

ACTUALLY, I'll always have Charlottetown. Not quite as romantically resonant as Bogey's Asian parting shot from the conclusion of *sablanca*, but it has its own warm, fuzzy associations for yours truly. It's been about 10 years since I wandered in here, all young and impressionable, and was moulded into the riddly journalistic pontificator you all know and love (?). So, with my term as editor drawing to its inevitable close, I thought I'd like to black with a few thoughts on what this year has meant to me-- and, perhaps more importantly, what it has meant and should mean for the readers, the U.P.E.I. community. To paraphrase Jimmy (Stuart, not Hoffa), "It's been a wonderful life (at the *X-Press*)."

Okay, so it hasn't all been a bowl of cherries-- late readers, insane letter-writers, neglected proofwork, sleep-deprivation, the odd rebellious, unbalanced, or prima donna staffer, engaging content controversies, scrutiny of local ambulance-chasing reporters, threatened lawsuits, staff disputes, and the ever-inescapable journalistic scourge known as the deadline (emphasis on the dead). Despite all that schlock, though, it's been a good four years, even the two I put in as the big editorial hunka. I've had the opportunity to hone my writing and artistic skills in a variety of media and genres since I came to this place (reporter, feature writer, comics editor, cartoonist, arts reviewer, even editor); I've met a lot of interesting and talented people through my work here, many of whom I'm proud to have known and worked with; I've learned a lot of valuable work skills and been exposed to a good deal more ideas and information than I might otherwise have gotten from university (or anywhere else), considerably broadening my experience and intellectual horizons (corny, but true); I've even had some good-old-fashioned fun here now and again. The paper has given me a chance to develop valuable skills while contributing something worthwhile to the university community, and I've even enjoyed a lot of it.

What's any of this mean to you folks? Well, unless you've got a yen for bland voyeurism, not much at first glance; however, my own little story is significant in that it's a template of what the *X-Press* can do for people. I've gotten years of rewarding work out of it, not to mention camaraderie and even some supplementary income; and the beauty of it is that just about any of you folks can do this-- I walked in here off the street about four years ago without much experience, and look where I am now (okay, so I'm not rich and famous, but I'm content).

Whether you think you need the *X-Press* or not, though, what's important is that the *X-Press* needs you-- all of you. The student paper, to be truly successful, to be relevant, requires the participation of the students-- not just as readers (though that's important, too), but as contributors. That's never more apparent or important than at this time of year, when a new generation of *X-Pressers*-- including this crawler-- are taking their bows and exiting stage right. We've been luckier than usual this

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I'LL ALWAYS
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year, with an all-star cast of a dozen or so dedicated volunteer folks, but we always need new blood, and I urge those students remaining at U.P.E.I. to get involved with us. It's a chance to accomplish something constructive for both yourself and the university, and the rewards do outweigh the grief in the end-- heck, except for us upper management types, the paper's generally a pretty painless experience.

Okay, there's my obligatory (but heartfelt) public service pitch. What happens now? Well, as for myself, I'll be stepping down from the editor's post. It's been a blast, and a very special time for me, but all things must end and I'm opting to bow out gracefully. I'm planning on grad school, but not next year-- I want to take a year to get my head together, write (creative stuff), decide what I want to do with the rest of my corporeal existence, and maybe scare up some cash. Odds are, if funding's sufficient, I'll take another course or two here next year, maybe finish the English honours program. More likely than not, I'll even haunt the *X-Press* now and again like the friendly ghost I am, though not as editor. Other folks deserve a shot at it, and I deserve a rest,

but you may see me here in my old role as a volunteer writer and-- as I'm told many of you still remember me--a cartoonist. I still cartoon, and now that I've got a good deal of that nasty old grown-up responsibility off my shoulders, I'll take a whirl at the fun stuff again before sailing off to that mist-enshrouded penal colony known as grad school. You're only young once (physically, anyway).

Enough about me, what about the *X-Press*? Well, hiring is still being debated at this writing, but without letting any cats out of their respective bags, I can assure you all that an excellent group of people is prepared to sustain-- if not better--the quality of work that we have striven for. There are some really

talented, top-notch folks returning to the staff for next year, and the best may very well be yet to come.

