

Frolicking Freshmen

A new column just for Frosh

By Dean MacMillian

Well, this is it; the freshmen section of The Gem. It gives me great pleasure to know that there are freshman eyeballs focused upon this article. The intent of this column is to instill a sense of unity and spirit among freshmen and, as well, The Frolicking Freshmen will act as an information guide specifically for freshmen, and as a forum for freshmen expression.

I have held position as Freshmen representative on the UPEI student council since late October of 1986. I have realized that there is a tremendous lack of spirit among the freshmen class. This is not surprising since freshmen are totally new to university life and maybe a little lost at first.

One problem I saw was the apparent lack of any kind of organization among freshmen to enhance their university life. Luckily this is beginning to change. There are many freshmen who are now actively taking a role in instilling spirit in the freshmen class.

During this new semester I am confident that the freshmen class will be more active than ever before. Through the initiations of the "Freshmen Council", which any freshmen may be a part of, I foresee many freshmen events taking place. Hopefully we can initiate activities like a freshmen skate, or freshmen night at the Panther Lounge. Perhaps we can even have freshmen trivia night at the Lounge. Through these

activities, hopefully we can get all freshmen actively involved in something.

It's also pleasing to see that the Student Council is quite interested in Freshmen. In fact, even organizations such as the Winter Carnival committee are becoming more freshmen oriented. During winter carnival, I expect freshmen students will be pleased in the way they are treated. Student services is also interested in the welfare of freshmen and offer any help they can.

I am confident that the spring semester is going to be one in which freshmen will feel at home at UPEI and where freshmen unity, spirit, and enjoyment will grow tremendous-

ly. This column is a first step.

I hope you will enjoy the weekly article and I urge you to contribute to it as much as you can. Let's make this semester an outstanding success! **Student Services Help Freshmen**

The department of Student Services office (bottom floor Main Bldg) is a wonderful place. When you walk across the floor, you can be heard all over campus.

Actually, Student Services
Con't Pg 10

Racism Resurfaces

OTTAWA (CUP) - Racist graffiti has resurfaced at Carleton University, where unknown students defaces a poster advertising a discussion with the ambassador of Sudan.

Written on the poster's corner were the words, "Bunch of Niggers."

"This is supposed to be a growing and learning place. You'd think people would be more broad-minded," said Andrea Timoll, one of two Carleton Anti-Apartheid Action Group members who discovered the graffiti.

The defacement comes nine months after racist comments appeared on a poster during last year's student council election campaign.

"We'd hoped (that) was an isolated example," said Sulley Gariba, co-ordinator of Carleton's International Student's Centre.

Islander Experiences Kenyan Culture

By Sam Okello

Mike Nearing is a man of adventure.

That's why he spent six months recently teaching English, Geography, and Mathematics to Kenyan high school students.

Nearing went to Kenya in May, 1986 under the Crossroads Program, a non-profit, non-governmental organization involving Canadians in social and academic programs abroad.

Nearing has brought back with him a unique taste of a foreign culture. He says, "If the name Kenya means nothing to you, you shouldn't worry about your lack of geographical trivia knowledge, as PEI might be completely unknown to most Kenyans."

Nearing explains that the name Kenya is a catch-word for the best experience he has ever seen in his life.

Nearing, born in Charlottetown, lived in Kisi village. He notes that houses in Kisi con-

sist of attractive designs painted on the walls with coloured soil and plant dyes. He points out that a family usually lives on approximately two acres of land where the members practice subsistence agriculture.

Kenya's small farm areas are extremely impressive, according to Nearing. He is pleased to see the neatness of the fields, the intensity of land use, the extent and quality of the soil conservation works. The number of tin-roofed buildings, bicycles, vehicles, and even the quality of clothing depicts a relatively high degree of development.

Nearing explains that for the vast number of farm families, whose members constitute the main agricultural work force, agriculture is not only a way of life, but also an occupation and source of income.

One problem that Kenya shares with other countries is the problem of inequality. Nearing says it exists within farming communities, and

there is also the problem of the rich and poor, successful and unsuccessful living side by side.

He points out that the small farm sector contrasts with the large farm sector in its relative scarcity of land, capital, access to research-technical advice, markets, and transport, but relatively large quantities of labour to apply to the land.

"Life in Kisi village can be relaxing and down to earth," he says. "During the day, men sit near a hut and drink 'Bussa', a beer drunk from mugs. The ladies spend their day sitting by the fire cooking 'ugali' (the national staple usually made of maize meal)," he adds.

There is a certain amount of male and female role-playing. Nearing admits that the villagers (the men) give him the impression of being less sexist and condescending about a woman's contribution to society than in towns. He notes that out of economic necessity, both partners in a marriage are expected to do daily physical work.

Life in Kenyan villages can be somewhat slow by Canadian standards, according to Nearing. He also recalls how people relate to each other in a human and dignified manner. He mentions that everyone has respect of the elderly members of the community and take care of them communally. Nearing adds that everyone in the village shows concern for those who are ill. "A simple case of Malaria fever will bring a queue of well-wishers outside one's door," he says.

Although education is valued

in Kenya, Nearing indicated that many people, particularly the older generation have not had much schooling. He stresses that school in Kenya have an acute shortage of books, labs, libraries, and trained teachers, to name a few. Such a shortage in school supplies implies that education is more accessible to the rich people who can afford to pay the high tuition.

On leaving Kisi village, Nearing said, "I felt a great sadness, yet I was deeply honoured by the overwhelming friendliness and hospitality that I had received."

He mentions that his departure from Kisi village ended up being as interesting as his arrival.

Nearing is now back at UPEI finishing his B.A. in English. He plans to raise funds and start a library in Kisi village. He also has some slide shows about Kenya. Anyone interested should contact him at 569-4858.

What is perhaps most impressive about Nearing is his adaptable personality that has enabled him to experience a new culture. He says that if one is planning to go to Kenya for a vacation, one will not be disappointed. Not only will one learn a lot about Kenyans and their culture, but also one is sure to learn a lot more about himself.

Nearing's experience has enhanced support for the Cross Roads program that helped him go to Kenya.



The Letters Page

The Gem gets a lot of letters to the Editor signed with that old favourite "Anonymous". Unfortunately, for legal and other reasons, these cannot be printed without the Editor knowing who wrote it.

The Gem gladly will withhold names from publication, but to prove the authenticity of the letter, IT MUST BE SIGNED BY THE AUTHOR. Just write at the bottom of the page "please withhold name", or "sign me Anonymous" and the author's identity will be known only to the editor. It will be kept confidential even from other staff members.

Letters to the editor or other submissions can be sent free of charge through campus mail, dropped off at the SU office in the Barn, or through our Gem-Slot 2000, rm.401 Main.

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