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## Dal takes action on sexual assault

by Emily Macnaughton

You're living away from home for the first time, you're staggering around co-ed frosh parties, partially clad in your toga, beer in your hand and a few more in your gut. Is this a recipe for disaster?

Recent statistics suggest so. The majority of sexual assaults occur on university campuses within the first five weeks of classes. Dal students and faculty are taking measures to curb the numbers. "There's a party mentality the first weeks at university," says Candida Rifkind, women's commissioner on the national executive of the National Federation of Students. "People are experiencing pressures they never have before."

These pressures may be responsible for incidents of sexual assault or acquaintance rape. Seventy-five percent of the assaults which occur in the first five weeks involve drugs and alcohol.

To cope with the potential problem, Dalhousie orientation leaders and residence advisors partake in informa-

tion sessions advising them in how to deal with victim's reports. Members of SSAV (Service for Sexual Assault Victims) will be conducting seminars in crisis intervention throughout the week. On Sunday, September 12, the Dal Women's Centre will host a Campus Safety information session for incoming frosh. A similar talk hosted at St. Mary's Monday yielded a turnout of 400 people. "The big turnout proves there's definitely a need for these things," says SSAV education worker Vida Woodworth. "People are worried about what happened on campus this summer," says Tammy Takachuk, member of the Women's Centre executive, referring to a sexual assault which was alleged to have taken place in Howe Hall in late July.

"These issues were more public this summer," says Rifkind. "There's been a growing awareness of the problem over the past ten years."

The new awareness has spurred on new security measures such as Tiger Patrol, Dal's walk home program. Currently, Tiger Patrol employs two teams

of twelve patrollers and has tentative plans to expand this year. "We could create a Tiger Patrol army if we had the money for it," says security chief Sandy MacDonald. "There's a need for it." In its first year, Tiger Patrol made 459 walk-homes. The second year, it made 1584.

However, Tiger Patrol prevents attacks from strangers. Eighty-four percent of sexual assaults are committed by someone the survivor knows. Further security steps are self-defense classes like Wen-Do, a course designed

specifically for the need of women.

Dal Security also offers three-hour classes on self-defence. The Women's Centre, residence advisors and SSAV also provide resource materials, support networks and counselling for assault victims.

The focus remains on prevention. People involved with sexual assault prevention and education hope soon to see a sexual assault prevention and education policy at Dalhousie.

"Policies like this have been previously geared for the paperwork, not for

the victims," says Woodworth. "We need to see a victim-oriented policy on Dalhousie campus. We need to make these things easier to report."

Until then, those involved in promoting the issue continue to raise awareness. "We need to stress to people that in new surroundings or anywhere.

Others suggest that the problem not the symptoms should be attacked. "It's the men not the women who will ultimately be able to put a stop to [sexual assaults]," says MacDonald.

## Student sets sights on political office

by Ryan Stanley

Canadians will elect a new Parliament in about six weeks, but recent history suggests not many students will even bother to vote. For at least one Dalhousie student, however, the campaign will be somewhat more personal.

Dominic Cardy, a political science graduate student at Dal, is running as the (so far) uncontested candidate for the nomination of the New Democratic Party in Halifax. If NDP members locally choose him as their nominee, he will face off against Mary Clancy, Halifax's Liberal MP, for a seat in the national legislature.

Cardy doesn't go for the apathy with which most students regard federal politics. "Even in my political science classes you have people who say, 'Oh well, politics doesn't have anything to do with me,'" he says. "But that's not something that has to be that way."

Neither does he think he's in over his head. He cites more than a decade of experience in "street politics" in both Canada and England, and a year of involvement with the youth wing of the Nova Scotia New Democrats.

Although the fact that he now attends university makes him an unusual candidate, Cardy does not pretend to be running on the 'student ticket'. Instead, he has taken aim at Clancy's record as the MP for Halifax, and promises to provide better representation for the residents of the city on a host of issues.

"You never hear from [Clancy] apart from a little flyer that comes in the mail about how she's visited a senior citizens home," he says. "She didn't even vote on the free trade issue [the bill to implement the North American Free Trade Agreement]. I think it's pretty clear in Halifax that people want to vote one

way or the other on free trade. If she's not voting either way, why bother having her?"

When reached at her constituency office, Clancy denied the accuracy of this allegation. "There were several votes on NAFTA, and I was present for some and not present for others," she said. She said she had been present for second reading of the bill, which she said was the most important of the stages through which bills pass in the House of Commons.

But Cardy insists Clancy has been delinquent in her duties as member for Halifax. "If I get elected MP for Halifax, I'll be there for the votes that people want me to be there for, and at the same time come back to Halifax and find out what people do want me to vote on."

Clancy maintained that her attendance record for votes in the Commons places her in the top ten percentile among MPs.

Despite his emphasis on Clancy's failings, Cardy says he hopes to run an issues-driven campaign. "The most important thing is jobs, and that's supposed to be the main plank of our [the NDP's] campaign, but I think that the Liberals and Tories federally are going to be pushing it entirely along the lines of leadership," he predicts. "We're not going to pay much attention to the federal campaign of the NDP. We're going to be running a local campaign, pushing the jobs plank."

Cardy's political ideas contain a liberal dose of idealism, backed by an articulate familiarity with political theory. He also distances himself somewhat from the mainstream of the NDP. "A lot of people in the old party focus on ideas of socialist economics, whereas ours [in the youth wing of the party] is a lot more on individual initiative

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DALPHOTO: MIKE DEVONPORT

## A lifetime supply of what?!