

The Ride Network

by Sean Steele

The Ride Network is a program set up by PEI Environmental Network for people looking for rides and for people looking to share the cost of a trip. This offers a convenient way for people to save money, gas, and wear and tear on the car. Not to mention the fact that you will have someone to talk to.

Denise Reiser, the grand poobah of the Ride Network noted that the Ride Network is not just for trips within Prince Edward Island. She said trips are frequently arranged for people travelling out west or to the States. However, for best results (this sounds like a shampoo bottle), she said that it would be wise for people to call 2-3 weeks in advance so that they would have a better chance of finding a driver or rider. At present there are more riders than drivers. That is, more people looking to get a ride than give one. Therefore, if you wouldn't mind giving someone a ride and even saving some money, then give the Ride Network a call.

Of course, those looking for drives are more than welcome as well. If you're interested, the phone number is 566-

4170 and their office hours are from 9-3 daily, Monday to Friday. If you get the answering machine, then just leave your name, where you're going, when you're going, etc. The Ride Network will then go through it's files of drivers and riders, depending on what you want and call you back if and when they get a match. (It should be noted that the Ride Network has absolutely no affiliation with the Dating Game.) Once they call you back with the number, it is up to you to call the other person and set up some arrangements. The arrangements between the rider and the driver are totally up to themselves and the only extra cost incurred is a mere three dollars for the matching procedure.

Right now, there is a shortage of drivers as opposed to riders, so anyone out there with a spare seat or two that wouldn't mind a little company on the way to their destination should give the Ride Network a call.

I can say from my own experience that the trip to town just doesn't get more thrilling with each passing day and if I could only find a manic-depressive-schizophrenic-totally-infatuated-Aerosmith-fan who didn't mind a car that shakes at speeds over 80 km/h and a driver that hated every other person on the road, then I would gladly share travelling expenses.

Canadian Shield may be site for nuclear waste disposal

A government plan suggests that the best place to dispose of nuclear waste is to bury it in the Canadian Shield. The Canadian Environmental Assessment Agency (CEAA), Atomic Energy of Canada Limited (AECL), and Ontario Hydro were recently at Lakehead University in Thunder Bay seeking opinions on a concept they have been developing since 1978.

Since last November, the groups have been travelling to Newfoundland, Quebec, Ontario and Manitoba, and will report to a seven-member panel appointed by the federal Minister of the Environment by this spring.

The idea is to store nuclear waste 500 to 1000 m below the surface of the Canadian Shield. The size of the containment facility would be two square kilometers. Nuclear waste is contained as ceramic pellets in metal tubes. The tubes would be placed in disposal rooms through tunnels. Each container would be surrounded by a clay buffer.

"We believe this concept is extremely safe," says AECL's Gary Simmons. He says the containers would last at least 500 years, and possibly even thousands of years.

He adds: "People are not familiar with radiation although it's all around us... If it is handled well, it is safe." He says the amount of radiation released would be far less than the safe standard set by the government -- the same amount as in the air right now.

But Glen Kukkee of Lakehead's environmental group, ECHO, says the concept needs to be closely examined before any action is taken. Kukkee believes that the government should stop using nuclear power and creating waste altogether until it has absolutely safe plans for storage.

Kukkee also says that sometimes groups such as the AECL use statistics in a misleading way. "They say it's the

same amount of radiation as you get from a microwave, but if you stand in front of your microwave 24 hours a day [there's going to be damage done]."

Right now there are about 850,000 bundles of nuclear fuel waste in Ontario alone, which have accumulated since 1972. Waste is stored by Ontario Hydro for six years in pools of water, and then in concrete storage facilities.

Peter Stevens Guille from Ontario Hydro explained that although current storage procedures are safe, there is a need for long-term storage that does not use human effort.

"The current system relies on action from humans for security, monitoring and maintenance. This [proposal] does not require human action."

Other alternatives of disposing of nuclear waste include melting it into the Arctic, or sending it into space, but these aren't being explored in Canada.

