

OPINION & EDITORIAL

The pros and cons of residence

For the last five years, I have lived in and around the residence system. I have enjoyed my time here and truly regret the fact that I must soon leave. The people I have met, friends I have made, and lessons I have learned, I will keep forever.

My time in residence has taught me to be a stronger person in many regards. It has taught me that often, you must stand up for yourself. I truly feel bad writing this letter to the editor as it will mainly highlight the negative aspects of residence life but I feel it must be done. I truly hope this letter will spur and encourage others to speak up against a residence administration that many times has gone too far.

The first issue is about Proctors (Note: I am not a proctor and never have been.) These people are paid by the university (they are given a free room, they must pay for a meal plan) to supervise, guide, and assist residents. They are horribly paid by the residence office, to the point where many believe they are being exploited. Effective last year, a house (approx. 100 students) must have one proctor on duty every night. With five proctors in a house it means you are on duty one night a week, three whole weekends a semester, and are responsible for the general condition of your floor the rest of the time. This means a proctor is on duty a minimum of 22 nights a semester for a minimum of five hours a night. That is a minimum 110 hours a semester of on-duty time. However, proctors put in much more work than that, yet all they get is a free room. This is a decrease in pay from 1999-2000 when they got the free room and a bonus on their meal plan. I feel it is totally wrong for the residence office to take advantage of students like this. They put in many hours every day. Their pay rate should be much higher, especially considering the number of hours they put in and the importance of their work.

There is a lack of accountability within the residence office. Two issues highlight this perfectly. Between April 1999 and September 2000, a large part of a weight set disappeared from Harrison House. Many residents attempted to recover these items. They were never recovered. The residents who attempted to recover these items were given the runaround, sent in circles from person to person. To this day, these pieces of equipment are still missing. On the positive side, between April and September 2000, some new equipment was purchased,

but this purchase took over a year to make!

Another issue is repairs in the residence system. Repairing things like medicine cabinets, closets and desks often takes months. On one occasion, a student had to wait three months to get a closet installed in his room! At the two month mark, someone in the residence office informed this paying customer he was "a chronic complainer" because he visited the residence office weekly in order to get his closet installed! It is the responsibility of the residence office to provide livable spaces to students - their customers. Too often, this responsibility is shirked. Repairs should be undertaken in a much faster manner.

A shining light in the residence system is McConnell Hall and the Beaver/Chartwells staff. Since I began here, the food has continuously improved. The selection and quality is always getting better and the customer service is unbeatable. Often, we feel a closer bond to the staff in McConnell Hall than we do to our professors. (Author's note: Thanks for everything Beaver staff, we really do appreciate it!)

In a recent decision, the residence office has made a decision about intermural ice hockey. For two houses to play a game, they must have six Campus Police and two City of Fredericton Police members present. This is to be paid for by the houses. My question is, what house can afford to pay for this? On top of that, the hockey officials must be level three qualified, which means more cost. This is an undue burden on students. While there have been problems lately between two specific houses, this is an undue burden and an overreaction. Too often, the residence office overreacts in this fashion and only the students lose.

The alcohol policy in residence houses is very strict and continually becomes more strict. Lately this has had many negative effects on residents. More students engage in binge drinking and even more venture off campus to drink. Instead of staying on campus in a controlled environment where help (from both proctors and senior students) is quickly available, students venture off campus to drink. Instead of solving a 'problem,' the residence office has simply hidden it. Students will drink if we choose to, at least in residence it can be controlled by friends, proctors and senior students. It also reads in the Alcohol Policy that any student caught 'undermining the

policy will be disciplined.' Is this a threat against those who speak out against it? The wording to me seems very threatening and does not promote a healthy living environment.

Furthermore, senior students who came back to residence this fall for Orientation Week were not allowed to drink. On top of that, we were not allowed to socialize with the frosh. Most of us who came back early were Peer Mentors or on the Orientation Committee. We were volunteers who sacrificed one week's pay to help (for free) new students become adjusted to UNB. Instead, we were treated like prisoners in our own homes. (Don't forget, residence is our home.) We could not drink off campus, on campus, anywhere. No alcohol consumption was permitted. We were also not allowed to socialize with our neighbours and in some cases, roommates! UNB treated its senior residence students, senior volunteer students like prisoners. If I was returning to residence and school next year, there is no way I would ever be a Peer Mentor and Orientation Committee member again. The way the residence office treated me was disgusting. If this is how volunteers are to be treated, then UNB will be losing many volunteers.

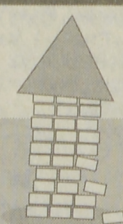
To those in power, remember, the residents (customers) of the residence system are the leaders and financial contribution makers of tomorrow. We have long memories.

I want to reiterate that most of my experiences in residence have been positive. Residence is where I have lived, ate, slept, and partied for about five years. I have received help from senior students in my courses and in turn, helped junior students with theirs. This is the place where I made more friends than I can count. I even met my beautiful fiancé here.

If I had to do it all over again, I would definitely live in residence but I would work harder to ensure the community I leave behind is a better community, the community I want to live in.

