

EDITORIAL

By Karen Burgess

The Student Union seated its new councillors at Wednesday night's council meeting, handing over the reigns of power from the old to the new. Poor things, they hardly knew what they were getting into. Little did they suspect that from now on they will be expected to eat, sleep, breath and THINK Student Union Council.

The scene at Wednesday's meeting was appalling, if not for the incident which I'm about to describe, then at least for the lack of reaction that the whole thing inspired from the SU.

A member of council, duly elected in that farcical yes/no affair the SU called an election, was compelled to confess to council that he had had impure thoughts, to bare his soul to the world and explain his doubts, to ask for forgiveness from the group because he had entertained the idea of joining a different student-oriented extra-curricular activity which would have excluded him from service on council in the upcoming year.

This is the smallest-minded, narrowest, most petty and reactionary situation I have ever witnessed at council.

Let's talk for a moment about the "thought police." This is a term that was thrown around a lot this year during the Yaqzan Thing and the ensuing debate on academic freedom and freedom of speech, but never in my wildest most cynical dreams did I imagine that our own council executive could stoop to such stringent intellectual dogmatism.

After the confession had been duly extracted from our poor subject, President van Raalte (aka "Team Leader"—now you know why) insisted that the individual explain to council exactly what heinous act he had contemplated. (Gasp! Joining *The Brunswickan's* editorial board)

Excuse me your honour, but I believe the prosecution is badgering the witness.

It seems somewhat ironic that two individuals who were elected to serve on council for the term currently coming to an end actually resigned those positions—after they were seated, and, in one case, after the individual collected a salary as a summer employee of the Student Union for several months—and yet the Inquisitor...I mean the President was satisfied to merely read the letters of resignation to council. Perhaps they should have been interrogated to ensure that the purity of the election process was not compromised by their possible transgressions of faith.

The councillor with which van Raalte took issue at Wednesday's meeting asked that his considerations not be seen as an act of bad faith, and requested that he be allowed to show through his efforts that Council was a priority for him. The question of

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—CAMILLE PAGLIA
NOVEMBER, 1994

"good faith" seems to have some degree of flexibility within the SU anyhow (is it, for instance, good faith when the editor of one "publication" in his role of councillor recommends cutting the remuneration given to the staff of the University's official student newspaper, albeit in a package requesting other reforms?), but this moral lapse, real or imagined, seems ridiculous: a slap on the wrist for daring to contemplate whether one's time could be better spent serving students in another fashion.

Forgive me Team Leader, for I have sinned, I confess, I have had these doubts which have plagued me constantly for years now...

(sob!) I often wonder if the SU council isn't a huge waste of time and effort and the majority of those involved merely looking to advance their own agendas or to pad their resumes.

It's very sad actually. I was looking back on what the SU had done over the last year and thinking how worthwhile the initiatives had been for the most part. I was even contemplating writing my farewell editorial on all the warm-fuzzy nostalgic events of the last year, but to be quite frank, this display in council has ended my career as UNB SU media hound on a sour note. It is exactly this kind of narrow focus and infighting that causes people to lose sight of what a council should do. The Councillors for the most part reacted to the confession with their usual compassionate empathy (they pretended (???)) not to have noticed or comprehended, but I can only assume the incident on Wednesday night was supposed to embarrass the individual in question, or possibly to make an example of him because of he did not show a 100 per cent dedication to the team player

concept of SU politicking.

Reality check: despite the fact that next year's exec has been widely criticized already because of its "cult of personality," the last time I checked, slate politics were not allowed within the hallowed institution which is the UNB SU. Dissent is allowed and should be encouraged. I know what the reaction to all this will be: "We're all working in the best interests of the students, we need to present a united front blah, blah, blah," but students are not a united front, they are as diverse as a body of people could possibly be. A council full of sheep will be lead astray very easily.

A few weeks ago while writing about the SU's decision to hand over the administration of its emergency loans to the University, I noted my concern that the SU seemed more and more to be looking toward the bottom line to help it determine its party line. I had used the term "party line" very loosely at the time, but now it seems the concept is alive and well in all of its chilling Orwellian glory.

I guess Camille was right.

MUGWUMP BY JAMES ROWAN

Time's Arrow, Time's Cycle

In one of my classes we are discussing the nature of time: is it an arrow, moving inexorably forward, or is it circular, cycle after cycle. At least on campus, it's both.

I would like to say that there have been dramatic changes in my years here...but I'd be lying. Year after year, student leaders come and go, and the university exploits our ephemerality ruthlessly. If they can delay for more than two years, the students pushing hardest for a change will graduate and leave, solving the problem. There have been major changes occasionally: over the last four years, the relationship with the Administration has changed, as the Student Union has demonstrated more and more responsibility (or conservatism, either one). SUB Expansion is a demonstration of the way that the University and the Council can now work together. But at the same time, the Health Plan debacle is an example of the worst kind of patronizing, arrogant demeaning BS that has dogged student activism and student leadership on campus.

If the Health Plan weren't enough of a reminder that things never really change, the SU Presidents (current and next) ran into John Bosnitch, the only person in decades at UNB more controversial than Yaqzan (beating Strax by a narrow margin). What did they talk about? I don't know—but I imagine the concerns back then were the same as now (aside from all the litigation): getting respect and responsibility from the Senate, BoG and Admin, fair funding, campus safety, academic excellence, etc. These concerns never end, they just change incrementally.

The pace of change depresses me—but at least things are changing, ever so slowly. Another cycle is ending, as my graduating class moves on, but another one is beginning.

Will they, four years from now, look back and feel the same things that I am feeling now? Remember to mail me a Mugwump at the end of '98—I'd really like to find out.

To all the people I may have offended over the years, in the immortal words of a great newspaperman, "F@#!'em then, the humorless bastards."

MUGWUMP JOURNAL BY MARK MORGAN MANAGING EDITOR ELECT

First Time Around

Call me Ishmael. Oops! Wrong introduction. Over the past several years my esteemed brethren of managing editors, here at the Bruns, have bastardized the once proud, even distinguishing moniker of "Mugwump Journal" to a bland and uninspiring "Mugwump." That would be fine if you are one of those individuals whose book has more spine than they do. I'm proud to be a vertebrate and I think it is imperative to return to the great annals of *Brunswickan* tradition and resurrect an all-new, all-different Mugwump Journal.

Recently I have become afflicted with an acute case of retro-active conservatism, and felt that the past is where the future is told. For those of who do not share this sentiment than I would say you are doomed to repeat your mistakes and toil in failure in all your endeavours. Maybe this affliction has something to do with the fact that as "Canada's Oldest Official Student Publication" I have a hell of a past to work from. It should come as no surprise that retro-active conservatism does not involve any mention of Campbells or Mulroneys. No sir, not even a hint of Joe Clark. Maybe in the future we will see a guy like John Bosnitch carrying the torch for some party on Parliament Hill.

Bosnitch could talk at length with Mike Duffy about his days as charismatic unconventional UNB Student Union president or how he left a larger-than-life reputation lingering on campus, almost a decade later. Personally I don't know Bosnitch, I was still in primary school when he first took over Bruns headlines but as it stands when I heard that he was in town I became afraid.



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