

THE RES RAP

By Yvonne MacKean

WELCOME TO THE FIRST OF many, and hopefully regular, instalments of the Res Rap. My aim is to keep the general university community up to date with the events in the residence community. I hope to include all residences, but from time to time my Bernardine bias may show. Well, here goes...

In case some people hadn't noticed there have been some major renovations in the residences. Marian Hall has been the greatest benefactor of these changes. To start with, all the rooms have been painted (the difference is remarkable). The hallways on first and second have been carpeted and the stairwells have been re-surfaced. Most rooms have new dressers. As well, some more new windows were installed. Blanchard Hall has also received some attention. There is new furniture and carpeting in the rooms in C wing. Also, some new mattresses have replaced the more damaged ones. In Bernardine there are plans to improve the ventilation system. All in all, the residences do look better.

According to Marc Braithwaite, Residence Manager, occupancy in the residences is up eighteen percent. There are also less people leaving residence without giving it a trial period. Also, the number of people on the board meal plan is up twenty-five percent. This should mean better food services. Students, Braithwaite says, are still demanding the best for their money, except now there are more students.

Something visitors will notice, especially in Bernardine, is the new 24 hour lock up now in effect. The outside doors are locked, but there is an intercom link and a list of residents and numbers to dial to reach them in the entry way. A visitor dials the number and waits for the student to come and open the door for them. It will take a bit of getting used to, but will soon become habit.

On a lighter note, the first year residence students had a blast participating in some activities organized by House Committees. The most memorable was the 2:30 am serenade to Marian Hall by the pajama clad residents of Bernardine -- I'm sure revenge is in the works. The floors in the buildings also participated in the same groups for First Year Orientation Week activities. Congrats to the Royal team, including fourth floor Bernardine girls, who defeated the team which included third floor Marian guys in the soccer baseball tournament -- yeah fourth! (No bias here whatsoever!)

Finally, I have to comment on the successful residence pub that took place on Sept 8th. The pub, which was open to all students, featured (for a second time) the Sons of Maxwell. The Sons of Maxwell are Don and Dave Carroll, who have recently relocated to Halifax. The guys do a great acoustic show. Their musical selections include Irish, Maritime folk, classic rock, modern tunes and some of their own original work. The music was easy to listen, dance and sing to (of which I did my share!). The dining hall-where the pub was-rocked through out the evening. It is safe to assume, that most people (including me) had a great time. Just in case you want to check out Sons of Maxwell, they are playing at the Olde Dublin Pub the weekend of September 28-30. Hope to see you there.

Well, that seems to be it for this instalment. No doubt I have forgotten some material, but I hope to have covered the important stuff. If you have any ideas for this column, or want something included feel free to get in touch with me through the newspaper office. Until next time...this is the Res Rapper signing off!

by Dionne Stephens (CUP) — A sociology professor is suing York

University and members of a college student association for over 2.6 million dollars in damages. Charging York and the Atkinson College Student Association (ACSA) with libel, professor Doug Smith has put forth the suit in response to statements printed about him in ACAS's Summer 1994 Teacher Evaluation Results booklet.

The book contains students evaluations of courses they took at Atkinson College. At the end of each course, students were asked to anonymously complete a questionnaire about the course and professor. In the past, the university has put this type of information in a reference book which students could not take home to carefully examine.

Explained Les Swan, Chair of the ACSA: "For the first time we took the information and made it into an interesting book — students will really find it useful for picking courses."

Professor Smith also believes that the book is an excellent way of getting students feedback about his course entitled Racism in Popular Culture. The course has, in the past, actively lobbied against racist board games being sold at a local department store, visited a native protest at the Revenue Building in Toronto, and analyzed the images being portrayed in films like Disney's Pocahontas.

Smith has always looked forward to seeing the students comments at the end of the course but he was shocked at the description of his class in this year's book. "So I'm described as disorganized and unstructured — I can handle unstructured," insisted Smith. "But then it says incompetent, racist and anti-feminist with an exclamation mark. I had to pick myself up off the floor!"

Swan stands behind the contents of the book. "While these are harsh terms that we don't like to hear, they are opinions of students and terms they used to categorized this guy — we don't replace words,"

he said. "This whole thing [the book] is to advantage students and to advantage professors who are doing a good job. (Students) pay for this service and those not doing their job should be noted."

Smith proposed the university set up a board of inquiry into the allegations. As of yet, there has been no response to this suggestion. But Smith has moved ahead, launching the libel suit.

"You can't dump on someone and then just have a little disclaimer at the front [of the book] that what your saying you don't assume responsibility for it. When you charge someone with libel, the onus is on them to demonstrate the use of that language was justified," said Smith.

In his suit, Smith has specifically named York University (as they are ultimately responsible for campus publications), former ACSA President Ruby Hunt and the booklet's four staff members. Smith's claims against these parties include \$1 million for libel, \$1 million in punitive damages, pre-judgment interest and the costs of his lawyer. As well, Smith is fighting for an additional \$600,000 dollars in damages for "intentional . . . negligent or reckless interference" with his livelihood as a professor.

"(The book) is distributed all over campus," Smith explained. "And people who are interested in the sociology, social psychology, anti-racism, communication field or whatever are going to be reading it."

"My reputation is mud. This is a disaster — because on a campus, reputation is all."

He is especially concerned about how the evaluation will affect his job security and mobility as a part-time professor. "Vulnerability is the name of the game," Smith said.

Calling the statements gossip and innuendo, he says that it could lead to him being passed over for positions by decision makers who are frightened that the allegations are true or could resurface into a great explosion.

"It fuels paranoia and leads to a poisonous teaching situation."

Smith doesn't plan to sit back and wait. "You have to use those words with extreme caution," he explained. "You've got to have some information. I'm not going to have this stuff hurled at me without fighting back fiercely."

