

EDITORIAL

"Is this normal?"

Agnes McPhail, the first woman Member of Parliament, asks this question of the House of Commons in the heritage commercial regarding the beatings which used to be routine in the Canadian prison system. She is credited as the one responsible for the overhaul of Canada's prisons, changing the system to make the treatment of prisoners more humane. What do you suppose her reaction would be to the events which occur in the Canadian penal institutions of today?

In the inquiry which looked into the events surrounding the sexual abuse of inmates at the New Brunswick Training School, Justice Miller, as part of his mandate, was asked:

...to determine whether there are reasonable grounds to believe any department of the Government of New Brunswick or any of its officers or employees failed to take appropriate action to respond to allegations or circumstances which led or ought to have led to a concern that instances of sexual abuse might occur or have occurred.

In answer, his one hundred fifty four page report (minus appendices) all but used the word "cover-up" in his housecleaning criticism of the events which occurred at the Training School. He did single out at least one member of the Fredericton Police Department, Inspector Lillian Ripley (at the time, Corporal Lillian Ulsh), saying that if she had performed her duty with a "minimum standard of performance," the events possibly wouldn't have gone on so long, and fewer victims may have resulted. All of the officials who still worked for the Solicitor General's Office and were implicated in this cover-up were fired Tuesday with the release of the report, if they hadn't previously retired from government.

The video taken at Kingston's Prison for Women speaks volumes all by itself. Male guards, dressed in the best finery that the local S&M prison guard store has to offer, entered the cells, chained and shackled women inmates, held them down, and tore or cut their clothes off if they refused to remove them. The two reports written about the incident downplay the role played by the male emergency response team, saying that they acted appropriately. However, one segment of the video, which contained two male guards ripping and cutting a woman inmate's t-shirt and bra off while a female guard cut off the woman's pants, showed the male guards exceeding their authority. The male emergency response team was not authorised to strip female inmates. That they did so gives the impression of an exercise in muscle-flexing on the part of the prison administration in the most humiliating and degrading manner possible. Compounding their deplorable behavior, the administration then tried to cover up the actions in a white-washed report. This kind of search was to be carried out by female corrections staff only except in the case of an emergency. However, the incident would be hard to classify as an emergency which warranted the ERT, as the inmates were securely locked in their cells. But when CBC's *Fifth Estate* aired the tape and asked the warden if she would change what she said in her report about the conduct of the male guards, she replied that she thought they reacted appropriately given the circumstances.

I can't help but wonder what kind of answer could we give Agnes McPhail if she asked the same question today? Could we look her in the eye and say that her reforms worked? Maybe if we were the ones who testified before Justice Miller or wrote the report on the Prison for Women we could?



I'm madder than a Maritime fisherman with no cod in his net now that the Bank of Canada in its wise ways has decided to replace my two dollar bill with a two dollar coin.

No, really, thank you Bank of Canada for letting John Crow go his own way, but really I want to thank you people for us Canadian's new 'Two-na'.

What the Hell is a Two-na? Well, after some less-than-legal ways, *Mugwump Journal* has uncovered a ploy by Brian Tobin and associates in the Chretien government to deliberately fool those less than street savvy Maritime fisherman into thinking they're really meeting their fish quotas if they have a pocketful of two-nas. No longer will B'y and Buddy have to get a boat and scoot out to the Grand Banks. They'll just buy two pieces of 5 cent bubble gum for 11 cents (Welcome to Canada folks) and pay with it with a five. In the new world order of things you'll get a two catch of two-na and 89 cents to boot. Not bad for less than 20 seconds worth of fishing. However when ever the government encourages any type of fishing, it's usually their own.

Speaking of Government fishing. Look for your friendly gas stations to raise their gas prices. Of course, with all the money university students are supposedly destined to haul in over the summer flipping burgers or something. Yeah, I know our big McJobs really rake in the bucks but lucky for us we live in *Frankyland* and we can shed our burger flippers for a telemarketing telephones. Thanks Paul Martin for your extra incentive to take Taxis more often 'cause it's the right thing to do.

