

# Cross cultural experience proves educational

By URSULA WAWER

EDITOR'S NOTE: UNB student Ursula Wawer went overseas to take part in a Crossroads International project. She has decided to share her experience with the rest of the university.

— St. Lucia, where the hell is that, Quebec?

— Cross cultural experience what's that?

Indeed, it is easy to ask what and where is St. Lucia.

In simple terms, it is a tiny West Indian island of 233 square miles and 120,000 inhabitants. I could also add that its mountainous terrain is covered by lush tropical jungle and arid brushland. All of this is surrounded by beaches, cliffs, harbours, lagoons, and pounding surf.

But, it is much more... It is a place to fall in love with and hate simultaneously. A place that questions your every value and goal in life. It becomes a state of mind that throws you off balance. As a tourist poster advertises, it is "Paradise Found" (plus or minus a few bad mangoes).

This summer Canadian Crossroads International sent me to work and live on this island and with its people.

SHOCK!....

My first introduction to West Indian ways occurred on their

airlines LIAT (or more infamously known as: Leave Island Any Time). This is an organization subject to not only atmospheric winds but also those of politics in Trinidad and the West Indies as a whole. Some flight may leave an hour before schedule or a day late, if at all. Reservations may be made but there is no guarantee that a seat is available. Chaos — People may sleep in airports trying to obtain seats. It is the person "first seen" by the ticket clerk that leaves on his winged flight for hopefully the correct destination. One learns to be very patient, as well as develop a good strong elbow. But then, what's the rush? There is always tomorrow; as time flows at a different pace.

Flying over St. Lucia gives a view of the island that must be seen to be appreciated. Due to the mountain range, the green tropical interior is virtually uninhabited and most towns and villages are situated along the east coast which is dotted by extensive banana plantations owned mainly by British firms. In contrast to this green fertile and often inaccessible land, the southern tip and some of the western coast areas are flat, brown, and dry due to frequent droughts. Two other land marks; the Pitons are impossible to miss and pose an immediate challenge to be climbed, massive projectiles of sheer rock in the Soufriere Bay reaching 2600 and

2400 feet in height.

Considering this type of landscape, it is no wonder that transportation on St. Lucia is slow and inefficient.

Lorries are used as buses that travel from village to village over narrow mountain roads. Although, I must confess, even though the system runs less than smoothly with a "bus" leaving "sometime" in the morning and coming back "maybe" that night I enjoyed the country buses. Most are licensed to carry 48 people but entrepreneur drivers would pile in 60 or 70 people. There was always room for one more!

But this is changing. A road is being cut across the island and within a few years things will hopefully improve.

Enough geography, even though it plays a major role in the economic and therefore social and political development of the country. For as much as people try to alter their environment, their environment moulds them.

The purpose of my project was to learn as much as possible about a culture different from mine and try to understand some of the problems of a country caught midway in the stream of development. I use the word development very gingerly. There are many alternative forms as opposed to the sometimes single and simple minded concept held by North Americans. A new factory being built does not necessarily mean an increase in wealth for the

population as a whole. Often what profits these exist are directed towards the building of bigger and better tourist deals. What is needed is better education, housing for the poor, and adequate water storage facilities. Even local people shook their heads in amazement upon hearing that water was being supplied to the poshest hotel in the capital city of Castries for the watering of lawns, golf courses, and allowing their guests to flush their toilets 50 times a day should Montuzuma's revenge strike. Meanwhile, the hospital in the city was totally without water for three days!

Development for whom? ...

The work with which I was involved in on the island was in the St. Lucian school for the mentally retarded. Opened only two years ago, it is a first on the island. The school can handle only thirty children at a time and has a waiting list of 240 from the city of Castries (pop. 40,000) alone. There has been no census taken of the needs of the island as a whole. Upon reaching maturity, if the extended family is unable to take care of him, the child is placed in the Golden Hope Institute, a name which at times seemed ironic. Sheltered workshops are found only on drawing boards. Everything is in its infancy but progress is being made.

