

UNB campus hard on disabled

By SUSAN REED
Brunswickan Staff

Accessibility on the UNB campus is essentially a contradiction in itself. The university is built on a hill and this is obviously an obstacle that can't be removed.

As well, said Rick Price of the Canadian Paraplegic Association, many of the buildings are old and could not be successfully renovated.

A disabled student wanting to attend UNB is necessarily limited in his course choice by the number of accessible buildings. For example, the majority of Head Hall can successfully be maneuvered in a wheelchair, but the older part of the building cannot. Tilley Hall is accessible but Carleton is not.

Not only buildings where classes are held but things such as curb cuts at crosswalks

and access to student services like the bookstore and the bank need to be altered to facilitate freedom of movement. The university is attempting to make these changes.

Carol Green is coordinator of a sub committee of the Senate Student Services Committee investigating the needs of disabled students on campus. The committee has drafted a purpose paper which has been given to Dean of Students Barry Thompson who in turn will channel it in the proper direction so that its recommendations can be followed.

Green said the report states that all students should be able to use all campus services and in cases where these services are inaccessible, alternate services should be provided. Presently the Registrar's office makes outside appointments for those students who cannot enter the building.

The committee recommends that more residences be made accessible. Lady Beaverbrook is the only one now and this is accessible on one floor only. None of the women's residences are accessible.

Green said the committee wants to improve conditions for students with different types of disabilities, including the visually and hearing impaired. While curb cuts aid the wheelchair-bound, they may prove hazardous for the visually impaired and should be marked with bright paint. Telephones could be lowered and provided with amplifiers which could then be switched off for those students with normal hearing.

The committee would like to see an information office for students staffed with someone who knows sign language and equipped with a visual ear.

Green said they hope to establish an ongoing committee with a coordinator whose responsibility it would be to increase accessibility on campus, oversee necessary changes and evaluate the progress of those changes.

The Student Union Building is inaccessible, said Green. Student medical services in Tibbits Hall are no longer accessible. This is a new problem which began last year when the study rooms which provided access were changed into bedrooms to accommodate an overflow of residence students.

Harriet Irving Library has started work on making its premises accessible. The library should be commended for its efforts, said Rick Price.

The library provides a folder on the services it offers to disabled students. In addition to the front door, there is a back door with a ramp opening onto the parking lot. This is usually locked but there is a bell. At night and on weekends, the student is advised to call ahead. Just inside this entrance is the library's sole accessible washroom, which is unisex.

An elevator provides access to all floors and the library staff is willing to help with the location of books.

Some problems still exist - the elevator button is situated high on the wall as are the pay

phones in the basement. Students wanting to work in the microforms department in the basement during off hours may face problems due to the security doors and the lack of good communication with the security guards. At present the library is looking into solving these questions.

Elizabeth Hamilton, a librarian at Harriet Irving, helped produce the information brochure. The idea for the folder came about during 1981, the International Year of Disabled Persons, when she was asked to write an article on the subject for a library newsletter. The library also took part in last year's Disabled Awareness Day when a number of the staff spent the day in wheelchairs. Hamilton said the staff found the experience exciting and interesting. She said she is taking a course in sign language and hopes to be able to communicate with someone hearing-impaired if the need arises. Hamilton pointed out that those areas of the library considered accessible generally apply to someone with good upper mobility.

One disabled student attending UNB said he naturally plans his courses depending on those buildings he can get into. He said those courses he needs to take in Tilley Hall, which has both a ramp and an elevator, he tries to take in the first term as winter renders the building practically off limits.

The report on accessibility is due to be discussed at the October 19 meeting of the Senate.

Coalition formed

September 26th saw the convening of an organizational meeting of the N.B. Coalition of Students at UNB in the Student Union Building.

Representing the UNB Student Union were comptroller Andy Young and engineering representative John Bosnitch. All members of council has been invited to attend but these two were the only ones who appeared. Nevertheless, the influence which UNB carries as the province's largest university, coupled with Bosnitch and Young's adamant defence of UNB's position in the organization resulted in the successful tabling of several measures which seemed to discriminate against this student union.

The agenda initially called for the final approval of the constitution of the NB Coalition and various other motions officially linking the organization to the Canadian Federation of Students. Bosnitch strenuously opposed the approval of the constitution, with Young's support, on the grounds that it was unfair that each university should get only one vote regardless of size, while at the same time paying a membership fee proportional to the number of students. Under such a system UNB would have paid over six hundred dollars for one vote on the coalition, while a small campus could have had exactly the same voting power after paying only sixty dollars. As a result of the impasse, the constitution was tabled and sent back to committee for reconsideration.

On another front, UNB was instrumental in pushing for united student action on reform of the post-secondary education system in N.B. Bosnitch called on the other delegations to coordinate the writing of a letter challenging the parties in the provincial election coming up to publicly declare their position with

respect to student's needs. Included in the letter will be demands that students have a say in the formulation of education policy, that tuition rates be frozen at present levels, that the extra foreign students differential fee be abolished, that the government ensure an adequate supply of housing for university students, that there be absolutely no diversion of federal funds earmarked for education, and finally, that post-

secondary education be declared a major priority of the provincial government with a guarantee that N.B. institutions be protected against closure. The responses to the letter are to be analyzed by the N.B. Coalition at a press conference in Fredericton on October 8th. The Coalition is expected to meet again within the next month for an official founding meeting with the acceptance of a corrected constitution.

By SARAH ABRAHAM
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UNB's Brydone Jack astronomical observatory, erected in 1851 is the oldest of its kind in Canada. It therefore seemed fitting that the arrival of an astronaut to UNB should attract great interest.

The coming of guest lecturer Colonel James B. Irwin, astronaut and lunar module pilot of the 1971 Apollo 15 mission, filled Head Hall auditorium beyond its capacity Monday. The lack of sufficient seating forced many to sit in the aisles in order to hear the fascinating experiences of a man who is one of only twelve human beings to walk on the moon.

Professor Gary T. Whiteford

of the Education Department introduced the distinguished lecturer stating, "I think you will agree with me that Col. Irwin is a unique human being. He is a man who has been some 250,000 miles from Planet Earth. . . Such men were never to survive, but Col. Irwin is living testimony of the ability for man to make the impossible dream possible."

James B. Irwin was selected in 1966 by NASA to become a rookie astronaut. He then commenced extensive training in preparation for his entry into space five years later.

Said Irwin, "The greatest challenge was adjusting to the full pressure system." He admitted that initially, the specially designed space suits provoked a sense of

claustrophobia. However, this he soon overcame and was fully prepared both mentally and emotionally for the 1971 flight of Apollo 15.

Irwin's Apollo mission is distinguished by the fact that a lunar rover was used for the first time to help the astronauts travel more swiftly over the moon's surface. Irwin and fellow astronaut Col. Dave Scott used the Rover on three occasions for nineteen hours to cover a total of seventeen miles. This jeep-like vehicle also enabled the astronauts to collect 173 lbs. of lunar soil and rock. The most famous of these lunar rock samples is the white "Genesis" rock which was discovered at the base of a 13,000 foot Appennine mountain.

Col. Irwin featured in his discussion a film which documented the arrival of the Apollo 15 lunar module on the moon. Irwin's running commentary made the film vastly more enjoyable to his appreciative audience.

At one point when astronauts Irwin and Scott are shown disembarking from the module to the moon space, Irwin wryly recalls that he stumbled and tripped slightly on the last step. Irwin joked, "I was so embarrassed because I realized the whole world was watching."

When asked about his personal emotions in space and whether he ever felt fear he stated, "Earth was the most beautiful thing I saw in space."

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Lunar astronaut comes to university