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# the Gazette

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## No more free furniture for Haligonians

BY JOHN CULLEN

Parker Street Furniture Bank is amidst a last ditch attempt to raise money to keep afloat.

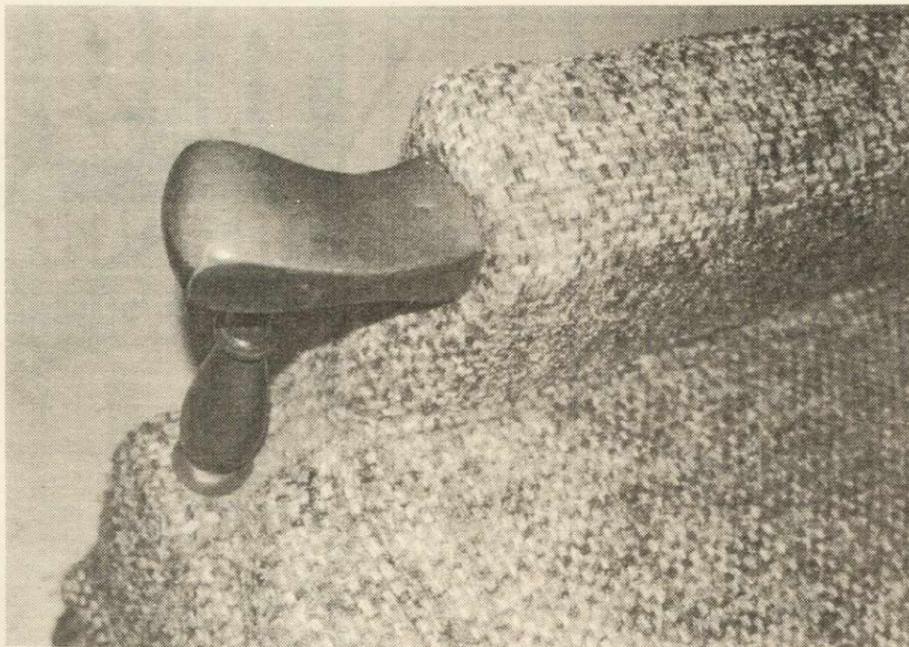
The Bank provides low to no-income individuals and families with basic furnishings.

Since its inception a year ago, they have serviced over 1,000 people with beds, chairs, dressers, and kitchen tables, and have another 2,400 people on their waiting list.

Deborah Sharpe is a Parker Street recipient. A mother of three who recently moved to Halifax, she found herself in need of some basic household necessities. She received some furniture that has helped her get back on her feet.

"You can't function if you don't have the right stuff," she said.

The group is a non-profit organization run by the Community Care Network Society which was incorporated as a registered charity in 1990. The Furniture Bank was started in March of 1994 by Mel Boutilier, the former chairman of the board of the Parker



**NO MORE SITTING AROUND** / The Parker St. Furniture Bank faces closure due to lack of government support.

Street Food Bank.

Aside from providing furnishings, the group's objective is to cut down on the amount of salvageable waste entering the landfills.

Parker Street has certainly

never suffered from a lack of furniture.

"We have plenty of furniture to go around, it is the finances we are in need of," said Kelly Walsh, the public relations representative

for the group. The Bank has received two work fare grants from the government under section 25 of the Job Creation Program, a program which helps unemployed recipients find a job.

They received a total of \$177,000; the grant money runs out at the end of this month.

"We have had some private contributions from the people who donate furniture and some corporate donations from some banks, but it hasn't been enough," said Walsh.

Because the Bank cannot ex-

pect further grants from the government, it now depends on private donations. In the meantime, it has been forced to lay off some of its staff. At the end of March, Parker Street will be running on a skeleton crew of five staff members, down from a previous total of eleven.

These five people are essential to the operation of the group. The personnel consists of one social worker, a warehouse manager, a truck driver who collects the donations, an upholsterer who fixes up the furniture, and a public relations worker.

The problem does not end at the prospect of these lay-offs. The staff members are all recipients of UI, and after the grant runs out, they will all be without financial aid.

