

MUGWUMP

Moral of the week: leave well enough alone. The College Hill Social Club, as most people are now aware, is the object of a greedy takeover attempt by the Student Union. Why? The Social Club has been an economically successful venture for the past few years. As a non-profit organization, it puts its profits back into the club in order to benefit the students who are members. The Student Union now wants a piece of the action; if they were to take control of the Social Club, they could transfer profits to the Student Union.

Is this a good thing? I think not. Organizations such as the Social Club should remain outside the scope of the Student Union. In this way petty student politics cannot interfere in the daily operation of the club. Operating a bar is not an easy venture; it requires a steady and constant management which the Student Union would be unable to provide.

It is easy to blame the campus media of bias in favor of the Social Club, as some in the Student Union have done. (Some have gone as far as suggesting bribery, a serious charge, between the Social Club and the Brunswickan. What's more, these charges have been levelled on the very pages of this Brunswickan. Horrors! Shame on those who make such serious accusations with no substantiating evidence. Nasty things have been known to happen when children play with fire.) The Brunswickan editorial board, however, works with the Student Union on a daily basis. Perhaps it is a result of this close working relationship that certain persons at the Brunswickan can be certain that a Student Union takeover of the College Hill Social Club is a bad idea.

Live music continues to thrive at UNB. This is a good thing. Certain other universities in the Maritimes have had a great deal of trouble in drawing students to live music events. This does not seem to be a problem at UNB, although it has been in the past. Kudos to UNB students for supporting live music, and to those who continue to bring in good bands.

It seems our beloved Prime Minister has had a change of heart on native issues. A recent conference with native peoples in Vancouver has many believing that the present government has suddenly become sensitive to issues it seemed to have absolutely no grasp of during the past summer months. This same government seems to have had a change of heart on the subject of immigration as well. I smell an election on the horizon. Never forget Oka!

I've been getting into the game of chess lately. It seems that there are a number of very good chess players in our fair city, and many of them can be found at a new local chess club. If you are a chess aficionado or novice, head down to the chess club found at the Regent Bistro, downtown on Regent street. Philippe Cliche, the brains behind the chess club, would be only too happy to match wits with you, as would many other chess people. A chess column featuring games played at the Bistro chess club has also found its way to the pages of this paper. Who knows; maybe one of your games will be featured in the chess column.

Peace.
Ras Baba

by Luis Cardoso

OPINION

The opinions found in Opinion are not necessarily the views of the Brunswickan

The Brunswickan has provided us with the opportunity to respond to the comments found in last week's edition concerning the proposed "takeover" of the College Hill Social Club by the UNB Student Union. Both of us have been involved in this project from the very beginning. For this reason we feel that the comments made by both Randy Hickey and Bill Traer are totally ludicrous. They have no foundation in fact and are based solely on conjecture, rumour and a questionable desire to panic the members and staff of the CHSC.

If the UNB Student Union is successful in its bid to acquire a controlling interest in the CHSC, the three evils cited by Mr. Hickey would not, and need not, come to pass. These evils are: higher beer prices, cutting staff and firing management.

1) Higher Beer Prices.

A \$90,000 surplus was reported by the CHSC at the end of their last fiscal year. It makes no sense whatsoever to raise prices when they do not have to be raised. This is a student bar. Students do not have a lot of cash. The UNB Student Union is more aware of this than anyone. Students deserve drinks at a reasonable price and \$1.95 appears to be such a price.

2) Cutting Staff

This has never been contemplated. The staff are students. They do a great job in providing the essentials which make the CHSC what it is: cold beer, quick service, excellent music and a good environment. The UNB Student Union is there to advance student's interests, not for them.

3) Firing the Management

One would have to be blind not to realize the positive impact the current Manager has had. In only three years the CHSC has gone from a substantial deficit to a considerable surplus. The Student Union recognizes this. If the Student Union is successful, the Manager has been promised that his job will not be affected and a three year employment contract has been offered.

