

One year ago: How Aitken House saved itself

Brian Beaudette discusses the last hectic year at Aitken House, which was put on the chopping block last February

by Josh O'Kane

A year ago last week, the proctors of Aitken House found out there would be no more Aitken House to proctor. By that Saturday night, at the house formal, word had spread to many house residents. Sunday evening, the residents held a pep rally with students from across campus as well as alumni, protesting the proposed closure of Aitken at the end of the school year.

In an interview with The Brunswickian that Monday, February 26, 2007, James Brown stated that for the upcoming school year, "At a minimum, I have to close two residences."

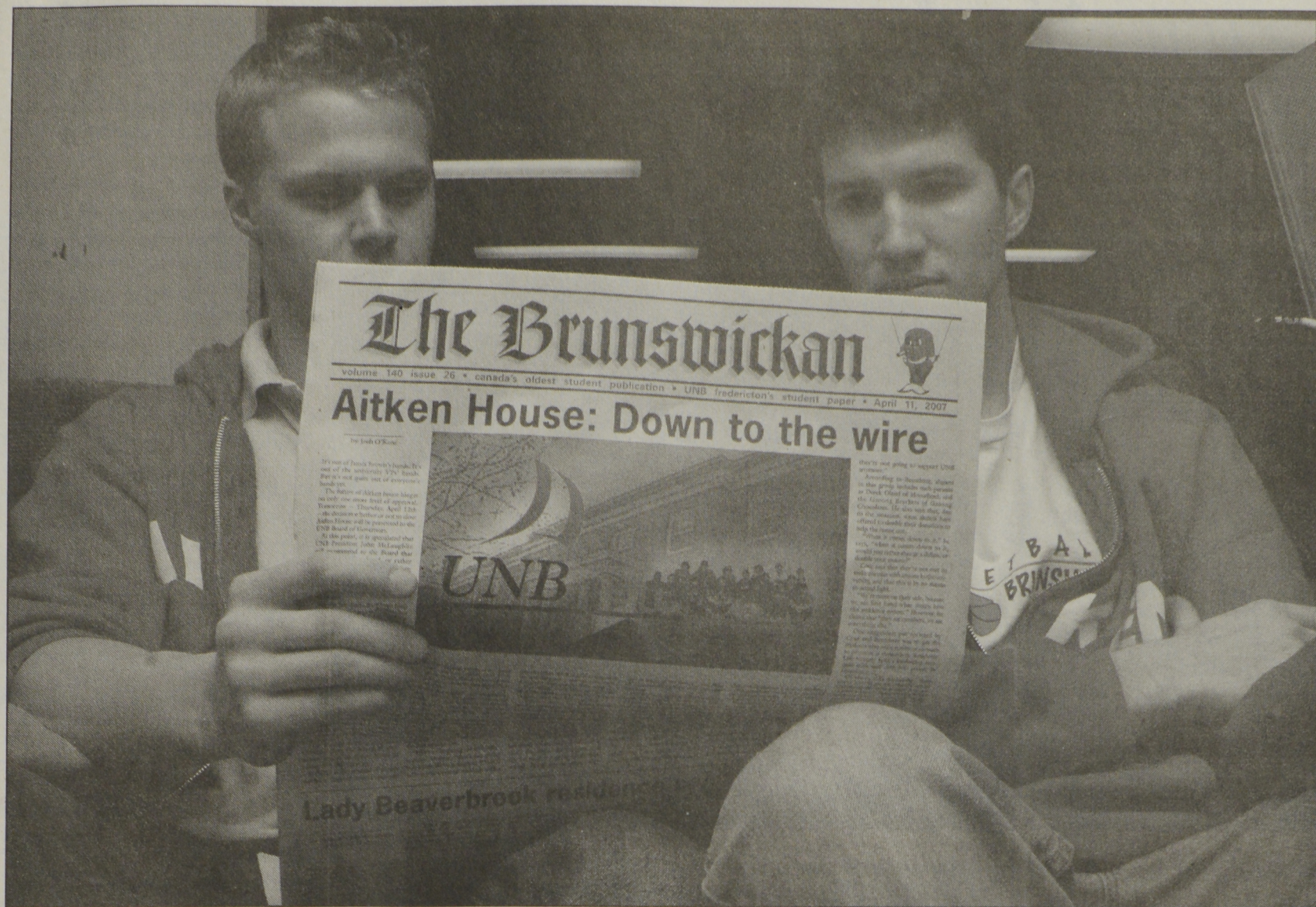
With Jones already closed at that point, he needed to pick a second one. The idea was proposed that the other choice should be based on proximity to existing office buildings, in such a manner that it would become the new home to Student Services.

