

Blaming Brenda the real mistake say women

by Bill Doskoch

Sir Winston Churchill's Square's trees and their festive lighting contrasted with the sombre candlelight vigil held there for murder victim Brenda McClenaghan last night.

"We are supporting each other and expressing, with one voice, our sorrow, vulnerability, anger and frustration," said Jane Karstaedt, director of the Sexual Assault Centre of Edmonton.

"The *Edmonton Journal* ("Tragedy of Brenda: just one mistake," January 26) tells us Brenda made

one mistake," said Alberta Status of Women Action Committee board member Lisa Walter to the crowd of 250 people.

"Why blame Brenda? Walking alone is not a mistake. The mistake lies with the men who think it is their right to abduct and torture women and who believe seeing pictures of women mutilated in pornography is also their right," she said.

"It's a funny world that tells women to stay safely hidden and allows brutal attackers to roam

freely," said Walters. "If our leaders want to show respect for women like Brenda, they should change the laws, fund shelters and crisis centers and find ways to keep these men off the streets."

Songs and the planting of candles in the snow concluded the vigil.

When asked why she attended, one woman, Val Hesp, said it was to "share in my feelings with other people."

"There's a lot of fear in this city right now and to stand with other

people helps replace that fear with strength," she said.

Her friend, Susan Beach, added that "a real mix of people came out to this. At the *Take Back the Night* marches (held by women's groups every year to protest violence against women) you always see the same people, but here there were men, women and children of all ages."

When asked about the political content of the speeches, Hesp admitted she thought they dealt more with broader issues of vio-

lence against women than the tragedy of McClenaghan herself but felt there were benefits in that. "It showed the connections to the larger problems of society."

In a pre-vigil press conference, Karstaedt said her center has experienced a 12 per cent increase in sexual assaults over 1984.

When asked why the vigil for McClenaghan was being held, Walters said it was because of the number of responses by people in phone calls to ASWAC and the Sexual Assault Centre and the amount of outrage expressed in them.

"We have always felt rage and sorrow after each attack of this sort, but this time the whole city reacted," said Karstaedt and Walters added "we can't march every day."

Bar breathalyzer blows 'em away

by Ken Magor

TORONTO (CUP) — Pub-goers at Ryerson Polytechnical Institute don't have to wait for a police officer to pull them over to find out they're unfit to drive. The Filling Station bar is one of a handful of student pubs in Canada equipped with a breathalyzer, bought earlier this year.

Slip in a quarter, breathe through a straw and a digital display tells you if your blood alcohol count is above or below the legal limit of 80 milligrams of alcohol in 100 millilitres of blood.

The wall-mounted Alcohol Guard machine was installed at Ryerson by the local chapter of Boost Alcohol Consciousness Concerning the Health of University Students (BACCHUS), begun six years ago at the University of Florida. BACCHUS has 256 U.S. and five Canadian chapters.

Ryerson chapter president Barry Hayward said the instrument was installed as "part of a broad educational thing BACCHUS wanted to do" to convince drivers they should drink in moderation.

Hayward said he expects the \$2,000 machine to pay for itself by the end of this year, but admits students aren't using it as much as when it was first installed.

"The novelty's wearing out a bit," he said.

Of the four Filling Station patrons interviewed, two had used the breathalyzer, but said they were just trying it out for fun and not to judge their impairment.

"I know when I'm not fit to drive," said Ryerson student Ed Whitehouse.

Another one-time sampler, Wayne Lee, said the machine is a "good idea", but questioned the ability of any device to gauge impairment.

BACCHUS's Hayward said two of the group's early concerns proved to be unjustified. People haven't been drinking more to see how much their blood alcohol level would rise. And because the machine's accuracy is not accepted in court, nobody at the school would be liable for damages if a person using the machine was subsequently involved in a car

accident.

However, the idea hasn't taken off on other campuses. Apart from the machine at Ryerson and others at three St. Lawrence College campuses, probably no other Canadian campus has one, the former distributor says.

Cogni Instruments Inc. of Toron-

to pulled out as the Canadian distributor last month because "the response was just horrible," said sales manager Gerald Patt.

He said most restaurants, bars and hotels wouldn't take the machines because they feel they would discourage customers from buying drinks.

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