

# The Front Row

by Maria Paisley, Sports Editor

Just play the game dammit!!

I went to the "Battle of the Hill" at the AUC and whaaaat there were these people screaming, wearing red and "war paint". Hmm, bizarre ritual you ask. Nope, it's Varsity Mania.

Entering the AUC one notices the large crowd which had gathered before the game. The crowd was boisterous and the residences were seated in their assigned spots. The usual taped music was replaced with a live band(?).

The crowd went wild making lots of noise when the Reds skated on the ice. There were even times that the cheering was deafening.

Then, suddenly, people started leaving with about 20 minutes left in the game. What?? Hold it, the game was exciting, close and these are school rivals. Not to mention that the "Battle of the Hill" Part II was being waged. Hmm. Why??

Simple, these spectators lived in residence and as one resident said they were "forced" to attend the game only because the house with the most points won a prize. Yea, okay. Well their theory was that they showed up for the judging and once the prizes had been given out well over 75 percent left. Unfortunately, this is not an isolated incident.

As a result the STU fans (students), who don't have a varsity mania program like UNB's, out numbered and out yelled the remaining UNB contin-

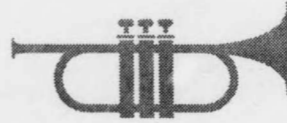
gent. Hmm. If they don't have a varsity program in which the residents are "bribed" to attend, then why do these fans come to the games.

UNB Varsity Mania was started in the late 80's and the theory behind it was to bring people to the games then having the teams providing the excitement and a convincing a good percentage to return. Weeell, sometimes this worked and sometimes it didn't - it sort of depended on the sport. The reason being was that a couple of the teams weren't overly successful. But hey, it was fun watching Rowdy, UNB's biggest varsity supporter, and Red Tide, UNB's band.


Although, if you ask students why they don't go they give all sorts reasons why. Some of the people state that they don't know the athletes, can't identify with the teams, there are no "big legends" from UNB. Others even think that the university is too big and this is a serious part of the "problem".

Weeell, at "smaller" universities one sees the athletes every day, sometimes several times, you always hear about the team and any big names. But, that certainly doesn't mean that the games will be well attended. Rather it has to do more with school pride, a link with the past performance of the university, team, and athletes, and even a big celebration such as a homecoming, team reunions.

I am not saying that Varsity Mania is a bad thing, but when spectators leave once they either have their goodies or have to leave empty-handed before the game ends, and not by just a few seconds, it creates rivalry between the houses over the winning of prizes, one has to wonder.



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Club News

## "Going Down ?"

by Christine Hunter  
Bruns Sports

SCUBA (self-contained underwater breathing apparatus) is the closest thing to flying that humans can experience. The physical satisfaction of movement without the restrictions of gravity is part of the attraction. The opportunity to explore an aquatic jungle is the other. Kevin Johnston, a member of UNB's scuba club believes that the underwater "environment" is what draws people to the sport.

"There's nothing that compares to swimming with the fishes," says Johnston, "You wonder what you look like to them." UNB's divers have been spooking marine life for over 35 years. The scuba club has a long history, and now boasts enough equipment for up to 20 people. The sports popularity has increased in the last decade, states Johnston. Once divers master the basic skills and learn the proper procedures, they must make an open water dive in order to attain their diver's li-

cense. The physics and laws of scuba diving are relatively easy to master. Johnston explains the written examination at the end of the course should be no problem as the pool sessions prepare you. The program at UNB prepares divers "more than the average course", according to Johnston. RCMP Instructor Steve Cummons stresses the importance of rescue techniques to reduce the risks of diving. One rule at thumb is "never dive alone".

Johnston describes the joy of scuba diving: "It's not like TV. It's a totally foreign environment in which you can explore caves, wall effects and observe wildlife from up close. There's a tendency to hold your breath, until you get used to it." Once you are trained and experienced, slipping into another world can be a fulfilling way to escape.

For more information about the scuba club and other related enquiries call Kevin Johnston at 472-3103.


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