



Hello again! As promised, this column will be about news groups. News groups are, in my opinion one of the most interesting features of the Internet. Of course, they are also one of the most addicting features of the Net, which is why this column had to wait until after midterms.

What are news groups? A news group is sort of like a bulletin board system, where people can post messages onto a place on the Net, and everyone else can read them, and, if they wish, reply to them. In other words, it is sort of like a group E-mail discussion. There are hundreds of Internet news groups, organized around various topics ranging from interests (rec.arts.animation, rec.arts.videogames.sega) to cultural and educational topics to some really strange groups of people (alt.angst, alt.barney-the-dinosaur.die.die.die). In other words, anything that interests you probably has a news group. Or two, or three, or even a dozen and more.

How do you access news groups from a UPEI account? Well, there are several ways. One is to use the Trumpet Newsreader software, which you will find on all the Net-capable computers. The problem is, this tends to have bugs in it when you try to "subscribe" to a new news group, and initializing (setting it up to work on your account) the program dumps a whole lot of files on your E-mail cache, which will fill it up quickly. A better-and actually simpler-way is to use certain pages on the World Wide Web

to read the news groups of your choice. The two best ones are (http://www.dejanews.com) and (http://www.zippo.com). Dejanews is a service which has archived all the news group articles for an immense variety of groups since 1995, and is updated daily. You can use it to search for any news group articles which contain topics or people you might be interested in. Zippo is a service that allows you to read all the articles for the past week on specific news groups. It is updated every fifteen minutes, and you can actually post articles through it as well as reading them. Well, have fun on the news groups, as I am going back to reading rec.arts.anime.misc....

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## Right Outta Left Field by Joel Gillespie

Yes, I know that I have been noticeably absent for the past few issues or so. Don't let that bother you though, for I am back! If this was any other column, I would go into what I have (or have not) been doing, but I have a much greater purpose than self-gratification this week. My topic, probably one of the most talked-about topics on PEI recently, is the game of Island politics.

News flash for the swamped student-- PEI had a provincial election. The limits of this printed medium prevent me from getting any more specific than that, lest I be totally off-base with my half-witted pundit predictions. I would, however, like to give my opinions on a few topics relevant to the campaign. (For the record, I have no association with any existing politi-

cal party running in this provincial election. I have not even been following the campaign closely, but since this anything but a serious column, I do not think you will find this to be anything but a light-hearted romp through the past few weeks of Island history.)

If I wanted to do something patriotic, I could compare our rather subdued election campaign to the outlandish circus that happened south of the border, and describe how our quaint rural democracy is so much more civilised than the 'winner-take-all' presidential campaign. However, I will not be doing that.

I could shift into 'Generation X' mode and say something to the effect that 'shuffling the chairs on the deck of the Titanic doesn't make much sense.' As much as I agree

with that statement, I do not think I can base a whole column on apathy and the debasement of a provincial institution.

If I had the inkling, I could go on a paranoid delusional rant and explain how the province is not actually run by the government, and we are but the underlinings of a great, omnipotent, yet secret society that controls all. (Fjord.)

Actually, and I know that this is even more perverse than any idea from above, I would like to thank all the candidates for running. ("What?!?! How can you thank a bunch of two-faced, lying, hypocritical, etc..." Please, be patient. Read on.) Not only has this campaign been mercifully short, but also rather well-behaved. No noticeable negative ads, no real fireworks at many debates, not much at all for half-baked pundits like myself to elaborate upon. But therein lies my point in thanking the candidates. I doubt many people would volunteer to be the topic of all sorts of malicious rumours and conversations and be the butt of jokes. It takes courage to climb upon the provincial stage and sing and dance to the electorate-- I know for a fact that I could never do it. Once they are elected, however, another facet of politics comes into play.

I guess the main point of this column (since I have learned to use a concluding paragraph to sum up the points that I have made) is that apathy breeds apathy. Being a politician is probably one of the few jobs that actually gives other people the right to criticise every move and decision a politician makes. Living under a microscope is not an easy job for anyone, especially not for one who honestly thinks he or she is doing the best job for the province.

(There, I think I have broken every possible stereotype of the apathetic young student. Except, of course, I

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