

The Student Union and You

By Tom R. Beveridge

The academic year is well underway at this point and after two months of study, the usual grumblings of both students and the Student Union have begun. While some students are bemoaning the lack of things that the Student Union does for them, with a deeper look into the issues one can find that much of the problem lies with the students.

Consider the term 'Student Union', this refers to an organized body to represent the issues of students and is supported by students themselves. With only 60-100 students who are consistently involved with almost every organized activity on campus these people appear to be the SU and usually carry the spirit of the SU through their participation. With only 5% of UPEI's full-time student population participating, is the UPEI-SU a real student union in the true sense of the word?

Now the SU may be adverse to certain political issues, but the people who are involved do the best job that is

possible under the circumstances. A dance pub was held recently and the Vice-President of the SU responsible, received criticism for the lack of student turn out. He can not be held accountable for not knowing what students want, since nobody else seems to know or is willing to bring forward suggestions, let alone attend an event.

Many comments regarding students who are unwilling, disinterested or just do not care about what is happening on campus have been made, but nothing is being done. Students lost their radio station, and by the grace and hard work of those same few (60-100 students) it has been brought back to life...but for how long without student support? The Panther Prints is constantly advertising for students to work on the newspaper, if not enough volunteers come out, will it be the next benefit of the SU to die out? Maybe students should just consider closing the SU all together due to lack of participation and interest. Who

would notice anyhow, except that the doors to the barn would be locked. Other parts of the mass media have claimed that the youth have no future and are hopeless, does this same sentiment apply to student participation on campus?

Instead of only commenting on things without any positive criticism or commitment to helping out or participating, the SU and other organized events on campus will not improve. Under the current environment things will only worsen. Nominations for the SU by-elections opened up Monday, if you have the time consider running for a position. If not, come on out and listen to the candidate's speeches in the pit and then cast your vote. If politics is not your flavour try the next event held at the barn, before heading to the clubs downtown some night. The effort to participate in any activity is not great, nor does it require a high interest level. If the SU is expect to be for the students, then as students greater participation is expected.

View From the Cheap Seats

Workers Run Amok?

Does anyone know what those construction crews scattered in various locations throughout the city are doing? They are everywhere, they are making a huge mess, and they do not seem to be any closer to finishing whatever it is they are doing. Prince Street has been a no man's land for three months. University Avenue has had orange construction signs all over the place since June. And those random holes and trenches downtown... What are they doing? Has city council lost control of the construction workers? Are they digging holes at random?

I know, I know, I exaggerate. The municipal workers are not entirely out of control. They still post signs letting the public know that work is in progress, at least most of the time. Drivers have to keep on their toes, though. You never know if there will be a gaping hole or a marked-off section around the next corner. Just today I had the misfortune to drive behind one of those big, ugly, City of Charlottetown trucks. The driver signalled, turned the corner, then stopped in the middle of the street. He got out, and started to shovel loose asphalt. Other vehicles were left to dodge around this unexpected spectacle. No one had any warning.

Pedestrians have it even worse. Sections of sidewalk suddenly vanish. Huge parts of University Avenue have been without sidewalks for months. Where are people supposed to walk -- in the street? Someone is going to be killed one of these days, simply

because there was no other place to walk.

It will get worse when the snow comes, both for drivers and pedestrians. Not only will large trucks stop anytime and anywhere they want, there will also be front-end loaders, graders, and snowploughs breaking every traffic law except the speed limit. I am looking forward to it.

The cause of the chaos comes from several sources. City planning has always left something to be desired. If anyone doubts this, look at Ken's Corner intersection, or even worse, the one at St. Peter's Road-Belvedere Avenue-Brackley Point Road. If city planning has improved, why is half of Allen Street smoother than glass, but the other half a war zone?

Another problem lies with the city workers themselves? They act as if they own the road -- literally. I understand that they do have to be in the way at times, but so often? They give no regard to drivers or pedestrians, and they park all over the place. This is not intended to be a personal attack on municipal workers, but many of the them could use better safety training, as well as a lesson in courtesy. Of course, what does one expect from patronage appointments?

Do not take this the wrong way, but I hope this column annoys someone down at City Hall. Maybe then things will change a little, and people will be able to get across town without risking their lives. For now, though, I am not counting on it.

J.R. Capones
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