

Influence...

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THE

# GAZETTE

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North of America and Neuseiland rock the Marquee like a hurricane. More on page 16.

photos by Jenn Bethune

## People are getting sick Sacred Heart protest pesticides

BY ERIC MARTYN

Students and faculty from Sacred Heart School of Halifax organized a rally on Monday to protest the cosmetic use of pesticides within Halifax Regional Municipality (HRM).

Despite the forecasted freezing rain and wind, approximately 60 people marched from the Spring

Garden Rd. School to City Hall showing their support by carrying place cards, chanting and listening to speakers.

Linda Davis, a teacher at Sacred Heart School, said the focus of the rally "is to encourage city council to come up with some strong legislation regarding the cosmetic use of pesticides for this spring."

The school has been active for the past two years trying to curb the cosmetic use of pesticides within HRM.

"By bringing speakers in [to the school] there has been some learning. We've gone out to IGA to raise awareness. We've brought councillors into our school to present petitions to express to them

our concern and hope for a bylaw" said Davis.

Davis noted that there has been no action by HRM on this issue, despite the pressure of approaching springtime use of pesticides.

Students from Sacred Heart were joined in protest by members from a local citizens group Real

Alternatives to Toxins in the Environment (RATE). Others included Elizabeth May from Sierra Club of Canada, Sean Betts from Canadian Union of Postal Workers, and the Raging Grannies who all showed their particular brand of support by singing protest songs.

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## What is that smell? Cleanspirit in the HRM

BY MIKE PALMER

It is a running joke in Halifax that everything we put down our drains simply gets dumped into the harbour. Unfortunately, except for two small-scale sewage plants, this is absolutely true. Everyday astronomical amounts of untreated storm and sewage water are being discharged into the harbour and North-West arm, through 40 untreated outfalls, prohibiting *Homo Sapiens*, amphibious and mammalian residents of Halifax from enjoying the waterfront area.

The harbour area is littered with visible debris and a nasty stench. But these cosmetic deficiencies are superficial compared with environmental and health concerns. Recent water samples show an overly high fecal matter and bacteria count. When will this fiasco end? It may be closer than you think.

Brent McCombs of the Halifax Harbour Solutions Project, a subsidiary of the Halifax Regional Municipality recently spoke to members of the Sierra Youth Coalition on the subject of the cleanup. Mr. McCombs informed us that the project to clean up the harbour is well under way. The municipality has stated that they are fully committed to putting the plan in place and following through with it. When asked about the time line for the project, McCombs stated that it will be phased in over a maximum of ten years, with construction beginning in 2001.

As of the present time the municipality has opened itself up to offers from the private sector for the contract to build the plants. McCombs ensured us that the plants will be operated by the municipal-

ity, with only the design and construction conducted by private interests. In the spring and fall of 2000, sites for the four new plants will be researched with community input. The proposed sites are as follows, in order of date of construction. The first plant would be built in North Halifax near the Cornwallis/Lower Water Street intersection. The second plant would be located on the Dartmouth side. The third plant would be located in the Herring cove area and would service the Spryfield/Herring Cove region. The fourth and final plant would be constructed in South Halifax somewhere in the area of the Ocean Terminals.

The four proposed plants will initially be built as advanced primary treatment plants, but will have leeway for the incorporation of secondary and tertiary treatment facilities. Advanced primary treatment means that the plant will mechanically filter the sewage before it passes through a series of flocculation and disinfecting processes.

According to McCombs, the municipalities' goal for the project at the end of the pipe is to have people swimming in the NorthWest Arm and Bedford Basin, eating shellfish from the outer harbour and boating in the Narrow and Inner Harbour.

