

# Editorial / Mugwump

## EDITORIAL

## Lights! Camera! ...Action?

Last week was Date Rape Awareness Week.

Anybody notice? (I mean, of course, without having heard it announced through the media prefaced by remarks about Professor Yaqzan). Well, you'll be pleased to know that the Student Union will be taking this non-show on the road, all the way to *Donahue*, where your elected representatives will be housed for one excitement-filled day and night at the luxurious Chateau d'Onahue in New York City.

Intriguing concept number one: the people at the show contacted the illustrious organization to see if it could provide producers with four representative students to get all riled up and tell the nice folks in TV Land what they think about date rape. Reality check: the UNB SU is not exactly internationally renowned as an authority on social issues. Why else would they be contacted except to talk about the Yaqzan thing? The Union doesn't seem to want to acknowledge this though, despite the fact that SU Veep Fitzpatrick actually comments [see page one] that the producers asked for people who disagree with Yaqzan's Opinion. A pretty specific request for a show that purports to have such a broad focus as date rape, n'est-ce pas?

Mortified by the fact that the student body of UNB might come across looking like real people, our omniscient council has appointed an ad hoc committee to interview potential candidates nominated by the council executive. As was explained to me, council didn't want us to look bad.

Intriguing concept number two: no one voted on whether or not they would like Tammy Yates to be our principle spokesperson when dealing with the all-to-related Yaqzan affair. She spoke for the Student Union, and yet is

not even an elected council member. Shocking.

If they want a Union-line toting parrot to prattle off the now-familiar "We're *jubilant* Yaqzan was reprimanded" mumbling, knock yourselves out—interview away until you find the perfect mouthpiece. If they want real students with comments that might reflect those, thought not so eloquent, of an average university student, then ask for volunteers and take the chance that you might not end up with an orator befitting *The Merchant of Venice's* trial scene.

Here's an idea, if they want people who are willing to speak their minds, why not try contacting some of the students who have made their views known in the pages of *The Brunswickan's* Letters to the Editor section. One might even ask for participation from someone whose views didn't sound like the latest SU pre-fab press release.

It's too bad that the Student Union trusts the members of the student body enough to let them elect the council and its executive, but not enough to let them speak for themselves. One might almost think their scared that their own constituents will make them look bad.

The term "Bubble gum politicians," an echo from my first years of news writing with *The Brunswickan*, keeps popping into my mind. I never thought of how appropriate the description could be. Metaphorical truisms to live by folks—watch out, if you fill it too full of hot air it might blow up in your face, etc. etc.

The Union is obviously anxious about the possibility of laying themselves open to some kind of embarrassment.

Egg on your faces would be awful, but I'm willing to bet remnants of Bubble Yum will stick with you a lot longer.

## MUGWUMP

BY J.R.

Many people complain when this column degenerates into Student Union bashing, but well, sometimes it has to. I've been really nice to the Student Union this term. Well, no longer.

As you know, the most contentious issue to hit UNB in years exploded in the laps of the Student Union this month. *MatinGate*? No, much more serious. The *Donahue Dilemma*. Yes, with friendships on the line, credibility straining and hordes of would-be TV stars beating a path to their doors, the Student Union had to make a stand, take a decision and decide who they were going to send to the *Donahue* show. To make this hard-hitting decision, they resorted to a time honored technique among those who like to get things done: they referred it to a committee. This wasn't any normal committee. No, this one was special. I refer of course to the Ad-Hoc *Donahue* Committee. Like they say, you can take the child out of the bureaucrat, but you can't take the bureaucrat out of the child. The Student Union has, in one fell swoop, managed to achieve a state that may safely be labelled self-parody.

