

Fear and Loathing in the Cancer Cloud:

The Continuing Saga of Smoking in the Pit

by Kent Driscoll

Due to an administrative action by the office of President Epperly late this summer, the area commonly known to students as the Pit was turned into a non-smoking area. Among the many problems this decision has presented is the difficulty of enforcement. Since the Department of Student Services is responsible for setting policy concerning the students, this responsibility has fallen into the lap of Director of Student Services, Blaine Jensen.

At the Student Council meeting on January 7, Jensen discussed the options available to Student Services in this area, and looked for opinion from councillors. Many options were presented, including fines for offenders. These fines would be given out by UPEI Security. Jensen stated in a later interview "Many universities enforce similar policies without fines. However, we have the right to institute fines. We would much rather appeal to the better judgement of our students. In fact, the reluctance of Student Services to fine students is what has led to this discussion."

What has also led to this discussion has been some incidents of people smoking in the Pit, especially during exam time. Jensen states "Co-operation with the new policy has been very good, except for the occasional inadvertent smoking. There have been very few cases of overt breaking of the regulation." The major problem seems to have occurred when the ash trays which had graced the Pit for decades mysteriously reappeared during exam time, as well as the equally mysterious removal of "No Smoking" signs. Students assumed there had been some change in the regulation, and proceeded to light up. Jensen states "When these people were asked to stop, they were very co-operative." It is these incidents of smoking that led to the numerous permanent plexiglass-covered signs that now cover much of the wall area in the Pit.

The Student Union's stance has been consistent throughout this debate.

According to VP Internal Tara Inman "[We believe] that the Barn is a more then adequate area for smoking." While admitting that it is a significant walk, VP Finance Kelly Yeo commented, "It [The Barn] is as close to Main building as the Pit" is." Inman later stated support for the university's "smoke-free" policy, but had no comment on the ethical dilemma of supporting a smoke free campus while maintaining the only official smoking building on campus, except to state that "Circulation of air was the major problem in the Pit situation, we do not have that same problem at the Barn". As for the issue of enforcement of the smoking policy, Inman explained "We are not in favour of fines, per say, but we do understand the need for enforcement of this policy".

The official university policy for smoking states that it is not permitted in "any public area". For purposes of enforcement, professor's private offices are not considered public, while secretaries' offices and classrooms are. Students may be surprised that, technically, under this policy, many areas that are commonly considered smoking areas, are not. Some examples are student lounges, the glass doorway on the side of Main building, and the area outside the security office. All of these areas have ashtrays in plain view, but the non-smoking policy is not pursued to the extent it has been in the Pit. If security is to enforce fines (or some alternate form of deterrence), the administration will have to make clear exactly what is and what is not a smoking area. The large, stand-up ash trays by security and in the glass entryway of Main seem to indicate a smoking area, but policy states they are not.

Have a Voice

by Nancy MacIntosh

Being a Canadian is something so special that many people from other countries come (if they are able) to view this vast country of ours. Recently a wonderful girl from Hungary crossed my path and taught me a few things about being a Canadian.

First, she taught me that we are really free. Her grandmother was a teacher and since I am a third year education student, I encouraged as many stories as time would allow about this remarkable educator. She happened to be a Catholic -- she did not teach religion in her classroom, yet she was followed and monitored by the ten communist government to ensure that she did not practice her religion, even on her own.

Second, this girl from Hungary taught me that we do not often appreciate what we have. My family (including four children) live in Blanchard Hall. Do not misunderstand me, we are often grateful for our home, but know it is only temporary "until mom gets a job". Many families more than we can imagine, live in tight quarters in Hungary and due to economic problems, cannot hope to find better arrangements.

Here I am, expressing myself in my student newspaper -- a privilege unheard of in Hungary until quite recently. And while this girl from Hungary caused me to think about being a Canadian, I cannot help but think that there is room for improvement. One thing that Canadians are known for around the world is our compassion and patience. I think however, that at times we are these to a fault.

Don't be an APATHETIC SLOB
VOLUNTEER!!



ALL YOU NEED IS A PENCIL AND
PIECE OF PAPER
(OR A DISK AND A COMPUTER)
TO WRITE FOR THE STUDENT PAPER.

Last year our Federal Government slashed 7 million dollars in transfer payment to our province. The loss was felt in health care. This year there are going to be more cuts and the word is that most likely education will be the target.

February 7, 1996 is set aside as a national day of action. It is a day designated to express out views as a student, parent, sibling, teacher, and members of the community and Canadians. It is a day to take a stand and have a voice.

My Hungarian friend taught me one other thing, she taught me that getting a post secondary education is not considered a person's right in every country. I was reminded that it is in Canada -- or so we believe

My parents and their parents fought for my right and the rights of my children to attend university. It is not supposed to be just for the rich.

What about our schools? Does every student have the textbooks they need? Are all students in each district receiving the same programs, music, phys ed., etc? The answer to both these questions is no.

Your student council is organizing a way in which all of our voices can be heard. Let us all decide that we are proud to be Canadians and we are proud to be able to use our voices. Look for how you can help make a difference on February 7, 1996.

NOTICE

The University of Prince Edward Island Student Union Incorporated will be holding referenda to determine the state of our membership in the Canadian Federation of Students.

The question in the referenda will be as follows:

Are you in favour of the UPEI Student Union remaining a member of the Canadian Federation of Students (-Services)?

The dates of voting will be January 25, 1996 and January 26, 1996 from 9:00 am to 5:00 pm both days. Advanced polls will be held on January 25, 1996 from 6:00 pm to 9:00 pm both days.