

# CROSS CANADA

## Precedent set at UCCB

HALIFAX (CUP) — Fear over women's safety has spurred Cape Breton feminist community groups into action.

The catalyst was a report by a University College of Cape Breton student who said she was sexually assaulted in the campus residence in late September.

Police charged her with mischief after she changed her statement, but the charges were later dropped due to a lack of evidence.

The subsequent media attention, the university administration's handling of the case and the actions of the local RCMP detachment demonstrated the need for support services for victims of sexual assault, MacDonald said.

"It's the most negative scenario in terms of how the situation was handled in the university and seen in the broader community," said MacDonald. "It will prevent women from coming forward, and other sexual assaults will go unreported. It's a very grave situation."

A coalition of women's groups has formed to tackle the problem. It includes the Elizabeth Fry Society, the Nova Scotia Advisory Committee on the Status of Women, Cape Breton Transition House, a representative of the UCCB female faculty and staff, and the National Action Committee on the Status of Women.

MacDonald said there are four to five assaults reported throughout Cape Breton every week.

The group wants to establish a sexual assault service and a rape crisis line. If the coalition is successful, it will be the second location in the province where these services are offered.

## Same-sex benefits

MONTREAL (CUP) — A three-year struggle to extend benefits to the partners of lesbian and gay employees at Concordia University has finally paid off.

The doors were thrown wide open after the term "opposite sex" was removed from the definition of "spouse" in a motion passed by the board of governors last November.

Employees now living in a "spousal relationship" for at least one year may sign their spouse onto the plan.

Pat Freed, faculty personnel director, said a 1989 report commissioned by the benefits committee was full of incorrect information. "It was full of ridiculous statements based on the fear of AIDS," she said.

Used as a basis for refusing the lobbyists' original request, the 25-page report concluded that "covering spouses of the same sex could double Concordia's exposure to AIDS claims under the health plan."

"The average amount of life insurance per same-sex spouse is likely to be much higher than for opposite-sex spouses, due to the predictably higher risk of contracting AIDS among male homosexuals," the report stated.

The University of British Columbia was the first university to extend same-sex benefits when they adopted the policy in 1990.

Dalhousie, Acadia, and the University of Toronto have similar policies, and McGill granted same-sex benefits last month.

## Starving students

OTTAWA (CUP) — It all started with five people starving themselves for the status quo.

During Ontario's 1990 provincial election, five student councillors went on a fleeting "hunger strike", calling themselves "underfed and underfunded." They demanded a halt to funding cuts to colleges and universities, and tuition fees indexed to inflation.

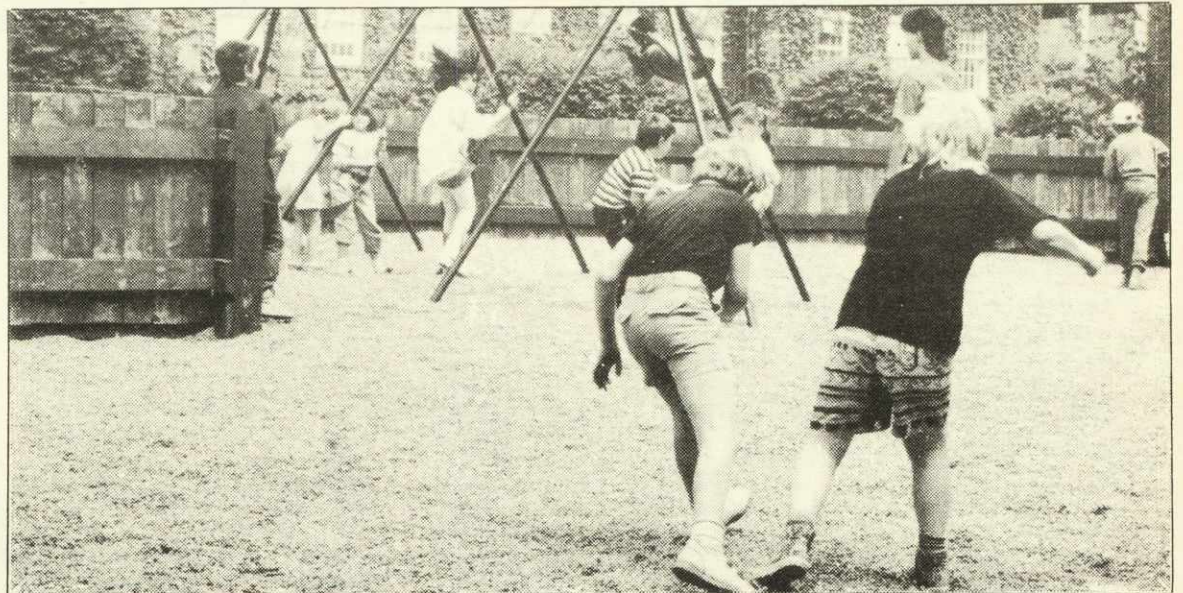
There is a "new" alliance of student councils pressing for the status quo — the Ontario University Students' Funding Alliance.

