

Are classes cancelled? Who knows...

UNB needs to get a handle on stormy weather

by Chris Runyon

Ah, Monday morning! The sun is out and the birds are singing. Wait a minute - there's no sun, and there are no birds. There's 15 cm of snow on the ground and the Weather Channel is calling for more.

"Surely they will cancel school today!" we say to ourselves as we fire up the e-mail to check, because we assume that since every one of our professors has one of those little cue cards with all of our e-mails for this very reason, it wouldn't be too much trouble for them to send a mass e-mail to their students saying they won't be there.

Sure, I got an e-mail telling me my class was cancelled. I got it at 10:15 am, only 45 minutes after my first class was supposed to start. Not to mention I was crossing the street this morning and almost got nailed by, of all things, a UNB truck that didn't think that big red stop sign applied to him and slid right through it - or maybe it was the weather? Thanks for that.

I am a first year education student, and one of the first things any education professor will tell you is, "You can't be late as a teacher. There are students waiting for you." Ok, I'm here today, now where are you? I guess they should have said, "Do as I say, and not as I do."

Now don't get me wrong: if you can't make it because of the weather, we all understand. I have professors



Heather Hickey / The Brunswickan

Monday's storm left enough snow to do this, but not enough for class cancellations at UNB.

who drive from Saint John everyday to teach; if I were in their shoes, I would stay home too. However, you would think that after completing my four year undergraduate program here, and having two years left in the

Education program, that I have at least earned the respect to be notified when class is going to be cancelled, before I have to risk my neck trying to get there.

A notification at 10:15 am? Ridiculous, and please don't try and tell me that's the earliest anyone was aware of it. I guarantee that professor knew they weren't coming at 7:00 am this morning.

I'm sure all of us have had professors who say, "If you're not going to be here, make sure and e-mail me." Are we, as students, not seen as important enough to be shown the same common courtesy? I damn well know they consider us important enough to take \$5000 every year.

Then there are those of us who call and talk to a lovely lady who says, "sorry there's school today." Oh yeah, the "school" is open today, but all your classes are cancelled. Then after trudging through the snow for a half hour you might have a class, but only half the students are there. And then, what does your professor say? "I

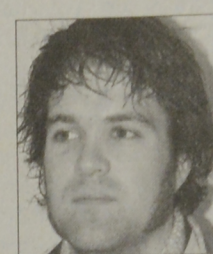
figured there wouldn't be anyone here at all." Well if you hadn't told us that "attendance is mandatory" and "you can't miss lectures because we cover too much information," I would have been home doing something a hell of a lot more constructive than walking up and down a big ass hill all morning. So what happens in class if you're lucky enough to have it? You go over last week's material because the professor doesn't want to start anything new with so many students absent.

Again, I'm not stating that because I could get to class this morning, that everyone else should too. I'm only pointing out the fact that there seems to be very little communication between professors and the school. Perhaps not. Maybe it is the communication between students and the school that is lacking. Is it too much to ask that the school be required to post class cancellations before classes start? I called the school's general information line, and was informed that official office hours start at 8:15 am. I don't believe we are asking too much to require cancellations to be in by 8:30 am. The professor posts by 8:00 am, and the school sends them out by 8:30 am. Problem solved.

Every student I talked to today said they were up checking e-mails and making phone calls about cancellations because we were all told that we would be notified. I can take five minutes to check for e-mails, so surely someone could meet us halfway and take five minutes to click "send" on a simple message: "Class is cancelled."

Well, until such time as students are seen as being important enough to be notified of cancellations (and notified before class, mind you), happy walking, and bundle up. It's cold out there!

Social beings eat common meals



THOUGHT FOR FOOD
MATTHEW THOMPSON

It's rare to actually think about food. When it does demand some attention, it is often because of hunger and sometimes nutritional concern. Thus, food appears to have importance only at a physiological level (though I have addressed other environmental and political issues). However, food also has strong social significance that is frequently overlooked and under-appreciated.

It is tradition for many families in Canada to have large turkey dinners, or other large meals, during the holidays. Family members and friends share in these feasts while reminiscing and discussing one another's lives. Sometimes reunions with estranged friends and relatives can be strained and awkward but, for a moment at least, this tension is alleviated by the sharing of food. Perhaps, eating food is similar, in a sense, to smoking in that by occupying our hands and physical movements to the purpose of eating we release our social discomfort. I believe there is more than just this physical preoccupation though.