The residence that best fit those needs was Aitken House.

Residence enrollment has declined in recent years, prompting such closures in order to recoup the \$90,000 a year it takes to run a building. Jones House was closed temporarily for such reasons in June 2006, and was officially rededicated to become UNB's new Student Services building in September 2007.

If it weren't for the fight put up by Aitken's residents, alumni, and friends, that Student Services building could have been Aitken.

That fight put a lot of pressure on Brian Beaudette, who had just been elected as house president. The day after the house formal, he was alerted



Brian 'Trooper' Beaudette, left, recently passed Aitken's presidential reigns to Simon Pearn.

Andrew Meade / The Brunswickian

by some friends from Lady Dunn Hall that his house was to be closed.

"I didn't believe them at all," says Beaudette. "I ran home to my don's room. He was sitting on his chair. I asked what was going on and he acted like he didn't know. I asked for the real story, and he told me about James Brown's plan. I said, 'What can I do?' He said, 'do what you can do.'"

That day, Aitken representatives went to every house, gathering supporters for a pep rally to be held that evening. They then held a meeting with James Brown at McConnell, who explained the situation.

Brown said last year that he left the meeting willing to revisit his de-

cision. However, budgets continued to be drafted that left one building closed, and the house was left with few answers.

"We organized a team of students and alumni alike to combat against it and do everything we could do to stay open," says Beaudette of the next step. "We had a few conference calls with the alumni and came up with ideas. We approached James Brown personally about the situation."

"He was very open about it and gave his side of the story, but it looked like they weren't going anywhere from there."

Beaudette says he saw a ray of light after meeting with Brown, Angelo

Belcastro (then VP Academic), and Jane Fritz (then Associate VP, now Acting VP Academic). Evan Green, the outgoing president of Aitken, as well as Beaudette, stayed in Fredericton over their March Break for the meeting. Fritz's reaction was largely positive, says Beaudette, but there still appeared to be many hurdles ahead.

There were times during that winter term where spirits were low, he says.

"We always do a house picture at the awards ceremony," he explains. "No one was smiling."

A UNB Board of Governors meeting was held on the last day of classes. Though no answer was given before

then, Aitken was given 15 minutes to make their case before the Board. That morning, a march-up was organized, where the men of Aitken and companions from Lady Dunn, Tibbits, and Harrison headed to the Wu Conference Centre and welcomed the members of the Board with handshakes and warm greetings.

Two alumni, as well as Beaudette, made their case to the Board that day. Beaudette says that once the presentation was made, John McLaughlin stepped forward and spoke to say that Aitken would remain open for another year, on the grounds that the campus would be surveyed later to determine the best location for a

Student Services building.

Jessica Stutt, SU President at the time, broke him the news after he left. Beaudette could hardly keep his composure.

"I don't drink," he says, "but I told the boys that would drink a beer if we were open... I walked back over to the guys with Artigas [Cruz], and there was a whole group of them around us. I looked over at Phil [Nelson], who I had made the deal with. I said 'Phil, go get me my beer.'"

"The guys went nuts."

"No one wanted to go out to the club; they all wanted to spend the time in the house reflecting on the entire year. That was one of the highlights of my life, and for a lot of peoples' lives."

The good news did not end there: James Brown stated in a September issue of The Brunswickian that Aitken House would remain open next year, removing the fear that the house's deal was only a year long.

Regardless of guarantee, Beaudette says that Aitken has since been striving to show their positive influence on the community.

"When we came back, we knew we were coming back. We were looking forward to frosh week big time; we wanted to make a good impression to the university and the community, and trying to get rid of bad stereotypes. We came back in frosh week, and we were off to a good start. We won Shinerama, we won the Amazing Race. We had the frosh really into the house, and they knew about the situation that had happened prior."

Beaudette has just passed the presidential reigns to Simon Pearn, who will see Aitken into its 2008-09 year. His tenure in the house is not over yet, though - he has been selected to return to the Aitken next year as a proctor.

