



"Hi, mom, we're home!" Fantasy Field Trip Society members emerge from the undergrowth of Point Pleasant Park.

Forty fantasize for fun

By NAIRNE HOLTZ

A TOWERING FIGURE IN dark fluttering robes poses on a jutting crag crying, "Hold Mudwallow, I'm throwing a lightning bolt." Nearby an elf-like creature stands still while a referee rushes in to arbitrate their moral conflict fought with dice and score cards.

This battle scene is just one of many acted out during the Fantasy Field Trip society's last outdoor excursion held Jan. 27 in Point Pleasant Park.

The 40 member fantasy group began three years ago after a dungeons and dragons fan heard of an American society that held annual unicorn hunts.

Sound strange? Members of the Fantasy Field Trip Society's last their games are no different than other fantasy games — except they are played by real people instead of scaled down models, in real parks and woods instead of a game board.

"The basic premise in any fantasy game or field trip is to get the treasure and/or solve the riddle, rescue the land and defeat the oppressor," says one fantasy game enthusiast. "On a fantasy field trip you can take the role of the referee who adjudicates and tells you what you can see in crystal balls or a scenario monster which is an inhabitant of the land or a gamer".

The society's members say people are so taken aback by the idea of adults dressing up in costumes to play games in the woods that they prefer not to identify themselves. They say

image and claims that game players themselves can lose touch with reality.

"If someone is going to flip out, well that's one way they can do it but it's not attributable to the game," said one student. "It's a hobby comparable to improvisational theatre."

Like actors, players have strong opinions about their roles and often say they learn about themselves from their character.

"Once I played a truly evil character. It showed me how easy it is to be evil if you let yourself," said another fantasy field member. He says the experience left him "irreversibly ill and disgusted."

Most of the Fantasy Field trip's

games are set in medieval England. Their most recent outing was based on C.S. Lewis's *Narnia* series. Members say though that they are open to almost any scenario. Past games have included a James Bond theme and a futuristic one set in outer space.

Members say the group is no longer just attracting young men. Although the society has about a 70 percent male membership, they say fantasy game fans are changing.

"The game started out as male dominated. The original rules assumed male characters...but now it doesn't tend to have these restrictions."

Council pulls condoms

(ANTIGONISH) CUP — A condom ad placed in the Xaverian Weekly was grabbed from the paper at the printers on the orders of the St. FX student union.

The paper's staff members seized the 2500 copies of the issue and scrawled "Censored condom ad here" in ball point pen over the page before distributing it on campus. The printer had replaced the ad with "Hocus Pocus", a syndicated cartoon.

The Xaverian staff decided to run birth control ads last September. The editorial board wanted to educate students and start some discussion on the topic. The issue contained two articles on birth control - one

explaining the Catholic position, and one explaining more progressive viewpoints.

Advertising falls under editorial content, and therefore staff should decide their own boycott lists, said Xaverian editor John Ross. "There's not a newspaper in CUP that does not decide its own advertising policy as to what it does and does not print." Dalhousie's student newspaper *The Gazette* runs condom ads on a regular basis.

Don Dempsey, student union treasurer, says he was offended by the term "censored." The student union's decision not to run the ad was no different than the Xaverian staff's decision to boycott DeBeer's, he said.

Fifteen dollars goes a long way

By SAMANTHA BRENNAN

"THINK NEGATIVELY" competes with "Vote Yes" for space on the bulletin boards of Dalhousie university as the student union gears up for its latest referendum.

In a week's time students will be voting on a proposal that sets limits on tuition fees in return for a student contribution to the university's capital campaign. Scheduled for Feb. 19-21, the referendum proposal is unique among Canadian universities and involves the largest student contribution to a capital fund drive ever.

If the referendum passes tuition fees can only be increased by four percent each year for the next three years. Tuition fee increases in the following three year period would be regulated by the cost of living increases—a minimum of three percent to a maximum of eight percent.

In return students would be paying \$750,000 into the university's capital fund drive over the same six years through a \$15 per student increase in student union fees.

"The proposal allows Dalhousie to bring tuition more in line with the national average, allowing for continued accessibility," says Dalhousie Student Union president Alex Gigeroff.

In the past six years tuition fee increases at Dalhousie have averaged 12.1 percent. Students at Dalhousie now pay the highest tuition fees in Canada—\$1415 for full time studies in 1984/85.

"We were talking to people from schools in Ontario where similar things have happened," says Gigeroff. "But as far as I know this proposal is unique in that it involves tuition fees."

He says he recommended the idea to other student councillors at the recent Student Unions of Nova Scotia conference. In light of the Maritime Provinces Higher Education Commission's funding recommendations and the pressure they place on tuition fees it would be a good idea for them to consider it, says Gigeroff.

Students at some other universities in Nova Scotia pay money into their university's capital fund drives—the catch is the, may not get anything in return.

Theresa Francis, student council president at Mount Saint Vincent University, says she thinks Dalhousie's proposal is great but students at her university already pay \$10 a student into MSVU's capital campaign. Francis says the referendum to do this passed a few years ago and she thinks the council probably didn't consider the possibility of linking their support to tuition fees.

The capital fund campaign is a five year plan designed to raise

money for Dalhousie university. With a goal of \$25 million, the university is raising money for improvements in building renovations, library supplies, computers, faculty, learning resources and scholarships.

Students at Dalhousie would also be able to control what their contribution is spent on. Gigeroff says this could be decided by either the student council or a committee of the whole. He says council has listed financial assistance for student, library acquisitions and computers and scientific equipment as priority areas.

Right now though council's biggest concern is getting students to vote in the referendum.

Kevin Drolet, DSU elections returning officer, told a Feb. 11 council meeting that the referendum needs at least eight percent of the student population to vote for it to be valid.

"Go out and sell the thing," Gigeroff told the council. "Students must realize that not turning up to vote is equivalent to a no vote."

Although the constitution allows for providing funds for a "no" campaign, no one has approached the council.

Gigeroff says the lack of a "no" campaign just means there will be less controversy about the proposal. The absence of a "no" campaign just means that most students see it as a great idea, he says.

Not only students but also faculty are applauding the deal as a step in the right direction for Dalhousie. The Dalhousie Faculty Association (DFA) executive voted unanimously to support the proposed deal and to encourage their members to make students aware of the referendum.

"The proposal is perfectly consistent with our sense of how the university budget ought to be run," says Tom Sinclair-Faulkner, the DFA's liaison with the student union. He says it would work in much the same way as the cost of living increases faculty have been asking for as part of their salary package. Fixed rates on increases for both salaries and fees would mean the university could approach the provincial government for funding knowing in advance what the costs will be, he says.

"We support it for students just as we ask for it ourselves," says Sinclair-Faulkner.

The agreement will take the form of a legal contract that is binding on the administration. The only way for the board of governors to terminate the agreement would be if the source of funding was changed, says Gigeroff.

"You never know with the Tories in Ottawa but I don't think we'll see that," he says.