

Republican platform flawed: Surprise!

EDITORIAL
PATRICK REINARTZ

While the excitement of the recent Canadian federal election may be dying off, a whole new pot of political muck is brewing south of the border.

The most recent chapter of this ongoing electoral soap opera unfolded in New York at the Republican National Convention, where the party's members officially re-nominated President George W. Bush as their candidate for the upcoming election.

"Tonight I will tell you where I stand, what I believe, and where I will lead this country in the next four years," Bush announced, leading into a speech that touched on most aspects of his party's platform, if only briefly.

Although the President's platform could be called controversial on several points (as the presence of hundreds of thousands of protesters in New York's streets would surely suggest), what truly caught my attention was Mr. Bush's rather coy discussion of what he perceives to be American values.

On the topic of abortion, Bush stated, "Because a caring society will value its weakest members, we must make a place for the unborn child."

Addressing religion's place in government, Bush said, "Because religious charities provide a safety net of mercy and compassion, our government must never discriminate against them."

On the topic of gay marriage, the President said, "Because the union of a man and woman deserves an honored place in our society, I support the protection of marriage against activist judges." On that note, he also added, "And I will continue to appoint federal judges who know the difference between personal opinion and the strict interpretation of the law."

Now, I'm not a legal expert, but I always thought that "strict interpretation of the law" should protect all citizens from discrimination, not just the religious charities (read: Christian groups) Bush wishes to shelter from so-called activist judges. Wouldn't the President's assertion that "the union of a man and woman deserves an honored place in our society," count as personal opinion as well? Wouldn't this make him just as guilty of bias as the progressive lawmakers he is condemning? Some would say, "Yes, it does."

Clearly President Bush lives in a world where morals and values are painted only in black and white. While this attitude may be viable for one's personal lifestyle choices, it can not be the foundation for building a country's laws.

Society is an ever-changing, evolving creature and whether or not the Republican party wishes to acknowledge it, a country's laws need to be constantly updated to reflect the values of society at large—not just its most conservative constituents.

For contrast's sake, consider France's dedication to separating church from state. Obviously that government's decisions have not passed without controversy either, but at the very least there is no concern about decisions being passed by judges under the influence of a religion that those abiding by the laws don't necessarily even practice.

Closing his speech, President Bush said, "By encouraging liberty at home, we will build a more hopeful America." I wish I could say that this is something we can all agree on, but I get the funny feeling that a few million Americans are going to be left waiting for the day when they have the liberty to publicly marry their same-sex partner before they accept Mr. Bush's comments as truth.

Labour Day lacking progress in today's wired world

MUGWUMP
NATHAN WHITE

"Labor Day differs in every essential way from the other holidays of the year in any country. All other holidays are in a more or less degree connected with conflicts and battles of man's prowess over man, of strife and discord for greed and power, of glories achieved by one nation over another. Labor Day...is devoted to no man, living or dead, to no sect, race, or nation."

-Samuel Gompers, founder and longtime president of the American Federation of Labor.

122 years and one day after the first Labor Day was celebrated in New York City as a holiday for the "working man", your very own hard-working men and women at The Brunswickian were in their offices churning out the first edition of yet another fine volume of Canada's oldest official student publication.

Which leads me to the thought, if we still have to work hard on Labor Day, what exactly, if anything, has this holiday achieved? Does Labor Day really mean anything in the 24-hour, wired world of 2004?

Well, for starters, festivals like Labor Day and May Day around the world have raised awareness about such worker abuses as low wages, long hours, and inhumane working conditions. Yet, around the world, and even much closer to home than you might think, these things are still occurring.

For instance, the Philippine Daily Inquirer reported just last summer that Anvil Ensembles, a producer of baby clothes for companies such as J.C. Penney and Sears, gave its workers (who made less than minimum wage) amphetamines to keep them awake for 48- and 72-hour shifts. To some, this story might be only mildly more surprising than the multitude of Third World cases where workers are paid sub-poverty wages and workers who attempt to organize unions are summarily fired.

However, you might be a bit more surprised to hear about how factories in U.S. territories such as American Samoa and Saipan slap on the good ol' "Made in USA" label after locking their workers in factories, beating and starving them, and forcing them to work without pay or even to pay

"recruitment fees" just to get these horrible jobs in the first place. That's probably not something you think about when you're shopping at Sears or Wal-Mart.

Even right here in North America, sweatshops continue to operate, such as WINS Facilities in San Francisco, which supplied Sears, Wal-Mart, and Kmart, among others, and deprived over 200 workers (mostly female Chinese immigrants) of almost \$1 million US in wages over a period of several months in 2001 and 2002.

