

Brunswickan



Established in 1867, *The Brunswickan* is published Tuesdays and Fridays by and for the students of the University of New Brunswick at Fredericton, N.B. Opinions expressed are not necessarily those of the Students' Representative Council. Subscriptions are available to non-students at \$3.50 a year. Single copies 10 cents. Authorized as second class matter, Post Office Department, Ottawa.

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The Moving Finger

could thou and I with Fate conspire
 To grasp this sorry Scheme of Things entire,
 Would not we shatter it to bits—and then
 Re-mould it nearer to the Heart's Desire?

With today's issue *The Brunswickan* closes up shop for another year.

For the staff members, the end comes none too soon. Final examinations are only a month away, and even student journalists must devote some time to their books.

Once again this year the paper experienced a shortage of willing and able workers. As a result, a very few had to do the work of many.

A lack of staff has been chronic ever since *The Brunswickan* began to publish twice a week three years ago. The increased frequency of publication not only created a need for more hands, but it also meant that staff members had to acquire an unprecedented degree of skill, because far less time was available for correcting copy before it had to go to the printers.

Perhaps next year will see an improvement. Perhaps more people will make the great effort required to master the vital skills of news writing and editing.

If more people do not contribute to the paper, *The Brunswickan* may well have to revert to its former status of a weekly.

If the students want such a cutback, they need do only one thing: *continue their present apathy*. But if they don't, all they have to do is to be willing to work a little.

We can only hope that the future will see more shoulders behind the wheel.

In any case, the retiring staff members can enjoy a well-deserved sigh of relief. Despite many handicaps, they have done remarkably well, and the consistent improvement in the paper's quality is eloquent tribute to their efforts.

To our readers, we can only say:

The Moving Finger writes; and, having writ,
 Moves on: nor all thy Piety nor Wit
 Shall lure it back to cancel half a Line
 Nor all thy Tears wash out a Word of it.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Normal or Abnormal?

Panelists Fight Back

Sir: Two articles in *The Brunswickan* of March 17, by Messrs. Lovell Clark and Steve Fay, may be used as masterpieces of the art of overstatement and prejudicial exaggeration through their attack on the reported conclusions of a panel discussion held by the SAP Society. These conclusions, published as a summary of one and one-half hours of discussion, have been called "foolish" as well as "illiberal, unintelligent and lacking in moral principle", by these experts. Let us look at their analysis in more detail.

Mr. Fay attacks the statement of the panel that homosexuals are abnormal and harmful in society by appealing to the statistics on homosexuality in the Kinsey reports. His argument is that homosexuals form a large portion of the North American population and therefore cannot be classified as abnormal since they are commonly found in each community. In the first place he estimates that one-fourth of those individuals who having had a single homosexual experience are habitual homosexuals. This estimate is undoubtedly high, even if we could accept the accuracy of Kinsey's data (which has been severely criticized by competent statisticians) and if in fact they could be applied to "North Americans" instead of habitants of the U.S.A.

Furthermore, Mr. Fay has not bothered to define what he means by abnormality, and as a result uses it in the sense of statistical variation at certain times but in the sense of moral waywardness at others. The panel used neither of these definitions. Thus, it is not clear whether Mr. Fay is himself confused or whether he is simply attempting to confuse the reader. Mr. Fay is convinced that the panel's "accusations of harm and abnormality" imply interference with individual rights. Of course, this would then also apply to individuals diagnosed as paranoid cases and psychopathic personalities, not to mention more severe disorders such as schizophrenia and manic-depressive psychosis.

In sum, it appears that Mr. Fay is guilty of some sort of double distortion: after excerpting material which was in fact only the summary of a panel discussion and choosing to interpret that material differently than the panel itself, he has argued against his own subjective interpretation with ill-grounded statistical statements and double definitions of terms.

Mr. Clark, on the other hand, has once again proved himself a master of critique: his use of

innuendo and the effective word is truly professional.

