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What has the SU done for you: Students say, "Not much"

by Julianne Philpott and Jennifer McKenzie

With Student Union elections right around the corner, the Brunswickan took a look at what the Student Union has done for UNB's student population this year, and what you thought of their accomplishments. From the simple issues to the not-so-simple, students gave their opinions on the progress and the services provided by this year's Student Union.

Most recently, last Wednesday night was an opportunity for students to catch a bus to Crabbe Mountain as a part of this year's Winter Carnival. Jessica Sturt, Student Union President, was pleasantly surprised when 170 students showed up at the SUB, and many students agreed that this was indeed a great idea. One student, Stacie Parry, commented, "I enjoy the fact that they provide transportation to Crabbe." Numerous students also commented on how advantageous this service was for them.

Equally beneficial to the students was the SU's Book Buy and Sell, which takes place each year at the beginning of both the fall and winter semesters. Here, students can rid themselves of books that they no longer need in exchange for cash and also look for used books at (reasonably) low prices. This year, it was deemed a success, as a number of students marked the usefulness of such a resource. One student offered, "The book sale is pretty convenient," while another said, "The used book sale saved me a bit of money. I think



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it's a good thing."

One of the responsibilities of the Student Union is to fight for the rights of students. After all, they are students themselves, and are undoubtedly equally affected by the issues that occur throughout the year. The SU struggle to obtain a Universal Bus Pass (U-Pass) got the attention of many students. One student, who asked to remain nameless, commented, "I think they need to fight more for the needs of the students. For example, the U-Pass... was an issue that a lot of people were counting on. I even picked my apartment location based on it being voted in and agreed on. Then, [the SU] sent out an e-mail

to half the students claiming it wasn't going to happen. [They] did a good job at staying on top of the city and fighting for the students, but it was confusing to those of us who were trying to get answers."

The Student Union-operated Advocacy Centre in the SUB acts as an advocate for UNB students who have any legal questions or concerns. This comes in pretty handy when a student is having landlord/tenant issues or property lease and academic issues. One student commented on the benefits of this service: "The law service has helped me a lot from being scammed by my landlord. I had no idea." However, many students feel

this service does not go far enough and often leaves them feeling cast off. A second-year Computer Science student, Jason, explained, "They didn't really have the information I was looking for and it seemed like they were just trying to get rid of me."

Many students feel the SU is not visible enough on campus and because of this not very useful to them. When considering the SU in general, one student said, "I always thought they needed more advertisement for all the services that [they] provide. I never know where to go or who to speak to." Another student offered, "I've got to say that I honestly don't know exactly what the SU does. I

know things get done and money is spent, but I can't say that I know on what."

One fourth-year student, Steve Sharron, expressed serious concern about the general fees that UNB students have to pay each year. "[The SU] has charged me \$25 to make their building bigger. They have charged me \$89 for reasons I'm unsure of, and \$15 for a radio station that nobody listens to. Give me back my \$129 and find another way to pad your resume, UNBSU. Thanks for increasing my debt."

Another graduating student's thoughts on the SU during her time

at UNB are generally indifferent. "In my 4 years at UNB, I would say that they have helped me with a few things, but they weren't a big part of my experience at UNB, which is kind of sad. I would give them 6/10. It's good they are there, but they can't help you when you don't feel welcomed to find them."

This year in particular, the SU face controversy surrounding their by-elections, and many students believe the election process is meaningless. One pointed out that the elections are a confusing time for students in general. "I think the elections are pointless, because no one campaigns, so you never know who is running or what they want when it comes time to vote. Everyone reads about the disappointment of school spirit because no one voted, but I feel it's up to them to get out there. We don't have time to research every candidate."

Any student-run organization is going to have its ups and downs, and face large hurdles. UNB's SU is no different. With the controversy over ratifying a Pro-Life group at the beginning of the year and the ongoing troubles with the by-election, the Union had some difficulties. They faced some new challenges, working without Bruce Devlin and seeking to provide entertainment for students on their own. But then they triumphed with the success of the Winter Carnival last week.

While many students appear to have concerns with not only this year's student government but those of past years as well, the voice of UNB's student population seems to be searching for credibility regardless of who makes up the active administration.

Grilling Sodexho over Selona

by Josh O'Kane

With the start of the winter term, students who went to the Student Union Building on campus were hit with an interesting surprise: the Selona Grill, the SUB's home of hamburger-style take-out food and all day breakfasts was closed. It was later discovered that the Grill would in fact be open on February 2nd.

Wait, what? The new, renovated Selona Grill was to have improved access and services, including a new stir fry option. You may have noticed, however, that all that can be seen of the location is still a series of tarps and curtains.

One major disappointment for students is the current lack of its all-day breakfast service.

First year BCS student Justin LeBlanc says (morosely), "I miss having breakfast all day."

Kris Rogers, an Arts-Computer Science major, is also disappointed.

