

CAMPUS

people



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"Feeling at home in Fredericton"

The time I arrived at Fredericton I felt at home with the city. Why? you may ask. Well, this is the first north American city where I can manage to go around without a car. So simple a reason, you may wonder. For me, however, it is not simple, 'cause I come from a country where cars are not the popular means of private transportation. You can imagine how I felt when I landed in Texas last year. Big spreading cities, huge webs of freeways, rapid traffic and, most frustrating, infrequent buses. In China, in Beijing, buses come every 3 minutes. I am glad that there are some North American cities that remain intact from the automobile culture. Toronto may be another one. A Chinese friend of mine has lived in Toronto for eight years and never cared to learn to drive. Of course, she is a bit out of the ordinary. Every time her husband wants her to learn to drive because he has been exhausted by driving her around when she needs to go to somewhere unreachable by the public transit system, she says: "Do you want me to die?"

I came to Fredericton by way of Toronto, by bus, and I like Toronto, too. It feels like a city. In Texas, cities are not like cities. Take Houston, for example. Houston's downtown is small in size and tall with office buildings. It is a place only for work, not for living, not for passing time in the leisurely way. Not for mugging even. The city spreads with houses and shopping centers and the streets are not inviting to pedestrians. So in Houston, you see cars. Cars everywhere, and not one is mine. Everyone is hurrying back into their metal boxes after shopping or business. You see no people walking - I mean, enjoying walking. If there is someone walking, you bet he is someone who has to walk all the time. The day after I arrived at Fredericton, I came by an abandoned bike with a broken seat. It is an old bike with only one speed and the braking is done by reversing the pedals. It is definitely not the type of bike that you can ride safely downhill. I guess that's why it was abandoned. It works well with me, though, because I do not care to push it downhill when the slope becomes too steep. The third day I went beyond the river on my bike and soon I had toured the whole Fredericton downtown in no time. I visited the local bookstores, went to the City Hall to get tourist information, went to Wal Mart to get my phone done and buy a telephone, went to WalMart again to return the phone after I bought a better one from a yard sale at half its price and I also went to the other side of the river by way of the bridge of Hwy 2 to attend a breakfast party to make friends. I fully enjoy the freedom that this old bike has given to me, albeit it means much push ups and downs.

Fredericton appears home to me also because of its urban structure. The downtown is not merely a business center and there are no imposing high-rises. I enjoy the streets lined with small shops that offer a variety of merchandise and service. I also enjoy King's Place, where modern style shopping is done. I like the Gothic building of the old churches. In Texas, many churches are not Gothic enough. I mean they are normally one-story buildings with a symbolic Gothic thing to indicate they are churches. Here I see real churches, or at least the churches that I assume they should be. In Texas, many churches are new and suggest functional purposes. Here, the churches tell stories, stories of generations of Frederictonians who have come to worship and to meet friends. Last Sunday, I went to the United Baptist Church on York Street. I saw the most beautiful picture I have ever seen in a church in the glass window facing the entrance.

What makes me like Fredericton is the benches in the streets and on the banks of the river. They mean there is no rat-racing hurry in the town. They mean parents with their toddling kids out for a walk. They mean elderly citizens bathing in the sun. They mean a friendly invitation to those tired from walking around.

Last month is the month they had the performance of change of guards. That was the first time I saw something like that with my own eyes. I especially like the guy in kilt and playing the pipe. I wonder if there is anything that links this city with Scotland, because I also noticed a statue of Robert Burns in the street. Besides, wild imagination also associates these to the place name Nova Scotia: does it mean "New Scotland"? To tell you the truth, man, I like Scots.

I have been to the public library many times since my arrival on August 25. I was amazed to find a collection of books and magazines in Chinese in such a small city. It is all the more amazing because in the library of the university, I did not find a single book or newspaper in Chinese! The collection, it seems to me, will be perfect if some books and newspapers from mainland China are included.

The library is in a good location. On the second floor, there are big windows facing St. John River, offering a pleasant view for those who read newspapers and magazines. I am a regular visitor to local public libraries wherever I go. I have been to a district branch of the Houston Public Library and a branch of the Harris County Library in north Houston. I should say in terms of library hours and facilities, this one in Fredericton is good.

