

## Residence Life: Parties or Straight A's?

By Chad Luff

(CUP) — Many people view life in a university residence as a never ending orgy of toga parties and drinking games leading to countless late nights leaning over a toilet bowl in a cold sweat losing lunch while finding religion.

But researchers at Memorial University could soon replace that image with one of late-night study sessions and high grades.

A study by the university's department of student services shows students living in residence are 15 per cent less likely to drop out of university over a two year period than those living in apartments, and 10 per cent less likely than those still living at home.

Brian Johnston, Memorial's director of student housing, cautions the study is still in the preliminary stages and "too much should not be read into it." But he did say the early results are a good argument against the common misconception that residence students do poorly in school.

Johnston credits many of the services, such as house computers, academic advisors and house tutors for the success of residence, but acknowledges the negative aspect of the intense social atmosphere.

"Going to university is about getting a total education. Part of that education is growing up, learning to live with other people, learning to accept differences, compromise and learning to have fun," he said.

"We promote academics, but at that age you should be having fun."

Johnston does admit, however, some students aren't suited for residence life.

"Residence isn't for everybody," he said. "Ninety per cent of our students have never shared a room with anyone and that is a major adjustment."

Dave Piercy, a student and academic advisor in Burke house, a co-ed residence, is a firm believer in the benefits of residence life.

"To come in here, into this atmosphere, helps [students] much more than it is a hindrance," he said.

"A lot of the residents have already gone through their first year and know exactly what it feels like to be shoved into this sort of environment from high school to university," Piercy said, adding the information and peer support provided to first year students is invaluable.

As well, he said, first-year students are not always aware of how much work a university student must do, and outside of residence, they don't have the example of people studying all around them.

"When people talk about (residence life), they talk about the big parties . . . but they're talking about 10, maybe 15 years ago. That's not to say there's not a social atmosphere in (residence), but I think it's a healthy one."

## How Much Do You Care About Your Mother

By Carla Tonelli

(CUP)--- If anyone out there remembers the pandemonium and excitement that surrounded Earth Day 1990, you may be wondering what happened to all that good will and charity that went out to everyone's communal mom — Mother Earth.

Actually, Earth Day has been around since 1972, but in the late 80s and early 90s the media took hold of the environmental movement and squeezed a surge of life into it. Shiny new blue boxes sprung up on lawns across the country giving presence to a movement some feel is fading into the distant past. The question surfaces as to whether or not anyone still cares about the environment, as so many apparently did in 1990.

Jennifer Good, information co-ordinator at Greenpeace, says environmental awareness appears low because most Canadians are too busy worrying about job security and social services to be troubled over issues like the federal Conservatives' recent protests over a bill banning the importation of the fuel additive MMT into the country.

"In the 60s there was a movement to simpler living. People were able to be environmental activists because they did not consider (material gain) as important as the masses do today," Good said.

"Now that people are stuck somewhere in the mid-

dle classes, and are seeing their material status challenged, the environment slips down a few notches on their lists of priorities."

However, polls conducted by groups over the past three or four years suggest declining concern over Earth's destruction may just be a nasty rumour. Instead, it seems that an overwhelming number of Canadians want to see stricter laws and more stringent enforcement when it comes to the environment.

Paul Muldoon, a lawyer with the Canadian Environmental Law Association, says the public is just as concerned today with environmental issues as it has been in the past.

"I think it's a falsehood that the Canadian public is less concerned. The media doesn't seem to find the issues as interesting as they did in the early 90s, but it's hard to do when there are so (many other issues) on their plate," he said.

Muldoon's point was proven last Oct. 25, when — as part of Toronto's Days of Action — thousands of people gathered in front of the offices of the Ministry of Environment and Energy to protest the department's gutting through provincial cuts.

Part of what may be sparking this renewed activism is the neoliberal economic philosophy becoming entrenched at both the federal and provincial levels, in which, among other

things, environmental protection laws are being tossed aside to make Canada more competitive.

As a way to raise awareness about environmental concerns, Greenpeace is working to publicize the links between environmental issues and today's more immediate concerns, such as health problems. Good says, for example, that the high percentage of children developing respiratory diseases like asthma corresponds directly to the poor quality of our polluted air.

Muldoon adds that Mother Nature, far from sitting idly by, is finding ways to punish her careless offspring.

"You can't cheat the environment. It's like a pendulum that swings and if you don't take care of it, it'll come back to you," he said.

"People say things like, 'Yeah, there's global warming, so what? I like warm winters'," said Good.

"What they aren't realizing is that as a (repercussion) of this global warming, there are going to be all kinds of what they'll call 'freak' natural disasters, like flooding and (agricultural) mayhem."