

Free speech funk



RIP

by Sean M.H.

Last week, in a class about communications, my professor said something that had an impact.

"You people are too young to be cynics. I'm old, so I can be cynical, but you guys don't have the experience yet."

This is true. Most people in the class are journalism majors, and most journalism majors complain about the media constantly.

Whether it's the Irvings that own most newspapers in the province, Bill O'Reilly being a blowhard, or that CNN spends more time on Britney than MTV does, these students never miss a chance to voice their negative opinions.

Journalism students are molding their cynicism before even becoming journalists.

But an event that would stir up such a view is taking place at this very moment and I think it is quite relevant to this topic.

In Woodstock, a man named William Kenneth Langdon is trying to start his own newspaper.

But he can't because J.D. Irving LTD. is trying to stop him.

For now, anyway. It seems that Langdon worked as the publisher for the Bugle-Observer, an Irving-owned newspaper in Woodstock, N.B.

He quit his job in order to start his own paper, which would be in direct competition with the Bugle-Observer.

According to local media, Langdon claims that Irving is making efforts to stop his paper from getting off the ground and that some executives at Irving-owned Brunswick News, which owns the Bugle-Observer and most other papers in the province, stoop to bullying business tactics to eliminate competition.

In Irving's defense, Langdon was under contract not to share trade secrets or any information relating to the company and was entrusted not to use confidential information to his benefit.

But stopping a new newspaper altogether? What gives them the right? How are these trade secrets so vast that knowing them binds you to their source?

So it's easy to be cynical. And we just complain about it, and sometimes we talk.

Even in this paper, The Brunswickian, there is little more than tepid interest.

But with this paper, and other widely-read school papers, we have two things that most journalists don't have the luxury of having, although we hardly take advantage.

One, Irving doesn't own us, and two, we're students. We're young, full of ideals and piss and vinegar, and we all sing our anthems on truth and justice. And we still believe in them.

We haven't let the world get us down.

We shouldn't be cynical just yet. We dream of fighting the good fight and exposing evil corporation empires and we still believe it can happen.

So then why aren't we trying? Why don't we use these two things, which are rare assets in New Brunswick, and do something about it?

Who knows? I'm not doing anything, either. I'm just talking and complaining.

But it all leads back to what my professor said, "We're too young to be cynical."

Because what we think is wrong with the media is really what's wrong with us. We're cynical because we expect change without being involved in it.

