

# Editorial

Student Union or South Africa?

Issues or people?

What we think you should be interested in or what everyone tells us you want to read in your newspaper?

We are confused.

At our last wonderful *Gem* staff meeting (6 p.m. on Mondays), screams and shouts filled the air as we tried to bash out the direction we should be taking.

I don't think we decided anything (besides the fact that Lori Anne is in charge of the party when ARCUP hits town for a conference next month), but we did realize that we all want to do this thing right.

Surprise, surprise.

It eventually boiled down (as hot potatoes usually do) to the question of what we want to accomplish at UPEI.

You see, we have this tremendous power. Like it or not, most of you read the *Gem*, if only to see what we misspelled this week. We are subtly molding your perception of what is newsworthy and what is not.

"Students don't care about every silly little thing Senate or the Student Union does!" insisted more than one *Gemmie*.

"Maybe not, but isn't that part of the problem?" responded others. "It's our job to *make* them interested."

"Fine, but the way to do that is to cover ordinary students doing what they like to do," was the swift response.

Impasse. We want to get students interested in the paper, but the only way to do that is to write about them, and the only way to do that is to have more people writing for us, which calls for more people to be interested in the paper.

Let's make a deal here. If you have something you think the *Netted Gem* should be covering, don't tell your friends. Tell us.

This is more than a request. It's a necessity ... if we are to truly be the newspaper of the students of the University of Prince Edward Island.

By Carolyn Ryan

## The President speaks

October 15, 1984

Letter to the Editor

The *Netted Gem*

U.P.E.I.

Dear Editor:

Jonathon Orlowski's article on the criteria for the new President suggests that the President should say more about what he or she is doing. Last year, Jack Keefe and I explored the idea of a President's Column in the *Netted Gem* in which we would try to answer questions sent in by your readers. I encouraged the idea and hoped it would start soon.

I'd like to take this opportunity to follow up on Jack's suggestion and try to answer some of the questions raised in Jonathan's article so that your readers will have a little more information about the job of President on which to base their suggestions for criteria for the new President.

The most important thing to appreciate is that the President of a small university such as UPEI will never have as much time to devote to any activity as he or she would like, and very difficult trade offs must be made.

I have placed great emphasis on external relations and internal administrative matters which meant that informal contact with faculty, staff and students suffered.

I'm not at all surprised to be described as distant and ghostlike, because of the incredible amount of time I was

away haunting anyone who might help get the Veterinary College underway.

I also devoted countless hours to strengthening the links between the University and the Island community.

I saw the University as one of the Island's most important resources and wanted Islanders, especially the Government, to look to the University first for many of the things they normally look to Central Canada to find.

I joined just about any Island organization that asked me and took on the job of President and Chairman of the Board of the Institute of Man and Resources because I thought it was an important connection for UPEI, especially in the area of Island development. I encouraged the use of the term "Island University" and played a key role in obtaining the Island Studies Research Grant.

The former Lieutenant Governor, Gordon Bennet, Ed Hilton, and I spent many hours briefing Cabinet ministers, town councils, and planning and development groups on the plans for a new athletic complex on the UPEI campus. That is a long story in itself, but I want to make clear that the MPHEC made a recommendation in 1980-81 that the PEI Government provide funding for the construction of new athletic facilities at UPEI. The Government has yet to respond formally to that recommendation, but we

have had some encouraging signals in the last year.

I have also spent a lot of time on a number of national and international boards. For example, I was Chairman of the Association of Atlantic Universities from 1979 to 1981, a member of the Board of the Association of Universities and Colleges of Canada from 1979 to 1983 and a member of the Council of the Association of Commonwealth Universities from 1979 to 1983.

Although such activities may not at first sight seem to be of much benefit to UPEI or to its students, I think it did help to make UPEI even better known to other institutions throughout the world and, in particular, helped occasionally with the admission of UPEI students into graduate programs in universities that had little or no knowledge about UPEI programs.

