

Editorial

Mary Rogal-Black

The Brunswickan: defending our lives

When facing the challenge of reporting a news story involving one of our own staff members this week, I could at least take comfort in the fact that I'm in good company. Just two weeks ago, I read an editorial by Robert Lewis, Editor-in-Chief of *Maclean's*: "It's a revealing experience for an editor to become part of a news story," wrote Lewis. "This department fell into that role last week, when several reporters called to demand instant answers about the role of two *Maclean's* reporters in the Airbus case. The shoe was on the other foot, and it was not as comfortable taking the questions as asking them." (September 23, 1996)

CBC reporters, too, must have felt uncomfortable last month when news of major funding cuts to the network were announced. The story led that night's broadcast of *The National*, and no one watching or delivering the story could claim that the reporting was completely unbiased. Similarly, readers might question the potential for bias in *The Brunswickan's* coverage of what is becoming known in some circles as "The Pat FitzPatrick Affair."

Pat FitzPatrick, formerly a VP of the UNB Student Union Executive, resigned his position as interim director of fledgling lobbying group, the Canadian Alliance of Student Associations (CASA) following allegations of financial mismanagement. After dropping out of student politics in January of this year, Pat reappeared in the SUB fall — to work as a photographer for *The Brunswickan*. As such, Pat has been a member of our staff team for the past month. This week, he became front page news once again when Matt Hough, National Director of CASA, came to town ("CASA allegations against former SU VP resurface," page 1).

Members of CASA and the UNB SU Executive are justifiably concerned about this situation, and so am I. The most important responsibility of the media is to provide trustworthy information, maintaining its ability to hold governments and individuals accountable for their actions and giving the public real information on which to base its decisions, actions and social development. The critical question now is whether Pat's participation at *The Brunswickan* has compromised our claim on the readers' trust.

For this reason, it is appropriate for me to make public my reasons for supporting Pat's involvement in *The Brunswickan* when I knew he could become the subject of a news story at any time. Although Pat has offered to resign several times in the past few weeks, I have refused that offer for the following reasons:

First, Pat's role as a staff photographer does not involve direct knowledge of news stories. He does not read, write or edit news before it is published, and his input into the news department, beyond contributing photos, has been minimal to non-existent.

Second, Pat has not initiated any discussion about the CASA situation or his side of the story. Although he has answered some questions about it, discussion overall has been minimal and guarded, and I feel confident in the assertion that Gordon Loane's reporting of the story is balanced and carefully considered, as is his general practice.

Finally, my fundamental problem with excluding Pat from a volunteer student organisation is that I have little choice but to believe that he is innocent until proven guilty. In combination with the above factors, the presumption of innocence due Pat makes it unfair of me to ask him to leave. Even if he were to be found guilty in a court of law, the nature of the alleged offenses are not such that the Editorial Board would necessarily decide to exclude Pat from the club.

At the same time, I do have some concerns about the situation we find ourselves in this week. Everyone in the offices of *The Brunswickan* knows Pat, and this fact obviously muddies the waters, since even the appearance of conflict or bias is a concern. As well, Joe FitzPatrick, our Managing Editor, is Pat's brother. While he quite fairly contends that he should not be judged or limited by the alleged actions of his brother, the significant control Joe has within the paper is cause for concern in a situation in which his conflict of interest is readily apparent.

My reasons for allowing *The Brunswickan* to remain in conflict on this point may or may not be satisfactory; readers will decide, and I invite feedback on this issue. Do you feel you can trust our news coverage? What actions do you think we should have taken in this situation?

Meanwhile, if you'll forgive my Pollyanna-ish desire to make lemonade of all the lemons in this situation, I do find it particularly interesting that all of the students and student associations involved in "The Pat FitzPatrick Affair" have had a valuable learning experience. Conveniently, this is what being a student means, and while it can be frustrating and downright painful at times, making mistakes -- as I think many of the parties involved have done on one level or another over the course of "The Pat FitzPatrick Affair" -- forces us to examine our actions and motivations more deeply than we are generally required to.

For example, while I stand by my reasons supporting Pat's participation in *The Brunswickan*, I am genuinely concerned about the indirect influence his presence in the organisation could bring to bear on our coverage of the issue. Even without knowing specifics about his involvement with CASA, many members of staff here have come to know Pat on a personal level, and we may never be sure how much this affects our coverage of his case.

On the other side of the scale, other student newspapers and individuals who have made potentially libellous statements about Pat or about CASA may wish they, too, had taken the concept of innocent until proven guilty a little more seriously when reporting on the situation.

At best, there seems to have been a breakdown in communication between CASA's Board of Directors and its former acting director. While at times appearing to lay blame for its lack of fiscal responsibility squarely on the shoulders of one individual, the public relations crisis CASA found itself in this year is only appropriate. If someone appointed by the board did the things that CASA officials have alleged Pat did, the board itself must also be held accountable for the situation. For this reason, much as we all like to find someone to blame when the shit hits the fan, CASA's organisation, or lack thereof, remained at the root of the issue and it has since had to answer for that. As a result of confronting a major crisis when it was just starting out, CASA has had to become more accountable to schools who pay thousands of dollars in membership fees each year.

