mugwump journal

BY DEBORAH GENEAU

Congratulations to John Rutter and Andrew Hempel who succeeded in setting a new time in the Guinness Book of World Records. The pair spent 82 hours and 19 minutes downhill skiing at Silverwood last weekend, beating the old Guinness record and staking their claim to fame.

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The Bruns sincerely apologizes to UNB's African students for the typographical error which appeared in last week's Brunswickan. The slight was in no way intentional.

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The editorial this week deals with a topic vital to the basic human rights of students and the violation of those rights by the Board of Deans whenever they choose to do so.

A person charged with an offense has the right to be judged and tried by his peers under Common Law. Under the University Administration, however, this is not always the case. Normally, students charged with an offense are required to appear before the SDC (Student Disciplinary Committee) - a committee composed of primarily students. This is as it should be. Unfortunately, this is not always the way it is. The Board of Governors (who are University Administrators, not students, and therefore, not peers of students) may require certain cases to appear before them and not the SDC. Why?

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The 42 percent of students who failed the University Literacy Test last term will have to rewrite the test. If students show improved performance on this test what does it mean? Does it mean the first test was not an accurate test of their literacy after all? Does it mean they have studied for the test this time? Does it mean their communication skills have actually improved since the time of the last test? Does it solve the problem? The University can attempt to educate students to read, write and think clearly but equally clear is the fact that students will continue entering the university with the literacy level of a twelve year old. The university can cure the symptoms but the cause of the problem goes untreated and unaddressed. Forcing students to take English courses is like taking an aspirin for a headache, which, in turn, is the symptom of a brain tumor. Let's get radical.

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The word radical is carelessly thrown around and usually with extremely negative connotations. People tend to have cloudy notions of what a radical person is: They are usually disruptive and extremist. In a sense, I suppose, this is true but a radical is someone who attacks the very root causes of a problem. Simple, isn't it? And nothing so very terrible.

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Some people regard the operation of CSL as adequate. The approve the fact that CSL is constantly losing money by putting bands like Rough Trade or The Spoons in the cramped quarters of the cafeteria where there is absolutely no chance of making a profit. The reasoning behind this is that the most important thing is entertainment for students. Squandering money? Oh well, they reason, there's plenty more where that came from. What happens when CSL runs out of money? At the rate they're going, that shouldn't take very long. Will they come to students again for donations?

There is no reason why CSL cannot make a profit or at least break even on all events. They should begin showing responsibility for the money entrusted to them by the students.

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editorial

The basic tennant of Common Law is that a person should be tried by a jury of his peers. This is to ensure that in any particular case justice will be done. The basis for this is that each case has different facts and people react in different ways. For this reason is has been recognized that a group of people showing the same morals and attitudes of the parties in a case are in the best position to judge what is fair.

The SDC - Student Disciplinary Committee - was set up so students would be tried by a panel of students. It is proper that the university should be run on the same basis as society as a whole. Should students have less rights than other people in the community?

The Charter of Rights guarantees everyone certain basic rights, such as the right to a fair and impartial trial. By setting up special tribunals and not allowing public hearings, the administration is in effect setting up a star chamber.

The recognition that citizens should have the right to a fair trial can be found as far back as the Bill of Rights of 1688. This right was fought for by the people and is protected by the Constitution. Any disciplinary action involving students should be heard by the SDC especially if the charges brought are under the SDC code. Students are of the opinion the SDC is the proper body to hear charges against students in whatever capacity.

There are two reasons for this. Firstly, the SDC understands the code where other bodies may not and secondly, the SDC is in a better position to judge the action of students.

What is the criteria for the Board of Deans hearing which cases they will be hearing? Under the University of New Brunswick Act the Board of Deans is responsible for disciplinary matters. They have chosen to delegate that authority and responsibilities to the SDC as is stated in the SDC code. The Board of Deans should act as an appellate bodies, or body of appeal, as set out in the SDC code.

The time has come for the administration to make a choice. Either the students will be treated fairly on campus or they will not be. It is up to the administration, starting with the Board of Deans, to either follow procedures already set down or to act on a totally ad hoc basis leaving the students in the dark as to what their rights are.