

## Writers write up a storm to protest arts cutbacks

By LAURA LUSH

A chain letter started by Canadian authoress Margaret Atwood and author Graeme Gibson has had hundreds of responses, according to a spokesperson from The Writers' Center.

The letter was started in early February in reaction to the federal government's heavy budget cutbacks in the field of Canadian arts. The government cut \$85 million alone from the CBC's budget, in an early Fall announcement. The cutbacks affected all areas of the CBC, especially programming.

The letter was sent with an attached statement to various cultural and professional organizations, in hopes that each letter would be sent to three other people. This would mean the government could receive close to 100,000 statements before their announcement of the Spring budget. The statement asks Prime Minister Brian Mulroney to not interfere with the "creative freedom" of the arts by maintaining the independence of the Canada Council and not "starving such agencies as the CBC." Canadian artists depend on Canada Council grants to provide funding for their various projects.

Calling the cutbacks the "government's assault on the arts," the statement accuses the government of failing to acknowledge "the astonishing maturation of our collective culture over the past twenty years." In order to preserve the cultural quality of life in Canada, the statement asks the government to "generously and thoughtfully increase its



financial and moral support" to the arts.

The chain letter asks that all those parties sending statements to Prime Minister Mulroney forward a postcard to The Writers' Center so they can monitor the response. So far the response has "been fabulous" the spokesperson said. The center has received an average of 10 to 20 postcards a day, since its distribution. The Writers' Center sent out more than 650 letters through their newsletters. Other literary organizations such as the Canadian Authors Association, and the League of Canadian Poets have also been distributing the letter. "Virtually anyone affected by the cutbacks have expressed their interest in distributing the letter," the spokesperson added. A petition that started in February in BC is making its way across the country to complement the chain letter, she added.

## other campuses

By ADAM BRYANT

### More english

Even as Quebec's acting premier declared the Parti Quebecois' commitment to keep Montreal french last month, the provincial government approved funding which will give the city's English universities more library space than French universities.

When Concordia University's new downtown library opens in 1988, Concordia and McGill Universities together will have 49,086 square metres of library space, compared to the 43,603 square metre combined total at the Université de Montreal and Université du Quebec à Montreal.

The Parti Quebecois government will contribute \$18.5 million to the new Concordia library, announced Yves Berube, Science and Technology and Advanced Education minister in Montreal recently.

A day earlier, coming out of a cabinet meeting, Quebec's Acting Premier Bernard Landry told reporters he hoped for the renaissance of groups promoting the French fact in Quebec, like the "McGill Français" movement of the 1960s.

In 1969, 5,000 Montreal university students provoked a riot when they marched on McGill, demanding that it teach only in French.

Arlette Goffe, the director of libraries at Université de Montreal, said English university libraries have larger collections because giving money to university libraries was always a tradition of Anglo-Saxon alumni.

"In Quebec, you gave money to

the church or someone else," Goffe said. "Francophone institutions are funded only by the state," not through private donations.

—The Cord Weekly  
Wilfred Laurier University

### Students not facing the world

As the prospect of hitting the job market quickly approaches, students must begin to muster up the energy and persistence needed for the hunt. At Mt. Saint Vincent University in Halifax, however, students there seem to be simply not interested.

Student services counsellor Ann Westmore-Foshay said the job market is so hopeless an average of only 15 students turned up for Career Week workshops.

"If students think about job searching, they are making a conscious effort to face the world," she said. "Maybe students don't want to take that step forward."

A counsellor at the Canada Employment Center in Halifax agreed students are discouraged. Bruna Caracristi said the depressed employment mood is shown by the



decrease in both the number and quality of applications at the center.

"Students are not coming into the office until they've been unemployed for a few months," she said. "If students acquired job searching skills, they would have a better chance of finding employment earlier."

—The Charlatan  
Carleton University

### Hobo haunts Brock U.

A report about an alleged "hobo" who claims to have lived quite comfortably off Brock University for four months has prompted security officials to impose a midnight curfew on campus.



The crackdown started after the Press, the university's student newspaper, published an anonymous letter from a man who claimed to have lived in a university back room for four months, shoplifted from the campus general store, took showers in the school's phys-ed building, and ate leftovers from the students' plates in the university cafeteria.

"After hours, we're going to be challenging everybody we see," said security chief Doug Roberts. "The open season is over."

—Imprint  
University of Waterloo

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