

CAMPUS

body *spirit* Hunger pains in Residence

When talking about the food and weight problems of women, it is tempting to focus on eating "disorders" such as Anorexia Nervosa, Bulimia Nervosa and Binge Eating. And yet, the discussion can then easily become one of definitions: Who qualifies? What are the symptoms? When is it a problem? Who receives help in overcoming this problem? Focusing only on the disorders allows us to keep these additional difficulties at arm's length and makes us more tempted to view the symptoms as the bizarre actions of a few women, rather than as a part of a continuum of body image dissatisfaction which is supported by our culture.

In both subtle and obvious ways, we are raised to believe that fat, especially on women's bodies, is disgusting and a cause for self-loathing, and that thinness will guarantee happiness and success. Even though many researchers now believe that weight, like height or hair colour, is inherited, the concept of "willpower" as solutions to alter our weight are commonly accepted in our culture. Added to these cultural myths, girls and women are given the messages that appearance is our most important personal attribute, and that total preoccupation with weight is reasonable. To sum it up, it's of utmost importance to be really thin. The failure to achieve this is our own fault, and we therefore deserve our own anger, self-loathing, shame, guilt, unhappiness, and the lack of success in our lives.

What are the results of these cultural views, and who are the casualties? Girls and women make up 90-95% of those individuals struggling with eating disorders, with boys and men making up the other 5-10%. Beyond these individuals, 40% of women are yo-yo dieting, and 90-95% of women are dissatisfied with their bodies, with about 90% believing that they weigh too much (many of these women being underweight by medical standards). Many women surveyed describe their top goal as losing 10-15 pounds, rather than success in work/school, or success in their relationships. Not only are at least 25% of women on diets on any given day, but half of 10 year old girls have dieted. While women and girls are struggling to change their bodies, the dieting industry makes billions of dollars. Nor do they lose their consumers, since approximately 95% of those who diet regain any lost weight and so "must try again". With such weight preoccupation, weight loss becomes the primary concern in women's lives and is then central to feelings of self-worth, overshadowing other qualities and achievements.

Because we are encouraged culturally to restrict our eating in rigid ways, eating problems can be the strategy in trying to cope with deeper problems which are too painful or difficult for a woman to address directly. Eating problems can occur when a woman tries to control her

body size and to compensate for a lack of control she feels in other areas of her life. While the need to feel in control of her body and food intake restriction may be intense, often a woman ultimately ends up feeling powerless and out of control as her obsessions with food and weight begin to "control" her in this cycle of "failure".

How do we begin to acknowledge our right to grow, develop, and to be accepted by our culture in a way that ceases to do damage to who we are as women? And how can men support such changes? As women and men, we need to examine our own attitudes and prejudices about body image and size. Challenge the cultural pressures on women to be thin. Speak out against negative stereotypes of large people. Boycott products that advertise in ways that demean and are harmful to women.

If you struggle with body image dissatisfaction, ask yourself what you are missing out on in your life because

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your thoughts and energies are consumed by weight and body issues. Learn to value yourself for attributes other than your appearance—what do you do well, what do you like about yourself, what are your successes? Develop other interests. Think about treating yourself well, as your body is right now. Find healthy ways to deal with painful feelings, and ask for help when it is needed. Improving body image does not involve changing your body, but rather changing the way you think about your body. Don't listen to talk about diets and weight. Don't read magazines that encourage dieting and attaining the "thin beauty ideal." Try to eat when you are hungry and stop when you are full, rather than eating to "stuff" down feelings, to be polite, or to avoid wasting food. Work on eating for your health, not for your looks.

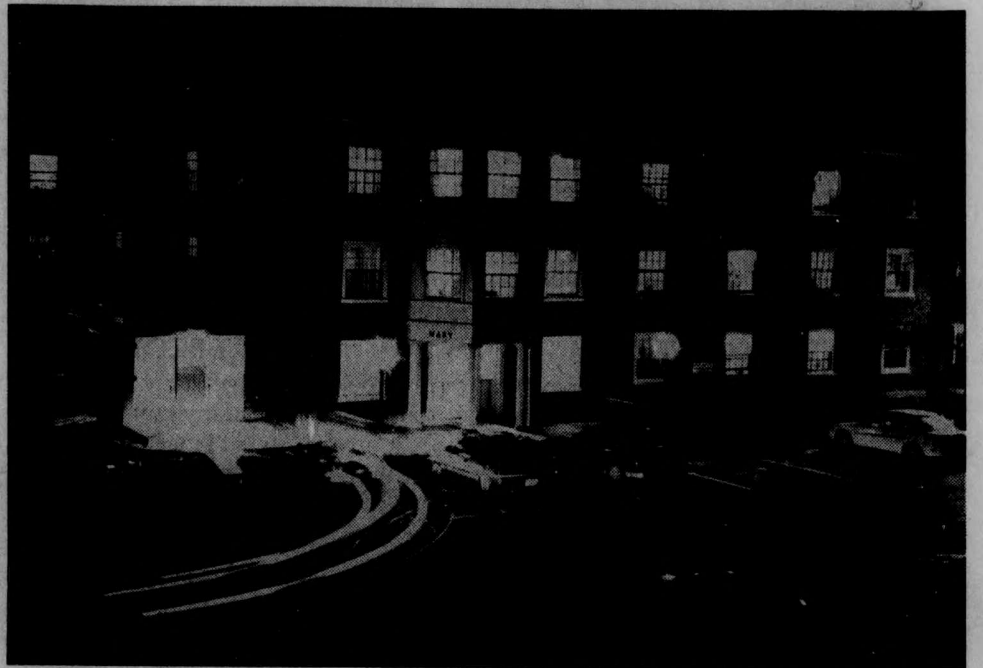
If you are concerned about someone you know, let her know that you care and are willing to talk with her when she is ready. Avoid comments on her appearance, even if you feel they are complimentary, as this simply perpetuates her focus on body image. Try to avoid any power struggles related to her eating. Read to learn more, and if the individual is able to acknowledge the problem, share this information with her, and find out about resources for her. Patience helps, because overcoming food and weight problems can take time.

