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### Science Society

## Anyone care?

by Rod Brittain

Did anyone happen to notice the Science Society this year? We haven't seen much evidence of it around this year, and are wondering if it is lost. If you know where it is, would you please turn it in to the Lost 'N Found at the SUB enquiry desk? Then any one of its owners able to identify it can claim it and take it home.

The Dalhousie Science Society has had its ups and downs. Generally, its ups don't attract much attention and are relatively short lived. On one of its downs, the whole organization tends to sink out of sight completely. It would be nice to think that the fortunes of the Science Society would be of concern to most of its members if only they were more aware of what was going on. Perhaps this is being a bit optimistic; but, since it is their society and their money involved, I think that at least a few will be interested enough to read about these ups and downs.

The Science Society is actually a fairly new society on campus; this is only its third year of operation after a long period of true absence from campus. It is unlike societies in most other faculties just as Science is very different from most other studies. The organization of the society reflects this.

Most of the faculty-based societies that seem to do well at Dalhousie are very small in comparison with Science and the programs of study are much less varied. Students entering these faculties in any given year share most of their classes together right through almost to the end of their degree. They get a good chance to get to know all the other students at their level in the program. This is obviously not the case for Science. Here students generally are attached to one department (at least once they have passed their first year). So, rather than being one homogeneous group, science students really make up a number of smaller groups.

For each of these smaller departmental groups there is usually a separate club. These science clubs vary greatly in size; on one extreme there are less than 50 people in Dal UPS, the Under-graduate Physics Society, and on the other extreme, DABS, the Dalhousie Association of Biology Students, may have 1300 members (all the seven hundred-plus students in Biology 1000 are included because DABS tries to look after their interests at the departmental level and organizes several activities of particular interest for first year biology students). They also vary greatly in how well they are organized and how much they actually do.

Most of the Science Council, the body which governs the Science Society, is made

up of representatives from these departmental clubs (the only other people on the Council are the Science Representatives on the Council of the Dalhousie Student Union and the President of the Science Society). Perhaps the most important thing this council looks after is the handling of the \$3.00 Society Fees collected from each Science Student. A good portion of this is handed out to the different science clubs on the basis of their needs to keep things going. Everyone involved with this business seems to be quite happy with it. The rest of it is used for things the Science Society itself directly sponsors. It is these things that give the society its ups and downs and whose merits few people, including the members of the Science Council, can agree.

Briefly, these activities fall into three main categories: social entertainment, academic entertainment and "special projects".

The Science Society's record on social entertainment is, at first glance, rather patternless. A Science Ball was held one year and went very well although attendance was low. It was tried again the next year and had to be cancelled because only 15 tickets were sold. Halloween Parties were held on two different years; the first was a good party, the second was a flop. One end of the year dance was attempted as was a Valentine Day's Party; both bombed. Pub crawls held on two different years and both drew a fair amount of interest although they had a rather limited clientele.

Academic entertainment means guest lectures on science related topics of general interest, panel discussions, films, etc. This has mostly been a long series of students inviting lecturers and the people being unable or unwilling to come here and students trying to set up special film series or panel discussions and spending many hours of work which results in no success. Only two such events have been held by the Science Society. One was a lecture by J. Tuzo Wilson, a famous Canadian geologist and Director-General of the Ontario Science Center on "Science and Society". The worst storm of the year hit Halifax the night of the lecture. Eighty people went anyway. The other was a panel discussion on "Scientific Freedom and Responsibility" (advertised by signs saying "Mad Scientists Beware!"). Only about twenty people went to this, but this actually made it good because then there was a chance for a real discussion.

"Special projects" more or less includes everything that doesn't fit into the other categories. The most notable events have been the Science Orientation programs. "Bud-



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