

# THE FIRST DECADE, IT'S OVER

By Kevin Gauthier

Well, in case you you don't know by now, this is U.P.E.I.'s tenth anniversary as an institution of higher learning, which is something we all have to learn to celebrate. This beloved little university of ours has come a long way since it was incorporated back in 1969 after an immense amount of discussion, arguing, and some bitterness.

But, the optimism, determination, and foresight of the new vision prevailed to fashion this university, which we all appreciate too little.

In commemoration of U.P.E.I.'s tenth anniversary U.P.E.I. Day was held last Sunday. The day was organized by a committee chaired by Jim Griffith, Director of Student Services. The day featured an open-

house on campus. The public was invited to visit the campus for an opportunity to walk through our buildings, talk to faculty, staff and student, and generally to take a good first-hand look at our "Island university." Highlights of the day included an open-air concert by the Three Oak's High School Concert Band, and the presentation of commemorative medals to ten Islanders who have contributed in superior fashion to the betterment of education in this province. The medals were designed by Prof. Adrienne Arsenault of the Fine Arts Dept., and featured an impressive illustration of P.E.I. cradled in the waves of the Gulf, faced by the U.P.E.I. 10th anniversary symbol. The weather

for the day was simply beautiful, enhancing the natural serenity and "greenness" of our campus, and the visitors got a chance to view U.P.E.I. as it is (especially the Student Union Building which, thanks to the efforts of a few butter-fingered individuals on Saturday night, featured a new floor covering that smelled vaguely like the inside of an old, rotting beer keg and attracted hoards of flies that would otherwise have continued romping blissfully in the less fragrant garbage bin out back. Oh well, no sense hiding the less glorious side of university life.)

Mr. Griffith has estimated that about 700 people visited campus on U.P.E.I. Day, a figure that stirs little excitement in my heart. Now, by no means am I criticizing the organizers of the day, who did a good job. But where were the people? If UPEI is truly the "Island university" where were the rest of the 120,000 Islanders who finance and supposedly support this university? 700 people!!! Not very impressive at all. Despite the efforts of the organizing committee, and an adequate publicity campaign, less than 1 percent of the population of Charlottetown alone found the time to drag themselves out here to see what we're all up to.

This illustrates a problem that has haunted UPEI since its inception, and appears likely to continue doing so for some time: that problem being that Islanders, for some reason, just cannot accept UPEI as a useful part of their lives, and UPEI cannot make itself appreciated or even remembered by the average Island citizen. Following the original furor surrounding its establishment UPEI fell into total oblivion as far as many Islanders were concerned, and has remained there to this day. Witness 700 people. How or why this happened is somewhat a mystery. The potential exists for UPEI to play a major role in improving the lives and imaginations of many Islanders. Likewise, Island citizens have the potential to create from UPEI a true "Island university", serving the needs of P.E.I., educating Islanders as they wish to be educated, developing technology and promoting knowledge appropriate to the local setting. Our sister institution, Holland College, has been much more successful at this than us. Why? Perhaps we should take a closer look at this question. But the limits of space compell me to delay further exploration until the next issue. In the meantime, perhaps we shouldn't toss about our much-touted label of "Island university" until we're sure we can properly lay claim to that title.



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### NOTIFICATION

There will be a Student Union Meeting Friday, September 21 on the second floor of the barm at 2:30 pm.

The following week there will be another meeting on September 28 in Kelley 209, again at 2:30pm.

ALL STUDENTS ARE WELCOME TO ATTEND BOTH MEETINGS