

COMMENTS & LETTERS

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Grinds my gears: Paging doctor pills

by Courtenay Courrier

One thing that has always thoroughly grinded my gears has been doctors. Not doctors in general, but their pill pushing. Anyone who dares to brave the waiting rooms of their doctor's office has left with an armful of prescriptions, many of which they probably didn't even need.

Pharmaceutical companies pay out thousands of dollars to doctors who prescribe these medications. This is where doctors get the money to blow at the country club. It works for them, because even if they don't get as much as they can (money-wise) directly from your pocket, they can still rake in the dough by prescribing various pills and puffers, whether you need it or not.

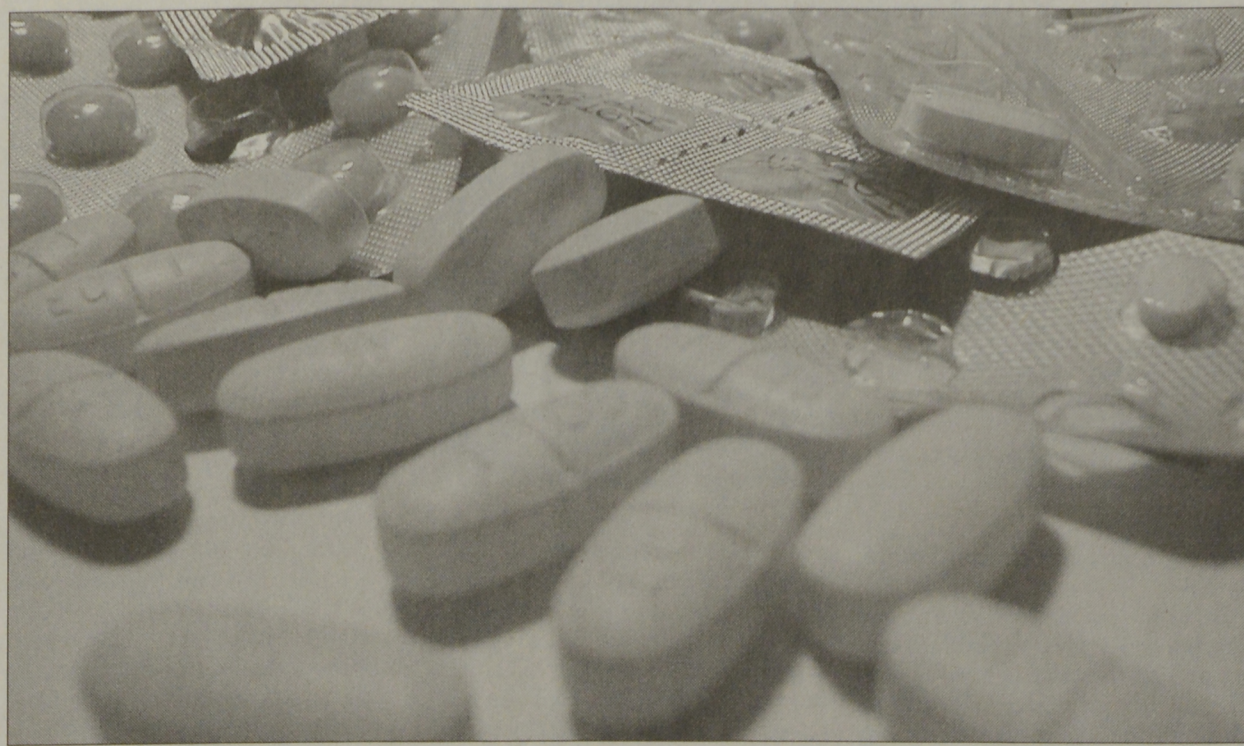
And that's the issue -- whether you need it or not. There have been numerous times when I've gone into my doctor's office (we'll call him Dr. Pills) for mild problems. Even if it was just for a check-up, I'd always leave with at least three prescriptions, not even knowing what they were for. Had I filled these prescriptions (I hate taking pills, especially when it seems completely unnecessary), I would have been heavily medicated between the ages of ten and twenty, and for what reason? I have no serious illness or medical condition, so why do I need all these prescriptions

of purposes unknown and names I couldn't possibly pronounce? There is no reason, of course, other than money. Their money.

According to Health Canada, their "highest priority" is ensuring balance between the benefits and risks of medication. This would enable them to give you many prescriptions with fewer risks. Or maybe they actually want some risks and side effects, since these drawbacks are often counteracted by other medications.

