

COMMENTS & LETTERS

Plants are meant for gardens

eric@unb.ca • January 18, 2006

The Brunswickan

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The Brunswickan, in its 139th 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.

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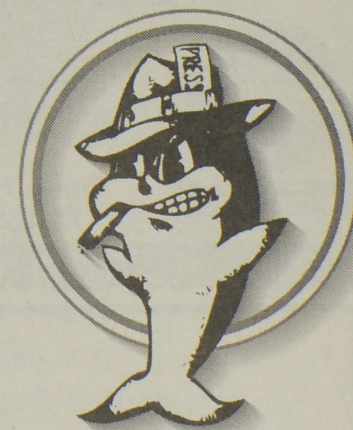
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Letters to the Editor should be no more than 300 words. We reserve the right to edit for length and clarity. Submissions are due by 5pm on Saturday evening.

Tell us what you think:

21 Pacey Drive, SUB Suite 35
Fredericton, NB, E3B 5A3
main office • (506) 447-3388
advertising • (506) 452-6099
fax • (506) 453-5073
email • bruns@unb.ca
web • www.unb.ca/bruns



Dear Editor,

We're in the midst of a federal election. Being the informed citizen that I am, I went to the local UNB/STU campus debate for Fredrickson candidates on January 10. And my, the greenery I saw there! No, I'm not talking about supporters of the Green Party.

I'm talking about something quite different: planted questions from the audience. But these were not simply questions on the minds of audience members before the debate. The plants I saw at this debate were in a league of their own - filled with rhetoric, asked by obvious partisans with their minds already made up, and aimed at perpetuating political gamesmanship instead of speaking consistently, completely, and genuinely to the heart of policy debates.

Now, there were some well thought out, meaningful questions posed by undecided voters from the crowd. Many of the questions, though, especially those right off the starting blocks, were so obviously created to gift or attack one candidate or another that many in the audience quickly

became disinterested in what was actually being said.

That's unfortunate, because we end up with cheapened debate and increasingly apathetic demographics. More importantly, it risks preventing those with genuine questions from asking them because the time for these events is limited.

It's also ineffective. It's old style politics and doesn't sway people my age. We see right through it.

If you're going to a local candidates' debate to ask questions, then great!

We need more active involvement from citizens in this country. But please, don't reduce the event into a mere exchange of political blows. Sure, you might get some satisfaction out of it, and it might make your partisan fellows feel good about your shared cause, but the policies you support and the ideas you advance are the proper tools for that, not a few quick hits in a Q&A.

Keep the subservience out of these events; instead, inject them full of substance.

Nick Ouellette



Brendan Doyle/The Brunswickan

Liberal candidate Andy Scott at the recent All-Candidates debate held in the SUB Cafeteria.

Voters face a fresh start or corruption

Dear Editor,

Is this a Canadian election campaign or just a really long episode of Canada's Most Wanted? As if it wasn't bad enough that the RCMP is investigating the Liberals over an alleged leak of their income trust announcement, now we learn that the Mounties are also looking into a questionable grant that went to a shadowy "national unity" organization in Quebec. Canada has endured 13 years of this sort of corruption, and enough is enough. Let's vote the crooks out on January 23.

After 13 years of Liberal lies, arrogance, and corruption, the need for a change in government in a no-brainer. It's time to elect a party that is serious about cleaning up Ottawa. Trusting the Liberals to do so makes about as much sense as having prisoners mind the keys to their own cells. Let's face it, Paul Martin's gang is no different than Jean Chretien's gang when it comes to ethics. On January 23, let's vote for the clean, trustworthy government Canada deserves. Let's give Stephen Harper and his new Conservative Party a chance.

Paul Martin criticizes the United States for its CO2 emissions even though Canada's record under the Liberals is far, far worse. More recently, Martin has been busy trying to mislead Canadians that the Conservative Party's platform will plunge the country into deficit even though the prestigious Conference Board of Canada has said the party's plan will result in successive surpluses. Who to believe? A non-partisan think tank, or the party that pur-

posely low-balled the recent surplus for political ends (the Liberals claimed the surplus would be \$1.9 billion, but it ended up being \$9.1 billion)?

