

THE BRUNSWICKAN OPINION & EDITORIAL

Editorial

Writing a letter to the editor

by Cindy Brown
Editor-in-Chief

So you want to write a letter to *The Brunswickan*.

Here are a few tips you should follow if you would like to have your letter published in *The Brunswickan*.

Make a solid argument. This should be a rule of thumb whether you are writing a letter or a paper for class. By a solid argument, I mean: find facts which directly support your conclusion. It is okay to ramble/rant in a letter but what you write done on paper may not be as funny or interesting to a complete stranger. By searching for facts which will strengthen your argument, you may realize your argument is unfounded or perhaps, you will find that you would rather take the opposite view.

Keep an open mind. Admitting you are

wrong when someone makes valid points against your argument will likely make future arguments stronger. If you decide to write a letter to the editor, you may get replies to your pieces - don't be offended, not everyone shares your view.

Keep it short and to the point. *The Brunswickan* will accept letters of any length but if space is little, your letters may be edited for length and possibly clarity. It is also more likely that people will finish your letter if it is 250 words, compared to 1000. We're students - we don't all have great attention spans.

Keep it simple. Not everyone is highly educated on the migration patterns of the pink flamingo. I don't think the majority of the general population really cares. So, since *The Brunswickan* is a paper run by students for students, we will print your letter on the importance of the migration patterns of the pink flamingo.

Your name, your student number - your identity. *The Brunswickan* cannot print an anonymous letter to the editor unless that person has expressed valid reasons why we should not print his/her name. And, you still have to let us know your name and student number - but we won't tell, I promise. This protects us if you want to print a scandalous letter. But, on that note, *The Brunswickan* will not print a letter which we deem sexist, racist, or libelous in anyway. So don't bother.

We are always curious to find out how students view different subjects. It helps to feel passionate about the subject, however.

Mugwump

Java Jabba

by Patryk Reid
Managing Editor

Oh sure there are a lot of things that bother me about UNB.

I mean think of it: the high cost of tuition; profs who think they've got it right; assignment deadlines; students who think they're the shit because they're at a university; the lack of recycling containers; as well as the lack of current and diverse resources at the library.

But more than that, probably more than anything else, I have a big problem with people who tell me they drink cola products

for the caffeine. I have a close relationship with that dark, hot, bitter drink; it is a friend I cannot get through the day without. So when people tell me that cola does the same thing as coffee, even going so far as to suggest it is healthier to have it, I'm insulted, frankly. Equal servings of the two do not have the same amount of caffeine, and pop is not actually made of anything real. Moreover, coffee culture has more class, and coffee drinks have more variety.

To say that cola is equivalent to coffee in any way is insulting, and unreasonable. Let the coffee drinkers help the dim-witted. Do not stand for such diatribe.

Suffering through depression - don't

by Anonymous

Upon hearing that February is suicide prevention month, I felt the need to share the following letter. In sharing this letter, I'm not looking for sympathy, nor do I want any of you to look at me any differently. I'm still the same normal person, except I have accepted the fact that I suffer from depression.

My hope, in sharing this letter, is that I might connect with at least one person, allowing them to realize that depression is not a battle they have to fight on their own. It has become very common for doctors to treat patients for depression. You do not need to suffer silently. If you think that you might suffer from depression, I encourage you to make an appointment with your doctor or the UNB Student Health Center (453-4837). Here is my letter:

Dear Mom:

I've been trying to find an easy way to tell you that I suffer from depression. But each time I see you, I can't seem to find the words. I know how much you love me, but with the past year being so hard on me, I didn't want to add to your worries about me. Before you start to panic, as I fear you will, I want you to know that I only suffer from mild to moderate depression and I have sought out help. Despite this depression, I've still been able to live a normal life, as you know, with a healthy social life, good grades in school,

recreational sports, etc...

My depression first started in 1995. I was in denial for six years. Society's views on depression made me feel that it was something that I had to combat on my own. In fact, I wasn't even sure that I did suffer from depression until I lived with my cousin and her husband, while in Ottawa. She is very open about the depression from which she suffers. This helped me realize that I also suffer from depression and that it is not something I need to be ashamed of.

She also informed me that most depression is caused by chemical imbalances. To the best of my understanding, Serotonin is a chemical produced by the brain that helps maintain a "happy feeling," and seems to help keep our moods under control by helping with sleep, calming anxiety, and relieving depression. Low Serotonin levels are believed to be the reason for many cases of mild to moderate depression. Antidepressant medications, such as Prozac (which I am taking), help to maintain a regular Serotonin level, which lessens or eliminates the feelings of depression.

