

opinions



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The Brunswickian



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Student Union President Jessica Stutt reads over the election by-laws. Three days into the election a complaint was filed about the conduct of the Chief Returning Officer.

CRO's competence in question

by Jennifer McKenzie

With the Student Union General Election barely underway, controversy has already begun to overwhelm it. Two days into the campaigning, an official complaint has been filed about the Chief Returning Officer, Rafael Velázquez. The Brunswickian has also received complaints about the conduct of the CRO.

Presidential candidate Lyle Skinner filed an official elections complaint Sunday night relating to the scheduling of candidate speeches and his candidacy for SUBS Inc. representative.

In a mass e-mail to all the candidates, Velázquez announced that the first set of candidate speeches will be held on February 13th, which would be a direct violation of the Election bylaws. Velázquez acknowledged the infringement and defended this decision by explaining simply that it is because he had decided so: "The by-laws state that debates or speeches have to be announced 7 days in advance for the candidates to be ready, but due to booking reasons and my own personal availability, I have decided that Tuesday would work fine."

Skinner's complaint objects to the CRO's noted violation of the bylaw, stating "[Your e-mail] states further that the reason for not respecting this by-law section is 'due to booking reasons and my own personal availability.' Again, respectfully, I submit

that it is not at the discretion of the Chief Returning Officer to choose not to abide by the provisions of the by-law." Skinner goes on to argue that this would not allow for enough time to publicize the event to the student population, the audience the speeches are directed towards.

Later that same night, Velázquez advised Skinner, via email, that he had chosen, as a reaction to the electoral complaint, to cancel the debates entirely, stating, "This formal complaint will hurt the freedom of speech of candidates that were willing to participate in this venue."

The CRO's poor choice of words has offended some, with one candidate stating: "Apparently a twisted logic exists that says that insisting the by-laws be followed hinders freedom of speech."

In the same e-mail, Velázquez defends his original decision to violate the bylaws and hold the now-cancelled speeches by explaining, "[The bylaw] clearly starts with 'If Applicable.' There cannot be 7 day notice [sic] to candidates if the final list of all candidates was not compiled until last Friday. Besides 5 day notice [sic] would suffice [sic] most candidates."

It was, however, four days' notice, and it would appear as though Velázquez has misinterpreted the by-laws.

Nick Ouellette, a Student Union veteran who was a member of the committee who wrote the election by-laws, clarified: "I looked at the CRO's response to the complaint...

It appears that the CRO is reading the section's words 'if applicable' to mean that 'if there is time for the CRO to schedule this with at least 7 days notice, then it is applicable that the CRO should give at least 7 days notice.' However, that is not what the section says. The section says 'If applicable, [the CRO shall] provide at least seven (7) days notice to all candidates setting out the time and place for candidate debates and or speeches.'

This clearly means that IF speeches are to be held, then there should be 7 days notice. To read 'if applicable' to mean 'if it fits into the CRO's personal schedule' offends the spirit of the by-law, which the CRO himself notes 'is to provide ample time for candidates to prepare and for the Student Body to have knowledge of these Speeches.'

Ouellette further explains that if there is any more discrepancy over the wording of the by-law, it can be simply clarified by reading the next section which states that "if applicable, [the CRO shall] consult with the University of New Brunswick information technology services department with respect to online or electronic voting systems."

Ouellette clarifies, "In the same way that here 'if applicable' means that 'if there is online voting', 'if applicable' in the speeches section means 'if speeches are held.'"

Velázquez did immediately address the second part to the complaint, the error of not including Mr. Skinner's name as a candidate for SUBS Inc.

representative.

Skinner's complaint is the latest in a series of concerns over the CRO competence and ability to conduct an election of this size.

Velázquez faced controversy when he was first hired and oversaw the Student Union's by-election earlier this year, which was later declared invalid after a series of errors and oversights at the hands of the CRO and various others.

The Brunswickian was contacted on Saturday with objections to how Velázquez conducted the candidates' meeting on Friday afternoon. It was reported that the CRO failed to announce the candidates, even after it was suggested to him, a violation of By-law No. 2, Section 3 (l). In addition, a copy of the by-laws was not given out, a violation of By-law No. 2, Section 3 (k).

When contacted, via e-mail, Velázquez defended his actions while chastising the attendance of the Brunswickian News Editor at the meeting. He explained that an electronic copy of the by-law had since been delivered to the candidates, and that all the candidates had received a copy of the candidates list. These actions appear to have corrected the errors at the meeting, though they do not change the original violations.

The Brunswickian was contacted about an objection to the CRO's decision that has allowed one student to run as a candidate in the election. This student allegedly submitted his

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Loving love today

by Niki Klukas

Today, on this Valentine's Day, most people living in the western world think about love, whether they want to or not. But what does love really mean?

Some say love can lift us up, it can make us soar, and it can give us joy -- that love is all around us. We love each other, we love chocolate, we love a hockey team, and we love an outfit. But what does all that mean?

The Merriam-Webster Collegiate Dictionary defines love as "any of a number of emotions and experiences related to a sense of strong affection or profound oneness."

This broad definition encompasses the plethora of uses for the word love but doesn't get at the heart (pun intended) of the love people think about on Valentine's Day.

From a biological point of view, love is closely linked to lust and sex as an important part of the continuation of the human species.

Robert Winston of the Smithsonian Institution says, "lust is the initial passionate sexual desire that promotes mating and involves the increased release of chemicals such as testosterone and estrogen."

He points out the difference between lust and attraction.

"These effects rarely last more than a few weeks or months. Attraction is the more romantic desire for a specific candidate for mating, which develops out of lust as commitment to an individual mate forms."