"When you wake up at 3:30 on the weekend, and you're hungry for some bacon and eggs, you'd say, hey, let's go to the Selona Grill."

In fact, he says, "some days we'd go at 8 p.m. and say, let's get some breakfast."

James Brown, Director of Residential Life and Conference Services, offers his remarks about the still-unchanged Selona Grill location.

"It's going to be open a week [from last Monday]," says Brown.

Residential Life and Conference Services is responsible for the food service on the UNB campus and currently is under contract to provide it through Sodexho. Sodexho in turn runs the Selona Grill and all other food outlet locations such as Mr. Sub and Pizza Pizza.

The delay, he says, has to do with the shipping of the countertops for the new setup.

"The countertops, which are just in Canada now, had to be shipped from the States. They're just in," he says.

"They think they're going to be able to get them and the equipment installed this week, with the goal to open a week from today."

Another speculated reason for the delay is that the sneeze guards for the counter have also not arrived -- but, regardless, the new Grill should be up and running by next Monday.

"The fact that it doesn't look that close is because until you put the countertops down and put the equipment on it, it doesn't look serving. But it's close."

Another delayed project of Sodexho's is the new Tilley Hall café. Alongside the MacLaggan café, it was originally expected to be set up by the beginning of the 2006 school year. A series of delays have left it high and dry as of yet.

Brown reassures, however, that Tilley should also be open by Monday.

"I just talked to the supervisor about Tilley. They're moving the equipment down today," he said on Monday February 5th.

"There's nothing outstanding with Tilley. They've got all the equipment and they're moving in now. The only thing that has to happen is that, through Sodexho, hours have to be arranged, and somebody has to work them."

In fact, Brown says that Monday would be the worst case scenario, and that the café could be open even sooner than that. The location is designed to be primarily for take-out, with minimal seating.

"It's an alternative to Tim's and Starbucks with a lower price," says Brown, "providing a cheaper alternative in the area."

I don't ♥ (heart) Valentine's Day

by Niki Klukas

Valentine's Day is once again upon us. Once again we have to don pink and red, be frighteningly lovey, and spend our hard earned money on non-lasting goods.

Some people look forward to February 14th with the eager anticipation of a hopeful fool, while others know better.

According to a website dedicated to fighting the insidious effects of Valentine's Day, "Love isn't a one-day a year event, sponsored by Hallmark, Hershey's Kisses, and the American Florists Association!"

It continues, "If you can't show someone you love them the other 364 [days], then what's the point? And why should everyone who doesn't feel like being all lovey-dovey have to deal with your big mushy red hearts for an entire day?"

Catherine Donaldson-Evans, reporter for Fox News, says, "Some feel icky about the sappy quality that characterizes February 14th. Plenty of Valentine's Day scrooges despise what they say is the corny, forced sentimentalism of a contrived, overly commercialized holiday."

She says that guilt is a big problem associated with the day, whether you have a "special someone" or not.

"There are a lot of things that run across your mind that you'd like to do, but with busy schedules, you don't always have the time. But when you don't do them, you feel guilty," she explains.

Though there may be something beneficial to the idea of healthily accepting singlehood and recognizing Valentine's Day for what it is with a level head, many singles take the occasion to bask in the glory of their sorrow.

"It's funny to hear the rage that

a holiday symbolized by cute little Cupids and fluffy things brings out in people," said Danielle Romano, an editor at DailyCandy.

"That resentment definitely makes you want to not just ignore the holiday but to do something as a protest, a statement against dinner for two and cheesy professions of love," she continues.

Some gyms have started "Scorned Lovers" kickboxing sessions.

"It's a regular kickboxing class, but the only added dimension is that they're bringing in the picture for motivation," said trainer Adam McLeavy, "They're going to unleash their pent-up aggression on that person. They're going to punch and kick away those hurt feelings."

Another reason many people in and out of love give for disliking the holiday is the pure commercialization of it. Hallmark makes millions.

One hotel has even gone so far as to develop a package for single men and women. "For guys, we'd offer a six-pack of Bud and a paper shredder [for old love letters and photos]. For girls, it was bubble bath, darts and a dart board, and a box of Mallomars," the manager says.

This statement alone brings up the numerous gender issues related to Valentine's Day. Women are thought to expect expensive gifts and men claim to be happy with some extra spicy sex.

In truth, some men would probably really like some chocolates and nice underwear, and some women would love some new and different lovin'.

When it comes right down to it, Valentine's Day has become an exclusionary holiday. What happened to the sweet old days when every kid in the class got a valentine and a cupcake?

Today, people in couples get roses they know their significant others cannot afford and hot sex they should

be having anyway, and singles get kickboxing and pity hotel packages.

In both cases someone ends up annoyed or downright pissed off.

Perhaps the answer lies in ignor-

ing the holiday altogether, though it feels much better to wear black, roll your eyes, and mock those who are happy and in love. (Or torch your ex's house/car/pet, etc -- Ed.)



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