


The Literary Corner



On the Outside Looking In

by Beverly-Anne Bishop

The police officer in the waiting room frowned sadly at a young boy sitting on a couch. He was waiting for the detention officer to pick him up. The police officer gazed at the boy's file almost blindly. The boy was seventeen, tallish, dark-haired, and blue-eyed. It seemed that he had been in trouble numerous times. Yet, as the officer read the file, the boy seemed to radiate a different picture. Not a trouble-maker as the files led one to believe but a lonely child, lost without a friend in sight.

The boy was unaware of the officer's thoughtful gaze. He was aware of a dull pain in his head and an empty, hollow feeling in his stomach. Somehow he always managed to end up right in the middle of trouble. Why, just for once, couldn't he be on the right side of the law, on the inside, instead of being on the outside looking in?

He closed his eyes and remembered the girl he had seen earlier. She had been with three other girls. Nice girls. Not rough and noisy. Girls from good homes and complete families. He had stood and watched her, liking the way her long blond hair had tossed when she had laughed and thinking of how he would like to know her. He had unashamedly listened to their conversation to get her name and had followed the girls at a distance, to find out where she lived.

He had stood, in front of her home for over half an hour. The living room curtains had been open and inside supper preparations had been going on. Two small boys had been intently watching the television, the father had been reading the evening paper, and the girl had been sitting stroking what appeared to be a small cat. All his longing and loneliness had welled up inside him, he had never had a real family like that one. His father had left them years ago. His mother was an alcoholic. How he wished he too could have been within that warm room. He had left then as tears had started to threaten. It had been later that he got into trouble. Trouble which hadn't been his fault but for which he would take the blame. How could he fight with his record already against him from before? No one cared anyway. He sighed and jumped slightly as the officer spoke.

This police officer appeared different. He had seen the expressions and had read the loneliness on the boy's face. For some obscure reason, he felt as if he should try to help. Maybe open his home to the boy. He had asked himself why and had come back with a disturbing answer. He felt all the boy needed was love, a friend, a chance. This chance, he was going to offer. If the boy accepted, the rest would follow naturally. The detention officer could arrange his release into the police officers' custody.

The boy listened to the police officer's proposal and felt his heart tingle with excitement. This was what he needed, it was a way to improve, to become the person he wanted to be not the picture drawn by his files.

When the detention officer arrived, the boy left the station with a gentle smile on his face. His headache had gone and the hollow feeling within him had been replaced with a feeling that he had a new friend and possibly a future. He felt he was no longer on the outside looking in.

UPEI: University or Day Nursery

by Mark Ledwell

A university, which by its very name professes to teach universal knowledge, is in many ways like the human body. To achieve any degree of functional efficiency, a university must possess a marked degree of coordination or, like a human in poor physical condition, it will continuously stumble and fall. So, UPEI which by its very name professes to teach universal knowledge should be to its students and faculty as say the SPA is to its members. Suffice it to say that the educational program offered at UPEI should be oriented towards a continuous exercising of every student's mind into shape, not on a model similar to a cumbersome boy who continuously outgrows his shape and strength but rather from a well coordinated base capable of rendering well coordinated graduates. "It is the education which made the man," says Newman in The Idea of a University, so naturally it should be a well-toned educational program that brings you to UPEI.

The question is, of course, does UPEI live up to its name? Does UPEI offer a program capable of producing an educated man or are her graduates somewhat flabby and out of shape? Well, Newman points out that if a university lives up to its very name, it must "pledge to admit, without fear, without prejudice, without compromise, all comers, IF they come in the name of TRUTH, to adjust views and experiences, habits of mind, and to give full play to thought." Here then is a model to weigh and consider the functional efficiency of UPEI - its students, professors, and administrators, to see what in fact UPEI's status is as a university and, more significantly, analyses any changes UPEI may require to live up to its name.

Undoubtedly, P.E.I.'s single university (if the term can be used) has indeed rendered a fair number of well conditioned students. However that by no means allows for an air of complacency among the university ranks for, like the human body, UPEI is constantly in need of a 'work-out' to acquire or maintain any level of efficiency. In Newman's criteria for a university, truth and the pursuit of it emerges as being the key to education in terms of universal knowledge. The point is then that it is a must for UPEI to emphasize truth to at least maintain the spirit of a university because if she chooses otherwise, UPEI could soon resemble not a well coordinated university center but rather a motley collection of brick buildings on the western end of University Avenue.

Truth then, and the pursuit of it, must be the key for the well being and survival of UPEI. However, for the pursuit of truth to exist at all those involved must first of all be true to their respective roles and to themselves; that is essential. Presently at UPEI there exists a grading system that has led university members astray in the quest for truth and increasingly more to a mad scramble for marks. Look for example to a professor who hands out grades not in the name of truth but athletics, or a student who in the quest for truth finds it necessary to cheat, or the student who in the name of truth manipulates a professor who knows very well the game being played. Conflicting situations such as these at UPEI are common not to a well coordinated individual but rather to an awkward child travelling in circles and pursuing nothing.

UPEI then, its students, professors, and administrators must work at conditioning the weaker components of the university if they wish to accord university status. Clearly, a mad scramble for marks is not conducive to the pursuit of truth so alternations must be made. One exercise might be to replace the grading system for freshmen with a written assessment of the student's progress or failure. Such a move would rid UPEI of a system that flings innocent freshmen into a den of deception that conveniently categorizes and processes students on a computer in Robertson Library. Furthermore, UPEI would introduce to newcomers a spirit of

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