

Police investigate possible arson in SUB

by Paul Creelman

An outburst of fire on the third floor of the student Union Building resulted in the evacuation and closure of the SUB last Monday night. After putting out the blaze, the fire department declared the fire to be "of a suspicious nature" and called in the police to investigate possible arson.

According to a fire department spokesperson, the fire started in a pile of styrofoam display material in the dressing room by the Grawood. Before spreading far from this spot, the flames triggered sprinklers and an alarm system. Night manager John Russell and Student Council President Gord Owen, who were in the building at the time, aided the SUB staff in the evacuation of the building and the clean up after the fire.

"I was surprised at the speed with which people left the building," said Owen.

"Especially in view of the fact we've had a number of false alarms this year. Part of the reason was the fact that there was a fair amount of smoke which collected down

the stairwell in the Games Room, and you could smell the smoke in the air."

Although the medium sized fire was quickly extinguished, the mopping up of a considerable quantity of water and the possibility of secondary fires led night manager Russell to

close the SUB for the night. Russell states that the fire was well handled all around because of prompt clearing of the building and quick response by the fire department.

Damage reports are still tentative because a wall must be partly dismantled to deter-

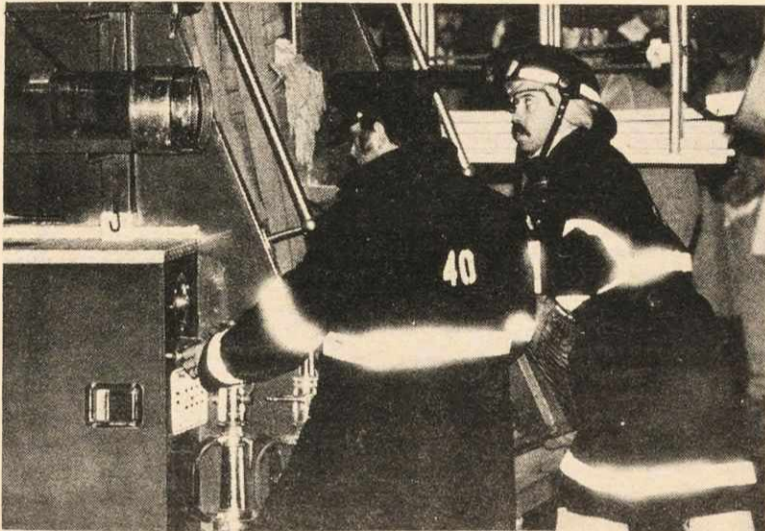
mine whether or not wiring was damaged by the fire. However, Student Union manager, John Graham states that if only the burned wallboard and similar cosmetic damage were involved the dollar estimate cost could be as low as one thousand dollars.

The work needed to fix up the room and the neighboring washroom is not too extensive, says Graham.

"In fact, if the police didn't have the place locked up for the investigation, we could have it ready to use later today."

The fire department spokesperson said that further information about the investigation will not be available until it is brought to the point where the case goes to the courts. However, he was not enthusiastic about this possibility, noting that substantive proof is always difficult in an arson case.

Corporal Baxter, the detective investigating the fire, would not comment on the investigation except to say it has been referred to them by the fire department.



Higgins/Dal Photo

Dalhousie students were roused from their warm reveries in the Grawood Lounge Monday night when a fire broke out in a nearby room. The beerdrinkers, together with some people from Dentistry and several SUB groupies, were forced to evacuate for the evening.



DAYAL/DAL PHOTO

Cleaning up the water was more of a hassle than putting out the flames.

R and D cutbacks will cripple, researcher

OTTAWA [CUP]—Most Canadian research will come to a grinding halt if federal funding to research councils and universities is not increased, according to the president of the Canadian Federation of Biological Sciences.

John Cowan said February 10 the expected research funding increases would be insufficient to maintain the current level of research.

"I think that we're in much more serious trouble than anyone realizes yet," he said.

