



UPEI FIGHTS FOR SMOKE-FREE SPACES

by James Connolly

"I DON'T SMOKE so it's a good plan." That was the reaction of one UPEI student in the cafeteria. She was referring to the recently implemented smoking ban in the cafeteria. On September first, the cafeteria was officially declared a smoke-free area and a message of explanation from the President's office was posted on the bulletin boards and on the micro-wave. People found out about the smoking ban more by word of mouth than by the bulletins. "I've heard about it, but I haven't seen anything about it" and "When people realize, they'll obey the rule," were typical comments from students eating in the cafeteria.

A common misconception is that Senate rushed the proposal through at the last minute this summer. "Our committee started in late 1986: November," said Dr. Satadal Dasgupta, president of the Ad Hoc committee on smoking control. Previously the UPEI Faculty Association had presented Senate with a strict, perhaps radical, all-encompassing non-smoking proposal. Their document was discussed in senate, but no resolutions were passed. On 21 Nov 86 the Faculty Association's motion was tabled in Senate at which time the ad hoc committee was formed.

The committee consisted of 5 senators: Dr. Dasgupta (then a smoker) and Arnost Cepica (non-smoker) from the faculty, Rob Kelly (non-smoker) and Kirstin Lund (smoker) from the student body, and Ian MacDonald (former-smoker) from the administration. This 60/40% committee is very representative of the general population (65% non-smokers and 35% smokers).

The committee commenced by studying the

smoking policies of other universities and companies. It was quickly realized that UPEI, with its policy that forbids smoking in classrooms, is actually ahead of many institutions. In light of this, the committee began gathering information about the effects of secondhand smoke on non-smokers. "Smokers definitely do have rights," said Dasgupta, "but not the right to put the health of non-smokers in jeopardy."

From the senate report "the nonsmoker suffers from adverse health consequences of passive smoking which include headaches, eye and nasal irritation, impairment of lung function, aggravation ... of asthma," and the list continues. "Approximately 500 Canadians die of lung cancer each year as a result of passive exposure to tobacco smoke."

According to Dr. Dasgupta, "Smokers are becoming a minority. They are looked down upon in society." One student spoke of the policy. "It's the status quo; they (senate) change things behind your back." On 20 Feb 87, senate debated the policy then unanimously passed it onto the UPEI Board of Governors for implementation. When asked if Senate polled the student body, Dasgupta responded that "We could have held a referendum, but it's a decision for the welfare of everyone. (It was) passed by senate through democratic debate ... Smoking is detrimental to all people, even smokers."

"The ultimate goal is to have non-smoking all across campus. We can't expect this overnight." The policy recommended by senate to the Board of Governors is that all public areas of university buildings be smoke-free at all times. These areas include classrooms, laboratories, read-

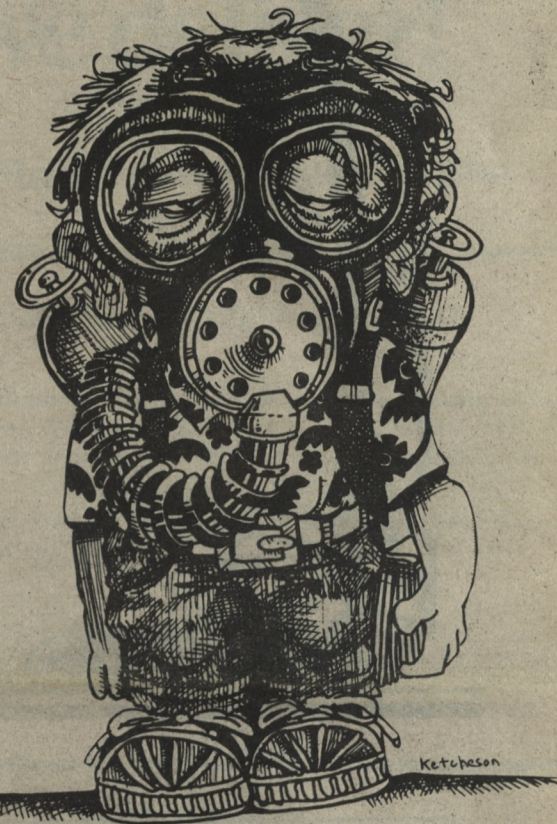
ing rooms, lounges, the book store, UPEI operated vehicles, washrooms, etc. All lounge areas in residences are now smoke-free areas, but the touchy subject of smoking in the rooms has been left to the Board of Governors. One student noted, "I don't smoke, but one of my roommates does. It bothers me when I'm in the room."

The plan calls for each building to have a coordinator who can chose a smoking area which is separate from public lounges. Lounges are for all people to relax or work in. The Board of Governors has already passed the proposal in principle, but it must look at the cost of implementing designated smoking areas.

"We need to have designated areas in each building as long as smoke from the areas does not pollute the other smoke-free areas in the building," said Dasgupta. "The Vet College has a forced circulation air system in which people cannot smoke." If people smoked inside the Vet College, the smoke would eventually permeate the whole building. The senate committee's policy does not specify that people must smoke outside, rather that each building has its own smoking area.

The proposed plan is to be completely phased in by January 1988. The cafeteria is the most noticeable example of the implementation, but other buildings will be effected soon enough. "I hope this policy will help a lot of people quit smoking. (The policy) deliberately discourages smoking on campus," Dasgupta continued, "and the more difficult it is for people to smoke, the less they will."

The proof is the now-old policy which prohibits smoking in classrooms.



When the policy was introduced by senate, many students and professors (including Dasgupta) didn't know how they would make it through the class-period

without smoking. "We did adjust ... we got used to it over time."

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CIMN Radio service restored

CAMPUS RADIO service has been partially restored. Last Friday, CIMN staff member Bob Stanley spliced together cables in Main Building linking CIMN to its transmitter in Bernardine Hall. CIMN had been unable to broadcast since the cables were accidentally cut in late July.

With the cables temporarily repaired, CIMN can now be heard in all three UPEI residences. Another cable linking Blanchard Hall was thought to be cut as well, but when service was restored Blanchard Hall's signal came through clearly.

Cable service, however, will take longer to restore. A modulator box needed to connect to Island Cablevision has been located and CIMN may begin cablecasting again in as little as a week.

The usual CIMN broadcast to the speaker in Robertson Library Lounge may be restored at that time as well.

In Bernardine, Blanchard, and Marion Halls, CIMN may be tuned in at 700 AM. When cable service becomes active again, anyone with cable service at home may receive CIMN by connecting the cable to an FM radio and tuning 102.3 FM.