Aitken House celebrated its 50th anniversary last month, and looks forward to an ongoing position in the UNB residence community.

"It's been 50 years in the making," says Beaudette. "Here's to 50 more."

Sustainability at UNB: Reality or pipe-dream?

by Becky Graham,
Marc Girard, Melissa Fulton

Sustainability: A buzz word, or an achievable goal for UNB? Before we tackle that quagmire, we ought to develop a functional definition of sustainability. For the sake of brevity, let's just say that sustainability at UNB would mean reaching a state where our practices are neutral, causing no negative consequences to the environment around us and where we are leaving no ecological footprint (since we're already on the buzz word bandwagon). Now that we're all on the same page, another question presents itself. Why is it important? Well, in case David Suzuki's voice hasn't found its way into your head yet (trust us, it's unsettling), we'll give you a few quick facts. The arctic ice is declining (bad news for our polar bear friends) and could see its first entirely ice-free summer by 2040. And it's not only the coke commercial celebrities that are in trouble; more than a million species face extinction as a result of climate change and the consequent loss and change of habitat and ecosystems. From a human perspective, roughly 100M people live within three feet of sea level and can already attest to the devastating effects of climate change.

These are daunting challenges to say the least, and it's easy to be overwhelmed, but we have a sneaking suspicion that the UNB community has a little more gumption than that. Based on facts presented in a campus sustainability audit, presented in 2004, there are plenty of improvements we can make starting right here on campus. For example, as of 2004, UNB did not purchase any paper with recycled materials. This is a problem since paper use is expected to increase 50% by 2010. Milk is the only local food product offered on campus, meaning that everything else fol-

lows a food transportation chain requiring huge amounts of fossil fuels. In 2002-03, only 3.9% of the approximately 160 kg of waste produced per campus community member was recycled. These aren't the actions of the informed and active campus community we've seen that can push a bed from Saint John to Fredericton or polish everything in our fair city until it shines for a worthy cause.

Greening UNB is nevertheless a huge challenge. Thankfully, there are plenty of us who enjoy a good challenge. The ENVS 4002 class is designing a campus sustainability plan. We, the authors of this article, are part of that class. Our role is to engage the community while our other classmates work on more tangible issues like energy, water, waste, and food management. Our collective mission is to make UNB sustainable, as defined above. Concordia, Waterloo, and other campuses may be well ahead of us, but UNB sits in a unique position to make significant advances. We have a city that wants to go green, wonderful natural resources by any urban standard, an Environment and Sustainable Development Research Centre on campus, and many community members who are willing to work at this common goal.

We are inviting you to help by sending us an e-mail at engage@unb.ca or by joining our Facebook group, "University of New Brunswick Fredericton Campus Sustainability Project" and speak your mind. Let us know how you think UNB could become more sustainable.

The academic community is aware of the plight of nature, and understands the importance of supporting those institutions that have chosen the path of sustainability. In addition, the degrees we all plan to carry will command that much more respect coming from a leading university in modern issues, as opposed to one lagging behind.

Students promote fire safety in off-campus housing

by Sufi Mohamed
The Brock Press
(Brock University)

ST. CATHARINE'S (CUP) -- Fire safety in students' off-campus housing has become a serious concern for many students.

Brad Clarke, Brock University Students' Union's Off-Campus Housing Officer, has teamed up with the town's Chief Fire Prevention Officer, Jim Waycik, to try and bring some awareness to the issue.

Both agree that students looking for off-campus housing need to have easily accessible fire prevention information. Clarke and Waycik both have a number of different resources at their fingertips and together hope to offer students some helpful tips to avoid having their homes burn down.

According to Waycik, residential fires are the most common type of fire, so fire safety is an important life skill that a lot of students are lacking.

"It is extremely important. Young people are careless and get a little carried away," said Caron McIntyre a student at Brock University.

According to the Office of the Fire Marshall, "Cooking is the number one cause of home fires in Ontario and it could be as simple as leaving a pot on the stove."

Waycik said that candles top the list when it comes to endangering homes. Fires may erupt spontaneously and "should be kept one metre away from any combustibles."

When cigarette butts are left unat-

tended, they can become hazardous when the ashes, still burning, lie on the ground. It is highly recommended that students use ashtrays and keep an eye on any fallen ashes.

