

Housing Getting Better

Throughout this summer, the rent situation had been looking more promising for returning students.

The Housing Office at Dalhousie and some Dalhousie Legal Aid staff were telling students they had a good opportunity to bargain while apartment-hunting.

But it is now September and any of you who are still looking for a place to stay should hope the situation stays as promising.

Looking at the population shift over the past few years, one shouldn't be optimistic. During a recent CBC Radio show, statistics were given that the average income in Halifax had risen rapidly.

This rise is logical. Halifax is a city and suburbs combined in one small area. Because it is a peninsula, any houses in that peninsula become prime real estate as there are more jobs downtown.

This has meant a boom in condominium construction in the North end of Halifax, and those people who rely on public housing are concerned that they might be shoved off the Halifax "island".

More professionals are moving into the South and North ends of Halifax, tagging \$50,000 incomes and wanting "safe" (read: no minorities or students) neighbourhoods.

In the next few years, the amount of apartment space must surely decrease. Landlords will make more money selling to developers than maintaining apartments, and rent will increase.

This could threaten more than whether a student gets a place to stay near Dalhousie. It means families in the North end, already uprooted by waterfront

development and the destruction of Africville (a Black community destroyed by the construction of the McKay bridge) face the threat of being pushed farther outside the city, outside the job opportunities and quality schools.

While we can be happy about the better situation this year, we should be looking for a long-term solution to what we will be facing.

Low-income families and students in Halifax will need to create the solution together.

In order to preserve space on the peninsula for us, there must be a push to keep the low-rent areas low-rent, and to keep social housing in the city. Since city council has the most power over whether we stay or go, lobbying and endorsing city council members can be vital.

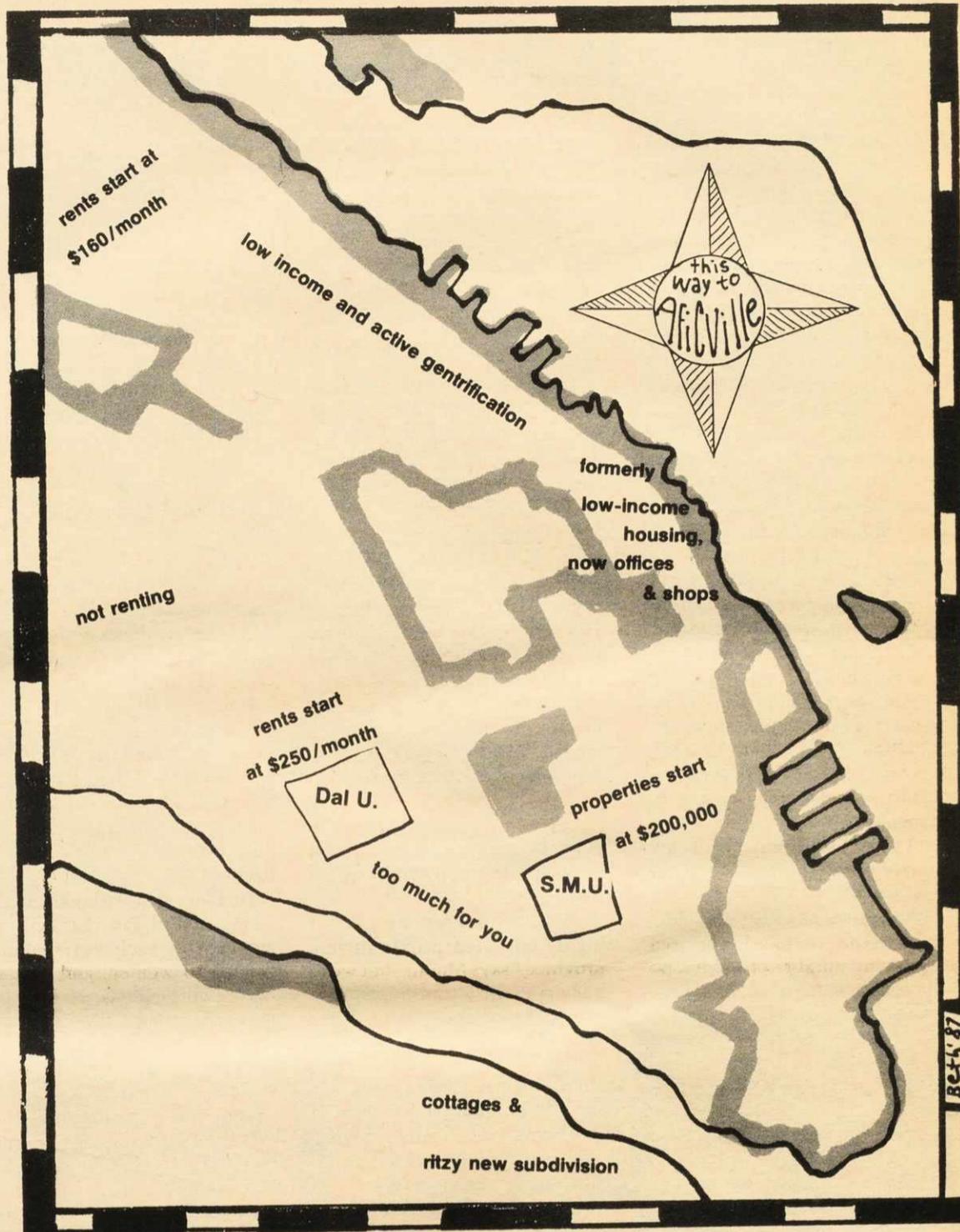
The Uniacke Square housing development has led the way to preserve their housing. This downtown Halifax development is concerned that a proposed "rejuvenation" project of Uniacke Square could mean moving them outside of the city.

"Rejuvenation" of the North end does not mean a better place for low-income people. It means that you will be travelling from two to five kilometres each day to and from university and work, as low-rent houses become high-cost dwellings.

Uniacke Square has faced the situation. Now we should help them in the process. Toronto is now impossible for low rent, or sanitary conditions. Halifax will become the plugged by its geography more easily if trends continue.

A Toronto in Halifax would not be good for any of us, so let's do something. Now.

Geoff Stone



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Commentary should not exceed 700 words, letters should not exceed 300 words. No unsigned material will be accepted, but anonymity may be granted on request.

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The Gazette offices are located on the 3rd floor SUB. Come up and have a coffee and tell us what's going on.

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