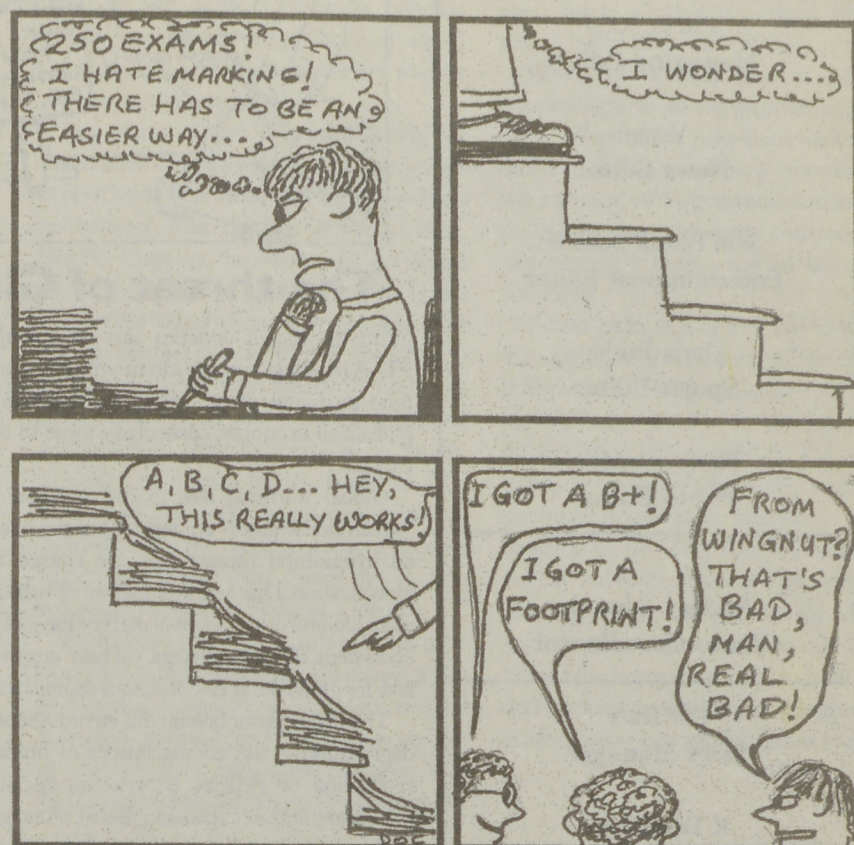
I apologize to those who follow me into the residence system for not writing this letter or taking action sooner but I do hope that some change can come because of it and that those who follow in my footsteps can have the same enjoyable experiences I have had.

• Tom Brewer



Ivory Towers

DOC



Letter to the Aquinian

Dear Editor,

I am writing in response to the editorial written by Managing Editor, Greg Mercer, in the March 28th edition of the *Aquinian*. I would like to draw attention to a number of issues raised by this article, first and foremost the allegations of misuse of funds.

Although the article is unclear whether funds were stolen or simply misused, the implication seems to be quite clear that funds were used to finance an out-of-province trip for purely personal purposes and without sanction. Quite frankly I am astounded that any half-way competent editor would allow the publication of an article that includes statements that border on the libelous.

Having spoken to the Chair of the AQ Board of Directors, I have been assured that these funds were fully sanctioned by then Editor-in-Chief, Dan Schnare, who has the discretionary power to award up to \$200. Indeed not only were they [the funds] intended to assist financing a trip to Ottawa to write news articles for the *Aquinian* but they did even [sic] finance the entire trip. Furthermore Dipaolo insists that this can be easily proved by examining the AQ budget books.

Mercer's article included such blatantly defamatory statements as, "I can say for sure that a number of individuals in the past who have sat on the board have used *Aquinian* money to go on personal trips out of province. One of those board members who enjoyed your money for a personal trip has now decided he should be running your student newspaper," in effect identifying Mr. Girard in all but name.

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Last Class Bash

THE
CELLAR
EST. 1994

Pub & Grill

HAPPY HOUR

2:00 - 4:00

8:00 - 10:00

Large Draught \$2.50

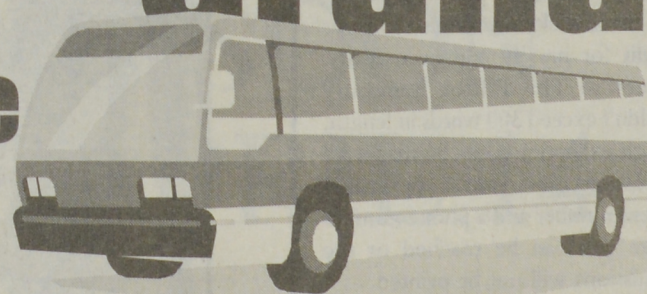
Small Draught \$1.75

Shots \$1.75

Thursday April 12

Matinee Funky Underpants

Evening: Hop on the
Bus with



Theft Bus



Cocktail
Specials
all day
Door Prizes

THE
CELLAR
EST. 1994
Pub & Grill

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Monday through Thursday

Kitchen Hours Only

11:00 am - 8:00pm

Friday

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Closed on Saturdays & Sundays