If things are going so well with the CHSC then why should the Student Union interfere? Over the next few weeks this question will be the focus of the entire debate. It is a question which the Student Union is more than willing to answer. Some of the arguments which will be heard include the following:

- 1) All major Canadian universities have a controlling interest in their campus bar. "The Breezeway", Memorial University of Newfoundland's Student Union owned bar, last year generated \$300,000 in profits from \$1.5 million in sales. Their venue is the size of the CHSC plus half of the ballroom. This \$300,000 is used to upgrade existing services, provide new facilities, and undertake projects that are too substantial to be covered solely by student fees. By having a controlling interest in the CHSC the Student Union will finally be able to undertake those projects which are really important to students, namely daycare, football and SUB expansion.
- 2) Bar Services is currently the most unpopular operation at this university. From its warm beer to its high prices, every club, society and residence has had to pay the price. If the Student Union acquires a controlling interest in the CHSC then the students are one step closer to getting rid of bar services altogether. In its place would be an operation more accountable to the students that it is supposed to serve.

Essentially, the issue is whether or not the students really want to see any positive change to student life. The Student Union believes that this will lay the ground work for future change.

The Directors of the CHSC would like the students to think that this whole idea has been hostile from the start. This is not true. Initial discussions in July between the CHSC and the UNB Student Union covered an agreement that would enhance Campus Entertainment and avoid further duplication of services at additional student expense. Currently, the UNB Student Union spends \$50,000 per year on entertainment, an amount that can never be covered by admission alone. From the beginning, it was the hope that all terms of this proposal would be "negotiated faithfully and thoroughly" by both parties. In July, the UNB Student Union talked, the Directors asked a few questions and that was it. After two months of silence the Directors told their legal counsel to tell the Student Union that they were not interested in any further negotiations. It was at this point that the Student Union decided to take more active steps to preserve and advance the interests of the students. These steps are now being viewed by the Directors as being "hostile". We see it as the Student Union doing its job.

The Directors asked the members to "seriously question" the motives of the Student Union and ask why they are only now "picking" on the CHSC. These are legitimate concerns and the Student Union is prepared to answer any question that the members and students may have. We hope that the Directors can answer some of ours.

- 1) Why is it that when the CHSC reports a \$90,000 surplus last year, the Directors raise the Membership Fee by 50% this year - from \$10.00 to \$15.00?
- 2) Why are Graduate students given a reduced rate on their membership simply for being Graduate students?
- 3) Why are the employees of other bars in Fredericton given free memberships?
- 4) Why are only those groups who seem to serve the best interests of the Directors given free memberships, namely Bar Services employees, members of the Brunswickan and CHSR?
- 5) Why are the Directors continuing to delay for seven weeks the production of a membership list lawfully requested in accordance with their bylaws?
- 6) What do the Directors plan on doing with the surplus that they are currently enjoying? Paint the CHSC once again? Buy more weights?
- 7) How many of the Directors are currently undergraduate full-time students of either UNB or STU?
- 8) What was their motive for ceasing to negotiate in good faith with the Student Union?

The next time you are in line waiting to get in, ask yourself this one question - does membership really have its privileges?

In the weeks ahead, the UNB Student Union will be putting forward its position on acquiring a controlling interest in the CHSC. As well, the UNB Student Union will be proposing a structure that will better serve not only the members but all students of the university community.

This issue affects all students, not just those who are members of the CHSC. It becomes vitally important that all parties act in good faith in the attempt to resolve this issue in the best interests of the students. As members, we are asking the Directors to provide the membership list to the UNB Student Union and refrain from spreading any more rumours and falsehoods. As students, we hope that other students will put the questions that have been raised to the Directors and to the UNB Student Union. Finally, we trust that the Brunswickan and CHSR will take an active, yet impartial, role in presenting all sides of the issue in the factual and objective a manner as possible.

Thank you.
Marc Braithwaite and James Small
Members of the College Hill Social Club