

Editorial
Mary Rogal-Black

In the spirit of Valentine's Day, tell your SU you love them

The Brunswickan has a lover. Though we're not always kind to them, don't always enjoy living with them and sometimes just love to hate them, the Student Union is our partner for better or worse, until autonomy do us part.

As chroniclers of the SU's ever-mediocre existence, *The Brunswickan* often receives complaints from its sweetheart: "You don't love me enough!" "You're so critical; I can't do anything to please you!" And they're right. As a lover, we can be terribly hard-hearted; we're mocking, disdainful and, on a bad week, downright abusive. Sometimes they retaliate with the silent treatment or threaten to withhold our allowance, but we have the security of knowing that, in one way or another, we could make it without them, and so still we do what we please. We argue that being critical is just our duty-loyal opposition, if you will—and we snicker when they protest again. "C'mon, if we don't keep you honest, who will?"



We ask, pretending we don't enjoy our role as the self-righteous bearers of bad news. But the truth is, we do have a lot in common. (With a nod to editors who have gone before me, I will now extend the metaphor beyond its graceful limits.) Our children are the students of UNB students, and we both decry their apathy and lack of respect for us: "Why don't you visit more often?" "Can't you see I'm only trying to do what's best for you?" But at the same time, we realise that other things in the world are much more interesting than their boring old parents and that it's natural for them to take us for granted. Meanwhile, we are here for our own reasons and can't claim purely altruistic motives, so if the kids don't appreciate us enough, we'll still keep doing what we do. And sometimes the SU and *The Brunswickan* can stop bickering, commiserate and worry over their children's future. "When will they learn?"

By our natures, both of us change every year, our faces and characters fluctuating without restraint and, because divorce would be too much bother, we just learn to love each other all over again. Or, by the time we decide we don't want to live together anymore, our faces are already changing and we decide to stick it out again for one more year. And every year, the lessons have to be relearned; if only we could all learn to be new to our jobs with grace, some of our spats might be avoided. But reinventing the wheel every year or two is innate for both of us, since in many ways, we are both more about the experience than the end result.

The prescription for unhappy partners is to improve communication and to learn to live with each other—flaws and all. Both of us tend to nurse old wounds when it's convenient. Mutual understanding would be a great asset, but of course, the SU is *always* at fault here since, although it's our job to analyze their performance, they never really seem to understand why we are the way we are (or pay us enough). Sigh.

Lately, though, when we've tried to get angry at our sweetheart, it's been difficult to muster up the energy. I don't know if it's the smell of cupid's diaper in the air, or if it's just 'cause this year has been a relatively good one for the love of our life. Either way, with SU elections on the horizon (February 24-25), it just doesn't seem worth it to complain about all the things they done wrong. We might just be satisfied if the new folks have good intentions and a sense of decency. And, at the risk of losing our tough journalistic edge, maybe we'll do a little cheerleading once in a while. After all, even though we all know that love is where it's at, it's easy to forget to treat the ones we love—or even just the ones we work with—with the respect they deserve. Hell, you only live once.

BLOOD & THUNDER
Letters to the Editor

Bridges resident has different view of Don

To the Editor:

When I read the *In Residence* article entitled "A Don's Life" [Issue 17, page 16], I couldn't help but laugh. I was amazed that someone would actually write such a one-sided article that was full of fluff and half-truths. It made my blood boil that a person who did not even live in the house could give such praise to someone when they haven't been forced to live with him as their Don.

I've lived in Bridges House for six years. I've been on the Dean's list for two years and I will be graduating in May with a degree in Computer Science. Last year, I was elected president of the Bridges House Committee and as a result I had to deal with Professor Workman regularly. I can honestly say that he deserves no commendation for his work as Don. The reason I can say this is because I knew and admired the former Don of Bridges House, Marry Williams. She created a true atmosphere of trust, caring and harmony among all of the residents of Bridges House. She would always be an active supporter and willing participant in all of our house events. She knew everyone's name and was always eager to participate in house events with us. Her door was always open and she would always speak to us as equals and treat us with respect. I can't give enough praise to Marry for her three years of work as Don. She truly went above the job of Donship.

Professor Workman, on the other hand, has contributed to an atmosphere of distrust and insecurity in the house. I have watched him closely over the past two years as he has reduced the

power of student opinion to nothing. At one time our house constitution was a document that gave residents the ability to have a say in the running of the house. Even though the Don is the final authority, it gave us the power to voice our opinion without fear of reprisals. Now the constitution is worthless to us. Professor Workman uses it against us when it serves his purpose and claims that he is not bound by it when we try to use it as it was meant to be used. There is no arguing with him because if you take a stand against his actions or opinions you become an "annoyance." He then takes every action within his power to discourage you from further annoying him.

