

## Letter to the Editor

### Of Potholes and Draught

I have two beefs in which I would like to address in this issue of the X-Press; the first concerns the massive craters located in various areas across campus, especially at the Belvedere entrance (the one I always use). I mean, come on guys, somebody is responsible for this crap not being looked after and I'm quite sure this guy or gal is getting a hefty chunk of change to look after things like this. Let's just get it out in the open and see if things will take care of themselves without going around tracking down who is responsible for repairing the roads.

My second beef may not be a concern of as many students, but it really gets my goat. It's the issue of Myrons mysteriously running out of draught every single weekend at about 12 or so. Now I may not run a nightclub myself, but I think that whoever does down there should sit down for a few minutes and get the old calculator out or something. I myself am a bit P.O.'d about the fact that someone down there seems to think that once we get a few in us we won't mind paying \$3.65, plus a tip for Al, for a cold one. Well, this little note is just to let you know that I do care and that the Playhouse will open again....perhaps it's time to shop around if that's the way your patrons are going to be treated.

Thank you for attention.

Dry & Bumpy

### Attention Students:

Are you looking for fame and friends? Hot nights with hot dates? **POWER?** Then join the hockey team. On the other hand, if you are looking to churn your charming cynicism into free-floating hostility, or you are longing to have your name and twisted mental thoughts in print then **SUBMIT TO THE X-PRESS!**

- Here's what you need to do:
1. Screw your courage to its sticking place;
  2. **WRITE.** About anything! The news, the state of the world, how bad your cat's litter box smells, **ANYTHING!**
  3. Put your name and number on it;
  4. Bring it down to the X-Press office either printed out or on a disk;
  5. Put it in the submissions slot. **SIMPLE!**

Deadline for submissions is Thursday 4:00pm!

## Some Readers May Be Offended Mature Content!!

By Rory O'Connor and Danielle Christensen

As fourth-year students who have both been heavily involved in many aspects of the Student Union throughout our university careers, we have had the chance to work with many bright, creative and talented people. These people are genuinely interested, and work hard to improve the situation of their fellow students. But due to structural deficiencies in the organization, their efforts are often of limited effectiveness. We would like to point out some of the problems we have encountered in hopes of generating discussion that will improve the situation. As we see it, the Student Union acts in four main areas: Services (SWAP, Health Plan, etc.); Sub-organizations (CIMN, X-Press, Yearbook, etc.); Lobbying on behalf of students; and maintaining ongoing communications with students. We have encountered few problems with the delivery of services, so for the purposes of this article we will ignore them.

While we have encountered problems within the sub-organizations, we also see positive attempts to resolve them. For the purposes of this article, we would prefer to concentrate on the areas of lobbying and communication, because these areas have a direct impact on all of the student body.

In all of the lobbying efforts we have witnessed at UPEI, few have attracted more than 20 students, most of whom were SU councillors! This is

not a reflection of the efforts of the organizers themselves, but rather the accepted methods of organizing. All the posters in the world are just dead trees if they don't tell people what's going on. In one recent example, a rally was held in the Panther Lounge against the Axworthy reforms. Many posters were up all over campus, advertising free food and beverages and live music, but they didn't mention that it was to protest cuts to post-secondary education. Local media outlets turned out in force and gave heavy exposure to the 10 or 12 students who were there to listen to the speakers. The publicity regarding an apparent lack of concern was not necessarily the best message to send to the government and the public at large. Unfortunately, this level of attendance is something we have seen repeated throughout our university careers. We'd like to offer a few ideas to improve the situation. Many of these ideas involve communication and publicity and will be discussed later, but some others deal specifically with lobbying.

The first and most important of these is advance planning. It is impossible to adequately alert the media and students to an event when the organizers themselves don't know what it will involve, where it will be held, who, when, and how. All of these particulars should be in place several weeks before an event.

The next aspect is numbers. If you can't guarantee a number of students at an event, say 50 or 75, don't hold it. A poorly attended event will undermine your position, however strong it is.

Another consideration is focus of lobbying efforts. When planning an event, focus on the issues as they relate to the students of this university in their daily lives. As well, don't overwhelm students with protest after protest. Pick some issues and stick to them. Students only have so much energy to spend.

All of the effectiveness of lobbying is dependent on

communication. For starters, lobbying cannot be effective without an understanding of student concerns. A great deal of non-participation by students is written off as apathy, and students are indeed apathetic. Others, however, may not have an interest in or agree with particular issues or may not understand either how to get involved or what they would expect to contribute. The SU has unfortunately not been effective at getting the word out on such key topics.

There are many reasons why the SU has a hard time effectively communicating with students. Due to space limitations we will analyze two important ones: the structure of the SU, and the job of SU promotions coordinator. From their lack of contact with their would-be constituents, potential SU councillors limit communications with students. In our time at UPEI, few individuals running for council (with the exception of the one running for executive) have ever made a speech at the Candidates Forum, or even publicized their campaign! These individuals have commonly relied on a low voter turnout (largely composed of friends) to land them in office.

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(meetings, etc.) the structure and culture of the council have prevented them from adequately representing and reporting to students. SU President Andrew MacPherson, recognizing this problem, has investigated the possibility of having council members represent departments as opposed to having a number representing one faculty. If implemented, this may lead to a more grass-roots government with better communication between students and council.

Another problem is publicity. It seems the S.U. needs to fund extended hours for the publicity coordinator. Monthly signs about events litter the university, keeping students from easily seeing what is new. Perhaps if old signs were removed when new ones were put up, students would not have to search as hard to find out what is currently going on. Likewise, scrolling pixel signs in the Pit and the Panther Lounge should be updated each week (as opposed to every few months). If we're spending money on them, they should be used. Increasing publicity would increase awareness of events on campus. An increase in awareness obviously increases the chance of student participation on campus.

There are many other problems, and an even greater number of possible solutions. We cannot possibly cover them all here, but a committee is being organized to look into some of the problems of lobbying and communication, in order to present the Student Union with some possible solutions. If this article has led you to think about the problems and to consider constructive solutions, feel free to get involved. There will be two committee meetings, so the commitment will not be too painful. In addition, you may help improve the awareness of future students at UPEI. To help improve the Student Union leave your name with Betty at the Barn (0530). Now that you've gained awareness of the event, participate!