

MUGWUMP

by Aime Phillips

Well, I'll be darned. Karaoke night was canceled at the Pub in the Sub last Wednesday night. I finally went down to check it out, and although there was no Karaoke going on, there were plenty of people. Hmhmhm.

It could've been part of the Hip "apres soiree" crowd, or maybe not. Maybe people were attracted to the melodious thumping of the stereo system and lack of screeching singers.

Speaking of the Tragically Hip, on behalf of the Photo Department I would like to thank those Aitken Center staff and Security persons responsible for the wonderful time that was had by all. The photographer sent to cover the event was denied access to the pit (the area between the stage and barricade) despite the fact he was displaying his press pass and had his camera with him... I suppose Security mistook it for one of those James Bond gizmos that squirts ink. Wouldn't want a Guns 'n Roses-like riot, now would we? It's funny how the Aitken Center photographer was clicking away, though. Fortunately, Alastair the Entertainment Editor was able to straighten things out after talking with a harried Gordon Label, Director of the Aitken Center.

Allan and I were cordially invited to the launching of the Alumni News magazine the other week. The format has been changed from that of a newsletter to a nice glossy magazine with about six ads in it. I mention this because by now they have been delivered to homes everywhere UNB Alumni reside. Anyway, Allan and I can't believe wine was being served with no food. After all this fussing about student events not having alcohol available without food, what happens? The administration gets together for a "wine and hold the cheese, please." Tsk - tsk.

Also included in the Alumni News is a ballot so that the Alumni can help decide on a new name for all the varsity teams at UNB. If you missed the "Loonie Bins" strategically located throughout the city for our voting purposes, you may be out of luck. The suggested names are Red Falcons, Red Lions, Varsity Reds and this one was added at the last minute: Red Mariners. The deal was you dropped a loonie into the bin that had your preferred choice. They didn't have one that suggested leaving the names as they are. There was a referendum during one of the Student Union General Elections one year asking whether or not students wanted to support a name change like that, and if I remember correctly it was voted down by a small margin. Oh well, so much for student input.

Half of the Student Union Executive is gone until the middle of the month. They are at a conference in Edmonton, and then they're off to Ottawa for CFS stuff. They were looking for more student participation, so if you didn't hear about it it's your own fault. Besides, who would want to miss a few issues of the Bruns just to go gallivanting around Edmonton and Ottawa for the good of students everywhere?

What a dilemma. I've been getting some feedback about Mugwump. Half the time people say I'm being too damn personal- what a waste of space. The other half ask me to add some personal messages for them... Hello? Why doesn't everyone get together first before you come bother me while I'm trying to escape the never ending pressures of the Managing Editor's position. And if I was able to please everybody at once I sure as hell wouldn't be slaving over this every week. I'd be orgaizing World Peace.

After that positive note, please feel free to come on down to The Brunswickan's office (Room 35 SUB) to help out or chat about the paper. We're always around and we're always looking for eager volunteers to help us in our search for journalistic excellence.

OPINION

The opinions found in this column are not necessarily the views of the Brunswickan

As blunt as an ice-pick in the forehead

by Melynda Jarratt

Last week's article by Valerie Kilfoil "Excuse me your honour", was one of the most courageous op-ed pieces I have read in the Brunswickan in a very long time. She deserves praise for having the guts to voice her opinion on the subject of woman assault - no matter how blunt that opinion may be. I too, have a personal interest in the issue, having been a witness and victim of male-directed violence. I can speak from personal experience that one has to be "as blunt as an ice-pick in the forehead" if one is to be taken seriously at all.

So, in reading Ms. Kilfoil's article last week, I was reminded of something that happened last year and which I shall relate to you in the following paragraphs. It is a story that some people may not like to hear, for it involves the ivory towers of the University of New Brunswick and St. Thomas University, two professors found guilty of wife assault, and how they have attempted to keep these stories swept under the rug.

Last March 4, I sat in a cushioned chair of the McAllistar Room at the UNB Law School and listened as the (soon to be ex) wife of a St. Thomas University professor recollected her memories of nearly 10 years of physical and emotional abuse to the Canadian Panel on Violence Against Women. It was a sad yet victorious occasion: sad because it took nearly a decade for this woman to extricate herself from the vicious cycle of abuse perpetuated against her by her husband; but it was also victorious, because now, somebody, *even the government*, believed and was listening to what she had to say.

