

# SUNS reaches 9 years old

by Geoff Stone

After almost 9 years as an organization, the Students' Union of Nova Scotia continues to be the only province-wide lobby group for post-secondary students.

SUNS began after the "disintegration" of the Atlantic Federation of Students, and has held together through a number of membership changes.

At present, membership in SUNS includes the Dalhousie Student Union, the Dalhousie Graduate Association, King's College, Acadia University, the Nova Scotia College of Art and Design, St. F.X. University, and Mount St. Vincent.

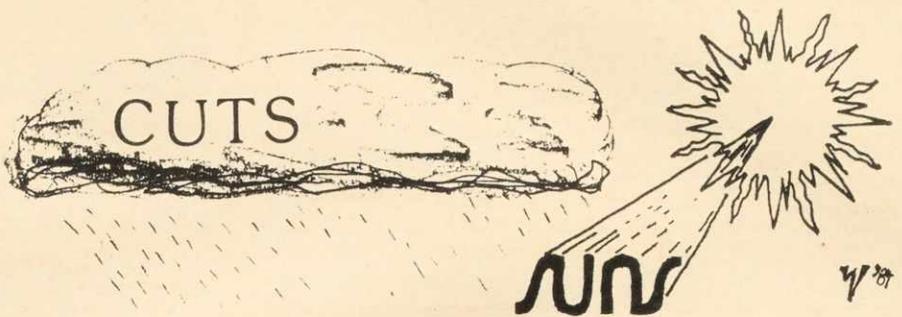
Robin Hamilton, interim executive officer of SUNS, said SUNS presently has membership of around 80 per cent of the students, but the organization is working on gaining other members. "SUNS is concentrating on St. Mary's", said Hamilton.

He said SUNS works in such areas as lobbying the provincial government, organizing information for students on education issues, and providing a forum for student governments to share ideas.

Recent projects by SUNS include an election awareness campaign for a possible provincial election. Hamilton said there were problems with student enumeration in the 1984 election. "Just because your parents are in B.C. doesn't mean you don't have a political entity," he said.

The structure of SUNS is developed at its four to six conferences held throughout the year. The conferences are open to any student from any institution.

A five-person executive coordinates the activities of SUNS. The budget for SUNS comes from a levy of \$1.50 on each member institution's registered full-time students.



## Student loans data doesn't jive

OTTAWA (CUP) — Over 17,000 post-secondary students had debt loads of over \$10,000 in 1985-86, a recently released government analysis of student debt load has revealed.

The study, which also shows that 1,830 students have debt loads of over \$15,000, was based on Canada Student Loans data for those full-time students who negotiated a student loan during the 1985-86 loan year. Provincial student loan information was also supplied by B.C., Alberta, and Ontario.

Critics say the government is trying to understate the problem of high student debt load in Canada.

A government press release on the study said "over 80 per cent of the post-secondary students with student loans graduate with total student loan debts of

less than \$10,000."

"The figures didn't concur with the ones I had, which were that most students had debts of \$12,000 to \$20,000 coming out of bachelor programmes," said Bill Rompkey, Liberal secretary of state critic. "But even if they are right, a \$10,000 debt load is nothing to gloat about."

"The attitude underlying this is that students are privileged," said Rompkey, "and the government is saying to students: 'you are lucky to be where you are and here's your degree and your \$10,000 debt load, so good luck to you!'"

Mary Meloshe, Director of the Student Assistance Directorate for the federal government, said the researchers themselves were surprised at the results of the study.

"Considering the articles in the media in the past year con-

cerning students struggling with very high debt loads, we were surprised to find that the majority of students have debts of less than \$10,000," she said.

"This does not mean that there's not a problem with debt load. Debt at any level can be a problem depending on one's resources," said Meloshe.

The study found that loans are distributed relatively evenly between men and women, that half of the negotiators are 21 years or younger, and that Arts and Sciences students are the most common debtors (40 per cent). It also noted that the average accumulated debt load was \$4,796.