"If we don't get some money, we'll be the clients of the furniture bank," said Walsh.

*If you have any old furniture to get rid of, or if you would like to make a financial donation, you can contact the Parker Street Furniture Bank at 453-4886.*

## Memorial University gets the Supercard

BY NICK GARDNER

ST. JOHN'S, Nfld. (CUP) — Memorial University will soon be on the cutting edge of technology as it joins one of just five North American universities to have the Supercard.

The Supercard is a combination student identification card, library card, and debit card which is equipped with a smart chip to store information. To date, Memorial has spent about \$250,000 on updating equipment and creating the cards.

"[The \$250,000] also gives us what we call cash value machines," said Carson Leonard of Memorial University Student Services. "A student could put in a bill, take that money and put it on the chip. We've got one of these for each of the libraries on the campus plus one in the Thomson Centre."

According to Leonard, the money is being used to purchase 15,000 cards complete with the smart chip and the university crest. Technicians will change the thirty-one photocopiers around campus from their present striped debit card system to the chip format.

Card production stations, which include both computer hardware and software, will also be purchased. Two stations will be made available for Memorial — one for

## UPEI radio station funding cut

BY ZACK TAYLOR

After a two hour debate, the University of Prince Edward Island (UPEI) student council voted by secret ballot to cut all funding to CIMN, the campus radio station last Sunday.

Supporters of the station have questioned the validity of the council's decision.

The funding was withdrawn because the Student Union council was unhappy with the Red Book, the station's draft FM broadcasting plan which was to be further negotiated. The student council treated the draft as a finished proposal.

"It just didn't do it for me," said Student Union President Amber Allin.

Student Union VP External Fidel Murphy spearheaded the drive to cut the funding. He argued that solving the "problems" at CIMN could only be achieved by going back to "square one," and that CIMN needed to "prove itself at the grass roots level."

The student council was also concerned with perceived problems in the CIMN by-laws, which, since the station's creation in 1981, have not been officially changed. The executive feared that they might be personally financially liable in their capacity as members of the CIMN board of directors. They also took issue with the fact that board members are required to be Canadian citizens.

Both arguments were debunked in the pre-vote discussion. The station's annual general meeting, held today, will change the structure of the board of directors. A Halifax-based broadcasting consultant, brought in to help argue the station's case, pointed to the federal Broadcast Act, which states that board members of all broadcasting companies must be Canadian citizens.

Supporters of the station believe that the council's decision to cut funding is undemocratic and based on self-interest.

"Their arguments had no basis, and there are things that could have been discussed and

changed," said Melissa Buote, CIMN's station manager.

President-Elect Chris Burns also advocated withdrawing funding. He was widely criticized for speaking out because he is presently serving as university ombudsman, a position which requires him to be unbiased.

"I think the actions of Chris Burns were very corrupt, and that he shouldn't be president next year based on those actions," Buote said.

Although CIMN was created by the Student Union in 1982, it is an independently registered company, and it owns all of its own equipment. Although the station has an agreement with the Student Union, the council has no direct control over the operations of the station.

What will happen to next year's budget allocation for CIMN is unclear. Even if the cuts remain in place, the student council is planning on going ahead with a three dollar increase in student fees.

The Student Union executive was not unanimous, however. Following the vote, Student Society VP Internal Tara Inman raised the fee issue and expressed her concern with the process.

"This is an issue which really should have been brought to a referendum vote. It directly affects students and student fees. We had a petition with over 400 names in support of CIMN, and the final decision was left to be made by 18 people which in my opinion is completely unfair to the students of UPEI," Inman said.

Without funding, the station will be unable to act on its new plans to switch to FM broadcasting. Canada's regulatory body for broadcasters, the Canadian Radio and Telecommunications Commission (CRTC), granted CIMN an FM license last June. The initial license is only valid for one year, so the station has applied for an extension until funding is secured.

The station has secured private support to continue operations, pending the development of a five-year business plan.

— with reporting by Panther Prints, UPEI