My personal battle with depression provided me with a better understanding of myself, but at the same time, it drained me of emotions. Depression might best be compared to a drug. Every so often, you need a fix. I think it's some sort of withdrawal thing. Before Prozac, I always used to notice that if I was flying high for a week or more, then I was going to come

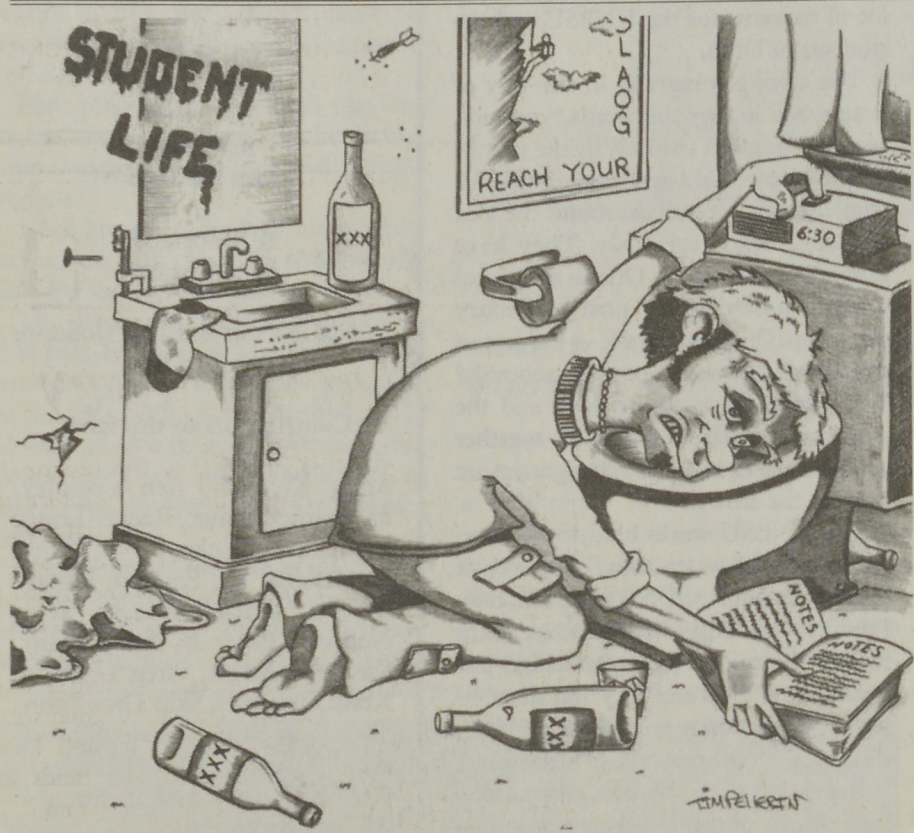
down and wallow in my low. So, my way of dealing with my depression was to avoid getting excited about anything. In order to avoid highs and lows, I tried to maintain a neutral emotion level, but I was blindly robbing myself of a love for life.

At first, I used to tell myself to "think happy thoughts," but that never works. In fact, the hardest part about getting advice from friends who don't understand depression is that they tell you to "think happy thoughts," to "just get over it" or to "stop feeling sorry for yourself." From their perspective, they are completely right. But depression is the missing link preventing them from truly understanding. When I felt really down, I learned to trust in the fact that it would get better.

Unfortunately, my depression did include occasional suicidal thoughts, but they only served as a fantasy escape from my problems. I would have never gone through with them. As well, I had become familiar with the "I feel alone"/"no one wants me for who I am"/"will I ever find the right person" cycle. It's a truly pointless cycle, but when I was feeling down, it was the most comforting hole in which to hide. I don't want you to feel that it is at all your fault, because it is not! You've been the most understanding and caring Mom that I could have ever hoped for!

So in November 2001, with the support of my best friend, I overcame my embarrassment and finally sought out help.

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Just a thought...

by Joanne Barr

February is "love" month. Every year, on the 14th day of that month, people exchange candy, flowers, cards and gifts, all in the name of St. Valentine.

The history of Valentine's Day, and its patron saint, is shrouded in mystery. St. Valentine's Day, as it is known today, contains vestiges of both Christian and ancient Roman traditions. Who was St. Valentine and how did he become associated with this ancient rite? I looked for answers to these questions and found the following bits of information in research which is provided on the internet.

According to one legend, Valentine was a priest who served during the third century in Rome. The story goes that the Emperor Claudius II decided single men made better soldiers than those with wives and families, so he outlawed marriage for young men. Valentine defied Claudius and continued to perform marriage for young lovers in secret. When this was discovered, Claudius ordered Valentine

put to death.

Another legend suggests Valentine actually sent the first 'valentine' greeting himself. It is believed that while he was in prison, he fell in love with a young woman who visited him during his confinement and before his death, it is alleged he wrote a letter to her. According to the story, he signed the letter "from your Valentine," an expression which is still in use today.

