

# Maturity brings new challenges

## Varsity Mania comes of age (part 3)

by Aime Phillips

**T**his year has brought many changes to Varsity-Mania.

One of the major concerns with everyone involved was the survival of Varsity-Mania now that the distribution of free alcohol to the residences is prohibited.

The controversy over the free alcohol culminated this past September when representatives from Varsity-Mania, the Athletic Department and the Board of Dons met to discuss the issue. Jim Born of the Athletic Department states: "Over the past three years we talked to Varsity-Mania to make sure there was no adverse publicity, and we did our best to ensure there were no problems. When university administrators and others started to express concern we addressed the issue."

"The athletic department decided they didn't want the department associated with the distribution of free alcohol. Granted, there are a lot of different prizes, but one was alcoholic products. We didn't want to tarnish the image of the university, the faculty or the department," says Born.

There were legitimate concerns brought forth by the residence administration and other individuals, such as the access that underage people had to the alcohol and the fact that the Houses were stockpiling the products until the day of the event.

Steve Williams, coordinator of Varsity-Mania, argues that 25 cases of beer divided by 80 people is not that much. Williams also states after the decision was made by the

Athletic Department Varsity-Mania met with advisors.

"We decided Varsity-Mania could run without the free alcohol, although we were unsure of the results."

As it turned out the results were positive. The soccer game sponsored that weekend had an audience of over 800 people, despite the cold weather.

The Residence Challenge continues, with Moosehead Breweries pledging the year-end prizes: a T.V. and VCR for the residences with the two highest aggregate attendance to all sponsored events.

Williams adds there is "an increase in participation from off-campus students who are attracted to the events because of the excitement and the big crowds".

"Overall, the year has gone exceptionally well. No longer are people coming out for the games for prizes, they are coming out because it is fun and exciting..."

This year's events have been very successful. The Belly Flop contest debuted, where individual contestants competed in three categories: biggest splash, crowd pleaser and most painful. That event saw participants from off-campus students, residences, and varsity teams.

There has been an excellent attendance at all the hockey games so far, with last Saturday's "Battle Up the Hill" packing the Aitken Center with close to 2000 spectators.

The Roadtrip to Mt. Allison met with some difficulties this year, with game times being changed and \$1500 worth of damage done to the buses. When asked whether UNB would see another Roadtrip, Williams stated: "A road trip next year is not probable unless security can be guaranteed."

Varsity-Mania received national exposure in the September issue of the Campus Canada magazine, the first time UNB has ever been featured in that publication. Williams claims: "That was a positive shot in the arm, because that meant we had impressed someone outside looking in."

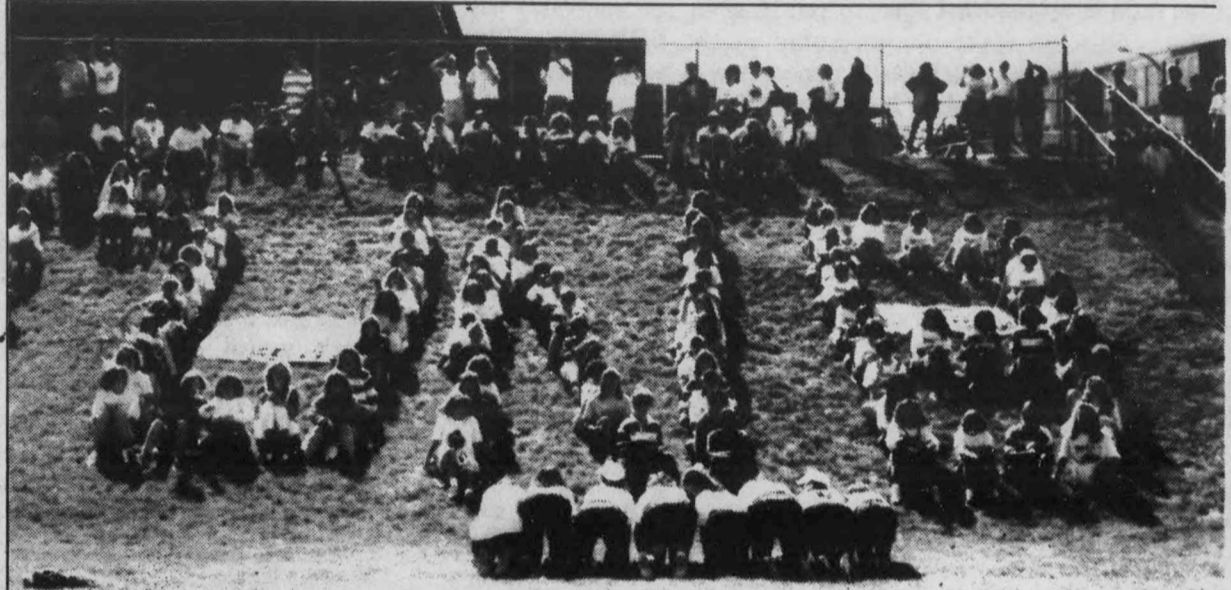
Students at UNB are not the only ones taking notice of the work Varsity-Mania has done. Saint Thomas University recently countered Varsity-Mania with The Bleacher Creature, and the representatives from the Fredericton Canadiens have contacted Varsity-

Mania to see what can be done to promote student vocal support.

