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Sex Centre opens tomorrow

by Greg LeBlanc

After years of proposals, meetings, and motions, UNBF has a Sexuality Centre, and its grand opening is tomorrow.

What began as a simple request from Spectrum, a UNB society that discusses and initiates actions on issues for lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgendered, queer and questioning people (LGBTQ), has finally been completed. The original intent was for the centre to be a pride centre, which dealt specifically with issues for LGBTQ.

"The proposal was initially geared primarily to the needs of the LGBTQ community at UNB," notes Jeff Brewer, former VP Academic for the UNBSU, and a major mover in the implementation of the Centre, "serving as a safe space and a resource for those who have either come to terms with their sexual identity, or are still struggling with this issue."

"The need for the Centre was determined by several factors," furthered Brewer, "one of the most important being the results of a recent study, which suggested that gay youth constitute a portion of the population that is significantly more at risk of dropping out of school, and significantly more at risk of committing suicide."

As the ball got rolling, other organizations on campus began to follow suit.

"Starting a few years ago, a formal proposal was launched by counseling services... asking for a LGBTQ space on campus," said Sara Rothman, Student Development Coordinator at UNB.

But support didn't stop there. "The Student Union really advocated [for] the establishment of the Sexuality Centre," added Rothman, "and were instrumental in finding a location [for the Centre] in the Student Union Building."

As the locus for much student activity on campus, the SUB was an obvious choice for the location of a centre that is designed to benefit students. The Sexuality Centre is located in room 203, next to the Ballroom. Securing this space was probably the most difficult challenge for the Centre, as space is hard to get anywhere on campus, especially in the SUB.

In fact, this room, formerly an underutilized meeting space, needed extensive renovations in order to take on its new capacity as the Sexuality Centre. It has been divided into a few offices and a main meeting area.

Funding for the renovations,



Michèle Legendre /The Brunswickan

An erect and confident Captain Condom feels right at home in the UNB Sexuality Centre. He invites us to the centre to gain awareness and understanding of human sexuality.

which was another major concern for the Centre, came from the Safety Audit Committee, which instituted a number of other safety improvements on campus, such as placing new lights and safety phones in strategic places.

Another debate that surrounded the Centre concerned another resource centre at UNB, namely that of the Women's Centre, which had been created just a year prior. Questions were raised about the joining of the two Centres at meetings of the Student Union.

"[Their] goals are different," noted Rothman. "Women need their space, and the Sexuality Centre may take away from what the Women's Centre [offers]."

This issue was resolved, however, and support continued to build.

As more details began to fall in place, other aspects of the centre also began to take shape.

"The proposal itself evolved as well, in that instead of simply being a pride centre it evolved into being a centre to explore all issues

and aspects of sexuality," Rothman explained.

Since one of the major aspects of the pride centre would have gravitated around sexuality, it seemed a natural progression to move to a more inclusive centre, one in which other groups besides Spectrum could participate.

MASA (Men Against Sexual Aggression) and Safe Spaces will also be using the Centre as a home base. Any other group that supports the intent of the Centre can also use the room as a meeting space.

"Including MASA really shows the breadth of diversity of issues that the Centre is geared towards," said Toby Stoddart, former coordinator for MASA.

The intent now is to serve as a resource centre for information and activities that deal with many aspects of sexuality, from relationships, to discrimination and violence, to spreading awareness and understanding of the full spectrum of sexuality. It's for everyone, because we're all sexual.

However, Stoddart is concerned that it may be too inclusive, at the risk of losing the focus of the Sexuality Centre.

With its broad approach and appeal to the public as a Centre dealing with sexuality in all its facets, the Sexuality Centre may be unique in Canada.

"Essentially every other University in Canada that has a Centre similar to this one focuses mainly on issues pertaining to sexual identity," remarks Brewer.

There is one problem for the Sexuality Centre. Now that it is finally ready to open its doors, it needs to keep them open - and that means having volunteers.

"We really need volunteers," stated Rothman, "otherwise the Centre can't stay open."

So if you're curious about the Sexuality Centre, looking to help or just want to see what it has to offer, be sure to drop by SUB room 203 on tomorrow.

Rising fuel costs affect students across Canada

by Bruns Staff

Justin Hawco can hardly afford to fill up his Honda since the price of gas rose 32.5 cents over the weekend.

"Pretty much half of my bi-weekly cheque goes to gas, so it doesn't leave a lot of money for saving for books; it doesn't leave a lot of money for anything else, really."

The fourth-year Memorial University of Newfoundland earth sciences student said he is definitely feeling the pinch caused by hurricane Katrina.

Katrina is largely to blame for the rapid jump in prices, says David Toms, acting director of the Petroleum Pricing Office. He says Louisiana and Mississippi are important areas of oil production and transport.

"[Those states are] one of the worst areas the storm could hit," he said.

With key refineries down, he says oil from elsewhere, including Newfoundland, needs to fill the void. With demand for oil the same, a limited amount of crude will sell at a higher price under economies such as those in Canada and the U.S.

Still, this logic is cold comfort for desperate students such as Hawco. "It's getting ridiculous," he said. "A lot of people ... barely have the money to own a car to begin with, and then you start throwing crazy gas prices on top of it, and it makes cars totally unaffordable."

But for those without a car, there may be an economical and environmentally friendly way to get around. Many Canadian cities have witnessed the introduction

of a new species of wildlife to their highways and streets - the hybrid. Combining a gas engine with an electric motor, hybrid vehicles take advantage of both systems to provide power in the most efficient way possible.

"They say that they were hoping they would get to ride in a hybrid," said Ken Wardroper, president of Bluebird Cabs in Victoria, B.C., and veteran taxi driver of 30 years, referring to customers' expectations of fuel-efficient cabs.

Wardroper's customers' hopes and expectations are increasingly becoming the norm in a society aware of both the environmental costs of automobiles that emit greenhouse gases and the economic reality of rising fuel prices. Slowly, governments and businesses have begun to respond to these concerns.

BC Transit unveiled the first of six new hybrid buses, the first in Canada, in Kelowna in May. Three were introduced to Victoria in July. New Flyer - the largest manufacturer of buses in North America - fulfilled the contract for all six buses. Another three of the buses will be used in Victoria.

"BC Transit is committed to identifying and adopting new technologies for public transit," said Greg Slocombe, chair of BC Transit. "As well as environmental quality advantages, the hybrid electric buses have major advantages in lower fuel costs."

Tests done on the new buses show fuel savings as high as 58 per cent each year, or 100,000 litres.

It sounds good to Joe Akouri, owner of Trius and A1 Taxi companies in Fredericton. Fuel costs Akouri approximately \$17,000 per week for his 27 vehicles.

He does not yet have a hybrid vehicle in his lineup. Because he buys used vehicles, and because hybrids are still relatively new, he has yet to purchase one. He has, however, entertained the idea.

Recently Trius and A1 fares increased \$1 per trip to compensate for rising fuel costs. Fare increases also led to a raise for Akouri's drivers.

Most other taxi companies in Fredericton have also raised fares to compensate for fuel costs.

Fees for products and services involving any kind of land transport are on the rise, and students nationwide are feeling the crunch.

With files from Patrick Szpak at The Martlet (University of Victoria) and Devon Wells at The Muse (Memorial University of Newfoundland) CUP

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Sara Rothman, Student Development Coordinator, shows her excitement for the unveiling of the Sexuality center.

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