

Black studies a no-go at McGill

MONTREAL (CUP) — McGill University's history department refuses to approve a proposal by the Black Students' Network for a black history course.

The BSN wants a mandatory black history course for history students taught by a professor of African descent.

But the committee said there isn't enough money to hire new professors next year, and that the department does not hire on the basis of race, BSN member Miriam Kaba said.

"We expected this excuse to be used by the university's administration," said Kaba. "However, budget constraints can't excuse the pressing need for hiring more professors of colour."

"It is ridiculous that McGill graduates know very little about the contributions of Africans, whether it be the Moors' dominance in Europe for eight hundred years up until the advent of slavery, or the ancient black civilization of Egypt," said BSN member Dave Austin. "Most don't even know that the history of humankind began in Africa."

Universities such as Dalhousie and the University of Toronto offer black studies programs.

Morgentaler courting again

HALIFAX (CUP) — In an attempt to regain control of its health care system, the Nova Scotia government is taking Henry Morgentaler to court — again.

The government has argued the Morgentaler clinic violates the provincial Medical Services Act which lists nine medical procedures that cannot be performed outside a hospital setting, including abortion.

But two provincial court judges have ruled the act unconstitutional on the grounds that the regulation of abortion is an area of federal concern.

The Public Prosecutions Service has asked the Supreme Court of Canada to decide whether the federal government or the province has the authority to pass laws on the matter, said Peter Spurway, spokesperson for the provincial Attorney General's office.

There is no federal law criminalizing abortion in Canada.

In 1988, the Supreme Court struck down Section 215 of the Canadian Criminal Code — which regulated abortion — on the grounds that it violated the Charter of Rights and Freedoms.

Establishing national standards

OTTAWA (CUP) — A Liberal MP is pushing a bill that could lead to the development of "national standards" for all levels of education.

Stuart Smith released a report — commissioned by the Association of Universities and Colleges of Canada — in early October which said universities were fundamentally healthy.

"Stuart Smith says the system is fine," said Mac Harb. "I say it's not fine. If it's fine, why do 50 per cent of university students not finish their degrees?"

Harb introduced Bill C-318 in the House of Commons Oct. 23.

If it passes, the bill will investigate setting a national standard for all levels of education.

He said the bill has "to send out a signal, there has to be a minimum standard that has to be achieved."

The bill, which has passed first reading, is being circulated among members of a Canada-wide ad hoc committee investigating national education standards.

Reporting sexual assault at Concordia

MONTREAL (CUP) — Concordia University is inching towards its first comprehensive system of sexual assault reporting on campus.

Information from the reports will allow the university to compile statistics on the number, types and locations of campus assaults.

Health services director Nancy Torbit said the problem stems from the fact that women can report assaults to several campus organizations including campus security, the women's centre, health services, the status of women office, the student council, and the sexual harassment office.

Women's Centre co-ordinator Danette Steele said a co-ordinated system of reporting will force the university to take responsibility for dealing with the bigger problem.

"It lends support to women's voices that, yes, this is happening," said Steele. "And when there is a recognition that the problem exists, something can be done collaboratively in terms of prevention."

Travel agency investigated

BY JERRY WEST

You might want to stop payment on the cheque for your spring break trip.

The Dalhousie Student Union is investigating allegations that one travel company operating on campus has engaged in some shady dealings. Student Travel Services (STS) is offering a \$299 trip to Cancun, and one to Daytona.

Started in 1987, the London, Ontario based STS has a history of unsatisfied customers. The London *Free Press*, in March of 1990, reported 20 high-school students had their vacation cancelled by STS the night before they were to leave. STS attributed the problem to a travel wholesaler. However, they waited long enough to contact the students that some were left waiting for a bus at 5 am in the

rain. The bus never came, and their refund was almost as slow.

According to the University of Western Ontario's *Gazette*, some Western students were promised a beach-side hotel. Instead they got "a real dive" that was far enough

*they're all
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away to get beaten up on the way back from the beach.

