

Disability awareness challenge met

Although some of you may not have realized it, last Thursday was UPEI's Disability Awareness Challenge. About 40 people participated and they deserve a big thank you for their time. However, only 2 professors took part and no other UPEI Staff. Does this show a lack of support from the ones a disabled student would really need support from, do these people not care?? This can be a good year for the Disabled, but only if they have able bodied support.

The day was a success in many ways. Some students got a small taste of what a disability involves and, although they all realized that they did not get the entire picture, they did learn a few important things. During the day, I heard such things as: "carried upstairs in a wheelchair is a really scary experience", or "I didn't know the walkways had so many lumps until I tripped my way across campus blinded". The most important lesson learned was that all students, regardless of physical ability or lack of it, can lead a full university

life. They can go to basketball games, eat in the cafe (if they dare), and to to classes in every building on campus because that is their right.

There are several people who need special thanks for making last Thursday go so well: All the folks in the Student Union who looked after posters, gave support and approval, and generally lived up to the IYDP Logo of "Together we can make it work", Miss Gillis at the Provincial San who loaned me all her spare wheelchairs, Anne MacDonald, coordinator for IYDP on the Island,

for her ideas and press releases, and the CBC Crew who came out to show their support. Mostly though, I would like to thank the people who took up the challenge and seldom cheated. Thank you all very, very, much!!

Before I finish off I would like to apologize to Bernard MacDonald. If he would like to speak to me again on the issue he bellowed at me in the Library on Thurs., I would be more than willing to clear the air.

Susan Buchanan
Member of the Special
Committee for 1981

Disabled day enlightening

By Stephen Thompson

Wow! What a great idea! Who would think that the best way to recognize the disabled would be to actually become a disabled person for a day! And what better way could one come to appreciate the many problems encountered by the disabled than to hop in a wheelchair and try to carry on a normal routine in this manner. For the participants, it was a trying experience.

Many people discovered that wheelchair locomotion is tiring and extremely hard on the hands. The more athletically inclined realized that wheelchairs are not meant for going "cross-country" (or for "popping wheelies"!). The majority, however, came to the conclusion that being disabled makes the functions which we take for granted from day to day, extremely awkward!

It's easy for us to try

to get around for a few hours on a wheelchair and say "That's enough of that!" and get up and walk away. But for the disabled, there's no "getting up and walking away" from the frustrations and inconveniences. They have to cope with these problems because they have no other choice. I hope that Disabled Day pointed out at least some of these problems to the participants involved, and helped to illustrate the need for a greater awareness to these problems faced by the disabled.

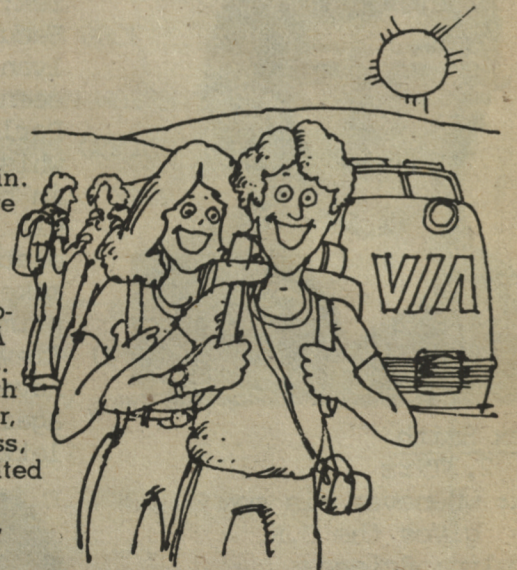
A sincere "Thank-you" should be extended to Susan Buchanan and the others who planned and carried out this day with such great success. I would hope that Disabled Day will become an annual event at UPEI and not end this year, the "Year of the Disabled". After all, our concern for the disabled does not end this year, does it?



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