

Attacks prompt Grawood 'Gay-In'

by Rita Baker

Members of the Bisexual, Gay, and Lesbian Association of Dalhousie held a 'Gay-In' at the Grawood, on Thursday, November 4, following a regularly scheduled meeting. "We went to the bar to promote [lesbian, bisexual, and

gay] visibility in a peaceful way," said law student Denise Evans.

The event was prompted by several recent homophobic assaults on campus. "Myself and others have been verbally assaulted by people leaving the Grawood," said Dalhousie student Josef Tratnik.

"The bar is open to all students. That's the mandate the bar has always had," said Deborah Brown, manager of the Grawood, who encourages all student to come in freely.

The event was publicized through posters and word of mouth. "Some people were aware the fags were there but they weren't sure where," said Tratnik. "The turnout was smaller than it would have been had it been an exclusively gay event. People in this city live in constant fear of being attacked."

Some members were nervous beforehand about the possible conse-

quences of identifying themselves as queer. "I was a little apprehensive," said first-year student Amelia, "but

"People in this city live in constant fear of being attacked."

felt better because there were a lot of us." Others were confident. One man went so far as to wear a t-shirt that

said 'Queers for Beers'.

"I was afraid to dance a slow-dance. I wasn't even aware that I had that fear until it confronted me," said David, who said he had been having a great time until then. "I felt really frustrated after the whole thing because I went there to be visible but I felt too scared to slow-dance or kiss a guy."

Overall everyone enjoyed themselves. While most members were getting stares, one woman exclaimed, "I got smiles!"

"We're glad the event was taken in the spirit in which it was intended," said Evans.

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Mature students lose office

by Wanda Chow

The Dalhousie Student Union has denied the Organization of Part-time and Mature University Students (OPTAMUS) an office in the Student Union Building because the society didn't register with the DSU.

The DSU Council made the decision at its October 31 meeting, when it accepted the recommendation of the

SUB Operations Committee that the limited office space in the building be divided among four other societies. The committee is responsible for allocating office space in the SUB.

"The other societies that were given office space all fulfilled the criteria of being a registered society with the union. OPTAMUS didn't and they didn't get in," says Caroline Kolompar, chair of the SUB Operations Committee.

OPTAMUS had previously been sharing space in Room 314 with three other student societies.

Dwight Neal, the society's representative on DSU Council, says that while he doesn't blame the DSU, he also believes mature students aren't getting all the breaks they deserve.

"The [lack of an office] situation is no fault of the DSU whatsoever. But mature students have extra commitments that traditional 18- to 25-year-old students don't have," says Neal.

He says some mature students are "disadvantaged" in a university setting because many are single parents.

"Single mothers and fathers used to bring their children to have lunch together in the [OPTAMUS] lounge, so they could see each other during mid-day," says Neal.

Although he isn't a single parent, Neal says he brought his four children to the lounge to avoid paying lunch supervision fees at their nearby school. At \$4 per day, he saved \$80 per month.

"Five or six parents used the lounge to help reduce the cost of child care to a certain extent, myself included," says Neal.

Neal says most mature students have been out of school for a few years. They go back to school because they need "serious retraining" to either improve their careers or to get employed. If they don't go back to school unemployment in society just gets worse, he says.

Some have financial commitments that most traditional students don't have.

"A lot of mature students don't qualify for student loans because they have a job. It's a catch-22 situation because when they work part-time they still don't have enough money. To get a loan, they'd have to stop working altogether," says Neal. "Most of the mature students I've spoken to have a minimum of three to four thousand dollars in debt. And I'm not talking your usual tuition debt, I'm talking like car and mortgage payments falling behind."

He says he doesn't know if being significantly different from other students qualifies mature students to have an office, but he says he knows the space was used efficiently in the past.

The former president of OPTAMUS, Jackie George, resigned last week after the society asked her to do so. The new president, Lynn Cvitko, was elected November 4. OPTAMUS registered as a society on November 9, according to Kolompar.

Neal and Cvitko are working with Kolompar to reorganize OPTAMUS. Neal adds that while it is difficult, the society is also trying to find an alternative space on campus.

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by the Rumours Club

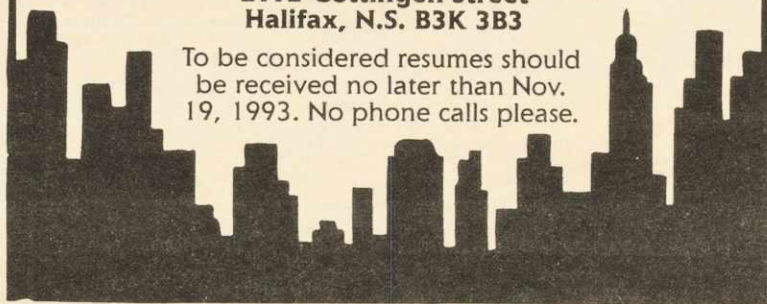
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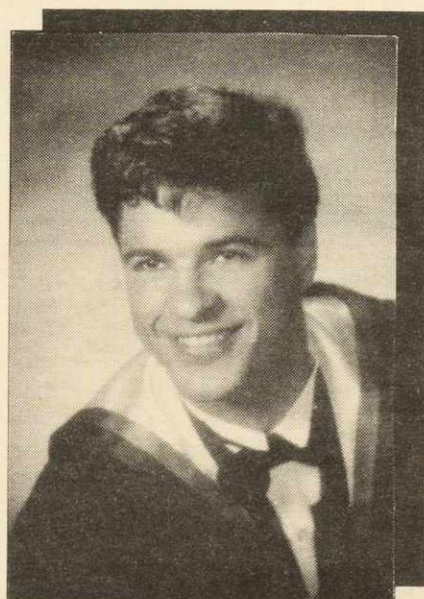


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