However, in this area your readers may wish to suggest to the Search Committee that they make it very clear to Presidential candidates that UPEI wants its President to spend less time on such national and international boards and councils.

I am currently Chairman of the National Library Advisory Board and Vice-Chairman of the Minister's Advisory Board on the Canadian Military Colleges where I have made contacts that have allowed me to advance the interests of UPEI in various ways.

For example, small university libraries tend to be forgotten in the setting of national policies. I have been able to encourage the exploration of electronic dissemination of journals, which I believe is going to make a tremendous difference to small, more remote institutions like UPEI, where faculty often have to travel to larger centers to obtain access to the information they need.

One very interesting and important contact made on the NLAB was Nicholas Goldschmidt and much progress has been made toward the establishment of a Festival of Master Classes in Music



GRAPHIC/MUSE

## LETTERS

and Dance at UPEI.

Two years on the Physics Committee of the Natural Sciences and Engineering Research Council allowed me to advance the cause of research at smaller universities.

Three years on the Canadian Environmental Advisory Council brought me into contact with a number of people involved in pesticide control, small scale agriculture and new techniques of forest management that have important implications for PEI.

I am also a member of the Board of the Intermediate Technology Development Group of North America and the Atlantic Council of Chief Executive Officers of the Conference Board of Canada, and I recently joined the Board of the National Institute for Nutrition which is sponsored by the Chief Executive Officers of ten major Canadian food companies.

Again, your readers may wish to advise the Search Committee to seek a President who will give such memberships lower priority as they add up to a lot of time away from the campus.

However, your readers should keep in mind that one of the benefits of such memberships is the contact that one makes with potential donors to the University. The

many contacts I made through my participation on such national boards and councils had put me in a much better position than before to embark on a major fund-raising campaign we had planned to launch this year.

The President of UPEI is expected to give many talks and attend a very large number of openings, receptions, speeches, performances, games, etc. My wife and I also invite faculty, staff and students to the President's residence and to our farm on occasions such as the Orientation Barbecue, the Graduation Tea, Athletic Awards Night, etc.

A certain amount of informal contact can and does occur during these events. For example, my wife and I had a very long and interesting discussion with two students, Sharon Ledwell and Jimm Mutter during last year's PEI Symphony Ball.

A lot more interaction could take place during other events such as inter-collegiate games which I attend as often as possible. I certainly try to kick-off the ball or drop the puck whenever I am asked.

Most of what remains of my time is taken up with University administration, and, in a place like UPEI which does not have an Academic Vice-President, the

President ends up with a lot on his or her plate.

Unfortunately, each year the Senate, the Board, the Faculty Association and external agencies such as MPHEC and the governments are adding more and more to that plate.

If your readers really want to see more of their next President, they should ask that high priority be given to appointing a Vice-President (Academic). However, it will not be easy to find the money in our hard pressed budget.

I hope these few examples give your readers some idea of what your President has been doing, and are of some assistance as they think about what they would like to see in their next President.

There are, of course, many more things to consider; the role of UPEI and its relation to the Island, what new programs should be established, the beginning of the Veterinary College, how to cope with financial constraint, etc.

In this letter I have tried to deal with only a few of the concerns that were raised in Jonathan's article.

I wish your readers well as they develop their suggestions for the Search Committee.

Yours Sincerely  
Peter P. M. Meincke  
President

## The Netted Gem

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The staff of Canada's best student newspaper this week are: Nancy Ross, Jill Warburton, Kaberi Dasgupta, Robert Bodrog-Goodland, Melanie Clarke, Bob Stanley, Jonathan Orlowski, Sandra MacDonald, Lori MacLeod, Ross Hartinger, John Dougan, John Pendergast, Michael Zinck, Tony Sauer, Lori Anne Heckbert, Jim Lai, Brian MacLeod, Carol Doiron, Ron Lewis, Phil Stanyer, Glen Boswall, Brian Linkletter and our beloved editor Carolyn Ryan.

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