

Quiet grief

By Marko Peric

I'll warn you right away, this won't be a happy editorial. A friend of mine died the day before yesterday, in the week of his eighteenth birthday. He wasn't one of my close friends, and many people are taking this much worse than I am. I've never been the type to cry in public, even if I feel I should. But one has to express his feelings in some way. Sometimes grief has to be a personal thing, a quiet thing. I'm still not sure why I'm telling you, the reader, how I feel.

Andrew was always such a happy, joyful person, and he always smiled. His best friend's mother took out the photo album yesterday, and found all of Andrew's pictures. He was smiling in every last one. And he always managed to make a joke out of everything. I can almost see him in Heaven, beaming down at the rest of us, and cracking jokes. When I get there, he'll probably ask what took me so long.

I think of his fiancée. They were going to get married next summer, and he was going to give her a diamond this

spring.

I think of his family. He was one of the youngest, and the family was closely-knit. They're leaning on each other, their community, and their faith.

I think of his friends. Some are quietly avoiding signs of grief. Others are openly displaying their emotion. I had counted myself among the former, until I wrote this.

Andrew was the first of my friends to ever die. My grandmother passed away some years ago, but she was aged, and her health was failing. She had lived a full life, and although my family never said so, we all knew that really it was only a matter of time. We still grieved, of course. But this is very different. This is sudden and unexpected, a lightning bolt out of a clear blue sky.

However, all of us who knew Andrew can rest in the fact that he knew where he stood with God. Everyone around him was aware of that. Andrew knew where he was going.

It might be a terrifying suggestion, but each of us will face eternity sooner or later. For some, it will be very soon. Do you know where you're going?

Andrew Willis 1977-1995

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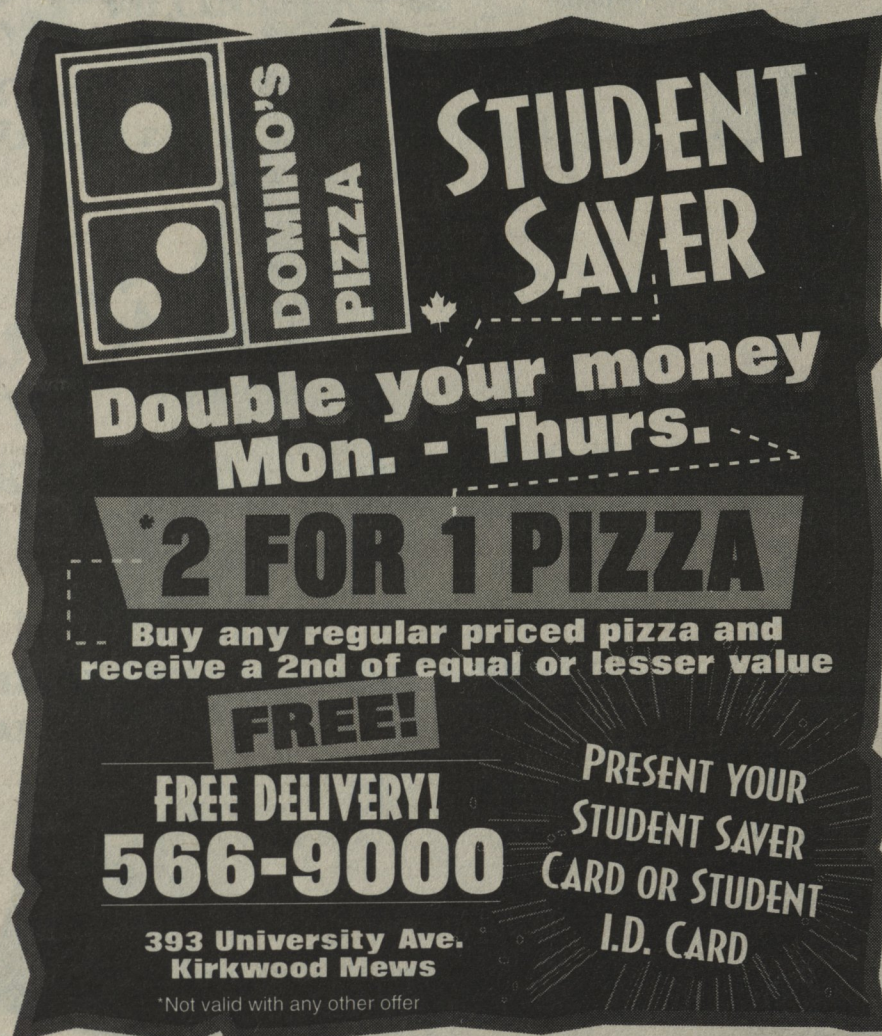
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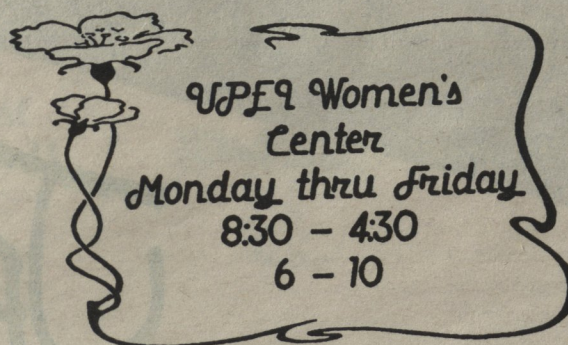


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