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No green bucks

by Jennifer Seamone

"It's a policy without a plan" Bill Freidman of the Dalhousie Environmental Committee said about the five point environmental policy accepted by Dalhousie administration this spring.

"There is no funding for this policy" said Freidman, "we must approach it organized on a piecemeal basis."

The committee's direct influence on the environmental planning at Dal is minimal, Friedman said, "there is no link between administration and the committee, and of 30 members only 8-10 attend on a regular basis... we circulate our minutes and hope someone will pay attention."

Although Friedman feels the policy is a positive step forward he does not believe it will be taken as seriously as it should be. "One would expect an institution like Dalhousie to lead the way, but we are lagging behind because of

budgeting and administration," said Freidman, who feels there is a lack of interest and dedication to environmental issues by administration and students

"In a perfect world, administration would prioritize this, and in a perfect world students would demand these things, but this is not a perfect world, and students and administration are not going to do anything," said Friedman.

The committee has been pushing for an undergraduate class in environmental studies open to all students which would give people a foundation to form educated and appropriate opinions on environmental issues, but the money is not there, said Freidman, "If it happens in 3-5 years I'll be surprised" he said, "much of the money is in tenure and fixed costs, but at the same time we are trying to reduce staff... the real problem is the inflexibility for imaginative and necessary programs."

Mike Murphy, manager of



Dal photo: Kevin Peters

Dal Hockey team finishes second in the AUAA finals. See story page 11.

environmental services at Dalhousie has more optimism for environmental issues. In the next week, he said a budget for next year is being sent in for approval which includes a pilot paper recycling program, and estimates on staff and equipment needed to collect aluminum from the 30 blue plastic barrels donated to Dalhousie by Alcan of Montreal.

"Various groups across campus

have made private initiatives to recycle, but the problem associated with that is volume," said Murphy.

As it stands, private groups must empty barrels and call for pick up, which often results in overflowing barrels and confusion. With a campus wide recycling program the problem would be elevated said Murphy, "we'll do it on our own".

Murphy feels there is a great deal

of interest in the policy at Dalhousie even though they did not commit a certain amount of money, "I remain positive, as long as we are reasonable. I am hopeful we will be met, you can do a lot with a little," he said. "There is a return on this, we save a thirty-eight dollar dumping fee for every load we take to the land fill... I have to do this properly, based on the market and that can change," he added.

Public Interest Research Group cleans up

by Steve Mills

If you have been reading the *Gazette* recently, you will undoubtedly have noticed an advertisement urging you to recycle much of your garbage on March 15. The ad, and its program are sponsored by PIRG, the Public Interest Research Group.

Dal-PIRG is one of a group of organizations that exist throughout Canada and the U.S. all using the PIRG name. The idea of Public Interest Research Group was conceived in 1970 by American consumer advocate, Ralph Nader, who gained notoriety in the late fifties for denouncing the much-hyped Edsel (Ford sucking a lemon). In their twenty-one year history, the PIRGs have published hundreds of ground-breaking reports, useful guides, and have had scores of important laws passed. PIRGs also call media attention to energy or environmental problems and successfully promote solutions to these and other problems.

PIRGs have been especially effective because they do not only specialize in one type of activity, but in a series of concurrent activities. Starting with identifying a problem through research and surveys, PIRGs then take steps to inform the public through the media. They also go directly to lawmakers and press for legislative

solutions, demonstrating to politicians the powerful constituency behind their proposals.

Michigan PIRG was the first non-governmental source to document problems of nuclear waste transportation in 1974. Several other PIRGs have produced similar studies and have urged reduced dependency on nuclear power.

Since its inception one year ago, Dal-PIRG has been steadily building its internal structure in anticipation of addressing campus, community, social, and environmental problems. With a roster of volunteers, a Board of Directors, and one paid employee, Dal PIRG acts as a bridge between the university and the community. The group brings community issues onto the campus, using the resources of the university to address community problems.

Dal-PIRG recently donated time and space to groups, including some King's students and *Gazette* staff, to help facilitate the production of the *Gulf War in Perspective* magazine, and *The Single Mother's Survival Guide*. PIRG also assists community groups by donating "in kind" services such as computer access, and photocopying. Though such assistance may seem trivial, it can be invaluable to groups who otherwise do not have it. At present PIRG office

space and resources are limited (one room in fact), but they are actively seeking a larger office to help facilitate meetings and organize future projects.

Two of Dal-PIRG's present projects are taking place this month. On March 15, the "Ides of Recycling" project will take place. There will be dumpsters on campus

and everyone is urged to bring all potential recyclable items. On March 19 at 1pm, a Dal-PIRG sponsored seminar entitled "AIDS-What's safe, What's not?" will take place in room 307 of the SUB. The seminar will be hosted by Karen Pyra from the Metro Area Committee on AIDS.

These are just two examples of

the kind of positive action that Dal-PIRG is taking to improve and enlighten the campus environment. If you are interested in channelling your concerns and ideas into effective action, talk to Anna-Marie Larsen in room 310 of the SUB. In joining Dal-PIRG, you can apply your intellect and your values in engaging the important issues.

Canada has role in O.A.S.

by Angel Figueroa

Dalhousie professor and Latin American specialist John Kirk accompanied a Canadian delegation of diplomats and academics which visited Washington March 5 to attend a symposium as part of an international Forum sponsored by the Organization of American States.

The Canada-Latin America Forum was established to discuss Canada's strengths, weaknesses and potential initiatives it can offer to the OAS, to which it applied for full membership in March of 1989. The March 5 symposium analyzed political and business relations Canada might have with Latin American countries.

Among the conclusions regarding Canada's potential initiatives was the improvement of funding

to Latin America, which was slashed considerably in Wilson's last budget. Another initiative would be to encourage Cuba's readmission into the organization, which had been expelled since 1962, following the Cuban missile crisis.

Although formerly opposed to Canadian membership in the OAS, Kirk stressed the importance that Canada now has in the wake of the recent demise of the Cold War. In the past, any Canadian role would simply have been to comply with American policy.

"We have far more potential than any other country in the OAS. Canada has an excellent reputation in both the English and French Caribbean, all of Spanish Latin America, and unlike the United States, we also practise good relations with Cuba. This is important,

as we can act as an effective intermediary between Hispanic, English, and French nations in the region, and we would be of especially great use in negotiations between Cuba and the United States."

Kirk pointed out that the OAS has traditionally 'rubberstamped' American policies and interests in the region. The OAS was ineffective during the American invasion of the Dominican Republic in 1965, and did nothing during the repression in Pinochet's Chile. As well, a separate, 'made-in-Latin-America' Contadora peace-initiative to bring stability to Central America was successfully subverted by Washington. But now, things are beginning to change. Potentially, the OAS could be a major factor in reviving the Inter-

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