

the Other Press



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January 21, 1997 Ja, vie elsker dette landet since 1976 Volume 21 • Issue 10



GODS OF THE NORTHLAND

by Ciaran Meeks

A thousand years have passed and the old gods are stirring. Churches are torched in Norway, biker wars thunder across Scandinavia, and the rage of Black Metal music roars like a vitriolic death machine. These events are bound together by a rebirth of the old Viking religion. Alarmists prick up their ears and raise their voices. Satanists! Nazis! Evil! But what is the truth of Asatru?

It was a misty, rainy August day in 1987, outside of a NATO base near Reykjavik, Iceland. Beneath the shroud of low clouds in the sky a small group of protesters had gathered around the base to protest the presence of foreign troops in their country.

From out of the crowd one figure stepped forth, bringing with him an indefinable, yet powerful presence. A pagan priest with a flowing white beard bearing a staff with a horse's head carved upon it—Sveinbjorn Beinteinsson, a priest of the ancient Norse Asatru religion. At first he neither said nor did anything, then, planting the pole in the ground he turned his baleful gaze towards the NATO base and raised his voice to chant a curse much as his Norse ancestors did before meeting their enemies in battle centuries ago.

"I raise this *nid* (insult) against nuclear weapons and all warfare...I raise this *nid* against the destruction of life and the land, so help me Freyr and Njordur..." (from *National Geographic*, "Iceland: Life Under the Glaciers" by Louise E. Levathes, Vol. 171, No. 2, Feb. 1987, pg. 187.)

To many, this scene may seem startling and strange, unnerving even, as it evokes images of a primal past, of a set of beliefs and way of life thought long gone. However, despite remaining relatively unknown for the most part, the ancient pagan Norse religion of Asatru is making a comeback, both in its original birthplace in Scandinavia, and in North America.

Asatru, or Odinism, means "belief in the gods" in Old Norse; adherents claim affinity to the Aesir, the major race of gods and goddesses of Norse mythology. The Aesir include gods that many people are familiar with: Odin the All Father, his wife Frigga, his sons Thor, Balder and Loki the Trickster, and others. The Aesir is a race of sky gods, who are more aggressive and powerful than the other group, the Vanir. The Vanir are gods of

the earth, agriculture, fertility, and death. Many students of religion consider them to represent a survival of the pantheon of the much older Goddess religion of northern Europe, elements of which are prominent in the Celtic Wiccan tradition. The most well known of these deities are Frey and Freya (very similar in fact to the Wiccan notion of the Triple Goddess and her consort, the Horned God of the hunt, the forests, and the beasts), Nerthus, and Njord.

The mythology of the Norse revolves around a time lost in antiquity wherein the Aesir and the Vanir warred, later merging. The gods are said to dwell in the mystical realm of Asgard, beyond the Bifrost, Rainbow Bridge. Odin's handmaidens, the Valkyries, gather the souls of fallen warriors and bring them to Valhalla, Odin's great hall. The warriors spend their time feasting and fighting, anticipating Ragnarok, the final battle between gods, giants and men, wherein gods and men are destined to be defeated by the giants, and the cycle of life may begin anew.

Asatru, like Wicca and other pagan sects, was all but exterminated by the Christian church over 900 years ago, but is enjoying a resurgence in more modern times. In Iceland, as in the other Scandinavian countries, the ancient restrictions were removed in 1874.

In 1972, Norse paganism was officially recognized as an existent and legitimate religion. The most recent example of the renewed interest in Asatru can be found on the Internet where no less than 12 Asatru Websites are listed on-line in the Yahoo! Web indexing service.

The largest and most successful organization to promote Norse paganism in the United States is the Asatru Free Assembly (AFA), started by Stephen McNallen in 1971. Other groups include the Odinist Fellowship in Florida, the Odinist Committee in England, the Northern Way (tied to the AFA) in Illinois, the Asatru Kindred, the Heathen Way in San Francisco and Asatruarfolks in Iceland to name but a few. Like other forms of Paganism, there is a healthy diversity of views. The AFA publishes "The Runestone," a quarterly journal, and hold a yearly three-day festival called the Althing after the ancient Norse gathering of the same name.

The Althing is held in a rural, forested area and consists of rituals, fellowship, music and feasting. The Heathen Way also publish a newsletter called "Yggdrasil" after the mythological World-Tree, or centre of the universe. The Arizona Kindred also publish a newsletter called Odin's Folk and the Northern Way publish "Pagan Unity News". (Note: This information was taken from the book "Drawing Down the Moon: Witches, Druids, Goddess-Worshippers, and Other Pagans in America Today" by Margot Adler. Revised and expanded between 1979 and 1986, it is somewhat outdated, but still an excellent resource.)



continued on page 5

News

First Nations students serenade DC with lunchtime "gathering"

by Jim Chliboyko

The drumbeats ricocheted off the concourse windows, distracting classes and puzzling the passers-by. A small, but determined, contingent of Douglas College First Nations' students gathered in the New Westminster concourse on Monday the 13th and let the college community know their grievances with leaflets and song.

The din caught the attention of many passers-by and the demonstrators scored a bulls-eye by attracting the cafeteria-bound College President Dr. Lloyd Morin and VP of College Development Mia Gordon.

The latest source of anger is the miscommunication over the college's proposed hiring of an external consultant to deal with aboriginal affairs. "We are greatly concerned with the College's decision to hire an external consultant and how it will affect the First Nations coordinator's future as well as the future of the First Nations students," claims the unsigned letter, copies of which were circulated by DCSS First Nations Rep. Leah Fontaine and other demonstrators.

Mia Gordon explains from her fourth floor office that the consultant has not been hired yet. In fact, administration has delayed the hiring for three months. The College did advertise for the position in September in *The Vancouver Sun*, emphasizing that the consultant

must be of Native ancestry.

But Fontaine and the others are angry at what they perceive to be the redundancy behind the new consultant's position. "I don't understand why, all of a sudden, they have to have this person come



The gathering

David Tam photo

in and reassess everything, evaluate the student's needs. We already know what we need. We don't need people coming in to tell us what we need. We know what we need and we've known for a long time," she says in a break between songs.

Gordon explains the College's position on why the consultant is needed. In these budget-conscious times, she says, the key is to prioritize, to get the most out of the funding. "The consultant is to review the provincial policy, Douglas College's current practice, and practice at other institutions. The point is to create future plans (for First Nations students' programs) and to suggest priorities. The First Nations students have received an increase in funds, but we haven't

yet determined yet how to spend them," says Gordon.

