

Canadian University Press national conference

Student press gazes inward

By RICK JANSON

PLENARY MAN WALKS IN AS Ultra-Feminist speaks to the motion.

"Patriarchy is everywhere. Its there, and there, and over under that chair..."

Plenary man puts his hands over his genitals and walks up to the microphone, drawing his most fierce weapon:

"I'd like to table this motion."

The audience of student newspaper members laughs at these caricatures, some of them a little nervously. This bit of theatre, created by members of the *McGill Daily* and others, points out only too bluntly the foibles of Canadian University Press' 47th national conference.

More than 180 people came to Nova Scotia's Oak Island Inn between Dec 26 and Jan 3 to participate in workshops and decision making involving Canada's oldest national student organization.

At age 47, CUP's annual conference kept up with its tradition of high energy and minimal sleep.

Unlike its predecessors, this conference lacked the high level of political debate characteristic of the student press over the last decade.

Debate on the plenary floor remained confusing and convoluted as delegates tried to come to terms primarily with the organization's services and finance.

Although CUP has been rapidly expanding over the last four years, it has managed to avoid the kind of punishing debt loads that has hamstrung its political counterpart, The Canadian Federation of Students. In return for balanced budgets, its member newspapers have had to contend with large hikes in fees paid annually to CUP.

This year the increase was kept to a minimum, but still remains above inflation at seven per cent.

Services to member newspapers remained mostly static as priorities were slightly rearranged for the upcoming year. Long term projects, such as a new style guide and computerization, were once again put on hold.

As one long time observer put it, CUP was consolidating itself at this conference.

The biggest winner in the services debate was the ten papers from Atlantic Canada which secured a new full-time bureau for Halifax. Starting next September, the bureau chief will operate out of *The Gazette* for 20 weeks, writing overviews pertinent to the region. The bureau chief is the second staff person serving Atlantic Canada, and the 11th national editorial employee.

Another noticeable change in services next year will be an emphasis on sports reporting and an increase in analysis oriented news writing.

After eliminating the

organization's telex network several years ago, spot news stories have become increasingly stale after delays in the present system of news dissemination. CUP's focus on analysis is intended to fill in the gaps left by the lack of immediacy.

Eastern papers dominated the elections for CUP's national executive. Going to Ottawa next year will be: Martha Muzychka as president (*Muse*, Memorial University of Newfoundland), Samantha Brennan as national features writer (*The Gazette*, Dalhousie University) and Peter Kuitenbrouwer as national bureau chief (*McGill Daily*, McGill University).

CUP decided to break its long time partnership with the CFS in its Ottawa print shop. CUP will be taking over the Common Printing Group as part of CFS' debt owed to the organization. Since the inception of the co-

owned print shop, CFS has not pulled its weight in commitments to the partnership.

CUP's treatment of its own staff continued to come under scrutiny at this conference, but member papers expressed little more than collective guilt rather than solve problems related to both work-load and salary. Despite a motion prohibiting the plenary from expanding the present work-load of staff, numerous motions were later passed heaping new mandates primarily on the national executive.

At numerous points during the conference members expressed dissatisfaction with the general level of newswriting across the country, but no resolutions on solving the malaise were settled on.

The annual conference will be hosted in Vancouver next year.

Brennan slips into Coma City

By JOHN GUSHUE

A LONG TIME FASCINATION with bureaucracy has given Samantha Brennan something to look forward to. The 20-year-old Brennan will move to Ottawa this August to assume her duties as national features writer of Canadian University Press.

Brennan, present co-editor of *The Gazette*, was elected to the 31-week position Jan 1 at CUP's 47th national conference, which she helped to organize.

Brennan will co-ordinate a weekly feature service for CUP's 57 member papers, by clipping, editing and rewriting between two and four features each week, as well as writing at least five original features during the year. She will also contribute to the general administration of the co-operative, represent the national executive at regional conferences, and sit on the board of directors of the Common Printing Group, CUP's Ottawa print shop.

Brennan, in accordance with

guidelines passed by the national plenary, will select features based on their topicality and quality, with an emphasis on education and social issues. But Brennan's interests do not stop there.



"Mom— I got the job..." Photo: Mary C. Sykes, Dal Photo.