I should not conclude this rambling without saying something about the Saturday farmers' market. Small as it is, it offers some fun that I miss a lot while in Houston. Before I went to Houston, I stayed in Waco, where there is a flea market near the place I lived. I frequented the place on weekends, just to savor the fun of digging into old curiosities and bargaining with vendors. The human touch is what I look for in such old-fashioned markets. Here at the Farmer's market, I find it too. Part of it, like the food stalls, reminds me of the night food markets in Beijing. The fresh vegetables and meat and home-made cookies and a lot of other stuff reveals to me a picture of pastoral life. I cannot help thinking of living a farmer's life for a year. Finally, I think River St. John supplies much of its revelation of the beauty of the town. One morning I went to do Tai Chi on the bank of the river. Everything was still except for some early birds that walk or run along the walking path. It was a little bit dark on the river before the sun cast his full light. Already there was a boat leaving the dock, in the wake of which was a long trail of ripples. The grass smelt wet in the morning dew. What a lovely day!

body spirit

When someone you love dies

Losing someone you love is one of life's most difficult experiences. You are faced with the most arduous, but important, need to grieve. Grief is the emotional, spiritual, and physical response to the loss. The thoughts, feelings, and emotions associated with grief are at times overwhelming and may make you feel like you are "going crazy." Confusion, disorganisation, fear, guilt, relief, and anger, are just a few of the emotions you may feel. As strange or uncomfortable as these feelings may be, they are all normal and healthy.

Mourning is the open expression of your thoughts and feelings regarding the death and the person who died. It is important to express grief openly; ignoring it won't make it go away. However, it is sometimes difficult to find people to talk to; who won't judge, or criticise, or who won't steal your grief away by telling you to "keep your chin up" or "be strong." This can leave the griever feeling misunderstood and isolated.

North America as we know it today has been successful in creating a "death denying" culture. People "pass on", "expire", or "depart"; rarely does anyone die anymore. The media, through ads, pushes us to stay healthy and live longer. Death, unlike birth, has become unnatural and alien, and many of us find it difficult to talk about death, or face our own mortality.

It is not uncommon for people who are mourning to be unable to function at the level they are accustomed. Students will often witness a drop in marks as they find themselves with a limited attention span and unable to concentrate long enough to absorb information. Then

there are those who will use their studies as an opportunity to forget and dive "head first" into their books. It is important to remember that your grief is unique and no two people will grieve in exactly the same way.

The impact of loss may take months. It is important to recognise that grief is a process, not an event that ends once the funeral is over. Feelings of grief can occur long after the death. These "grief attacks" can resurface off and on for a life time. They do become particularly noticeable when dealing with "firsts": Christmas, birthdays, and anniversaries. Even years down the road, occasions like graduations, weddings, births, and other deaths, may be times when the absence of someone special is felt.

If you are struggling with a loss and would like some help in sorting out some of your feelings, contact Counselling Services or Campus Ministry. They are also sponsoring a one day workshop, Understanding Grief, on Saturday, October 5, 1996 from 10:00 am to 4:00 pm. The workshop leader will be Shelley Cohen-Thorley, R.N., grief counsellor and Co-ordinator of the Community Care Program. This workshop will be helpful to those who have experienced a loss through death and for those who are or may be supporting someone in grief. For more information contact Counselling Services, 453-4820.

By Shelley Cohen-Thorley. This column is sponsored by Counselling Services and will appear biweekly. NEXT: Career Concerns.

The Ultra investigation...

Tuesday 10:07 am - Assignment: Find out the details on the new Ultra™ Hamburger at Harvey's. Not much of a scoop, to the untrained eye, but I knew that behind it all was a great controversy waiting to be unleashed. I was excited. I felt like the guy who uncovered the JFK conspiracy, or at least Kevin Costner. Packing my equalizer (.45) and a pen and paper, I made my way to the SUB cafeteria.

Tuesday 10:20 am - The cafeteria was crowded - almost too crowded - as I made my way to Harvey's. The manager acted surprised to hear from me, but I knew it was only an act, because anyone with a secret as big as hers should have expected some people checking the place out sooner or later. She wouldn't give me her name (the Harvey's bigwigs have a special way of dealing with squealers) but she did answer a few of my questions. Basically all I found out is that the Ultra™ Burger is one ounce larger and more flavoured than the regular burger. I tried to get more from her, but she was a tough nut to crack; the Harvey's people had trained her well. "Haven't you anything better to write about?" she asked, trying to get rid of me. I knew then I wouldn't get anything more from her, so I bid my farewell, grabbed some evidence (a Harvey's regular burger and a Harvey's Ultra™ Burger) and went back to the office.

Tuesday 10:42 am - Back at the office, I proceeded to examine the two burgers. What made the new burger different? Was it imported illegally from Cuba? Was it made from mad cows? Did the Harvey's people inject additive chemicals into it? I figured the only way to learn anything more about the burger (aside from bringing it into the lab to have it tested for its contents, that would be too easy)



Charles Teed, investigative reporter, looks for the mysterious added flavour in the new Ultra™.

was to eat it. I ate the regular hamburger first so I could compare the new burger with another Harvey's product. Then, I ate the Ultra™ Burger. It tasted like a mix of fin and paper... they must be making it out of non-edible materials! Then I realised I hadn't taken off the wrapper. The burger was just like the lady had said, actually: a little bigger and a little more flavoured. I finished the burger quickly and left, more frustrated than ever.

