

focus on dal

Wen-Do: Turning the tables on fear

by Jennifer Partridge

Rather than endure the evils of residence food and noisy frosh away from home for the first time, a young woman at the University of Toronto decided to rent a house with several other people, none of whom she knew very well. Returning home late one night, she crawled into bed to get some much-needed sleep. One of her housemates decided he would join her, forcing his way into the room... and into her bed. Or so he thought.

Recognizing that the eyes are the most vulnerable part of the body, a well-aimed squirt of hairspray gave this woman enough time to get out of there and over to a neighbour's house to call the police.

Hers is what Anne Campbell, a Halifax Wen-Do instructor, terms a "success story". Others have not been so lucky. Some of the women in her classes have been assaulted before. They want to ensure this won't happen again. And some simply want to get home safely after working and studying late at night. Through the Wen-Do Women's Self Defence course which began Tuesday, September 20 at Dal, Campbell teaches

women the necessary steps to empower themselves.

Wen-Do, translated as "Women's Way", is a national program developed for women 12 years of age and



over. In the supportive atmosphere of a small group (a maximum of 20 students), women learn both physical and verbal techniques to help them get out of unavoidable situations.

For Cecilia, one of Campbell's students, working alone in her office

at night is definitely risky.

"I get callers that are alone with me in her office and in the whole office as a matter of fact...I'd like to be sure that I could protect myself from that kind of situation."

There are other pressing concerns—the things which we take for granted.

"Simply walking—particularly in the evenings... I'm worried about late night attacks... The lighting is often not very good. [I'm also worried about] attacks from strangers but also even from people that I know or know only slightly."

Students learn the art of verbally defusing a potentially threatening situation simply by talking their way out of it.

And they learn that replacing fear with anger is crucial.

Campbell stresses the course's emphasis on "awareness and avoidance". And action. By learning Wen-Do, women don't have to be victims.

Wen-Do runs Tuesdays evenings from 7 to 9:30 p.m. in the Dal SUB for 6 weeks. For more information, contact the DSU, 2nd floor, SUB or call 494-1106.

Following Monday's elections (whereby the Gazette now has more editors than staff), I am the 'Focus on Dal' editor. And I'm begging for contributions. Lots of them. Or a) this page will inevitably fill up with crap, or b) Jan will fill it up with ads, which, let's face it, is essentially the same thing. So, before I lose any credibility I have left, HELP ME!

The object of this section is to bring attention to things happening in Dal (hence the name), so if you have any suggestions or queries, drop by the Gazette office on Tuesdays (4-6pm) or Wednesdays (after 7:30pm), or call 494-2507, or just leave a message in our mail-box (and don't say you couldn't get through to me).

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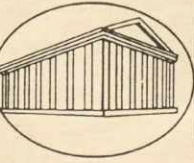
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