

# Cutting corners with EnerAction

BY WAYNE GROSZKO

This February marks the first anniversary of EnerAction, an ongoing project to save energy and money at Dal. EnerAction is coordinated by Physical Plant and Planning's Darrell Boutilier and Ross Farrant.

According to Farrant, the two goals of the project are to facilitate communication with the campus community about energy management, and ultimately, to reduce the university's energy bills.

Each year, Dalhousie spends about \$3 million on electricity, \$1.5 million on oil, and \$0.5 million on water, for a total utility bill of around \$5 million.

EnerAction publishes a quarterly, 4-page newsletter with information on how the heating and cooling systems work, features on energy-saving projects, and tips on how people can help save energy.

Boutilier is hopeful that the cost of publishing the newsletter will be recovered through energy savings. EnerAction is also looking into other forms of communication, such as having a World Wide Web page.

EnerAction has a telephone hotline and an email address, so people can ask questions and make suggestions. Farrant says that while they have received some calls, "The number of calls has not been as many as we would like."

Most of the calls have been of two basic types. The first type is about ongoing comfort problems. For example, some people complain of offices which are too cold in the winter and too hot in the summer. To reduce this problem, a device called an "Infflector" has been fitted on the windows of several offices. This is supposed to keep the office cooler in summer by reflecting out sunlight, and warmer in winter by holding in the

heat. According to Boutilier, this approach has been successful.

The other kind of calls has been from people with ideas for saving energy. People have asked why lights are on all the time in some places, and some callers have wanted to know how much it costs to leave certain pieces of equipment running.

Physical Plant has taken several actions to conserve energy. Turning off the personal computers in the Central Services Building at night is saving about ten thousand dollars per year. In another project, many exit sign lights on campus are being changed from light bulbs to Light Emitting Diodes (LEDs), which take only two watts of power and last much longer. This change will cost twenty-five thousand dollars, but will pay for itself in three-and-a-half years by savings in electricity and maintenance.

The Killam Library is being renovated to improve ventilation and install energy efficient lighting. If all goes well, the library will be a better study environment, while saving electricity.

Boutilier and Farrant say that they have about sixty ideas on the table for projects to save energy, but the amount of funding available to invest in these projects is limited, so they must choose one at a time. When a project is successful in reducing the energy budget, the money saved is removed from the budget to cut costs, rather than re-invested in the next project.

The EnerAction initiative has support within the university administration, and Farrant and Boutilier are actively seeking feedback from the campus community. You can call the EnerAction hotline at 494-1223 with questions, ideas, or suggestions. By email, EnerAction can be reached at darrell.boutilier@dal.ca or ross.farrant@dal.ca.

# Students to go to UN conference

BY WAYNE GROSZKO

Several Dalhousie students have volunteered to gather the input of Metro area youth for a United Nations conference.

The second UN Conference on Human Settlement (nicknamed Habitat 2) will take place this June in Istanbul, Turkey. The conference will try to develop policies to address some of the difficulties caused by rapid urbanization. The migration of people from rural to urban areas is a worldwide phenomenon and many of the people who move to the city are youth in search of opportunities.

Youth groups across Canada and in other countries are organizing under the name "Youth for Habitat 2" in an effort to bring the perspectives and ideas of young people to the conference table.

Amanda Lavers, a Dalhousie student, is helping to organize a workshop in Halifax this Saturday, February 3, from 1:00 to 3:30 pm, at 2099 Gottingen Street. The workshop is entitled "Urbanization & all of its crazy implications."

The workshop will be very casual, and issues such as poverty, food, homeless youth, and sustainability are on the agenda, said Lavers. She hopes to focus on success stories such as the affordable housing cooperatives and community gardens which exist in Atlantic Canada. The workshop is cosponsored by Youth for Habitat 2 and Youth for Social Justice, and all interested people are welcome.

Similar workshops are taking place in other regions of Canada, and representatives from across Canada will go to Ottawa on February 4 to form a team and head to a preparatory meeting called PrepComIII in New York, beginning on February 5. In New York, the youth representatives will voice the concerns and ideas of youth to the official delegations as the conference agenda is finalised.

Several youth representatives will travel to Istanbul in June to participate in the conference itself. It is not yet known how many Canadian youths will participate, or from which regions they'll hail.

Canadian youths will also be publishing a book and producing videos to document their stories, concerns, and ideas about housing rights and sustainable cities.

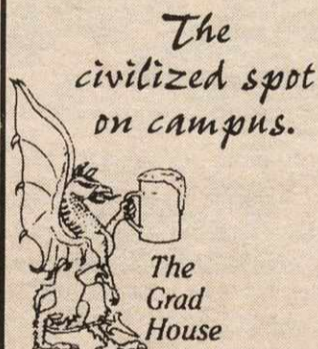
For more information about Youth for Habitat 2, email Amanda Lavers (ae208@ccn.cs.dal.ca), or drop a note to "Youth for Habitat 2," c/o NSPIRG at the information desk in the SUB.

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