The catch 22 of childcare



Dear Editor,

The problem of being able to find and pay for adequate childcare in this day and age is one that most people seem to accept it as one of those things in life that just has to be worked through. My thinking is that we shouldn't have to choose between a reasonable quality of life for our families and taking care of our children.

It should be a given... shouldn't it?

The Setting: the 16 South bus at 7:45am. Crowded. Two dads, seated with their respective daughters (roughly six years old each) are chatting while their children introduce their dollies to one another.

The Scene: The topic of conversation was not Canada's abysmal loss to Russia in Olympic hockey, but childcare - the availability and the cost thereof (both daddies were escorting their little darlins to daycare before making their way to their respective places of employment).

The Problem: As I observed the discussion, it became more and more disturbing to me. The overall theme of the discussion was how lucky each had been to find a place for their kids in daycare. As the dollies danced together and farted in each others' face, both parents confided that the price of daycare was prohibitive, but what could they do? The kids had to be taken care of, and both Mom and Dad had to work.

The dollies were now tap-dancing on thin air... it's amazing how dollies can do that...

The Rant: This is a theme that is familiar to most people, even if they don't have kids. The cost of childcare is astronomical. Many families just can't afford it, so they end up relying on a relative or two, or the kids end up raising themselves. In fact, for many young, dual income families, once you've factored in childcare and transportation costs, it's actually cheaper for one partner not to work - ie: these costs not only absorb one person's income, but actually start eating into the second (and you just know that nine times out of 10, it is Mom who's expected to be the one to give up her 'day job'). What's wrong with these pictures? Or worse yet, what the hell are single parents supposed to do?

And on top of all this, even if you have enough income to actually pay for someone to look after your kids, you still have to worry about actually getting them a place in a daycare facility. And you'd better believe that the competition for these coveted spots in our sleepy little town has become cut-throat. I ask again: What's wrong with this picture?

At this point in my thought process, I notice that the dollies have morphed into light-sabres and that their owners are now locked in a do-or-die battle...

Now don't get me wrong: I'm not suggesting that care-givers be paid less. Quite the contrary, in fact: Most care-givers are extremely underpaid, and this is something that should also be addressed. So what's the solution? Should the government pay?

The Solution: As most of you probably know, the recent federal election brought forward promises of a $100/month childcare subsidy from the party that actually won. Upon discussing this with my one friend who actually has a child, I discovered that the average monthly cost of childcare per month is actually in the neighbourhood of $900- $1000 - and that's cheap childcare. What the hell is $100 going to do to that kind of cost? And now, on top of that, our glorious leaders are considering scrapping the childcare program altogether. Great idea, guys!

It seems to me that if the federal government put even a fraction of their military budget into social programs, including childcare, we could come up with something a hell of a lot more feasible for the majority of parents than the extremely creative solutions that people are currently forced to come up with... the mythical creature that is a national childcare program, perhaps... And that's just to start. But alas and alack, our current governmental structure is simply not up to the task of dealing with the social issues that have arisen as a result of said structure. Thus, I fear that the people of this country will continue to grapple with the Catch 22 of trying to earn enough money to provide basic care for their children whilst attempting to ensure that there is actually someone there to provide said care.

By the time we reached my stop on the line, the dollies were locked in a vicious wrestling match, accompanied by ear-splitting giggles...

Ah to be six and worry-free again.

By Jennifer Carkner

Oral question period: SEX Q & A

Sex Q & A - The Oral Sex Issue
Your questions about oral sex answered
A Service Provided by the UNB Sexuality Centre
Questions Researched & Answered by Sarah Falconer

My boyfriend told me that swallowing ejaculate will clear up my acne. Is this true?

• This is completely false. There are a lot of myths out there about oral sex. Swallowing ejaculate will not clear up your acne, give you big breasts, make you fat, get you pregnant or ease your menstrual cramps. These are myths that are not to be believed. Nothing terrible will happen if you swallow ejaculate, but that does not mean that you have to swallow. Many women do not enjoy swallowing ejaculate and that is completely fine and normal as well. Just remember if you do swallow, you'll still have that acne in the morning.