"The consultancy is not a position, it is a contract. Betsy's [Bruyere, DC's First Nations coordinator] position not in jeopardy. We're spending the money (on a consultant) to clarify priorities," Gordon says.

Despite the strained relationship between the First Nations students and administration, Fontaine and other protestors did manage to bend the ears of President Morin and Gordon for a good few minutes. It was a rare chance for the two groups to talk, as it was mentioned by both sides that attempting to get ahold of one another by telephone was

ineffective.

The calm, laid-back nature of the protest belied the urgency of the group's anxiety over the College's handling of aboriginal affairs. Though the main theme of the protest was the external consultant, other concerns were being voiced as well. Rep. Fontaine believes that if the students don't protest, they will simply be dismissed by the College. "We've been bringing our concerns and our issues to Betsy Bruyere and she's been voicing them for us, but nothing's been getting done," she said.

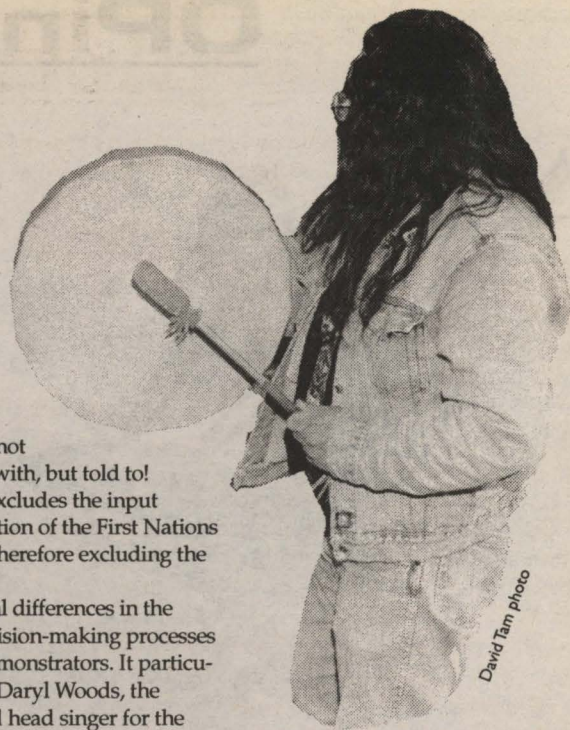
The protesters believe that cultural differences are what is coming between the College and the First Nations students. The letter says that in hiring the consultant, the

College is committing

"a pure act of oppression, as once again we are not being talked with, but told to! This project excludes the input and participation of the First Nations coordinator, therefore excluding the students."

The cultural differences in the College's decision-making processes bother the demonstrators. It particularly irritates Daryl Woods, the drummer and head singer for the group. He says that First Nations people handle negotiation in quite a different way. "Before contact, from the youngest one to the oldest one, everything that the people wanted to say was heard," said Woods. "And they didn't make a decision until everyone was satisfied. It could take maybe a day to a year, and they kept right on that same topic until everyone was satisfied. There was no time limit. When our people are making decisions, all areas have to be covered," he concluded before returning to the singing.

Fontaine claims that by ignoring the student's complaints, the College's inaction ultimately costs the students. "We had a mentoring program set up and the Ministry of Skills, Labour and Training, or whatever, approved it, loved it, thought it was wonderful, but we don't have that program because of a lack of space," Fontaine says, citing one of the more persistent sources of the bad relations between the College and First Nations students. "They are making decisions about our lives, and I think it's important that we be included in that proc-



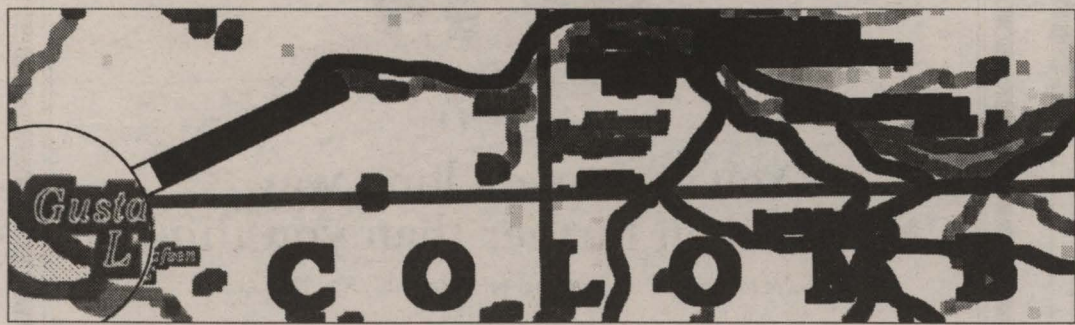
David Tam photo

ess...."

Gordon mentions that space is an issue throughout the College, even with the addition of the David Lam campus. "The college will have to go through a whole special reconfiguration. [After that] the request will have high priority," she says.

The drumming began as a simple, sonorous beat at about 12:20, the echoes of which resounded around a suddenly hushed concourse. Woods then began to sing a simple, melancholy Nisga'a peace song while drumming, followed by a song for celebrating the new year. An experienced Nisga'a dancer and singer, Woods coached the group on lyrics, led the singing and, at one point, danced while drumming, the most dramatic moment of the protest.

But as unassuming as it was, the gathering was successful in one respect. It got both sides talking, in person. Dialogue is to continue throughout the spring, though it might be a while before all problems are resolved.



Gustafsen Lake trial confusion in Courtroom No.7

By Doug Whitlow

After spending many hours in courtroom no. 7 observing the Supreme Court trial of the Gustafsen Lake defendants, this reporter has been witness to many irregularities of normal courtroom procedure. But as the trial continues on into 1997, events begin to border on bizarre. Three of the defendants are now representing themselves and this appears to have the jury confused. The three are: James Pinawanakwat, aka OJ, Shelagh Franklin and William Jones Ignace. Of the three, OJ appears to have absolutely no comprehension of normal courtroom procedure and this will undoubtedly cause many delays in the cross-examination of crown witnesses. As the old year came to a close, Len Olfert, the overall RCMP Field Commander at

the Lake, had taken the witness stand and he remains in that position.

