

Riding into the SUNSet

by Erin Goodman

Metro Transit is a bust. This public service has consistently ignored the need of Halifax's 20,000 post-secondary students for efficient and affordable transport.

Last year at this time, students were reluctantly digging into their pockets for the 65¢ fare. And it seemed that almost overnight, fares skyrocketed to 85¢, leaving many students behind to choke in the exhaust.

Students earning minimum wage and paying the highest tuition in the country simply couldn't afford to take the bus. The fares shot up, ridership quickly dropped off, and Metro Transit officials may finally be making the connection. They're talking about reducing the fares. Now is the time for students to push for a reduced-fare, unlimited student bus pass.

In 1985, the student unions of Dalhousie, Mount Saint Vincent, Saint Mary's, TUNS, King's and the Nova Scotia College of Art and Design joined forces to lobby for a student bus pass. Sup-

ported by the Students' Union of Nova Scotia, they developed a bus pass questionnaire and found that regular student bus use could increase by 45% due to the discount in fares. In fact, they determined that a reduced-fare pass could actually **increase** Metro Transit's net profit. So what happened to the SUNS proposal, submitted in December of '85?

"The guy said no." Oh. Well. Halifax students will have to depend on their own initiative to secure a reasonable transit deal. Much can be learned from the experience and ingenuity of other Canadian students in dealing with indifferent transit officials.

In Ottawa, student union representatives set up booths beside university bus stops, selling rolls of pennies to students for bus fare. Thousands of pennies soon wreaked havoc in the system, effectively choking the transit cash flow.

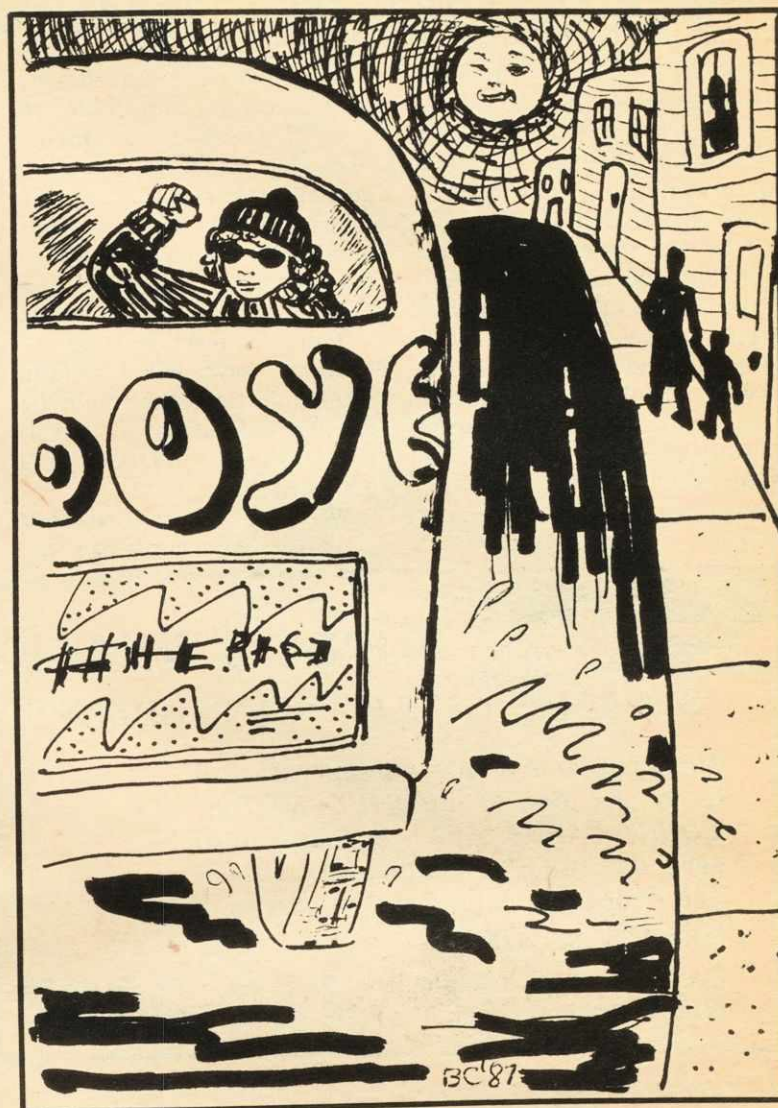
Innovative Ottawa students cut costs by cutting dollar bills in half, and throwing them crumpled into fare boxes to mas-

querade as full fare.

Politically-minded students started wrapping their fares in notes addressed to transit officials, demanding student discounts. Students learned to help other students by automatically asking for a transfer, and handing it to a passenger waiting for another bus when disembarking at their stop.

Other transit veterans have admitted to stuffing two nickels and three pennies into the box while distracting the driver by asking for the time.

And of course there's always the back door of the bus, and students who ask the driver if there's any student discount every time they take the bus, and button campaigns and form letters and the swift blow of a simple boycott Of course, the **Gazette** doesn't advocate any these methods. But the time has come for the Students' Union of Nova Scotia, and most importantly, the students themselves, to take a more active, creative approach towards lobbying for a reduced-fare student bus pass.



"My Daddy Will Save Me"

Ed Woodman ran through the boat, yelling his daughter's name but knowing in his heart she would not answer.

Then he flung off his shoes and pants,
and took the railing in a twisting dive.

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