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“Wanna Be A College Graduate, Eh?”

By Eleanor Brown

HALIFAX (CUP) — It's lunchtime. Over in the student pub, four good old boys and one woman are crowded around the latest Trivial Pursuit clone, rolling dice and slugging back a few brews.

A card is picked: "Sudden loss of appetite as you notice the cafeteria waitress has considerable facial hair". Everyone laughs, and the player marks down the loss of one Social Point on his scorecard. Another man gives up \$30 on being informed he has just subscribed to a porn magazine.

"Wanna Be a College Graduate, Eh?" is the first board game about university life to hit bookstore shelves. The grand launching was held last week at St. Mary's University, where the game's creators, Bob Smith and Dave Wiseman, attend classes.

"One night in a smoke-filled college room, we thought, hey, we'd had a good time in college. And we wanted to incorporate the idea into a game," said Smith, a fourth-year biology student.

"It just came to me all at once."

“two-day ripper” will cost you an Academic Point.

The project took two years to get off the ground. According to Wiseman, a geologist-in-training, he and Smith "practically dropped out last year" to complete the game.

'Wanna' requires players to answer skill-testing questions about sports, finances, social life and academics. Count up the points and move up to second- and third-year status. Graduate first and you win.

But you can get caught along the way.

An "affair with Professor Bendova" will garner one Academic Credit and two Social Points and a "Let's Party" card offering a "two-day ripper for \$250" will cost you an Academic Point. The "Sexual Encounter" square could mean a new experience with Mazola oil.

"It was going to be a cult game with lots of drugs and alcohol. We changed that somewhat so people wouldn't be too offended," explains Smith, a beer never far from his hand.

Graduate first and you win.

Some 3,000 of those inoffensive skill-testing questions were pared down to 1,080 academic puzzlers and 900 social, sports and financial brain-teasers. Smith says the questions came from friends' personal experiences, school textbooks, and dictionaries.

Smith's dad financed the whole deal. that works out to \$20,000 for the actual game and first production run of 1,000, plus another \$5,000 for lawyer's fees, a copyright, and a graphic artist's salary.

The initial production run won't even cover costs, the partners say. And they've already missed their original launching date by three weeks.

Wiseman says the game should have been ready at the beginning of the school term, when students with newly-cashed loans were buying texts and picking up gadgets in the bookstores.

Now it's just in time for the Christmas market, a \$29.95 a pop.

There's no money left for an advertising campaign, but Nova Scotia will be blanketed. Smith's cousin in southern Ontario will distribute 500 copies.

Wiseman says the board game's name will help.

The patently Canadian 'Eh' will "stick in the mind", he hopes, and the length of the name will jolt consumers.

If successful, a second production will follow, enabling the entrepreneurs to distribute throughout Canada and, eventually, the United States, said Wiseman.

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— Joseph Gelms, NEWSDAY

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