MUGWUMP

by Allan Carter

I don't think you can leaf through one issue of *the Brunswickan* and not come across an article dealing with sexual harassment, rape or assault. Assaults, in particular, have been a hot topic for the media. From surveys to defense courses to escort services, it seems also every media outlet in Canada has dealt with this topic during the last few months. And UNB is not an exception. So far, four reported assaults have occurred on, or near, the campus. (Although the police claim one has been fabricated, they appear hesitant to give out any information supporting their claim.) So, what has been done?

Almost immediately, an escort service was established right within UNB's residence community. This service has the support from many, including Pepsi and NB-Tel. In articles in the Bruns the campus security and the residence administration have urged students to use this service.

Furthermore, lighting on campus has become an issue of concern. A survey is being done to pinpoint the areas where lighting is a problem. The pressure is there for more lighting and everyone hopes it will come.

So, now we have an escort service and more lighting. Is that the solution? Will these security measures put everybody's mind at ease? Of course not, it is obvious that there is no perfect solution to this problem. We can rant and rave saying we need more education and we need to make people more aware, and all this is important, but assaults will, unfortunately, still occur. The important question to ask is: Are we putting the control of this situation in the hands of the people who are assaulted, which almost always are women.? The answer is, no, we are not.

Read this:

> "Taking this course was more empowering than all the years of therapy I have endured or the self-help books I have studied."
>
> (Wimmin's Room, Bruns, Nov. 15)

Now, what course is this women talking about? A woman, who herself, was raped at the age of fourteen. Is she talking about how to use an escort service? Or is she discussing the security she found in there being more lighting or maybe in carrying with her a rape whistle? No. She is not talking about any of these security measures. She is talking about a self-defence course that is taught for women. WEN-DO (The UNB's Wimmin's collective brought in a WEN-DO instructor this term to teach thirty women.) This woman learned that her body is "a weapon that I can depend on in a struggle."

This is a solution. It is not a complete one, nor does it guarantee that a woman won't be assaulted or raped. But neither do any of the other security measures at UNB. But what WED-DO does guarantee is that the woman has a chance to take control of her predicament. She knows what she can do. And she can defend herself if she needs to.

Some might dismiss this approach. After all, they argue, how can a woman overpower a man? Our society dictates that men are the stronger sex, the protecting sex, and also, the abusing sex. But after reading the article in the Wimmin's Room it is clear that this view is only a mere convention and it is possible for a women to take control of a situation if necessary:

> A struggle ensued and she was able to kick her attacker first in the groin and then in the face before she ran to a nearby residence building."
>
> (Bruns, Nov. 20, story by Kirsten Burgess)

"She" was able to kick "her attacker". "She" was able to get away. The "attacker" was "about 6'4" tall and 200 pounds". A capable attacker, indeed. Did "she" ever take a self defence course? Perhaps. But, even if she didn't it is obvious that resisting an attack is feasible, even for a woman.

Let's remember, however, that a self-defence course must be taught correctly. Each woman must realize her own body's limitations and be taught how to use her strengths in almost every type of defense situation. There can be no creation of false security.

Thus, lobbying for more lighting will continue, which, I think, would be nice for everybody on this dark campus. People will continue to support UNB's escort service. It is being used. Quite a bit, in fact. Apparently, they get up to five to seven calls a night. Obviously, the need is there. The rape whistles? Most women will throw them away.

But, while promotion continues for the escort service and more lighting, let us hope that those who support and sponsor these needed measures will also see the value for more training courses in WEN-DO for those women at UNB who want to take as much control of a potentially dangerous situation as they can.

Not convinced? Well, consider this. How many domestic assaults or acquaintance rapes occur which are never officially reported? Statistics tell us that there are quite a few. What security measures have I mentioned in this column that would have the slightest chance of helping a woman in such a situation? None. What self defense course have I mentioned in this column that has a good chance of helping a woman in such a situation? One.

OPINION

The opinions found in Opinion are not necessarily the views of The Brunswickan

Epithets and Slurs

by Matin Yaqzan

In the Brunswickan's Opinion column of November 15, 1991, Mr. Thomas S. Kuttner expresses amazement that jew is included in the list of racial epithets and slurs, in the following excerpt from a news feature in the Brunswickan of November 8.

