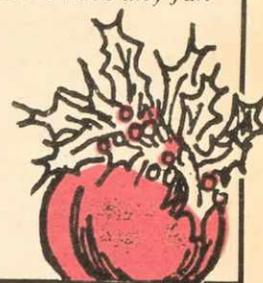


See you after Christmas

— hope you don't have any January exams.

Happy Holidays!



Grad president resigns in protest

by David Mansvelt

At an emergency meeting of the Dalhousie Association of Graduate Students (DAGS) Council December 1, councillors voted to accept President John Inegbedion's resignation.

In a surprise move Inegbedion had tendered his resignation to Council immediately after a November 24 meeting voted to not host a national conference as scheduled.

In his letter of resignation, Inegbedion says, "While I do not question Council's right to set aside decorum and reverse itself, my principles do not allow me to sanction the decision. . . anything short of hosting the event successfully does not accord with the image of DAGS Council which I want to be associated with." Acting President Mary Jane Harkins, says although she was unprepared for the resignation, she respects Inegbedion's decision.

Inegbedion says the original hosting motion was unanimously approved by council back in April and DAGS was granted the go-ahead in May. He says DAGS decided to bid for the host position because it would have cost as much to send a delegate to U.B.C. or Simon Fraser (the other proposed hosts) as to host the conference at Dalhousie. Hosting it would promote Dalhousie's image across Canada, he adds.

In November, Inegbedion proposed to set up a committee for the conference and it was then that he discovered there were reservations about DAGS's ability to host it.

"I don't know why it suddenly became an issue," says Inegbedion. "Council had discussed it on three occasions. Everybody was for it."

Harkins says there was a feeling that "we went into it without knowing what we were in for". Several councillors felt that not enough planning had been done and that it was too late to start. councillor Roger Gale says that, there was "no action taken" and "not enough information was available". Harkins says she didn't plan earlier, adding that he had been approached during the summer with offers of assistance.

Inegbedion says that lack of planning is a non-issue. "There wasn't much to prepare," he explains, because it is only a three-day conference with about

25-40 people expected. "They bring their own agenda," he says "All that was needed was to book a meeting room for the mornings and join in and have fun in the evenings with the visitors".

The fact that there were no budget guarantees concerned Gale and fellow Councillor Carl Jarvis. Gale says it looked like the conference would even run over budget. Inegbedion says that last year's conference in Winnipeg cost about \$1300 and he didn't see any reason to think that this year would cost more than the \$1500 budgeted.

Harkins, Gale and Jarvis all felt that there was lack of commitment from DAGS Council to see

the conference go ahead. Harkins says some students got behind in their work because of the faculty strike and were hesitant to devote time to the conference. Even if there were legitimate concerns, says Inegbedion, he wanted to go ahead and make the best of it. "We should be mature enough to honour our commitments."

At the November 24 meeting, however, a motion to defer the matter to further study was defeated. Inegbedion says it might have provided a chance for councillors to see that there weren't as many obstacles as they thought. But there was also a feeling that it should be dealt with immediately. Some councillors



David Mansvelt: Dal Photo

DAGS president John Inegbedion, resigned last week when Council axed plans to host a conference slated for February.

said they wouldn't have voted to renege if they knew he would resign. But Inegbedion says that to have told Council his plans

beforehand would have amounted to blackmail and would have trivialized Council's

Continued on page 3

Putting out the "not welcome" mat

New laws bad news for refugees

by Lynda Cassels

Church groups, community workers and interested individuals from throughout the Maritimes met with the Halifax Refugee Assistance Group in St. Mark's church last weekend to

discuss their concerns about the new refugee legislation which comes into effect this January.

Bills C55 and C84 will significantly streamline the refugee determination process in Canada. Participants in last weekend's workshop fear that the more effi-

cient system could result in some legitimate refugees being denied asylum.

At the Halifax workshop Peter Bisson, a staff member at the Canadian Jesuit Refugee Program in Toronto, commented that Canada's new policy parallels a growing isolationist trend among western nations. Fearing an imminent tide of refugees from the Third World, the developed countries are hastily pulling in the welcome mat. After 1992, Bisson said, Europe will be virtually impenetrable to refugees.

"To my mind Bill C55 only reinforces these trends," he said.

Under the new legislation, persons entering Canada will have to meet stringent eligibility criteria before being allowed to file a claim for refugee status. In practice, this will mean that potential refugees could be denied entry to Canada without an opportunity to justify their need for Canadian protection.

Most controversial of the new criteria is the "safe third country" restriction. Persons travelling to Canada through a country which the federal government has designated as "safe" will be refused permission to claim refugee status in Canada if it can be demonstrated that they remained in the third country for more than a two or three day transit period.

Bisson, told the Halifax workshop that there can be no guarantees as to how the third country will proceed in handling the refu-

gee's case.

"It (the safe third country restriction) violates the spirit of asylum of the Geneva Convention," Bisson said.

It is also not known by what criteria Ottawa will designate countries as "safe". Bill Powroz, a para-legal professional and immigration counsellor in Halifax, said that while third countries would have to be signatories to the United Nations Convention on Refugees to be considered, the federal government "will be very sensitive to political considerations" in making its decision. He added that in his experience refugee claimants from Cuba and the Soviet Union have been more likely to be accepted as refugees than persons from "right-wing" countries in Latin America or Africa.

The ability of the third country to accommodate refugees should also be taken into account, Poroz said. Costa Rica, for example, willingly grants refugees asylum but denies them work permits because of the formidable unemployment problems that country faces.

A further source of concern is the so-called "credibility" criterion. Under Bill C55 claimants passing the third country restriction will be considered for refugee status on the basis of the human rights record of their home country. Persons from areas suffering civil war, famine or other strife,

Continued on page 4

