

## Returning to Learning

by Erin Goodman

Daisy McDonald is not your average student. She has never lived in residence; she and her children share their home with six other people, some of whom are Metro University students. She's never seen at frat parties, and she won't be found checking your books out at the library. Three children and a full-time job occupy most of her time.

She's an adult student at Dalhousie, one of hundreds who have made the decision to return to education after years of absence. Their reasons are varied, and their needs are unique.

### It's a big step for a freshman at any age

"There was a feeling that non-traditional students were getting lost in the whole start-of-the-year process," says Daisy, this year's coordinator of Returning to Learning '87. "Frosh week doesn't focus on older students at all."

Adult students are unlikely to participate in exuberant orientation activities, and miss out on initial opportunities to meet new people and familiarize themselves with the university. According to the co-ordinator, it often seems that mature students are expected to be less



Daisy McDonald with her daughter.

Photo: Ariella Pahlke

intimidated, and more knowledgeable, than regular frosh. But she stresses, "It's a big step for a freshman at any age."

Returning to Learning '87 is a special one-day orientation for adult students, sponsored by the Centre for Continuing Studies at Henson College and Counseling and Psychological Services at Dalhousie. It places an emphasis on the services and resources that will most benefit mature students: health services, financial aid, writing skills, etc. One of the main goals of the event is to de-mystify the university environment, introducing new students to people at the university who will help them make the adjustment to going back to school.

To students attending classes part-time in the evenings, simply recognizing some faces around the campus can help alleviate some of the feelings of segregation and isolation. Daisy McDonald is anxious to reach those students who attend classes once or twice a week, get into their cars, and leave the university having gained very little from its eclectic, social nature.

"You can be part of the university, and make new friends," she says. "But you have to reach out to other students. Don't let age be a barrier."

Having held a seat in the Dalhousie Senate as a student representative last year, Daisy recognizes the value of being informed on student issues. And she questions the political process that neglects the needs of the mature student minority. "The priorities of a returning student are entirely different from those of a 19-year-old," she says.

Regarding the allocation of student union fees, she says, "I would rather see my portion go towards daycare than towards Super SUBs. Mature students are going to look towards the DSU to see that some of the practical issues of the university are cared for."

## Bus passes again

by Geoff Stone

For another year, the Students Union of Nova Scotia (SUNS) is pushing for student bus passes from the Metropolitan Authority.

For a number of years, SUNS has lobbied to have reduced-fare bus passes for students, in order to cut the cost of daily bus fare in Metro.

Barney Savage, researcher for SUNS, says the student bus passes are more of an issue this year, as ridership has decreased drastically in the last few months.

A SUNS Bus Pass Committee was formed this summer to lobby the municipality for a bus pass. "The committee met three times over the course of the summer. Aldermen with post-secondary students in their ridings are being contacted," Savage said.

At present there is only a discount for the purchase of a large number of bus tickets. The Bus Pass Committee hopes to get the municipality to offer students

some form of discount for regular use of the metro buses.

Savage said the general assumption is that the bus passes will increase ridership, which will increase revenue, but that it is harder to justify with a bus pass. "With a straight fare, revenue is one hundred per cent", said Savage.

Among other issues, SUNS is working on a number of projects for the coming year.

SUNS will be waiting for the Minister of Education to appoint a Student Aid Advisory committee.

SUNS also plans to appear before the Maritime Provinces Higher Education Committee (MPHEC) in mid-October to organize a mini-forum on post-secondary education, and to inform students about enumeration and voting in the possible upcoming election in Nova Scotia.

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## TIGER OPENER

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Sept. 16

Acadia vs. Dal  
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Men's Soccer

Sept. 17

Acadia at Dal  
at 4 p.m.

Both games played  
on Studley Field