For example, Mr. Clark explains the position of the panel as "the complete reverse" of the position of The Wolfenden Committee. This of course is clearly a distortion of fact, since it implies that we recommended harsher penalties against homosexuality. Even a cursory scan of the article would show that this was not the case.

Mr. Clark also states that the panel "evinced a policy of cure or kill with respect to homosexuality" (a wonderfully metaphorical phrase describing the term abnormal) and "one of leniency towards prostitution" (when of course more descriptive terms would be pessimism or realism). Furthermore he justifies a farcical misinterpretation of the panel's reason for accepting prostitution by labelling it jargon. Why did he even bother?

Mr. Clark feels qualified to summarize the panel's attitudes as "illiberal" toward homosexuality and "liberal" toward prostitution even after admitting his inability to decipher the language of the social scientist. Perhaps he recognized the tenuous nature of his overgeneralizations, since later in his letter he decided that our attitudes were only *illiberal*.

Mr. Clark obviously disclaims knowledge or competence in the area of social science by implying detachment from this group in his letter. Yet despite this, he is willing to state without qualification that homosexuality cannot be eliminated or "cured" and that prostitution is "clearly eradicable". We beg to reveal his sources of such enlightening information.

Mr. Clark insists on making the overgeneralization that the opinions of the panel are the opinions of "social scientists." Not only were these the opinions, simply, of three individuals (and therefore not of social scientists in general) but also the opinions of a panel, two members of which have completed only a single course in these disciplines (they have also completed at least one history course).

Mr. Clark concludes his impassioned analysis of the panel discussion with the statement: "Heaven help society if it ever passes under the control of our local 'social scientists'." This is highly amusing, since in point of

fact the "recommendations" of the panel were essentially to *keep our present system of laws and morals intact*.

BARBARA DOUGLASS
 CHARLENE HALLETT
 LAWSON STOCKFORD

Editor's notes Correspondents Douglass, Hallett and Stockford were the three panelists who originally discussed the Wolfenden Report. In a postscript to their letter, Mr. J. C. Stockdale made the following comments:

Skulls

I saw a mountain of skulls
 Near a city in China
 And I thought
 It looks like the skulls
 Of writers left bleaching there
 Exposed by critics
 While the critics' skulls
 Lie buried
 Lest the people passing see
 That there is nothing in them,
 either.

Mr. Fay's Reply

Steve Fay, the author of *Hypocrisy is the Real Danger* (March 17), replies as follows:

To defend my "ill grounded statistical statements" I refer in greater detail to Kinsey's *Sexual Behaviour of the Human Male*, which remains the only readily available (in Dr. Bailey's office) statistical work on the subject. "Twenty-five per cent of the male population," says Kinsey, "has had more than incidental homosexual experience or reactions for at least three years between the ages of sixteen and twenty-five." Obviously this is a much larger relative percentage of the population than my previous estimate of 15 per cent permanently either homo- or bi-sexual. No matter who has been severely critical of Kinsey's data, the percentage remains high enough to include a substantial proportion of the male population.

To introduce cases of paranoia psychopathic personalities, schizophrenics and manic depressives is another case of flippant foolishness. Again I revert to Kinsey, who says "of the 40 or 50 per cent of the male population which has had homosexual experience, certainly a high proportion would not be considered psychopathic personalities on the basis of anything else in their histories." It is the high proportion and the accusation in *The Brunswickan's* original report (March 10) that the high proportion is considered "abnormal and harmful in society" which concerns me. (I have not chosen to interpret the material differently than the panel, but differently from the report in *The Brunswickan*). The men in this group are those who might serve prison sentences if once convicted of homosexuality.

In no way have the representatives of SAPS (perhaps small letters should be used next year) undermined my "masterpiece of over-statement and exaggeration." The basic original idea, that punishment of homosexual relations between consenting males over the age of twenty-one is the imposition of a hypocritical society, remains untouched in this issue-dodging rebuttal.

STEVE FAY

Puff after puff
 of smooth
 mild smoking



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