



the BRUNSWICKAN

Volume 130 • Frosh Issue September 6, 1996 Second Class Mail #8120
Canada's Oldest Official Student Publication • University of New Brunswick, Fredericton, N.B.

Neill House goes co-ed

GORDON LOANE

THE BRUNSWICKAN

Neill House, an all-male residence on the UNB Fredericton campus since the early 1960's, will become co-ed this September.

Dean of Residence John Craighead admits incidents in January that resulted in the eviction of four residents and the suspension of the entire House Committee were a factor in the decision to turn Neill co-ed.

But the primary driving force behind the decision was a need for more co-ed space, according to Craighead.

When all applications for residence were reviewed, Craighead found himself with 160 more students who expressed a preference for co-ed space than beds that were available.

"In other years we've had a surplus number of students that wanted co-ed but it has only been 30 or 40 students, as opposed to 160 this year," Craighead explained.

So the Dean of Residence faced a dilemma in June.

He looked at a number of options in certain areas of Lady Dunn and Tibbits Hall but that amounted to only about 30 beds, still a long way from 160.

Craighead then cast his eye on four male residences: Aitken, Jones, Neville and Neill. Neill would provide accommodation for 100 co-ed applicants. It also had the lowest number of returning students of any of the four male residences. Numbers supplied by the Dean indicated that just 17 residents wanted to return to Neill, as opposed to almost forty at Neville, fifty at Jones and sixty at Aitken House.

"Although very unfortunate, potentially we would be disrupting the lives of only 17 people if we made the change," Craighead said.

But what really tipped the decision in favour of turning Neill co-ed were disruptions



This year's house orientation committee for Neill House includes women as the house goes co-ed for the first time in over thirty years. Right to left: Sajeev Kappukatt, Stephen Meyer, Alana Doran, Crystal Charest and Melissa Falconer.

in the house last year.

"We make no bones about it," said Craighead. "The university was anxious to have a healthier environment in Neill and the other three male residences had operated fairly well."

"The primary driving force is that we needed more co-ed space but once we acknowledged that then the decision to pick Neill over the other male residences was driven by the fact that the university wanted a healthier attitude there," Craighead emphasized.

What about the 17 residents who asked to return?

In fact, Craighead said it was actually 18, since one applicant submitted fees a little late.

Five of the residents decided to move off-campus as a result of Neill's move to co-ed while the thirteen others opted to move to other residences.

According to Craighead, the majority picked Neville but at least two moved to MacKenzie and MacLeod House.

One thing was for sure, none of the 13 who wanted to return to the residence would be

allowed back in Neill.

"The university's experience in similar changes like this has been that the change to co-ed works much better with a new population of students," Craighead continued.

"Indeed, that has also been the recent experience at Mount Allison where Trueman House was turned into a co-ed residence."

UNB has also had experience with turning a male residence co-ed. After disruptions in Bridges House in the late 1980's, the house became co-ed the following September.

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Former Neill House resident unhappy with change

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A decision by Dean of Residence John Craighead to turn Neill House into a co-ed residence is being criticized by former Neill resident Craig Maskill.

In a letter to several provincial newspapers in July, Maskill accuses Craighead of going back on his word not to turn Neill co-ed.

"He assured the members of the house this past year that this would not happen," Maskill wrote.

"The Dean states that this action is necessary because of the high demand for co-ed residences among applicants this year and this may in fact be the case, but to those who lived in the house this past year and to others who supported Neill House, it is just another in a long line of actions taken by the Dean against Neill House last year," said Maskill.

Maskill served as an Academic Resource Person in 1995-96 and has lived in Neill for the past five years.

But he has become disillusioned with the UNB Residence system and has decided to move off-campus this year. "It is something I never thought I would do," Maskill wrote.

For his part, Craighead admits he told Neill residents at a three-hour house meeting some time after the January incidents that there were no plans to turn the house co-ed at that time.

But Craighead said subsequent events have changed all that. "I could not foresee a large demand for co-ed beds at that time."

"It then became a decision as to whether you take 160 students who want a certain lifestyle and tell them no or whether you take 17 students who want a certain lifestyle and tell them no," Craighead said.

"In any case the 17 students had another option which was not Neill but which meant moving to another male residence," Craighead concluded.

