

The answer? Improved transit

**Student Union Roundup
fills you in**

by Milan Chotai
SU President

A problem isn't always easy to identify. Typically, it manifests itself through a host of symptoms that are difficult to associate back to a cause – unless you know what you are looking for.

As an example, consider public transportation in Fredericton. With improvement, it could enable access to the full range of off-campus housing options available in our city. It could alleviate concerns, voiced by an increasing number of neighborhood associations, related to high student concentrations. For those who must walk home across busy roads or through the woods, especially at night, it could significantly reduce the potential risks to a student's safety. Finally, an improved bus service would provide a means through which we could make our municipality and campus cleaner places to live and study.

What characteristics might this improved bus service include? Possibly a reduction in wait times to no more than 15 minutes at stops inside a core area of service. Maybe a maximum transit time of no more than 45 minutes irrespective of your origin or destination. Perhaps additional routes that enable access to all key areas of our city. It's up to



Brendan Doyle / The Brunswickan

Improving the city's transit system means cheaper housing and less waiting in the cold.

you to decide. How?

Our Student Union is studying the impact of a revitalized public transit service in Fredericton. Part of this

process is the creation of a survey, which will be distributed online through our UNB E-Services portal in January. A student forum will also be held around this time. I encourage

you to use these opportunities to share your thoughts, and to contact the Student Union (unbsu@unb.ca) if you have any questions.

Being a punk with a conscience

**"Punk" isn't knocking
signs down**

by Bobby Cann

"Day after day your home life's a wreck, the powers that be just breathe down your neck, you get no respect you get no relief, you gotta speak up and yell out your grief, so back off your rules and back off your jive, I'm sick of not living to stay alive, leave me alone I'm not asking a lot, just don't wanna be controlled. That's all I want..."

-The Offspring / 'All I Want'

They don't write punk songs like that anymore. In fact, even The Offspring don't really write punk songs like that anymore. Bad Religion, Green Day, The Ramones, NOFX, Pennywise; all very good punk bands. But no one has ever put it better than The Offspring on the date they recorded 'All I Want.' This wasn't necessarily a song about

1997, it was describing a rebel ... a punk, if you will.

You try everything to fit in and it just doesn't work. No one will listen to you therefore no one can possibly understand you. And because of your appearance you're a lot more likely to be removed from a spot due to loitering or the first to be asked when something's afoot.

When I was 14 I had long hair. Not just long hair but hair past my shoulders. It took me almost a full year and 200 resumes before I got hired in my hometown, which at the time might have had 65 businesses in total. When I finally got hired my new boss told me to cut my hair. No other place asked that I do it, instead they just decided not to hire me. If my appearance was the problem, all they had to do was ask and my hair would have been cut. So I gave my respect to the only business that was straight with me and I cut my hair. A year later I was in college, and you know what? My hair grew back. I now once again

have hair to my shoulders and just like when I was 14 I still wear jeans and a t-shirt to work everyday. I have the respect of my co-workers and peers, and I'm just as big a punk as I ever was. So now we get to the point.

About two weeks ago a trio of "punks" ran past my workplace knocking over our signs along with everyone else's they could get at on King Street. And I was shocked at how much it bothered me. After all, one had a foot-tall pink mohawk, another a shaved head and all were adorned with "traditional punk garb." This is a classic scene from any movie you've ever watched. *Salt Lake City Punk, Rebel without a Cause, Jay and Silent Bob Strike Back...* and that's the problem. There is a lot more to being a punk than watching *SLC Punk* and trying to copy Steve-o's every action. And sorry guys but in this day and age listening to the Simple Plan "revolution" isn't the same as even me listening to Nirvana start their reign of world domination 12 years

ago. And it's a far cry from the original punk movement nearly 20 years before that.

Punk is an attitude not an action. The whole punk movement was started because a mass group of people were unhappy about their way of life, not because they wanted to make life more difficult for others. Doing your own thing, showing resilience to gain respect and to prove we're the same as everyone else wearing, different clothes, and listening to music that moves us in a different way. That's what being a punk is about. And maybe, if they would just listen, others would at least understand. There's a right way and a wrong way to go about this. And next time you come into Reid's News Stand I'll ask you about it, just to see how punk you are. Because a real punk would know they were wrong, and an apology would be issued. Fight for the cause, don't set it back. Be a punk, not a chump.

Bobby Cann is a punk with a conscience.

Reduce tuition fees: a how-to guide

**It's been done before,
and now it's time for
New Brunswickers**

by Ben Isitt

Several years ago, I worked on a campaign that resulted in a five per cent reduction in tuition barriers to education at the University of Victoria. This was achieved through an increase in the annual grant from the government of British Columbia to the university. There is no reason why a similar step could not be implemented here at UNB.

Our taxation system exists to ensure a fair distribution of resources. Rather than increase tuition barriers each year (preventing low-income students from accessing an education), UNB should set a precedent in the Maritimes by returning to a progressive, government-funded model of education.

In 1996, Ireland eliminated tuition barriers. The 'Irish Tiger' economy – one of the strongest in Europe – draws heavily from a highly trained, well-educated population. Students are not penalized, impoverished and indebted with escalating user fees. Instead, universities receive sufficient resources from their government to make tuition unnecessary. This provides an incentive to receive an education, rather than a disincentive, as currently exists in New Brunswick.

