

Bruns fundraiser a smashing success



Brendan Doyle/The Brunswickan

Students get out their aggression on some ancient computer equipment from The Brunswickan. The event was part of a fundraiser to send delegates to a journalism conference in Toronto.



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\$10 minimum wage?

by William Wolfe-Wylie
The Argosy (Mount A)

SACKVILLE, N.B. (CUP) -- A New Brunswick labour group is calling for an increase in the minimum wage to \$10/hr for all jobs that fall under federal jurisdiction. The New Brunswick Federation of Labour made the recommendations to the commission which is reviewing Part III of the Canada Labour Code.

"It is in fact unacceptable that the current federal legislation has as minimum hourly wage of the provincial standards, especially since New Brunswick is the second-last province in Canada with its weak minimum wage of \$6.30 per hour," said Kathryn-Ann Leger at the public hearing in Moncton, NB, on Monday Oct. 24.

The NBFL has found that the increase in the cost of living since 1976 has not equaled the rise in the minimum wage. According to a report released by the government of Nova Scotia in February 2005, the purchasing power of minimum wage is twenty-five per cent less than it was in 1976. The NBFL argues that if the increase in

minimum wage were consistent with the rise in the cost of living, minimum wage would be slightly more than \$9 per hour today.

The organization believes that making the changes in minimum wage at the federal level will set a model for other provinces and establish a benchmark across the country. This, said Leger, will also help to combat out-migration from the Atlantic region.

"It's because there are greener pastures out west," said Leger. "We suggest that people won't leave if they can make a decent wage in the Maritimes."

The Canada Labour Code covers all jobs that are of an international or inter-provincial nature such as railways, highway transport, broadcasting, aircraft operations, banks, first nations communities, and undertakings declared to be generally advantageous for Canada such as uranium mining and atomic energy.

Section III, the section under review, deals with labour standards such as hours of work, minimum wages, holidays, termination of employment practices, and provides for inspectors to enforce compliance with the code.

Approximately 10 per cent of

employees in the Maritimes are covered by the federal code rather than provincial codes.

According to Mount Allison professor of economics and Canada Research Chair in Canadian Studies, Craig Brett, however, the proposal could cause more problems than it solves. He notes that, over time, increases in the minimum wage have contributed to lower overall employment.

"It seems that in the short run, say in the first year after a minimum wage goes up, there are very few, if any, jobs lost," said Brett, but that "after three or four years, enough employers have either changed the way they do business, or have gone out of business altogether, to cause a noticeable effect of higher minimum wages on employment."

"For those people who keep their jobs, this would be great," said Brett.

The CLC has not been reviewed since its adoption in 1965. The commission's mandate is to make recommendations for both legislative and non-legislative ways of modernizing and improving the relevance of federal labour standards. Its final report will be ready in June 2006.

New UNB Health Village will bring research to campus

by Brendan Doyle

UNB is concerned about our health and wellness.

The university plans to build a new, multi-building Health Village complex beside the Lady Beaverbrook Gymnasium on Buchanan Field.

Originally conceptualized as a health and wellness center, the idea grew to include a number of buildings incorporating research and athletic facilities, and classrooms.

Part of the impetus behind the center was "recognizing that the recreation facilities and fitness facilities for the UNB population, the student population, were less than adequate and it was time to correct the situation for our students," said Bob Skillen, Special Projects Manager in the President's Office at UNB.

When UNB Chancellor Richard Curry heard about the plan and offered to fund a portion of it, the concept was completely re-tooled. The building site was moved to Buchanan Field and community groups were approached to gauge their interest in participating.

"As opposed to one gigantic

200,000 square foot building we're now looking at putting a series of buildings, over time, that will incorporate all of the [Health Village services]," said Skillen.

Some of those services could include "physiotherapy, massage therapy, and other types of health care services that could be made available to the student population," said Skillen. Partnerships with the local YMCA and River Valley Health could also bring new services to campus.

The faculties of Kinesiology, Nursing, and Forestry will participate, as will Student Affairs and Services, and groups from the community. "We're looking for the partnerships those groups already have to see where everyone will fit, because obviously there's not enough space to put everyone in [the Health Village]," explained SU President Ciana Chaiasson.

Skillen and Chaiasson are excited about the possibilities for research and development.

