

EDITORIAL

COPING WITH THE FALL-GUY

Being the fall-guy is invariably a thankless job unless you are Jesus Christ who got his reward in heaven. He also got some pleasure in seeing us benefit from his sacrifice which is cold comfort for the fall-guy who can't be guaranteed resurrection by their superiors. While Oliver North has come disturbingly close to achieving this kind of status, his human weakness seems to have taken over and now he is squealing on god-Reagan in a way that Christ would never imagine doing to his boss. When the fall-guy squeals he exposes the deceit that his or her role is intended to carry out. The task entails the art of convincing the public that only one person (the fall-guy) is responsible for the negative acts of a larger group of people. The fall guy contracts to "take the rap" so that the others may appear blameless if and when everything is exposed. The lucky fall-guy never has to deal with the living-out of this responsibility, but sometimes things blow up and the job has to be done. A responsible public should have a vested interest in discovering the true culprits behind the misdeed despite what the fall-guy or the bosses have to say. Sometimes in student politics we are given a chance to see some of this dramatic interplay of poli-tricks at work.

Whether Ernest Dunphy deserves all the flak that has been subjected to over the past few weeks in the Brunswickan and from other senior SRC councillors or not is open to some debate. But I contend that he shouldn't be treated as the fall-guy. Councillors have openly cited Dunphy's lack of diplomacy and his misdirected enthusiasm for some of the unfortunate blunders attributed to the SRC especially with regard to the GSA issue without openly admitting culpability as a council. However, there is little doubt that Ernest has operated largely within his rights as an ardent defender of the interests of the student union. He has had dialogue with several clubs and societies and seems to have done a good job communicating with them. While the student union can manage to apply the fall-guy strategy with several of the issues, involving Dunphy, the last one of the honoraria must fall squarely on their collective shoulders. The decision to restrict the granting of honoraria to paid up members of the Student Honoraria Union only, may, on the surface, seem like a prudent and fair decision, however, when we examine the implications of the action, we can only conclude that it would appear to violate the spirit of the honoraria granted to students. Council's mandate to the Honoraria Committee is commendable in that it articulates clearly what the spirit of the honoraria should be. The opening brief is worth quoting:

"In considering the honorarium allocated for various positions the committee shall consider honorarium as essentially a token for a job well done. Honorarium shall not be considered as payment for services rendered for in that way it loses its meaning and purpose."

The emphasis on the task at hand would suggest to me that council regards the honorarium as a gift and the act of giving as one expressing gratitude and appreciation for a job well done. By stipulating that such gratitude may not be shown to people who are not "members of the student union", the council is stating implicitly that it would gladly accept the involvement and voluntary participation of non-student union members in tasks that they readily acknowledge to be consuming "a great deal of time and energy". But Council will not grant to such people a gift as a token of their appreciation. This position reflects badly on the union. It would be more honorable for the Union to deny such individuals access to any of these time consuming posts, rather than to subject them to this double standard. I understand that such a policy is not far from the minds of some council members, but that is not the discussion at hand. If, indeed, this new motion, (passed and ratified by council), is the first step in an attempt to restrict involvement in areas like the Brunswickan and CHSR to student union members only, then it may be carrying out the proverbial shortsighted action of "cutting one's nose to spite one's face".

My personal response to this issue has altered somewhat. Last week I thought seriously about resigning, then I considered the issue more closely and concluded that council was right, it is true that "the most important gain that these students [who do voluntary work] should expect is the satisfaction and good name they get from doing a good job for their peers". Thus, I must make it clear that financial remuneration is not on my agenda in taking on the post of editor-in-chief. I will do the job and seek to do a good one at that, however I can only question the wisdom of the Student Union in their decision to pass a motion of this nature. Quite simply put "IT LOOK BAD!" (patois grammar).

And the fall-guy Ernie? He has been done wrong. He did lobby for the motion but he could not pass it. That was council's headache and they deserve the pressure for the action, not just Ernie. Ironically, the motion was passed at a time when workers should be thanking the council for its generosity in the granting of honoraria this year. This may be the last time some workers will be so honored but hopefully they will keep working for students. The Brunswickan Editorial Board wishes to thank the Council for its kindness in this regard and it hopes that the students feel they have been justly represented in that action.

Next week is the spoof issue so this is the last semblance of good-sense we will hear from the Brunswickan this academic year. We wish all students success in their exams and a very productive summer vacation. We look forward to the zeal and interest that should come with the Fall.

Kwame Dawes
Editor-in-Chief

The Brunswickan

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