

The Brunswickan

Canada's oldest official student publication

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Blood and Thunder

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"Prejudiced and Convuluted?"

Dear Editor:

Who does Mr. Dawes speak for when he says that "blacks are not privileged to observe the niceties of gender distinctions in the realm of oppression"? I am curious to know how a black woman would respond to such a presumptuous statement. Women; black and white, are raped, beaten, abused and exploited by men, black and white. Sexual violence and harassment affect women of all races and social classes. These issues are hardly 'niceties' to be enjoyed by bourgeois white women.

Apropos of Mr. Dawes' rather condescending comments that "ignorance is not the exclusive terrain of those who disagree with the findings of the SWC", and that "those who are strong advocates of certain ideas (should) become far more explicit and lucid in their presentations." In what way does the presentation by the SWC display ignorance? How is it not educational? The presentation by the SWC of sexist material in The Brunswickan is infinitely more explicit and lucid than the prejudiced and convoluted arguments expressed in the editorials written by Mr. Comeau, Mr. Griffiths and Mr. Dawes in the November 25th issue.

Clarissa Hurley

Consequences

Dear Mr. Comeau:

Over the past two years I heard some ridiculous attempts to justify the sexist misrepresentation in The Brunswickan but the gibberish that appeared in the 25 November "Mugwump" deserves an award for sheer silliness.

Censorship? ...come, come now! Persecution complexes aside, there is a much simpler explanation for the events of this term. As my two year old nephew has already learned, there are always consequences attached to one's actions.

For the past two years or more, The Brunswickan has published all sorts of nonsense with impunity. Last year's attempts to educate and explain were a complete failure and a waste of time. This year we decided it was time for The Brunswickan to suffer the consequences of its actions. Karen Braun and I wrote "Abusing the Privilege to Publish" and gave you an advance copy on 25 October 1988. Any action you may have taken to address our concerns did not make themselves apparent in the subsequent issues of The Brunswickan. Being the women of conscience that we are, we fired up the photocopiers and sent a copy to every feminist/social justice agency we could find addresses for.

That is not censorship. It is simply attaching some consequences, and from the reaction we've been getting it looks as if they are unpleasant consequences, to the actions of The Brunswickan. We haven't told you what you can print or what issues you should cover. We have simply reacted to the articles and items that The Brunswickan chose to print.

If The Brunswickan wishes to continue printing junk, such as that found in "Abusing the Privilege", go right ahead. Just stop crying "censorship" when The Brunswickan reaps the 'benefits' of what it has sown.

Kate MacKay
 Member
 Student Women's Committee

Advice too late?

Dear Editor:

Your feature article, "Addressing ignorance", which appeared in The Brunswickan on November 25, raises some important issues.

The Student Women's Committee has some legitimate complaints. However, the manner in which they were presented may simply cause another round of verbal warfare in The Brunswickan. When this occurs, the real issues are usually clouded by personal attacks. So, what's the solution? Mr. Dawes hit on it when, in his article, he talked of education.

First of all, perhaps the SWC could take steps to educate the student population about these issues in a less confrontational manner. The present strategy seems to create more problems than it solves.

Secondly, as individuals perhaps we should take some initiative. Attitudes are formed through up-bringing, education, the media, and many other sources. As a result they may be based on learned biases, not rational analysis. Unless we are willing to hold our personal attitudes up to scrutiny, examining them in light of factual information, no amount of education will bring change.

In the long run, perhaps education, and a genuine willingness to learn, will bring an end to this conflict. For now, I hope this issue doesn't turn The Brunswickan into a paper filled with endless mud slinging.

Yours truly,
 Darren McHarg

Attain Perspective

To Ms. K.J. Braun, and the rest of the world...

I have always respected women and I will continue to do so, however, Ms. Braun, the students of UNB must have a rest from your constant rhetoric on sexism and female exploitation. You fight to abolish the generalizations and stereotypes of which women are afflicted, yet, by the very number and tone (i.e. condescending) of your literary commentaries, you become that which you hate most: You have become a nag (defined by Webster's New World as "one who annoys by continual scolding, faultfinding, etc..."). This is, you must admit, an especially female-based stereotype which you seem to prove rather adequately, no???

Your points are valid, yes, Ms. Braun. I congratulate you on your conviction and loyalty to the cause (noble as it is), of women. But, your points were already made...last year, as I recall. And your points are all a little out of proportion.

I would like to address these issues in order.

1) The Brunns presented the CAMPUS DISCOVERY CALENDAR in an objective manner suitable to the policies of the written media. You would be advised to share that objectivity. It is NOT the responsibility of the Brunns to express an opinion that the contest is exploitative. If all women shared this OPINION there would not have been a contest, would there? If you would like to express just such an opinion, you should try Blood and Thunder!

2) I know of many men (more, in fact, than women) who are not serious about education. Regardless of the experience of this author, or of your historical precedents, VIEWPOINT is not meant in any way as an insult. It is entertainment. It is not a personal vendetta carried out by a male-idealizing secret society. Everyone understands that there is an equal work effort put forth by the ladies. One woman's (humerous) comment, fictional or otherwise, that she wishes to "be a sex symbol" can't be generalized to the wishes of the entire female population of UNB. It is you who is now committing the deadly sin of generalizing.

3) Ms. Brawn, I will not even honor the comments on cartoons save to say... IT IS ENTERTAINMENT. Noone is slaughtering the pigs of rural Fredericton with chainsaws any more than women are being discriminated against as a result of these cartoons.

4) There are but two points left. The Van Oyen ads show no bondage. It shows an attractive woman in attractive clothes (albeit leather, but aren't shoes made of leather? You don't have a grudge against shoes, do you?) anyway, the clothes were attractive. What you see is bondage, what I see is a curiosity builder... (I, too, asked what Van Oyen was selling???) That was the purpose! And the Classified ads? This is a courtesy which is extended to the students. It is to use and abuse as wished! It is up to the editors to decide what is clean enough to print... with the intention to print whatever possible.

5) "EATING DISORDERS" caused you much strife, Ms. Braun. Are men not students too? You have chosen a view that seems to IMPLY that .5% of men at this university are insignificant. This, Ms. Braun, is sexist and I suggest that you watch your own wording in the future. Your implication will not ride well with the (.005 times approx 5000 = males) twenty-five men you choose to ignore. One can derive derogatory meanings from everything, Ms. Braun, if one is looking! Let us not lose sight of the forest for the trees. Others can twist your words as well as you twist the words (and meanings) of others.

In summary, I find the threats of "actions by the SWC" a little melodramatic. To threaten is to demand rebellion and anger. Try to work on your own perception before trying to change the perceptions of the others. Interpretation is interpretation, we all have our own.

Finally, I wish to thank the staff of the Brunswickan, and especially Steve Griffiths and Stephane Comeau. Steve Griffiths has an incredible and unique sense of humor, and Mr. Comeau had enough to do before this issue started again. He is an editor, Ms. Braun. I refer again to the Webster's New World: Edit: "to prepare (an author's works, a manuscript, etc...) for publication as by selection, annotation, revision; to decide what to print." What goes into Mr. Comeau's office is intended for print, and I am sure he wants to, when deemed necessary, and appropriate. He is doing just fine, thank you.

To Ms. Braun, I wish success and prosperity, but please, attain and retain, perspective!!

Tim J. Walker
 Neville House

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