Professor Workman also described being a Don as being more like a "task." Taking out the garbage is a task. Changing the kitty litter is a task. Scooping dog crap is a task. That is the kind of attitude that Professor Workman has toward being a Don. He does what he has to do and that's it. He says that he prides himself on being close to his students. He doesn't even know the names of most of the students in the house. Not only does he not make an effort to get to know us, he also does not support us during our major events. Each year, Bridges House residents go out into the community to collect food for the Fredericton Food Bank and then we jump into the Saint John river in our annual Polar Dip. No one is forced to participate in these events but the Don should at the very least come out to give his or her support for our efforts. Professor Workman has never attended a Polar Dip or helped us in our Food Drive during his two years in the house. Baking bread for everyone in the house

is indeed a nice gesture, but that alone does not make him close to the residents of Bridges House.

The article also described Workman as being very approachable. The fact is that most people don't even want to talk to him if they have a problem because he is very condescending. He speaks to us as if we are three year old children. When I first met him I needed to get the key to the Don's storage room to get some T-shirts and mugs for Frosh Week. As he handed me the key he said "Be sure not to lose this" in a tone of voice one would use when telling a three year old child not to drop cookie crumbs on the floor. Being in my mid twenties, this kind of treatment was not only degrading but was insulting and disrespectful. He always tells us how we should always be respectful of others feelings. I wish he would practice what he preaches, because he continuously treats the residents of Bridges House as inferiors.

I wrote this article to give a glimpse of how things are really like at Bridges House in the hope that future residents will not have to live with Professor Workman as their Don. Unfortunately, as I am all too familiar with the politics of the Residence "Community," I will either be kicked out of residence next week for speaking my mind or will be sent to counselling to try and discover what underlying problems I have that would drive me to speak out against this kind of treatment. Professor Workman will no doubt be commended for quelling a potentially dangerous individual from starting a rebellion against the university administration.

Tom Wynn

UNB needs more concern for underpaid cleaning staff

To the Editor:

I am writing in response to two articles in *The Brunswickan*, the first on January 17, 1997 ["New cleaning company on track," page 1] and January 31, 1997 ["Worker has a different view of cleaning company," page 6].

Now first of all, the cleaning company that took the contract didn't care very much about their staff or they would have paid seven or eight dollars an hour. The campus police get over seven dollars an hour, and I don't think they work as hard as the cleaners do. There isn't a UNB worker on campus who gets less than 11 dollars an hour. I personally would like to see Mr. Burns or anyone in the office take off their big suits and ties, and work for \$6.00 an hour, then try to pay their mortgage, car, lights, etc. Now you tell me if you can get along on \$6.00 an hour, before paying union dues, income tax, and UIC. ABC cleaners have to pay that, and I don't think that it is very fair for UNB to let a contract come in and pay their staff such low wages. UNB janitors and everybody else up there get top wages.

I don't understand why the UNB staff don't take a look at what is going on. Because if they contract one job for six dollars an hour, look out for the rest of your jobs on campus. All I can say that UNB let a lot of good janitors down. And I don't think UNB will contract everything out.

I have worked on campus for a long time, and I thought UNB was a pretty good employer to work for, but I guess they proved me wrong.

Name withheld by request.

VP Candidate grad class prez

To the Editor:

It has come to our attention that in the upcoming election Jeff Clark will be running for an executive position on the 1997-98 Student's Council. This seems strange considering that he is the current Grad Class president. If Mr. Clark is in the position of knowing that he will not be graduating this Spring, perhaps he should step down and leave the position to a true '97 graduate. Considering that it is his second time as Grad Class president, maybe in the future the Student Union should take measures to make sure that the candidate will in fact be graduating.

Geoff Black, Kerry Thompson
Grad Class '97

Congrats to SPARC for winning conference

To the Editor:

As Chair of the UNB Ambassador Program, I would like to congratulate the SPARC; Student Pride and Alumni Relations Committee for receiving the bid to host CSAAN '98.

CSAAN, which stand for the Canadian Student Alumni Association Network, is a nation-wide conference which is held at a different school every year. Its purpose is to create new and interesting ways for Student Alumni Associations to bridge the gap

between alumni and students. In January, SPARC sent ten delegates to attend CSAAN '97, which was held at St. Francis Xavier University in Antigonish, NS. Without a doubt, UNB's spirit and confidence are the leading reasons why UNB was voted to host the conference next year.