Speaking of taxis. According to one concerned cab driver that I had the pleasure of meeting, the well educated Brad Woodside and the Fredericton city council have made it mandatory that all city cabs be no later than a 1990 model. It doesn't take someone with a high school diploma to know this will make cab fares more expensive in the next little while. Newer vehicles + operating costs = more expenses = higher cab fares. Gimme a break. If an 88 Caprice Classic is gonna get me from point A to B I don't care. If the cab is falling apart and if I don't think I'm gonna make it in alive it just makes for a more interesting ride.

Speaking of Breaks. March Break is here. I want to clarify my position on March/Spring Break. If you don't live below the 30 degrees latitude and you're vacationing there or below, I utterly and without hesitation ... hate you. I'm gonna spend my week in the great little hovel of Coldstream. It's cold, not really current and I'm related to everyone in some way, whether or not I believe it. Ugh! No seriously I love Coldstream and I hope everyone did well on their mid-terms and more importantly has fun doing whatever it is that you do during your break. I think I'll be suffering from the 'Why-did-I-pick-All-the-Above-on-all-my-multiple-choice-questions-on-my-mid-term-blues.

Blood n' Thunder

RESIDENCE PROCTORS RATED LIKE HAMBURGERS

I am writing not to slander anyone personally but to object to the manner and systems related with the choosing of proctors and ARP's for the residence for each new fiscal year.

There are many problems with the way that the residence and administration obtains their candidates. The first of these problems being the assessments that are written about applicants by their peers. As a result these assessments are not based totally on an individual's abilities, but on how long the applicant's lips touch the assessor's rear end. Most times the evaluations by the seven chosen individuals (Proctors, ARP's, and house committee members) are biased. When you live with the people for a complete year and get involved there is bound to be some conflict or dissatisfaction with your performance. Therefore unless you are particularly close to this individual you will be assessed in a negative fashion and close friends will have the opportunity to thrive.

Another reason to advocate negative inflictions toward this process is the impeding factor relating to the 'right' choice. A person in the house for 3 or more years, has an excellent grade point average, has been on house committee and never been in trouble with the residential system has less of a chance to become proctor than an individual who no one knows.

Every year individuals are chosen to be proctors from off campus and do an excellent job. These people have never been subjected to the pettiness of certain individuals in residence and thus get interviews simply based on their resumes and references. They also have the advantage of references that they feel know them well. Since these people can make such good proctors (and from my experience, better than those who went through the assessments) then why should those applicants who have experienced residential life be at a disadvantage? When applying for a job, the person responsible for hiring adheres to a process by which they check out references (people the applicants feel are familiar with his/her personality and abilities and are mature enough to be objective and fair in their descriptions) and hires based on these results.

So why do we get evaluated upon a rating system from 1 to 5 (like hamburgers in a restaurant) by peers that are most times simply acquaintances who may base their decisions on whether or not they personally like the applicant rather than whether or not the applicant is actually qualified. This, to me, does not seem fair or conventional.

—Yours truly, a fully garnished hamburger who did not get a chance!!

RATING SYSTEM OPEN TO ABUSE AND ERROR

Over the course of the past few months, this publication has provided a forum for a number of problems plaguing the UNB residence community. Unfortunately, these problems have been, in general, brushed off by the administration.

I now feel the need to address yet another complaint—that being the selection process used in hiring proctors. I will not whine on about how myself and others deserved more consideration, that would serve no purpose. I intend, rather, to highlight the drawbacks of the current system in the hopes that our venerable Dean Skidmore will act to correct them. (Somehow, I don't expect this will occur.)

For those of you unfamiliar with the selection process, I will outline it here. To begin, all interested parties are asked to submit an application form, resume, and transcript of marks. Based on this information, potential candidates are selected and assessment forms distributed to various people within the applicant's current residence (such as proctors, ARP's, and house executive). Based on these assessments, interviews are granted and proctor positions are eventually offered.