Perhaps one can look to our ancient ancestors and their methods of hunting to explain the community formed by the sharing of food. I confess I know little about this element of human history except that social status was

inextricably linked to the hunter's success and generosity. I don't think much has changed except that the hunt has changed in focus from meat to money. To some extent we still, for example, calculate the generosity of our host or hostess by the food we receive in their company.

Human generosity seems to be embodied more naturally when it comes to food. We seem more likely to share the food we have than some of our other possessions. At our most selfish stage, childhood, we are possessive of our toys but not so possessive of our food. I remember lunchtimes in elementary school when kids used to trade lunches, sometimes to improve their own meal and sometimes merely to have more diversity (i.e. trading half sandwiches). There was always at least one child with a really crappy lunch, an insufficient amount of food, or sometimes no lunch whatsoever, but these kids could always depend upon the charity of others.

I believe we are generous with our food out of a fear of loneliness, which can also be identified conversely as a desire to share life. Some of my loneliest moments have been during meals that I have eaten alone. This is particularly true when I've eaten alone in restaurants. At those moments I think back to times when my family would sit down together for dinner. Sharing food is important in the sharing of life because food reminds us both of the sensuality of life and our will to live. After all, sustenance is essential to our existence. Food also reminds us of the life cycle, the death of an organism (flora or fauna) ensures our continued existence, and the simple commonality that all humans must eat.

An ode to being alone

Really, it's not as bad as it sounds

by Erin Hancock

Many of us lead each day caught up in a big, social scene. Most would admit that this is how they prefer to live their life. Whether it's going for a walk, studying or grabbing lunch, the majority of people choose to be

surrounded by people for the majority of their daily events. In university it is so easy to get caught up with your friends or partners that you can't remember the last time you sat down to just think.

I remember when I was a kid and my parents would send me to bed and because it was far too early to be sleeping, I had a lot of time to just think. I'd think about the events of the day, what I wanted to do the next and most of all just daydream. Now that I'm in university, on most nights I crawl into bed dead tired sometime after midnight and as soon as my head hits the pillow, I'm gone. Between friends, homework, sports, TV, laundry and all that other junk we do in the course of a day, we appreciate all the sleep we can get. There's no time for reflecting on the day.

One common misconception is that being alone and being lonely are one in the same. A wise friend once told me that when you are able to reach a point where you can dine out by yourself, you have achieved the most delightful self-comfort level you may ever reach. There may be some truth to this. Lots of people wouldn't think it would be much fun to be out at a restaurant by themselves, but it may

not be about fun. This can be a relaxing experience, where you just enjoy your own company and indulge in a little down time. Perhaps dining alone is jumping the gun a little.

There are so many ways to help yourself relax, reflect and rejuvenate by only taking a little time out of your more-than-crazy schedules. It will be well worth the time spared for reflection because you'll achieve the end result of mental peace. Depending upon what your personal style is, you can journal, do yoga, sing, go for a walk/run, have some tea, etc. I find that my thinking time usually ends up occurring in the gym. I'm on a machine and my legs are doing their thing and my mind is all mine to just sort through things. Anything that allows you to be alone and not have your mind committed to anything else is a great activity (or lack thereof) for "you time".

THIS WEEK'S CHALLENGE: I challenge you to take at least fifteen minutes a day to be alone and sort through all of the junk in your mind, allowing your mind to be put at ease. This may be in the form of a walk, rest (no, sleep doesn't count) or whatever else allows you to be alone with your thoughts.

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(Correction from Notice in Jan. 14th Issue)
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This is a two-step process:

1. APPLICATION TO GRADUATE FORM - This form is available from the UNB homepage under Quick Links. Graduation, Application to Graduate (<http://www.unb.ca/schedules/gradapp/>). If an application to graduate for May 2004 has already been submitted, please disregard this 1st step.
2. EXPECTED COMPLETION DATE - The expected completion date can be entered via your secure Website. Go to the UNB homepage clicking on >My UNB E-services= (you will need your email ID and PIN number) select the Personal tab, Demographic. Scroll down until you see Active Academic Program and at this point you will see New Completion Date (mm/yy). If there is no date or if the date is incorrect please enter the correct date i.e. 05/04. At this point you must click on the SUBMIT button.