Depression is one of the medical conditions you hear about most frequently -- especially in a University town like Fredericton. I do believe, however, that depression is a serious problem and can be treated with medication, but I don't believe that most people who take medications for depression need them. There are medical conditions, such as a chemical imbalance, that can cause depression. These, of course, need to be tended to. But also, everyone gets depressed at some point and often it doesn't require medication to cure. But either way, they go to the doctor and come out with a bag full of Paxil, Prozac and Celexa, hoping popping a pill will be easier than having to deal with their problems.

Of course, it must be recognized that popping all these pills without adequate cause will not only up the side effects of these drugs (depression



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being one possibility, ironically), but psychological factors will also set in and tell you that you need them. So you go to the doctor for more, because if you weren't depressed before, you are now.

This doesn't at all mean you should avoid prescriptions; they do help many people with various conditions. But our consumption of medication is

over the top. We are medicated for everything. We can't live the lifestyle we want, so we eat a bowl full of pills for breakfast, hoping that day will at least be easier. But we don't need them. And if we don't need them, then the risks of taking them just simply aren't worth it. Anyone who has read Aldous Huxley's *Brave New World* (1932) can relate. His idea of a society thriving

completely on Soma (a "safer," more balanced form of LSD) in substitute for any kind of coping skills doesn't seem that far off anymore. We're in danger of losing ourselves to our doctors' horrible, handwritten prescriptions. Soon we will be nothing more than a society of pill-driven people, with no learned skills anymore, only chemical.

Is UNB out of touch?

MUGWUMP

by Tony von Richter

At the start of September, I criticized UNB for its lack of planning skills. Their unfortunate choices have plagued our campus and affected the timing of projects for at least as long as I've been here.

Last week, while talking with some people, something hit me: could UNB's problems be bigger than just planning? Does UNB actually have no idea what its students want?

To some, it may seem like a foregone conclusion that UNB has no idea what people want, but when you consider that UNB has existed since 1785, you'd think that they'd have a pretty good idea of what we need while we're completing their degrees.

Unfortunately for us here now, that doesn't appear to be the case.

Don't get me wrong, this isn't a condemnation of the academic side of UNB, which I think is in good standing (and speaking from experience, the Business Administration faculty is particularly good). The issues facing UNB are more administrative in nature.

For example, a few years back, McConnell Hall was renovated. The project took much longer than scheduled and provided us with "Ultimate Dining." Now, I don't live in residence, but judging from the students I've talked to, "Ultimate Dining" serves up pretty much the same food as before.

This sounds similar to what just happened in the SUB cafeteria with Selona Grill, except they didn't go quite as far overtime on that project. Costing thousands of dollars, the kitchen was renovated, with food service being severely limited during January due to the Grill's closure, all to provide us with a better dining experience.

So what have we got for the university's time and money? Well, from what I can tell, we've got a nice pretty

blue counter on the grill, and a bulletin board to tell us what's on the menu.

But, Tony, you say, what about the stir-fry? They've got stir-fry now! Surely that is worth something, seeing as it's been a popular item so far. You're right that it's worth something. It's worth every bit as much as it was when we had it a few years ago. They obviously didn't need to fix the kitchen to provide us with that.

Okay, so the fact that campus construction projects take too long and that our food isn't the greatest isn't exactly new, but with the news on Aitken House potentially closing (as you saw on our front page), has the university finally done something that will make students stand up and take notice?

It's no secret that Aitken is among the most boisterous and visible houses on campus. Removing it would be a huge blow to life in residence. Already there was a rally to protest the residence's closure, and a representative of Lady Dunn Hall even wrote a letter to the same effect for this week's issue.

This could finally be the decision that causes students to realize that UNB administrators might not have the best ideas for campus life. This in turn could make more people get involved in things like student government.

Now, even though the above decisions don't portray the university in the best light, that's not to say all UNB projects are terrible and that the administration is inept. Many things, like free legal advice, career and mental health counseling, the Student Health Centre, and (eventually) campus-wide wireless access are all great programs to have in place.

Overall, UNB is a good school and, as is most important, all of us will come out of here with a degree that's actually worth something. It's just that with a few changes UNB could go from being a school that is very good in some areas and not so good in others, to being a school that is great in every aspect of university life.

