

EDITORIAL

Another step backward

Rape. The word means fear to most women. It is the violation of a woman's innermost being. Control over her most intimate self is taken away.

The actual rape is of relatively short duration, but the repercussions continue for a lifetime.

First, the victim must admit to herself that she was raped, this is especially difficult in date rape cases. Then she must get help, from a friend, a sexual assault hotline, or some other source. To do this she has to admit to others she was raped.

Most rape cases go unreported. Obtaining a conviction is a long and painful process. Most women try to put the experience behind them. If we are to deal with the problem, women need encouragement to report rapes. Our current system makes it very difficult for a woman to report sexual assaults. In fact, backward steps are being taken.

If she chooses to press charges, or if someone else reports the incident, the woman may have to submit to a medical examination, informing doctors and nurses of her rape. She will also have to undergo police investigation, where she will have to tell her story, to strangers, over and over again. The police will also try to question the suspect, and anyone else involved. Depending on the evidence, the police can press charges, or the case may be dropped.

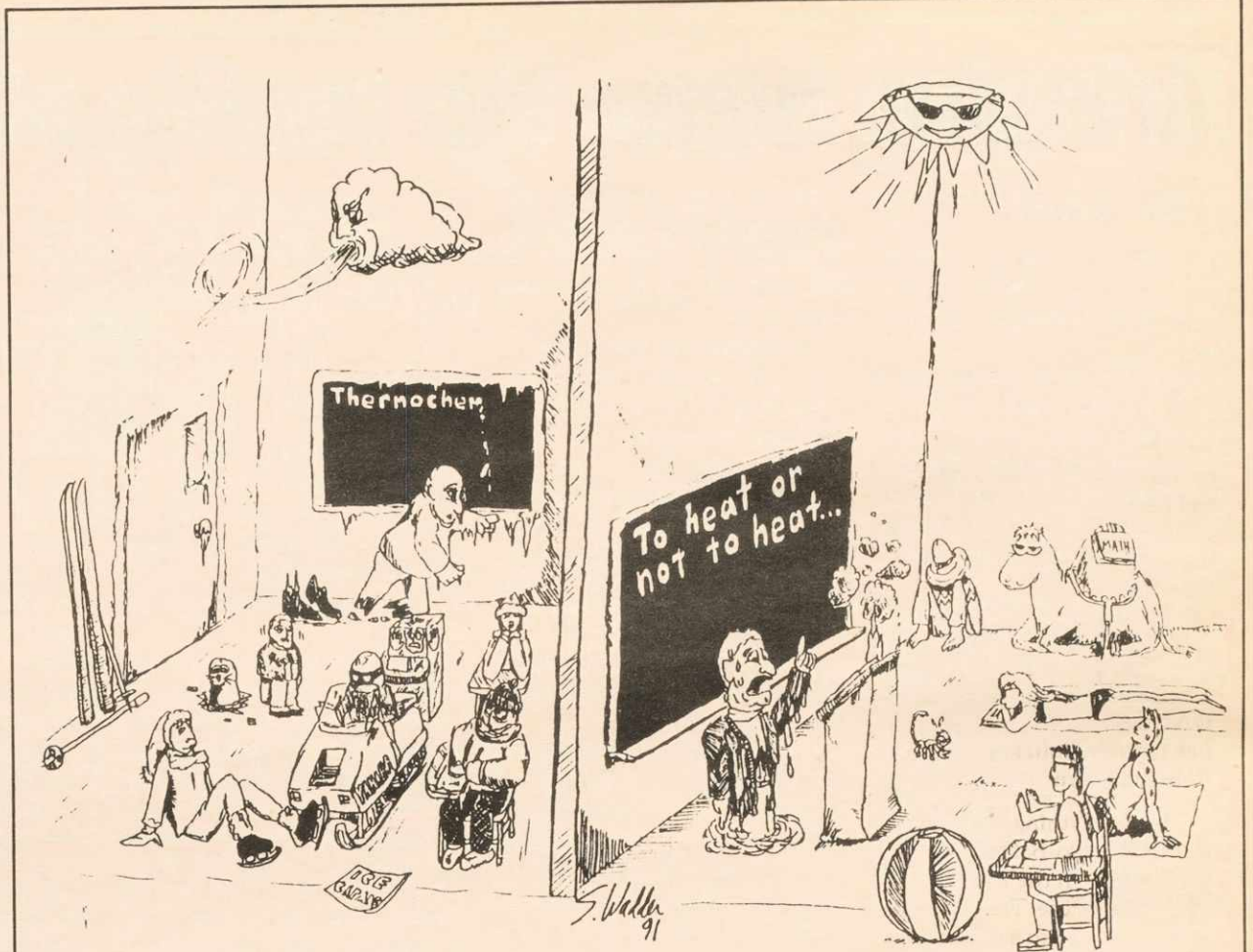
If charges are laid then the case goes to trial. The woman will then have to tell her story to even more strangers, and face cross examination. Until recently the so called "rape shield" law protected a woman from having to answer questions about her previous sexual history. However, the Supreme Court of Canada has declared this protective law to be unconstitutional. Now a woman may be asked by more strangers, the details of her sexual life.

