

Liquor liability irks the DSU

By TOBY SANGER

Rising liability damages in liquor-related accidents are making the student union consider major preventative actions, including additional liability insurance and moving the location of the Grawood lounge.

Recent cases in the United States, holding third parties liable for over \$1 million damage, have even led some colleges to move to liquor-free campuses.

Student union general manager Andrew Beckett says this isn't likely to happen at Dalhousie, but admits fears of this trend moving to Halifax has made the student union give serious consideration to how it deals with alcohol.

Beckett cites a case in the U.S. where a bartender has been held liable for an accident which happened to a customer he was serving. There is also a lawsuit in Canada where a student is suing a university because he was injured after leaving a bar on university property, says Beckett.

He warns, "it's only a matter of time before someone gets hurt and starts to sue the organization."

Law professor Dr. William Charles agrees. "You're right to be concerned about it. Generally speaking, the courts are expanding liability."

If the student union does decide to pay for extended liability insurance, which Beckett says is likely, it won't be cheap.

Premiums Dalhousie pays for liability insurance have jumped by 40 per cent in the last two years, largely because of these recent cases.

To help reduce risks of accidents — and the costs of insurance — Beckett is stressing education of societies which sponsor events with alcohol and of bar staff on legal liability.

All SUB bartenders are required to take a course from the Nova Scotia Liquor Commission and Beckett is offering seminars to anyone who is interested.

"We're trying to educate ourselves to take a preventive posture and eliminate our risks as much as possible."

This, he hopes, will help to prevent accidents, hold the student union in better stead if they are ever taken to court, and also reduce insurance premiums.

Tony Martin, director of athletics and recreational services at Dalplex, says although there are areas which don't fall under the university coverage, "we've thought we're probably just as well without it" because of the "phenomenal" recent increases in premiums.

Instead, he says, "we try and provide appropriate training and procedures so people have safety foremost in their minds."

Dalhousie support for new drug act

BY GEOFF STONE

Dalhousie administration and some faculty members have put their support behind the patent act amendment bill C-22.

The bill, which is in reading in parliament, would extend pharmaceutical companies' patent rights on new drugs from the present four years to ten.

Bob Fournier, vice president research says Dalhousie will receive benefits from the legislation. While there have been no concrete proposals from the drug companies for research, Fournier is optimistic about their promises: "I don't know, you can be skeptical or optimistic... I hope that it will work."

Fournier doesn't think Dalhousie will be selling itself out to the large corporations against Canadians, who will be spending more for their drugs.

"We're not saying we're prostituting ourselves", he says, but the new research hoped for will pro-

vide a better study program for pharmacology students and more money in a number of departments at Dalhousie.

Fournier says the Canadian research industry is in a competitive world struggle for research and high tech.

David Yung, a Dalhousie pharmacology professor, has spoken very strongly in favor of the new drug laws. Yung has spoken with the drug companies and thinks they will support Nova Scotia.

"They've got to keep Nova Scotia in mind... they can let all the money go to Ontario and Quebec."

Presently very little research is done outside of these two provinces.

Most of the support for Nova Scotia Yung sees being directed to Dalhousie as it has the largest research base. "Who will benefit most? Dalhousie is the only university doing pharmaceutical research." How much the promised research will aid the other Maritime universities is unclear.

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