

THE BRUNSWICKAN OPINION & EDITORIAL

Editorial

What we do

by Sean Patrick Sullivan
Editor-in-Chief

"The conference is open to the public, provided they want to sit with a group of young people facing a future with few job prospects, low incomes, shot nerves and drinking problems." - *MIRROR* magazine, regarding the Canadian University Press (CUP) national conference.

Last week, six delegates from this paper attended the 65th annual CUP conference in Montreal. Surrounded by almost 200 other student journalists from over forty papers, we were in newspaper geek heaven (that being a place strangers will high-five you for using big words in everyday conversation).

Over six days of seminars, keynotes, plenary, and 'evenings out,' we had a chance to talk newspapers like nobody's business. Together, we were able to appreciate how damn special we are as a student press, and the unique opportunities a newspaper like *The Brunswickan* can provide.

See, not only are we the only actual 'free press' left around here, we have another mandate: to act as a training grounds for wannabe journalists. Point in case: I'm 21, running one of Canada's largest student newspapers, and most of my education has been centred around the study of English literature. How did I get this gig? Uh... I vaguely recall walking into the office four years ago asking to write some CD reviews. From there on in it's pretty much a blur.

This is the nature of the student press. You don't need any particular skills, just determination and a lot of patience,

because you learn everything you need to know while actively participating in this newspaper.

Recently, *The Brunswickan* has come under fire from students who disagree with how the paper has covered some issues as of late. From those who feel we aren't looking enough to the world outside Fredericton, to those who would like to see an article showing where to buy the cheapest bottled water in the SUB, we've got ideas coming at us from every direction.

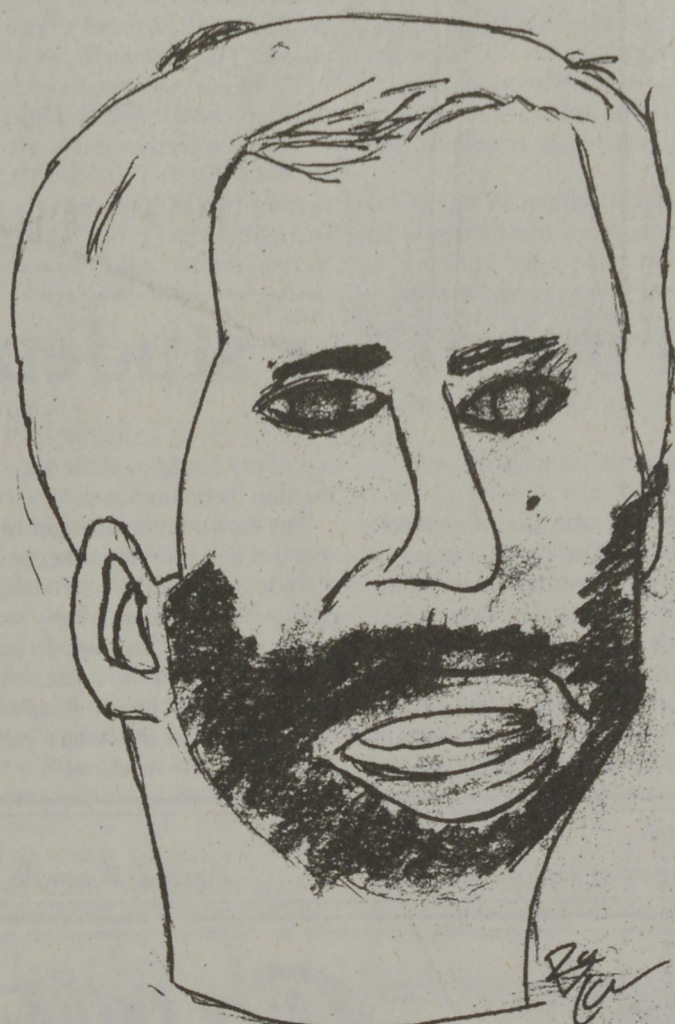
And most of them are good. We just don't have the staff to do them all.

As Shea Tompkins points out in his opinion piece this week, we, and every other student newspaper, have a staff that is continuously stretched to its limits. We're mostly full-time students, who, in addition to a full course load, spend up to forty or fifty hours a week plugging away at a newspaper. The shot nerves are a given (see quote above), though we've yet to develop any extreme drinking problems.

Our writing and photography is almost completely made up of contributions from volunteers. Again, these are all students who find the time to work at a story every week, or can take an afternoon to run around the campus taking pictures at our every whim. These hard-working contributors (see the masthead on page 6), are what we need more of to cover all these stories.

The Brunswickan would love to explore as many issues as it can - it just needs the people to make that difference. If you have a news story you'd like to write, come talk to our news editor and do it - you, the students and community, are what makes this newspaper tick.

Stories of abbreviation



This reminds me of the time I got my ear pierced to look badass, but it hurt so much I cried.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Bruns estimates for peace march embarrassingly low

by Asaf Rashid

I'm troubled by the fact that *The Brunswickan* contained a very inaccurate estimate of the numbers of people who showed up to the incredible - and historic - street party and march for peace in Fredericton on Saturday, January 18th. The news article written about the event said "200 activists wage peace on war," which is a grossly incorrect estimate of the number of people who came despite the very cold temperatures - I'm not going to bother getting into the sensationalized nature of the headline.

