

Winter Closures, "Who Do I Yell At?"

By Allan Manley
Provincial/Regional Reporter

It is 8:00 in the morning, and as you wake up and check out the window you see white. You see the kind of white that makes you think that school may be closed, with a quick rush to the radio and bolstered by the closure announcements of everything from Stone Park Choir practice to the Eastern School board you discover UPEI is still open. This, unfortunately, has happened several times this winter and many people want to

know who to yell at. The person with the unpleasant

In the end, each student has to decide if the weather is too bad for him or her to travel.

duty of deciding school closure at UPEI is Mr. Gary Bradshaw, Vice-President of Finance and Facilities. While most of us would like to have a discussion with Mr. Bradshaw concerning what he thinks are reasonable travel conditions, it is only fair to put his job in context, rather than take his name in vain the next time we are open during a snow-storm.

In my hunt to find out what UPEI's official policy was on school closures due to weather, I was directed to the desk of Diane MacLean, assistant to Mr. Bradshaw. Ms. Bradshaw informed me that UPEI does not have an official policy concerning what guidelines should decide whether school is to remain open; however, I was enlightened to discover what Mr. Bradshaw does in order to make

his decision.

A wake up 4:30am on the day of a possible storm is followed by a number of calls made to find out just how bad it is out there. Those calls include the Department of Highways, a counterpart at Holland College, as well as campus security. Diane informed me that sometimes a request is made of the security staff to drive around and see what conditions are like. In addition, Mr. Bradshaw looks at weather reports and any RCMP

warnings, and considers road conditions outside of town.

The question remains: "If Mr. Bradshaw is so diligent, why do we have school in - 40 degree weather when the Eastern and Western school boards are closed?"

The answer is not a great one I am afraid. It appears that as adults we are supposed to decide for ourselves when the weather is too poor for our individual situations. Imagine that! The decision to come to school or not is up to the individual. While it is a complete white out in Cornwall should the school be closed for the majority of people who live closer to the university? UPEI closures are not controlled by the school boards, as we are expected to know how to dress more appropriately than kids in grade 6 or high-school students who care more about style than common

Continued on page 10.

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