

Barn soon to be replaced by new Student Centre

By **MELISSA DOUCETTE**

In a few short years, the Barn, one of UPEI's most recognizable features, will be no more. Since UPEI's inception, the Barn has been the home of the UPEI Student Union (SU).

The Barn was only supposed to be the temporary headquarters of the union. However, twenty-eight years later, students are still solidly entrenched in the building that once housed the livestock of St. Dunstan's.

But by the year 2000, a new union building is slated to begin construction. Finally, the students will have a permanent home.

In its first years, the Barn adequately served the needs of UPEI students. Pedestrian traffic patterns were much different years ago, and the Barn was in the path of many travellers. Temporary classrooms were located near the student centre, and to drop by the Barn was a common occurrence.

As the years went by and buildings sprung up, traffic patterns changed. It was no

longer as convenient for students to frequent the Barn. Also, the building was never logistically adequate. By the late eighties, the Barn's shortcomings were becoming harder to ignore.

During this period, the administration asked the SU what kind of space they needed.

According to Heather Love, SU General Manager, "a process of self-analysis" ensued. These reflections saw the union conclude that a new building was needed. The next questions the SU asked itself were where, when, and how.

By the early nineties, the union needed money to undertake what was certain to be a costly project. Fundraising began with the implementation of a student fee, and the union's efforts were later aided by the university administration.

The union participated in the Potential Within campaign, which raised money for the construction of the KC Irving building and the renovation of Cass and Memorial. In return,

the university donated the proceeds of the sale of the President's house to the union, which raised funds in the area of \$250,000. Before the sale, UPEI owned a residence that every president could occupy, much like a lieutenant governor's mansion.

By 1996, the union was showing that it had a serious commitment towards the new student centre. However, trying to find a site would prove to be one of the most difficult

obstacles to overcome.

From 1990 to 1994, the union had given several site proposals to the University, all of which were rejected. Finally in 1995, a committee was struck to deal with the SUB 2000 project.

The committee is still in effect, and consists of a faculty representative, the director of student services, the director of alumni and public relations, the SU president, the SU general manager, an

alumni representative, and a student at large. Unlike previous efforts, this committee is more representative of the entire university community.

"That was when it [SUB 2000] became a successful concept," commented Love.

The committee also received more formal training in project development, making

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Site of the future UPEI Student Union building

-photo by Richard Haines

Renovations near completion for Blanchard Hall

By **SUZANNE WILLIAMS**

Even in these final stages of the semester, the long-awaited work to improve the heating systems at Blanchard Hall wages on.

According to Marc Braithwaite, the Residence, Food and Conference Services Manager at UPEI, the improvements are long overdue.

"The work should have been done when Blanchard was first constructed," he said.

Since Blanchard Hall was built in 1973, the heating system has been mediated by one thermostat in the centre of the building, which is controlled by and communicates with

another thermostat located outside.

The struggle to heat the entire dormitory has resulted in colder water and heating temperatures the further away from the central heating source one goes, which has led to numerous complaints throughout the years.

This past winter, plans were finally set to provide a better source of heat to the various apartments. The move to improve the situation came after many letters were sent to former President Elizabeth Epperly due to the cold winter last school year.

The budget for the work was approved last June, and on July 28 a contract was set

up with MacIntyre Plumbing and Heating. The work began in August, and the project was originally intended to last for only six weeks.

Honeywell Control Systems is the company who has been given the job of installing the thermostats in each apartment, thereby allowing students to control individual room temperatures. They are also in charge of work on the thermostats across campus.

As they do not have an excess of staff, the work across campus -- and not just within Blanchard -- has been spread rather thin, resulting in a slower process of the entire project being done within the original framework set.

In order to get the work finished before winter sets in, contractors have been rushing to complete their work by letting themselves into apartments to install thermostats with a skeleton key. This practice has resulted in anger from some students.

"They're invading our privacy. Although we've been warned that they'll come by... they just drop in when they please," said one current resident of Blanchard Hall, who added that the drilling leaves dust that the workers do not clean up after themselves.

Sadly enough, for the students who live on the side

of Blanchard which faces the UPEI campus, installing a thermostat within the apartment may not be enough to keep the rooms warm through the winter.

There are plans for more work to be done regarding the window seals and the insulation, which is considered to be phase two of the project, and is not intended to begin until next year.

Hopefully, the occasional drilling and the knocking on apartment doors will be finished before the first snowflakes fall, although a definite ending date has not been released.