The entire project is estimated to have a cost of \$315 million. The Halifax Regional Municipality (HRM) has stated, according to McCombs, that they are prepared to cover two-thirds of the cost. The remaining one-third is being sought after from the provincial and federal governments. McCombs was confident that the federal govern-

ment would come through, although he was more skeptical about the aid from the provincial government. When asked what would happen if additional support was not received, McCombs replied that the project would continue, but that the implementation of the project would occur over a longer period of time. Throughout the discussion Mr. McCombs stressed that HRM was completely committed to the project, adding that increased financial support would result in faster implementation and vice versa. The municipality will be drawing some of its funds from a water tax that has been added to the water bills of Halifax municipality residents over the years, as well as from the Pollution Control Fund, leftover from the last cleanup attempt. The water tax comes in majority support from the community, in which 71 percent of the residents polled supported the tax in order to get the harbour cleaned up.

A few issues surrounding the cleanup still remain, one being the cleanup of contaminated sediments. At the moment there is no plan to clean up these sediments, mostly in the direct radius of the outfalls. The reasoning behind this decision, according to McCombs, is the high cost coupled with the fact that the consequences of moving the sediments are not completely understood. Research is currently being conducted at the Bedford Institute of Oceanography on this subject.

Another issue is the bilging of tanks from cruise ships and tankers. Currently tankers and ships using the harbour are not prohibited from bilging their tanks and emptying their sewage into the harbour.

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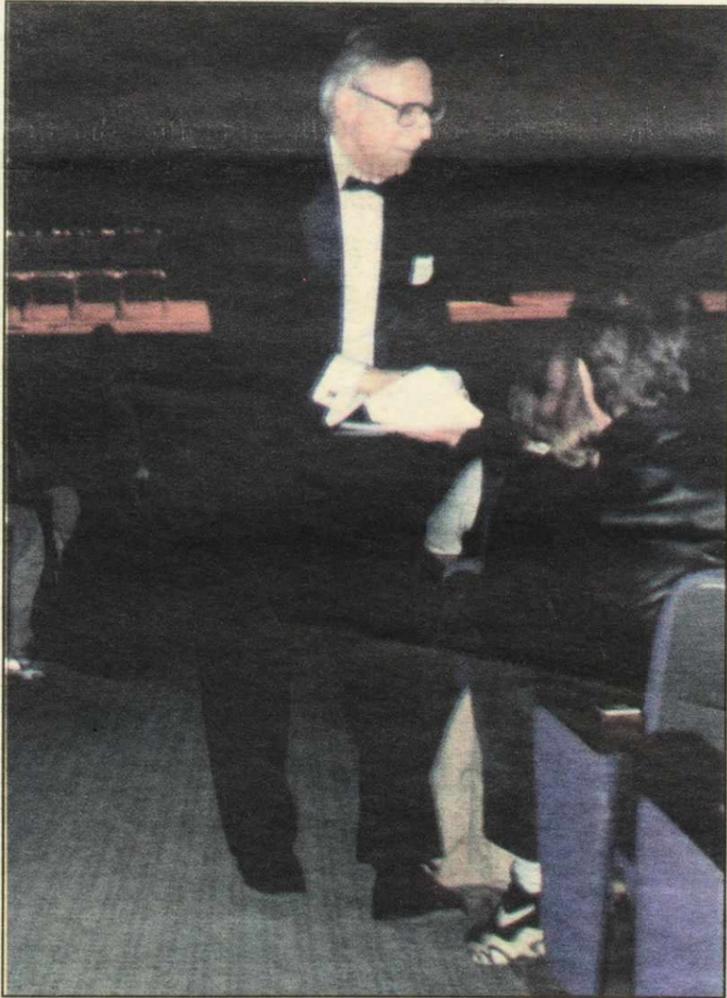


photo by Wazo Nazo

Sleight of mind. See story on page 17.

## Dal charity drive

BY RACHELLE DUMAS

A third year neuroscience student at Dalhousie is playing an active role in a nation-wide campaign dedicated to giving used sports equipment to children in the North West Territories.

Sarah Giles, a Dalhousie student, and her two sisters formed Sporting Partnership of Universities and Northern Communities (SPUNC) in the fall of 1999 after

spending the previous summer in the Northwest Territories working in Waterfront Supervision jobs.

SPUNC is a small nonprofit organization which twins towns in the North with Southern Canadian universities.

In connection with Sport North and Sport Nunavut they conduct needs assessments on towns and match them with a university depending on the need and geo-

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