

THE GAZETTE

DALHOUSIE UNIVERSITY

Vigil for Justice

By TOBY SANGER

Bruce Curtis will celebrate his 23rd birthday Saturday in a New Jersey state prison, far from his Nova Scotia home but not far from the hundreds of supporters his case has attracted across Canada.

In July 1982, Curtis was convicted of aggravated manslaughter of a friend's mother, although he has maintained the shooting was accidental.

He was sentenced to 20 years in prison, 10 of which must be served before he is eligible for parole.

Since then, he has been fighting to appeal the sentence with no success. He learned last Christmas eve that his latest appeal for a new trial had been denied.

Now, his father says, Bruce and his family are giving up their fight for a new trial in order to apply for transfer to a Canadian prison. According to the New Jersey Department of Corrections, the move could take up to 18 months.

If Curtis is transferred to Canada, he could be eligible for day parole if his crime is classified as manslaughter rather than murder, says his Canadian lawyer, Jennie Lyon. Aggravated manslaughter is not classified as a crime in Canada.

Joanne Legano, Curtis' American lawyer, says his July 1986 appeal for clemency from the governor of New Jersey, whose decision is expected in six months, would remain valid after such a transfer.

Curtis insists he accidentally shot Rosemary Podgis, the mother of his friend, Scott Franz while rounding a corner after he heard the shot Franz fired at his step-father. The two young men say they armed themselves because Al Podgis was on a binge of violence that weekend.

His case attracted widespread attention this fall after the publication of a book, *No Easy Answers*, which documents the trial and Curtis' life as a student at King's-Edgehill, a private school in Windsor, Nova Scotia.

He had been admitted to Dalhousie University and was planning to start classes here in the fall of 1982.

Seen as a gentle and intelligent boy, from a good family, who became accidentally entangled in a web of violence and injustice, his plight has attracted much sympathy in Canada.

"A couple years ago people figured it was just our impression that injustice was done," says his father, Jim Curtis. "But when (prominent Toronto lawyer) Eddie Greenspan gets up and says the same thing, it's no longer just our opinion."

After years of fighting for his son's release, Jim Curtis has harsh words to say about the New Jersey justice system. But he hasn't yet given up hope.

The Curtis family and support groups are organizing vigils across the country this Saturday. In Halifax, the vigil will take place in the Grand Parade on Barrington Street, from 2PM to 4PM.

Bruce Curtis still hopes to eventually enroll at Dalhousie, but it is science he will be studying, not law.



Bruce Curtis is getting an education he didn't plan for — in a New Jersey prison. Photo courtesy of Jim Curtis.

Gaskin sweeps NSCAD elections

By PETER WALKER

The student union at the Nova Scotia College of Art and Design held elections last week to fill positions left vacant since last semester.

Peter Gaskin, a fourth year video major, was elected president of the student council by a vote of 105 to 62 over the only other candidate, Margaret Boyle.

He takes the position of president from Joe Blades who had been serving as interim president after the forced resignation of former president Ken Robinson, who is now rumoured to be in Amsterdam.

Gaskin says he wants to bridge the gap he believes exists between the council and the student population, which he says became apparent during the last term's faculty strike when communication and organization were a necessity.

Only 30 per cent of the college's over 500 students turned out to vote at this election.

Gaskin, also vice-chair and project coordinator for the Ecphore Art Exhibition, plans to clean up the record keeping and organizational problems that have plagued the council. Withdrawing from the Canadian Federation of Students is also on his agenda, but he says he wants to remain in the Students Union of Nova Scotia.

The new president will have until April 1988 to achieve his goals.

The following are the final results of the election:

President	Peter Gaskin 105 Margaret Boyle 62
Vice-President	Carol Krismer 92 Jamie McRae 57
Treasurer	John Spence 127 No votes 18
Foundation	Bill Brisaid/Tamara Drushka 133 No votes 4

Next week . . . CFS surfaces

By GEOFF STONE

Organizers at Dalhousie are confident next week's National Week of Action will spur their fight for increase in university funding and greater accessibility to post-secondary education.

The week of action, sponsored by the Canadian Federation of Students, is a concerted effort by the organization to heighten awareness of student issues on campuses and by the general public.

Rather than stage a central national protest, regional student associations have chosen to organize their own events for the week to address particular problems in each province.

In Nova Scotia, the campaign will concentrate on three main

issues: summer employment, student aid, and federal funding of education.

At Dalhousie, the week appropriately starts off with a SUNS/CFS awareness day on Monday. Tuesday, a seminar on "How to start your own business" will be held at noon as petitions circulate asking the provincial government for more funding for summer employment programs.

A debate on "Should the provincial government have more control over post-secondary education" is scheduled for Wednesday.

The SUNS taskforce on student aid will hold hearings on Thursday, asking students what they would like to see in a student aid program and finding out about

problems they have with the new one in place.

The highlight of the week will be Friday's raffling of tickets for a term's tuition fees. Tickets are only a dime a piece — "a measure of what many people think their education is worth these days," says Drapeau.

Dalhousie campaign coordinator Kamleh Nicola says the success of the week's activities depends on the person to person contact of the campaign. "The only way we can do things is by going hands-on with the students . . . to go to the classes."

Activities planned for other universities include a "scavenger hunt for things that are underfunded" at King's College, to a postcard campaign for more funding in Saskatchewan.