The federal government provides funding for research through three granting councils, who in turn finance individual researchers and universities. The Medical Research Council is expected to receive a 9 per cent increase in funding, the Natural Science and Engineering Research Council will likely receive 11.5 per cent and the Social Science and Humanities Research Council may get 8 per cent.

Although the final decision on the budgets for the councils will not be made until later this month, Cowan said the councils have been advised verbally of these increases. He also said John Roberts, Minister of Science and Technology, hinted at these percentages.

"Roberts said he wouldn't discourage this belief," said Cowan.

Cowan said these increases are insufficient because the rate of inflation for scientific research is higher than the regular inflation rate as a result of the cost of importing supplies and equipment. Also,

he said, there is a backlog of equipment replacement requests, which have built up over years in inadequate funding, that cannot be answered under the proposed budgets.

"The councils have also made long range financial commitments based on five year plans that were approved over a year ago," said Cowan. For example, the Science and Engineering Council had a budget of \$206 million approved last year and that

would be reduced to \$181.5 million if the new proposal takes effect.

"There was a different government in power then," said Cowan. "We had assurances that neither party would change the five year plans."

Cowan dismissed the statement Roberts made January 19 which suggests there would be "real growth" in research and development funding for next year.

"We in the scientific com-

munity are not fooled," he said. "Of course, I would be delighted if the minister's claim is true."

Cowan said the possible research and development cuts and the upcoming announcement on cutbacks in post secondary education funding to the provinces are "two sides of the same coin. We can no longer expect overhead support from post secondary education funding," he said.

At a press conference February 9 at the University of Toronto, John Leyerle, dean of the school of graduate studies, said the inadequate funding has left research in a state of "demoralization, disarray and inability to fulfill goals."

Leyerle noted that only 0.9 per cent of Canada's Gross National Product is spent on research, as compared to 2.4 per cent in the United States and 2.2 per cent in West Germany.

Elections coming—who will run?

by Cathy McDonald

Indications are the Dalhousie Student Union will have a hotly contested electoral race for the presidential and vice-presidential positions on next year's council. Elections will be held on March 11 and 12.

A matter of contention is whether current Student Council President Gord Owen will run again. Owen points out that "until I file an application, I'm not running."

Newer names on the ballot could be Dan Kelly and Frank Dunn. Engineering and Biology students respectively. Kelly lamented that Dal student activities did not involve the off-campus student. He would not reveal any of the team's possible platforms. According to Kelly, the team's

candidacy" depends on who's running."

Marie Gilkinson, Health and Physical Education representative and chairperson of the Entertainment Committee is "very interested" in being next year's vice-president. She "has a lot of ideas" she would like to implement, however, personal plans and finding a good running-mate will determine Gilkinson's candidacy.

Graduate students' representative Greg Graham is definitely in the running for president. Confident that Gilkinson will be his running mate, Graham wants to see more attention paid to government, administrative and academic policies as they affect students at Dalhousie.

Greg Tynski, President of Howe Hall, wants to run for Student Council President. Greg pointed to his experience in public administration. "My own political future depends on whether I can find a suitable running mate," Greg said.

Peter Rans, another graduate student representative, is not considering candidacy "this year". Nevertheless, he offered a possible political platform, hoping that running teams would have "genuine beliefs and proposed solutions in the area of communication, and active as opposed to passive participation with respect to the government's acceptance of the inevitable decline in the quality of education in this province."

Constitutionally, candidates must present themselves as a presidential vice-presidential team. The President is responsible for the general management of the Student Union while the Vice-President acts as a liaison with societies and is responsible for the operation of the Student Union Building.

The following nominations were received at press time for Student Council positions: Gregory Fitzgerald for Arts rep, Cindy Jenson for Administrative Studies, Ian MacKay for Law, Lynn Lamont as Member at Large, and Mark Perrault and Martin Baker both as student representatives on the Senate. The deadline for applications is 5:00 p.m., Friday, February 20th.