

## Editorial

Mary Rogal-Black

### SEX! Easy to do; hard to talk about

Will you still respect us in the morning? And will we still respect ourselves?

This week, *The Brunswickan* presents its long-awaited sex feature. This project, like many relationships, began full of fun and potential but gradually evolved into a bit of a pain in the neck. Sending it off to the printer on Wednesday was like finally breaking up with someone you've stayed with just a little too long.

A couple of weeks after preparation for the sex feature began, we discussed the issue in an Editorial Board meeting. Several members were concerned about what kind of sexually explicit material we would be circulating, particularly off-campus, since *The Bruns* is delivered to FHS and to Kings Place downtown, where junior high students will have easy access to it. One member was concerned simply about our capability to produce a feature of a quality warranting the kind of attention we were likely to receive for it. Some were worried about backlash to the paper, both financial and political, or about the consequences for staff members looking for summer jobs in a conservative Fredericton business community.

Other members disagreed, arguing that as a student newspaper, we should be willing to go where other newspapers do not or cannot. They prefer to see *The Brunswickan* pushing the envelope and being a little provocative and said they would be disappointed to see the paper give in to pressure from people who have a problem with sex. All agreed that there would be limits to what we would publish; reaching consensus on those limits became the challenge. Portrayals of violence or degradation were not acceptable for anyone, but there was still disagreement about just how risqué we wanted our photographs and articles to be.

In the context of the Editorial Board's division on the subject of the sex feature, the word censorship was batted around. This was, I believe, an unfortunate use of the word. Since the Editorial Board was divided on the issue of the sex feature, I had asked that everyone have access to the material that was to be published and a say in what was and wasn't acceptable. In this way, I hoped to both dispel the fears of those concerned that we would be going overboard and ensure that everyone felt comfortable-if not entirely approving-with the feature. In the end, the Board vetoed only one photo depicting bondage, the concern being that it was of questionable taste and that, under Canadian Customs laws, portrayals of violence are prohibited. Other than that, choosing what to include or exclude from the feature was left up to me, to Jenn Brown (Features Editor), and to staff contributing to the feature. I would argue that this is not censorship in the political sense of the word, but the natural course of events in the process of publishing any material we put in the paper.

In the end, this became a lesson for all involved about the limits of consensus and about our own personal limits when it comes to the issue of sexuality. For some, this feature is an example of how the journey can become more significant than the destination.

Personally, I feel that access to information about sex is necessary and that it is an interesting topic for a student newspaper to tackle. Everyone either does it or considers doing it, and while I would personally recommend abstinence to young people, I would also like them to at least have some understanding of what they're getting into if they do decide to have sex.

Considering the rates of teenage pregnancy, for example, sex education for teenagers can't hurt. In her piece on page 4 of the sex feature, Cynthia Kirkby points out that a 1994 survey of FHS students indicated that approximately 45% of students are sexually active. As well, the high school runs a day care centre so that 22 student-parents can bring their children to school while they go to classes. Meanwhile, condom machines are not available at the school, and very few students are exposed to sex education.

Sandra Byers, a professor specializing in human sexuality at the UNB Department of Psychology, agreed that sex education in New Brunswick is lacking. Byers considers that sex-negative attitudes in our society contribute to a variety of problems, ranging from sexual dysfunctions to teenagers having unprotected sex to pornography. And what about people concerned that sex education and readily available condoms will encourage youngsters to have sex? "The research clearly shows that sex education does not result in kids having sex earlier," Byers says (page 5 of the feature insert). "Not only that, but good sex education actually ends up in kids delaying having sex and also in being more likely to use contraceptives when they do have sex." Providing young people with information about sex is, at least in part, an issue of control on the part of the adults. We may feel that we give up something when we stop attempting to control people's actions, but it seems clear that for many, we give up more when we do not educate those whom, really, we can never fully control anyway.

For university-age students, it's less often a question about whether or not to have sex; instead, there are more sophisticated issues about sex in relationships and how to enjoy the activities people do decide to engage in. As well, questions about sexual orientation are relevant and, as several members of the Editorial Board pointed out, a discussion about sexuality would not be complete without addressing the issue of homosexuality. Dispelling the myths and misunderstandings surrounding homosexuality and the relevance that's been placed on it in our society is one way for everyone to come to terms with the reality of gay and lesbian people, hopefully leading to acceptance. Students with easy access to the internet may be considering their own limits and definitions of pornography and erotica, and questioning the things that turn them on. It's a topic of which, perhaps, we could only hope to scratch the surface.

Finally, mistakes and disagreements about the sex feature within our organization will now be turned outward and left to the consideration of the community. Did we go too far? Did we not go far enough? What does sex really mean to our readers? We await your response; sometimes, it does all come down to this.