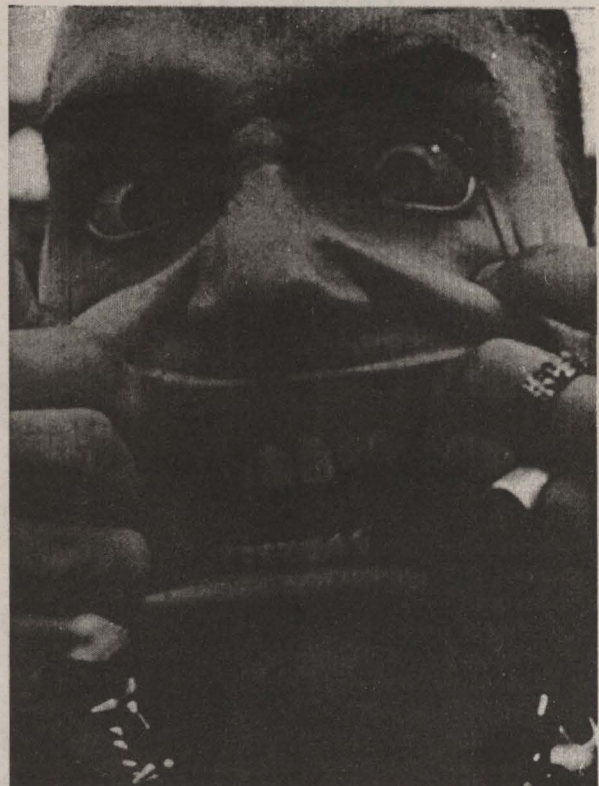
Commissioner Olfert's testimony had implicated many government officials in both the BC and Canadian governments. Only time will tell what effect these disclosures will have on the eventual outcome of the trial.

Prior to Olfert taking the stand, none of his junior officers had been willing to implicate anyone outranking them. But Commissioner Olfert appeared determined to let it be known that he would not take full responsibility for this miscarriage of justice. The court has heard that Federal Justice Minister Allan Rock was at the lake in September 1995, and most ministers involved had at least been briefed regarding the incident on a regular basis.

Other names that have been

bandied about are BC Attorney General Ujjal Dosanjh, Solicitor General Herb Grey, and Army General Addey. According to Olfert's testimony these men played major roles in the standoff incident and without them the APCs could never have been requisitioned from the Canadian Forces. Testimony from Olfert also showed that the RCMP had been watching events at the lake for several years as the sundances began to happen on a regular basis. Statements like this from a person in his position show that even still, native people in Canada do not have freedom of religion as laid out in the Canadian Charter of Rights. This has also brought out other questions of native rights violations by the combined governments in this country.

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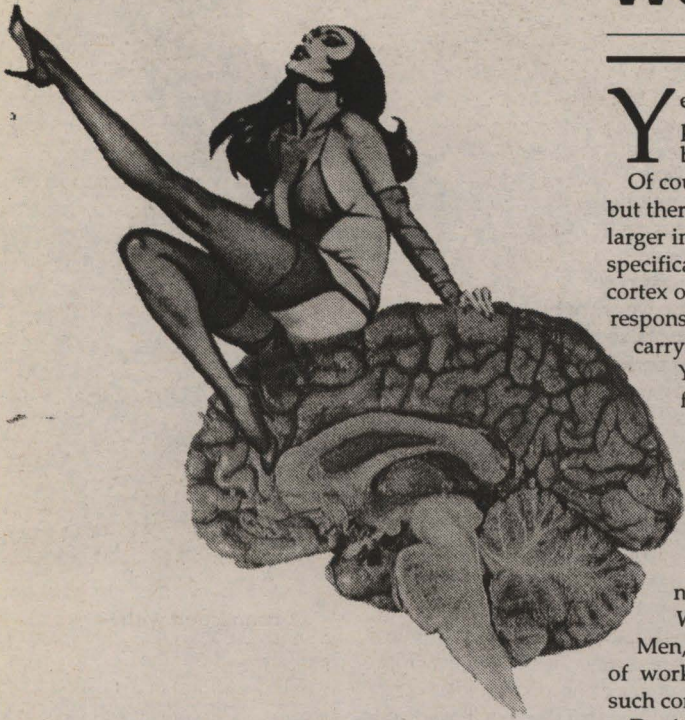
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Opinion

Women have bigger brains than men

by Ivana Kumptu



Yes, it's really true. While men are on average 12% physically larger than women, women have larger brains than men.

Of course, cows and elephants have larger brains too, but there is a crucial difference. The part of the brain that is larger in women is its most recently evolved part. More specifically, it is the cerebral cortex or frontal lobes — the part responsible for planning and carrying out action.

You can blame evolution for this hidden but important difference between men and

women. It is women's bodies that incubate life. It is women's bodies that can sustain (as in nourish through their mammary glands) life during that most vulnerable first year of post incubation. So, nature has given us a few advantages.

Why? Women's lives are more complex than men's.

Men, not traditionally burdened with the multiple tasks of working and rearing young, didn't need to develop such complicated hard wiring.

Don't take my word for it. Check out any first year psychology or second year biology textbook. It's all there in black and white.

I'm not saying women are smarter than men. I'm only reporting some facts

Not only are women's brains larger but their corpus callos, which divide the two hemispheres of the brain and allows them to communicate, is thicker and more fibrous than those found in men. What this means is that women can switch mental gears with greater ease and efficiency. While men tend to focus on one thing at a time, women seem to be able to juggle several tasks at once. Actually they can't, but they can switch their attention so rapidly it seems they can.

This allows women to respond to unpredictable and active toddlers, then easily resume other tasks.

Furthermore, women carry more genetic matter than men. It's that tiny "Y" chromosome that gets men into trouble. Men tend to acquire more genetic related disorders such as colour blindness and hemophilia.

It's because they inherit defunct recessive genes from their mothers.

I'm not saying women are smarter than men. I'm only reporting some facts of the biological differences between men and women — other than the obvious. And I do happen to like men a whole lot. But it does seem odd that the sex with the smaller brain still holds most of the power on this planet. I guess that extra 12% in body size has done men well over the centuries.

But today, nearing the year 2000, when we are learning the secrets of life — or are at least figuring out how much we don't really know about ourselves — a little respect please, for the brain as well as the brawn.

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Feature

continued from cover

Those who are curious about the philosophy of Asatru need look no further than a pamphlet published by the Asatru Free Assembly which states: "We believe in an underlying all-pervading energy or essence which is generally hidden from us because it surpasses our direct understanding. We further believe that this spiritual reality is interdependent with us—that we affect it, and it affects us. We believe that this underlying divinity expresses itself in the forms of the Gods and Goddesses. Stories about these deities are like a sort of code, the mysterious 'language' which the divine reality speaks to us."

Members of the Asatru faith honour both the gods and goddesses through ritual, as well as during various seasonal gatherings on both the solstices and equinoxes and on other ancient festival days. Some groups perform circle rituals and "boasting" rituals known as the Bragi (after the long-winded god of poetry) wherein one's deeds are recounted to the group, using symbolism related to the elements.

