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Best of Charlottetown

THE CADRE

Charlottetown's finest news source.

Editorial 03: What Wasn't

Just because you call it a tradition, well that doesn't make it a tradition. And just because you dress up the front of Main building with some red, white and blue bunting, and clean up the cigarette butts a little, well that doesn't mean anyone in the audience is going to leave with chills.

If you are aiming to sell, then the first Founder's day celebration was perfect. The Audio Visual people had cameras locked in, and the physical plant crew made the grounds truly investment worthy; the videotape will travel well to alumni cash grabs all across this country. And do not mistake me here, this is a good thing.

Because if you want UPEI to join the ranks of the best small universities in the country, then you should want the H. Wade MacLauchlan show to be a telethon, not a reality program.

But let us be honest about the proceedings; Founder's Day was as dull as the hockey coach's motivational speeches. Dr. Ed MacDonald's speech, though important and impressive, was way too fucking long. The entire event took place absent any real genuine sense of community, of which this place is so rightly proud. What they should have done, if you ask me, (and surely somebody by this time is demanding my improvements) was open the show up to the crowd. Example.

Frank Ledwell, do you have any stories about the history of this great place?

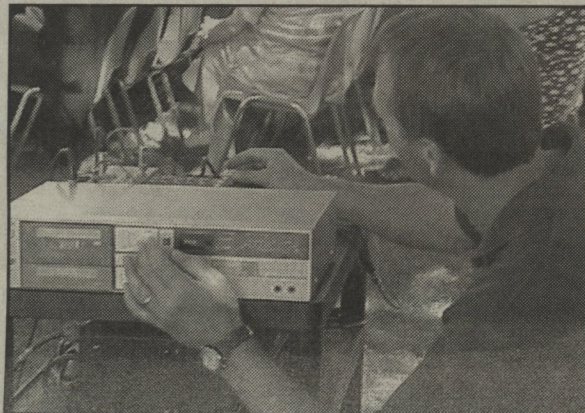
Elizabeth Epperly, what was it like when you were first here?

Brendan O'Grady, how has the place changed since you began teaching here?

Jim Hornby, are students as dangerous now as they were in 1969?

The problem with a genuine celebration of UPEI's history is that it would not film well. Sad but true.

The truth is that students were grabbed at random and played the role of "first year students." (The sight of all



those short-wearing legs poking out from underneath, those stoic black gowns provided the only real laugh of the afternoon). The truth is that, with the

proper editing, Ed Macdonald will look like Martin Luther King (metaphorically speaking of course), and all those unsuspecting robe wearers will appear as the class of 2003 to anyone who was not there.

The nun, the mailman and the past-president were all worthy recipients (if a certain editor would get off his ass, any of the troika would make for a wonderful story) and I was genuinely moved by their memory and their obvious pride in what they have helped to build.

I hope the Founder's day 'tradition' marches on; I hope the videotape of the festivities makes its way into the pocketbooks of all well-heeled alumni; I hope all continue to attend; I just think they should all bring pillows.

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