

Some facts on tenants' rights

The area of Tenant/Landlord relations brings us close to the power-structure, as the landlord is often a large-scale capitalist (or capitalistic company) who provides more problems for more people.

These are the people who structure the laws to protect their interests above all else. These are the ones who capitalized on students so much; our rents are the highest in Canada. This hurts the working men (as well as the students) for they must now compete with wealthy, middle-class, loan-financed students for the WORST of dwellings.

Here then, is another common ground: both workers and students are losing to the landlord class. Before we can rise to a position of mass power over such individuals, we must know our rights in our everyday dealings with them: THEN we must organize against them. The following are only a few of the points found in the Landlords and Tenants Act, which everyone should study.

Every tenant must receive either a copy of the Landlords and Tenants Act or a copy of his lease before being held responsible for the premises. The premises must also be fit for habitation according to health, safety, and housing standards, but need not be improved after the tenant's occupation UNLESS they fall below these standards and are not repaired after notice is given to the landlord. Tenants are responsible for damages, whether inflicted by themselves or their guests.

No landlord may enter the premises at an

unreasonable hour without first giving notice except in an emergency. No locks may be changed without the mutual consent of both tenant and landlord.

A tenant does NOT have the right to sub-let without the consent of the landlord. If you are renting first ask to see the landlord's written consent or speak with him for confirmation.

The least understood of rental procedures is leasing. Make sure that you read the lease carefully, asking questions until you understand what is involved. You may also take it with you to ask someone's advice.

Be careful of any initial statements made by you or the landlord and remember your witnesses. A lease for less than three years duration may be VERBAL AS WELL AS WRITTEN.

Be sure that you pay rent to either the landlord or their agent; otherwise, you may have to repeat the payment. Payment through the mail is to be avoided whenever possible.

A landlord may seize a tenant's goods in lieu of rent, but only according to specific procedures. A legal complaint requires that you be notified FIVE DAYS in advance of such action, but be sure of your ground before resisting. The Criminal Code allows an indictable two year prison term for obstructing a lawful seizure.

The landlord is making an unlawful seizure when there is no tenancy, no rent in arrears, unlawful entry, entry during a prohibited period or more than six months after expiration of the lease, entry made after

the tenant has left the premises, or when the goods are exempt from seizure.

Much confusion surrounds the question of "giving notice". However, a standard for this has been established and must be followed. If a dwelling is rented on a yearly basis, notice must be given at least three months before the year's end. Monthly rental requires three months from the landlord and one by the tenant, while if you rent by the week, you need only give one week's notice; your landlord must give you a month to vacate.

This is an area where the tenant can wield a small amount of power. If your landlord appears to be disrespectful of your needs then he can be hurt by tenants' "non-actions": waiting until the last possible moment to give notice, and similar inconveniences; the best way to cause him pain is to cost him money. But remember to protect your interests as he does his: stay within the letter of the law.

If you have a serious dispute with your landlord, notify the Residential Tenancies Board immediately. They will hold your rental payments in trust until the problem is resolved. As this group is landlord-oriented, they should be watched and their advice taken with a grain of salt. More valuable assistance can come from various tenants' unions, legal aid offices, etc., but the best formula for results is a small, co-ordinated group living in the same area or under the same landlord. Following a criteria of making it hard for the landlord NOT to improve dwellings has brought speedy results and a multitude of ideas elsewhere in Canada.

Fairy tale Orientation must go



**STUDENT CAMPUS SECURITY
POSITIONS ARE NOW OPEN
INTERESTED MALE AND FEMALE
STUDENTS SHOULD APPLY
AT SUB INQUIRY DESK**

by Glenn Wanamaker

Once again this year, new students to Dalhousie are being greeted by an irrelevant, expensive and generally poorly thought-out Orientation program.

The theme is Alice in Wonderland, and all the new students are to be known as Alicians. If that's not enough, it's going to cost \$6.00 to buy a frosh card, which will entitle the holder to admittance to most of the Orientation events. Two concerts scheduled for September 17 are not included "due to extraordinary expense".

The connection between university and Wonderland does not exactly jump out and strike one in the face. If there is a connection, it's well-hidden. At any rate, the events that are scheduled are basically no different from the past years. And in past years, it was widely known that few of the events were well-attended and that new students just did not find out about the things that are and will be important to them in the few years ahead.

There will be dances, movies and speeches about the supposedly great potential that a university graduate has. The one worthwhile event is Shinerama in which students go through the Halifax-Dartmouth area shining shoes to raise money for children suffering from Cystic Fibrosis. But that's where the relevancy ends.

The just-released final report of the President's Task Force

on the Quality of Student Life was extremely critical of the Orientation program. It reported that 13% of the students randomly interviewed, gave a negative response to Orientation. Not one student had a positive reaction to the program.

The report states: "A recent survey, undertaken by Professor William Stephens of the Sociology Department, indicates that most students feel either hostility or nothing at all concerning Orientation as it now operates. For a supposedly positive activity, this is an extremely negative reaction."

This report was completed sometime ago so why hasn't the Orientation committee been let in on this top secret information? The current type of Orientation program must be scrubbed! If the Report and the myriads of complaints do not convince the organizers of their failure to relate to students, then the only solution is to totally boycott Orientation events. It has become increasingly evident that the Student Union does not support functions that fail to make money.

Thus the solution is to financially cripple Orientation if this farce is ever going to end. It is the only way to get the message across that university students are not entering kindergarten. Fairy tales and Tea Parties do not a university make.

**GAZETTE
NEEDS
STAFF**