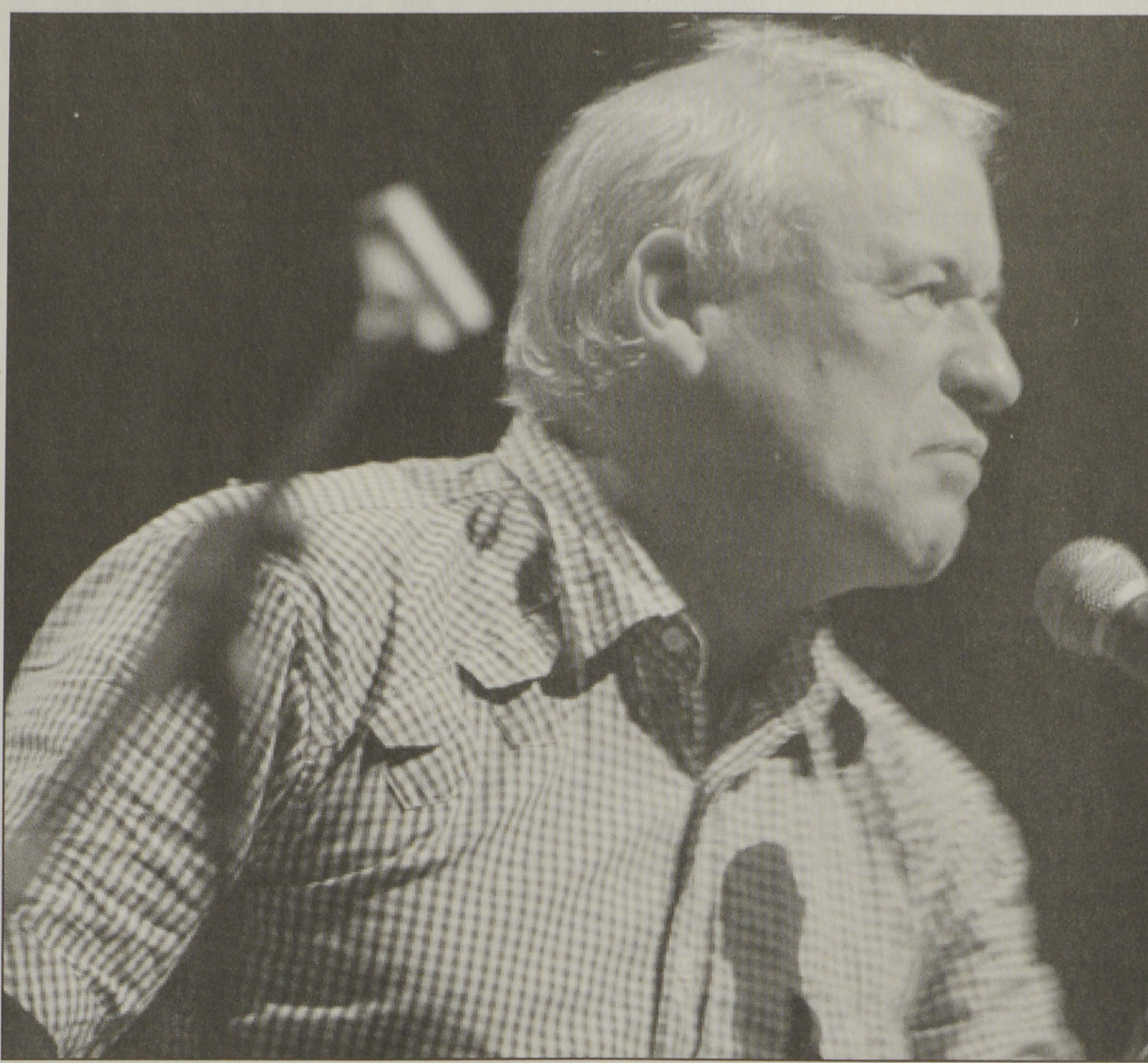
We have a medium for some kind of change right now. William Kenneth Langdon might not be able to start his own paper, but he can certainly write for this one. He might not make as much money (or any), but the freedom he's looking for is on the same page as this column.

The worst part is, I'm not taking advantage of it and he's fighting tooth and nail for it.

My professor was right. I have no right to be negative, and maybe I am too young to be cynical, but I'm the right age to be lazy.

We all are.

MUCH MUNSCH



Andrew Meade / The Brunswickian

Robert Munsch reads from his popular children's book "Stephanie's Ponytail" at the Playhouse on Oct 11. Munsch has authored many favorites, including "Paper Bag Princess", "Love You Forever", and "Mud Puddle."

Radio Free and camera-ready

Director of Photography George Hosek turns the lights, camera, and action on Freddy Beach

by Ashley Bursey

When someone's got a resume that declares he's worked on 'Hedwig and the Angry Inch' and 'Tremors II', most folks automatically perk up, if only to hear the guy's bio.

But when that same man is standing in front of you telling you to wipe your forehead because "you're sweaty, greasy - but so am I!" it becomes a little less daunting.

Marginally. George Hosek is that man. Fresh from the set of YTV's hit show 'Radio Free Roscoe', Hosek is a DOP - director of photography - who visited Fredericton this past weekend to host a film workshop in conjunction with the New Brunswick Film Co-op.

Sunday, Noon. Hosek is standing behind a monstrous HD camera in the James Joyce Pub in downtown Freddy, barking orders for lights - a huge part of any production, he insists - and paper napkins to sop up some of the "grease" on his actors.