"It's basically the same thing with different players," said Chris Lawson, researcher for the Ontario Federation of Students. OFS represents 200,000 students and is lobbying for a freeze on tuition fees and their eventual abolition.

Lisa McLean, Brock University student council president, said OUSFA is examining funding options other than zero tuition or a tuition freeze.

She said "the alliance has no formal membership, but it has been spearheaded by Queen's, Brock and Waterloo. Other universities, such as McMaster, the University of Toronto, Ryerson and Wilfred Laurier have been involved."

# NEWS



DUS students running to scoop their first story.

## Elementary news writing

BY DAWN MITCHELL

Mr. Mugs and Dick & Jane books don't make the grade at Dalhousie University School anymore — not when newspapers are involved.

In an attempt to challenge the children at the university-based elementary school, teachers asked students if they would like to publish their own newspaper.

"We are always looking for interesting ways to develop language and communication skills," said Janet Nish-lapidus, a teacher at DUS. "This gives them an opportunity to do lots of different kinds of writing."

The students responded with enthusiasm and have been sniffing out news stories for their first edition in December ever since.

"We all do articles about stuff that happened at school," said seven-year-old Danny Brauer, one of the 23 students working on the

paper.

Tara Perkin, who will be 10 in December, is working on two stories.

"[I'm writing a story] about tv and how to replace it, and one on a maze me and my friends are building out of cardboard," she said.

The paper won't just be hard-hitting news stories though, the students are also preparing a cartoon section.

When asked about her contribution to the comics, graphic artist Angeline Thibodeau, 6, said, "We draw. We write."

Although they may be nonchalant about it all now, each of the 23 students worked hard to get their jobs.

"The children all had to apply for the jobs in writing and explain why they thought they would be good for that position," said Nish-lapidus.

All of them got the job they

wanted.

Putting together a newspaper isn't always easy. One stumbling block is agreeing on a name for the paper.

Suggestions for this paper ranged from "Sunshine News" to "Raging Reporters," and "Blues DUS News Snooze" before they finally agreed on "Elementary News."

"I invented that name," said nine-year-old Colin Fuller, who is also writing articles on the video game system turbo graphix 16 and the school's compost heap.

If all goes well, the Elementary News will publish two more issues this school year to be distributed in the Dalhousie News.

"The children are very excited about [the project] especially with all the attention it has been getting," said Nish-lapidus.

"It's moved from a school thing to a larger one where a lot of people are interested in it," she said.

## Raindrops permeate my head

BY JOEY GOODINGS

SOMETIMES I JUST want to rain on people's parades. This is one of those times.

You may be one of the newly initiated Haligonians, having travelled from some far flung province to go to school here, and you may have thought to yourself upon arrival: "Wow, Halifax is so pretty, the houses are all painted with bright colours and the leaves are turning yellow and red."

Well, now it's November. The weather is grey and Dal is even greyer; a double-whammy for the stressed out student. Sure, there's lots of brightly coloured buildings, but the SUB, the Killam Library and the LSC aren't among them. Even the DSU Clown troupe is powerless to do much about it.

Imagine this: you wake up late, it's cold and rainy outside and you've run out of Shreddies so you have to make it to LSC on an empty stomach. You get there late, run through the building to take your place in a dark and dreary

classroom with the most absurd lighting imaginable and no windows. (If some cow-poke tells you to stick it where the sun don't shine, he may in fact be referring to one of the many classrooms in the LSC.)

After class you take the underground tunnel (like in the beginning of that hit 70s TV show - *The Mod Squad*) to that big wad of grey, the Killam library. Even from the inside, this place feels grey.

Before making one iota of progress on your overdue essay, it's breaktime, (you've probably been procrastinating by reading useless articles like this one for at least half an hour). Time to go to the SUB.

Unless you want lousy fast food with loads of environmentally hostile gunk, you settle on a muffin or two with and a coffee (in your own mug — I hope). And then you down these things in the smoking section of the cafeteria — even if you don't smoke.

Once done, it's back to that big wad of grey. A few hours later, and you've accomplished nothing. Maybe there's an easier topic to

write on? Add another fruitless hour or two looking for one, then it's time to split.

But wait a minute, it's black outside. That's like grey, only ten times worse. Somebody shortened the days. It's bad enough being stressed out, but leaving the library to find it's already night (when you've accomplished nothing all day) is a recipe for an instant headache.

Thank God there's always tomorrow and prime time TV. But tomorrow will be greyer, your essay more overdue and the days even shorter. And this goes on 'til you finish your degree or decide otherwise.

Everyday, year after year. Think twice about doing a Master's degree, law or med school, unless you enjoy prolonged torture.

Enjoy the last few coloured leaves of Fall while they last. The warm days are gone and summer won't be back for a long, long time. With the leaves on the ground, the campus is showing its one true colour: deep, dull grey.