Around 498 A.D. Pope Gelasius declared February 14, "St. Valentine's Day." During the Middle Ages, people in England and France believed February 14 was the beginning of the birds' mating season. This belief added to the idea that the middle of February - Valentine's Day - should be a day for romance.

Apparently the oldest known valentine was a poem written by Charles, Duke of Orleans, in 1415 to his wife while he was imprisoned in the Tower of London, following his capture at the Battle of Agincourt.

It is believed that, years later, King Henry V hired a writer, John Lydgate,

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The decisions of our Supreme Court

by Brian Barnett

The dismissal of Her Honour, Jocelyne Moreau-Bérubé, was upheld by the Supreme Court of Canada last week.

I have not yet read the judgement, but symbolically, the dismissal has its own meaning. Her comments about the general dishonesty of people who live on the Acadian Peninsula were the root of her undoing. She should have known her comments would be subject to heavy scrutiny. The upholding of the decision of the lower courts can be viewed as a check on a judge by judges - Supreme Court judges.

Canadians boast of their tolerance and sensitivity. People claim Canada can be held up as an example to the rest of the world. Canadians want others to be tolerant and sensitive when these issues arise; this view

lacks humility in the sense that it implies the Canadian example is the 'right one' to follow.

The Supreme Court decision shows the justices may be trying to send a message about judicial impartiality in Canada. This message reflects a strong sensitivity among the judiciary. It is also a warning to judges about their need for tolerance.

I am anxious to read the Supreme Court decision; whatever substantive law they include I am sure it will be socially significant. The decision upheld the lower court's decision to dismiss a judge for what she said about Acadian people indicating Canadian judges are to be held accountable for their comments.

Peoples' ideas of what is or is not proper are as varied as the population itself. The comments this judge made could be interpreted differently by different people. Bérubé was in a position that demanded

impartiality. What is considered over the line today might not be the same as it was in times past.

In our society many views are expressed and many opinions cry to be heard, however, judges are required to withhold their opinions - especially when these opinions conflict with the doctrine of judicial impartiality. It is difficult to see how branding an entire population as dishonest could be a step forward for judicial impartiality.

The decision to remove Bérubé can be seen as a message about fairness in our judicial system. The symbolism of Canada's highest court's decision is that judges must be diligent in acting in an impartial manner.

Some may see this decision as a blow to the independence of the judiciary in our system but it would appear the Supreme Court has made its choice on which virtue takes precedence in this case.

In defense of our apathetic generation

by Tony Antoniadis

In her meandering editorial last week, Cindy Brown reported that one of her professors has accused our generation of apathy. Given some of the other content in last week's *Brun*, I cannot blame the professor for arriving at that conclusion. Patryk Reid's column ably highlighted the way in which ludicrous internecine rivalries led to a lack of student awareness of, and therefore participation in, the National Day of Action against rising tuition costs. On the next page, our own UNBSU VP proudly asserts that our student union is against the idea of tuition freezes, presumably supporting the current morally offensive trend of spiralling fees, dwindling government support for education, crushing debt burdens for graduating students, and closing of post-secondary education to less affluent Canadians. Hooray for the UNBSU.

Despite the evidence to the contrary, however, I don't believe

that our generation is any more or less apathetic than, say, Ms. Brown's professor's.

To wit, I offer a challenge. Not long ago, in a forum to discuss the future of the arts at UNB, a panel was convened of our university's outgoing president, our Dean of Arts, STU's VP academic, and Andy Scott, our federal MP. Every member of that panel managed to neatly sidestep the recent bid by Queen's University in Ontario to de-index Arts and Sciences tuition, and raise rates by enormous amounts over the next few years. Imagine that - a group of non-apathetic members of the older generation who completely avoided taking a stand on the most pressing issue facing post-secondary education today. And when two students got up in the question period to raise the issue of tuition hikes, each member of the panel, with Baryshnikovian grace, danced completely around the issue yet again, brushing off student concerns as though they were lint on a cashmere sweater.

My challenge, then, is this: let

any member of that panel, or perhaps our incoming president, or indeed Ms. Brown's professor himself, take advantage of the editorial pages of the *Brun* to offer an unequivocal condemnation of the Queens method, and issue a written guarantee that my tuition rates will remain next year exactly what they were this year. Let any one of them demand money from the government to ensure that this takes place, staging a protest of their own to draw attention to their demand. Let any of them lay out a plan of action by which they will reverse the trend of corporatization of post-secondary education in this country.

I offer any one of these individuals the chance to lead by example, to take the initiative which admittedly our own idiotic Student Union has completely let drop. Prove that Ms. Brown's professor does not show me the steep and thorny way to heaven, while like some puffed and reckless libertine himself the primrose path to dalliance treads, and recks not his own rede. Put your generation's money where your mouth is, sir.

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