

Lesbians and community

The list of churches in this column last week was an example of diversity in people's approaches to a common desire. Lesbians do not all have a single faith (or all hold to a faith). Those that do worship can choose from larger or smaller, welcoming, or even completely intolerant religions. If you ask ten lesbians about their religious beliefs, you will get at least five different answers.

The same is true about their political views. The image of the politically correct left-wing environmentalist ultra feminist separatist is obviously a stereotype (despite the fact that many lesbians find some or all of these adjectives appealing). The truth of the matter is that there are plenty of middle class, upper class and downright snobby lesbians, who, for whatever other values they purport, are bucking the system by living their lives have been thinking about the different circles (some women would say "cliques", the army says "rings") that exist in Fredericton. These little sub-groups hardly know each other and rarely make contact. Yet together, they make up what outsiders call "the lesbian community".

The unfortunate result of this last generalization is that lesbians who know none, or only a few

other lesbians, feel that they are somehow excluded from this community.

To add another complication to the problem, there are different levels of activity among the circles, giving the illusion that the more active is the main circle. I happened upon the sportsy sports outdoors lesbians while putting up posters advertising my radio show (Dos Lesbos) last year. These women also organize dances. I took this to mean they were the political centre of Lesbo culture here. I was dead sure I had just made contact. I had arrived.

Yes. Well, one might have thought so. There were dances, sports events, weekend camping excursions and house parties where I met one or two women I hadn't seen before. The only nagging clue that this was not an exhaustive directory of lesbians I had tapped into, was that, almost to a woman, they were white.

This proves nothing more than that sub-cultures carry many of the same characteristics as the society they live in (there isn't a lot of mixed socializing throughout Fredericton), and that somewhere out there were plenty more lesbians who make up this community.

It's a goal of mine to at least say hello to the other circles. I know

that differences in politics, age, class, ability and religion as well as culture keep lesbians separate, and maybe it's too much to expect us to overcome the clutter in our opinions that keeps us from getting together, but that doesn't mean we can't even talk to each other. The pockets that we trap ourselves into keep us hidden from other lesbians who are interested in the same things we are. New lesbians in Fredericton who are, for example, deaf, and who also play baseball, may never get to meet the baseball playing lesbians. They may not meet any lesbians.

There really are new lesbians coming to Fredericton (or coming out in Fredericton) all the time. There are others who have been here for years, and felt excluded from what they thought was the

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fere with their education.

In summary, students are encouraged to:

1. Apply for the Canada Student Loan as soon as possible so they will be waiting at University in September when they commence fall classes.

2. Students who run into difficulty are encouraged to talk with the Financial Officers at UNB and

STU for guidance and support through this process.

3. Students who need to go through the Appeal Process with the Canada Students Loans Office are encouraged to seek support through the Financial Officers on campus.

4. The SRC has emergency funding available to students who are in need and can be contacted

The Black Triangle by Tristis Bhaird

community. These problems are not difficult to solve. But whose business is it to solve them?

For starters it can't be the sportsy/outdoorsy gang they really are just one of the many circles. The dance committee is not a political body. They do not have as a mandate contacting and integrating all Frederictonian, lesbians. The new FLAG is currently loading it's plate with a variety of issues that need to be dealt with. Luckily, these folks are indeed taking on communications. They will be circulating

FLAG MAG among their membership, and it will contain a calendar of groups and events. This is a start. If you are currently feeling left out of things get involved with FLAG.

You'll be able to meet some members of FLAG by attending the Coalition for Human Rights Reform meeting on March 28th at The Unitarian House 49 Charlotte St. at 2:30 pm (Those political people hang out in the same circle, I guess).

for further information.

5. Employment opportunities exist that could help reduce costs of tuition and other related university expenses.

Feedback to these articles and the Mind-Body Connection is welcomed through the Brunswickan or CHSR-FM.

The Grad Zone

The UNB Graduate Student Association

Reflections by a graduate student

by David Wilson

After two years as a graduate student I now have the time to reflect on what it is that distinguishes graduates students from undergraduates. I feel it is important to address this question as I have been made aware recently of an impression, commonly held by undergraduates, that graduate students think they are better than undergraduates. In our modern egalitarian world that may well be the ultimate heresy. Are we elitist? The answer is a mixed one, for while we are not "better" in a general sense, we are certainly "better at" the academic component of university life. How could it be otherwise when graduate schools employ the criteria of academic performance to judge who is worthy of admission.

Perhaps a related question

sheds additional light on the matter, and that is, "Where do graduate students come from?" The answer is, of course, a simple one, for all graduate students have one thing in common: they started as undergraduates. Having said that, it should also be mentioned that the real differences between the two are quantitative rather than qualitative in nature. A student in the last two years of an undergraduate degree who is earning A's may reasonably expect to continue at that level in graduate school, for the whole process is incremental and gradual. As an example, it is possible to be treated like a graduate student by faculty while one is still an undergraduate, by the act of assuming some of their characteristics. Graduate students interact more with professors than do undergraduates, and so a simple thing

like going to speak to them in their office can result in different treatment from a professor.

Contrary to popular belief, graduate students do have fun in university, although their fun derives more from the satisfaction of doing well in an academic sense than from the social life. This brings the discussion to a major difference between graduates and undergraduates: the quality of a particular degree. An undergraduate's degree consists of credits, but a prospective employer is usually concerned with the finished product rather than the marks received in individual courses. This is not the case with graduate students, for the mark received is the true measure of success. Graduate courses are not just a credit that can be promptly forgotten, but a permanent accretion to the student's body of

knowledge.

An interesting difference between graduate and undergraduate students may be found in the way the various disciplines and faculties relate to each other at the graduate level. While there are often mutual antipathies expressed between disciplines, as between engineers and arts, for example, that same feeling is not duplicated at the graduate level, where there is more understanding of the other's academic commitment.

While this piece has been of somewhat limited length, I would like to think that it may have shed some light on what makes graduate students different. In the end, it behoves all undergraduates to remember that graduate schools are filled from within the ranks of undergraduates, so to paraphrase Pogo, the enemy may well be your-

selves.

Special Note: The Board of International Students presents its end of year social on Saturday, March 28th, 1992 at the SUB Cafeteria from 8:00 p.m. till close. All are welcome.

Classic lines from the Student Union.

"\$14,000 -- it doesn't have any letters but it spells abuse to me"

Steve Williams
Board of Governors
UNB
March 25, 1992.