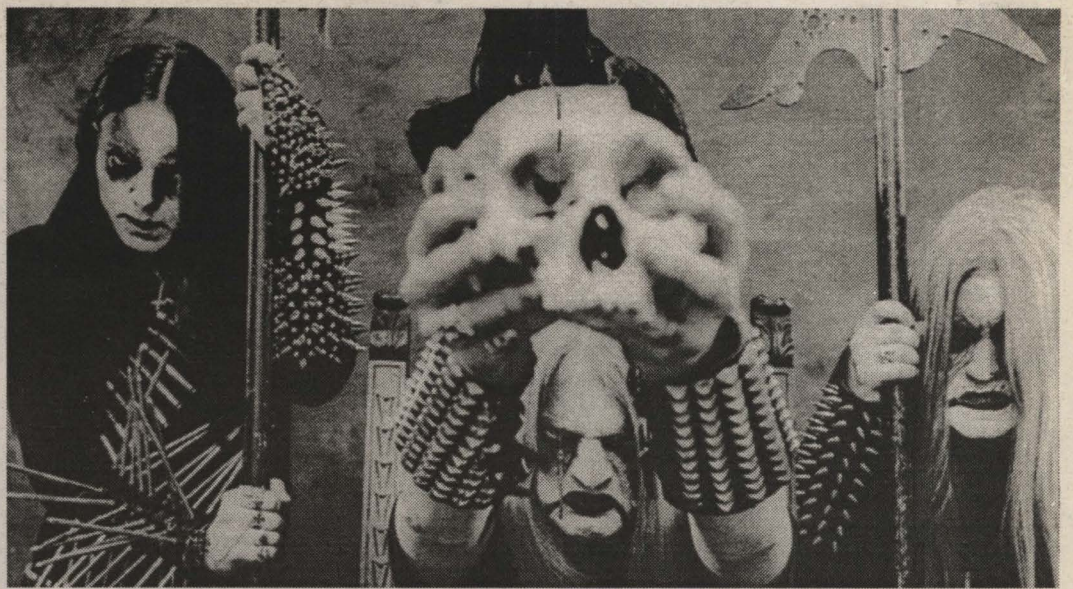
According to the research of Margot Adler, these symbols may include: a sickle or cakes for the North; a spear (symbolic of Odin's spear *Gungnir*) or rune wand for the East; a sword for the South; and a hunting horn for the West. The form is not unlike Wiccan or Native American circle rituals. Some groups decline to take part in these practices, preferring instead to pay homage to six of the eight known pagan sabbats, represented by a six-spoked wheel of the year as opposed to the more traditional eight. All groups profess a strong bond of kinship with, and respect for, ancestral spirits, not unlike Japanese Shintoists.

Unfortunately, as with many misunderstood faiths, Asatru has gained a certain amount of infamy by attracting a negative element into its sphere of influence. Many

groups find that a strong racist/Neo-Nazi strain has entered their ranks. Some are attracted by the importance Asatru places on ancestry, hence "race." Some fringe sects have formed, often with ties to militia groups, attracted by what they perceive to be the trappings of Viking machismo and/or Nazism, openly endorsing this viewpoint and basing the acceptability of members upon bloodline and political leanings as opposed to their belief in paganism. The Odinist Fellowship's journal, "The Odinist" which, unlike the other groups mentioned, has decidedly "political" leanings, with a very right-wing, even racist slant. Racist groups often prefer to be referred to as Odinists; conversely, Asatru groups often reject using the terms Odinist, or Odinism.

This is a cross that Norse/Teutonic culture and imagery has had to bear since the post-World War II era. It is well-known that Hitler's SS adopted the trappings of Nordic symbolism to further their own cause, particularly in the case of the swastika, an ancient symbol common in a number of different cultures predating Nazism by several thousand years. This appropriation has been continued by modern Neo-Nazis. In Norse mythology the swastika was the symbol of Thor's hammer *Mjollnir*, as well as for the Wheel of the Sun. It is not an inherently evil symbol, but sadly, due to its modern connotations seems doomed to be considered as such [even at Douglas College, where our new logo was criticised by some as a Neo-Nazi sign].

Granted, many people who are attracted to Asatru in the first place are slightly more patriarchal and conservative in their mind set than those of other pagan groups. They reject vegetarianism and mind-altering substances in favour of alcohol, martial arts, and warrior values. Although many adherents are uncomfortable with feminism



and alternate lifestyle choices, many women are attracted to Norse paganism, enjoying equal status without harassment. In ancient times Norse women had equal rights with their male counterparts, such as rights of property and divorce, long before their sisters in Christian Europe and elsewhere.

Some of the more violent and disturbing incidents involving fringe groups have taken place in Norway. This mayhem is interlinked with the recent music trend known as "Black Metal," featuring bands such as Burzum, Mayhem, Emperor, Immortal, Enslaved, Mysticum, Satyricon, Helheim, and DarkThrone. Some of these bands have been accused of combining elements of Norse mythology with overt Satanism and, in some cases, leaning towards fascism, promoting this dark hybrid ideology through loud, fast, and extremely brutal music. Two cults based in and around this scene include "The Norwegian Black Metal Syndicate," and "The Inner Circle."

In 1993 Count Grishnakh, front man of the band Burzum, stabbed Euronymous, front man of the band Mayhem, to death in the culmination of a long-running feud between the two. Grishnakh, one of the scene's most infamous figures, espouses Neo-Nazism and violence. He has also been connected with a long string of church burnings and desecrations which currently plaguing much of Norway.

Another incident arose during the 1994 Winter Olympics at Lillehammer wherein Faust, drummer for the band Emperor, stabbed a man who had sexually propositioned him. Grishnakh and Faust are both currently serving 15-25 year sentences at the Bergen Correctional Institute in Norway. These are but two in a series of similar cases involving members of Norway's Black Metal scene which, it should be stated, cannot

be held accountable. As a genre of music, it has spawned many talented and credible musicians who are *not* involved in criminal activity. As with Asatru, its reputation suffers as a result of the deeds of a few extremists.

In Denmark the escalating warfare between youth bike gangs, while not directly connected to the Black Metal music scene, is also symptomatic of a rising tide of violence. Many attribute this to a youthful fascination with, again, perceived trappings within Norse mythology and ideology, including warrior virtues and violence. The irony is that these individuals are painfully ignorant of their own history. Between the 8th and 11th centuries, the majority of the Norse

connection with Sikh fundamentalists in Surrey be attributed to the philosophy and ideology of that faith? Objectively speaking, no, it cannot. Those who would condemn Asatru, or any other pagan sect, for the same reasons may be given pause to reflect upon this point.