Even setting aside the fact that this decision is by far the dumbest, most moronic action that I have encountered in years of Council watching, that it just invites jokes, commentaries, *Mugwump* columns and general disrespect, this decision doesn't make any sense in practical terms. The committee was designed to "assist" the Executive in making the determination. Excuse me, but I think the Executive, as our elected *executive* arm can figure this out on their own without needing their hands held. This committee was formed to find rational, calm students who would never ever say anything at all offensive to anyone at all. This committee doesn't want anyone to get the impression that we are in anyway undesirable, uncontrollable or uncouth. It is formed of three SU Council members. The first member of the committee is known by the name of *Scooter*. *Scooter*? The second member of this Political Correctness Police Corps is the Editor-in-Chief of *The Pillar* (formerly *ERTW aka Engineers Rule The World (The Rest of You Suck)*). Do you see a potential problem yet? *The Pillar's* taste in articles sometimes offends me almost as much as Yaqzan's opinion did. Putting this committee in charge is like putting CHSR in charge of the CRTS.

It could, of course, be worse. They could have grilled the chosen delegates before a full meeting of the Council, which was the alternative suggestion. That would be fun. It would probably make good television, but I don't think that it would prove anything. The SU is concerned that a poor choice of delegates will give us a bad reputation. We were on *CNN*—how much worse can it get?! Besides, shouldn't it be the *Administration* worrying about how these students are going to comport themselves? After all, the University's reputation is in their hands, not ours. The Student Union's job, in many cases, is to *make the Admin look as bad as possible to shame them into action*. This is one of the only tactics that has been proven to work in the cause of student rights. We are not here to make our school look good. We are here for an education. The students that make the school look best (ironically)

## INTRODUCING THE AD-HOC SPECIAL COMMITTEE ON PERSONAL SANITATION AND PUBLIC HEALTH I.E. THEY REALLY CAN'T TAKE A SHIT WITHOUT FORMING A COMMITTEE

are those who cause the most problems for the school while they are here.

I would personally be offended if the Student Union chose only those students who conformed rigidly to a set political agenda, who had specific beliefs and who toed the party line. The University is here to learn and to debate—*Donahue* is a talk show, not a propaganda machine. If there is any room at all for a free exchange of ideas in our modern society, I think this would be an appropriate place.

Look folks, the *Donahue* show doesn't want the Student Union's favorite mouthpieces anyway. If they did, you could have referred the matter to the VP External and it would have been over with. No, the *Donahue* show wants students to represent the average UNB student, to carry the rage that UNB students feel about this whole date rape thing.

I would be offended if we sent complete morons that will make us look like "reading-challenged" or moronic idiots, but I would be much more offended if we looked like a nation of Proletarians and Commissars. I don't want the Student Union to become involved in this decision in any way. I don't think it is at all appropriate. We are definitely sending one representative to present our official Student Union position. Fine, we elected people to do that job, use them. I didn't elect the Council so they could limit how we express ourselves. If the voice of the Thought Police carries any weight in this decision, please don't make that decision in my name.

This whole debate has distracted the Student Union and, in the glare of the TV lights, they seem to have lost sight of their mandate: to better the lives of the students, not to get maximum TV exposure.

Everyone always accuses student newspapers of being sensationalist, journalistically questionable and so close to the line legally that they are operating only one step ahead of a defamation suit. So why is it that we have spent more time correcting misprints, misquotes, wrongly attributed by-lines, inaccurate stories and misspelled words in *other papers* than most of the journalists who have swarmed on our offices spent researching their stories? Maybe we're the exception that proves the rule. Could be. Ask *The Varsity*—we did.

We, the editors of the *Brunswickan*, would like to thank *MacLean's* magazine for pointing out an error in our paper. For 128 years we, the oldest official student publication in Canada (Dahousie be damned), have apparently been misspelling our name. According to *MacLeans*—which says they quoted us extensively—we are the *Brunswickian*. If a distinguished journalistic outlet like *MacLeans* says there's an extra I, who are we to argue. It does occur to me though, if they really did get those quotes out of our paper, why did they misspell our name? And why did they use the version of President Armstrong's letter that appeared not in our paper, but in the *Telegraph-Journal*? Well, you can't argue with *MacLeans*. If they say that's



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