

# Obituary

## The Barn

September 9, 1970- September 3, 2002

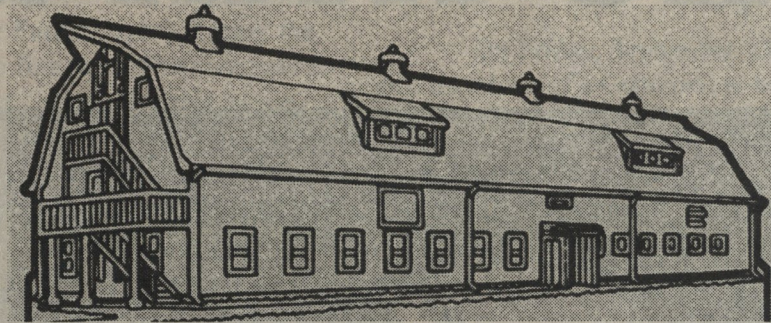
The Student Union Centre, nicknamed 'The Barn', was conceived between May 2-5, 1970. Daughter of 'Stu' Dentunion-Fees and 'Grant' St.Dunstan, as well as her surrogate mother Loan Upei, The Barn was a welcome sight into the UPEI campus community. It was a difficult pregnancy, but with the architecturally sound knowledge of Peter A. MacNeil and the support of S.U. prez Jim Ross, the birth was a success. The birth cost \$130,000, but it was well worth the price for the 36 X 140 foot baby.

### **The night was soon dubbed "pig and whistle" night.**

The standing parent of the Barn was the adopting body of the Student Union. She was given to them from the university free of charge, on the condition that she would be raised, clothed, fed, educated, and taken care of properly. In the child's upbringing, a lounge, rec centre, student union offices, coffee shop, and mezzanine were developed. Finally on September 9, 1970, The Barn was introduced to the rest of her family, the UPEI student body. She was welcome and loved by all, and accepted by her new family joyously.

Distressingly, there were many disputes between family members over the dressing of The Barn, and this left emotional scars on both her and her family. Some wanted her to be adorned in green, white, and rust, the school colours. They also wanted to maintain a rustic, comfy, and 'stylish' look about her, by lighting her with hanging lanterns and the like. In the end, a compromise was made, and she was given a red decor on the outside and green, white, and rust on the inside, with lighting that seemed fit for a lantern.

The Barn held a certain air of stateliness while a member of our campus family. She was originally grey before she became the red splendour



Artist Rendition of The Barn

that students everywhere came to know and cherish. She was one of the largest and last barns of her make, and in perfect condition. It was a day of pride when she was accepted into society as more than "just an old barn," which she was quite literally. She was publicized all over the P.E.I. newspapers in the summer of 1970 as being one of the most unique Student Centres in Canada. What's more, she was highly advertized as "The New Charlottetown Coffee House," a very hip and cool place to relax and meet people.

Three months after her birth, the Student Union made an action to acquire a liquor license for their beloved coffee house, but their inquiry was quickly rejected. Institutions of higher learning were not permitted liquor licenses at the time. But one year later in Oct. 1971, the P.E.I. Liquor Commission granted the university the privilege of one night of liquor licensing per week. This night was soon dubbed "Pig and Whistle" night.

### **In the 1980's, during The Barn's teen years she developed a drinking problem**

In January of 1975, the laws on liquor licensing changed, and universities could apply freely. The Student Union, being a more responsible parent than five years prior, decided to wait a while before applying. Pig and Whistle night was popular, and

they didn't want to throw their child into the club scene too quickly. Instead, they waited a year or two before easing The Barn into the bar mainstream.

In 1979, the coffee house was given a new name and a new image. It was christened "The Exchange," and the second floor was destined for performers such as Lenny Gallant, Margie Carmichael, and Roy Johnston, and any other John/Jane Doe who cared to grace the stage in the coffee house.

The Barn got a make-over in January 1982, and all the interior was refurbished. Sadly, she was attacked in May of that year and received third degree burns. Her family was devastated, and besides the arson, it is believed that she was also robbed. A new wide screen TV, VCR, and Pac-Man game were all stolen. But her family pulled together and gave her a second make-over, with improvements! The CIMN radio station was relocated from the main building to the third floor of The Barn, while the lounge area was completely reconstructed. She was re-opened again by Sept. 8, 1982, and a party was held on her twelfth birthday.

In the 1980's, during The Barn's teen years, she developed a drinking problem. Her family and community did not recognize her strong tendency towards alcohol abuse, even though her nickname during this period was "a place to drink your face off." Her social image changed and was marred terribly and negatively. The Barn no longer was a place for any student to go and relax and meet people, it was a place to get plastered.

It wasn't until 1994 that the Student Union realized how sick their child had become. They campaigned to reestablish The Barn's rep as a place for anyone, alcohol or no alcohol. Posters were posted, articles were printed, the message got out that if students were to drink, that they should drink responsibly.

In The Barn's final years, she became ill and suffered a lot before her death. In 1992 The Barn was charged with causing rowdiness in downtown Charlottetown. She was hosting a 'liquidation sale,' officially known as 'the year-end pub,' unofficially 'drink The Barn dry,' when some of her guests stumbled away into the night and caused quite the ado. Then in 1996, 40 CDs were stolen out of her care. These, and the stench, were the beginnings of her downfall.

### **She was attacked in May (1982) and recieved third degree burns.**

Yes, beers were spilt, stains and odours lingered, laughs were had, great memories (or lack there of) took place, and nights to last forever occurred there, all in the old girl's presence. She studied with us, celebrated with us, cried with us, grew with us, and lived with us. The Barn certainly became an intricate part of every UPEI student's life at some point or other. As we say goodbye, let us thank the bartenders, performers, store owners, student union members, door men, and anyone else who volunteered there. They and the rest of the UPEI community will greatly miss The Barn and all the life that was lived there for so many generations of students and faculty alike. Barn, you shall not be forgotten.

-Mariève MACGREGOR