Can you get AIDS from giving or receiving oral sex?

• While oral-genital sex is considered a low-risk behaviour for the transmission of HIV, you can still transmit or receive HIV and other STIs (sexually transmitted infections) through oral sex. Low risk does not mean no risk. If the person performing oral sex has any type of cut, canker or lesion on their lips or inside their mouth, these can provide access for viral infection. There have also been recent reports that the virus can penetrate through intact (not cut) mucous membranes in the throat. There is such a minute amount of the HIV virus concentrated in saliva that the risk of the performer infecting the receiver is low for HIV, but other STIs can be transmitted by the performer like herpes and gonorrhea. If you are concerned about STIs, talk to your partner about their past sexual experiences, get tested, insist that your partner get tested and use condoms when having oral sex (flavoured ones can help to make oral sex even more enjoyable).

Why do people enjoy oral sex?

• People enjoy oral sex because it feels good; most people find it sexually stimulating and exciting. It is great as foreplay or an alternative to sexual intercourse. It is even recommended by some sexual therapists as a therapy for premature or delayed ejaculation and low sex drive in both men and women. In addition, many people who cannot reach orgasm through intercourse find that they are able to orgasm through oral-genital sex.

For answers to these questions and more, come visit us at The Sexuality Centre (Top Floor of the Student Union Building). Take the elevator or the stairs by the jewellery store.
Don't forget to check out our free weekly film screening every Thursday at 7 p.m. in the Sexuality Centre!
Want to see your question in a future issue? Email questions to: o8731@unb.ca

New residence brings headaches

by Josh Joshua

I read in a recent issue of *The Brunswickan* that one reason that UNB has trouble keeping students has to do with not them proper support. As a residence student who pays endless amounts of money for every little thing, I'm more than a little annoyed at the lack of interest the university has in its current students, especially those who pay endless cash even more directly to UNB for the convenience of living on campus.

Let's review: if I want to go back to residence next year, which is pretty debatable at this point, I need to pay $300 by May 31 of this year. If I pull out between now and July 31 - including as early as the day after I paid that fee - I get $150 back from what I paid. Where does the other $150 go? UNB is not some small institution that desperately needs the money.

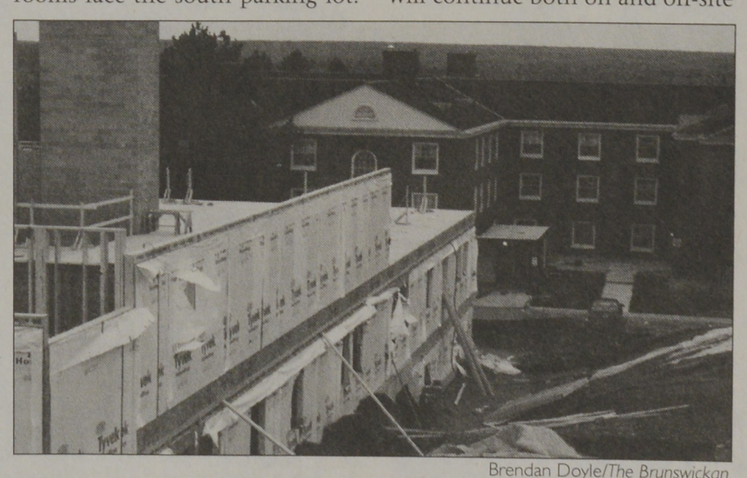
When students sign up for residence, they sign up for an eight-month deal. But if they're from far away, which often is the case for residence students, and can't make it back for Christmas, they need to pay another $200 just to stay for two weeks. That's two extra weeks within the eight months that they're already paying for. That doesn't even include meals over the break. And the university goes over the top to make sure that no one gets in over the break for free: they change the locks as soon as exams are over, and make sure no one moves in until they say so.