Recycling of nuclear waste is also possible. However, recycling is considered too expensive an option in Canada because uranium used for nuclear power can be mined much more cheaply.

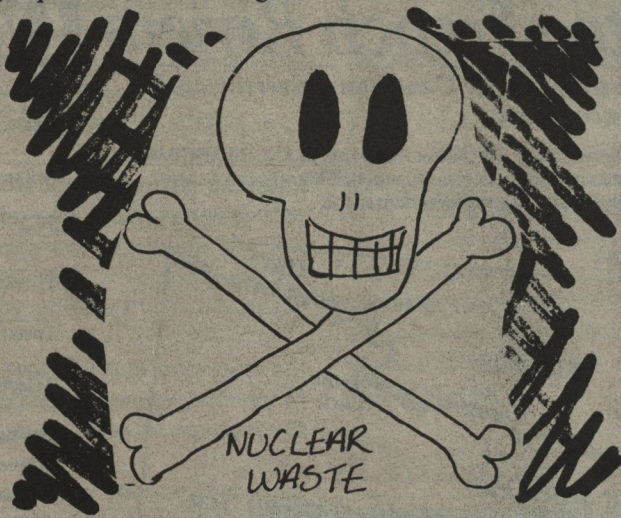
"We wanted to base it on something that's do-able here and now," says Simmons when asked why the government was not exploring other alternatives.

Although other countries are exploring similar options, there are no permanent disposal sites in the world today.

Hearings on choosing a site will likely start in 1996. If the government decides to store nuclear waste in the Canadian Shield, construction will begin in 20 years at the earliest.

Some Lakehead students questioned the concept.

"It's like taking the most unpolluted spot in Canada and saying, 'Here's your share of garbage,'" said Lakehead student Marc Bigras. He was also concerned that radiation would leak from the storage facility.



This week in Student Council

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Elections and Referendum

The most gripping thing that happened at the Student Union meeting this week was the release of the general election dates. This year there will not only be an election to decide our student union executive and councillors, but also a referendum to decide whether UPEI should stay in CFS. Stay tuned for lots of information to help you with your voting decisions. The nominations are open March 6 to March 17. Then the elections will be held on March 27 to March 30. Think about running, power can be fun!

Executives are Busy

The last few weeks before spring break have been busy for our student union executive. President Andrew MacPherson and VP External Patricia Embleton have had a meeting with MP Wayne Easter and Higher Education Minister Jeannie Lea to discuss the Axworthy proposals. Valentine's is If You Love Education Day and Embleton is making sure that the provincial government knows the students of UPEI are unhappy by way of some stinging valentines. Finley Martin, VP Operations, was happy with the turnout for various winter carnival activities, and was looking forward to Campus Comedy with the Arrogant Worms on February 16. VP Finance, Lisa Belliveau, spent a weekend at the national meeting for CASA, which may be our alternative to CFS. They ratified the constitution and made other decisions to help set up the new national organization. Stay tuned for more information as we get closer to the referendum in March.

Student Teaching Evaluations

Guess what? Yet another Senate meeting has passed without there being any progress on having mandatory student teaching evaluations on this campus! What a surprise. This is not due to a lack of perseverance on the part of the student senators. A motion to make mandatory evaluations which were used in career advancement decisions was attempted by a student senator. This was stonewalled by several senators and no progress was made.

Wen-Do Self Defense

A self defense course for women called Wen-Do will be held at the UPEI Women's Centre during the last weekend of spring break. This course is taught by women, for women, to give them alternatives to being a victim. The Student Union will be giving the organization some money to help defray the costs for one or two students. Drop in to the Women's Centre for more information.

Health Plan

In this week's X-Press, you will find a health plan survey placed by the Student Union. Every year some people are not quite satisfied with the way the health plan operates. This survey is to help the student union decide how to run the plan next year and how much students are willing to pay for certain services. Fill out the survey and drop it off at Student Union to help improve your health plan.

By Colleen Easter