Williams concludes that "overall the year has gone exceptionally

well. Third year has been the biggest change so far. No longer are people coming out to the games for

prizes, they're coming out because it's fun and exciting. And that, in my opinion, is what Varsity-Mania is meant to be."



UNB: Varsity Mania is recognized nationally during its third year.

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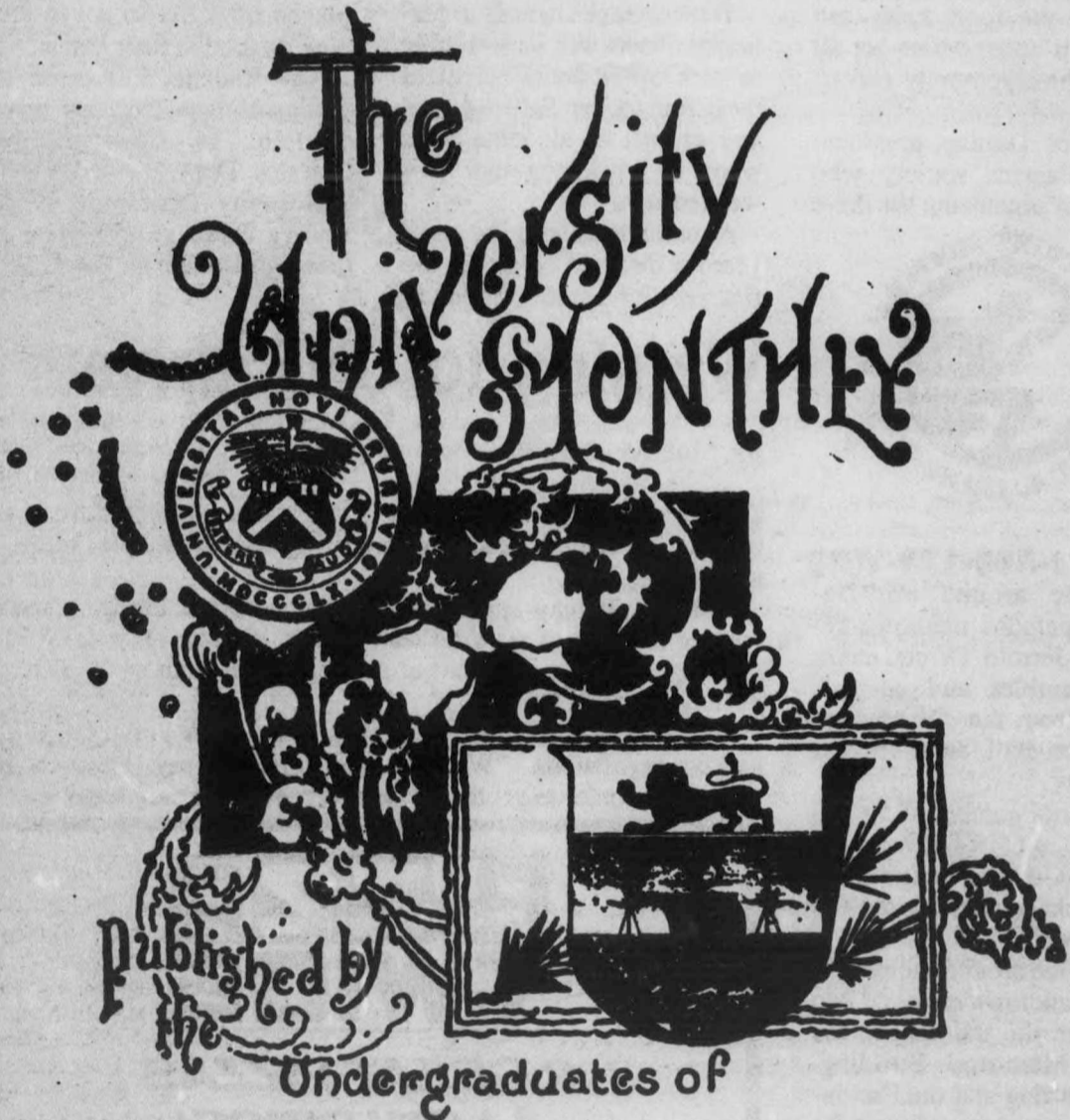
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