

Fighting for the right to peacefully assemble

by Will Minton

(U-WIRE) PITTSBURGH — First off let me put down something I hope we can all agree on. The ability of a people to redress their government for wrongs it has inflicted is essential in any free society.

Now for a history lesson. Three years ago, the World Trade Organization met in Seattle. They were greeted by an estimated 20,000 protesters, and the events that ensued were frightening: police in riot gear, peaceful protesters arrested by the hundreds, tear gas and a city in confusion.

Fast forward to last weekend. Washington, D.C. planned to host meetings of the World Bank and International Monetary Fund.

This was no secret. The date of the meetings was set months ago. Nor was it a secret that the Anti-Capitalist Convergence planned protests modeled after the ones in Seattle to accompany those conferences. Washington has been aware of these plans for more than five months.

Given this situation and memories of what transpired in Seattle, the city had two options.

One: They could recognize that an overwhelming number of people had a

common view and wished to express it. They could then take measures to cooperate with the protesters by giving them a platform to express their views. They could perhaps even grant their somewhat radical views recognition, given that they are growing in popularity. These actions would make sure protesters didn't disrupt the city.

Or, two: The city could fear the protesters. They could prepare to suppress them and deprive them of a voice. They could beef up their police force and arrest the protesters. These actions would also ensure an orderly city.

Guess which one Washington picked. If you said fear and repression, give yourself a cookie. In the weeks preceding the conference, Washington not only equipped its own police with riot gear but also recruited 1,700 police officers from as far away as Miami and Chicago. Combined with 1,500 D.C. officers, they prepared to "maintain order" in the city.

Police Chief Charles Ramsey, standing at the head of these battle clad officers, told CNN "Our goal is no arrests." Kind of makes you laugh doesn't it? Especially when the facts are considered: on Friday police outnumbered the protesters by more than 1,000 and 649 people were arrested.

If Ramsey was so against resorting to



Sean Patrick Sullivan/The Brunswickian

This is a scene which greets many protestors.

arrests, you'd think he would give protesters the option to disperse before barricading all exits to Freedom Park and arresting everyone inside. But several witnesses state that no option was given.

Witnesses also reported seeing protesters struck in the head by police batons and one activist reported to a hospital with her injuries. In reaction to the officer's actions, those assembled

the city's strategy to deal with the protesters can be excused. The actions taken by police last Friday scare me. The fact that larger demonstrations were held on Saturday with only minor incident is of minimal consolation.

Ramsey justifies the actions of his officers by noting that protesters had no permit for the demonstrations on Friday. This is true, but brings us to the larger topic of how constitutional the permit for demonstration law is. Answer: not at all.

If citizens want to exercise their right to assemble in protest of the government, they must first get permission from the government. Something about that just doesn't sound right to me.

They say that it's the only way to ensure protests are safe and orderly.

We have no way of knowing if this is true or not. What we do know is that this is the only policy that ensures protests are few and lame.

The right to peaceably assemble is a fundamental one, as is the right to free speech. When I see these rights so blatantly encroached in our nation's capital, it makes me wonder. It makes me wonder just how much force our government is willing to use against its own citizens in the name of order.

Column: Because everything is political

by Tan-Nee Ng

(Editor's Note: This is a new column that will be appearing weekly in The Brunswickian. Tan-Nee can be reached through email at k4nzz@unb.ca.)

What do I mean when I say "everything is political"? What is politics? In high school, when I first started questioning my surroundings and beliefs, I use to attach a particular signature to all my e-mails:

POLITICS

Poli = Many
Tics = Bloodsucking Insects

Now I'm sure we can all remember back to our young schooling days, in English class, when we spent time analyzing words by way of their prefixes, roots and suffixes. In that spirit, let's analyze the word "politics."

We'll start with the prefix: poli (or poly). We know that this prefix means "many." Now let's take a look at the root

word: tics (ticks). Most of us know these to be "blood sucking insects." So, if we put these two meanings together, we see that "politics" means "many bloodsucking insects."

This meaning of "politics" may not be new to many of you. In fact, many are probably thinking, "Yeah, I've always known this." But, if this is the case, how can politics be everything? Wouldn't politics seem only to refer to large men in suits who run the country? Making decision and laws that affect our everyday lives in ways we don't even think about/could even dream of? Ohhh, ok, now I'm starting to get it.

Politics undermine our whole society and way of life. Politics influences our social life, how we organize ourselves in society, how we think and interact with each other. Politics determine everything from what our status in society will be, what illnesses we will be more prone to suffer from, to what we chose to digest and who we chose to love.

Don't believe me? Well then...now that I have your attention, just stay tuned every week starting from now because everything is political.

Kyoto pro-action

The deadline is looming. Thursday, October 10, marks the day when the Canadian Federal Legislature begins deliberations on the Kyoto Protocol. Now, more than ever, it is time to show our support to ratifying Kyoto by writing, phoning, emailing, or faxing our Members of Parliament or Prime Minister Jean Chretien. We can make a difference by voicing our opinions towards the campaign against pollution and climate change.

For this purpose, the UNB Environmental Society will be hosting a pro-active information and letter writing workshop on Tuesday evening at 6pm in Room 203 of the Old Forestry building. The plan is to educate then to demonstrate - educate through informative presentations by members of our society and then demonstrate through writing letters and emails to our MP's and to our PM. No experience is required, however a strong will to see a change in the status quo will be helpful!

If you can't make the session and you still want to send a letter, some useful websites are www.davidsuzuki.org and www.sierraclub.ca.

Contact the society at envs@unb.ca for more information.

Editorial Comic needed!

The Brunswickian is in need of a cartoonist to draw a weekly editorial comic for the Opinions/Editorial section. Drop submissions off to our office (Room 35 in the SUB) or email bruns@unb.ca, Attention: Sean

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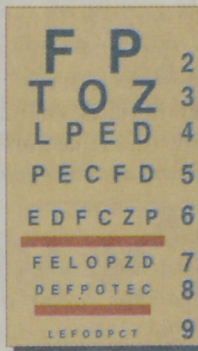
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STUDENT UNION
UNIVERSITY OF NEW BRUNSWICK

2002 Fall By-Election

Your Student Union would like to announce the 2002 Fall By-election

The positions available in the by-election are as follows:

- Student at Large
- Computer Science Representative
- Business Representative
- Engineering Representative
- Residence Representative (NEW!)
- International Student Representative (NEW!)
- Education Representative
- Science Representative
- Grad Class President
- SUBS Inc Board of Directors Seat
- 1 Year Senate

Nominations open on October 1st and close on October 8th at 4:30 P.M.

The Campaign period will run from 6:00 P.M. on October 8th to 9 P.M. on October 15th.

Voting begins on October 16th, and ends on October 19th at 11:55 P.M.

The election will be entirely on-line again this year - there will be no paper ballots. To cast your vote, please go to the UNB homepage (www.unb.ca) and click on my UNB e-services. After you log into e-services with your email id and pin, click on the voting tab in the upper left corner. From there you may read about the positions, find out who the nominees are, check the voter eligibility requirements, read the by-laws that govern this election, and of course cast your vote!

From the hours of 9:00 A.M. to 4:00 P.M. on October 16, 17, and 18th, there will be computers in the SUB dedicated to online voting. Staff will be present to show you how to use the web vote, and answer any questions you may have about the process.

If you have any questions please contact Pam, the Chief Returning Officer, at cro@unb.ca.

All candidates must be 19 years of age

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