It's a busy hour; the crew is filming two angles for the same scene, and every light in the place seems to have a mind of its own - a dimmer switch broken on one, another light petering out altogether.

But Hosek's cool and cracking jokes or giving tips and tricks along the way. His students are rapt, jumping quickly

to help move a table or light, shouting commands across the room.

A few minutes later, the scene has been filmed, and the crowd breaks for lunch. Hosek, a Czech native who studied film in Prague, sits down at one of the pub's tables for a chat.

On workshops: "It's always an experience when you have to teach somebody, it's quite interesting because it's more time-consuming... My approach is to tell people what is good and what's wrong. If you don't tell them, people think they're great and they get out of the school and they come to real life and everybody's polite but nobody gives them assignments or work. This is the problem because of people maybe doing something wrong, but nobody has the courage to tell them something is wrong, because they are politically correct. And this doesn't help."

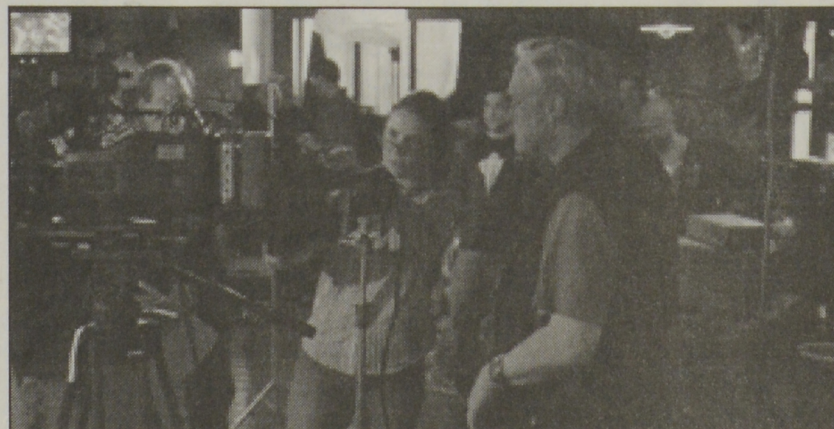
On Radio Free Roscoe: "When you do 52 episodes, you don't know which your favorite is! Sometimes I'll watch them on TV, months after... Sometimes I'll watch myself in the distance, and I like this one, or I'll see another and, oh, I like this one as well! Because you

have a distance [from the work at the point]."

On favorite films: "I like 'Chicago', 'Amadeus', and 'Passion of the Christ'. I don't buy many DVDs. I watch a movie once, maybe twice...and what I do is, probably after like ten years maybe, I'll watch the movie again. I like a movie to have a story, not all these special effects. You get so many stupid movies..."

On his favorite cinematographer: "I like Vittorio Storaro. You ask anyone, they would say him. In Hollywood, I would have to say Tony Richardson, Oliver Stone's cinematographer, he used to be, and he's very talented...he uses a diversity of lighting."

On wannabe 'biz' junkies: "If [someone] would like to be a director, they should be watching so many movies and analyzing movies and the acting especially...As a cinematographer, I would say take so many pictures, stills, photography, it's a basic essential. The eye, composition, taking pictures, stills. So many stills! Photography is the basic. And for writers, what can I tell you. It's a different story! Read a lot, be intelligent, and write."



Andrew Meade / The Brunswickian

Psykosonik swordplay



THE FINAL SCORE

by Dan Hagerman

This game and the movie Mortal Kombat have a lot in common. For one thing, they share what is essentially the exact same theme song, minus the "MORTAL KOMBAAAT!" scream, and they're both kinda neat at first, but wear thin after successive viewings.

X-Kaliber 2097 (the game's spelling, not mine) is a cyberpunk action game, or so it claims to be. It does have a futuristic setting and some sort of plot involving the future, but I could not pay for the life of me seem to be able to pay attention to it. All I wanted to do was slice barrels in half.