Electrical equipment and the electrical wiring of the home may also pose a serious fire hazard. Waycik said that homes with certified and qualified electrical wiring have safety codes that provide details about fire safety. Homes without such codes present the risk of unwanted sparks.

Space heaters are also prone to accidents involving combustibles and easily enflamed objects such as furniture, curtains, and paper. Waycik suggested that keeping space heaters one meter away from any of the aforementioned materials.

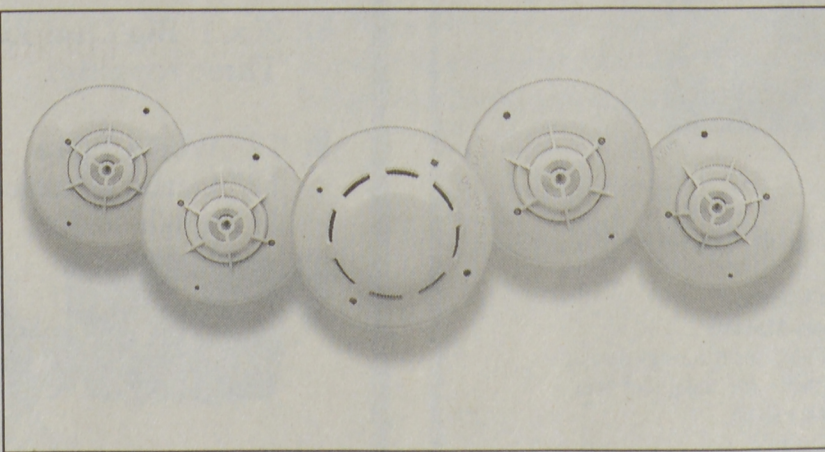
Social gatherings, he added, are notorious for getting out of control. According to the Office of the Fire Marshall, the host must "encourage guests to smoke outside" and not light any candles anywhere at any time in a party.

Smoke alarms are the most important feature in a home in preventing fires and they should be checked regularly.

According to Waycik, everyone living in the home should make two fire escape routes and practice them.

If students don't feel that a house is fire-compliant, Clarke noted, there is nobody forcing them to move in.

There is a "consistent over-supply of off-campus housing," said Clarke. "Supply definitely exceeds the demands. Students shouldn't feel pressured to take housing if it is unsafe. They should look for a place they're happy with."



Smoke alarms are the most important part of domestic fire prevention.

Dr. Richard E. Lee Optometrist

406A Regent St. 458-1580
(2 buildings past Harvey's Hamburgers)
New Patients Welcome

S.U.B. STYLES



Student Union Building 452-6900

Mon thru Fri 9-4:45

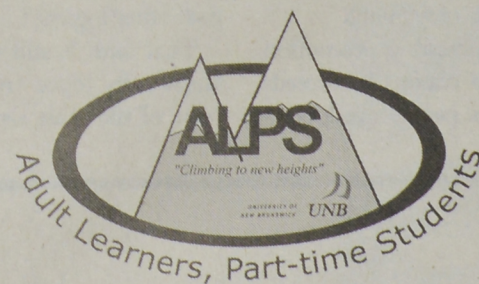
SAT 10:00 - 1:30

Cash Only Service

"WALK IN'S ONLY"

Open All Year Round

Student & Senior Discount



ALPS Call for Nominations for Executive Board Members

The ALPS (Adult Learners, Part-Time Students) Executive Board of Directors is calling for nominations for the term of May 2008-April 2009.

The following positions are available:

President

VP Administration

VP Finance

VP Promotions

VP Social Events

VP Student Services

ALPS Senate Representative

Nomination forms and detailed terms of references for each position can be picked up at the ALPS office located in 130A of Marshall D'Avray Hall.

Students must have a GPA of 2.0 or above and meet one of the following criteria:

- Be a Registered Part-Time Undergraduate Student / Fredericton Campus
- Be a Registered Part-Time Undergraduate Student / Distant Learner
- Be a Registered Full-Time Undergraduate Adult Learner (25 years old and over)

Deadline for nominations is 11:59 pm on Friday, April 4, 2008.

The elections will be held the week of April 14 to 18, 2008.

For more information and detailed terms of reference for these positions, please feel free to contact the ALPS office at alps@unb.ca. You can also check out our website at www.unb.ca/alps

Please note that a small honorarium is paid for these positions.