

## Hey, Do You Have Change for A Twoonie?

by A. Chisholm

The campus vending machines are a vital snack source for many students at UPEI. However, complaints have been heard across campus from students who are unsatisfied with the vending services.

This year, the contract for vending services is held by Western Vending. Western is responsible for maintaining the coffee, candy, and change machines across campus. The pop machines are not part of Western, instead they are owned and operated by Coca-Cola. Two of the primary complaints about the machines are the inability to use two dollar coins, the the prices of the items in the machines.

Although the two dollar coin will fit in the machine, it does not recognize the coin. Instead, the twoonies jam up the machine causing them to register as out of order. In order to change the coins into usable loonies, students were overwhelming facilities such as the Pitstop with requests for change. Signs are now posted throughout the Pit explaining that they will no longer give change for the machines.

According to Peter Mellish, Western Vending Representative, the company does plan to adapt their machines to allow for the two dollar coin. However, it is a slow process because of the expense involved. Circuitry within the machines must be adapted to recognize the alloys of the twoonie; to adjust every machine on campus will cost Western Vending several thousand dollars.

While it would seem necessary to at least adapt the change machines, Mellish states that such a change is not in the future plans of Western Vending. Instead they plan to adapt their other vending

machines and force Coca-Cola to upgrade their beverage machines as well, rather than rely on a change machine paid for by Western Vending.

Another source of concern for students is the prices within the machines, such as the one dollar price tag on potato chips. The same chips retail for seventy-five cents. When tax is figured into the retail cost, students are paying an extra twelve cents for the privilege of using the machines.

The cost of the chips does not irk students as much as the diminished size of the bags. Hostess has shrunken their bag sizes by five grams to a total of fifty grams. However, the wholesale cost of the product has remained the same.

Small Fry distributes both their own product and Humpty Dumpty chips. They have maintained their fifty-five gram bag size. Chris Murphy of Small Fry noted that chip prices have not changed dramatically in the last ten years. "Companies such as Hostess are more likely to reduce sizes rather than increase prices," said Murphy, "market studies have shown that consumers are more willing to accept a five gram downsize, rather than a price increase." While some of the bags are smaller than what students are accustomed to seeing, the companies size reduction applies to both retail and those chips offered in concessions such as our vending machines.

Traditionally, Hostess provided only forty gram bags to vending services. Now that the sizing is uniform, all Hostess bags are fifty grams, for the same price they were asking as the forty gram bag. UPEI students may be actually getting a deal on the new size. So, does anyone have change for a twoonie?



## Contract Year for Marriott

by Karen Rawlines

UPEI may see a great change in the food services offered on campus as early as the 97-98 academic year should Marriott Food Services's contract not be renewed.

We are presently in a contract review year for food services on campus, currently provided by Marriott Foods. These services are concentrated in the Wanda Wyatt dining hall, and affect residence students most directly, but the decisions being made in the months ahead will affect the entire campus. Marriott currently supplies to the Pit coffee shop, the Atlantic Veterinary College's cafeteria and the canteen at the Sports Centre. They also cater to various events on campus, including faculty events and conferences. The Food and Vending committee, including residence student Erin Wall, realizes that supplying food to such a large variety of tastes and appetites is no easy task. All efforts are being made to ensure faculty and students that UPEI has the best food service possible feeding the campus.

The Food and Vending committee deals with all the

food and vending operations on campus, including Marriott and the vending machines. A sub-committee has been created to review all aspects of Marriott's business on campus. The decision being made this year will affect students not only of the next academic year, but through to the year 2000, whereupon another review will take place. Contracts are typically three years in length.

At present, options available are to stay with Marriott, or to accept bids from other catering companies.

There are mixed reviews regarding the current situation with Marriott, with the biggest complaint being the high price residence students are forced to pay for meal plans. The decision made this year will have the biggest effect on residence students, regardless of what is decided.

At this time, the evaluation sub-committee is still in the beginning processes of the development of an evaluation format, with specific criteria focusing on what the prospective catering service would offer the campus. The Food and Vending committee is 15 members strong, including students, student development

and faculty members. They meet biweekly, and deal with all issues on campus. The smaller evaluation committee, which at the moment consists of three members -- potentially expanding to take on an extra member to aid the decision making process -- is meeting every week until the evaluation process is approved. Once it has been approved, the committee will meet nearly every day.

To date, Marriott has been very helpful with the evaluation, stated Ms. Wall, who is involved with both committees. The last evaluation was three years ago. Wall explains, "if all goes according to plan, the evaluation process will begin middle to late November." A decision would be made by January, before second semester.

The decisions being made regarding the food services will also have a vast effect on many students all over campus who are employed by Marriott. If the committee decides not to renew Marriott's contract, the transition to the new catering service will be made in August of 1997.