

Commentary

Student Week of Information went wrong?

by Michael Redmond

The illusion of a strong unified body of students speaking with one voice on issues that concern them died an ugly death last Friday.

A protest march to Province House was a pale and pathetic effort to "Wake Terry Up" compared to last year's large and belliscose turnout. In being such a singular failure the efforts of those who picketed the Legislature were laid to waste and the political credibility of the entire student community of Nova Scotia was slurred. The blame for this fiasco can be laid at someone's feet.

Before I continue allow me to confess that I was not among the handful of "...noisy but orderly..." students (in the *Chronicle-Herald's* words) that participated. At one o'clock, instead of wearing out both shoe leather and lungs, I was sitting in a computer science lecture. The reason for my lack of involvement is fairly simple. I was, and still am, appalled by the poor job of organizing that the SUNS executive did. Very little notice was given for the event. Signs appeared in front of the SUB only a few days before the scheduled date. The first time I saw a leaflet announcing the march and explaining its purpose was on Thursday afternoon. Political protest on a large scale requires a little more effort on the part of those handling the publicity.

In voicing my criticism I certainly don't mean to belittle the efforts of the whole SUNS executive. I do not doubt the sincerity of people such as Peter Kavanagh when they express their concerns about student issues. A chain is, however, only as strong as its weakest link, and that link in the SUNS hierarchy appears to be SUNS treasurer and Dal Student Union V.P. External David Rideout. Mr. Rideout was the gentleman who accepted the responsibility of print-

ing and distributing the leaflets advertising the march. His failure to circulate the notices at an early enough date can be identified as the root cause of the low turnout. In violating the trust placed in him, in not meeting his commitment, Mr. Rideout has put himself in the position where the only honourable course of action is to offer his immediate resignation.

While most of the fault is Mr. Rideout's, there is enough to go around to other student leaders. Last year several thousand students did express their faith in their leaders and marched down to the Grand Parade to protest proposed government cutbacks. Our voice was strong and unified then and we had reason to hope for some government action or reaction as a result of our efforts. If there was any positive outcome from 1981's march it certainly has not been well publicized. Students returned to this university this fall only to be hit with tuition hikes and reduced services, both a result of the contemptible government of John Buchanan cutting the budget substantially several months into the fiscal year. It appears that Buchanan didn't listen very closely to us last year.

If the act of marching in protest does little to aid the student cause, then why march? The defeat of the Equal Rights Amendment in the United States was partially the result of poor lobbying on the part of the women's movement. Are students in Canada doomed to failure because of our own political naivete? I fear that this is indeed the case unless something is done now to rectify the blunders of last Friday's ill-fated attempt to grab the government's attention. I hope that the failure of this year's march can be a lesson that will open eyes and push the student movement forward in a new and more successful direction.



Jordan/Dal Photo

Letters

Alternate Sunshine and Tarred Duck Awards

To the Editor:

The Sunshine and Tarred Duck Awards mentioned in last week's Gazette story on the Ecology Action Centre (EAC) do not show much imagination. I would like to put forward some alternative nominations:

My main proposal for the Sunshine Award would be Roland Thornhill. Rollie apparently responded to a public plea for government funding by EAC and provided a six month grant from the N.S. Department of Development to jointly finance a full-time professional fund raiser in partnership with the Centre. Following the proud announcement of the appointment of this fund raiser, it was said by EAC that "Corporate fundraising in the future will be given high priority, allowing us to become more financially stabilized." (As fans of EAC will no doubt recall, the Centre published an advertisement in the *Chronicle Herald* in Sept. 1981, thanking various sponsors including the major oil companies, National Sea Products, the *Chronicle Herald*, major banks, etc. It is interesting that some of the oil companies cited were then exploring for uranium in N.S.)

Breathing down Thornhill's neck are two other persons who did not make it into the 'award' category. Jack Garnett, Provincial Department of Mines and Energy, deserves a citation for his skillful use of EAC to legitimize the guidelines for uranium exploration in N.S. Jack managed to get EAC to state in writing that the Department's proposal was "a fairly good first draft". (In the same document EAC never challenged the fact that uranium exploration was taking place in Nova Scotia.)

The other 'also ran' for a Sunshine Award must be George Cooper. George has been listed as a member of the board of directors of EAC for 1978, 1979 and 1980/81. However, his claim to fame here is that he was the main lawyer for Nova Scotia Forest Industries in the injunction hearings this past summer, held to try to halt the spraying of 2,4-D and 2,4,5-T in the forests of N.S. George clearly shows how one can be an EAC environmentalist and a proponent of the use of chemical poisons on behalf of the pulp and paper companies.

Due to recently imposed space limitations by the Gazette, I cannot develop the Tarred Duck testimonials. Briefly, this award should be given to EAC who prostrated itself before the acts of repression by Judge Robert McCleave in the first stage of the Uranium Inquiry. Perhaps the Gazette should receive an honourable mention for its consistent uncritical reporting of EAC.

Finally, as insiders know, there are no 'environmental subversives' to be found in EAC.

David Orton

Marc Trottier still DSS pres

To the Editor:

An open letter to all Science students:

The Dalhousie Science Society had engaged the Irish band FINNIGAN for the evening of Sept. 22nd as a kick-off for this year's activities. The event was cancelled due to poor ticket sales (attributed to restricted publicity and to conflicts with other entertainment events).

The Science Society incurred a loss of \$900 because of this cancellation and, as a result, Marc Trottier, president of DSS, submitted his resignation at the first DSS council meeting on Sept. 30th. Council decided, at that time, not to accept Marc's resignation and so he remains our president.

We want to assure students that we recognize their concerns over such a loss, and that DSS will work hard to continue to be an active organization for undergraduate science students.

Winter Science Council
Dalhousie Science Society