

Atlantic Feminists Speak Out

By Cindy Venema

For the second time the Women's Studies department of UPEI is hosting a conference on women's issues. Students from UPEI and other universities across Atlantic Canada are being encouraged to submit papers on female themes.

The conference hosted last spring was a huge success, and since then it has been determined to be an annual event at UPEI. Dr. Irene Gammel, Women's Studies Coordinator, is looking forward to this second conference, seeing it as an "unique opportunity for people from different disciplines to share their knowledge on women's issues".

Hosting the first conference was a lot of work, but the combined efforts of the organizing committee made it very professional and educational.

The feedback received concerning the conference was supportive, as J. Paul Boudreau, Director of UPEI's Infant Studies Program, stated, "the conference represented an exciting blend of disciplines and scholarly research approaches; the quality of the papers was indeed an outstanding testimony of the academic skill and ability of some of our UPEI students".

The last conference was mostly targeted at UPEI students, and local Islanders, although there were a couple of presenters from other Atlantic universities. This year, however, the call for papers is going to all of the Atlantic Universities, and the due date for submissions is February 28.

Already Dr. Gammel has received five email messages from students at universities such as UCCB, Acadia, and Dalhousie, expressing interest in submitting papers for the conference.

There is a vetting committee, of students and faculty, that reads the submissions and selects which papers will be accepted. The committee will be looking specifically for a diversity of papers that are well researched and are approximately eight pages in length. To make the selections fair, the papers will be read anonymously.

This is not uniquely an English or Women's Studies conference. Dr. Gammel stressed that this is an interdisciplinary conference and that students from all faculties are welcome to submit papers. "It would be nice to have someone with a scientific angle", stated Gammel, specifying a particular women's issue.

Last year's conference focused on: Maritime women in history; women and political issues; and women, fiction, and life writing. There were also two key note speakers.

This year there will also be a couple of key note speakers; in fact one has been confirmed already. Dr. Margaret Conrad from Mount Saint Vincent will be coming to speak at the conference. She is an historian, with expertise in Atlantic regional political culture and the history of women. She has conducted many studies on Maritime life writing particularly

women's autobiographies.

The conference provides several rare opportunities for students: they can gain skills in presenting; they are given an occasion to present their work to other students; they can observe their fellow student's work; and they are provided with the opportunity to learn how to organize a professional conference.

Presently there are about eight to nine organizers, but they are looking for more student involvement. The conference is being organized primarily by the students: "This is something unique because this is in the student's hands, but faculty are there to provide guidance" explained Dr. Gammel.

One of the toughest chores of the conference committee is fund-raising. Last conference the students were able to raise \$2500. Unlike most conferences, this conference is free and open to all.

A wonderful explanation of the conference is written by Dr. Gammel in her *Women's Studies Newsletter*, where she describes the last conference: "With limited experience, the students generated momentum that peaked in a well-coordinated day--a day that was not only an academic treat but was also entertaining and collegial; it included good food, musical entertainment, door prizes, and opportunities for connections".

K.C. Irving Building Grand Opening

By Todd MacLean

On Saturday, January 25th, 1997, the K.C. Irving Chemistry building was officially opened with ceremonies and speeches accentuating the upmost in prestige, which served to give this state of the art structure the introduction that it so rightfully deserves.

In attendance at the occasion were such distinguished individuals as Pat Mella, members of the Irving family, including Mary Jean, Robert, and J.K. Irving; all three of the former Deans of Science, along with Winston Pineau, the present Dean of Science; and Elizabeth Epperly, president of UPEI.

The event was considered so important that news commentator Mike Duffy plugged the occasion on national television, apologizing for his absence from the opening.

To commence the inauguration, there was a social function held in the foyer of the building, followed by introductory speeches which took place in the main lecture theatre.

"This is a very exciting day for the province of PEI." said Premier Pat Binns, in his speech. "I congratulate the University of Prince Edward Island for making their ideas become a reality."

Winston Pineau had a bit of an excited tone in his voice himself as he stated that enrollments in science programs this year have increased by 11%, and attributed much of this success to the opening of the new building.

J.K. Irving, son of K.C. Irving, represented the Irving family in his address, which consisted of heartfelt gratitude for the preservice of their family name. "We appreciate you honouring our father in this very sincere way."

With their one million dollar donation, however, it is we who should feel the gratitude, which was rightfully expressed in the thanking words of Dr. Epperly, and Dr. Pineau, who also mentioned Wanda Wyatt, and the province of PEI as large contributors to the building.

The Irvings wanted to help out our "beautiful province" and to honour K.C. with something that would last, something that would literally be carved in stone. And with the unveiling of the plaque dedicated to K.C. Irving, located in the entrance of the building, they have achieved just that.

And as Dr. Epperly excitedly cut the ribbon across the entrance to the foyer, it not only opened the building up to the public, who received guided tours later on that day, but also gave it an official opening for those whom it was built for--the students of UPEI, who will definitely benefit greatly in the future, from the presence of this grand structure.