It is with the assessment forms that problems arise. They are in the form of graphic ratings scales (those oh-so familiar checklists you have undoubtedly completed at your favourite local eatery). This type of ratings system is open to both abuse and error. Following is a list of some of the problems associated with this type of evaluation:

1) Traits, such as commitment and motivation, are evaluated. Can these be rated objectively by someone, at best, casually acquainted with the applicant?

2) All candidates have individual evaluators. As a result, those faced with harsh evaluators will be disadvantaged while those fortunate enough to have more lenient judges will be unduly.

3) Through human nature, recent events play a more important role than the events of the entire year or previous years.

4) Evaluators can be very political. Emotion can and does play a role in the evaluation process.

5) Unfamiliarity with the applicant. Of my seven evaluators, I would consider myself to know no more than three or four well enough to be able to judge them objectively.

Basically, all graphic rating scales are flawed, but the process used by residence administration simply compounds the problem.

Proctors must be prepared to deal with a vast array of problems, many very serious. It is extremely important to have these positions filled by the most qualified applicants. The system, as it stands, does not guarantee that they are.

—Aaron Fowler

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opinion

The opinions presented in this article do not necessarily represent those of The Brunswickan or its staff.

What is CASA?

The Canadian Alliance of Student Associations (CASA), is a new lobby organization representing fifteen University Student Associations from across the country. The intent of CASA is to offer the federal government alternatives and ideas that will make Post-Secondary Education (PSE) more responsive to the changing needs of Canadians. We are committed to ensuring that students have input into changes in PSE as it is our philosophy that students can and should be full participants in defining the future of post-secondary education in this country.

We, as an organization, do not support the "Green Paper" and all of our members who appeared before the parliamentary committee voiced this opposition intelligently and offered creative alternatives. It is this very opposition that brought many of us together in the beginning and it has been this tie which bound us together and motivated our members to create CASA. This May we will formally adopt the Articles of Incorporation and draft policies that, upon approval from our member's councils, will shape the responses and proposals we put forward to government.

We support changes to the current Canada Student Loan program (CSLP) that will make it more responsive to the needs of students in terms of access to funds and reasonable repayment schemes. We do not support changes to the CSLP, such as those found in the "Green Paper", that will allow the government to download its debt onto future generations of students. While we do NOT believe in higher tuition fees, we do believe that students, both past and present, should play some role in funding PSE. The concept of a National Graduate Surtax is one option that should be considered as a means of funding education through a consistent tax base. This tax would be levied only on those who have a degree(s) and who earn an income above the national average income for non-university graduates. This is a tax on the financial benefit received from an education and does not pose additional barriers to entering university.

CASA supports the notion of a National Conference on Post-Secondary Education and is interested in playing the role of organizer. We feel it is imperative that the provinces, the federal government, university administrations, faculty associations and students all commit to working together to make PSE the backbone of our economy as we enter the age of the knowledge based economy.

Our philosophy with regards to membership is "easy in, easy out". The Canadian Alliance of Student Associations is not a referendum based organization for this reason. We do not believe in dictating how each individual Association should conduct its business. "If it satisfies the rules that govern the association in question then it satisfies ours." For some associations, such as Dalhousie and Queen's, this means that a referendum must be held, for others it only requires a vote of their council. In our opinion we are showing the due respect for each of our member's democratic process by not mandating specific procedures.

No policy is adopted or changed nor can the constitution be amended in any way without the expressed endorsement of the majority of the members councils. These endorsements are done in accordance with the procedures used by each council. This forces our organization to be directly accountable to the councils and students that give us the power to speak on their behalf. In addition, this gives every student a say in what issues we champion on behalf of our members since these issues are decided at the members councils NOT at an annual conference. We regard this as truly democratic and an essential component of our organization.

In conclusion, CASA's mandate is to ensure that the voice and ideas of students are an integral part of the process of defining the future of PSE so that this future is better for all students across Canada and, in turn, better for all Canadians.

by Paul Estabrooks, President UNB Student Union and Interim National Director, CASA