Counselling Services will be offering a 9-week group in January for women students who struggle with body image problems and difficulties related to eating. For more information, call 453-4820.

Sue McKenzie-Mohr works as a Counsellor at UNB Counselling Services



Tibbits Hall collecting for community kitchen and Fredericton emergency shelter



Look for this building in daylight to make your donations.

JUDSON DELONG PHOTO

This week Tibbits Hall, a residence on the UNB's Fredericton campus, is accepting donations at drops as well as collecting them door-to-door in support of the Fredericton Community Kitchen and the Fredericton Emergency Shelter.

The students of Tibbits invite members of the community to donate non-perishable food items, household cleaners, and health-care products for the shelter and kitchen. Donations may be dropped off during the day from Thursday, Jan. 9, to Saturday, Jan. 11, inclusive, in the lobby of the Student Union Building on Pacey Drive or at Tibbits Hall, whose entrance is located behind Lady Dunn Hall on the uphill parking lot off Mackay Drive on campus.

The students will be conducting their door-to-door campaign in Fredericton on Saturday, Jan. 11, between the hours of 10 a.m. and 3 p.m. at homes in the area bounded by Priestman, Smythe, King's College and Regent streets.

Mireille Ozon and Stephanie Timpa, secretary and vice-president of the Tibbits Hall House Committee, respectively, say they decided to support these organizations with their first annual fundraiser because of their valuable work. The community kitchen feeds over 100 people daily and the Emergency Shelter houses on average 28 people nightly - and the demand for shelter is even greater during the winter.

For further information, contact Ms Ozon at 450-6692 or Ms Timpa at 450-6690.

UNB/STU VCF Upcoming Events

- Last Class Bash when: 7:30 where: Pillar Lounge (B-Level Head Hall)
- End of term Potluck Supper when: 7:30 where: Tilley 28 (Arts Common Room)

For more information check out the vcf web page at: www.unb.ca/web/ivcf

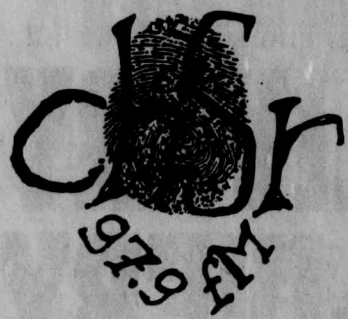


Bruns Elections

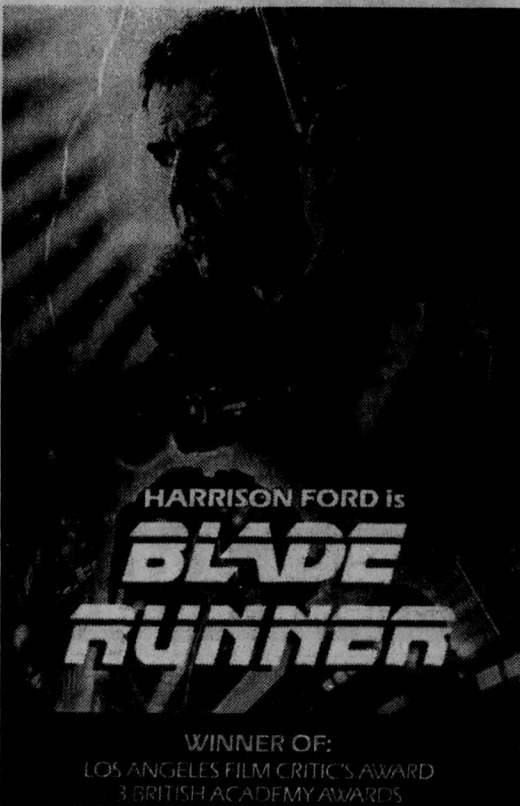
12:30, Room 35, SUB
Friday, January 17

Drop by the office (453-4983) or drop by for details.

... more human than human ... more human than human ... more human than human ...



Funk Night presents



Tuesday, January 14
MacLaggan Hall Auditorium
Shows at 7 PM and 9 PM
ADMISSION: \$4

Joe Blades presents

River Readings

at Molly's Coffee House
554 Queen St.

Fredericton poets

Phillip Igloliorti
Séamus Ó Ceallaigh

Sunday, January 12, 8 PM



General Membership Meeting
7 PM
Wednesday January 15
SUB Room 26
UNB