Also: my key deposit was $30. Last time I broke my car key, it cost me $3.50 to replace it. It was bigger and more heavy-duty than the keys I have for my room, but apparently they're worth more than that? It's bad enough that students are already regularly receiving fines for allowing their weighted doors to slam into the doorframes they are designed to slam into.

And now comes the fun part - food quality. We residence students are cordially invited up to 19 times a week to use our (mandatory) meal plans to pay for subpar ingredients for our sometimes minimally cooked and often reserved food. For example, once at the international menu, there was some pretty unappetizing chicken enchilada. For supper that day, one of the options was chicken enchilada stuffed potatoes. Yes, it is a good idea to save money, but Sodexho should really take a look into what students eat and what they don't. Maybe then they'd notice that sometimes students completely avoid certain foods they serve.

For the record, students who do have a 19-meal plan pay $3160 a year, $4.89 for each meal, even though you could get some of the ingredients in bulk, wholesale, for less.

Now, I would also like to point something out that UNB is doing to treat its students right. Between Tibbits and Joy Kidd house, there are 125 or so students whose rooms face the south parking lot.


Brendan Doyle/*The Brunswickan*

Each of these students started the year adjusting to food trucks constantly backing up to the Dunn Kidd Tibbits (DKT) entrance at 5 or 6 a.m. Then a month or so later, the heavy construction began at 7 a.m. every morning with backhoes and chainsaws, men yelling back and forth, and even more vehicles backing forth.

The following are quotes from various members of Res Life in a series of contradicting emails:

"The formwork for the concrete foundations is being set in place, and the concrete pouring will end before the beginning of exams on December 10. We anticipate that there will be no noisy construction to disrupt preparations for or the writing of exams."

"We anticipate that this first Fall phase of construction will conclude not later than the first week of December, so that there will be no interruption of your preparation for and writing of exams... Much of the building is being fabricated off-site, and there will be no further construction on site until the Spring."

And then:

"Please note that construction of the exterior building envelope will begin on January 2, 2006 and will continue both on and off-site during the winter months."

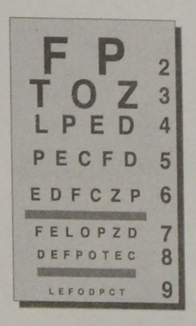
As well, construction continued to go on all through exams, violating almost all of the 23-hour quiet hour system that Res Life has in place at that time. That's also aside from the fact that construction regularly begins an hour before quiet hours end, at 8 a.m.

Now every morning at 7 a.m., students wake up to the hammering of nails constantly, as the new residence is built up. After 3 months of getting used to the heavy machinery, the sound of countless nail guns now wakes students up every weekday morning. And as an added bonus, the Tyvek coverings for the building flap around at night now, making it sound like someone is crinkling a gigantic bag outside residents' windows. It's too bad there isn't any ventilation in rooms, because otherwise it would be easy to just shut windows at night.

Each of 125 or so affected students, most of which are likely freshmen with younger friends, could tell 2 friends considering residence next year at UNB not to bother and to live off campus. 250 more than cancels out the 171 that UNB is so desperate to get into their new building. It's bad enough that residence students pay too much for the quality of what they get, but to have 125 students in an incredibly uncomfortable situation every morning, and have them pay the same as the rest of the residence students, is a very unfair way of going about things.

Overall, I would say I am very disappointed with the way that UNB has been recently treating its most valuable customers - the ones who pay $12500 or so directly to them. Perhaps next time they should consider the value they are giving their current students instead of focusing on ones they don't even have yet.

Dr. T. Wayne Lenehan / Dr. M. Michele Leger
Optometrists
"Family Eye Care"



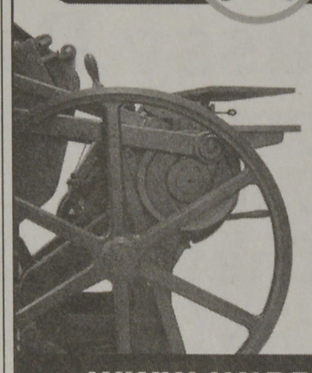
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