

Pyramid

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knows about the letter but won't investigate unless someone files an official complaint.

"We've had some calls about the letter from all over the province, and I've been advising those people that the scheme is illegal. Now, whether they choose to participate in the chain after that I don't know."

Leigh says pyramid schemes are illegal in Canada under section 198 1E of the criminal code, which says any program that has participants investing much less than they expect in return is against the law.

Leigh says he has seen similar programs "every year around this time." Because the scheme does not involve money like most pyramids, Leigh says the cheer program doesn't worry him.

"It's almost a victimless scheme. Even those who lose, only lose one bottle of alcohol," he says.

One Halifax resident, Mary, says she received the letter last Monday, after hearing about it through her friends.

"It's been going through the Bank of Commerce, Sears, a travel agency downtown and the Victoria General (hospital)," she says.

While she doesn't know where the letter originated, she does question its appearance.

"The letter is laid out really well. Everything on it is centred and it looks like word processor type. It looks like someone's secretary did it," she adds.

Alice, a third year UNB student who received the letter from a friend two weeks ago, says she's having some trouble passing it on to other people.

"It's not that they don't want it because it's illegal," she says, "but because people are naturally

suspicious."

Both women know people who have received the promise of "free" booze.

Unlike most chain letter schemes, this one has seven carefully devised steps to ensure its longevity. "The people who

created the chain don't want you to pass it on to just anybody, but someone who you think is trusted and reliable," says Alice.

The chain hasn't been broken yet, but Leigh says it probably has reached its saturation point in Halifax.

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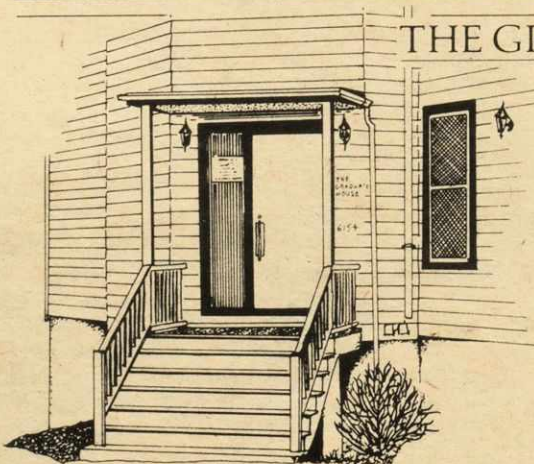
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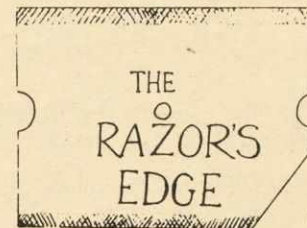
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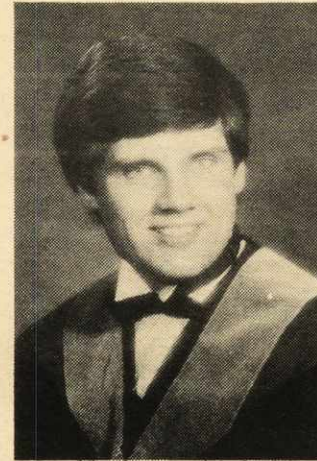
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