Get on the Bus Gus, Don't Need to Discuss Much

By: Robert MacPherson
Campus Reporter

The Provincial Budget has been released, and the Conservatives are telling us to take a hike -- literally. The budget allows for no money to be spent on a transit system for the greater Charlottetown area. According to a ten month study done in 2002, Charlottetown could have three buses connecting Stratford, Cornwall, and Charlottetown. A two dollar fare was proposed for this service. A total of $100,000, and a promise, was put away in the 2003 budget to set a plan in motion that would connect the three towns. The most it ever became was a service that targeted the disabled and the elderly. It was not widely known about or used by the general public.

So where is our transit system? What happened to the project that was supposed to take off last September? It didn't fly obviously, and nobody knows it better than Mitch Tweel. His $400, 000 proposal to establish a public transit system was rejected this year. Currently, Charlottetown is the only capital city in Canada lacking a public transit system.

So where is the money? This year the provincial revenues totalled $1.032 billion. From that money, $72.4 million (6.8%) goes to transporta-tion and public works, 25% goes to education, and 40% to health-care. Nudging out transportation for the number three spot is paying interest on our debt. Does this sound stingy to you? There is a freeze on spending across all government programs, and some are experiencing the sharp edge of this budget more so than others, including Holland College programs in Summerside, the processing plants up west, and a cut in University funding from $1 million to $750,000. There is no doubt that this Conservative government is being just that -- conservative.

> *"With a population approaching 60 thousand people, Charlottetown is very near due for a transit system of its own."*

You could also say the federal budget has a definite impact on our spending, and this is true, but there will always be cuts. Sooner or later they won't be able to put it off any more. The new budget has a new gas tax which will raise our trip to the pumps by 3 cents a litre. We are also paying higher rates on average gas rates now that pricing boards have approved increases of a possible 3.2 cents. All in all, this summer we will be paying the highest prices the island has ever payed. With increased insurance rates on top of that, the transit system has never looked better. You would think that a city with so much interest in the tourism industry would be jumping at the chance to install a transit system. If applied correctly to the tourism industry, it could generate revenue, and provide visitors with easy access to and from town. And lets not forget the environment either. PEI is making strong commitments to the environment with farming, waste, and energy initiatives. A bus system would only coincide with this new outlook.

With a population approaching 60 thousand people, Charlottetown is very near due for a transit system of its own. Don't be surprised to be seeing this as yet another big promise in the next election campaign for all parties.

PS: If you are looking to support a student initiative to get us a bus, keep your ear to the ground and in touch with the SU.

Be Aware- Shop With Care!

by Aleida Tweden

Maybe you hear this all too often: Save the whales children / trees / world. And there *is* a lot of saving to do. More than this brief listing. Well, do I have a deal for you! You can save it all subliminally through reduction of consumption and exercising choice. Choosing ethically responsible products gives you an amazing ability to aid all these commendable humanitarian and environmental efforts. I believe, truly, everyone is good and wants to do good. We, the consumer, do not think "Gee, where can I get my hands on the latest product made from a sweat shop?" or "Hook me up with that cup of coffee that ripped off the farmer who made it." No, we don't say it literally, but essentially we are saying it each time we shop. And no one talks about something he or she cannot see a solution for. But what if there *is* a solution? Feel empowered? Good! Get the ball rolling and free yourself from the corner that we, the consumer, have been pushed into. The corner known as "no choice" when it comes to the *where* and *how* your goods are made. This is a little solution manual to change:

Product	Current place shopped at...	Switch to ...
Coffee	*Tims, Grocery store, other Grocery store*	Fairly traded coffee found at Timothy's International Coffee downtown- if you need the coffee ground they can do so for free.
Vegetables	*New: right from the store*	Farmers market; supports local growers and ensures organic produce
Everyday goods, appliances	*Grocery store*	Old: yard, garage sales, bargain traders. By reducing the energy cost with producing new you are helping out the environment.
Pre-packaged food, individually wrapped		Bulk Barn- saves on wasteful packaging, and you usually get more for less. (10% off for students and seniors on Wed)
Commonly used wasteful items	*Use instead....*	
Paper towel	*Dishcloth, towel*	
Coffee filters and cups	*Permanent filter, coffee mug/thermos*	
Shopping bags	*Backpacks, cotton bags, any bag sitting around not used anyway*	
Cars	*Walk-is anything really that far in Charlottetown?*	

Maybe this is an over simplistic guide, but is also far from complete. By no means should one walk when it is -38 degrees! Bt, when you can, exercise your decisions that help; choices you are proud of. Be aware, shop with care. Don't just be a passive activist, one who is actively aware but passively acting. I think change really starts with I and solutions, not they and problems. Take the challenge, try and be an active consumer and educate the industry. Demonstrate that we are not passive, buying only what the industry produces. Show that they must only sell what we will buy.

Any comments/ suggestions? E mail me at aleidatweten@hotmail.com