

Safe sex brouhaha

Article offends homophobes

by Jeff Harrington

HALIFAX (CUP) — The mass media have "cupped the boat" in the brouhaha over a safer-sex article published in a Newfoundland student newspaper, say the paper's supporters.

"It's really unfortunate the media pounced on this and defined it immediately as being about offending people — rather than as a health education issue," said Gary Kinsman, a sociology professor at Memorial University who has done extensive research on AIDS education issues.

The Feb. 15 article, called, "A gay men's guide to erotic safer sex", was part of the annual lesbian and gay supplement published by *The Muse* at Memorial University in St. John's. It used explicit language and erotic scenarios to show gay men how to enjoy sex while reducing the risk of spreading HIV — the virus thought to cause AIDS. It was accompanied by a suggestive graphic taken from a pamphlet on oral sex produced by the AIDS Committee of Toronto.

Kinsman said the media's fascination with the various negative reactions to the article — rather than its intent — has created a "hysterical" atmosphere which

could stifle crucial discussion about AIDS education.

"This is a brilliant illustration of how the homophobia in society is preventing us from doing the effective safe-sex and AIDS education we have to do."

Kinsman said community-based AIDS groups in New York, San Francisco, Toronto and Vancouver have been highly successful in reducing rates of HIV transmission among men — but only by using the approach taken by the article in *The Muse*. To work, the message must be explicit, gay and sex-positive, actually showing people how to have safe sex and use language appropriate to the community it is aimed at.

"This is the type of work that succeeds. This is what works," said Kinsman.

After the supplement appeared, Memorial president Arthur May told the St. John's *Evening Telegram* the article was "pornographic" and suggested the Feb. 15 edition could raise tuition fees by hurting alumni donations. Newspapers and radio shows from as far away as Montreal called *The Muse* after Memorial's student council said it would establish a publishing board to oversee the paper's editorial content. The Royal New-

foundland Constabulary's statement that it would launch an investigation made *The Globe and Mail's* national edition. In St. John's, *The Sunday Express* advised the lesbian and gay communities to "take care not to lose sight of their longer-term social goals."

"A gay men's guide to safer sex"

"What long-term goal are they referring to - that we should book funeral parlors?" asked Padraic

Brake, the gay rights activist who co-wrote the controversial article.

Brake, a student at Memorial, said explicit, gay-positive education has been proven effective in study after study. He said the article was a "replication of safe-sex material used in other North American cities," based on the guidelines of the Canadian AIDS Society. The national umbrella group's booklet on safe-sex education urges that "a variety of specifically tailored terms be used for the many different needs of people, in their own erotic vocabularies."

"It wasn't meant to sensationalize, nor to shock anyone. It was to communicate directly to gay men

in the language that they use," said Brake, who estimates there are over 2,000 lesbians and gay men among students, staff and faculty at Memorial.

On Feb. 18, supporters of *The Muse* held a press conference in an effort to focus the media's gaze on the health angle of the story.

"Mr. May seems to have lost sight of the fact that pornography is the sexual imagery which presents a human subject as a sexual object for the use of the viewer," said Theresa Walsh, representing the St. John's Status of Women Council.

Walsh said May was trying to throw up a smokescreen.

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Dalhousie hosts

Racial issues forum

RACIAL ISSUES AGENDA

(all sessions at the Weldon Law Building - University Ave.)

- 9.00 am OPENING REMARKS
Myrna Gillis, President, Law Students' Society
Innis Christie, Dean, Dalhousie Law School
- 9.15 am DALHOUSIE LAW SCHOOL ADMISSIONS
Wayne MacKay, Acting Director IBM Program
- 9.30 am KEYNOTE SPEAKER #1
Graydon Nicholas, Chair, Native Studies, St. Thomas University, New Brunswick
(question & answer period to follow)
- 10.30 am LAW SCHOOL DEANS SESSION#1
University of Saskatchewan, York University, Dalhousie
- 11.30 am LUNCH
- 12.30 pm KEYNOTE SPEAKER #2
Jean Augustine, Chair, Metro Toronto Housing Authority
(question & answer period to follow)
- 1.15 pm LAW SCHOOL DEANS SESSION #2
University of New Brunswick, University of Ottawa, University of Manitoba
- 2.30 pm DISCUSSION GROUPS
Students, faculty, Deans and guests will divide into smaller groups for discussion and development of resolutions
- 3.30 pm RESOLUTIONS
- 5.30 pm EVENING CELEBRATION-MI'KMAQ FRIENDSHIP CENTRE