> *"pakie, nigger, honkey, gook, chink, spic, jew, limie, bohunk. These are only a few slang words used to discriminate against members of the human race."*

He says: *"Something is wrong here, terribly wrong. Why is 'jew' in that list of racial epithets and slurs? Why is 'Jew' described as a discriminatory slang word? to call a black 'nigger' or a Puerto Rican 'spik' or a Pakistani 'paki' is meant to objectify and demean that individual and every member of his or her particular ethnic community. It is to assert dominance and assumed superiority, to disbuse(sic) an entire people. But do you do the same when you call me a Jew?"*

The obvious answer to his question is yes, when it is used as an epithet. The reason 'jew' has not been modified or simplified is that it already is one syllable word and different connotations of the word are well known. A person can be called a jew because of his race, religion or attributes. Mr. Kuttner correctly points out that *"in the popular mind, to reproach someone with the epithet 'jew' is to insult and cast aspersion as to character and conduct."* Since he does not want the society to coin a new term for this purpose, it is not obvious as to why he is so shocked that "jew' appears with epithets for other ethnic groups?

As for the desire on the part of human beings to dominate and feel superior to others, even if Mr. Charles Darwin's theory of evolution is ill founded, his concept of struggle for survival and superiority seems to hold true fro different varieties (races?) of human beings at present. Mr. Kuttner confirms his own need to feel superior by listing the accomplishments of other Jews. He mentions Karl Marx, the prophet of Communism, but ignores Jesus Christ. If Communism is supposed to be so terrible, how can one be proud of Karl Marx? Mr. Kuttner says:

> *"I am a Jew as have been my forebears from time immemorial, as are my children and as will be theirs from generation to generation. Ours is a proud tradition full of much accomplishments."*

Obviously he is not referring to himself and his future generations as jews by religion, rather by race, in which he seems to exult. He may not realize that there are other racial and ethnic groups, like the Chinese, Hindus, Greeks, Arabs, Iranians and others, with rich traditions of scholarship and accomplishment, some of them longer than those of Jews. Mr. Kuttner puts the blame for the misfortunes of his people on the Christians, as follows:

> *"My identity has been used by the dominant Christian culture to describe all that is grasping, extortionate and crafty. ... The Christian world must root out this deeply racist abuse of language, for this is anti-semitism at its most insidious."*

It would be difficult to describe the Canadian culture, or American culture, as 'Christian' any more than Jewish or hedonistic.

If a person is justified in feeling proud of belonging to a certain race because of the accomplishments of some of its members, then it should be equally justifiable to condemn a person for the misdeeds and undesirable attributes of its members. According to Mr. Kuttner, the word Jew is used as *"a name of opprobrium and reprobation, especially applied to one who engages in sharp business practices"*. It is highly improbable that people would resent one's sharpness, unless it meant dishonesty, deceipt and deception in a business transaction. Can Jesus Christ be accused of being anti-semitic, because he too was critical of his people in this respect?

It should be noted that not all Jews are Semites, for example Jews who are blond; and Jews are not the only Semites, because some Arabs are also Semites. Christians cannot be condemned as anti-semitic, because Christ was Semite and many of his followers were and are Semites.

Slurs and epithets are expressions of anger and frustrations. Some serve a useful purpose, if one realizes that the user himself feels inadequate and inferior , and uses it to bolster his own self image, and it becomes a substitute for physical violence. It is something like a child saying: "My daddy is stronger than your daddy". Some epithets have an element of truth in them and that is what makes them effective. Others are a result of ignorance: either lack of information or an abundance of misinformation. Such ignorance is not confined to "illiterates". There are fine examples of ignorant people among the "highly educated" at universities, including U.N.B. The experiences of the international student, "Jacksonville", whose letter appeared in the November 15 issue of the Brunswickan, are not unique.

Slurs and epithets are not confined to any particular society and culture. However, they are most hurtful when an individual does not possess the characteristics associated with his or her group, or has no control over it, as in the case of one's skin color, sex, or race, or place of birth. It is difficult to change any of these, after one is born, as against modifying one's behaviour which is in the realm of possibility.

The education imparted in schools and universities is inadequate for eliminating the use of slurs and epithets; it can even aggravate the problem of prejudice and discrimination. However, a little reflection on the part of each individual can help. One needs to ponder as to what extent one is himself or herself responsible for his or her attributes, relating to place of birth, racial strain, wealth, beauty or intelligence.

It would appear that much credit or discredit must be given to whoever or whatever is responsible for our presence on this earth in a vast and mysterious universe.