

# Educational goals spark exhibition

*Middle Eastern cultural extravaganza offers a wealth of information.*

BY ANJOO SHARMA

Although bad weather may have impeded attendance at this year's Arabic cultural exhibition, the Arabic seminar series was a great success.

Three years ago the exhibition represented six of the 22 Arab countries. This year flags, posters, videos and various cultural items, including foods,

represented 20 of the Arab countries. Eight seminars discussed Arabic issues in relation to the present day world over a period of several days. The seminars included everything from slide shows on Egypt to lectures on present political issues in the Middle East.

"The goal of the seminars is to promote dialogue between cultural groups here at Dalhousie.

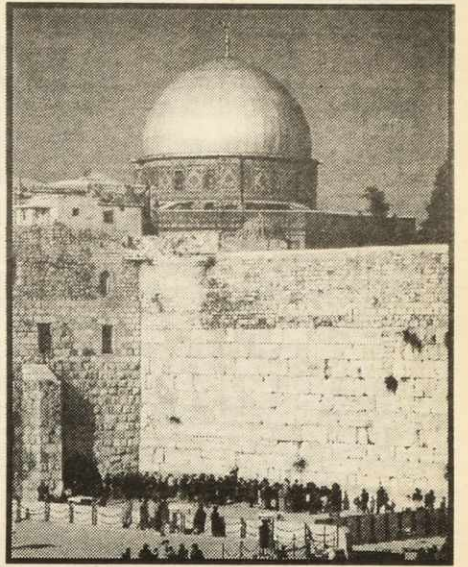
The reason why we took the initiative was because there are no courses here at Dalhousie that take that issue," said Adel Iskander, president of the Arabic Society. "I think that a lot of people here at Dal don't know enough about the Arab world.

"There are too many misconceptions and false stereotypes concerning Arabs," he said. "We felt these seminars

would be a good way to address this problem."

Attendance for the seminars ranged from 15-80 people, depending upon the topic. As expected, the more controversial the topic, the higher the attendance. Reham Abdelaziz, one of the coordinators, felt that

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# Abortion may be legal but not any easier a choice

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messages which are not helping them," said Karen Vance-Wallace, executive director of Planned Parenthood Metro Clinic.

"We want to provide all the information and counselling that people need to make informed decisions about their future," Vance-Wallace said.

"We're here to support the choice that you make. That's what being pro-choice is about. We're not telling anybody what to do."

The Planned Parenthood Metro Clinic, on Quinpool Road, offers pregnancy testing, counselling for unplanned pregnancies and, if requested, abortion referral.

"We know from the women coming to us that it's a very difficult decision. It's not to be made lightly. But it should be allowed to be made in an environment where somebody can support it, which is what we're trying to do."

Diane says she was impressed with the support provided by the hospital staff.

"The nurses were great, making jokes. They didn't make you feel like you were doing the

wrong thing. They didn't make you feel like this was bad or you were killing [something]."

Before her abortion, Diane was given the choice between an IV pain-killer and a nerve-relaxer.

"A lot of girls took [the nerve relaxer]. I took the

hurt so bad. She didn't get the IV.

"Should I turn around and walk out now, or what?" [I thought]. Even being there, you're still second guessing."

Diane also remembers being unnerved by the actual operating room.

"It was really

cold inside. And you could hear suction, but it wasn't really loud.

"I didn't feel any pain, which to some extent I kind of regret. But at the same time I'm glad I didn't. I regret not feeling it because it was part of me, and I don't know what it felt like and I'm mad that I didn't know.

"And the nurse came back to talk to me again. Just like 'How're you doing? How are you feeling?' Stuff like that. 'Feel free to cry'. Whatever.

"Sometimes I think 'I wonder if he forgot it? I wonder if it's still there? Maybe he missed it. It's somewhere else.' The stuff that runs through your mind...it's not really stupid, it's just 'Why are you thinking this?'"

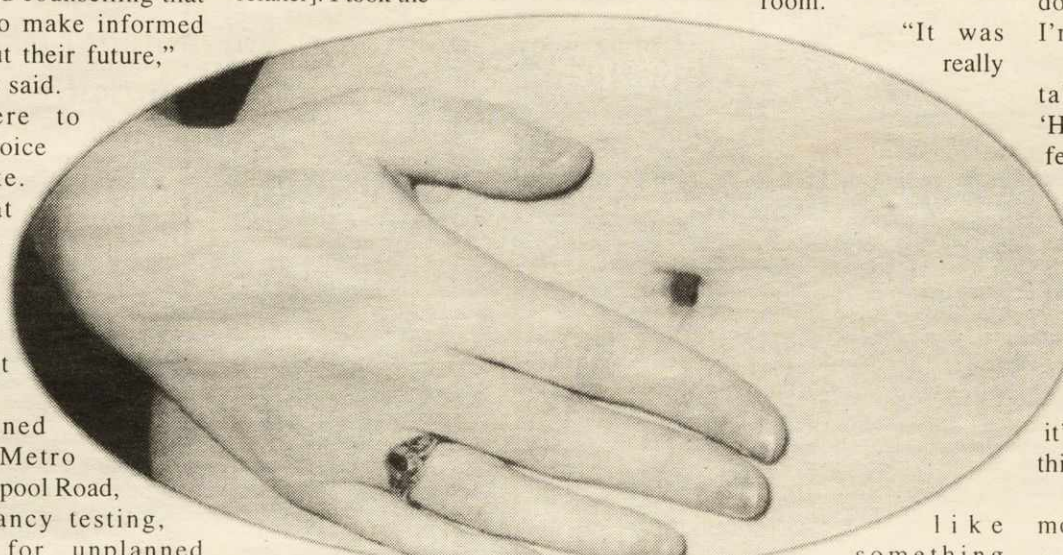
So although she admits to moments of doubt and regret,

Diane stresses that getting the abortion was probably one of the best, and hardest, decisions she's ever had to make.

"It's something I think no matter who does it they will regret it, to an extent. It doesn't matter. But you also have to look at the regret as a good thing. It's not a bad thing to regret it.

"Things are looking up. There's going to be days — there have been a lot of days in the past where I'd sit down in the afternoon and just cry. But you have to do that. You have to. If you don't, where are you?"

"It's easy to say 'Oh, I'd never do that'. But I don't think anybody should say it. Honestly. You don't know until you're in the situation. You don't know. I've always said it. 'Never will I have an abortion'. Look at me today."



like something

IV because I just don't like pain. Only two of us ended up getting the IV and we were the better off ones, I would say.

"I was in the room where the girls come back after having the abortion and...one of the girls, a sixteen-year-old, came in and she could barely walk. She was bawling and crying because it

you'd see on TV — with the big lights and the table with stirrups for your legs. I had a nurse on either side of me and there was a needle going in through my IV — I got so high it was unbelievable.

"It was over like that. It just seemed like it went by too fast. It was very cold. I remember it felt really

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