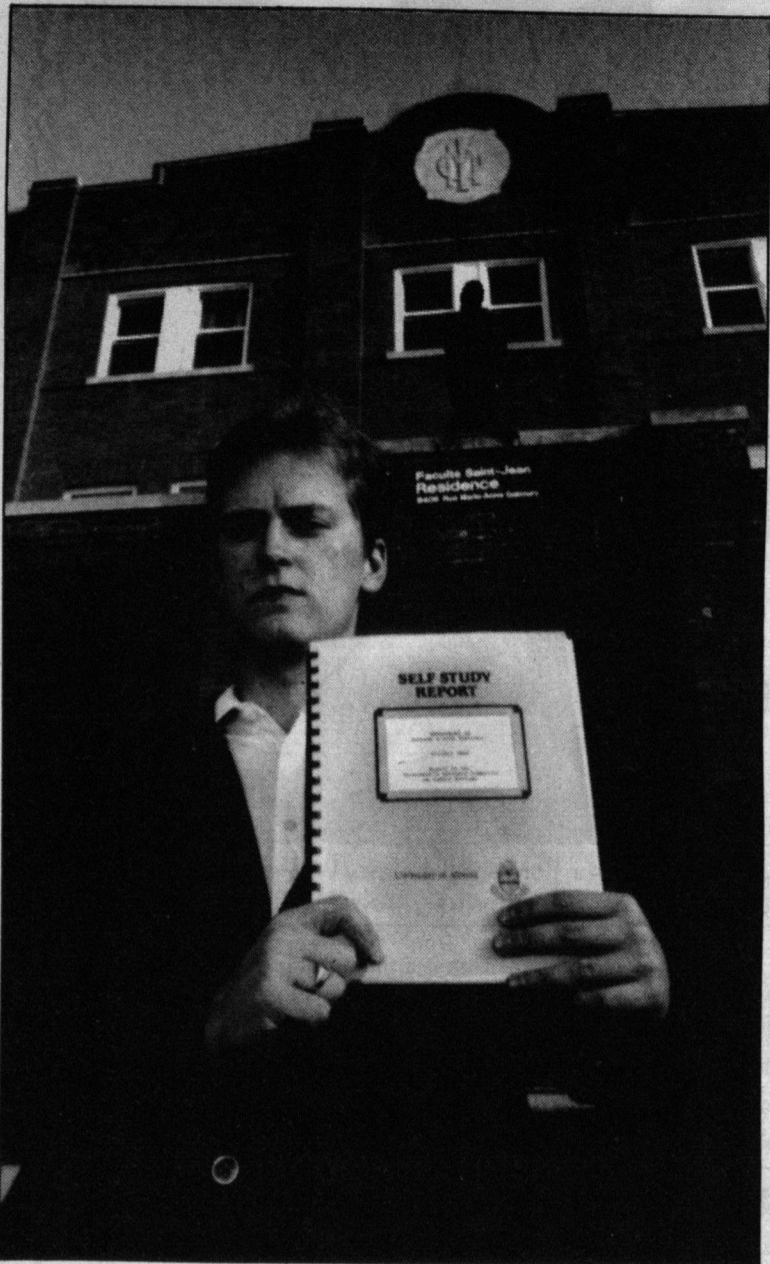
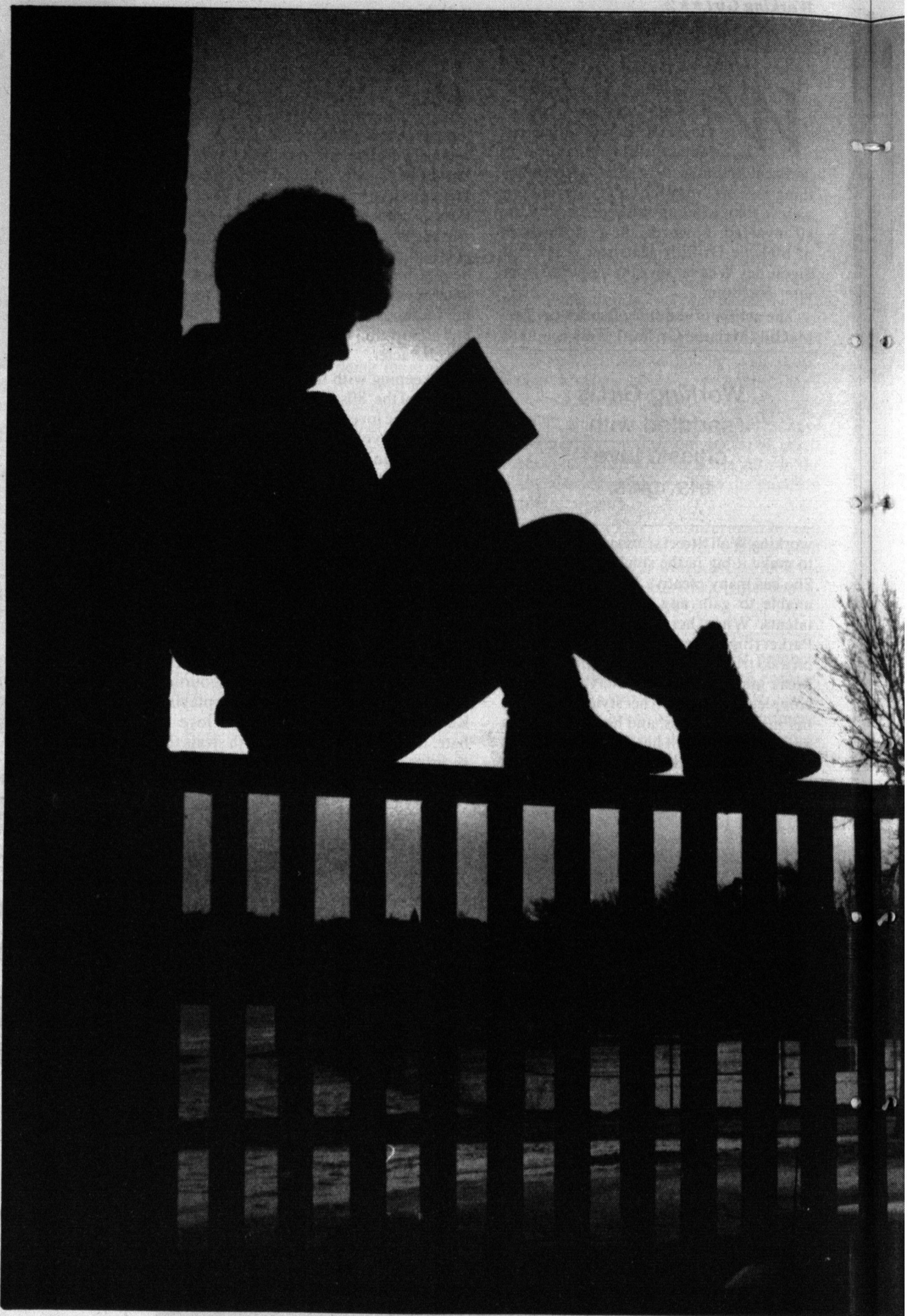