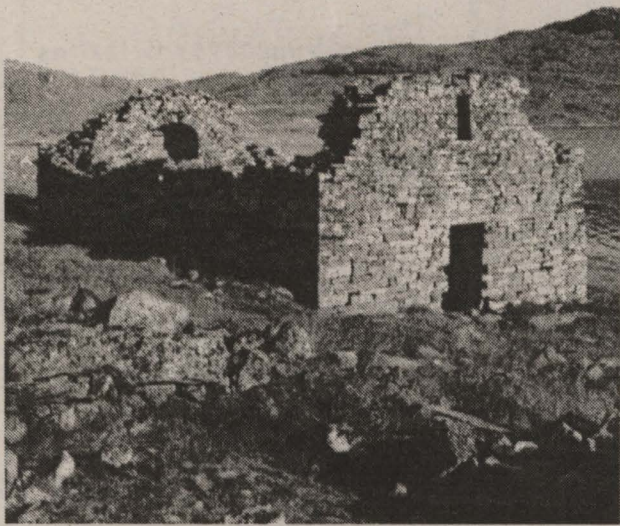
In its purest form, Asatru offers a spiritual outlook upon the world which celebrates an all-pervading link between mankind, the earth, the forests, the oceans, the animals, the spirits of our ancestors, our progeny, and most of all, the joy of the life experience as a whole. Asatru promotes the principles of freedom, strength and vigour, honesty and honour, the value of a person's word, living in harmony with a healthy environment, placing the concept of principle above that of gain, courage over cowardice, realism over dogmatism, and overall, leading a worthy life according to individual choice and decision.

Ultimately, as with any philosophy, ideology or religion, Asatru's success or failure to enrich and enlighten people's lives will be determined by the character of those who embrace the faith. In a world sadly devoid of respect for the earth, its creatures, and even our fellow human beings, perhaps the time has come for us to re-examine, and learn from, these ancient gods and goddesses who have refused to die. Ragnarok has not come.

Asatru, like Wicca and other pagan sects, was all but exterminated by the Christian church over 900 years ago

people were peaceful farmers, merchants, and fishermen, while only a relatively small percentage actually followed the Viking path.

The even greater irony of these individuals and their activities is they have only helped to add fuel to the fires of detraction which have long been burning away any semblance of credibility that proponents of paganism, Asatru or otherwise, can claim. To completely condemn the philosophy and ideology of Asatru as the root cause of these incidents is misguided at best, as the individuals involved represent a small, if decidedly vocal, fraction of confused extremists. One may ask, is the philosophy and ideology of Christianity the root cause of the madness that swept through Europe during the Inquisition? The genocide brought to the Americas in 1492? Can the recent violence in



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The Coquitlam Report

Marcel Martin

The David Lam Campus is alive with action.

In October 1996, students at the David Lam campus elected their first student representation: Coley Mansfield as Vice President; Ivor Shanks and Robert Tang as David Lam Reps; Laura Selman as University Transfer Rep; and Colleen Jeffrey as Developmental Studies Rep.

Time has come and gone, and like any political government, things do eventually happen.

First, we now have bicycle racks. At the north entrance there are two sets: one is perpendicular to the other. The rack at the main entrance is a little harder to find. It is smack dab in the middle of the left

side of the building as you ascend the massive concrete steps leading to our beloved campus.

At both locations, the racks are under cover. Many students in the Fall Semester were reduced to handcuffing their bicycles to the wheelchair ramp at the south side. This was the only place where the environmentalist physical fitness crowd could secure their prized motion machines without prizing them out to rust every time it rained.

Secondly, chairs in the atrium and lockers are being discussed. I know discussion isn't as good as the actual items, but all things take time.

In other news: equipment reported missing in action over the fall semester has not been located,

but steps have been taken so the next generation of equipment will not meet the same dismal fate. Smile folks, you're being videotaped! There is a camera situated at the south entrance that captures everything in its path. There are cameras set up at other locations too. Remember: Big Brother is watching you.

The controversies keeps on coming. Patrons of the cafeteria have discovered that to make mocha, they need to pay for both a coffee and a hot chocolate, even if they're only using half and half. I know the freeze on transfer payments has left the college scrambling for cash, but this is just petty.

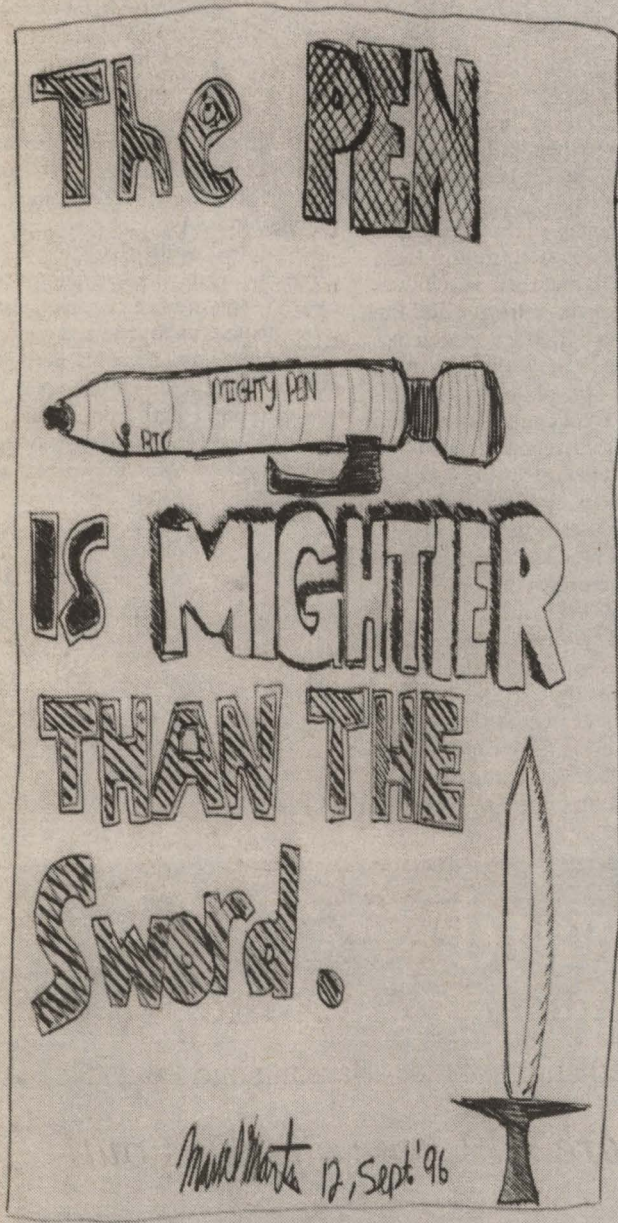
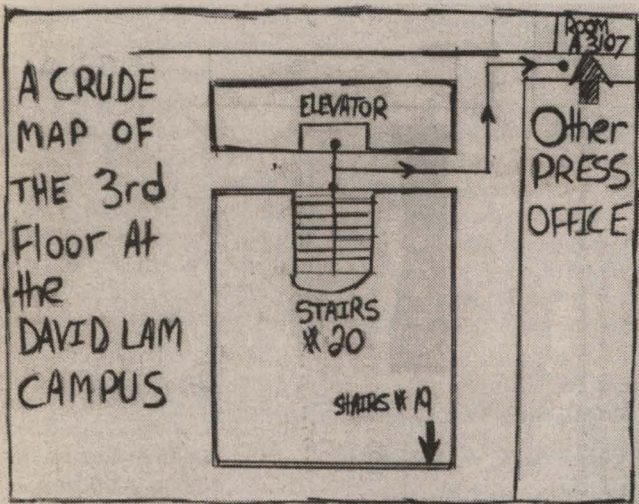
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Having trouble drowning out the New Years blues?