Health plan opt-out procedure changed

CYNTHIA KIRKBY

THE BRUNSWICKAN

The Health Plan got check-up that should make it better, less expensive, and easier to opt-out of.

According to Trish Davidson, VP Student Services, last year's complaints have become this year's focus areas.

"We had complaints that [the opt-out procedure] wasn't fair. 750 students are studying off campus, and it isn't easy to drive all the way down just to opt-out."

As a result, Davidson has sent out mail to each of these students, whereas last year mail was sent only to students who had requested it.

"Aside from that, we didn't have opt outs last year until September 1, . . . and [Comptroller] O'Brien told us that he would credit students' accounts up until September 11, which was the cut off date to pay your fees or else your registration was cancelled."

This meant that many students were unable

to opt-out, because they had just arrived. "Obviously if you get on campus a couple of days before that, then you didn't have much time to get credit, but we've worked out with them that they're going to credit all accounts now up until the end of September," Davidson said.

As well, students who pay their tuition in advance can opt-out early. "Starting August 1, I'll be doing opt outs right out of this office. Students can just come in, and they have to have their proof of coverage." Following the verification of alternate coverage, the student will then be credited with \$95.

This, too, is a beneficial change, Davidson said. In a few cases, students were credited and received a cheque, so having one method will prevent duplication. As well, the cheques that were sent out in previous years incurred more expenses. "Each cheque costs about a buck, and obviously students are paying for that because it's reflected in the cost."

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UNB commencement beginning of a tradition

GORDON LOANE

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Picture yourself at the opening or closing ceremonies at this summer's Olympic Games in Atlanta. If you did not quite manage to be one of the athletes or see the ceremonies on television, why not try the next best thing?

UNB launched a new ceremony this fall. Commencement, modelled after the Olympic Games, featured new students marching into a grassy area lined up behind the flag of their province or country of origin.

Ian Brown, a respected broadcaster and journalist and host of CBC Radio's *Sunday Morning* was recruited as guest speaker.

UNB Student Union Vice President External Anthony Knight greeted the new students and introduced UNB's equally new and minted President Elizabeth Parr-Johnston who handled the main part of the ceremony. Fredericton Mayor Brad Woodside brought a greeting from the city.

"The ceremony is intended as a formal beginning to the orientation period to show that the university has officially begun its year,"

said Peter Kent, UNB's Dean of Arts and one of the organizers of what may become an annual event.

Kent points out that a number of universities across North America have ceremonies like the one being planned at UNB this year, citing Mount Allison University in Sackville as the nearest one.

Kent hoped that at least twenty-five or thirty countries would be represented. At least ten countries have sizeable numbers of students attending UNB, including Malaysia, Indonesia and the United States, according to Kent.

The flags and the number of countries represented should blend in well with the theme of the Commencement Ceremony: "Celebrating Diversity."

Broadcaster Ian Brown has a wealth of

experience from which to draw when giving his keynote talk if CBC Radio's *Sunday Morning* program is any indication.

The program's contributors and correspondents have reported from every continent except Antarctica.

Sunday Morning is heard nationally in Canada and on sixty stations of American public radio in the United States, via satellite in Europe and on shortwave throughout the world through the services of Radio Canada International.

"Brown's talk will be aimed at people coming into university for the first time," emphasized Peter Kent, UNB's Dean of Arts and one of the organizers of the Commencement Ceremony.

Following the speeches, UNB faculty flags were unveiled and students lined up behind their respective faculty banner.

The ceremony ended with the unfurling of the UNB flag, signifying that the university year has begun.



Ian Brown



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THE GREAT BRUNS FROSH INSERT

places to go, people to see

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The Blues Tent

Harvest Jazz & Blues Festival
FREDERICTON, NB SEPT. 10-15 96

<p>Wednesday, Sept 11 All-Ages Event The Waterfront Stompers Openers: Our own FHS Stage Band * Free for children under 12</p>	<p>Thursday, Sept 12 Latin Dance Party Sizzling Hot Salsa Picante Openers: Southside Shuffle</p>	<p>Friday, Sept 13 Classic Blues at its best Canada's Georgette Fry and Chicago's Studebaker John and the Hawks</p>
<p>Saturday, Sept 14 Louisiana's Rising Star Nathan and the Zydeco Cha Chas Opener: Double Cross</p>		

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