This is going to be a HUGE event for UNB next January. SPARC is going to need a lot of volunteers to organize and implement such a conference. But with UNB's dedication and hard work, I have no doubts that we can make this

the best CSAAN conference ever!

Executive members will be hired next week. If anyone is interested in working on CSAAN '98 and would like to play a leading role, please call the SPARC office at 444-3071 or e-mail at sparc@unb.ca.

Once again, congratulations to all of SPARC's members for a job well done and let's make CSAAN '98 the best conference ever!

Nicole Lebrun Chair,
UNB Ambassador Program

Mudwump

Joseph W.J. FitzPatrick₃

Let's hope that there is an outbreak of good health next year, because the UNB Student Union is counting on it, desperately.

Nominations for the UNB Student Union general elections are over, and there are only 17 members available for a 31 member Council. Whatever any person might try to tell you, the Companies Act clearly defines quorum as at least 50%+1, and no less than 3, members of a Board of Directors which is under 50 members. Not of the seated members, but of the available seats. Otherwise, there would be no point in quorum. According to the logic of this, four people could offer for Council and spend \$1,000,000 of student money anyway they pleased.

I think it's high time that the Union re-evaluate the entire election process. It's not the first time that things have been so dire, either. It is a perennial problem. The Union should take the initiative and launch a study.

There is at least some chance that one of the candidates will lose a yes/no ballot (unlikely, but possible) and there is a good change that at least one will leave over the summer. Let's just hope that not one person gets sick. Given that this past week, only 22 of 31 elected members of the Council showed up, it looks pretty grim for next year.

And then what? Council is empowered to meet at one-third quorum between May and September, and the Executive would be able to make decisions until Council could meet, but the entire question of democracy and natural justice will go out the window.

There are few things which have been happening over and over, at every election. Once again, there is no candidate for Education or Nursing. Why? Might this have something to do with the fact that the third and fourth year students are on work terms during elections? Or, that if elected, they would miss at least a third of the Council meetings because of this work term?

Democracy will work—until somebody gets sick

Other things are relatively new, such as having only one engineering candidate. Last year, we had 11. What happened? Does anybody care?

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Maybe it's time that the Union look at empowering the Faculty Clubs to elect members to the Council. What if the Union had the executives of each Faculty Club sit on Council? That would mean a direct accountability, instead of the two or three hands. And the elections could be cheaper by having smaller, punctuated, Faculty-by-Faculty elections.

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And why are there so few candidates this year? One of the reasons may have something to do with the "policy" of requiring candidates for faculty representatives to acquire the signatures of 25 people. A look at the Student Union's Bylaws, however, points out that faculty representatives require only 10 signatures. When confronted with this evidence by Arts candidate Mark

Harvey, who has taken photos for *The Brunswickan*, the officials in the Student Union office said that the precedent has been for the past several years. Harvey eventually found the additional 15 signatures, but it raises an important question in my mind: don't the Bylaws of the Union explicitly state that the Union is not bound by precedent, and can a Bylaw of the Union be overridden by a policy passed down by word of mouth from year to year?

One person I was talking about this said, "they just didn't want to make another form." That may be a bit too harsh, but there is certainly something wrong when an unwritten policy may prevent people from offering themselves as candidates for Council.

The real issue is not really whether there are 10 or 25 signatures, but why they are needed at all. Ostensibly, candidate forms reduce the number of people who would run for the "wrong" reasons. But clearly 25 names can't prevent that. Why not a \$5 deposit? Do 25 names imply that you are "outgoing" or merely willing to go out and find people you don't know sign your form.

Somebody please take some notes: signatures are pointless, low voter (and candidate) turnout should indicate something else is going on (and you should want to find out what), and having a by-election which is larger than your General Elections make the Union look pretty silly.

If the Union found a way to ensure representation from each Faculty, what could possibly be the down side? Too many nurses and teachers on Council?

And if the rules for candidacy were relaxed, what would be the worst outcome, 10 candidates for each seat?

Is the cure so much worse than the disease?



the brunswickan
Canada's Oldest Official Student Publication
Established 1867

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Viewpoint Banner
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This issue is dedicated to:
Lovers everywhere. Except in the library. I mean, gross.

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 *Brunswickan Online* is an ongoing e-zine version of *The Brunswickan*, located on the World Wide Web at <http://www.unb.ca/web/bruns>.

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