Theatre Sports may be the quick-fix you're looking for.

by Jason Kurylo

Three times in my life, I've laughed myself to tears whilst attending live theatre. All three times, it was at the improvisationally untieable hands of the Vancouver Theatre-Sports League. The third and latest was last month, at the X-Mas Files opening night.

A rotating cast took the ultra-sombre Agent Smolder and his pouty sidekick Agent Sulky through a maze of paranormal experiences inspired by, and at times starring, audience members. Along the way, they encountered dark, creepy, backwards towns (This night, it was Ladner. <shudder> Spooky, huh?), and got officially uninvited from the F.I.B. Xmas party, all whilst investigating a bizarre series of wrapping paper murders.

As with most improv shows, the

X-Mas Files had a few weak spots, but more than made up for them by the final curtain. In fact, the third-quarter slow spots mirrored very closely the portion of the X-Files that usually slugs down for a few minutes. The culprit? Plot. Even the mother show has to stop the wagon for a minute to ensure the damn plot comes together by the end, so it was inevitable this quirk-conceived offspring would inherit this trait.

The gang on-stage did a marvelous job sending up the ultraserious TV crew. Pierce Visser, for example, nailed every twitch with his Candy Man. Lighting a candy cane, then ominously guiding the crowd through a surprising recreation of the moody theme song, he was a lanky Rod Serling minus the funhouse mirror.

Just like on the tube, there were more trenchcoats, flashlights, barely lit scenes, and great one-liners

than you could shake an alien at. One show saw David C. Jones' Smolder ask a crowd member, "How's my hair?" The quickwitted customer deadpanned, "Better than last week." When asked if his ninth Christmas was a good one, Smolder droned, "It was the happiest time of my life. I almost smiled."

The X-Mas Files ran until December 29 at the Arts Club Revue Theatre on Granville Island. According to the VTSL folks, the run was extremely successful. "We only wish Christmas lasted longer," said Jones, who doubles as a promotions fella. (Let's see Duchovny do *that*.) TheatreSports will call the Revue home for the foreseeable future, with the perpetually expected move to the Stan-ley still planned for "hopefully later this year."

Regular Theatre-Sports runs Wednesday to Saturday, at 8:15

pm, with 2 for 1 admission on Wednesdays and an extra 10:15 pm show on Fridays and Saturdays. Sundays at 8:15, see The Next Generation: Radical Experiment, which features up and coming improv actors for the low low price of just six bucks.

Watch for the St. Valentine's Day Massacre, beginning January 29. For those in the don't know, the Massacre is a three week competition, featuring your favourite locals going brain to brain, five nights a week, vying for top spot among Sportsters in the Lower Mainland.



Vancouver Theatre Sports provides a great laugh and puts all your worries aside for a while.

Vancouver TheatreSports file photo

VTSL tickets are always a bargain, and dammit, these are fabulous shows. Do yourself a favour. Go.

Bizarre dreams topic for new creation

My Education is the new 'disjointed' effort from William S. Burroughs, published by Penguin Books

by Kevin Sallows

My Education, subtitled *A Book of Dreams*, is just that. One would think that an entire book of Burroughs' dreams would be fascinating and revealing, yet *My Education* is frustratingly unrevealing, unless of course you're a psychoanalyst or a dream expert.

Promo blurbs on the back cover trumpet inevitable praises:

"Many Burroughs fans may find this book a sheer miracle...."

"A whirlwind valedictory tour of Burroughs' own unconscious.... An intensely personal book."

Personal, yes, perhaps even intensely so. But as tours go, it's a bit like a trip on an alien world without a comprehensible travelogue or guide—just the sights, no explanations. Taken as a whole, the book reads like a dream—disjointed, disparate elements juxtaposed, a lot of seeming nonsense dotted with sparks of intriguing insight. Fascinating, yes, but also confusing.

By the end of the book I felt as if the only thing I had learned is that it's extremely difficult to get breakfast in Burroughs' Land of the Dead, the strange grey unreality that is the setting for many of his nocturnal adventures. If that sounds a bit like a bizarre Woody Allen dream scenario, it's because Burroughs' dreams are as strange and sometimes even as funny as Allen's parodies of dream diary entries in *Without Feathers*. But then, how hard is it to dredge up absurdity from one's dream life? It's not as if Burroughs has cornered that market.

Why does he get his dreams published, then? This seems to me an extravagant luxury, one no doubt afforded by Burroughs' impressive track record and near-iconic stature as a writer and personality. Whatever his stature, though, Burroughs is still human and he has human dreams. Unfortunately, the commonality of the human experience doesn't translate well to dream reality.

Dreams are a very personal thing. I sometimes have difficulty figuring out the meaning of my own dreams, let alone those of another.

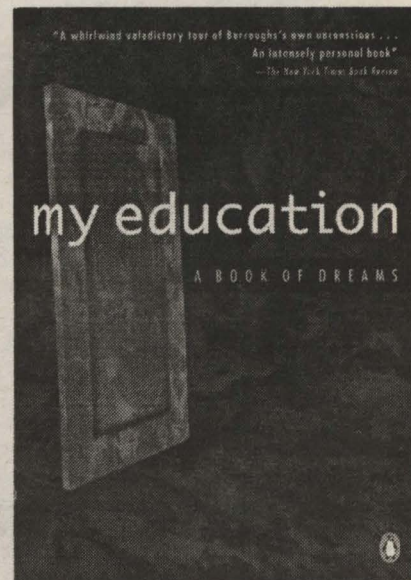
On page two, Burroughs surmises as to why dreams so often fall flat when related to others: "No context... like a stuffed animal set on the floor of a bank." He then goes on to set stuffed animals of varying shapes, sizes and colours on bank floors for 190 pages. Dream after dream, a jumble of fragmented, unfamiliar images. Disorienting.