In the 1960s, under the Liberal premier Joey Smallwood, Newfoundland embarked on a similar experiment of free education. While this program was never fully implemented, Newfoundland reduced tuition by 25 per cent in 2002. That same year, the government of Manitoba reduced undergraduate fees by 10 per cent.

Such models exist in a number of different countries. France, Austria, Switzerland, Denmark and Sweden all offer free, or extremely low, tuition. Students receive monthly grants from their governments, between \$200 and \$600 per month, to help cover living costs. Tuition is paid for by the state. Why not in Canada?

For several years, the United Nations ranked Canada as "the best country in the world to live." We have recently slipped from this position. So-called 'free trade' agreements, combined with the neo-liberal policies of Mulroney, Chretien and Martin, have eroded Canada's progressive social system. As (then finance minister) Paul Martin slashed transfer payments in 1995; the Young Liberals of Canada successfully split the student movement of the country. The Canadian Alliance of Student Associations (CASA) was formed as a counter-weight to the left-leaning Canadian Federation of Students (CFS).

University students lack the unity to prevent a frontal assault on state-

funded education. The result is crippling debt that in many cases exceeds \$40,000 per student.

Conforming to NAFTA, the WTO, and similar agreements, our political leaders are eager to harmonize public services with the private, for-profit model pursued in the United States. The doubling of tuition barriers across Canada in the 1990s demonstrates this trend.

UNB now finds itself at a crossroads. Our premier, Bernard Lord, occupies a tenuous position at Province House. Leading a minority government, there is an opening for public policies that would usually be unthinkable to right-wing politicians like Lord. (Before the last election, his majority government laid the groundwork for the privatization of NB Power.) Weakened in the legislature, the Lord government can be pressured to increase funding to UNB – several million dollars would be sufficient – to reduce tuition fees.

How can this outcome be achieved? First, the students, staff and administrators at UNB will have to discard the idea that "tuition increases are inevitable." Such narrow, illogical thinking is uncharacteristic of educated people. The purpose of a university education is to challenge conventional notions, not parrot them.

Second, the university community will have to organize itself into a force that the provincial government cannot ignore. Through discussion, debate, public meetings, petitions, and demonstrations, the UNB community – combined with the general public – will have to translate its will into government policy, and government funding.

The final ingredient in this equation involves a change of mindset. While I am a newcomer to New Brunswick, I have observed a pervasive culture of paternalism in this place, which is much weaker elsewhere in Canada. I see it regularly in dealings with landlords; in the way workers accept low wages with no job security; in the unwillingness of intelligent students to question authority and take action to defend their interests. Right now, I sense a powerlessness among many of my peers on this campus, and throughout the Maritimes. But this situation can change. And it will.

UNB will move towards a zero-tuition model. I would like to see this process begin in spring 2004, when the next budget is presented to the Board of Governors. I have faith in the capacity of ordinary people to assert, through education and organization, their own inherent power.

In the words of the rock band Trooper, "We're here for a good time, not a long time." So let's have a good time creating some social justice on this campus and beyond.

Ben Isitt is a member of the Fredericton NDP Club, and a doctoral student with the Department of History.

War on Terror nothing more than propaganda

**Canadian military not
fighting the good fight**

by Corey Padgett

Terrorist. What is the purpose of this word? As of late, the government and media have used the term redundantly, exploiting the overwhelming circumstances of a post-9/11 world. "Terrorism" has now become an undeniable focal point of global politics; look no further than the Middle East for definitive proof. Canadian soldiers in Afghanistan right now are contesting and most unfortunately

dying in a "War on Terror."

This phrase, that covers more ground than one might originally presume, is a general embarrassment to our nation. Why? Observe the Oxford dictionary definition of a terrorist: "Anyone who attempts to further his views by a system of coercive intimidation." This attests directly to the boisterous irony regarding our nation's current occupation of a foreign land. It also fabulously demonstrates the ability of the general public to swallow a big fat contradiction.

Notice also that the terminology did not include any particular ethnicity. A most deplorable

consequence of this war has been the promotion of fear regarding Middle Eastern Muslims. It is greatly propagated that these diverse cultures of people are nothing but savage fundamentalists with a vicious loathing for Western society. This racism is advocated largely as a tool for public manipulation.

It is paradoxical to assume that the Canadian military in its operations that result in the deaths of Afghan people in no way terrorizes that nation. It would be correct to say that as long as our forces are fighting

a war the terrorism will never stop. The democratic system that our country adheres to makes this our

responsibility. It is we as citizens that elect the officials that dictate policy. The taxpayers sustain the military and thus it becomes our hard-earned money that finances these escapades of ignorance.

This is a very serious issue and is one that many are taking rather lightly. There are many motives for this war and terrorism is not its true significance. Rather it is the expanding atrocities of consumerist globalization. War is becoming a necessary fuel to feed the machine of consumption that our culture has enforced. Control of raw materials and the limiting of people's freedom, at home and abroad, become a necessity in achieving the means to the end.

Unless something is done soon to correct this hodge-podge of feeble-mindedness the world's situation will get worse, not better. It is up to you to be alert of the political situation, to be skeptical of gross generalizations, and most importantly to say your opinion. The responsibility of this situation belongs to all Canadians and therefore it is we that will dictate the outcome.

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