Faculte residents face



Faculte Saint Jean Residents Students' Association President John Mark holds the president's report on the Faculte. Students are opposing a complete shutdown of the residence.



An old mattress, sporadic electricity, and fear of fire hazards worry second-year arts student Lisa Milligan, but she stays at the residence for the atmosphere. On an unusually warm winter day, Milligan takes the

Canadians are being forced to confront a national identity crisis. Bombarded with threats of nasty free trade side-effects, Meech Lake debate, and Official Languages Act controversy, the cultural foundations of this proud and peaceful nation have begun to crumble.

While the crumbling of our Canadian heritage is only an undesirable abstract to most, University of Alberta students living in the Faculte Saint Jean residence confront the collapsing culture problem every time they visit a bathroom, or spend a sleepless night listening to the banging of ancient hot water heaters.

Crusty plaster falls from the walls and the creaking of worn out floorboards echos through the residence. While the old-fashioned hot water heaters are quaint — and appear as trendy as hardwood floors — the pipes continually emit loud bangs and obnoxious moans. Added to the din is the sound of French chatter which passes through the thin dormitory walls.

The building's quirks remind students that the deteriorating residence is a financial burden to the U of A, and university administrators are contemplating demolishing the building — thus demolishing the unique multi-cultural society established by the residents within.

Built in 1911 by the Pere Oblats (Oblate Fathers), the landmark building and student community it houses are symbolic of the national identity many Canadian citizens are striving to hold onto. "It is a really good example of what Canada is all about — multiculturalism.... The loss of this building would not only result in a loss to the city and the province, but to all of Canada," says President of the Faculte Saint Jean Residents Students' Association John

Mark Fisher. The Faculte is the only French degree granting institution west of St. Boniface, Man. The residence, which is home to 76 students, is also one of a kind in Western Canada.

The students' living quarters has been used as a Faculte residence for over ten years, and the students have built a strong allegiance to their community and to the Edmonton francophone community. "We wish to do everything possible to preserve the unique community housed within these walls... It is a focal point of the francophone community in Edmonton — their pride and joy," Fisher says.

The distinct community Fisher speaks of has been erected by anglophone and francophone Faculte students from across Canada. Fisher is an English speaking Albertan from Rosalind, a small town south of Camrose. In his second year

at the Faculte, he is becoming fluent in the French language.

He says life in the residence has offered him the invaluable opportunity of living in a French Canadian atmosphere without leaving his province of birth.

Student housing assistant Colleen Rathwell agrees with Fisher. "The community is steeped in French Canadian tradition," notes the veteran resident. Rathwell, who moved into the residence from Red Deer five years ago, says the university administration might have to struggle with the resident ghost if they tamper too much with the community.

"The ghost of Frere Antoine, a Polish priest who lived here all his life, is said to haunt the building," she says, while cautiously glancing about her small room. "He was attacked by a rooster — who was said to be in the form of the devil — and died shortly after."

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