Closer to home, members of our own SU Executive, perhaps in a rush to disassociate themselves from Pat and apparently feeling comfortable enough in their glass houses, have become at times downright vicious in their treatment of a former co-worker and, in some cases, friend. In the midst of legal and public relations problems, this raises a more personal question: when all is said and done in the courts, on the balance sheets and in the newspapers, who is going to have trouble sleeping at night and why? Purely on the level of personal respect and understanding, few people in this scenario can claim to be entirely guilt-free, and forgiveness must begin somewhere.

As Matt Hough said of events of this year: "I found out the hard way." Hindsight can be a phenomenal kick in the ass, as many people have been reminded as a result of this experience. Student organisations, from *The Brunswickan* to CASA to the UNB SU, are just that: student organisations. If we knew all the answers, we wouldn't be here. The most we can hope for is that we will be judged not by the mistakes we make, but by how we respond, learn and grow as a result of them.

*"I don't think I'm ever more aware than I am right after I hit my thumb with a hammer."
- Deep Thoughts by Jack Handey*

Well it's happened, as if you couldn't have foreseen it. The cart has finally been put so far in front of the horse, that the horse has fallen on its ass. At least somebody was pulling on the reins. Too bad two were pulling, and 13 were pushing, but at least somebody tried.

On an unrelated note, I'm sure you're aware that there is going to be a football referendum question. Soon (or later) there will be a question about a 10 year \$10 fee to support a football team. To do this, you will have to put aside some petty concerns like the type of person who are attracted to and by football (or the people attracted to them, for that matter), and small annoyances like steroids, hazing, illegal pay-offs, and quasi-legal "special student" admissions.

You may be tempted to vote in favour of the referendum if you didn't know the relative cost of football, in the strict monetary sense (of course, since the University budget is supposed to be secret, you're not supposed to). For example, the amount of money we're talking about (just from the Students) is seven times the (non-salary) amount which the University plans to spend on our best hopes for a CIAU championship, the women's field hockey team.

In fact, with a total Athletics budget for 1996-97 of \$474,600 (a 3% cut), any football program

Mudwump

Joseph W.J. FitzPatrick
I've killed the football spirit

would dwarf not only any other single sport but the entire budget for Intercollegiate Athletics. Forget, also, that even a completely privately funded program would require a modicum of attention from the current athletics structure which takes away from other responsibilities.

Of course, where would they play? Clearly, with the fields we have, there is only one choice. Unfortunately, the field is not only unsuitable (bad turf, no bleachers, no scoreboard) but it is currently occupied by a CIAU caliber team.

Besides, UNB Security won't allow outdoor concerts for Frosh, what makes anybody think that football fans (assuming there are any) will be tolerated for 4 home games?

And how about all those local lads who go away to play football at other Universities and don't come to UNB? Let's just say that UNB is bursting at the seams with students, and staff is being reduced at an alarming rate, what are 40 students going to matter? It's embarrassing enough that 25% of all students starting in Arts have an average grade of 60%-65%. Let's not make it worse.

And where are all these footballers? Sure Fredericton High and Cromocto High have produced a few top-caliber football athletes, but realistically, how many local players do you expect would be

able to on a competitive AVAA team? Maybe 5. The rest will be imports from the other side of the St. Lawrence.

Sure, it would be nice to help out the High Schools by giving their footballers a sense of hope of intercollegiate football. I would embrace a football team if FHS and OHS would promise not to send us any more illiterate graduates who can't think, read, or write.

But what about the Alumni? Well, considering that 25% of all Alumni have donated to UNB in the past five years, and that this is the highest percentage of a Canadian University (according to *Maclean's*) we should ask ourselves: how much more can we expect, and what would we get with more? Obviously, we raised 30 million or so without football, how much more can we expect with it?

After reading this piece, a friend said to me "you've killed the football spirit!" Sure, I admitted, but I used to pick the wings off flies, so causing malicious harm to annoying entities of lesser intelligence is not a something to which I am unaccustomed.

So let's kill the spirit, and let's move on. It's embarrassing to have Council twice debate a referendum question when they don't even have an election set. Much longer, and the voters will be deciding between voting and writing exams.

BLOOD & THUNDER

Letters to the Editor

The Bruns: even greater than we thought

To the Editor:

I was in Fredericton for "Home Coming" and while there picked up a copy of *The Brunswickan* in the Campus Bookstore. It was not until then that I realized you are celebrating 130 years of history during the current academic year. My congratulations. Most certainly it is a much larger and more informative publication than when I worked on it as a student.

