

Is it worth the wait?

by Ann Woodworth

It is the middle of August. "Sharon" is looking forward to starting her first year at Dalhousie in less than three weeks. But she is frustrated with having to look for a nice apartment or room in Halifax at the last minute.

Sharon is one of the many students who have not yet received a room in residence, but have been placed on a waiting list.

Most first-year students visualize residence life as one of the main components of their first year. Living in residence not only provides a roof over their heads, it enables them to meet others,

share in residence activities, and develop friendships that will last through their college years.

Some who don't make it into residence feel left out of the university scene. "I just don't feel like I'm in university", complains one woman who has had to get an apartment by herself. "This isn't what I thought my first year would be like."

This is the first year there have still been people waiting for a room this late in the term. The housing office keeps three lists for each residence: one for first-year students, one for those returning to residence, and one for all others, transfer and mature students. As a student withdraws from

residence, their place is filled by another from the same category.

Preference is given to first-year applicants; over half the beds are reserved for them. This year, a large enrollment at Dalhousie and numerous applications have made it impossible to accommodate everyone. This has been more of a problem in the women's houses, which always get more applications than the men's Howe Hall.

Waiting lists move the most in the month before classes start in September. Slower movement continues throughout the fall, as some people drop out following midterms and over Christmas. People further down on the lists



still have some chance of getting a room. The housing Office estimates that 90 per cent of applicants for residence eventually do get a room. Waiting lists are not cut off until everyone on them has either received a room or found an alternative place to live.

A new procedure for applying for residence will come into effect in the spring. Residence applica-

tions will be sent out along with acceptance letters, instead of the student having to write the Housing Office for them, giving everyone an equal chance at obtaining a room.

For now, there are still first-year students waiting for a room, feeling left out of campus life, and hoping just one or two more people will drop out.



Famous for their parties

Student leaders go crazy

OTTAWA (CUP) — It's amazing what student leaders will do when they're miles away from their constituencies.

Take, for example, the Canadian Federation of Students' all-night bash held November 6 at the Beacon Arms Hotel in lovely downtown Ottawa.

We've been hearing nasty rumours about the behaviour of people who are, supposedly, the leaders of the student movement in Canada.

Several of these rumours have even been confirmed by various federation higher-ups and the security guard at the building opposite the hotel.

These same people marched on Parliament Hill Thursday to demand the federal government take them seriously.

If the feds need ammunition in their attempts to discredit the CFS and their demands for legitimacy, they should talk to the manager of the Beacon Arms.

There was "noise through the night," one of the hotel managers told our spies, requesting anonymity.

Monday night's bash allegedly featured partying until at least 5 am, with some sources claiming the festivities lasted until 7 am. And it wasn't confined to the hotel rooms.

Apparently, delegates were treating the Beacon Arms like a university residence, making all kinds of noise in the halls during the wee hours and tossing objects from a third-floor balcony.

"Things just got out of control," admitted CFS chair Jane Arnold.

What is out of control? And just what were those objects?

Arnold often uses the term "out of control" jokingly to describe CFS national executives' giddy behaviour after marathon 12-hour meetings. This "out of control" was another matter entirely, however, as the police became involved.

Someone or several people dropped one or several beer bottles and a paint can. A security guard, working across the street

called the cops after one projectile from on high nearly hit a passerby.

Ostensibly, the party was emanating from a second floor 'hospitality suite' where the federation's Pacific region was selling Kokanee beer in seemingly endless quantities for 50 cents a crack.

Cans weren't falling from the sky, however, which leads our sources to believe the real animals were elsewhere.

The manager said it's natural when you put that many young people in a hotel together, "they get, sometimes, a bit party-minded." But, he added, there's "really no major problem," noting the delegates were well-behaved Tuesday night.

That came after a threat of eviction from the hotel which led to a tongue-lashing from CFS chair Jane Arnold at Tuesday's plenary.

The phenomenon is hardly new although the hotel manager said this past meeting was the most raucous he had seen since the CFS began using the hotel for their meetings nine years ago.

Conferences like this one are famous for their parties.

What a pleasant thought: student associations across the country coughing up hundreds of dollars to fly their executives to far-away cities to drink their faces off with impunity. The next day, they are expected to drag themselves out of bed, eyes red, head throbbing, and make important decisions on our behalf.

— Jacques Poitras,
Chris Lawson

New abortion bill offers no solutions

by Chris Lawson

OTTAWA (CUP) — The proposed criminal law on abortion is a dangerous infringement on women's rights, pro-choice leaders say.

While the bill, which makes having an abortion without valid "social, psychological or economic cause" punishable by two years in jail, isn't as limiting as what many observers had expected, Judith Allen said it still "stinks."

The spokesperson for the National Association of Women and the Law said the bill tabled last week by Justice Minister Doug Lewis contains provisions similar to the old law struck down in 1988 by the Supreme Court.

The old abortion law (authorized by then-Minister of Justice John Turner) required women seeking abortions to prove their need to a hospital committee. But

standards for what constituted a valid need for an abortion varied wildly from province to province.

Allen said the proposed law would have the same problem.

"If you're in Ontario you could say you were stressed out and that might be enough reason to have an abortion," she said. "But if you go to Charlottetown, the doctor might say, 'well, you're not suicidal, so you don't qualify.'"

"Women in rural areas, in the north, in Nova Scotia, in Newfoundland will not have the same kind of access to abortions because the law will be applied differently," she added.

This aspect of the old law was found to violate women's right to security of person, Allen said.

The bill would also leave the door open for "ex-boyfriends, family or neighbours" to bring a complaint against a woman they felt was getting an 'illegal' abortion, Allen said.

Allen said the bill could force women who wanted abortions

because their birth control failed to have the child or face prosecution.

"In effect, it makes them criminally liable for the act of being sexually active," she said. "I this country, that's not a crime now, but this bill would make it that way."

Canadian Abortion Rights Action League official Nicole Jasmin said the bill was a move to pacify the anti-choice minority.

"It's very difficult to justify this bill to the anti-choice minority," she said. "It makes me wonder what are they promising down the road. All they would have to do is take out the word 'psychological' and abortions would be virtually impossible to perform legally."

"It's very dangerous," she added.

Under the proposed bill, it will be up to doctors to decide whether a woman has a valid need for an abortion.