

## news

# Students push responsible drinking

by Judy Reid

On a busy stairwell, over one hundred people stopped to scrawl on the wall leading to the second floor of the Student Union Building.

"Drinking and getting drunk in the early '80s made me sexually irresponsible and negligent," wrote one person. "As a result, I am HIV positive. I no longer drink, but will be reminded everyday of what alcohol has done to me and others like myself."

On December 6, 1993, a twenty-foot paper wall was posted asking, "How has alcohol affected your life?" By the time the wall was removed eleven days later, hundreds of students had paused to read the collection of stories, quips and plain truths that filled almost every block of the poster.

Karol Derry and Krista Yetman are two students who helped create the wall.

"I was really impressed with how many people made comments," said Yetman.

Derry said the wall was a success even if some people took the question lightly. "They were still there and they still saw the serious quotes," she said. "Who am I to say whether or not it affected them?"

Yetman and Derry are both members of PARTY — Promoting Alcohol Responsibility Throughout the Year. The purpose behind the wall was to make people aware of the role alcohol has played in people's lives,

as well as to encourage responsible drinking.

Both Derry and Yetman stressed that PARTY is not about prohibition, but offering students alternatives to drinking and teaching them to drink responsibly.

"If you drink, know your limits," explained Derry.

PARTY was formed by members of the Alcohol and Drug Awareness Committee (ADAC) who thought that a group made up of and run by students would be a more effective way to encourage responsible drinking.

Susan McIntyre, Director of Student Resources and Assistant to the Vice President, Student Services, is a member of the ADAC who encouraged the development of PARTY.

"Alcohol and drug education is very important," said McIntyre. "But I don't think I'm in as good a position as students are to design programs to suit their needs."

In 1990, McIntyre did research into the drinking patterns of first-year Dalhousie students. The study showed that approximately one-third of first-year students passed out at least once during the year, and almost a quarter blacked out a few times.

Four years later the biggest obstacle to responsible drinking still appears to be the party attitude found on most campuses.

Many people used the wall as an opportunity to get a laugh. "Made a ton of money for my kids," wrote one

person who signed 'Alexander Keith'. "I couldn't tell you," scribbled another. "I'm still drunk."

Derry said she found it odd that attitudes changed so much as people got older. "When you are thirty or forty years old and get tanked every weekend, people would think you had a problem," she said. "But when you do it at residence, it's cool."

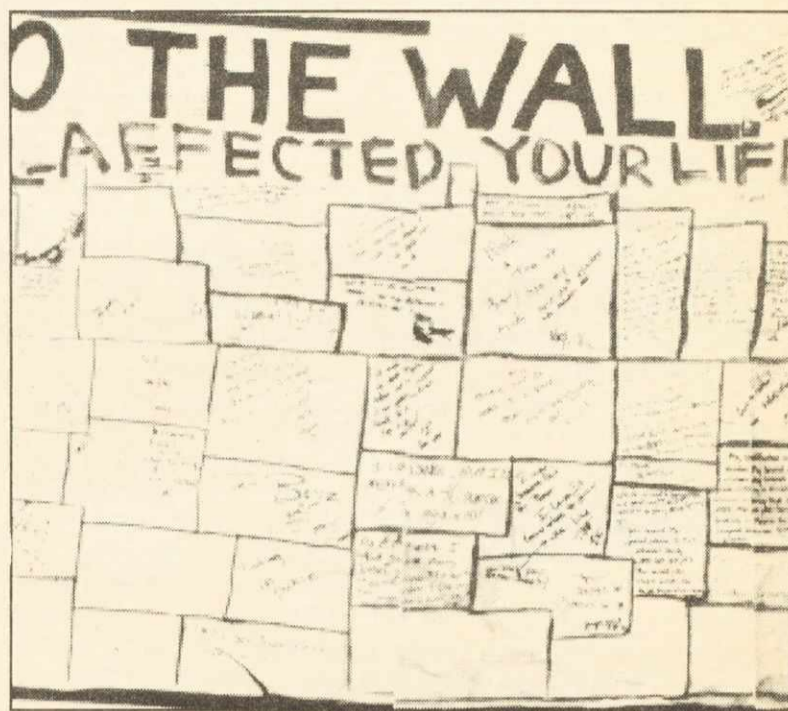
The changes may be slow, but the idea of responsible drinking is growing.

"In today's society it's one of the biggest things that's going," said Grawood manager Debbie Brown. "Even the breweries are promoting the fact of being responsible." A mocktail menu, non-alcoholic beer and a trained staff are all part of the Grawood's commitment to responsible use of alcohol.

PARTY has many plans for the future including a yellow ribbon campaign to remember those who died in alcohol-related deaths, an all night broomball tournament and maybe a talk show on CKDU.

Seeing all the writing on the wall was not the only time Yetman was surprised by Dalhousie students. Last November Yetman asked students to take part in an informal survey about alcohol, and couldn't believe how few students were aware of possible side-effects of alcohol. One of her favourite wall writings was a response to someone who said alcohol wasn't dangerous.

"Alcohol is just as lethal as jello," warned Yetman, "if used incorrectly."



TELL IT TO THE WALL - PARTYers share alcohol-related stories.

DALPHOTO: KENNETH KAM

## DAL STUDENT UNION General Elections 1994

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Executive Vice-President  
(must run as a team)

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Vice-President Community Affairs  
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2 Board of Governors Reps  
9 Senate Reps: Faculties of Arts, Dentistry,  
Grad Studies, Health Sciences, Law, Management  
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Education.

### NOMINATIONS

Open Monday, January 17, 1994  
Close Tuesday, February 1, 1994 at  
10:00 am. sharp.

### GENERAL ELECTIONS

Will run from Thursday, February  
3, 1994 at 10:00 am. to Monday,  
February 14, 1994 at 8:00 pm.

### VOTING

February 15, 16, and 17, 1994

### MORE INFO

Contact Jennifer Hockey (ERO) at  
494 - 6576 or 454 - 1106 or e-mail to  
DSU ERO @ ac.dal.ca.



### STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES

Students who may require special classroom and/or examination accommodations are urged to contact Services for Students with Disabilities at

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Delays in requesting accommodations may lead to unnecessary complications.

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