The general consensus amongst most of the people who I asked was that the number was greater than 750 at its peak. A few others and myself noted at one point that there might have been a thousand people. In the article, however, the author (who was the one covering the event on the scene) noted that there were 300 people present. Although a bigger estimate, it is still far off.

I feel it is important to point out the

discrepancy, even though it may seem trivial to some, because it truly was a historic event. I spoke with long time residents of Fredericton and the surrounding area, and was hearing that numbers for such an event as we experienced usually are around 40 or 50 people, maybe around a 100 at best. People were quite inspired by the fact that the turnout (and energy level) reached into an entirely new territory. One fellow said that nothing like that has ever happened in Fredericton before. The positive effects of the event are still being felt today, as I continue to hear about the new current of energy running through the city. By giving an estimate that is anywhere from three to five times lower than the actual number, the level of energy at the event is not captured.

Mass media outlets downplayed the event by either not showing up (CBC Fredericton), giving two seconds of coverage (CTV News), or by giving low estimates (*The Daily Gleaner* estimated 500). Obviously, none of them made a sincere effort to capture the energy of the event. I was hoping for better from *The Brunswickan*, and was left disappointed.

Rally articles misleading

Bruns criticized for articles about peace march

by Shea Tompkins

Both the January 17th, and January 24th issues of *The Brunswickan* contained articles concerning the peace rally that took place in front of City Hall on the 18th. As an individual who participated in some of the preparation and the community event itself, I feel that the articles contain discrepancies that would lead the reader to develop misconceptions regarding the organization, purpose and, in the end, the overwhelming success of the march.

Both articles are written from the perspective of what I would call a 'detached' bystander, rather than an 'objective' bystander. The detached perspective occurs when events are observed and interpreted only through the current experiences of the individual themselves. In order to gain a more objective (for lack of a better term) perspective, one must do preliminary research and interviews in order to understand the social, political, and historical context in which an event takes place. It is this lack of context that leads to some of the misinterpretations and slightly misleading language found in the articles. And, in turn, it is this language that will lead to the perception that the organization of, and community event itself was some form of random, spur of the moment gathering with mixed messages and confused onlookers.

For example, in the issue of the 24th, it was reported that the community event caused bystanders to "look upon them, wondering what they were doing." While I am sure there are people who do not even know there will be a war on Iraq,

let alone the organized dissent demonstrated by our community, the vast majority of those we passed knew exactly what was going on. Several storekeepers banged on their windows or came out to the sidewalk giving 'thumbs up' or 'peace' signs. So many cars honked in support that I felt I was in a wedding.

In the 17th issue, I am described as "the leader of the protest drumming circle," giving the impression that I simply called a group of people and handed out pots and water jugs. In reality, what I (in conjunction with instructors and students from the Université de Moncton percussion program, three of whom traveled more than 300 km to attend) did was hold a samba workshop, in which more than a dozen new musicians learned to play some of the traditional instruments, rhythms, calls and unisons common to the Brazilian Carnival. This was not a simple drum circle.

Further, both articles consistently make use of terms such as, "protesters," "demonstrators" and "dissenters." While these terms are not incorrect, not once do the articles refer to the participants as concerned citizens, community groups, students, artists etc. - all of which and more would have been applicable and led to a different perception on the part of the reader.

Finally, it is the issue of the 24th that we find the passage, "fuck the troops...fuck the troops" yelled a handful of angry demonstrators," followed by "the organizers achieved a peaceful celebration." I am quite simply flabbergasted that, of the dozens of slogans and chants from that afternoon, it is the above experience that is selected and relayed to *The Brunswickan* readers. Concerning the "achievement" of peace, there was nothing to "achieve" - it was a peace rally. I would like to ask: who expected anything but a peaceful event,

Because everything is political

How to turn being "on guard" into "en garde!"

by Tan-Nee Ng

Even though we never had a "sex" talk, I never even learnt about the birds and the bees until junior high, when I was forced to take a sex ed class in school. My mother always told me to "watch out, go for the balls, trust your instincts, and if you feel unsafe—leave."

That might be something that's easy to say and repeat, but it sure isn't as easy for me to follow. The fact is, after dark the UNB campus turns into a sort of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde story. The tall trees that provide ample shading from the sun become large obstacles that could potentially hide rapists and rabies-infested raccoons. The buildings that often protect me against the wind by day silence my voice by night. Not having to worry about running into a light post like clumsy Grace Adler on "Will and Grace" grow into worries about not being able to identify friends and foes from a distance of just a few feet because there is just no adequate lighting on campus. Suffice to say, as a woman, I don't particularly feel safe on my campus.

