

SYMPOSIUM SENSATIONALIZED

By Kevin Gauthier

Well, I don't really know where to begin. I suppose one should open a column on Symposium '79 by heaping pages of richly-deserved "Congratulations!" and "Thank you's!!" to the members of the Symposium Committee who gave us the opportunity to look inside ourselves and our university. But at the same time, one should also take time to berate two groups of individuals: a) those who did not attend Symposium and (b) the staff of that traditional and predictable Island paper, the Evening Patriot who, for reasons unknown to this writer, labored under the illusion that Symposium '79 was a conference on alcoholism at U.P.E.I. and communicated that misconception to the world on the front page of the Nov. 7 issue.

At present, let us push on with our enjoyable task of showering gratitude on our committee whilst recalling the activities and themes of the exercise. The very idea of the Symposium was a courageous one, and I admit of nothing but unbridled admiration for the students who had the stuff and pluck to proceed so boldly with such a precarious venture. The potential for absolute failure that threatened the endeavour from the very beginning must have given some very anxious moments to the organizers, and caused, I'm sure, more than one observing student to shake their heads in wonder at the kamikaze tenacity of that stalwart few. But, as a lesson that determination and dedication to an

ideal can overcome all obstacles, the committee pressed on until, on Tuesday and Wednesday of last week, the rich fruits of their labor were realized. Bravo!

The events and themes of Symposium '79 are dealt with elsewhere in this revered publication and need not be dealt with in depth here. Suffice to say that general concern was registered by the participants over (a) the need for a core curriculum of some sort; (b) the need for better physical facilities at UPEI; (c) the need for student access to course evaluations and (d) perhaps most telling of all, the need for an ombudsman to assist individuals in dealing with the university administration and, in some instances, faculty. A call was also made for the Symposium, or something similar, to continue on an annual or bi-annual basis. It would seem desirable to organize some sort of follow-up to Symposium '79 in the near future so that something concrete will result from our efforts, but the wisdom of holding a Symposium every year is questionable. What would be worth more consideration would be conducting such an exercise in the high schools so that students will have some idea why they are going to university before they get here.

Another positive aspect of Symposium, at least for this die-hard Artsie, was that science and business were placed in perspective. University education was identified as an inter-

disciplinary process, involving arts, humanities, sciences and professional studies. It appears as if the competition and animosity might well be in the process of being torn down.

So, Symposium '79 was an unqualified success. It is unfortunate that some people chose to ignore this occasion for reflection and self-evaluation, for they will probably not have the opportunity again. But those of us who attended the exercise are beginning to realize its value, and no doubt will become even more aware of its real worth as we reflect and reconsider in the days to come.

As an aside to Symposium, I cannot let pass this opportunity to comment on the story that appeared in the Patriot headlined "U.P.E.I. Breeds Alcoholics" This article, supposedly written about Symposium as a news story, distorted the purpose and message of the day entirely out of context. The Patriot's desire to sell papers, in instances like this,

does irreparable harm to this university's reputation and image. Can one lay claim to responsible journalism when the facts of a story are sacrificed for the sake of sensationalism? I think not. While discussing this matter with the editor of the publication, I was told that everybody at the paper office knows alcohol is a problem at U.P.E.I., so what was our complaint about the story? Simply this. Symposium '79 was not about alcoholism on campus, and expanding one comment made by one speaker through the whole day out of all proportion is not, in my opinion, fair, responsible, or justifiable.

Simply because the staff of the Evening Patriot have certain preconceived ideas about UPEI and its students is no cause for expanding those misconceptions at the expense of accurate reporting and our reputation.

Students at UPEI, and particularly the organizers of Symposium, have good reason to feel shafted by our competition downtown.

SENIORS!!! grad pictures

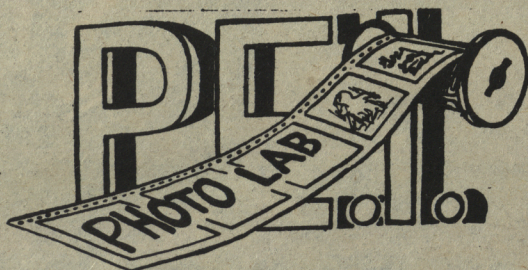
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PARTY!

THE FIRST SENIOR CLASS PARTY OF THE YEAR WILL BE HELD ON FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 30 FROM 8:30 - 12:30 ON THE SECOND FLOOR OF THE BARN. A RAFFLE WILL BE HELD FOR 5 DOZEN.

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