It was ironic as well, because exactly one year previous, on March 4, 1991, I and another close friend sat and held her hand as Judge Judy Glendenning found the professor guilty to a reduced charge of assault. For the act of swinging a cast iron fire-poker at his wife's head, he received a \$350 fine, and among other things, was ordered to take mandatory counselling on family violence.

When it was reported in the media, the community was aghast! A professor beating his wife: could it be true? People wrote Letters to the Editor of the Brunswickan, others made inquiries to STU's President Daniel O'Brien as to the professor's continued employment, but to no avail. There he is, two years later and he's still teaching in the Department of Psychology. Others, who couldn't bring themselves to talk about such taboo subjects as wife abuse, put their fingers in their ears and pretended it didn't happen.

But those of us who had seen the bruises, who knew the situation and believed his wife said, "Yes it is true!", and we will continue to say so about him and others until something is done! and, let's not be mistaken, it certainly was not the first time this professor had beaten his wife. As her presentation to the Panel stated, women are beaten on average 38 to 42 times (depending on who you read) before requesting outside assistance, most often from police.

"It would be a conservative estimate to say in my own case that I was physically assaulted by my husband at least once each month, over the eight years of our relationship, this translated into a *minimum* of 96 beatings. I am certain that the figure easily exceeded 100 times as there were a number of months in which I was often assaulted several times within the space of a week. The last time my husband assaulted me involved a threat on my life, after which he repeatedly swung a cast iron fireplace poker so close to my head I could feel the wind of it on my face on each pass.

And there is more. "Despite knowledge and the presence of experts, local universities offer no programs or formal means of support to victims, survivors or their aggressors. Instead, UNB and STU have adopted a hands-off policy and continue instead to harbour and employ accused and convicted wife abusers. Interestingly, my husband was not *found* guilty of wife assault, he entered a plea of guilty and was told by the presiding judge that as a psychologist, he was in a better position than anyone present in the court to understand the effect on his victim."

In May the Fredericton Anti-Poverty organizations newspaper, *The Anti-Poverty News* began a three part series based on the presentation which was made to the Canadian Panel on March 4. Once it becomes part of the public record, the press can report it. Just look at the case of Karl Toft, whose misdeeds of 20 years ago are fodder for the press nearly every day in 1992.

In a similar vein, last semester, when a UNB professor was found guilty of wife assault, he sued the Brunswickan after it reported the case. Granted, the Brunswickan did make two errors in reporting the article to which it has paid dearly, even to the point of printing an apology to the professor in its first issue of the year. Yet, it still doesn't change the fact that last March, the man was found guilty of assaulting his wife and that he continues to teach in the Faculty of Mechanical Engineering. To add to the irony, not long after his date with the judge, he received an award which although it had probably been planned long in advance of the assault charge, should have been delayed, if not cancelled altogether in recognition of the seriousness of the charge to which he was found guilty.

Which brings me to today. A few weeks back, I wrote a letter to the Editor of the Brunswickan expressing my disgust that the Bruns had apologized to a man found guilty of wife abuse, and I asked for a response from the university community to my suggestion of Zero Tolerance on wife abuse which was tabled by the Canadian Panel on Violence Against Women in its interim report released in September. In the three weeks which have passed since I wrote that letter, I have not heard one word from anyone, except one phone call from an international student friend of mine, who advised me to avoid controversial issues. Obviously, I haven't taken his advice.

And except for Valerie Kilfoil's dynamite article "Excuse me your honour", there hasn't been a single word from anyone. At the same time, the University of New Brunswick announced the establishment of a centre for research on family violence. Oh, the irony!

So I ask again, where are the voices of rage? Does anybody have anything to say? (For your information, Karen-Jean Braun's presentation to the Canadian Panel on Violence Against Women is available under the Freedom of Information Act and excerpts of it have also appeared in a three-part series in the Fredericton Anti-Poverty Organization's *Anti-Poverty News*. Phone 458-9102 for your copies now!)