Tuesday 6:39 pm - After a great deal of consideration, I decided that there was no controversy. The only crime Harvey's was guilty of was trying to sell a new burger which really wasn't much different than their old burger. Then the phone rang. It was my secretary, telling me there was another case for me to get on, pronto. Perhaps I'll need my .45 after all...

Top ten tips for eating Beaver food

1. Don't eat anything with whipped cream on it. It just covers up mold.
2. Skip a meal or two... Beaver Bucks! (I know it'll be hard, but it's worth it!)
3. Make a fashion statement: Wear nose plugs.
4. It may be more expensive than the tuition here, but surgically removing your taste buds can be beneficial in the long run.
5. Don't ask questions: Just close your eyes and swallow.
6. If it moves or twitches, catch it! It probably has more nutrients than you think.
7. Ice Cream with caramel and chocolate chips makes a quick meal, & it meets two essential food group requirements: milk & chocolate.
8. Smile at the workers. They may give you REAL food in your upperclass years.
9. Keep mouth closed during and after eating: That way, it won't be able to crawl back up.
10. Break into the cafeteria and replace this #7 with some real food!!!

Chris Sampson

SO YOU THINK YOU HAVE PROBLEMS...

In one of the courses I'm taking, I have to do a lab and the teaching assistant we have in our group is just wonderful. The problem is that I think he's too wonderful and I think that I'm falling in love with him. What should I do?

This is another one of those dangerous areas that seem to cropping up an awful lot in this advice column (what is wrong with you people?) because any sort of relationship with someone who is going to be grading you (I mean in the class...) is going to be risky as high grades could be misconstrued as being high for a reason, while low grades are going to cause problems between the two of you. But all this is assuming that something does happen, and it probably won't. Or shouldn't anyway - teaching assistants are warned about this kind of thing, and it is "suggested" that it simply doesn't happen. For one thing, it is a breach of trust for someone in a position of power to take advantage of someone, and that's what this would be. If you really can't help yourself and want to talk to them about it, then go ahead. But think very carefully about it. And if you both decide that it is going to happen then you should probably wait until the class is over, and that way nobody can accuse you of anything sinister.

I just broke up with someone two weeks ago and they don't want to let go. I just want to move on, but they won't stop bugging me. How can I convince them that it is over?

This is something which should be sorted out as quickly as possible because if it isn't, there is a good chance it will turn into something that resembles some kind of weird stalking thing. Not very pleasant at all. Basically you should just try to ignore them - tell them when you do have contact that it is absolutely, 100% over, but if they continue to bug you, just ignore them. They'll get the message eventually. If things don't get any better then you could maybe talk to a mutual friend and they could intervene. And one final piece of advice for people getting ready to split up - don't utter the 'we can still be friends' line. Nothing can make someone still have hope that things will still be okay like that line can.

The people I hang around with have started getting into drugs - nothing too bad, just smoking dope. The thing is that they keep trying to get me to try it, and I'm not sure if I want to. What should I do?

The thing about peer pressure is that it never really goes away. In fact, it seems to get worse at university because there are so many things that you can be pressured into trying, sometimes for the first time - alcohol, sex, drugs, rock 'n' roll and so on. Ultimately, you should never do anything that you aren't comfortable with, and that doesn't just go for drugs. If your 'friends' respond by giving you a really hard time then they probably aren't really your friends. I realise that this sounds like something that your Mom would tell you, but this time, her advice was good. And before I forget, tidy up your room.

I've been going out with the same guy for a few years, but lately things haven't been too good. He's currently unemployed and sits around watching TV and drinking beer all day without even looking for another job. But the worst thing is his temper. He gets so angry, and when he does he sometimes hits me. As soon as he does he apologises and promises that he won't do it again, but the last time he really hurt me. What should I do?

Leave. Get away from him right now. This will not stop people like this do not change overnight, and this kind of violence has a tendency to escalate. You have to leave him for your own safety. And you have to call someone about this too - get on the phone to the Fredericton Sexual Assault Centre at 454-0437 and talk to them about it as they are infinitely more qualified to counsel you on this matter. They can also help you find somewhere safe to stay if you don't have a place to go. But leave right now as there is never an excuse for domestic violence no matter what the circumstances are.

All my life my younger sister drove me crazy because she has a natural talent for everything. I came to UNB because no one here knew her, so I'd finally not be her big sister anymore. But now she's in her first year here, and she's already more popular than I am, and getting better grades than I am. She drives me crazy!

Umm...is there a problem here, or are you just getting something off your chest? Just checking. It seems to me that there is a small case of sibling rivalry here -- duh! There is only one thing to do - accept her for what she is, and get on with it. I'm sure that there are things that you can do better than she can so what's the problem? I'm sure if you talked to her about it then she would be able to list things about you that makes her insecure. The moral? Talking can be very important when there are problems

Got a problem? Submit it to So You Think You Have Problems. Get a solution.