This next spiel may be particularly foolhardy when addressing a public so recently desensitized by such ostentatious gratitude-orgies as the Oscars, Grammys, Junos and Geminis, but at this point I must thank a few people who helped make all this possible (those of faint hearts and short attention spans should skip to the end of what will probably be a monumental paragraph). Firstly, thanks to the folks from my first year here-- Angela Matheson for luring me in, and the others-- Jim, Kheng-wee, Liam, Tracy, Wendy, Loyd, Shannon and especially Kristine Suzuki for

keeping me around and interested, and encouraging me to continue. Thanks to the next generation of folks-- staffers Lisa, Chris, Stacy, Nicole, Nola, and the rest, and especially Cory Large (who guided and encouraged my ascension to editorhood) and Kirby Ferguson (who, for all his rough edges, has been one of the best volunteers <and later paid staff> we've ever had-- a talented writer and critic, a gifted designer, and a damn

fine production editor; give him a round of applause, folks. Without him, we wouldn't look as good as we do now.). Thanks also go out to third year's bright lights: the administratively adroit Andrew MacPherson, ad-manager turned student politician; the indispensable Carol Schneider, women's editor, soul mate, and volunteer writer par excellence; Trent Drake, connoisseur of all things warped and wonderful; Stan Livingstone, the endearingly cynical false generational prophet; Todd Petrie, imperturbable typist and intrepid sports editor, not to mention one of the most quietly likeable and refreshingly rational chaps in the office; and Danielle, subversive intellectual

mainlander who tragically defected to CIMN. Lastly, but by no means least, a nod to the rookies who signed on this year: perkily professional photographer, Kathy Giesbrecht; redoubtable reporter and aspiring editor Rebecca Moore; the gosh-darn-nice-guy literary contributor, George Anderson; Jennifer Caseley, the Friendly Home-Ec Student (I'm not sure what that means-- she's a fine young volunteer writer and food critic-- but it sprang to mind and has a certain endearingly Casperian ring); Aldera Chisholm, ad manager extraordinaire, food critic and gosh-darn-nice-gal; Bruce Davison, awe-inspiring student activist and invaluable volunteer writer of great skill and knowledge, to say nothing of his being an eerily pleasant fellow-- he will be sorely missed; Ed Fobes, who had his own unique perspective on campus events even before he acquired the eyepatch; Grace Kimpinski, inveterate keener and nascent production goddess; Yvonne Mackean, loyal volunteer writer and debating enthusiast; Shannon Younker, prolific and dedicated volunteer writer (good thing in a small package); Pat MacDonald, remarkably mellow woman (she makes recorded telephone operators sound abrasive) and a fine feature writer; Scott MacDonald, who isn't on the basketball team but looks like he should be, and is one of the two or three best sports writers we've had in memory; Kathryn Brown, budding young cub reporter (sounds like Jimmy Olsen in drag, doesn't it?); Dana Dennis, superb circulation manager and a volunteer writer, too(!); the irrepressible Janette Callbeck; and the philosophical Alex Keaveny, who aspires to be Igor to Grace's Frankenstein and seems to like coffee a whole lot. The above folks have made this and every other *X-Press* of the last four years possible, and for this they are all deserving of our thanks.

Okay, one last paragraph of back-slapping (a much shorter one, I swear): thanks also to the friendly folks at Student Union (especially Heather and Betty), whose patience and assistance have made my tenure here that much easier; thanks to my professors (Lemm, Ledwell, Murray, Epperly, Pratt, O'Hare, Foley, Smith, Lindsay, Fedak, Porter, Eliot, Buck, and all the rest) who taught me a lot and have been (for the most part) possessed of saintly patience with the class-conflicting demands of my extracurricular moonlighting; thanks to Wendy at Central Printing, and the custodial staff, and all the other people who keep this place running; thanks to Mom, Dad, Patsy, Monc, and the rest of my family and friends who have helped me sustain body and soul while tolerating my conspicuous absence from their day-to-day lives; and thanks to all the readers, without whom our work would have so much less meaning. This is already a ramble of Biblical proportions, so I'll slip away and return to my editing chores before locking up the place and turning off the lights for another year. Hope you all enjoyed the show, and that perhaps you're the better for it. I know I am.

Bringing down the curtain,
Sean McQuaid