Graphics: While the main character looks cool enough, he certainly doesn't have a lot going on in the animation department. He can block, slice horizontally, slice vertically, and send out a wave of energy or something from his sword. Enemies come as your typical garden-variety futuristic soldier, and what's cool about this game is that you can choose whether you want to slice them in half

horizontally or vertically.

Gameplay: This is what a side-scrolling beat-'em-up would be if you used a sword instead of your fists. It's not really bad gameplay so much as it's terribly repetitive. You walk, have a lame jump, and slash. That's pretty much it. Maybe they'll throw a flying enemy around or have some pits to jump over, but mostly this game isn't very fun to play. It also doesn't help that every time you get hit with something, you get knocked back about five feet, making it difficult to continue attacking, assuming one of the troopers actually gets the drop on you.

Sound: In the opening credits, it seems like a big deal that the music is by a band called Psykosonik. The reason why I said the game's music sounds exactly like the Mortal Kombat movie's music is because Psykosonik contributed to both. And it loops. Over. And over. And over again. Aside from that, the sound effects are pretty sub-par as well, not really sounding like much of anything.

The Final Score: The novelty of slicing robotic guards in half wears off in the first 30 seconds. The novelty of slicing barrels in half wears off about 15 seconds after that. Falling into pits all the time because enemy bullets knock you back too far? Also not fun. Despite the fact that I usually enjoy cyber-punk-styled stuff, I couldn't find myself getting into this game at all. 5/10

Monday Night Movie Series

Pierpoint:
The Last Hangman

Pierpoint: The Last Hangman, a film about Britain's most famous hangman. Plays at Tilley Hall, room 102 this Monday, October 22.

Timothy Spall (Professor Pettigrew from the Harry Potter movies) gives a magnificently multilayered performance as the protagonist in 'Pierpoint: The Last Hangman'. Spall plays Albert Pierpoint, a grocery deliveryman who decides to apply for his father's old job: a hangman for the British courts. Soon he is perfecting the execution procedure, fulfilling his duties in record time and with no problems whatsoever. Though proud of his success, Pierpoint prefers to keep it to himself, not even telling his wife, Anne (Juliet Stevenson), what he does when he leaves the house for days at a time. It is when General Montgomery (Clive Francis) asks Pierpoint to execute dozens of Nazis who have been sentenced to death that, for the first time, Pierpoint starts questioning what he does, and soon his relatively calm, quiet world is turned upside down.

Based on a true story. 90 minutes, UK, 2007, English

A record-breaking Canadian Bath

by Naomi Osborne

For most artists, writing and recording 52 CDs is a lifetime goal, and practically an unreachable one.

But for Burlington-based artist Kevin Bath, it was more like a New Year's resolution - and only took the artist a year to complete.

It started last October when Bath, a multi-instrumentalist, began writing and recording music in his own home studio. A year later and Bath has broken the Guinness World Record for writing and recording 52 CDs in a year, or one CD a week.

That's eight songs per album, and a total of 416 songs in one year.

"It all started off as a joke, and then the more I thought about it, I realized... that's a good idea! What better way to be more creative?" said Bath.

The whole process was demanding. Bath would start creating new songs every Sunday or Monday, then record all the instruments and do all the computer work and the vocals. By mid-week, Bath would start doing the mixes for the weekend and repeat the whole process again the next Sunday.

"Life was a huge obstacle. I have to make a living, I have a family," said Bath, "and it was hard to take care of all my other responsibilities."

A multi-instrumentalist for a variety of bands, Bath found it easy to switch between different genres of music. He played around - literally - with country, children's music, reggae, rock, dance folk, pop, punk, and instrumental.

"It gave me an appreciation for music in general. You really have to understand how it all works and fits together like a puzzle," said Bath.

All 416 songs are available on this website, kevinbath.com, where people all around the world can listen to them without charge.