by Lara Morris

Today (February 28) marks the third annual Racial Issues Forum at the Dalhousie Law School. "Four key issues have been identified for discussion at the Forum. Culturally specific barriers to education, affirmative action programs and quota systems, interaction versus self-governance, and political games such as streamlining of students by guidance counselors", said Althea Reyes, Forum Communications Committee Chair and President of the Dalhousie Black Law Students Association.

The Forum has an agenda packed with keynote speakers, workshops and discussion groups. It was planned by a committee of

Dalhousie law students with funding from the Dean of the law school, the Law Students Society and the Dalhousie Student Union. The committee also expects funding from the Secretary of State.

Guest speakers from the Black and Native communities will address Forum participants on issues of concern to their communities.

Jean Augustine, Chair of the Metropolitan Toronto Housing Authority Board of Members, is known for her volunteer work in the education field and her involvement with the Black community. "She'll be talking about issues of concern to the Black community, including access to education, cultural barriers to education, the lack of Black educators in the system, the politics

involved in the system and interaction versus segregation," said Reyes.

Graydon Nicholas, Chair of Native Studies at St. Thomas University in New Brunswick, will address Native concerns. As a Native lawyer and educator, Nicholas will "talk about why Native people need self-government, the Native school system, the Native judicial system, and the need for more Native lawyers," said Reyes.

Organizers are hoping non-law students will also attend the Forum. They've invited 60 students from Queen Elizabeth High School and St. Patrick's Alexander Junior High School to the Forum. These secondary students will have their lunch paid for by donations from individual law students. "We asked law students to pledge \$5 each to cover lunch costs. Everyone's getting involved and contributing something," said Reyes.

The Forum represents Dalhousie Law School's ongoing commitment to increase awareness of racial issues in the education system. "Dalhousie is ahead of other law schools in addressing these problems. They have the Indigenous Black and Mi'kmaq (IBM) Program which is well-organized. Other law schools have affirmative action programs, but they don't have quotas and their programs aren't as well-structured," said Reyes.

Forum organizers are hoping the resolutions coming out of the Forum will be implemented by politicians, law schools, and professionals. "We're hoping they will make these resolutions part of their personal and institutional agenda," said Reyes.

See Forum Schedule for more information.

DSA and Admin play win lose or draw

by Chris Lambie

The Dalhousie Staff Association voted to accept a new contract offer last week after a month-long session of rotating strikes.

While the DSA answering machine still advertises that they "have moved into the new strike headquarters," the strike is officially over.

Approximately 725 of the 760-member union turned out over the three days of voting. While the majority accepted the three-year package that offers a 4.2 per cent raise in year-one, four per cent in the first half of year two and another 5 per cent in the second half and a cost of living adjustment in year three, the exact outcome of the vote is, as yet, undisclosed.

Bette Yetman, executive director of the DSA, says, "we're viewing the strike as an overall win." This is the first DSA strike in our 16 years of existence, says Yetman, "it's a definite sign of growing confidence in our own demands and sense of identity."

Yetman says that of the three major issues on the table - wages, salary adjustments and sick leave

- they have a lose, a win and a draw.

LOSE: the wages, Yetman says, "are a definite disappointment; we have absorbed a loss on the cost of living for the past four years."

WIN: a \$50,000 lump-sum payment is going towards easing the salaries of a number of underpaid union clerical workers up to par with the rest of the DSA.

DRAW: the issue of sick leave, Yetman says, "was a draw - neither side got exactly what they wanted, there was a lot of give and take."

Yetman says "there was definite dissent within the union over putting the administration offer to a vote." A small vocal group wanted to call a full strike, says Yetman, "But we think the negotiating team made a good move in putting the contract to a vote."

Marilyn MacDonald, Dalhousie public relations coordinator, says, "the majority of the DSA membership sends a signal [with their acceptance] that they thought the contract was a fair deal."

Yetman breathes a sigh of relief when she says, "this contract means three years of relative labour peace for students." Any student at Dal can expect to graduate before new DSA negotiations arise.