Recently, at the University College of Cape Breton, a sexual assault investigation took an unusual twist. The police chose not to charge the suspects, but instead charged the woman with public mischief for misleading the police.

Now not only does a woman have to go through the humiliating experience of admitting she was raped, to herself, doctors, police, judges, lawyers, and the general public, but if the police do not believe a woman's story of rape she can face up to five years in jail, if convicted.

If a woman faces the risk of jail she will be far less likely to tell the police her story. Similarly, the chance she will have to reveal her previous sexual activities in order to obtain a conviction will make a woman think again before she files a complaint.

Shannon Gowans



Physical plant searches high and low for that ever-elusive comfort zone

LETTERS

The Dalhousie Gazette welcomes letters to the editor. Letters should not exceed 300 words in length and should be typed and double-spaced. The deadline for letters is Friday noon before publication. Letters may be submitted on Mac or IBM-compatible 3.5" disk.

Write good

To the editor:

I am writing in regard to the lack of formal training provided by the Science Department in regards to Formal Laboratory Reports in the A.P.A. Format as is required by most courses in your Faculty.

The University currently sponsors a program which formally teaches the format for Essay Writing but nothing like this is offered to Science students who need to be educated on the process for writing a Lab Report in the proper manner.

Currently all that is offered is examples and advice from the courses which require the use of this format but this is not sufficient. A formal training in this writing technique is required, with trial reports, for a student to become an efficient Lab Report writer.

With the amount of Tuition a student pays to be educated by Dalhousie University I can not see how we can be expected to teach ourselves such an important part of the Science Program.

Would please consider of

fering some type of non-credit program on the art of Formal Lab Report writing so students who wish to learn this properly can do so.

Ian Toy Landry
V.P., D.M.S.A.



No rape occurred

To the editor:

Lara Morris' article in the Sept. 19 issue on the subject of the Take Back the Night March which presumably intended to raise the awareness level among students on the important subject of violence against women contained a reference to rumours about recent rapes on the King's College and Saint Mary's campuses. With respect to King's, any such rumours of rapes are false.

On Sept. 2, the day when most first-year students

moved into the King's residence, a female student reported that while in one of the women's washrooms in Alexandra Hall, the King's women's residence, a man exposed himself to her. She informed him that he was obviously in the wrong place, and she then left the washroom and reported the incident to the Deans of the college and to the King's Campus Police Chief, as they were the first people she saw. Immediately, a search was undertaken and it was established that the man was no longer in the building. The student was asked if she wished to report the incident to the city police, but she did not wish to do so.

Early in the term, as is the custom, the Dean and Resident Dons in Alexandra Hall met with female students and discussed with them the serious issue of security on campus and the importance of reporting any incidents to the Dons and Deans of the college. To this date, no other such incidents have been reported.

No residence building can

be made completely secure without unduly restricting the civil rights of its occupants. Admittedly, on Labour Day, with one hundred female students, most accompanied by family and friends, moving their belongings into residence, the situation was difficult to monitor thoroughly. During the academic year, the issue of security is taken very seriously at King's. There is a receptionist on duty at the entrance of Alexandra hall 24 hours a day. Men have to be signed into the residence after 6 p.m., and must leave by a specified time each evening.

Violence against women is a serious problem in our society and incidents like this should not be treated lightly. Nevertheless, it is important that newspaper articles on this subject are accurate and factual.

With respect to her mention of King's in her article, Ms. Morris was inaccurate. A rape did not occur. In our opinion, she should have contacted the King's College administration to get her facts straight before she wrote her article.

Susan Tuck, Dean of Residence
Thomas Stinson, Dean of Men

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announcements is noon on Friday before publication (Thursday of each week). Submissions may be left at the SUB Enquiry Desk c/o The Gazette. Commentary should not exceed 500 words. Letters should not exceed 300 words. No unsigned material will be accepted, but anonymity may be granted upon request. Advertising copy deadline is noon Monday

before publication. The Gazette offices are located on the third floor of the SUB. Come up and have a coffee and tell us what's going on. The views expressed in The Gazette are not necessarily those of the Students' Union, the editors or the collective staff.