

Tragic death of UNB student

Sean Nickerson speaks
out about his girlfriend
Kristen's death

by Kora Stapelfeldt

UNB student Kristen Dawn MacDonald was killed in Fort MacMurray, Alberta on August 23rd.

Ms. MacDonald, native of Surrey, P.E.I., began work as a flagger in Fort MacMurray in late June for the Thompson Brother's construction company with her long-time boyfriend, Sean Nickerson.

The two worked long hours at the construction site on a single-lane highway which was the only route from Fort MacMurray to Edmonton.

This highway is "infamous for speeding and animal deaths," said Nickerson.

The usual shift stretched from seven in the morning until six at night.

"I worked South-bound and Kristen worked North-bound. When she saw a truck come out of the borrow pit she notified me on the walkie talkie and we stopped the traffic," said Nickerson.

"We had been working on this particular site for the King St. Overpass for a long time, so people knew there was construction going on."

The day of the incident, their break came early.

Nickerson was notified by Kristen to stop traffic as per usual and he turned around to double check her side.

"When I turned around to double check, she had stopped a black Grand AM that was in front of her, but

another vehicle – a white five-ton GMC truck was coming up quickly behind it."

Nickerson told the police it was traveling at least 90 kilometers an hour, the speed limit in that zone was 50.

"As I turned around, within a split second, I saw the accident in progress," he said. The truck veered off the side of the road.

"All I saw was her hard hat in the air," said Nickerson.

The left side of the truck rear-ended the right side of the Grand AM and drove it 65 meters forward from its original position. "The car went off the road and the truck is what actually hit her," said Nickerson.

"She flew about eight metres into the air," said Nickerson.

"I don't know if she was dead on impact, but I hope she was. That's all I have to say."

Nickerson, a trained lifeguard, was the first on the scene.

"I dropped everything I had and just started running over to the ditch, the black vehicle was so far ahead it almost hit me when I was running across."

After the black vehicle stopped, the woman driving immediately called EMS.

Medical attention was immediate as Nickerson began CPR and was joined by a nurse shortly after.

A surgeon also came onto the scene followed by the ambulance.

The man who had been driving the truck was out of his car by this point.

"I saw the guy get out of his truck. He was still on his cell phone, I asked him to help and he wouldn't help me," said Nickerson.

"I asked him a million times for



Kristen and Sean spent a month and a half in Australia together before beginning their flagging jobs in Alberta.

Photo courtesy of Sean Nickerson

help. He wouldn't look at me and he wouldn't look at her."

"I recognized it was pretty bad, but I thought maybe she'd be okay."

Nickerson said he and MacDonald had a lot of plans for the near future and a lot of hopes.

"We had the next three years of our lives planned and it all [came] to a grinding halt."

Nickerson said he will never work construction again and said the site was closed down the next day.

There is now a bylaw that all construction zones will be equipped with rumble strips on the shoulders.

Moreover, the man driving the truck has been charged with criminal negligence causing death and dangerous driving causing death.

It is possible, however, that he will not

be in court for his hearing until February or March of next year.

He is 21 years old and was working for a company in Edmonton at the time.

A celebration of Kristen's life was held yesterday at the St. Thomas University Chapel.

The Health and Sciences Society hopes to put up a park bench in her memory.

"She was cremated so this would be a place to go on that day and remember," said Nickerson.

Before working in Alberta, Nickerson and MacDonald spent about a month and a half in Australia together.

"Kristen loved to travel," said Nickerson. "She got to meet Steve Irwin, and scuba dive off the Barrier Reef."

"She couldn't have spent a better last six months of her life," he said.

SU on Gender Issues

by Patryk Reid

The new UNB Women's Centre received the official recognition and support from the Student Union after a lengthy discussion at its council meeting Tuesday.

The act came about through an unanimous vote in favour of a motion to that effect by SU President Kate Whitfield.

"This won't dictate if it's going to exist, because it's going to exist anyway," said Whitfield during discussion on the topic.

She asked the SU Council to formalize support of the Women's Centre in order to justify her continued membership on the board for the University Women's Centre.