The school for the mentally retarded was housed in a tiny St. John Ambulance building in the middle of a lovely garden. It

consisted of one larger room, an "office", a kitchen the size of a McLeod House bathroom equipped with a sink, a one burner hot plate, and a leaky refrigerator, and a washroom with one non functional toilet for thirty kids.

Very often the school found itself dealing with age old prejudices. Retardation is still often equated with insanity or possession. Even children with other handicaps such as deafness or blindness were kept out of sight let alone the mentally retarded. But, to retain an objective eye on a topic that is impossibly subjective we must remember that even in Canada the same problems exist. Except in our "sophistication" we are less blatant about it. The sins of one party do not absolve the sins of the other. Instead they point to a common ill to work on.

Continued Next Week.....

## Calculators discussed

A seminar on hand calculators will be given Monday, October 20 in room C-11, Head Hall.

All interested students, staff, and faculty are invited to attend.

This seminar is being put on by Miss Grace Powell, a Hewlett Packard representative.

She will be also in the bookstore on Monday, October 20 from 11:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. and Tuesday, October 21 from 9:00 to 11:00 a.m. to discuss calculators and answer any questions.

## Residence Report

By DAVE BANNER, Residence Fellow-at-Large

After several "fits and starts", this column is a hopeful beginning towards opening the channels of communications between the men's residence system and the greater university community. Every two weeks (or more often as the activities warrant), I'll talk about the goings-on in the various residences and I'll try to highlight those activities that really seem to turn people on. The shape of the column will largely depend upon input from each of the houses but, at a minimum, I'll try to highlight at least one residence per column and then present a summary of other residence happenings.

### BRIDGES HOUSE

Bridges Forum, sponsored by Resident Fellow Neil MacGill, has already been quite active this year. The first forum talked to the cast of TNB's 'A Flea in Her Ear' about this play, theater in the Maritimes, the philosophy of art, etc... quite a lively evening.

The second forum dealt with the state of Israel with slides and commentary from Professor Israel Unger, Chemistry department.

The third forum featured Art Doyle, UNB Alumni Office, on the controversial topic of corruption in NB politics ... spirited and predictably partisan.

The last pre-Thanksgiving forum was with Walter Learning and members of TNB's 'Frankenstein'; a video-tape with Walter and Alden Nowlin (co-authors of the play 'Frankenstein') was shown and the talk ensued until early hours.

The Fellow-at-Large sponsored a get-together with Dr. Norm Whitney, Department of Biology, on the topic of genetic engineering. His scenarios of possible future society were frightening yet plausible.

### JONES HOUSE

The gentlemen of Jones, at their recent house dinner, were presented with a lively talk by Professor Rae Brown (Forest Entomology) on the spruce budworm threat in New Brunswick... a very informative evening.

Under the heading of "progressive education", Jones men toured Oland's Brewery in St. John.

Veneral Disease was the topic of a commentary and slide show presented at Jones House by the Fellow-at-Large and Dr. Robert Tingley of the Student Health Centre. The presentation was most informative (and hopefully preventative).

The Davy Jones Locker continues to draw weekend crowds to Jones House...

### OTHER HOUSES

The veneral disease program was presented in Neill House by Derek Penk, proctor and Michael Mills, Don, prior to the Jones showing. Both were well-attended and enthusiastically received. This programs plus a Birth Control program will hopefully make most of the Houses in the near future.

Also, Ken Fuller, Counselling, has a taped program on relaxation that will possibly be used soon. See you next time!



## PIZZA DELIGHT

HOURS:

4 p.m. - 12:30 a.m. Weekdays

4 p.m. - 1:30 a.m. Friday & Saturday

DELIVERY OR TAKE-OUT

254 KING ST. 455-5206  
York Plaza, Na'sis 472-1707



## Gentleman Jims



CABARET cover charge \$1:00

for students with I.D.  
every night

Jam Sessions every Saturday afternoon  
3:00 - 5:00

Week of  
Oct 20th

## SHOWDOWN

Live Music Nightly 9:45 - 1:45

Discount of 10% on all steak dinners for students with valid I.D.

happy hour 11:00a.m. - 8:00p.m.

REDUCED Prices