"Recent studies have indicated that as people fall in love, the brain releases a set of chemicals which act similar to amphetamines, stimulating the brain's pleasure center," Winston continues.

He concludes by explaining that "this leads to side-effects such as an increased heart rate, loss of appetite

and sleep, and an intense feeling of excitement. Research has indicated that this stage generally lasts from one and a half to three years."

This would explain why people find their partners duller and more tedious as the years tick by.

Winston explains why people do not always move on once this attraction phase has ended. He says, "Attachment is the bonding which promotes relationships that last for many years and even decades."

He adds that it is "generally based on commitments such as marriage and children or on mutual friendship based on things like shared interests."

From a psychological point of view, love is a socially constructed need.

Famed psychologist Robert Sternberg developed a three-component theory of love, consisting of intimacy, commitment and passion.

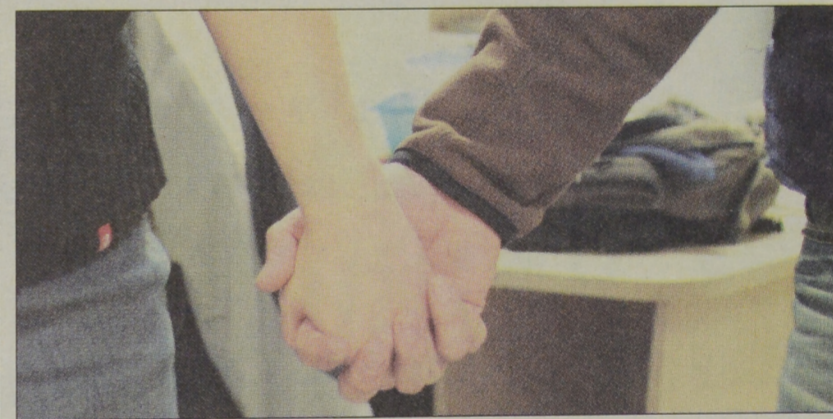
Of the three, he explains that "intimacy is a form by which two people can share secrets and various details of their personal lives. Intimacy is usually shown in friendships and romantic love affairs."

Commitment, as opposed to this, is the expectation that the relationship is going to last forever, and the dedication to that expectation.

"The most common form of love is sexual attraction and passion," says Sternberg. "Passionate love is shown in infatuation as well as romantic love. This led researchers to separate passion into two components: erotic passion and romantic passion."

Love, as it seems, does not have one hard and fast definition. It differs from culture to culture, country to country, city to city and person to person.

The love someone feels for their spouse is probably not quite the same as the love someone else feels for tacos or beer, but it is still called the same; so, on this Valentine's Day let us all celebrate our love of love, loved ones, and delicious food and beer.



Jonathan Hudon /The Brunswickian

Drinking like a grown up: bottled beer back in residence

by Josh O'Kane

As of last Monday, after a several-year ban, beer bottles have been allowed back in UNB Fredericton Residences.

Bottles have been banned since the 2003-04 school year in an attempt to increase safety and minimize discipline involved with broken glass incidents. Now, out of a request for fewer rules in the residence system, they have been brought back in. Students can now enjoy beers that cannot be purchased in cans, such as Corona and Rickard's.

"It seemed about two seconds after I rolled it out, everyone in residence knew about it," says James Brown, Director of Residential Life and Conference Services. He is part of a committee within the residence community that discusses the various rules in residence.

"The decision was an easy one -- it was unanimous. The convenience of getting beer in bottles outweighed

the additional risk for having bottles in residence."

Demand for the return of bottles has been there since the inception of the rule, but the problem was always assumed to be with enforcing discipline when problems arose. However, it appears that the enforcers are willing to support the return of bottles.

"It was clear that the beer bottle policy was a major opportunity," says Brown. "It's related to a wish to make people as happy as they can be in residence. There are three main themes that come out of our student satisfaction surveys: I wish the food was better, I wish the price was lower, I wish there were fewer rules. We're working on all three."

The bottles rule was the easiest to quickly revise.

"We allow other kinds of bottles in residence, and so the additional risk of allowing beer bottles as well didn't seem to be high.

The modification of the bottles rule allows students to purchase and drink out of beer bottles in their residence rooms; however, there are a few conditions that houses will need to follow

-- else they will revert to the previous no-bottle policy.

A storage room must be set aside in each house to store empty bottles, and it must be cleared out at least once every two weeks. Any messy incidents involving broken glass and/or people getting hurt would be a ticket right back to the no-bottle policy.

"If there was a house where we had beer bowling, I think they would instantly revert," says Brown. However, he also says, "I don't think this would happen."

As with the current policy concerning all glass beverage containers, like coolers, students can open and drink them in their rooms, but must pour glass-bottled drinks into plastic cups to take it to another room or a lounge.

Nick Ouellette is Assistant Don of Neville-Jones, a former proctor at Neville House, and was a student at UNB when the no-bottle policy was first instated.

"I did live in residence when beer bottles were allowed and also witnessed a few of the events that I think led to their being banned," he says.

"The year that concluded with the decision to ban bottles... saw a great deal of what were known as 'smashing parties,' in which people who had collected multiple bottles in their rooms

would end up breaking many of them on their own floor or elsewhere in their house."

Safety concerns arose with broken glass being found in rooms, halls and

lounges. Rooms with carpets were more common back then, and were particularly a problem when broken glass was kicking around.

Ouellette explains that "from the



UNB Residents Randall Wood, Chad Ramsay and Dustin Eisenhour celebrate the return of beer bottles early on Monday. Plenty of excitement is being generated over Res Life's new brew of rules.



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