

When the snow flies at UPEI

The University, in the eyes of the plebian non-University community, is allegedly a fortress of knowledge, the supreme seat of wisdom, a place where nothing happens irrationally, and everything is justified by the great Greek philosophers, the discoveries of modern science, or tradition, (a word that is fondly associated with Convocations, freshman orientation and going to home hockey games).

Since there is no screamingly obvious link between either Plato or the most recent Nobelaureates and the cancellation of classes halfway through last Wednesday's blizzard, it seems tradition is the culprit.

Is it really some hallowed, long-established precedent which decrees, "On winter days when all Island school units are shut down, the CBC weather service in Charlottetown predicts the worsening of an already fierce storm system, and even K-Mart closes, students of the University of Prince Edward Island shall be expected to brave the inhospitable elements (and we're not talking about carbon or oxygen here, kiddies) and the dangerously slippery road conditions to forge their way onto the Malpeque campus. There they shall wade laboriously through drifts of snow that maintenance crews haven't started to clear to classes in all manner of snow-encrusted buildings, to take their chances in the "How much do you want to bet the prof doesn't show up?" lottery. To make the situation even more interesting, the Administration may, at any time it wishes, decide to cancel classes. (We recommend that the decision makers wait until about 11:30 a.m., so that as many students as possible have had time to arrive on campus and be inconvenienced by the announcement)."

Perhaps a long-ousted Senate made the above motion years ago, and the present Senate hasn't gotten around to abolishing it yet (they *do* have a terribly long agenda, you know, and not much time to deal with such trivial matters.)

Ask the President and the Registrar, and they will quote the policy given in the story on page 1. Yes, gentlemen, this policy is admirable. Too bad it wasn't used on Wednesday until it was too late to matter.

We students aren't totally unsympathetic to your great responsibility in dealing with decisions of this type. Really, we aren't.

All we want is a teensy bit of consideration. Sometimes you tend to forget that the university exists so that students can attend classes and learn — in safety.

And not so that they can be stormstayed at UPEI on a dismal Wednesday afternoon.



LETTERS

It wasn't like that

Dear Editor,

When reading Sharon Leighton's feature, "How different are the two 1984's" (January 12, 1984), I was surprised by some of the "Lies About the Past" she used in the article. I agree that there is now a tendency to use language to confuse and not communicate, as in political and advertising jargon. It seems, however, that the two examples used to describe lies about the past do not show that we are receiving false information.

Although we are now in a recession, and unemployment and inflation are both high, I find it difficult to believe that we are not better off than people of the last century.

In any age there is a rich class, yet one must only look at the economic horror stories that have come out of the early industrial period to realize that most people are better off today than they were before. The *laissez-faire*

policy in that period led to great poverty among the working class.

One only needs to read Charles Dickens to see a portrait of Victorian society. The Victorian period was notorious for its slums, poverty, and inequality.

One must also remember the depression in the 1930's and ask one's parents or grandparents what it was really like when they grew up. The parental cliché we often ignore of "When I was your age, we didn't have ..." is based on fact, not fancy. We now have the forty-hour work week, social security, old-age pensions, Medicare, and public education that is superior to that of most previous eras.

I also find Sharon Leighton's reference to the strength of women rather offensive. The "fragile useless creatures of 1884" were not weak in a physical sense of the word. It would be impossible for a weak or fragile person to survive the labour required a hundred years ago.

Women were viewed in this period as being incapable of controlling their lives and making decisions, because of

the unnatural hierarchy imposed upon them. Now, in 1984, women are a political and economic force that requires respect. The change that we are so fond of gloating over is a matter of independence, self-awareness, and a growing respect for the capabilities of women, not a matter of the amount of work done.

I'm not claiming that the sexes have reached equality, yet things have improved since women were fighting for the vote.

I cannot deny that in certain aspects we are growing closer to Orwell's vision of totalitarianism. It is important to remember that Orwell's vision, although it has not manifested itself in Canada, is a reality in many parts of the world today, where people are being "vapourized" by the thousands.

It is not the specifics of Orwell's world or of our present state that are essential to understanding the horror of 1984. It is the concern Orwell showed with the perversion of the truth that is important and that has been with man for centuries.

Not Yet Paranoid

Praise for SCOPA

Dear Editor:

I am writing in reference to an article which appeared in the U.P.E.I. Sun on October 6, 1983 entitled "S.C.O.P.A.?" I regret that I have not responded sooner but the pressures of the first semester forced me to continually delay writing.

With the above in mind I would like to commend the Student Union on its "Student Career Orientation Projects Association" (S.C.O.P.A.). I believe the efforts closely resemble the Student-In-Industry program I have been coordinating through the School of Business Administration the past few years. In many ways, the Student-In-Industry program is analogous to the "student teaching" program which the Faculty of Education requires of its students.

I would like to congratulate the students involved in the S.C.O.P.A. project, and them well with their projects and hope they expand the program in the future. Finally, I would like to join the other faculty members who have offered them their help.

Sincerely,

J. Ronald Collins, Ph.D.
Associate Professor of Business Administration

The Netted Gem

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Yes, we're still alive, though depleted in numbers this week (something we hope changes very soon). Held captive in the *Netted Gem* office this week are John Pendergast, Ruth Edgett, Jonathan Orłowski, David Doiron, Leah Parker, Gus Hillstrom, John Dougan, Parker Grimmer, Sharon Leighton, Howard Beattie, and editor Carolyn Ryan. We try to count our blessings, but we wish you'd come up and be counted as one of us, too (staff meetings Wednesday at 6 p.m.)

The *Netted Gem* is the weekly student newspaper of the University of Prince Edward Island. Views expressed therein are not necessarily those of the Student Union. We reserve the right to edit copy for space, style, or legal reasons. Letters to the editor must be typed, double-spaced, and submitted before noon on Monday. Letters exceeding 500 words in length are prone to cutting and much abuse by the collective staff. All letters must be signed by their author(s). Our office is located on the fourth floor of the Main building. Our telephone is 892-4121, extension 387. The *Netted Gem* is now a full member in semi-good standing with Canadian University Press.

