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# the Gazette

Vol. 128, No. 4

DALHOUSIE UNIVERSITY, HALIFAX, N.S.

Thursday, September 28, 1995

## SUNS survives summer of discontent

BY MILTON HOWE

Hal MacLean, former chair of the Students' Union of Nova Scotia (SUNS), learned his final lesson in student politics this summer when he lost his job over a name change.

MacLean, who served as Vice President - External of the Dalhousie Student Union (DSU) in 1994-95, was elected Chair of SUNS at a meeting of the Executive Council in March.

Soon after taking office in April, MacLean found that he did not have much support within SUNS for his agenda. He said of his first executive council meeting as chair, "I had a list of things that I wanted to do, but we had to table all the decisions requiring action because there was a great deal of conflict at the meeting."

Much of this conflict centered around whether MacLean should be sent to a Canadian Federation of Students (CFS) conference as a SUNS delegate. MacLean was instrumental in pulling the DSU out of CFS last year, and was selling t-shirts at the last CFS conference emblazoned with, "CFS Farewell Tour '94."

MacLean is the first to admit that he is no stranger to controversy and that, "previous chairs did things a lot differently."

Hoping to improve the atmosphere of the meetings, a conflict resolution specialist gave a morning seminar before the following executive council meeting. At that meeting MacLean narrowly won a vote of confidence.

His undoing came at a controversial meeting in Wolfville the last weekend in July, when a committee on structure recommended to the executive that the position of chair be changed to president.

Christopher Webb, the recently elected President of SUNS, explained that "it was decided by the membership that in order to have a president that it should be an elected president."

This went against what MacLean had requested. "I asked for two months as president whereupon I would resign," said MacLean.

However, the executive was adamant. "If I wanted to be president, I would have to resign and run again," he said.

So MacLean did resign, and much to his surprise, when nominations were opened for the newly-created job of president, one of the councilors nominated Vice-chair Boris Mirtchev, who went on to win.

"Several schools were surprised," said Mirtchev of his decision to run. He said he was approached by some of the members for the first time that weekend and was encouraged to contest for the new position.

Mirtchev, who is now serving his second year as President of

the Saint Mary's University Students' Association, explained why he decided to run.

"There was a lot of discontent [about MacLean's chairmanship] on the part of many of the schools. Even though there was a vote of confidence, it seemed that a month-and-a-half later there was still discontent and SUNS wasn't going anywhere."

There were, however, some people questioning the validity of this decision. "There were a few fundamental problems with this

meeting," said Webb. "Dal wasn't there, St. Anne, the Agricultural College and Mount St. Vincent weren't there."

The executive agreed and, at the urging of the DSU and the Dalhousie Association of Graduate Students (DAGS), called an extraordinary meeting during which the election was ruled invalid on the grounds that insufficient notice was given to the membership. Sandy Ross of DAGS volunteered to run as an "Interim President" and was

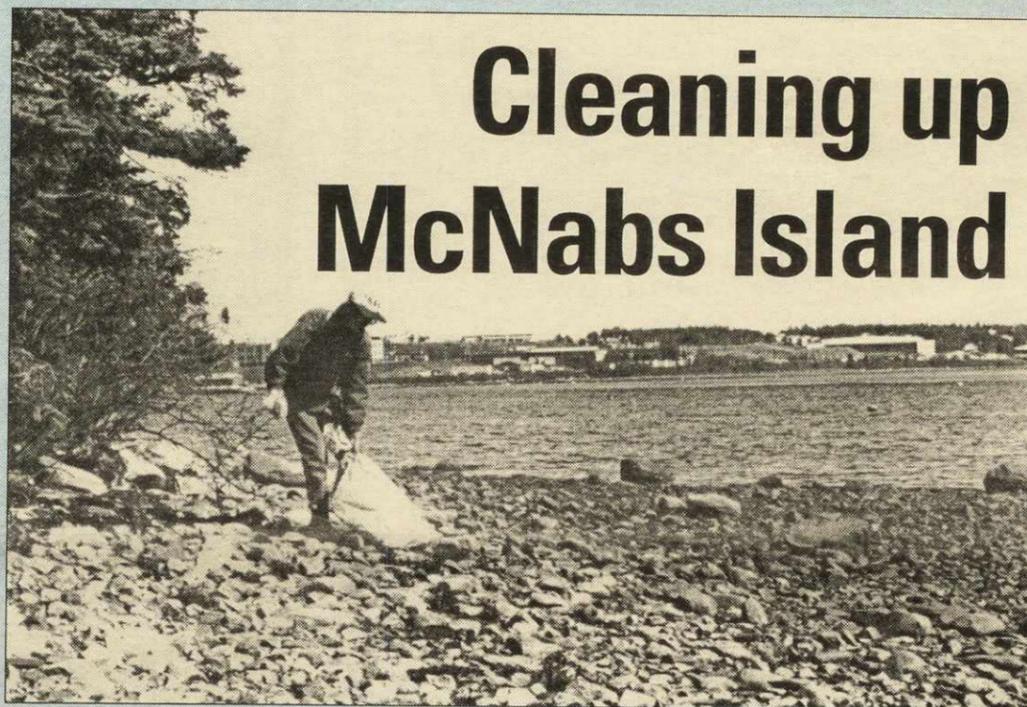
elected.