In the last half of the book Burroughs pulls it together a bit more often. Only he does it... cryptically. He doesn't make it easy on the reader—observations come seemingly out of nowhere. Burroughs is elliptical in his writing, preferring to leave the reader with the work of connecting the dots.

Meaning aside, some of

Burroughs' riffs are a pleasure to read. He often goes places many writers would be fearful or unable to visit. At one point he uses an ingenious technique. Taking phrases from various places earlier in the book, he combines them into a random, nonsensical paragraph of curious word/phrase combinations. The passage has a surreal, dreamy quality. There's a strange sense of familiarity—the reader has seen each of the phrases before, even if he or she can't remember exactly where. It's unclear whether the phrases are arranged by Burroughs or simply chosen and arranged using his random cut-and-paste style, but this is where the text really comes alive.

I suspect that the disjointed feel of the book is intentional.



WILLIAM S. BURROUGHS

Burroughs recreates the dream world in all its fragmented glory, sometimes vivid, often vague. The frustrating thing is that it is his world, a fact that may leave many readers floundering around searching for meaning. On the other hand, Burroughs fans will probably find this a rewarding read. I just found it work.

Smashing Pumpkins

January 8, at GM place

by Robert Moffat

It's time. Darkness collapses, then is smoothly pierced by white laser light. Tonight, 'Tonight' begins the set. The Pumpkins look appropriately happy and gay in black-on-black outfits; lead singer/guitarist Billy Corgan clad in his trademark ZERO-emblazoned T-shirt and shiny silver pants. Looming over the stage, grinning, grimacing, howling cold, glossy, bleakly windswept irony. A giant skeletal steel spaceship dominates the stage, pulsing red and blue halogen eyes. Abstract kaleidoscopic amoebae

the acidic colours of Warhol paintings cascade across huge projection screens, interspersed with scenes from *Planet of the Apes* and the *Hindenburg* explosion. Absolutely punishing volume, relentless in its intensity, an inescapable vortex of sound. 'Bullet With Butterfly Wings' shoves the capacity crowd beyond excitement, fifteen-year-old girls in black eyeliner and new ZERO shirts shriek inaudibly. Thirty-Three, Disarm, An Ode To No One...multiple encores, final crescendos culminating in a draining catharsis.

It's raining outside, of course.



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Sports

Grizzlies face tough times

by Miguel Strother

Some loud blond kid in the crowd pipes up, just before the start of the Vancouver Grizzlies-Detroit Pistons affair at GM Place on Wednesday, January 15: "Roy, I paid damn good money for this seat, Roy! Play good, Roy!"

Roy Rodgers will do just what he's been doing all year, blockin' shots, playin' tough D, while providing Brian Winters with solid support from the bench, something the Grizzlies have lacked prior to the big man's emergence into the NBA's rookie elite. Rodgers, after a bit of a rocky start, has managed to crack the roster for next month's rookie game at the NBA's all-star gala averaging 6.6 points, 4.1 rebounds and 0.3 assists per game.

Without bench support, like that of Roy's, the team suffers down the stretch, unable to keep up to other well stocked teams, as was the case

when the Grizzlies lost to the Los Angeles Lakers in a relatively close game on the 13. The Grizzlies were, in fact, much closer to a win than the final score would indicate in both January 5 and 14. The Boys were leading the Lakers by 10, in the latest contest they succumbed to a Lakers team which boasts that it has *too much* talent.

After a physically and mentally fatiguing game the night before, things didn't look good for the Bears. They returned to the Garage, taking on Grant Hill and the Detroit Pistons. Hill, one of the NBA's most exciting players, came into Vancouver averaging 20.7 points, 8.3 rebounds, 6.5 assist.

On this sad night Hill would see these numbers and more—just one assist shy of a triple double. The tired Grizzlies allowed the game to turn into a good ol' fashion blowout, losing by 24 points.

Fans started to leave their seats

early and Brian Winters made changes that would prove just how deep he had to look in order to try and find a player, any player, who could provide the team with some spark.

The bizarre combination which finished up on the hardwood as the clock laboriously ticked off it's last seconds included, Lawrence Moten, Pete Chilcutt, Lee Mayberry, Chris Robinson, and Eric Mobley.

Where, oh where are the Vancouver Grizzlies?

Nobody seems to be able to find the team that started off the season with so much promise and fought opponents as hard as they could every night. The Grizzlies have seen improvements—including higher shooting percentages and stronger play in the third quarter, which they have laboured so hard for—disappear into the empty space of GM Place.

January 17 vs. the Utah Jazz, the Grizzlies would fade yet further into the basement, losing by 38 points while allowing Karl Malone and his supporting cast to score at will as they shot a blistering 57.5 % from the field.

A dejected Roy Rodgers had a hard time turning his sad, tired eyes to face reporters, he fumbled with his tie and rambled in low quiet speech about wanting to put this game, and the current 1-10 losing streak behind himself and the rest of the team. The recovery from such monstrous defeats will have to happen pretty quick if the Grizz are going to get ready for Sundays game vs. cross country sibling, the Toronto Raptors, in a game which will determine bragging rights for one of the two Canadian cities.

Grizzlies giveaway

That's right, you can have a chance to win FREE, I said FREE, tickets to a Grizzlies' game on January 31, 1997 at GM Place. That week the Atlanta Hawks are in town to play the Grizz. Now read carefully because you can find out how to win tickets for two. Write down on a piece of paper *Grizzlies giveaway*, your name, a phone number, and your answers to the corresponding questions below. You should consider doing the questions because the last time we had a giveaway there was only one entry. So, if you actually hand your answers in to the Other Press, room 1020, to Jonathan D. Chapman, you'll probably win. Send in your answers.

- 1) Where do the Grizzlies play their home games?
- 2) Who holds the world record for the 100 meter dash?
- 3) Who has most recently hit the 300 goal mark in the NHL?
- 4) Who holds the record in the NHL for most goals scored in a season?
- 5) Who was Sports Illustrated's sportman of the year (1996)?
- 6) What former NBA superstar allegedly slept with 20 000 women?
- 7) Who is the all-time Canadian leading scorer in the NBA?
- 8) What is the web site address for the NBA?
- 9) Who is the winningest coach in the NBA of all time?