# BLOOD & THUNDER

Letters to the Editor

## Other solutions to education funding challenges

To the Editor:

**PROBLEM:**  
Tuition rates have increased dramatically in the recent past and can be expected to do so in the future. As governments provide less funding, students and administration must look to increasingly creative methods in order to alleviate the current situation. No potential solution should be dismissed until carefully examined. Hence the following:

**POTENTIAL SOLUTION:**  
Businesses located on campus make a profit, or they would not be there. Paradoxically, several companies, who extract large amounts of money from students, enjoy considerable profit margins, none of which returns to the students. If businesses were owned and operated by the

students, the following would apply:

- Hiring students as a priority, thereby creating numerous part-time jobs, something not currently considered.
- Profits for the sole purpose of reducing tuition, across the board, for all students.
- Existing royalty payments allowing exclusive rights to sell on campus would become the property of the students who support the products.
- As existing leases expire selected business (SRB) operation, under standard lease agreements.
- SRB's would offer students the unique opportunity to utilize and develop their newly acquired skills in management, accounting, marketing, promotion and other associated areas.

All profits from student businesses (SRB's)

would be placed in a fund, which would be used to subsidize the high tuition rates demanded of students. Over several years a gradual transition toward the implementation of SRB's throughout campus would be set in motion. Potential SRB's include convenience stores, coffee shops, and fast food restaurants. If students know their money is going directly towards the reduction of their tuition they will immediately recognize the benefits of SRB patronage.

If the aforementioned plan has merit a feasibility study should be implemented. A committee consisting of both the administration and the student union would evaluate the viability of such a plan.

Sincerely,  
Aaron McKinley Savage

## Maggie Jean Don under scrutiny from residents

To the Editor:

We would like to compliment Mr. Tom Wynn on his letter last week to *The Brunswickan* about the Don at Bridges House. However, we would like to know if he has possibly confused his Don with ours at Maggie Jean Chestnut?

In relating his experiences with Mr. Workman, Mr. Wynn has described our Don as well as his own. We too have had many problems; we feel that our Don is unprofessional in her manner, does not instill confidence in herself to us, and that confidentiality is an unknown concept to her. So far this year, we have had three house committees and two new proctors were brought in to replace our first proctor. We were told by Dean Craighead that the first proctor resigned because of "professional differences" in working with the Don.

meeting questioned several aspects of the Don's behaviour. At this time, Dean Craighead also introduced the two new proctors who were brought in as replacements. We have had no feedback from the residence office since this meeting and do not know what the Dean is doing to address our concerns while we live in an unchanged environment.

Like the house constitution at Bridges, ours has been used to hinder the functioning of the house. We too feel that the home cooking of brownies and cookies at house meetings are a nice gesture but they do not compensate for the Don's unbecoming behaviour.

Since the half-way mark of the second term is quickly approaching, many of us feel less than hopeful that our concerns will at any point be taken seriously. We feel it is a shame that the Maggie Jean experience as described in *The Brunswickan* three weeks ago is marred by the supposed 'focal point' of the house. This is truly unfortunate as MJC is the greatest place to be!

We hope that the University is sincere in its review this summer of the residence system and will take to heart the views of the students who live in the residences and who call them home!

Name withheld by request.

## President underestimates protest's relevance

To the Editor:

With all due respect, I take issue with the President's comments on the tuition hike protest of 13 February 1997. Saying protest is the "least reasonable way," and suggesting students make use of their "real opportunity" for "representation within the process," ignores that protest is part of the process. Speaking from her position of wealth and power, she ignored the relative poverty and impotence of students. This impotence is partially redressed through collective action in addition to speeches.

The interests of administration and students are at odds, and supported by unequal resources and power. Protests, rallies and building occupations are opportunities as real as "consultation." The President, counselled by career academics, financiers and bureaucrats, seems

willing only to talk, not act. This turns students' real struggle into an intellectual exercise. Protests and occupations, however, demonstrate the struggle in terms less easily turned aside, and demand that the full range of consequences and alternatives be open to public view.

Tuition hikes are part of an economic and political agenda that is well coordinated by particular and exclusively financial interests. As much as the President feels this pressure, she also exerts it; and is in a position to challenge it, or at least make manifest the entire rationale. Students invest their lives in the university; in curricular and extra-curricular pursuits. They are as entitled to the whole story as those who merely invest money. The university is, was, and will remain the students' Alma Mater.

Jamie Segar

## ABC employees not treated fairly

To the Editor:

Since May 1, 1996 I have watched and listened to many of the concerns of a number of Atlantic Building Cleaning employees. It is about time the whole truth be told.