Child care workers unionize over Christmas break

By DAVID OLIE

IN THE MIDST OF THE current labour turmoil at Dalhousie, one campus group has quietly and effectively organized their own union.

The Canadian Union of Child Care and Allied Workers held its founding meeting on Dec. 12. This new, independent union represents workers of the Dalhousie unit of the university children's centre.

Beverly Lewis, president of the new union, says gaining "professional recognition" is the main motive behind its formation. Lewis says daycare workers are often overlooked or taken for granted leading to low pay and a lack of benefits.

Wages at the centre currently start at \$4.25-\$4.50 per hour, although "some of our people have had four years of university training," says Lewis.

The Dal children's centre is the only unionized daycare facility in Halifax at this time. The employer, the Halifax student housing society, have voluntarily recognized the bargaining unit,

although with some reservations.

Christina LeGay, the society's board of director's president, says she was not surprised by the move.

"Feelings between the two groups are good," she says.

Lewis says the union plans to begin bargaining with the society for a first contract around the end of this month. She is satisfied that things have gone so smoothly for their home-grown effort.

"We read books and studied labour law to find out how to do it. Anyone can do it themselves," she says. "This is going to be a good union."

Lewis is optimistic that the union idea can spread to other daycare centres.

"We have put out contacts, and the response has been good, but we're still just babies ourselves," she says.

The Dal children's centre is located on campus near the corner of Cobourg Road and Oxford Street. The centre provides child care for about 65 families of faculty, staff and students of Dalhousie.

Objectivity stifles women

By MARY ELLEN JONES

OBJECTIVITY, CONSIDERED by some to be good journalism, distorts and stifles women's voices. It moves against the spirit of women journalists like feminist Susan Cole.

Multi-talented Cole addressed this year's Canadian University Press conference theme of "Women in the Media."

Cole is a feminist, rock journalist and musician, co-founder of the national feminist magazine *Broadside*, contributing editor to magazine's *NOW*, and *Graffiti*. Cole is also currently completing a book on pornography, which she hopes will be published in the fall.

Concerned about the impact of taking an objective stance in journalism on women's issues and women journalists, Cole says she finds objectivity to be one of the "strangest things around."

She talked about how objectivity means good

journalism to editors of Canadian publications, especially male editors. Specifically she told of her experience as a writer for editor Peter C. Newman.

Newman told her that she could write, but inferred to her that as a journalist she was doomed because... "I don't have that objective stance that you are supposed to have when you approach the field of journalism," said Cole.

"Objectivity assumes that we as journalists are always dreary blank slates. We have no opinions. We don't think. We are just going to take one quote and had better get another quote to offset it," says Cole.

Cole says objectivity in journalism implies the world is equally divided into black and white — to Cole and many others like her this is impossible.

It is especially difficult to be objective when touching upon issues such as birth control and abortions, says Cole.

Cole's voice rose in anger as she remembered the time the *Toronto Star* asked her to write a pro-choice commentary. She said she knew they'd place it next to a pro-life article of similar length but wrote in anyway because she needed the money.

If they had wanted to present both sides of the issue to reflect the views of Canadians they would have run two pro-choice articles for every pro-life one, said Cole.

She said this is the myth of objective journalism.

"The whole craft of objective journalism tries to reduce women so that we can't mean what we say — that's very male," says Cole.

As far as women's issues are concerned, there can only be one side for Cole.

When a woman discovers that the birth control pill is causing cervical cancer, her story has a difficult time entering the mainstream press. But when the drug companies who are soliciting the drug say that there is nothing wrong with the birth control pill this story is more easily accepted as news.

According to Cole, liberalism and discrepancies between power and state are completely smothering women and women journalists from really expressing what they mean.

"Women have discovered and feminists have discovered that the state isn't the issue in liberalism... Power is the issue and power terminates everywhere," says Cole.

"Liberalism just doesn't sit well with women's own experience," says Cole. "Women don't live in a world of freedom of speech and journalists don't either. We should all get used to it. either. We should all get used to it." covered. Cole suggests we only read the newspapers to confirm this.

"The only way we have been able to get information out about the hardships and anguish of women is when some guy opens an abortion clinic. Other than that it's not news," says Cole.