"This would be a natural fit to work to make us the leader [in health and wellness]," said Chaiasson. It is particularly important, says Chaiasson, because New Brunswick has such a poor standing nationally in terms of obesity.

Skillen and Chaiasson sit on the

project steering committee with Terry Haggerty, Dean of Kinesiology, and Ted Needham, Director of the Centre for Enhanced Teaching and Learning.

The group is looking at different faculty and community groups to decide how they will participate in the health village.

But are student's interests being considered?

"There is a big student focus. When we're looking at these groups, we're expecting them to have input from students and have the students' viewpoint in mind," said Chaiasson.

But at this point the steering committee is still choosing a direction.

"It's still pretty conceptual," said Chaiasson.

The fact that the Health Village concept has not been finalized makes fundraising difficult.

"At this point it's been mostly floating an idea," said Susan Montague, Director of the Office of Development and Donor Relations, the UNB department responsible for securing non-tuition funding.

"People who hear about it are very enthusiastic and supportive, but there are still a lot of details that need to be ironed out," she explained.

Another factor is the size of the project. Montague estimates that this is the largest building project the campus has seen since the expansions done during the 1960s, which included the Harriet Irving Library, Student Union Building, and residences.

"This is going to be similar in its impact to the growth of the campus in those days," said Montague.

Skillen agrees, saying that the new Health Village is, "much more than physical space, it's creating a new culture on campus."

Skillen hopes the Health Village will help provide an opportunity for UNB graduates to gain experience working in the health care sector without leaving New Brunswick.

He says that, "we'd like to position UNB and New Brunswick as leaders in illness prevention and management of chronic disease and give our young people... an opportunity to stay in New Brunswick."

Part of the new facilities will include space for new and existing programs, including those developed in partnership with community-based organizations, recreation facilities, and classroom space. This last fact is especially important for Kinesiology students.

"The [Lady Beaverbrook Gymnasium] is the faculty building for the Kinesiology Faculty and it has two classrooms, which are both very small. As a Kinesiology Student I took next to no classes in my faculty building," explained Chaiasson.

The Health Village promises enhanced services, increased space, and more research for all faculties that deal with wellness.

"I think it will really touch all faculties and all faculties will be able to benefit from the research that's going on there," said Chaiasson.

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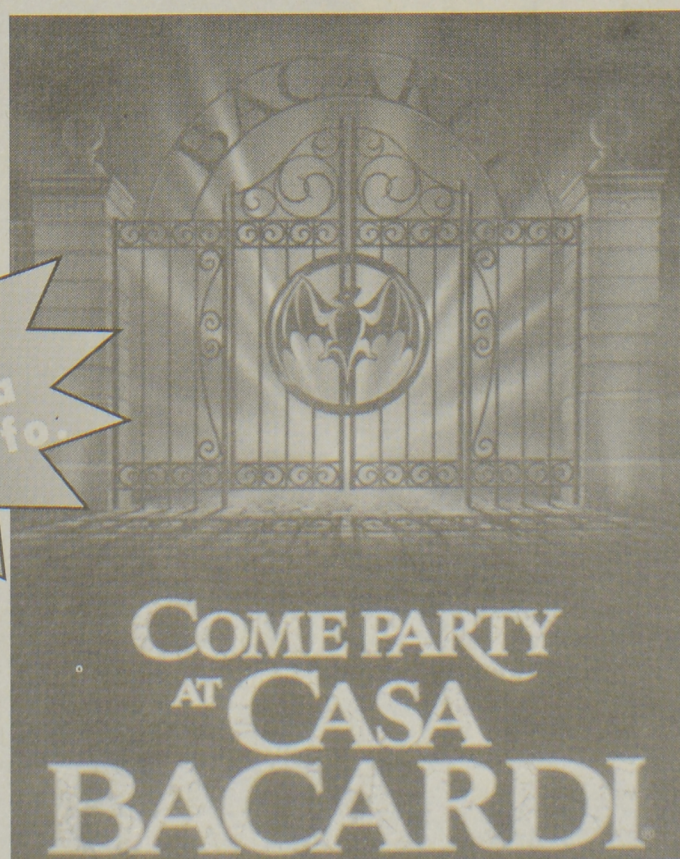


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