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8 Venerable dissident

12 Free music

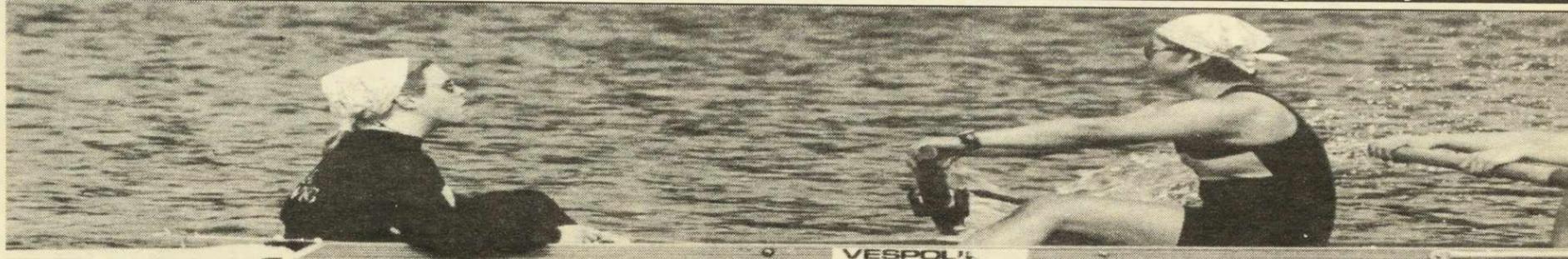


# THE GAZETTE

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Eating disorders and the healthy ideal pg. 9

## LSATs: are they culturally discriminatory?

BY JANET FRENCH

A cultural bias within the Law School Admission Test may place individuals from different cultural backgrounds at a disadvantage when applying for law school.

The test, known as the LSAT, is a multiple choice test written by all law school applicants in North America.

And, according to Carol

Aylward of the Dal Law School, the Human Rights Commission concluded that many standardized tests, including LSATs, are culturally biased.

"Is this method fair?" she asked. "[LSATs] do not accurately predict someone's ability to succeed in law school."

Aylward also says the tests are inadvertently culturally exclusive.

"You have to understand that

this test is put together by members of the dominant culture, so the questions are always based on the dominant culture."

Rocky Jones, a Halifax lawyer and graduate of Dalhousie Law School, says the tests are unquestionably culturally biased.

"[They] are based upon one's appreciation of the experiences around you. If you come from a

background of literacy and literary aids it is much easier to write tests. If you come from a community based on oral traditions, it is much more difficult to write such exams."

Jones also emphasizes that different communities have different ways of utilizing time. He says members of some cultures may experience more difficulty because of the test's rigid time constraints.

But students say cultural discrimination is just one of many problems with the entry tests.

Victor Tuomi, a second-year law student, says the exam is a useless method of determining how

prepared any individual is for law school.

"I don't see how [excelling at] a series of multiple choice questions based on analytical reasoning will help you," he said.

Third-year law student Janet O'Reilly is also opposed to the LSATs and other forms of standardized testing.

"It is a test that is devised in [the United States], so there are a lot of US biases in the exam. I think that there is probably a better way of evaluating people."

continued on page 3



THE SWEET TASTE OF FREE: Dal Students Tasha Richard and Melanie Kayser give away samples of Cranberry Almond Crunch in front of the SUB. Rest assured they were paid for it.

## Reputation of law program questioned

MacLellan's comments 'misinformed and uneducated'

BY JANET FRENCH

Disparaging remarks made by Nova Scotia Premier Russell MacLellan about a law program for Nova Scotian blacks and aboriginals has some concerned that the program's reputation will never be the same.

The Indigenous Black and Mi'kmaq program, or IBM as it is known, was

created to make law school more financially and socially accessible to members of the two communities while increasing the representation of Nova Scotian blacks and Mi'kmaq in Nova Scotia's legal community.

MacLellan's comments suggested that students in the IBM program received a lesser education than ordinary law students.

It was a response to a question asking why the Nova Scotia government hires law firms which have no representation from minority groups.

"It's the fault of the people who want to make believe that they are interested in minorities, the people who want to create a different program for blacks and

aboriginals in law school so they don't get the same education or the same standard as other students do," the Premier said.

Initially, MacLellan said he had nothing to apologize for, but a day later on Dec. 4, he apologized.

"I'm sorry for any hurt that my remarks may have caused graduates, students or the program," he said at the legislature.

The Premier's remarks were met with anger — in part because it was untrue. The academic curriculum requirements of

IBM students is identical to that of other law students.

Carol Aylward, director of the program, says she was incredulous when she heard MacLellan's statement.

"When people are misinformed they make [assumptions] which are not based on reality," she said.

Halifax lawyer Rocky Jones, an IBM graduate who has argued before the Supreme Court of Canada, says MacLellan's remarks were made out of ignorance and arrogance.

"He didn't figure that he

continued on page 3

## Faculty strike stops business as usual at Mount Allison

BY ANDREW SIMPSON

HALIFAX (CUP) — A faculty strike has disrupted classes at Canada's top-ranked undergraduate university, threatening to tarnish the school's reputation and leaving its 2,200 students feeling like hostages.

Professors and librarians at Mount Allison University in Sackville, New Brunswick walked off the job last Thursday morning when their contract negotiations stalled over salary increases.

The professors are seeking a 28-percent salary increase over the next three years, but the university is only offering 16 percent.

Mount Allison consistently ranks first amongst undergraduate

universities in *Maclean's* annual university rankings, partly on the strength of its close student-professor relations.

But those close relations are now at risk, says Mount Allison student union president Sam Millar.

Millar says students are beginning to realize they may be affected by the strike — and are bound to object if they think their future is being used as a bargaining chip.

"The tension is starting to be cranked up," Millar said. "Students have to walk past [striking professors]... and many will now question the strength of those relationships."

Millar says the student union hasn't yet taken sides in the dispute.

George DeBenedetti, who represents the Mount Allison Faculty Association, says the university is earning its top ranking on the backs of the professors.

While Mount Allison ranks first out of 23 schools in the *Maclean's* survey, DeBenedetti says amongst the same schools its faculty ranks twentieth in terms of salary.

And in spite of this disparity, he says the percentage of the school's operating budget spent on salary has decreased steadily throughout the 1990s, while tuition fees continue to increase.

"What we are asking for would barely put us in the top ten

continued on page 4