

STUDENT UNION AND YOU

by Kevin Gauthier

Hello, and welcome back!

The column that you are in the process of reading is the first in a series, I hope, of articles dealing with events and happenings that make news at UPEI. Each week, this column will explore some item of interest to people at the university. By exploring, I don't necessarily mean merely reporting, although of course some degree of reporting will be involved. But aside from reporting the facts, I hope as well to stimulate a little interest and discussion on the various events that occur on campus by offering a humble, but considered, opinion, or asking a few interesting questions. Of course, lacking any trace of writing talent or artistic style, I don't promise I'll be a great success as a columnist, but an opinion expressed is more likely to be discussed than one suppressed, so I'll do what I can to generate interest. If just one other person will express his own opinion publicly, then something will have been accomplished. This campus could use a bit more discussion and debate.

Well, it's only the first week of the semester, and already the Student Union is having problems

with students becoming dissatisfied with what's happening, a problem that plagues the Student Union every year. President Walker has had inquiries from three individuals who have asked that their \$55 Student Union fee be refunded; the reason - they don't feel they are getting their money's worth.

Well, if these students feel that their \$55 is not well spent (and there are undoubtedly more who share their feelings) perhaps rather than asking for their money back they should think about the reasons for their dissatisfaction and try to do something about them. There is no valid reason for anyone to feel cheated by the Student Union. Every student on this campus has the right to expect that the Union will function to serve him/her as well as it may. But nobody has the right to expect the Union Executive or Council to conceive and satisfy every student's expectations which many students do. Once you pay your fee, you are a full member of the Union and as free to use the organization as you wish. This can involve anything from setting up

a club to suit your particular interests to asking advice and support in some dealings with the administration. The Union has the capability of serving every student in some way, but it cannot force itself on individuals who do not choose to use it.

As an illustration of how the S.U. can work for you, and to those students in particular who want their fees refunded, consider what your tuition fees might be if not for your Student Union. The \$55 Union fee you now grudgingly pay would be insignificant compared to what you would pay in tuition if the Union had not been battling tuition and residence fee increases over the past four years. And consider as well what strength the Union would have if students began resigning as members, as you would like to. With fewer members, the Union would have less power, and

every student would soon reconsider the value of the Union fee compared to the subsequent rise in tuition and residence fees. So stop complaining. There isn't a student at UPEI who has not received full value for their Student Union fee and more. Some students, the ones who aren't complaining, know how to get more for their money than others, and know the value of membership in the Student Union. But, as is so often the case, some of us won't appreciate what we have until it is no longer there. Let's avoid that mistake.

Incidentally, Student Union fees are compulsory for all full-time students, so these students have not and should not receive refunds. Let's all hope that they, and others who shared their disillusion, will see the value of membership in the Student Union, and begin to use it more to their advantage.



God damn head cold!



J.B.

President's greeting

The summer has finally come to a close and with it the summer operations at the Barn. The Student Union had a very successful summer. The Barn was busy one or two nights a week which is a definite improvement over previous years. There were many conferences this summer and most stopped in at the Barn to relax. The French Immersion program students were in for a few nights. We are hoping that the Barn will become busier and busier every summer.

In March of last year members of this year's executive received an Enersave grant. The grant will be used to replace windows in the Barn. The renovations will result in a saving of \$12,500 in heating costs over the next five years. After much painting and patching the Barn is ready to go.

In conclusion I would like to welcome all students back to UPEI.

Kevin Walker
S.U. President



Gentleman Jim Disco

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