Celebrating Labor Day as a victory for workers seems more like a slap in the face to poor old Mr. Gompers, an idealist who probably expected a lot more advancement over 122 years. The U.S. Department of Labor's assertion that the American worker is "the creator of so much of the nation's strength, freedom, and leadership," is merely lip service to cover up (with apologies to Gompers for the unfortunate use of his words) battles of man's prowess over man, of strife and discord for greed and power, and glories achieved by one nation over another.

As I read about the cases of worker abuse across the globe, I start to feel a lot less sorry for myself spending long hours in front of the computer at the Bruns. Even though I make peanuts by North American standards for my work here, it's probably a year's wages or more in some countries. I also realize how lucky I am to be able to attend university and develop skills that will (hopefully) keep me above the poverty line once I enter the job market here in Canada.

The sanctuary of university is pretty much the only socially acceptable form of unemployment in our society, so be sure to take advantage of it while you are here. Consider going to class a privilege rather than a pain, and get involved actively in the university experience as much as possible, so you leave this place prepared for a competitive environment where hard work is no less necessary than it was 100 years ago.

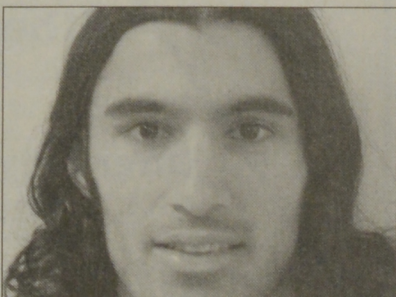
While sweatshops are not very common here in Canada, if you don't get the most out of your education, you might still find yourself toiling below the poverty line, as nearly one in four Canadians are, many of whom ironically work in the retail industry that fuels sweatshop demand around the world.



Brendan Doyle / The Brunswickian

Protestors camping outside of the Centennial Building were kicked off the site in August

Province has no right to ban protestors from site



DECONSTRUCTIONS
ASAF RASHID

I'm with the group, the Advocacy Collective, that rallied with Bonnie O'Dea (single, working mother), to fight against her eviction (April 2004) from subsidized housing owned by Fredericton Non-Profit Housing Corporation (FNPH).

Her story: She continued to bring very serious grievances to the director of FNPH, Jennifer Sloat, about a next door neighbour (also under FNPH) who she claims was regularly harassing her kids, including racial slurs and threats of violence; however, no action was taken on the neighbour, who at one time admitted to being long-time friends with Jennifer Sloat. Instead, Bonnie was eventually evicted, and her subsidy was taken away. Her and her kids were eventually thrust into homelessness.

Through the Court and contacting responsible officials, Bonnie's large body of evidence was ignored. The "normal" channels led to no justice, so we decided to further publicize the issue by setting up "Tent City", first at Officer's Square, then at the Centennial Building, where the offices of Premier

Bernard Lord and Minister of Justice Brad Green are located. Our goals were to make the issue more public and to press responsible government officials, including Green, to fulfill their obligations through addressing Bonnie's concerns. We made it clear that our tent camp would be removed if the responsible officials resolved the injustices done to Bonnie.

On August 5, after waiting proved to no avail, we became more assertive, offering pamphlets about Bonnie's case to people entering and exiting the Centennial Building. We entered the lobby area after contacting the media to inform them we intended on staying until someone with the jurisdiction to deal with Bonnie's case came to speak with us.

We tried to bring in a one-person tent to symbolize the issue of homelessness, but the guard refused, despite our assertion that he was inhibiting our right to free expression on public property.

The doors were locked and people were only let in with the permission of the guard. The police arrived at closing time and we agreed to leave willingly after making clear that we expected meaningful results by the next day. By the next afternoon, no meaningful resolution had yet arrived, so Bonnie locked herself in the bathroom inside the building to assert herself more. Others, myself included, maintained a presence in the lobby and we were eventually all physically removed from the building at closing time.

Shortly after, we were given "eviction" notices, ordering us to

vacate our tent camp in front of the Centennial Building. We did not leave.

On August 10, a court order commanded us to leave the premises immediately; it included a ban on our presence, if without appointment, on the property of the Centennial Building. We subsequently, and reluctantly, moved to the lawn of the Provincial Legislature.

On August 16, the Province applied for a permanent ban on myself and other members of our group from Centennial Building Premises. They based their claim on an assertion that we "interfered with entry and exit to the Premises, thereby disrupting the Plaintiff's business".