Earlier this week administration had a meeting on campus concerning a METRAC women's safety audit. METRAC stands for Metro Action Committee on Public Violence Against Women and Children and is a community organization that promotes the rights of women and children to live free from violence and the threats of violence. I'm glad that UNB has taken what I consider to be some pretty positive steps in the fight against rape and intimidation on campus (namely the installation of emergency phones and the Women's Centre), however we still have a long ways to go. A METRAC safety audit is maybe one of the first few steps we can take to ensure a safer campus, however, it won't happen if there is no demand for it by the students. So, if you are a student who feels unsafe on campus and want something done about it, please write an e-mail and cc. it to Reg Jerret, the director of security (rjerrett@unb.ca), the Women's Centre (women@unb.ca), and Jane McGinn, the director of student affairs and services (jmcginn@unb.ca). Also, for more information, please visit www.metrac.org.

Wabanaki Perspective

Bill C-250 debate turns ugly

by Dan Ennis

In this article I wish to share some of my observations on the Andy Savoy public forum held in Woodstock Jan 7th. I attended thinking different views would be discussed, but as things worked out, only one issue was discussed - the lifestyle of homosexuals.

I have to begin by stating that I have never in all of my life been witness to such a display of homophobic fear and hysteria as was displayed at this public forum.

In what was supposed to have been a public forum to discuss different issues concerning religion and the government instead turned into an evening of gay and lesbian bashing. For a solid two and a half hours WASP homophobics beat to death the issue of Bill C-250. This bill would add "sexual orientation" to the current list of identifiable groups (i.e. colour, race, religion and ethnic origin) in the "hate propaganda" sections of the Criminal Code of Canada. It has about as much chance of passing into law as a snowball's chance of surviving the flames of Christian hell.

Being the only non-Christian, dark-skinned "other" present in a sea of white faces, I was made to feel very uncomfortable, even fearful, at the blatant display of hostility, anger, hate and

bitterness towards those "others"; so much so I decided against expressing my concerns and issues for fear of being the next "other" to be vilified and/or attacked.

All of this mass hysteria was instigated and fanned by individuals who labeled themselves as Christian ministers. To me, this mass hysteria was reminiscent of the public exhortation by KKK leaders in their attempt to stir up hostile resentment toward black people.

Judging from the reaction of the majority of the people in attendance, this blatant display of hostility and hatred was acceptable and that they were only exercising their right to free speech and no one should be alarmed or concerned by such a display.

What I had intended to share at this forum was that as a survivor of the Christian residential school system perhaps all Christians should reflect on what was done to our people in the name of their Christian God along with their favorite mantra: loving the sinner but not his sin. As a religion that has arrogantly imposed its Christian lifestyle upon our people for 500 years, it is ironic it would be so concerned about having "another's" lifestyle imposed upon it.

As one whose people lived and survived every imaginable human atrocity, I am

(SEE BILL C-250, PAGE 5)

THE BRUNSWICKAN

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About us

The Brunswickan, in its 136th year of publication, is Canada's Oldest Official Student Publication.

We are an autonomous student newspaper, owned and operated by Brunswickan Publishing Inc., a non-profit, independent body.

We are a founding member of the Canadian University Press, and love it so. We are also members of U-Wire, a media exchange of university media throughout North America. We publish weekly during the academic year with a circulation of 10,000.

Editorial policy

While we endeavour to provide an open forum for a variety of viewpoints and ideas, we may refuse any submission considered by the editorial board to be racist, sexist, libellous, or in any way discriminatory.

The opinions and views expressed in this newspaper are those of the individual writers, and do not necessarily reflect the views of *The Brunswickan*, its Editorial Board, or its Board of Directors.

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Letters to the editor

We usually will not publish letters containing attacks of a strictly personal nature. *The Brunswickan* reserves the right to edit for length, spelling, and grammar. *The Brunswickan* reserves the right not to publish any letter. Letters to The Editor must be less than 300 words in length, though exceptions may be made. All submissions must contain your name, student number and a phone number. ID will be checked when submissions are dropped off at the editorial office of *The Brunswickan*, otherwise verification will be done by phone.

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This issue is dedicated to:
The Brutopia All-Boys Choir

and what presuppositions must necessarily exist in order to make 'non-violence' newsworthy?

Finally, and what concerns me the most, is the absence of the community groups and organizations responsible for bringing this event to fruition. More than anything else, I feel this simple detail, if reported, would have done a great deal to explain the truly grass-roots, non-hierarchical and highly diverse nature of the event. I would like, therefore, to give these organizations their just congratulations and recognition: the Raging Grannies, Project Plowshares, Voice of Women, Quaker groups, Maritime Conference of the United Church (which as an organization, and as individual parishes, are against the war in Iraq) Fredericton Food Not Bombs: Cold Squad (who distributed hot coffee, tea, hand/foot warmers and hats and gloves to those who were cold), Anti-Racist Action, Sambistas de Volta, Oxfam Fredericton, Kairos and Bethchange.ca.

As an individual who has been very active in *The Brunswickan* in the past, I am fully aware that matters such as this do not occur out of malice. Rather, they tend to occur because of lack of time and a staff that is continuously stretched to its limits - many working on several projects at once or tackling new jobs for the first time.

As such, this article should not be interpreted as negative. Rather, as a student owned and directed paper, it is up to us to hold ourselves to a high standard of journalism, and more importantly, to raise our voices when we feel they have not been represented. As such, my ability to do so here represents the stretch of our paper.