



Herds of people turned out to the annual Pharmacy Skit night.

PHOTO: CRYSTAL LEVY

Fun with pharmacists

by Gazette staff

Rivalry between classes was intense, but good-natured, when the Dalhousie Society of Pharmacy Students gathered in the Sir James Dunn theatre to poke fun at themselves, their professors, and their occupation at their annual skit night last Thursday.

"Skit night is a tradition that's been going on longer than anyone can remember," said Beth Wilson, a professor of first-year pharmacy.

"Most of us [professors] usually get portrayed at some point in the course of the night, but it's all in good fun," she said. Invariably portrayed by students in a blue golf shirt, bright tartan skirt, and bubbling over with excessive joy, Wilson said, "I guess some of us are just easier to portray than others. I must say though, they certainly do a good job of it!"

First-year students chose to spoof television shows like *Jeopardy!* and *Saturday Night Live* in their skit, and

even included a commercial for a special pharmacist's workout video — jumping to reach high shelves and working their hips as they stirred with an imaginary mortar and pestle.

In "Alice in Pharmacy Land", by the second-year class, Alice (played by Lee McBride) fell asleep in class and was transported to a dream world of dancing organic chemistry and a bizarre tea party.

The third-year class chose to spoof "Robin Hood, Prince of Thieves", but with a twist — Robin Hood and his Merry Men stole from the rich to provide overpriced drugs for the poor.

The fourth-year students, who all suddenly acquired western accents, called their skit "The Pony Rx Express". Bounty hunters sat around a campfire eating beans, a herd of cows performed a country line dance, and "Wanted" posters were put up for professors Matthew 'Mad Dog' Wright and Tom Birkness.

"It's quite competitive; every year wants to win," said Jeff Legere, who

played Prince John in the third year's skit. "I think we did better than last year, although we're still not winning! Every year, everyone seems to get a little better."

Despite DSPS president Julie Romkey's attempt to bribe the judges with chocolate chip cookies, the second-year class overwhelmed the judges with their singing, dancing, and acting abilities, and won the event this year.

"More than anything, it was fun," said fourth-year student Candace White, who helped write the Pony Rx Express Skit. "I'm kind of biased, but I'm surprised how well everyone pulled it together on such short notice."

The culmination of a week of activities — which included a pub crawl, a lecture series, and a casino night, skit night was organized this year by second year student Drina Zunic, and MC'd by Steve Graham and Eric Baker. All proceeds from the DSPS skit night went to the Metro Food Bank.

Gift buys Sony academic voice

by Kristin Andrews

MONTREAL (CUP) — The McGill University music department has traded partial control of its curriculum in return for equipment from a major corporation.

McGill struck a deal with Sony Classical Productions that guarantees Sony representation on the curriculum committee of the Faculty of Music. In exchange, McGill got \$250,000 worth of high-end audio equipment on indefinite loan and a guarantee that two graduates would be hired each year as interns by the corporation.

Calling the agreement an unprecedented violation of academic freedom, McGill's Senate voted January 19 to condemn any deal which grants a profit-making corporation a say in the school curriculum. While the agreement with Sony has been in effect since June, 1992, it was a secret to most senators until last week.

It is unclear how the Senate's motion will affect the agreement.

Instead of including a Sony representative per se on the curriculum committee, the Faculty of Music has hired an employee of Sony as an adjunct professor in the department. Christian Constantinov, the vice president of audio operations for Sony Classical Productions, Inc. in New York City, now teaches three days a month in the graduate faculty of music at McGill. This gives him a vote on the curriculum committee.

As an adjunct professor who also holds another job, Constantinov is not unique in the university. But even adjunct professors who work outside the university are hired as individuals, and not as representatives of corporations.

On behalf of Sony, Constantinov

negotiated an agreement that said the university would "appoint a designated member of Sony to be a voting member of the University's... committee... for creating and/or approving the curriculum of the University regarding music and sound recording."

Michael Temelini, post-graduate representative to the university's Board of Governors, said he finds the agreement "completely shocking."

"Whether Constantinov is eminently qualified or not is not the issue," Temelini said. "The fact is that they hired this guy totally without regard for regular hiring procedure."

Sam Noumoff, a senator and political science professor, said the agreement signals a change in the relationship between businesses and schools.

