

NEWS

News Editors: Cynthia Kirkby and Joe FitzPatrick Deadline: Wednesday Noon

HP evaluation

by René Allard
Brunswickan News

The Student Union is being sued over the refusal of a request for a refund of the Health Plan fee after the opt-out deadline. While this action may seem somewhat extreme, it is nevertheless indicative of the confusion, anger and frustration many students have felt because of this year's Health Plan opt-out procedure.

Barb Kirk, General Administrator of the Union is responsible for the administration of the Health Plan. Trish Davidson, VP Student Services, is responsible for dealing with students. Davidson would like to see a more streamlined opt-out procedure. According to her, "the best case scenario would be to have the opt-out procedure run out of the business office. The money used to run the present opt-out system would be used by the business office. This would allow students to opt-out when paying tuition and eliminate the need for refunds."

However, the business office "had not been as co-operative as was hoped," as the option of immediate refund upon payment of student fees was only available on September 8, 9, and 11. Unfortunately, most students either had not paid their student fees by September 11, or did not have sufficient time to get hold of the necessary proof of alternate coverage. As well, the Student Union ran out of opt-out forms on September 29, the last day for opting-out. Says Davidson: "We ran out of forms for about an hour, until Blue Cross brought us some more. To make up for this, the opt-out deadline was extended one more day." Students were not notified.

Because of a change in the insurance company, the Student Health Plan fee has decreased slightly from last year (from \$100 to \$95). As well, the procedure for the refund of the Health Plan fee has improved. Refunds are now mailed directly to students, so that students do not have to pick them themselves up. And, according to Davidson, the situation at UNB is not so bad, as "most smaller

universities don't even have any opt-out options."

When asked what measures were taken to inform students about the Health Plan and its opt-out procedure, Davidson mentioned that advertising was increased this year as a response to last year's numerous complaints. A mail notice was sent to each student in July, notices were posted around campus, and information was available in the Beaverbook and on Hip-Dial. "Students had more than enough time and information to either maintain their coverage or opt-out of the health Plan," she said.

Currently, opt-outs will be allowed only for "extraordinary circumstances." As for people who just didn't get around to opting out, Davidson said "if it's not a priority in their lives, I'm not going to make it a priority in mine." She had no more sympathy for students on work-terms or in co-op programs: "The faculty of Computer Science sent a letter to their co-op students, and student-teachers on practicum also had a letter sent to them."

Davidson feels that "the real problem is students not paying attention. They should stop making excuses about not reading or remembering the mail notice, or not reading *The Brunswickan*. ... it's about time students become aware of their financial affairs."

Though no definite results are in from the Blue Cross, Davidson told Council that the number of students opting-out is down, while enrollments for dependents is up. Either more students are choosing to take advantage of the Health Plan's benefits, or, despite the efforts of the Student Union, they simply did not know they had a choice.

The Student Health Plan is administered by the Student Union, and is intended to supplement the New Brunswick Medicare system. The Health Plan offers a pay-direct card, which provides 80% on-the-spot coverage of prescription drugs, worldwide travel benefits, and possible coverage for dependents. Health Cards became available on Wednesday, October 18. Blue Cross is mailing refunds to students this week.

Help Centre: No Drugs

by Peter J. Cullen
Brunswickan News

The coalition formed by the SUB's Help Centre and Collins Pharmacy Ltd. apparently teeters on the edge of a permanent collapse on account of a technicality. Due to regulations restricting the delivery of medical prescriptions, Collins Pharmacy Ltd. has been instructed that it is no longer permitted to leave drugs at the Help Centre for the convenience of UNB and STU students.

The bylaws established by the province do not specifically state that prescriptions are not allowed to be dropped off in an area for students to pick up. In fact, the dilemma of leaving the drugs at the Help Centre

compares directly to sending prescriptions to a post office; the recipient enters the post office, pays COD, and takes the medication home — the exact same procedure occurs at the Help Centre. So why is the pharmacy being slighted? "It's exactly the same thing except [our drugs] get there a lot faster. And there's a whole lot more security because we keep ours under lock and key ... and it's all monitored. It's more secure," said Jeannie Collins Beaudin, the proprietor of Collins Pharmacy Ltd. "Since they had said no to someone else in the past, the registrar ... said she couldn't change a previous decision that a previous council had made. So she said I had to go before a full council," Beaudin stated.