Of the students who owed more than \$15,000, most were male (61 per cent) and older than 25 years and 20 per cent were studying medicine.

## Moral issues don't merit funding

ST. JOHN'S (CUP) — Memorial University's student council unanimously refused to fund a campus pro-life group last week, citing the organization's focus on "moral issues".

"The decision was solely a professional one as all personal beliefs were put on hold. If (the student council) had chosen to pass such a ratification, it could possibly have been perceived as a stand on morality — something we have no intention of doing," said Council president Ann Marie Vaughan.

Gerry Carter, the council's vice-president academic, said

pro-choice crusader Dr. Henry Morgentaler was denied permission to lecture on campus for the same reason.

But members of MUN for Life argued that council has accepted other groups which reflect stands on moral issues. Last year a campus lesbian and gay group was given club status.

Responded Vaughan, "Memorial's gay and lesbian association was recognized because they are a minority."

"Fortunately or unfortunately, depending on your point of view, the rights of the unborn fetus are not recognized as having minority status."

## Share the wealth

VANCOUVER (CUP) — Wealthy Commonwealth countries should abolish the high differential fees posing financial barriers to foreign students, the commonwealth secretary told delegates to a recent conference.

Differential fees make it easier and cheaper for Commonwealth students to enter universities in non-commonwealth countries like France, Japan, the Soviet Union and the U.S., rather than Canada, Britain or Australia, Secretary Shridath Ramphal told delegates.

In Nova Scotia, differential fees essentially double the cost of studying at university. The Dalhousie International Students Centre has said that the

diversity of origin for international students is lacking, with the majority of students coming from a select group of countries Dalhousie associates with.

Diplomats and heads of commonwealth states discussed the issue at the Commonwealth conference held in Vancouver from October 13 to 18.

James Mitchell, keynote speaker and prime minister of Caribbean country St. Vincent and the Grenadines, called on Canada and other wealthy commonwealth countries to reduce the "exorbitant fees" levied upon foreign students.

Mitchell is also an alumnus of the University of British Columbia.

## CKDU in the news

by Geoff Stone

CKDU is trying to get more people involved in broadcast journalism with a series on the skills and techniques of radio reporting.

Dalhousie's FM radio station CKDU held the first of its seminars this past Tuesday evening. A small group of interested people talked about the basics and special points in getting stories and interviews onto the air.

CKDU plans to have a number of other talks, including technical aspects of radio reporting conducting interviews, sound-ing good, and editing.

The station has tried to increase its involvement in the community in order to provide alternative community-based news and views.

Donna Mayer, co-ordinator of the series, says CKDU has a number of new projects underway. "We are developing new feature programs," she said.

"We hope to keep the momentum going," Mayer added.

## Sauna saved

ST. JOHN'S (CUP) — Memorial University's men's soccer team prevented a serious fire in an Amherst, Nova Scotia hotel two weeks ago.

Seven players were swimming in the hotel's pool when they saw flames in the sauna room. Buckets of pool water doused the fire.

Said Memorial coach Alan Ross: "When the manager asked to see me in his office, the first thing I thought was that some of the boys were in trouble."

by Paul Creelman

The Dalhousie Invitational Debating Tournament is occurring this weekend, with suitable Halloween topics to be loudly debated.

The prepared resolution for the tournament is "Be it resolved that we are spirits in a material world". Those who wish to hear the debate will find it in the Arts and Administration building at 9:00 p.m. Saturday morning.

## Tourney turns to beer

In addition, there will be a pub round at 7:00 p.m. Friday evening in the Grawood, an event which involves both debating and the consumption of beer.

The finals will be held in the Legislative Assembly, 1690 Hollis Street, at 2:00 p.m. on Sunday, November 1.

Anyone interested in helping judge the debates should come to the judges' and debators' briefing at 9:00 a.m. in the A&A building on Saturday.