



the
brunswickan

CANADA'S OLDEST OFFICIAL STUDENT PUBLICATION

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OPINION...

*I promise not to be a naughty boy.
I promise*



I suppose by now that everybody on campus and around the city has heard about the four university students, (three of whom are from UNB) who received some highly unusual sentences when they appeared before Fredericton Judge C. Blake Lynch last week...and if you haven't, I will tell you all about it and then make a few comments on what I think about the whole deal.

The four students, two of whom were charged in a January 18 theft of two flags from the Kings Place Mall and the other two, who were involved in an incident of theft and mischief, were given conditional discharges, placed on probation for three months, ordered to make restitution, and GET THIS-- ordered to write an 800 WORD ESSAY on the effects on a student of getting a criminal record!!!

By the way, the conditional discharges become absolute discharges with no criminal record recorded upon fulfillment of ALL the conditions. And to top it all off, Lynch has suggested that the essays be printed in the *Brunswickan*!! Personally, I would welcome such a move. For a change, I could get a really good laugh out of the news section.

Now, I believe that Judge Lynch has some good intentions by handing out such lenient sentences in these four cases. No doubt the fact that his father is a journalist and columnist had some effect on his decision to publish the essays. You've all heard of the columnist Charles Lynch, haven't you?

What better way to embarrass the culprits than by printing their "original" essays in the *Brunswickan*!!

However, I have some misgivings about the whole deal. Do you think that these four young men would receive such lax sentences if they were not university students, but perhaps delinquents with a previous record? I think not. The lightness of their sentences reflects the attitudes of a society which is willing to mete out uneven punishments for the same crime when it is committed by different people-university students for example. No matter how you look at it, students form a separate class. We may come from impoverished backgrounds, or we may be rich, but we are going to university to make better persons of ourselves, both economically and socially. We are the people who are going to make up the elite of our future. (At least that is what sociologists keep saying.)

I doubt very much that if the same crime had been committed by young men from a lower socio-economic class, that the same kind of justice would have been distributed.

Nevertheless, I think that the whole thing is pretty interesting, and should generate some controversy. Whether you think it's all just a big joke, or that it is unfair, I for one am looking forward to reading their 800 word essays, and I promise I won't even edit them.

I'll let Judge Lynch do that.

By MELYNDA JARRATT