So, Paul Martin thinks Canadians are gullible enough to believe his claim that the Liberal Party isn't corrupt? Justice Gomery said the party was guilty of taking kickbacks in his report. On top of that, when are the Liberals going to pay back the rest of the missing millions? They expect us to jump for joy because they've paid back a million even though Justice Gomery said that about \$40 million is unaccounted for. It's high time Canadians gave the Liberals their walking papers.

A book that is to be released in Quebec this week alleges that a group called Option Canada spent millions illegally during the 1995 referendum. If true, this allegation will serve to further enrage Quebecers. So much for the Liberals as the true guardians of national unity.

Under the Liberals' watch, Canada is fast becoming the world's first banana dominion. The RCMP is currently conducting not one, but two investigations into the Liberal government's actions. Are we or are we not a First World country?

The choice Canadians face this election is simple: corruption or a fresh start. We can either opt for another term of Liberal corruption and arrogance or we stand up and stay enough already, Canada deserves better.

Graham D. Little
UNB Political Science Student

Liberal military ad wrong

Dear Editor,

Although the national media has latched onto this issue with some vigour, I think it should be brought up here, a little closer to home. I would contend that students, with the exception of those who are studying military history or current affairs, don't hear much about the defence portfolio. Many are likely left wondering why the Liberal ad entitled "Choose Your Canada: Military" has angered many Canadian Forces (CF) personnel, former and serving. I don't know if I'm allowed to put a transcript of it here, but Google can track it down for you easily.

This ad, like the rest of the twelve Liberal attack ads, targets Stephen Harper. The other eleven are anything but rainbows and sunshine, but the Liberals crossed the line with this one. In their attempt to score some cheap political points, they slagged the CF and her members with reckless

abandon.

Paul Martin said he approved all twelve, but "Military" was never meant to air. Ministers McLellan and McCallum contradict him though. Even if it was supposed to stop before it hit the airwaves, how could they possibly conceive it in the first place? Is this what they really think of the military?! That our men and women in uniform would participate in a coup of some sort or provide the means with which a Prime Minister would launch a police state? That they cannot be trusted in our urban centres, but instead be pushed out into the boondocks where they'll be "out of sight, out of mind"?

There already are troops in our cities (smaller towns too). You can find Reserve armoureds in every major centre. Some cities even have Regular Force garrisons (Edmonton, for example). Harper's proposal was not for soldiers to overrun civilian society, but for

the specialized personnel to be already in place in the event of natural or manmade disasters, instead of on a far off base. The nearest Regular Army Engineers to Vancouver, 1CER, are in Edmonton. How long would it take for them to move their large equipment over the Rockies and across the Interior to the coast in the event of a major earthquake? Or ice storms, floods, terrorist attacks, etc.?

This is not much of a partisan issue. I don't really care what political stripe you have when it comes to supporting and posting our professionals-in-arms. Forget politics, it is unfair for a governing party to get some political prize on the backs of those whom they commanded for 12 years.

The rationale for the new units is noble. Implying that our troops cannot be trusted to walk down our streets is not.

Ben Curtis

A letter to you from The Brunswickan

Dear Students,

While most of you have your own worthwhile endeavours, less than 0.1 per cent of the student population at UNB contributes to The Brunswickan. That means many of the stories that come out of your university experiences are not told.

The Brunswickan strives to issue a well-rounded newspaper, covering issues of relevance to students to the best of our ability. We are, however, dependant on a volunteer staff base, like other not-for-profit organizations on and off campus. Part of our operating budget comes from a media fee paid

by all students. Is it right that such a minuscule percentage of the student body decides the content of a publication that is funded, in part, by the students themselves?

Here are some of the stories that could have been covered in The Brunswickan this week:

- SafeRide cuts/ridealong chance
- The myths of VOIPing
- Stan Cassidy Rehab Centre opening in 2006?
- Student Affairs formalizes partnership with MCAF
- Tax hike to improve city trails

These are just a few of the numerous potential news stories affecting

students that cannot be found in this week's issue of The Brunswickan because of a shortage of student volunteers within this organization.

We encourage any and all interested students to contact us with story ideas. But that's not enough. We need some of you to come and write them.

The paper and, in turn, the students suffer when stories of interest fail to be covered because of a lack of resources.

Drop by our office (SUB room 35) anytime, or drop us an email (eric@unb.ca) if you'd like to help out.

Everybody has a story. Others want to hear them. Why not share?

Knowledge is power. Increase yours.

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