

# Dalhousie an issue in Ward 2

by Paul Creelman

Despite conflicts over areas from parking to disturbances by Dal students, Alderman Ron Cromwell says that the city has no serious disputes with Dal. However, he quickly added that there were problems, and that he hoped to meet with the vice-president and bring some of these up for discussion.

"I personally don't have any problem with Dal — I feel that we can do something with the parking situation. We've been getting a lot of flak about the fraternities. I'm sure that you can understand this, because many of the flat houses are located in residential areas. The parties until 2, 3 or 4 in the morning and the goings on disturb people nearby. This doesn't happen with all of the fraternities, but we have received a lot of complaints."

"Despite the fact that the frat houses are not part of the university, they are, because

the people in the fraternities all go to the university.

President MacKay feels that problems with fraternities are beyond the power of the university to deal with:

"Despite what people may think, we can't ban the fraternities — we have no more power to control the actions of the frats with respect to their houses than the city of Halifax does."

Jim Sykes, director of the physical plant at Dal, feels that Dal is a "wolf with no teeth" in the city. (Sykes was referring to a comment made in the aldermanic debate three weeks ago that Dal was a "property wolf" in the nearby community.)

"It's fair game for every politician in the city to bite Dalhousie, but we can't bite back", stated Sykes.

"However, we've been working with the city to resolve some of the problems which have arisen. Out of the regional zoning plan, which the city

has been working with for two years, we'll emerge with a plan for 1981 that we can live with, and the neighbors can get along with. We've agreed on boundary lines on property that Dal owns or can own in the future, and also agreed to maintain a certain number of parking spaces, I think 730, to deal with parking."

Complaints about soot from the generating plant are being dealt with by the physical plant, says Sykes.

"This is a problem which is in a different category from some of the others", said Sykes.

"I'll argue for a long time about the right of Dalhousie to use city parking, just as much as anyone else, but the situation with the soot is something that we just have to solve ourselves."

Sykes states that steps are being taken to correct the problem with soot, which was due to a change in the type of fuel oil used in the plant.

# Prof claims silences are significant in Dickens

by Michael McCarthy

The importance of Dickens' description of Victorian life lies not in his explicit themes but in his unconscious attitudes to society, according to Norman Feltes, assistant professor of English at York University, who spoke at the English Department last Friday.

Feltes, a Marxist-Structuralist critic, said that Dickens' vision is defined not by what he sees, but by what he doesn't see. This is illustrated, he said, when the author does not comment on an inspector shaking down the poor boy Jo, indicating that Dickens saw nothing unjust about a policeman's right to treat the lower class in such a manner.

In answer to the questioning of the validity of traditional study and criticism of literature, and even the value of literature as a separate classification at all, Feltes tries to interpret literature in the context of set Marxist political and social theories. His research has been an attempt at a concrete enterprise in interdisciplinary Victorian studies, recently centering on Dickens.

Feltes read his paper "Reading a London Particular; *Bleak House*, the City and the Ideology", and a discussion followed. The theme of *Bleak House* manifests itself in imagery and acts of vision, he maintained. The action hinges on what characters see, and what they make of what they see, with distinctions between vision, half-vision, and non-vision. There is a presence throughout of something unseen; something beyond, or on the fringes of the novel. There is a dark nature of relation-

ships not spoken about clearly, resulting from the struggle by Dickens to know what he cannot, without the full historical significance of the events of his time (the shaping forces of which are not empirically determinable).

From a modern viewpoint, with this historical distance and knowledge, Feltes finds that one can see the true



historical picture of London most clearly where Dickens' actual analysis breaks down. The tension between his ideology and the reality of the time is visible in "significant silences" in which the sociological formation of Victorian London can be seen, as it changed from a mainly

residential city to an industrial capitalist centre. The author's ideologies cause him to miss the true relations involved, which the later critic can derive from the text with a full knowledge of what the eventual sociological evolutions were. There is, then, a "visible in the invisible"; something that can be seen in Dickens' work that Dickens can't see. He attempted to portray Victorian London as an expressed totality, when it was in fact an incomplete gathering of forces (i.e. the triumph of capitalism).

The question was raised whether or not Dickens was aware of the true forces at work and the relationships in society, but omitted explicit statement of them in an attempt to delineate the stark reality through irony. Feltes opined that no one at that time could have recognized the shaping forces at work, since they had only a partial view of their historical importance, and lacked the sociological/political theories of analysis that have since been evolved.

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