The now 15 member board began a summer round of meetings after UNB ex-President Elizabeth Parr-Johnson approved a May 8th proposal asking for help building the centre. The board consists of representatives of undergraduate and graduate students, as well as faculty and staff.

The UNB Administration put up the funds to build the centre across the hall from SUB Styles in the SUB Blue Room, while donations start-up of the centre were received from Women's Alumni, and an anonymous independent donor gave \$10,000. The board has also secured donations of furniture and a fridge for the centre.

Whitfield noted that a Coordinator will start working 15 hours per week at

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CUPE march downtown

by Brendan Doyle

Striking Canadian Union of Public Employees Local 1418 members marched last Saturday against the Lord government.

More than 1,000 workers and their families attended a rally at the New Brunswick Legislature before heading down Queen Street, their numbers bolstered by members of the New Brunswick Public Employees Association.

"This dispute has dragged on too long and people are suffering because of it," said NBPEA President Debbie Lacelle. "Our presence at the march was but one indication of our support for our CUPE brothers and sisters."

The members of the CUPE Local 1418; psychologists, probation officers,

social workers, and child protection workers, walked out more than four weeks ago. They are locked in a dispute with the provincial government over wage increases.

The government's offer, a minimum wage increase of nine percent for all employees, with an increase of 10.5 percent for social workers, 13.8 percent for clinical psychologists and 16 percent for those assigned to child protection services, has been rejected by CUPE. They favor an across-the-board increase of 14.5 percent.

The offer also included lump-sum payments of \$1,500 for the last two years of the deal, retroactive to August 2000.

This is not enough, said CUPE President Judy Darcy. She points to the fact that child protection workers in Nova

Scotia make about \$6,500 more than their counterparts in New Brunswick.

The government said it has been accommodating. The union must show more flexibility, says Health and Wellness Minister Elvy Robichaud. "We have asked the union to be more reasonable in their demands."

Though the province and the union have returned to the bargaining table, the Minister is still cautious. "Overall, what they are asking in dollar value is way too far from what we have on the table at this moment," said Robichaud.

The province faces mounting public pressure to resolve the dispute, including threats from Local 1418 to protest at the Queen's upcoming visit. "We'll be there when the Queen comes. We'll be there to greet her," warned Local 1418 President Ann Hogan.

She stressed they would not disrupt the Queen's visit, but would "like her to know what our plight is regarding how the government has treated employees."

Tim Porter, director of Media Relations for the New Brunswick portion of the Queen's visit, said the union's plans won't change the Queen's itinerary.

"If they start protesting and if they try to be disruptive, that becomes a security issue and the RCMP would take over from there."

Men Against Sexual Aggression

by Tim Gallagher
MASA coordinator

MASA (Men Against Sexual Aggression) has begun another year here in Fredericton on both the UNB and STU campuses to work towards the prevention of sexual aggression involving students.

The existence of sexual aggression has been common knowledge on university campuses throughout the country for years, yet the problem continues to exist. Ten years ago, a survey of our campus indicated that one in three women at UNB and STU had experienced an unwanted sexual advance during the previous academic year, and 96 percent of those victims reported being assaulted by someone they knew. Boyfriends and friends topped the list of aggressors. Ten years later, there is still sexual aggression on campus. It is also evident that sexual aggression extends into the gay and lesbian communities.

MASA is a volunteer, non-profit, organization providing information and education about the destructive nature of sexual aggression. Its members include students from all faculties, who

challenge their peers to question values about relationships through workshops, group discussions, and frank appraisals of gender attitudes.

MASA recognizes that male aggression is more than a gender issue. Aggression is everyone's problem, and ultimately it affects all of us. Sexual aggression is a campus problem that all men need to confront. It is not a question of male bashing. It is not a question of not working in alliance with women to challenge an issue that confronts them directly. It is a question of men recognizing and confronting our own role in this longstanding and ongoing problem.

In the first years, MASA focused on developing prevention programs for male-only audiences. In other years, with the help of a group of UNB nursing students, this expanded to include co-ed sessions. The male-only and the co-ed sessions have both had positive results as groups have worked toward empowering students to recognize and take responsibility for their own ideas, and take charge of their feelings and

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