



Dal learns the international way

BY ANDREW GILLIS

Dream of black sandy beaches lined with majestic palm trees. Feel yourself settling into the sand as you watch a tropical sunset unfold in front of you. The sky is a painter's palette of red and gold. The warm exotic sea breezes rustle through palm groves. The white-capped waves crash to the shore. One moment, reality check. You are not on some exotic island, but in the bowels of the dark and mysterious Killam Library. There is no way you are going to go anywhere soon. Right? Wrong.

Why not go on exchange to a school in another country and work towards graduation while immersing yourself in a foreign culture.

Dalhousie University offers over thirty foreign exchange programs. Students can travel to universities in Cuba, Denmark, England, France, Germany, India, Ireland, Korea, Kuwait, Mexico, the Netherlands, Norway, Russia, Scotland, Spain, Sweden, Taiwan, and the United States.

Regan Chapman, a Dalhousie International Studies student, participated in an exchange program to the University of the South Pacific. While in Fiji she took Sociology and Economics classes.

"It was neat because I was not a tourist there, but a student," said Chapman. "It was difficult, but, I got to know the people. I stayed in Indian houses, ate Indian food, and wore Indian clothes. In the end, I belonged there. Tourists came up to me asking for directions. It was such an amazing experience. It was definitely worth all of the work. Everything ran by *Fiji time*. That meant everything went by really slowly. It was such a relaxed society; they were so friendly and caring."

Chapman described the exchange school as, "a regional university covering the entire South Pacific. Everyone wanted you to learn a part of their culture. It was great. I definitely recommend exchange programs, it is such a special way to go to university."

However, Chapman noted that, "It wasn't what I expected. I don't think I was fully prepared, but I don't think you can be. I was so busy arranging everything that I never guessed what it would be like. Nobody can tell you what it's like, it's something you have to do yourself."

In Chapman's eyes, the women in South Pacific have a low status.

"The men down there have got the wrong image of Western women, they must have watched too many bad movies, like *Barbwire*. They cat-call, and they pinch your bum in public. The women are demure and quiet; I was loud on the other hand. I know all you could hear coming out of the University was me talking. If you go to another country, especially a developing country, you must be open-minded. You never know what is going to happen next."

Dalhousie is a member of the Commonwealth Universities Study Abroad Consortium (CUSAC) — a student exchange program involving over forty-five universities in the Commonwealth. Through this program students can study in countries such as Australia and South Africa.

The Lester Pearson Institute (LPI),

located on the corner of University Avenue and Edward Street, offers information on various overseas exchange programs. Sharon Blanchard, the new full-time Student Exchange Coordinator for LPI, is available to consult with students wishing to enter overseas exchange programs.

"[I would] like to encourage all students thinking of going overseas to study, or wanting more information on programs to come and see me. We have a lot of information on Dalhousie's exchange programs and other opportunities. We will assist students in choosing where to go and how to do it," says Blanchard.

Blanchard noted that "a key thing in going overseas to study is finding the money to do it. Dalhousie has established a fund to help students financially. The Study/Work International Fund (SWIF) has already assisted over 200 students in going overseas."

SWIF was established as a part of the student assistance program for students in financial need who want to undertake an international education experience. Blanchard has all the SWIF information, including the application criteria.

She can also provide students with information on work and volunteer programs. Students may want to visit the LPI building to check out resource material in the Overseas Resource Area.

The Russian department offers opportunities for students to study in Russia through the *Intensive Russian program*. The program runs for one full academic year. Half of the year is spent at Dalhousie studying Russian culture and grammar, and half in Russia at St. Petersburg University.

Professor MacFadyen, of the Russian department, says students should not only go to Russia to learn the language.

"[They can] see the biggest political change of all time: communism choked and died. The transition from a communist country to a totally capitalist one is happening at the drop of hat."

St. Petersburg is the second largest city in the largest country on Earth. It is the most northern city of its size.

