

# NEWS BRIEFS

## Medics need dope

The American government's "marijuana monopoly" has caused a serious nationwide shortage of "medical quality marijuana."

The states of Hawaii, California and North Carolina have been approached by a marijuana reform group, The Alliance for Cannabis Therapeutics, to seriously consider the growth of the weed for medical uses.

## Student committee

A communications committee was struck by Dalhousie Student Council to review communications between the Student Council and the campus and off-campus communities.

Student Union V.P. Jeff Champion said that criticism of the present executive for poor communications was at least partly responsible for the move.

This committee, chaired by Graduate Representative Peter Rans, was formed in response to problems with contact between council and the

university community.

Recommendations will be presented to the council executive by March 25th.

## Klan ban

Student's council at the University of Toronto will decide shortly whether or not they support "banning the Klan."

A motion put forward by a number of councillors to have the Ku Klux Klan thrown off campus is "meant to be a symbolic gesture" says Charles Mills of the Afro-Caribbean Students Association. "It would be understood that they didn't want them (the KKK) on campus," he said.

## New Board for CKDU

In order to obtain FM status, a new interim board of directors for CKDU Radio will be appointed by Thursday.

CRTC regulations require there be no non-Canadian members on the board. Since Dalhousie Student Council, the station's present board of directors, contains some International Students, a new one must be formed.

Council vice-president, Jeff Champion, said this was unfortunate since it restricted the ability of international students to participate in this area of Council activities.

## SUB review

The structure of SUB operations and management will be reviewed before the end of office, following a decision by the Dalhousie Student Council executive last Monday.

The decision was not due to "specific incidents" according to Council V.P. Jeff Champion, but is needed after the way the system of management has "evolved" over the years.

## N.S. at odds

Nova Scotia is at odds with the other Atlantic provinces and Ottawa about the site of an Atlantic region veterinary college.

The "appropriate site" according to Nova Scotia is outside Truro at the N.S. Agricultural College while Charlotte-town is preferred by the other Atlantic provinces and Ottawa. They may be forced to proceed with construction without Nova Scotia's participation, according to P.E.I. Premier Angus MacLean.

## Eskimo sculptures

Ten major contemporary Inuit sculptors will be the subject of an exhibit at the Mount St. Vincent University Art Gallery until March 8th.

By all estimates, Canadian Eskimo sculpture should have been destroyed years ago, according to art critic and journalist Robert Fulford. "The astonishing thing is that despite the odds, Eskimo Art now lives a vigorous life," he said.

## Constitutional changes

Dalhousie students will be asked to consider three changes to the Student Union constitution at General Meeting of the Student Union, Friday at noon in the Council Chambers.

The first change is to insert the word, "national origin" after "religion" in the constitution's preamble restricting the Student Union from discriminations on the basis of national origin.

The second change enables the council chairperson to determine what constitutes a "reasonable excuse" for miss-

ing a council meeting. This is of interest because councillors who miss more than two meetings without reasonable excuse now have their seats declared vacant. The change will further specify the seat "may", but need not, be declared vacant.

The third change would enable members of the Council executive who are not full-time students to run again for a position on Council.

## Ronnie survival plans

A Vancouver man has decided to take advantage of the war paranoia in the United States following the election of Ronald Reagan.

John Dowd has produced a "Ronald Reagan Survival Kit." It sells for \$3000, and consists of a six-month supply of food for two people, a radiation detection kit, a fire extinguisher, an anti-contamination suit, and a copy of **War and Peace** to read while everyone else is in the final stages of meltdown.

Says Dowd, who at last report had yet to sell his first kit: "Perhaps I'll throw in a guide to infra-red cookery."

# Desexualization of rape laws controversial

by Kim Marchant

*"There's something worse about being raped than just being beaten, it's the final humiliation, the final showing that you're worthless and that you're there to be used by whoever wants you. In general, I think rape is a political act on the part of the man," says a rape victim who speaks out in Diana Russell's **The Politics of Rape**.*

The issue of the desexualization of rape is controversial, complex and charged with emotion. The proposed amendments to the Criminal Code expected to be implemented by the Liberal Government this spring are sufficient for some but not for others.

Historically, rape has been a separate criminal offence, qualitatively different and treated more seriously than other forms of assault. Several women's groups, including the National Association of Women and the Law, The Canadian Advisory Council on the Status of Women and many rape crisis centers, feel that women have not received fair treatment or adequate protection under the present rape laws. They have undergone active lobbying to amend the laws and three successive governments have responded to the pressure for rape reform.