In Magni Dominis Umbra: In the shadow of a great house

To whom it may concern:

Recently, the residence community of the University of New Brunswick received devastating news that our most beloved and spirited house on campus will be shut down next year for their 50th anniversary. Aitken House, the second oldest house on campus, opened in 1958, and is being closed as a result of poor financial planning on behalf of Res Life. Due to this obscene decision, the university community as well as the community of Fredericton will suffer many great losses.

Aitken House proudly supports AIDS research as they annually contribute the greatest donation and participation in the AIDS Walk, as well as organizing numerous successful Blood Donor Clinics. Aitken House has also contributed to various other charities in support of their residence community including Neville House charity events, donating back their winnings to the Neville House Bed Push and the Matthew Kinzie foundation to name a few. Kinzie, a fourth year student at UNB, was rock climbing in the Fredericton area when he fell and was paralyzed from the neck down. As a result of this terrible accident, Matthew was in need of thousands of dollars to pay for the costs of tools to function on his own and within society. Aitken House raised money on his behalf to offset some of the costs for the Kinzie family. This is just one of the many charities they take on annually.

If the decision to close Aitken House follows through, we as a residence community will be losing another single-sex house, which will greatly impact many other houses on campus including the three remaining single sex houses. Although every house on campus has many traditions, single-sex houses, especially Aitken

House, hold some of the most well-known and longest-held traditions at UNB. Aitken House was, and has become a home to many of the past and present men who have lived and shared these traditions.

Due to this travesty, the current men of the house, as well as many Aitken House Alumni, have been taken aback knowing how much they have contributed to the community, grown as men, and found a family in this house. Aitken is a well-known leader on the UNBF campus, continuously ranking number one in various charity challenges and sporting events, and also bringing the most returnees to the campus every year. Without Aitken House next year, these men will be losing years of traditions and memories, and what now and always considered home to thousands of men.

Aitken House is named after Sir Maxwell Aitken, also known as Lord Beaverbrook, a successful business man who also attended UNB Fredericton himself. Maxwell Aitken intended for a part of UNB's community to be designated for all males where they can continue a legacy which he himself holds. Many places across Fredericton proudly hold his name including: Aitken House, Aitken University Centre, Lady Beaverbrook Gymnasium, Lady Beaverbrook House, Lady Beaverbrook Arena, Lord Beaverbrook Hotel, The Beaverbrook Art Gallery, etc.

The Res Life Coordinators of UNB feel as though selling Aitken House to the University of New Brunswick is the only option to eliminate deficits which have accumulated over the years. Some may ask, why Aitken House if it is such an asset to both the residence and Fredericton community? We are embarrassed to admit that the soul reason they have to offer us is that Aitken House is the closest

house on campus to their administrative buildings. We as a residence community feel that this decision was hastily made and there are many other options available that were not considered.

We are willing to come together as a family and raise the money needed instead of shutting down Aitken House. Selling Aitken House for \$1.8 million seems like the easy solution for Res Life, but they are not considering the future and how closing this house will eliminate returnees from many residences. This decision will not only affect current students but also discourage those who plan on attending UNB in years to come.

Res Life has admitted this is only the beginning of buildings being shut down, as they plan on continuously closing houses on campus. Aitken House is a leading residence on campus and should be the last house shut down.

We as residence occupants are a family and will work together to help keep our brothers of Aitken in their home, allowing them to continue with their traditions and good deeds. Res Life is not merely selling a building, in effect; they are losing a brotherhood, traditions, a home and place of belonging on which frankly you cannot put a price. This is what we call home, and we will not allow anyone to take it from us. We're not only looking for your support, but also your suggestions as to how Res Life can fix their financial problems, whether it be through marketing plans, fundraising, etc. They are slowly shutting down the residence community of the University of New Brunswick.

Written by a sister house of Aitken, Lady Dunn Hall.

The Brunswickan

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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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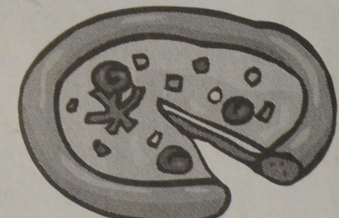
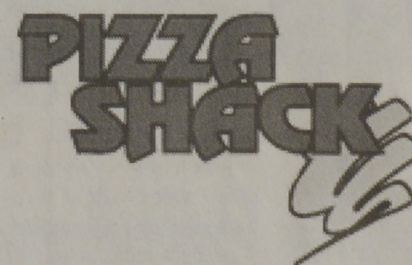
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