Collins Pharmacy Ltd. will make its formal appeal to legally re-establish their cooperative efforts with the Help Centre. Meanwhile, Beaudin and her husband Jean-Marie, the pharmacy's business manager, are delivering the prescriptions directly to the students' residences. However, the Beaudins have not found this entirely convenient for the students. "They have to sit there and wait for us to come when they'd rather be going to the dining hall for supper or maybe to the library to study," Beaudin explained.

With the ailments that inevitably accompany the changing of the seasons, Beaudin hopes that Sunday's council meeting will lead to the reinstatement of the program.

Beijing UN delegates give speech



The three UN delegates to Beijing chosen to speak at the panel.

Photo by Mark Bray

by Mark Bray
Brunswickan News

A select group of the Fredericton delegates to the United Nations Conference on Women spoke of their experiences at a panel discussion on Wednesday night. The discussion, entitled "Women Making History: the

Beijing Experience," took place at the Holy Cross conference room on the St. Thomas campus and was attended by over fifty people — predominantly female. It was co-sponsored by STU and the Canadian Research Institute for the Advancement of Women in celebration of Women's History Month. Panelists were Gerdine Van

Woudenberg, Joan McFarland and Allison Brewer. This panel represented St. Thomas students and New Brunswick youth, EGAL (Equality for Gays And Lesbians Everywhere), and St. Thomas researchers respectively.

The three delegates spoke of their experiences, which varied due to the fact that they attended completely different lectures and discussions during their time at the conference. The UN Conference, which took place in Beijing from September 4 to 15, was attended by over 25 000 women, representing a broad range of ages and ethnicities from around the world. There was a great number of sessions to choose from — the manual for the sessions was one centimetre thick. The panel and the audience were excited with the outcome of the conference despite the many frustrations with the excessively tight Conference security, site facilities, and the distant location of the Non-Governmental Organization parallel conference. They accepted these minor annoyances and used their time at the conference to take action and take in the many interesting sessions. October 24th marks the 50th anniversary of the United Nations.

SU budget doesn't add up

by Joe FitzPatrick
Co-News Editor

Two months following a deadline set by Council, the SU Executive is planning to meet to fix the problems with the 1995-96 Budget. On November 4th, the Executive has scheduled "an extended session" to reconcile three different versions of the budget and the dozen identified errors. President Lamrock has characterized the 1995-96 budget as "absurd." The Executive has maintained a position that the budget left little room to expand in areas it saw as important, such as the Student Advocacy Centre, the Student Resource Centre, and the Employment Opportunities Bureau.

A motion, to deal with these problems, was passed at the July 8 meeting of Council directing the VP Finance and Administration "to present to Council a revised budget, with great clarity in line item breakdowns, and adjusted for implementation of the action plan, at the first regular meeting of Council." To date no such report has been made.

Besides a conflict over the importance of different areas, there is the simple problem that the 1995-96 Budget, as presented, simply doesn't add up. One dozen mistakes have been identified to date in arithmetic. The difference between what the budget says, and what anybody's handheld calculator would say is \$3,825. While the net effect of these errors is

\$3,825, the actual amount of money in corrections is \$10,374. This "break-even" document, in fact, calls for a \$3,825 deficit for 1995-96.

The biggest problem is the lack of correlation between the line items and their breakdowns, or "notes" as the budget calls them. It is here where the majority of the errors were committed. This raises the issue of which entry is to be believed, the sum or the breakdowns. The larger discrepancies occurred in the Office, Conference and Beaverbook budgets. Office, as stated on page 1 of the Budget, is \$28,485. However, the sum of the breakdown is \$29,175, a difference of \$690. For Conferences, the Budget states \$16,495 on page 1, and \$18,045 for the

breakdown. However, the sum of the breakdown is, in fact, \$16,275, a difference of \$1,550. The Beaverbook has a budget of \$3,425 according to one entry, and \$5,425 according to another. However, the sum of the breakdown is actually \$5,525.

Other errors: Honouraria breakdown total is \$50,120 not \$49,265. As indicated in the breakdown, Special Interest Groups total of \$15,486 is correct, but two other entries for it are wrong, at \$15,252. The Student Resource Centre budget is \$6,120 under Student Services, but its breakdown actually totals \$6,020. In addition, the CFS National Conference totals \$1,850, not \$1,550; the CASA conference of May 1995 has \$1,680, not \$2,900 and of Jan. 1996 has \$1,650, not \$2,900.