We disagree. There is no evidence of us causing such problems. They created disruption by "securing the area." For them to legitimately trump constitutionally protected rights to free expression and peaceful assembly (article 2 of the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms), they have to qualify their actions as "reasonable limits prescribed by law as can be demonstrably justified in a free and democratic society", i.e. legitimate safety issues or actual disruption of the functioning of the government to the detriment of society in general.

Myself and others, in defense of rights, will be challenging the attempted permanent ban from the "Premises" on September 10 at 9:30 a.m. at the Court of Queen's Bench ("Justice" building at the Queen-York intersection, on Queen). All are welcome to attend these public proceedings.

Seriously, you want money for a cab?

THE OPINIONATOR
BEN CONOLEY

While walking to work last week I was approached by a young woman who was panhandling outside of a bar downtown. When she finally met me on the sidewalk she asked if I had any money; money for a cab.

Although I don't lean as far to the left as I did three years ago when I arrived in Fredericton, I still consider myself to be a fair individual. I don't live extravagantly, I give money to people on the street from time to time, and if a charity knocks on my door, as Shinerama did last weekend, I try to help out. But money for a cab?

If this girl had explained that she was in trouble, or had given me any good reason at all as to why she needed to get in a cab right then, I might have looked for some change, or even a bill. I don't think everyone asking for money on the street has to justify why they need it, but a cab seems different. A cab isn't a necessity, and when you're panhandling I think it's fair to explain why you need a what some consider to be a luxury.

This girl looked well kept, well dressed, and perfectly capable of walking. It was a beautiful day. I don't know if she had to travel far, but it was a nice day for a walk. Also, whatever happened to foresight?

Barring emergencies, it should be reasonably expected of one to plan a trip accordingly. If you go out with your friends at night, and you have to get back the next morning, maybe it's a not a good idea to buy that last round, instead keeping ten bucks in your pocket for the next day.

I'm not a wealthy guy. I was walking to work. If I had money for a cab, maybe I'd be taking one myself. I only have so much money I can afford to give to those less fortunate than myself, and right now, people who need to get a cab aren't topping that list.

Homelessness is a very real, and obviously important problem. Downtown Fredericton can sometimes be crowded, especially during the summer months, people looking for some extra money. When I get asked for change half a dozen times while walking one block, I've got to say I'm a little disappointed when one of them wants to take a cab. I'm far more likely to give my change to the people who don't look as though they just got out of the shower. People who ask for money for cabs, drugs, or bus tickets only serve to undermine the efforts of those who are truly in need of help. That kind of behaviour only makes people less likely to give money to someone who really does need it the next time they get asked.

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The Brunswickian
21 Pacey Drive, Suite 35
Fredericton, NB, E3B 5A3

main office • (506) 453-4983
advertising • (506) 452-6099
fax • (506) 453-5073
web • www.unb.ca/bruns
email • bruns@unb.ca

This issue is dedicated to: All those who lost their lives in Russia last week and their families.

Office of Development and Donor Relations

Job Title: Annual Fund Caller

Function:

This position reports to the Annual Giving Officer as part of a team of associates responsible for contacting parents, alumni, friends and recent graduates of UNB to update information, inform them about upcoming events, and follow up on solicitations sent from campaign chairs.

Representative Responsibilities:

- As an ambassador and public relations officer of UNB you will cultivate and encourage the support of our alumni via personal phone communications.
- Disseminate information (events, programs, etc) and answer or direct alumni inquiries to appropriate university personnel.
- Update information on all alumni contacted.
- Have a thorough knowledge of the University, its' history and a very good understanding of our current funding needs.
- Meet program performance goals as set out.
- Maintain confidentiality with respect to prospect information and donor profiles.

Job Requirements:

- Must be a current student of the University of New Brunswick or St. Thomas University.
- Excellent interpersonal and communication skills.
- Strong team player.
- Demonstrated attention to detail.
- High level of professionalism, motivation, flexibility, integrity and judgement.
- Previous customer service experience preferred.
- Experience in a call center and/or a computerized environment will be considered an asset.

Hours: Must commit to a minimum of two (of the following) scheduled shifts per week.

Sunday	12:30 - 4:30 pm	Sunday	5:00 - 9:00
Monday	5:00 - 9:00 pm	Tuesday	5:00 - 9:00
Wednesday	5:00 - 9:00 pm	Thursday	5:00 - 9:00

To Apply:

Phone: Anna-Marie at 458-7594
E-Mail: Anna-Marie at aburris@unb.ca
Drop In: Tibbits East, Room 44A

Application Deadline: September 22, 2004
Salary/rate: \$8.00 to \$9.50 per hour