"Increasingly, companies and private foundations are now insisting upon a direct role in the management of monies that they make available," he said.

Noumoff said that what Sony gets is essentially a cheap training camp for employees. Considering the high cost of teachers' salaries and facilities at McGill, even very pricey audio equipment seems like an incidental expense in comparison.

"The public purse is paying for their training," Noumoff said.

The two graduates Sony hired as interns last year have since been given permanent jobs at the company.

Since Sony has input at the teaching level in the graduate program in sound recording, they can ensure that McGill grads are well-trained in the types of skills Sony doesn't want to have to pay to teach for themselves, Noumoff said.

While the high-tech recording equipment may have been a bargaining chip on Sony's part, it was exactly what the music faculty needed.

Raymond Luk, a second-year music student at McGill said that most students in the department know about the new equipment from Sony. "The general consensus is that it's a really good thing," he said.

"This is some very very special equipment," said Professor Bruce Pennycook. "There are only a few of these machines in the world." Pennycook teaches computer applications in music at McGill.

Having the Sony equipment has enabled the music department's special graduate program in sound recording to come into the nineties, said John Grew, Dean of Music.

"It's a huge amount of money," Grew said of the Sony contribution. "My capital equipment budget for the entire Faculty of Music is half of that."

Private funding for the program is not at all unusual, Grew said. Over 75 per cent of the Faculty's money comes from sources outside the university.

But the question in this case is not the source of the funding, but what the corporation gets in return, said Noumoff.

"Let Sony or anybody else make a donation to the music school," Noumoff said. When you give them a position on the faculty in exchange, however, "you inevitably bend academic decisions to conform to the donor's will."

Astronomically controversial

by G. Bruce Rolston

TORONTO (CUP) — The University of Toronto is pulling out of a controversial telescope project, citing expense as the main reason.

Acting astronomy chair Donald Fernie said the university will not seek involvement in the Mount Graham astronomical project, but downplayed the role of recent protests in the decision.

"It's not true to say just because of the demonstrations we decided to pull out," he said.

Project planners at the University of Arizona hope to establish one or more telescopes to join the two already on Arizona's Mount Graham.

Native activists are opposing the project, saying it encroaches on sacred Apache Nation land. Some environmentalists have also opposed further telescope building, which they say may interfere with the habitat of an endangered local species of squirrel.

The University of Toronto has been considering a possible involvement for the last two years. Now, Fernie says the university does not have the financial resources to pursue involvement in the project.

"If we were to join the project the university would have to raise \$25 to \$30 million for it. That was seen clearly just not to be on."

A coalition of activist groups has been opposing Toronto's involvement in the project for sev-

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eral months. They greeted the news of the pull-out with enthusiasm.

"We were really pleased," said activist Andrea Calver. "People are hoping that with this pull-out the project may not be feasible."

In December, the University of Arizona drew wide criticism for continuing development on the Mount Graham site, cutting down 250 old-growth trees to make way for the third telescope.

Leanne Mallet, of the environmental group Earth First!, said protesters in Arizona would be heartened by U of T's withdrawal, so soon after this recent defeat.

"This is big news in Arizona. Anything that happens around it is big news."

Better than flipping burgers

by Mark Crane

WINDSOR (CUP) - John Scott graduated last June with a BA in sociology. He was hoping to go on to law school. Instead, he's working on

the assembly line at Chrysler Canada's Windsor Assembly Plant.

When the company created a third shift assembling its popular minivan this year, it hired 960 new employees — many of whom are university grads. This follows a growing trend of manufacturers hiring educated workers for what used to be unskilled jobs.

"I don't see doing this as a career," says Scott, who earns about \$700 a week on the line. "I guess the majority of guys I work with are doing it on an interim basis."

"But if you would have asked me when I started university if I thought I would be working on the line, I would have said 'Yeah, right'."

Walt McCall, Chrysler's manager of corporate and public relations, says the 'new' industrial workplace will need many more university graduates to do jobs that were formerly for unskilled workers. "These people have to be capable of being trained to a higher level of technology," he says.

According to Norm Solomon, a business professor at the University of Windsor, "Working on the line is not the same as it was 30 or 40 years ago. There is technical knowledge you can absorb and you have to understand how technology works — it's much more demanding to the intelligence."

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