

# ENTERTAINMENT

## PROBLEM CHILDREN

by Vincent McMackin

Saturday night, February 23, was hellish cold. Wind chill pushed temperatures down to -35, but it felt colder than that. Only a crazy person would be out in this weather. By the time I found the back entrance to the Gallery Connexion my face was frozen in a bizarre death-like grimace. Seventy-odd people were already there. Are we all crazy? Nick announced that the entire building is a designated NON-smoking area. Yikes! Off to a good start.

Four bands played. First was SAFE, a new three-piece based here, in Fredericton. Heart their demo-tape (Backstreet Records?), knew it would be a good set. The drummer and the guitar player are ex-members of two well known but not defunct bands: NEXT OF KIN (Fredericton) and SYSTEM OVERLOAD (Halifax). The experience shows. Definitely one of the finest debut performances

I've ever seen. Melodic, yet abrasive, SAFE is definitely an original sound, trend-setting rather than trend-following, if you know what I mean. Most of us only think we do. Try not to worry about it. SAFE songs are constructed carefully, almost a professional feel to it. Keep an eye on them. I may be mistaken, but I think they might be playing at the little hardcore/alternative festival at U.N.B. Saint John, Saturday, March 2nd. If they're not, they should be.

WHITE MINORITY were up next, an amazingly solid group of high school students from Saint John. It's hard to be objective about this band, been following them closely since they started last summer. Sound not nearly as complex as SAFE, but know exactly what they want to do, and they do it well: dissonant bar-chords, gut-wrenching vocals, and a thundering rhythm section. Their set goes like clockwork. WHITE

MINORITY is a solid, frenzy-inducing machine. They even look crazy, a long-hair, two shaved heads and a mohawk. They aren't nazis, though. Lets be very clear on that. They're from my hometown, the singer is my cousin even, so I know the song lyrics and what the guys are like. Conformity and apathy are deadly sins, and authoritarianism is what they're fighting against. In the real fourth reich they'll be the first to go, to the gas chambers, that is. I have a feeling they'll put up a good fight. Most of us won't, you know.

The third band, BAD LUCK #13, are veterans in this business. They have an interesting relationship with the aforementioned band, WHITE MINORITY (W.M.). Want to hear a story? Some nazi skins (yes, real ones) were causing trouble last year at a show in Moncton, their home turf, and BAD LUCK #13 was headlining. They decided not to play, and the show ended early.

Some harsh words were exchanged between the bands, and someone in W.M. called B.L. #13 a bunch of cowards for not playing. This is all by way of explanation as to why B.L. #13 appeared onstage Saturday night wearing T-shirts with "coward" scrawled on the fronts. It's an in-joke. As for the pajamas, the WWI pilot cap, and the phallic white socks dangling from their crotches ... I can offer no explanation. Did anyone get a charge out of seeing Mike (the singer) playfully clubbing audience members with his floppy dick? Bad joke, sinister implications. A damn good band, but too many covers, and a bit of an attitude problem. I know Mike, and he'd consider that a compliment. Then he'd smile and tell me to eat shit. We're pretty close. If we weren't, he wouldn't say anything.

PROBLEM CHILDREN headlined, and they're as good as ever, maybe better. Their new

album, "More Noise from the Playpen," will be out soon, so start saving your money now. Seriously I have to admit, the last time I saw them they weren't looking so hot, like their hearts weren't really in it. That was in Saint John, 1987. Might have been 88. Anyway, they're not really a S.J. - style band, so lack of crowd response could have been a factor. S.J. doesn't seem to like bands that sound happy all the time. Probably something to do with all the fog. Fredericton is a different story, though. The crowd went bananas. Three or four times I was nearly crushed into a concrete wall by the frenzied, thrashing mob. As Pierre would say, a good time was had by all. Everyone partied, and the PROBLEM CHILDREN kicked serious butt. A redneck expression, I know, but the shoe fits. Even if they are from Ontario. You got a problem with that?

### ENGLISH COURSE YIELDS DRAMATIC RESULTS

Students in the English 2140 course at the University of New Brunswick in Fredericton are spending a lot of their time this term as carpenters, cosmeticians, tailors and technicians. That may be unusual in most academic settings, but in this case it is more than appropriate.

English 2140 is an introductory course in drama production. Each year, the students get to put their newly acquired theatrical knowledge to the test by staging their own production. This year they've chosen Thornton Wilder's Pulitzer Prize winner, *Our Town*. The class will offer public performances of the play on Thursday, Friday and Saturday, March 21, 22 and 23, in the auditorium of Memorial Hall on the Fredericton campus. Curtain time is 8:p.m. and tickets, at \$2 each, will be available at the door.

With the guidance of their professor, Kathleen Scherf, the 22 students are taking on almost every task associated with mounting a stage production. Sets have to be designed and built, props assembled, and costumes found or made. Students must handle the intricacies of stage lighting, sound system and makeup as well as some of the managerial chores that go along with real life in the theatre.

"A stage play is a complex piece of work that requires the co-operation of a large number of people," Prof. Scherf explained. "The students in this course have already learned a lot about how others say it should be done. Now they're really enjoying the hands-on experience of doing it themselves, and it's an eye-opening exercise for most of them." All but four of the 22

students have acting roles as well as backstage jobs.

The class is getting some help from two experienced theatre professionals. Dan Silk, technical director at The Playhouse in Fredericton, is the play's production designer, and Robbie O'Neill, a veteran of theatre companies across Canada and co-founder of the Mulgrave Co-op Theatre in Nova Scotia, is directing the play. Mr. O'Neill, who works in Fredericton for Communications New Brunswick, got involved with the English 2140 group last year when one of the student cast members fell ill during a performance and he graciously agreed to take over the role. His diverse experience and abilities set a suitable example for students who are sampling a full range of theatrical assignments.

### A BIRDWATCHER'S DIARY

New Brunswick is a birdwatcher's mecca; over 350 species have been identified here, and two of the latest "exotics" from Europe have attracted international attention - the Eurasian Kestrel at Fort Beausejour in 1989 and last month's Fieldfare near Caraquet.

Nineteen resident species are the subjects of Norman Ryall's watercolors and drawings in *A Birdwatcher's Diary* now at the UNB Art Centre. The New Brunswick Museum prepared the exhibition for a 1990-91 tour of the province.

The birds, drawn lifesize, range from a tiny camouflaged White-Throat to fierce eagles and owls. Ryall's realistic approach is in the tradition of Audabon, Lansdowne and Bateman. Audabon came to Grand Manan to observe the (then) elusive Herring Gull, and a New Brunswick bird was the subject for his *Purple Finch* also.

Norman Ryall, born in Vancouver in 1954, has a degree in Philosophy from York University. However he has lived most of his life in St. Andrews, where for the last seven years he had devoted himself full time to wildlife painting.

On Sunday March 17th the UNB Art Centre will have a public reception for two exhibitions - *A Birdwatcher's Diary* and *New Talent '91*, the annual display of creative writing, music and visual arts by UNB and STU students.

*A Birdwatcher's Diary* will be displayed until March 28th, and *New Talent '91* until March 24th.

The UNB Art Centre, on Bailey Drive of the Fredericton campus, is open Monday to Friday from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m., and from 2 to 4 on Sundays.

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