"Two or three weeks later, I ran and I won," said Webb. In that final election, neither MacLean nor Mirtchev ran for the job.

Mirtchev felt that his position as a president of an individual student union might be seen as a conflict of interest. "I wanted to see someone who was not a student union president in the position. I was happy when Chris [Webb] came forward. I felt quite comfortable with his abilities."

Webb doesn't think there were any wrong intentions on the part of those involved in the great SUNS shake-up.

As for Hal MacLean, if he is still bitter over his ousting, he's not showing it. MacLean feels that moving on is the best thing for him as the executive was not behind him and his ideas. "Student politics has been undergoing a tremendous change. I'm done with student politics, I'm getting stale. I'm moving to other things," he said.



## Cleaning up McNabs Island

BY KRISTIN MCNEILL

Another year, another clean beach.

McNabs Island underwent its sixth annual beach sweep last Sunday, September 24, with a successful turnout of 108 garbage gatherers. The number of bags of garbage collected fell dramatically this year, cut by more than half the amount picked up in 1994.

Cathy McCarthy, a board member and long-time visitor to the island, has been involved with the beach cleanup for the past five years. She said garbage is measured by the number of bags collected at the end of each of the spring and fall beach sweeps.

"The number of bags will vary year to year," said McCarthy.

Over the past five years, McCarthy has observed a trend of "thinning out." For example, in 1994, 1225 bags were collected, compared to the 600 bags gathered this year.

This does not mean that the trend will continue. Every year, people are slowly rooting out the older trash while at the same time, controlling the new debris that washes up on the shore daily. McCarthy said some parts of the island are difficult to access and are even considered tricky for most hikers.

Garbage in the more remote parts of McNabs is left for the real adventurers with lots of time and good hiking boots.

McCarthy said, "We are finally making a dent on the garbage that has accumulated on the shoreline over the past years, even decades."

*Condoms and tampon applicators among debris that litters shores*

One of Sunday's beach combers, Dalhousie alumnus Shauna Bailey, was alarmed at the amount of plastic her group collected from the beach. She also commented on the abundance of condoms that seemed to litter the coastline, saying, "At least it means somebody is using them!"

Bailey added, "It was a worthwhile thing to do, as well as being a fun day — being outside and getting some exercise."

Among the more interesting articles of trash included a shopping cart, several bicycles, and a child's schoolbag

complete with decaying yet recognizable food items.

A group of Grade 10 environmentalists discovered many other "disgusting things," namely plastic tampon applicators — the day's top garbage item.

The beach sweep is run by The Friends of McNabs Island Society, a group composed of 150 members. It is a registered charity that relies on grants from different sources every year to fund its various projects. This year, Mountain Equipment Co-op was a major contributor. The society did not receive government funding this year.

Advocates for this more than one thousand acres of wilderness will be presenting their prospects for McNabs to the provincial and federal governments next month at public hearings. Their goal is to create an "operational park."

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**FEATURE**

## Hemp now high fashion

BY CHRIS DONALD

The world's oldest fabric, made from the much-maligned hemp plant, is now becoming the newest craze in the fashion industry.

In a recent New York Times article, Calvin Klein is quoted saying, "I believe that hemp is going to be the fibre of choice in both home furnishings and fashion, and I want to use this fabric in an innovative way."

Klein is referring to fabrics made of hemp fibre, which are processed from the cannabis "marijuana" plant. Hemp fibre contains none of the plant's active ingredient THC, which is banned except for medical uses, so it has no intoxicating properties if inhaled or ingested.

According to the article, hemp textiles have mushroomed into a \$50 million cottage industry in the United States, and now big corporations are poised to cash in. Besides Klein's introduction of a hemp fabric home collection this fall, Converse has taken custom orders for hemp sneakers from rock stars, and Disney World is selling hemp hats at its Indiana Jones gift shop. Literally hundreds of large and small companies across North America are cashing in on booming consumer demand.

Currently, hemp fibre textiles are very expensive in the U.S. because of high import duties and limited supply. It can cost up to \$25 a yard depending on quality and quantity, but its environmentally friendly qualities give it a consumer demand that is now being fully appreciated by the textile industry.

"Hemp represents a unique opportunity to intertwine the economy with ecology," said Geof Kime, who pioneered growing hemp for commercial uses in

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