It's a hope that you won't take it amiss if I refer to some errors in your listing of the great and near-great; perhaps more omissions than errors. Sir George Foster did indeed achieve fame, but Sir Douglas Hazen was knighted as well. Not only was he Premier of New Brunswick but also served in Ottawa as an M.P. and then as member of the Imperial War Cabinet during the first

Men and women need to share the night

To the Editor:

I enjoyed Cynthia Kirkby's recent article in the Bruns about marching to take back the night [Issue 3, page 9]. As a man, I believe that women should have equal rights and be treated fairly but I have to say that I don't agree with certain "womyn's" groups.

It seems to me that a group that would not allow men who agree that women should be treated fairly and that violence against women is wrong to participate in their group is only hurting themselves.

I particularly liked your comment: "Besides, when did we ever own the night that we could take it back? Who owns it that we want it back from?" The night and day for that matter, should be shared by both men and women (and yes "womyn" too), not owned by one or the other. It does seem that to "take back the night" implies a desire to own it.

Rob Stewart

World War. It was for this that he achieved a knighthood. Subsequently, he became Chief Justice of New Brunswick. There is a window in recognition of his efforts in Memorial Hall.

Dr. C.C. Jones was never Chancellor in the currently accepted concept of that term. Some American universities use the term Chancellor for the executive head (President and Vice-Chancellor in Canada and the Commonwealth), and that is what Dr. Jones was for, I believe the longest period of any of our presidents - 1906-1940. He was the president during my first two years as an undergraduate, which means I have known all of the presidents during this century.

I don't want you to think this letter is the grumbling comments of an old man who did not make the list - such a selection is the prerogative of the editor whose decision must

be final. However, I will mention that I worked happily and learned a lot as a member of the Brunswick staff over a period of 3.5 years. In my final year I believe we used the title of Co-Editor - myself and Mrs. Harold (Mary) Marshall. I was forced to dump everything on her capable shoulders when I took off for service with the Royal Canadian Navy, which kept me fully occupied until the spring of 1946 when I returned from what we then called the Far East - i.e. Malaya (now Malaysia and Singapore), Burma (now Myanmar) and Siam (now Thailand).

With my every good wish for a most successful 130th year, I am,

Yours most sincerely,
Colin B. Mackay, O.C., Q.C.
UNB President 1953-1969
President Emeritus, UNB

Thanks to Shinerama supporters

To the Editor:

Shinerama Day has once again come and gone, and we have so many people to thank. Although we do not have a confirmed total, we surpassed the \$14,000 mark and have beat DAL! Money is still coming in everyday, and our total continues to rise.

I must begin by thanking Marlene O'Neil, Marlene Brewer, and Karen Miner for all of their patience over the last year in the office -- if only everyone had the opportunity to work with you. As well, Judy and SUB staff for opening up the office, day in and out.

To my Executive and the Orientation committee, without the help of you all this day would not have been possible. To the Frosh of '96 - YOU ARE GREAT!! So much enthusiasm that day - I hope you all enjoyed it. Lois

Clowater, Tom Austin, and Todd Burgess - thank you so much for the kind words to kick off the day. Sean, Blair, Mel, Claire, Erin and Kerri - we'll always be THE TEAM.

My personal welcome and thanks to Matt Landry, our new team member and Director for '97. To all of the contributors, businesses and people who supported us - we thank you for your kindness.

On behalf of the Canadian Cystic Fibrosis Foundation, I thank all who helped make this day such a success for CF Research - be proud of your contribution, and remember that every penny counts. I truly do thank my lucky stars to have had you all aboard for this event. VIVA GRAND LAC.

Cheryl Flanagan
Shinerama Director 1995-96

Spectrum columns are approved by the Editorial Board at the end of October. Individuals or groups who would like to publish weekly or bi-weekly opinion columns in Spectrum may submit three sample columns for consideration. For more information, contact Mary by dropping by the office (SU B Room 33), calling 453-4983 or e-mailing: htmis@unb.ca

the brunswickan
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Established 1867

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Illustrated by Kent Weizel

This issue is dedicated to:
The honoraria committee. We like you. We really, really do.

The Brunswickan, in its 130th 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>.

The opinions contained in this newspaper are those of the individual writers, and do not necessarily reflect the views of The Brunswickan.

All members of the university community are encouraged to contribute to *The Brunswickan*. While we endeavour to be an open forum for a variety of viewpoints and ideas, we may refuse any submission considered racist, sexist, libellous or those containing attacks of a strictly personal nature. *The Brunswickan* reserves the right to edit for brevity and sometimes for levity. Letters generally shouldn't exceed 300 words in length and must contain your signature, student number and phone number, or they will not be printed.

All copy submitted must be double spaced, on one side of the page only and must be legible. If we can't read it, we won't print it. *The Brunswickan* accepts copy on 3.5 inch disk, either Macintosh or MS-DOS format.

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