"I am very concerned that many incidences of rape go unreported. Too often the attacker benefits from the victim's fear of the stigma associated with rape as a sexual offence, her fear of publicity and her concern that she, as much as her attacker, will be 'on trial' at court," said former Liberal Justice Minister Ron Basford in his introduction of Bill C-52 on May 1, 1978. In this Bill "rape" was to be replaced with "indecent assault", or where serious physical harm resulted, with "aggravated indecent assault". The penalty for indecent assault would have been increased from a maximum of 5 years to 14 years imprisonment and for aggravated indecent assault, the maximum would have been life imprisonment. Bill C-52 was never passed.

Former Progressive Conservative Justice Minister Jacques Flynn issued a public statement in October 1979 that he and his government were in agreement with the basic provisions of Bill C-52 with the addition of a new amendment which would eliminate spousal immunity. With the defeat of the Progressive Conservative Government in February 1980, this proposal was never introduced in the House of Commons.

Sometime this spring the Liberal Government is expected to introduce legislation that will change rape laws in Canada.

At present, a rape charge may only be pressed if: (1) a male person (2) has sexual intercourse (3) with a female person (4) not his wife (5) without her consent (6) or with her consent as the result of threats, impersonation or fraud. In the new legislation the word "rape" will be abolished from the Criminal Code and "sexual assault" and "aggravated sexual assault" will take its place.

Most women's groups are in favour of the proposed amendments. "The changes are most definitely in the right direction," said Lorraine Clark, professor of Law at Dalhousie and author of **Rape: The Price of Coercive Sexuality**.

She continued to say that the definite breakthrough is in inter-spousal relations. Under the present law marriage vows preclude sexual autonomy and women are not protected from being raped by their husbands. Even if a woman is separated, she is not protected unless there is a non-molestation clause written into the agreement at the time of separation.

"The only way a husband can be charged by his wife for rape is if he aided others in committing the crime," said Joel Pink, a member of the Bar. Pink said that the new legislation is not going to preclude husband and wife relations and that there will be "equality before the law between male and female."

"Assault would give women greater protection", said Savannah Williams, professor of Sociology and Anthropology at Dalhousie. She said that the idea that the marital right of the husband exists by the virtue of his wife's consent at the time of marriage stems back to the archaic concept that a woman is the property of her husband. A husband cannot be charged because, "he cannot steal from, rape, or abuse himself. It used to be that men could not be charged with adultery, but women have always been because they were considered to be the man's property."

The Canadian Advisory Council on the Status of Women are in favour of the sexual assault proposals and believe that it would be a significant step forward, mainly because it would treat rape more like assault "bringing this aspect of law into the 20th century."

The 27,000 member association of lawyers has recommended to the Government that rape be treated simply as assault.

"A person isn't charged with stabbing someone to death, or shooting someone to death," said Greg Brodsky of Winnipeg, chairman of the Canadian Bar Association's criminal justice section. "He is charged with murder. Sex should just be a factor that aggravates assault. Changing the label from 'rape' to 'sexual assault' isn't going to fool anyone. Take the word sex out altogether."

Commentators support Brodsky's argument that women experience rape as assault. "To her, the fact that this assault was directed against her sexual organs is—at least at the time—irrelevant. Rape is a violation of every woman's right to sexual autonomy, and wrong because it is an unjustified interference with her physical person, no different in kind from any other form of physical interference."

There are those, however, who are in opposition to the word 'rape' being abolished from the Criminal Code. Freada Klein, one of the leaders of the American anti-rape movement, said, "I only want rape to disappear if the crime itself goes away. Since our culture generates rape, which is a peculiar overlap of violence and sex. I don't want to see the results of that brushed under the rug. The way women are defined in our culture, primarily in terms of their sexuality, gives rape a distinct meaning. It's not the same as assault . . . rape is the product of striking inequalities between the sexes. To prosecute rape as assault is to ignore that fact."

While the sincere motivation of those who proposed and pressured for these reforms cannot be questioned, one wonders if the changes might be more cosmetic than substantive. Hopefully, the new legislation will shift the emphasis from the victim to the assailant and the entire legal procedure from filing a report to preliminary hearings to the actual trial will be less of an ordeal for the victim. As Williams said, "Changes in the law must be coupled with an attempt at changing society's attitude toward rape" if significant improvement is to be achieved.

(The paper **Sexual Assault Law Reform** by Maureen McEvoy for Canadian University Press was used for background information throughout this story.)