Orca Bay watch

by Culture Curmudgeon

Recently I went to my first NHL hockey game in over six years, and shortly after, I was comped and saw another one. Those two games represented my first ever visits to GM place. Okay, so the Garage has been open for 2 years now. So what if I'm slow off the mark; tickets for a decent game average around \$50, and are way, way out of my range. They are also out of the range of the panhandlers and homeless who gather around the rink for every game—the old man on Pacific Boulevard clutching the placard "Hungry and Homeless" declined to comment on the price of entertainment these days. I ain't poor, but close enough—I'm a writer dammit. And a lucky one too to get some free tickets from Orca Bay.

Both games brought the Canucks points: I saw the Canuck's rake the wilting Leafs 7-3 and tie-up Florida

4-4. And, yes, they were both good games; nice goals by the teams, some good fights, a penalty shot goal, and some bad calls by the referee in the second game. Joining thousands of fellow partisans in a rousing cheer of "Fraser sucks!", I was elated. Heck, I even saw (Florida's goalie) Fitzpatrick get kneed in the face, satiating my dormant blood lust. As a whole, the hockey wasn't bad, but y'know, there were some slow parts too. At points in both games, with the clutch shaking down the grab, my attention wandered and I began to get bored. Maybe too much expansion has diluted the hockey pool. Maybe there's too many dumb rules that reward the Odjick's over the Bure's. Maybe I just like a fine glass of wine. And this is when Orca Bay kicks in—saving me and thousands.

Natalie Siemons, a member of the Canucks booster club, recently summed up the Orca Bay philosophy: "You are not just there for the

VooDoo, or for a hockey game or for the basketball... you are there for the entertainment."

Hockey games begin in darkness, and then a voice speaks—maybe Charlton Heston's—and we are given Genesis. A mini-movie plays on the house TV/scoreboard, which takes the Canucks from Pat Quinn to Tiger to Bure to the Finals, (skipping Cam Neely, of course), ending with the vague slogo "Bring It on" implying everything and promising nothing. Then with acid house cranked, the stadia is filled with dashing spotlights, splaying the Canuck's logo over everything. The teams skate out, and a game starts. But Orca Bay never lets up. No matter the tone or pace of the game, music plays constantly, always 5 to 30 second bursts... there are trivia questions, lotteries, a rap attack of women descending from heaven, doling out prizes. At one point, a fiddler plays—he ain't Ashley, but everyone likes him anyway. A big

inflatable Orca whale dips over the ice surface. And ads find homes in every niche, segment and corner of the building. Colour, lights, spectacle, constant movement intoxicates the senses (it ain't the \$5 beer)...and it works. Orca Bay are entertainment masterminds. Bored, unhappy fans are distracted, and convinced to come again and again and again. The Canucks are consistently mediocre, but they still are selling oodles of tickets. People are happy with sizzle. I don't like b-ball, but I hear the marketing mix is even more up-front. The NBA is really MTV Live y'know.

I'm not sure if Orca Bay should go to jail for it, or whether they should be elected to the highest office in the land. Make every day a Special Event Marketing Day! Orca Bay is so good at what they do that if I was Jesus, I would hire Orca Bay to produce the Second Coming—just in case people got bored and stopped paying attention.

Sport shorts

Women's basketball

On January 10, the women's basketball team were island bound and came away with a split; at 65-51 loss to Malaspina on Friday and a 81-28 victory over Camosun on Saturday. The Royals shot a dismal 34% in Nanaimo, with Andrea Dufva and Darcy Pickard being the only two to score in double figures with 18 and 14 points respectively.

In Victoria the next day, there was a different story as six players were in double figures and the team shot a sizzling 57% from the floor. Stacy Reykdal led the squad with 19, Leanne Trotter added 13, while Sarah Wright, Andrea Dufva and Stacey Friar chipped in 10 each.



Jonathan D. Chapman

Men's basketball

The Royals travelled to the island on January 10 for a pair of games. Friday saw the squad in Nanaimo battle the #1 nationally ranked Malaspina Mariners. The Royals were looking for their first road win of the season, while

Malaspina were trying to keep their undefeated streak alive. The Royals got off to a good start, leading early in the first half, but the Mariners started to roll and build a 14 point lead by halftime. The second half saw the Royals close the lead to nine

with just over 10 minutes left, but that was as close as it would get as they fell 82-55.

On Saturday, January 11, the squad made the trip down to Victoria for an afternoon tilt with

the Camosun College Chargers. A closely played first half put the Chargers ahead 43-42. The game continued to be close through the second half with the lead changing hands a numerous amount of times. Late in the half, the Royals surged on a 8-0 run that ultimately put the game out of reach. Clutch free throw shooting by the Royals sealed the victory at 84-70. Lee Craven led the way for Douglas with 22 points and 8 rebounds, while second year post Jon Fast had a double-double with 12 points and 11 boards.

Women's volleyball

It was number one versus number two on January 11 as the Royals (2) and the Malaspina Mariners (1) did battle. The Mariners defeated the Royals by a 3-1 (15-7, 15-2, 15-17, 15-7) score to improve their record to 6-0, while

dropping Douglas' record to 4-2.

The ladies at times showed that they could definitely compete with the Mariners, but lacked the drive to sustain the pressure on Malaspina for the entire match. The Royals came out strong in the first game and with the score tied 7-7, lost the intensity that had got them to that point and proceeded to lose the game 15-7, and the second game by a 15-2 count.

The third game put the Royal's down by scores of 11-4 and 12-6, but regained the drive they had in the beginning and came back to win the game 17-15. Unfortunately, the squad lost 15-7 in the fourth and final game. Leading the way for Douglas was Stacey Dupuis with eight kills, while Coralie Hiemstra had seven. Becki Kosinski and Vesna Rukavina added six kills each.



Jonathan D. Chapman

Men's volleyball

On January 11, the number four CCAA nationally ranked Douglas College Royal's continued their winning ways as they defeated the visiting Malaspina Mariners by a 3-0 (15-6, 15-12, 15-12) score, led by the power of last seasons All-Canadian Ken Kliendienst with 18 kills and Darren Ettles with 15 kills.

The victory improved the team's league undefeated streak to 16 matches while improving this season's record to 6-0 and clinching a trip to the 1997 BCCAA Championships on February 21-22 in Nanaimo.

Badminton

Douglas won the BCCAA Tournament #3 at BCIT on January 11-12. Leading the first place finish in mixed doubles by Bobby Joe Breitkreutz and Jennifer Wong. With the first place finish the team moved into second place in the overall BCCAA standings with two tournaments left, the team will travel back to BCIT on January 25-26.