The students also claimed they had been promised transportation to the airport. When it came time to leave though, their representative told them to find their own way.

Other allegations against STS

include that they booked a dozen students to stay in one room, supplied rooms inferior to those advertised, and once tried to force a student representative to sign a waiver absolving STS of all responsibility before they would provide return transportation.

Scott Smith of Student Travel Services denies the relevance of these allegations.

"If you look into any travel company, they're all going to have complaints, he said. "We have less than two per cent complaints."

Lori Siemens of the London Better Business Bureau said that the bureau has been receiving complaints about the company's performance for the past three years. "Based on their past history, Student Travel Services shows a pattern of failure to provide services offered."

Have a chemical Christmas

BY GUY MAJOR

Consumers buying Christmas trees might also be buying into landfills, synthetic chemicals and land that is used only to meet this holiday demand.

According to Mark Janowitz at the Clean Nova Scotia Foundation, trees in landfills don't decompose properly because air can't get at them.

"The trees just sit there creating methane and acidic fluids which leach out into the water table."

Janowitz says that the Foundation doesn't propose that society does away with the Christmas tree tradition. But he says they have, along with the city, started a program whereby the trees are collected for chipping rather than wasted. He says that last year, 20,000 were collected in Halifax.

Janowitz says that his group has not come out against the use of pesticides and herbicides in tree production, in addition to the trees' natural pesticides.

Lance Makmillen, a carpenter who lives near Caledonia, is affected by Haligonians buying synthetic chemical-laden trees. "At one point they were spraying within 30 feet of the road where our kids walk to school every day."

Makmillen says that the chemical they were using was diazinon which he claims was never tested for carcinogens but can cause fetus deformities and liver damage.

Peter Ronkey, Christmas tree specialist with the Department of Natural Resources, agrees that chemicals such as these are not healthy, but has no problem with them, "...as long as you are following the directions." He adds that

the sprayed trees are not a threat to consumers because, "...there would be no residue on the trees when they're picked off the lot."

Jim Drechier, an organic farmer from Lunenburg county, believes that Christmas tree farming is wasteful.

"The use of land whereby natural forest growth or agriculture is

prevented is shameful, especially in our time," he said.

Ronkey says that just under 10% of Nova Scotia Christmas trees are grown on old agricultural land. He doesn't think it's a waste of land because, "...it's a cottage industry which employs 400-600 permanently and 2500-3000 seasonally."

Freeze chills BoG

BY DAWN MITCHELL

HALIFAX (CUP) — Student activism at Dalhousie University has resulted in the endorsement of a province-wide tuition freeze for 1992/93 by the two government opposition parties.

In one moment of solidarity, hundreds of Dal students protested the Board of Governors' proposal to increase tuition by 10 per cent — on top of the 25 per cent hike last September.

With the media attention, accessibility to a post-secondary education has become a political hot potato.

"The rally (on Nov. 19) made the Board of Governors aware that students are unhappy and unable to pay any further tuition increase," said Peter Pottier, president of the Dalhousie Students' Union.

Pottier has been arranging meetings with members of all provincial parties to ask for their support of the DSU's plan.

He is still waiting to meet with Progressive conservative premier Don Cameron.

Pottier initially wanted the gov-

ernment to pressure the Dal BoG to consider a tuition freeze until there was time to study student assistance programs, but both Vince MacLean, Liberal leader, and John Holm, New Democratic Party education critic, have asked for provincial regulation of all tuitions.

"These are very tough economic times," said MacLean, "and if there was ever a time when we should be encouraging students to stay in school it's now."

He said a tuition freeze combined with an examination of the bursary structures and summer employment schemes is the only viable way to keep Nova Scotia schools accessible.

Holm agreed. "A study of the bursary program is long overdue and we are very critical of what the government has done over the past year," he said.

Beginning last year, students were required to accept a full student loan of \$3360 before being eligible for a bursary.