"I just wanted to be acknowledged for what I did. I will release the 'Best of Bath' probably in the new year," he said. "It will be a compilation of those songs plus ones that weren't a part of the world record."

And a favourite song?

"A perfect analogy would be to say, if you have three kids you can't really say which one you love the best. They are all my babies. It's hard, it really is," said Bath.

But he says some of his favourite albums would likely be 'Sponge Bath Square Pants', 'Mid-Day Sun', 'Grapes of Bath', 'Prague', 'Unplugged', 'Punk Bath', '2007' and 'Lady Pinstripe'.

But what's next? "I'd like to go to different areas, like film work or publishing. Right now I still play live at nights," said Bath. "But I would love to hear other artists do my songs!"

He adds: "I wanted to finish something and do something of this magnitude," he said. "Personally, I surpassed my own expectations for myself. It's a great feeling just to say this is what I did. 'Hey kids, look at me!'"

Seether and spice

by Ashley Bursey

The first thing I notice is the album artwork. It's morbid: a young girl, blunt black bangs, pulling open her shirt to reveal the bare bones of a rib cage. Creepy as hell, reminiscent of Mark Ryden's bizarrely fascinating death-themed pieces.

The second thing I notice is just how damn catchy their new single is.

'Fake It' is the first single off the South African native band Seether's newest album, 'Finding Beauty in Negative Spaces', to be released Oct 23. And I've been listening to it on repeat right before I pick up the phone to chat with bassist Dale Stewart.

The guys are in Michigan, playing some shows with Breaking Benjamin and Three Days Grace.

I ask him about the new song, which, much like Finger Eleven and other heavy-rock bands, seems to be a lot more fun, more melodic, and has cooler riffs than previous tunes.

He tells me that bands today take themselves too seriously.

But Seether has already been getting some critical feedback for the pop-iness of the song, although Stewart is quick to assure me that while it's a change of

pace, it's more experimentation than a complete 180.

"We didn't want to completely change the sound, but we wanted to go in a different direction. It's one of our songs that goes in a new direction," he says. "It's not an indication of what the album sounds like..."

"You try to find a happy medium."

The guys took some time off between recording albums, breaking for about a year. It was a hard year; the group faced the death of singer Shaun Morgan's brother in August.

That's where the album title came from, Stewart says.

"I think it ties into the music and just the images surrounding the album," he says. "Our last year was a rough one for everyone, and in these kinds of situations, I think [you need to be] positive and look for the silver lining in the cloud and find beauty in negative spaces, if you will. It definitely just ties into the whole last year."

And the artwork? He laughs when I tell him how kickass I think it is.

"We were looking online and we eventually found this guy and just loved the images," he says. "It's basically, there's a whole series of this little girl, a really cool kind of tragic love story that goes along with her... Her name is... I think Candice, I believe."

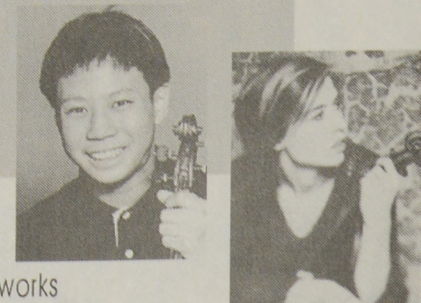
"Any last words?" I ask.

"Just thanks for the support and all that, and buy the new album," he says, then laughs again. "Does that sound like begging?"

MUSIC ON THE HILL PRESENTS

NIKKI CHOOI, VIOLIN AND
SUSANNE RUBERG-GORDON,
PIANO

Sun., October 21, 2007
8:00 p.m., Memorial Hall, UNB



The performance will perform works by Mozart, Debussy, Scott Good, Franck, Tchaikovsky, and Sarasate.

Music on the Hill Info Line - 457-2233. Tickets available at the door, UNB's College of Extended Learning, Mazzuca's, Westminster Books, and The Paper Trail. Ticket Prices: \$23 adult, \$21 senior, and \$7 student (HST included).

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