In my opinion, the employees have not been treated fairly. During working hours they have been ridiculed, yelled at, swore at, and had their jobs threatened while other employees and non employees stood by and listened. As far as I am concerned a public form is not the place for this kind of ridicule. Could this be the lack of proper management skills on the part of the supervisory staff? (I MOST CERTAINLY THINK THAT THIS IS THE CASE.) This is the type of working conditions you would expect to find in a third world country where employees are not allowed to lift their head in the presence

of the supervisor. These types of working conditions are very difficult to tolerate and extremely demeaning to the employee and certainly uncalled for. The University of New Brunswick should be ashamed to have an employer on its campus that treats its employees in such an insulting manner.

I mean no disrespect towards these supervisors, but if they treated their employees with a little more respect and dignity, it would make everyone's work a little easier. These employees are worked to the limit. How can one person clean offices, corridors, classrooms, lobbies, and washrooms in a three-floor building and still make sure that all of the entrances are shovelled from six in the morning until two thirty in the afternoon regardless of how long it snows? On storm days they have been told not to leave the campus until these

entrances are done. They have been told not to keep the staff happy. How can they do this with some ignorant supervisor on their back all the time. They are told to concentrate on the shovelling and then a week down the road their told that their building is a disgrace. Atlantic Building Cleaning took over the cleaning contract in May. The buildings were a mess then. Is that their fault? I do not think they have been given a fair chance.

In conclusion, I think the supervisors should ease up. It would definitely be an asset for the employees. They have been told that they are one big happy family. I really do not think they have seen it yet. Will ABC loose a lot of their employees because of their supervisors, or will something be done before this happens?

Name withheld by request.

## Mudwump

Joseph W.J. FitzPatrick<sub>3</sub>

No, this isn't Metanoia. And I am not John Valk. Not that either of those things would be bad. Some people, who know me little, would be surprised that I would make such a big deal about something so trivial. But I have become increasingly aware that a perception of me persists as distant and uncaring.

As egocentric as it sounds, nothing could be further from the truth. Whether those people who chose to dislike me want to believe it or not, I am a caring and sensitive individual. And, above all, I am gentle. While some may choose to believe otherwise, I don't seek to maliciously harm others. It's true, I, like others, can revel in the acrid language of political debates. But, at the end of the day, speaking any degree of bitterness invariably burns the speaker's tongue.

One of the reasons I am reluctant to tell others about this aspect of myself is

the degree to which it may reveal that I am willing to work with them. I am able to talk to people others hate, and not judge them. I am able to talk to people who think they hate me or what I represent.

And I am able to offer constructive advice to many people on many things. Some of the people and places where I have offered advice would surprise those people who dislike me. That I am able to reconcile considering myself friends with members of the Board of Directors of the Social Club and the Cellar may seem to be two-faced. But it is one of the least problematic dynamics in my life.

Being non-judgemental (didn't somebody once say "judge not, lest ye be judged"?) has often been taken as indifference or disdain. That is a dangerous edge on which to tread. How can one maintain a distance which allows one to deal with difficulties without being distant? It is something I work at every day.

## Without malice what is hate?

"Others may hate you, but those who hate you don't win unless you hate them." Richard Nixon, from his Farewell Address.

Some might call this piece an olive branch, a belated attempt to contact those people in my life that others have assumed that I dislike. And maybe, on some level it is. But the self-fulfilling irony of my unassuming personality is that it is just that, unassuming.

If others chose to dislike me, I can't really prevent it. And like most things, it becomes self-fulfilling. Those who dislike me because of something I did, or they think I did, or somebody I know did, and, as a result, no longer want to deal with me, will fuel their resentment with a lack of contact with me. I, like others, can't explain what is not asked of me. And I don't know why others feel about me the way they do.

We should all be aware that it's easy to hate people at a distance. It's much harder to hate them, knowing that you have to sit next to that person on the bus.



**the brunswickan**  
Canada's Oldest Official Student Publication  
Established 1867

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**This issue is dedicated to:**  
Peter - Happy Birthday O Cool One!

The Brunswickan, in its 130<sup>th</sup> year of publication, is Canada's oldest official student publication. We publish weekly during the school year, with a circulation of 10,000 copies. *The Bruns Online* is an ongoing e-zine version of *The Brunswickan*, located on the World Wide Web at <http://www.unb.ca/web/bruns>.

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*The Brunswickan* is proudly printed by New Brunswick Publishing Inc. of Saint John. This week's paper was delivered with a red truck by Jud DeLong and Jen Trites. They're both afraid of Purple People Eaters, but Jud's more afraid than Jen. Look out!

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