

## Meincke reviews term

By Jonathan Orlowski

*A Netted Gem interview with University of Prince Edward Island President Peter Meincke reviews the seven years he has spent in office.*

**Gem:** How has the emphasis of UPEI, particularly in regard to education, shifted since you arrived?

**Meincke:** Not very much. Even with the major addition of the Vet College, it will be a while before the direction of education shifts. There is, of course,

the addition of an honors program and Computer Sciences courses to the calendar.

There's been no revolutionary change, except in the budget. Spending must be kept to a minimum these days.

**Gem:** Are you satisfied with the Classic joint majors proposal, with the retention of two effective full-time teaching equivalents?

**Meincke:** That was a

serious mistake. We should first make sure there are enough professors in areas where students show the greatest interest. I think the two positions will prove to be a waste.

**Gem:** How do you feel about your contributing role in the construction of the Atlantic Veterinary College?

**Meincke:** I've put a lot of time and effort into that project. I feel if I hadn't kept up the pressure, we

wouldn't see that College being built here now.

**Gem:** Do you regret not having your term of office extended?

**Meincke:** It's naturally very disappointing. I would have liked to be here for the opening of the Vet College (in the fall of 1986), but the Board of Governors didn't see it as possible.

**Gem:** You were a Physics professor at the University of Toronto before coming

here. Will you return to that position?

**Meincke:** Not Toronto in particular, but possibly physics or another field of science. I may even stay on the Island.

**Gem:** Was there anything you wished to do that you didn't have time for?

**Meincke:** Yes, I wanted to see the university beginning a Master's degree in Island or Integrated Studies. As you know, this is a particular area of study where funding is difficult to find. But I feel it has enormous potential.

**Gem:** Any future plans?

**Meincke:** I'm preparing to leave office at the moment. Beyond that, I would like to work on a research proposal in the area of rural technology. That will hopefully take my studies to New Zealand, Kenya, India, and one or two South American countries.

**Gem:** Will you keep the farm in Victoria?

**Meincke:** Yes, if we stay on the Island. Even if we leave, we will more than likely keep it.

## Profs getting older

MONTREAL (CUP) — By the year 2005, the average university professor will be well into his or her sixties and rounding out a 30 or 40 year teaching career.

There is no compulsory retirement age for university teachers in Quebec or Manitoba, and on April 17, when Canada's Charter of Rights and Freedoms comes into force, professors in all provinces might not be obliged to retire.

"It's a law that's pertinent to universities because university professors tend to want to go on whereas others leap at the opportunity of going on retirement," said John Hill, president of Concordia University's faculty association.

In New Brunswick, a case involving a University of New Brunswick professor over whether the provincial human rights code prohibits mandatory retirement is now before the courts. The professor is arguing that a clause in the code forbidding age discrimination outlaws the practice of removing elderly professors.

The Charter's effect on compulsory retirement will also be decided by court cases launched after April 17. But according to the Canadian Association of University Teachers, the results may not be known for up to a year.

In the late 60s and early 70s, nearly every university and college in North America hired a huge glut of professors. To meet the educational demands of the baby boomers, a whole generation of post-graduate students were lifted from the library or lab and installed in the ivory towers. Here they stay, happily ensconced and cosily tenured for the remainder of the century.

Universities are now wor-

ried that hiring freezes caused by the declining population and funding cutbacks will keep new talent out of universities and cause intellectual stagnation.

"You are effectively throwing out huge piles of talent," said McGill sociology professor Richard Hamilton. "It either goes to the private sector or it's just wasted."

Hamilton said students will inevitably begin to steer away from graduate and post-graduate work unless it is directly job-related.

"All universities are worried about the stagnation that might set in as professors grow older," said Sheila Sheldon-Collyer, McGill University secretary of senate.

McGill recently allotted money to the physics department to hire two additional professors, to add some fresh blood to a department which had not hired a professor in 15 years.

Hamilton said the best policy would be "continuous small quantity of hiring every single year." But there is little new hiring, insignificant turnover and no money to encourage either of these.

As it stands, come the early 21st century, the professors will retire en masse and the whole cycle will begin once again. A massive wave of hiring will be followed by a hiring freeze, and eventually mass retirement again.

"I don't see there's any way to avoid it," said Sheldon-Collyer. "It's a difficult situation, especially when you're broke."

At McGill, some attractive early retirement packages have been worked out to cut down on elderly scholars, but their effect has been minimal. Fellowship programs have also been established to lure new professors into the fold now, but again with limited success.



Site of the Vet College construction. Inset, President Peter Meincke, who was in power during critical negotiations for the facility. (Photos: MacLeod)

## MacDonald wins major prize

Bill MacDonald, an Economics major at the University of Prince Edward Island, has been notified that he is the recipient of a prestigious Association of Commonwealth Universities "Commonwealth Scholarship".

MacDonald is a mature student who will receive his Bachelor of Arts degree from the Island university at Convocation this spring.

The scholarship, estimated to be worth \$20,000 in Canadian funds, will enable MacDonald to continue his studies toward a Master of Philosophy degree from the University of Sussex over the next two years. The program he will be following involves a multi-disciplinary study of economics, politics

and sociology of developing countries. The scholarship covers his tuition, travel, research and living expenses.

Although MacDonald had accumulated a number of university credits from universities in the Halifax area, it wasn't until he moved to Charlottetown that he began working toward his degree on a full-time basis. He enrolled at UPEI in the fall semester of 1982 and has been a Deans' List student (averaging 80, or higher on a full course load).

He is the son of George and Hazel MacDonald, formerly of Halifax, and now residing in Charlottetown. He is married to the former Cecilia MacDonald.

MacDonald will begin his studies in Sussex in October.

## Mistake

The Netted Gem wishes to apologize to Presidential candidate Robert Hanf. A typo was made in the reporting of the Student Union election results in last week's paper. Hanf received 298 of the 836 votes cast for 35.6% of the vote, not 208 as reported.

The amended totals are:

Gordon Cobb 366 votes, or 43.8%

Robert Hanf 298 votes, or 35.6%

Steve Zakem 172 votes, or 20.6%

Other results stand unchanged.