"There are white nights in the summer — the sun doesn't go down," said MacFadyen. "Even with the reports of major crime in Russia, St. Petersburg is still safer than most U.S. cities. Things happen to people in business. If you are not in business, you'd never see it. It is a chance to see the struggle of something new; shops and small businesses are trying to survive. The 'middle class' is always growing as people are beginning to make more money. Every year the extremes diminish."

The German department has arrangements with Freiburg, Heidelberg, Munich, and Dresden Universities for students wishing to spend an academic year abroad. Dalhousie student Jayne Belliveau spent a year in Germany, at the Heidelberg University.

"I went to Germany to get into the

culture. It's tricky to do that with books," said Belliveau. "The people were incredible, I met so many interesting people, and made a lot of great new friends. It was extremely exciting, we visited a lot of places. I encourage people to go on exchanges. It is an incredibly good idea. There is no other way to learn. It adds so much when you go abroad to learn a language and see it being used like English [is] here. It also brings so much to your degree."

The Université de Provence, in the historic Aix-en-Provence, offers three levels of French language training as well as electives in history, political science, art history, literature and women's studies.

"The program is not only for French students," said Patricia De Méo, Chairperson of the French Department. "Our only requirement is that you are a Dal student and have been so for at least one year."

Aix-en-Provence is a historic city in the heart of Southern France. Remnants of the Roman empire are everywhere. Buildings of stucco and red tiles pervade a densely populated city with glorious weather.

Each year a professor from Dalhousie escorts students to Aix.

"Twenty-eight students [from Dalhousie] went to Aix-en-Provence this year and twenty the year before," said De Méo. "The advantage with

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Regan Chapman (r) caught for a moment during her exchange to Fiji.

Constitutional Society or Animal House

BY LORI MACKAY

University offers many experiences to students, including the opportunity to become a member of a fraternity or a sorority. Generally referred to as chapters, the Dalhousie campus is home to a total of ten fraternities and sororities.

Students *rush* to meet their chapter of choice during a designated week of campaigning. *Rushing* involves attending various social events. These events allow students to meet members of the different societies. Students attend luncheons, dinners, and evening open-house parties at the fraternity houses. After the week of rushing, members of the chapters extend bids to rushers who they feel have the qualities the chapter desires.

Applicants are required to give up their spare hours as part of a pledge to the sorority or fraternity. The initiation starts with a ceremony where students pledge their honour to the chapter. The ensuing initiation period ends with a rite of passage which entitles the individual to full membership.

Where did all of this ritual come from? North America's first Greek-letter fraternity was founded December 5, 1776. The young men, who founded Phi Beta Kappa, had to conceal their project in secrecy. The society was deemed to be both "treasonable" and "dangerous" by disapproving professors. Over time the fraternity was accepted and invaded by the faculty.

Students then formed the Kappa Alpha Society in order to regain control over their own elections and other matters. Universities saw these young chapters as "threats to their authority and discipline". The societies had to fight intensely in the early years, but eventually, the student groups came to be tolerated. The original founders had begun a new era in the long history of student self-government.

Overall, the example set by Phi Beta Kappa, for future chapters, was one of escaping censorship and gaining "the freedom to discuss issues and to pursue the truth as they saw it."

The societies continued to grow across North America but, as in all large groups, problems arose. Controversies flared as many universities — at different times in different fashions — announced regulations.

Conflict was always more newsworthy than cooperation. Thus, more attention was given by the press to negative actions over philanthropic endeavours.

Fraternity recruitment, indeed, evokes derision from many individuals, for various reasons. For those outside chapter life it is all too easy to visualize the members within as arrogant and cruel; arbitrarily picking and choosing members from the student body and maliciously downing the hopes of others who wish to be accepted. Not exactly a saintly image. Such a poor picture is embarrassingly out of place in a campus culture with modern moral

codes. Codes which dictate access to opportunity for all students.

From the various chapters' point of view, these are harsh judgements. For them, the recruitment process represents very hard work and pleasurable social outings. They do not see it as sitting around rejecting eager candidates. They believe they are involved in a detailed organizational process in order to sell the values of their chapter to fellow students.

One of the historical controversies relates to the conditions and rituals undergone by new members. There is a space of time before the initiation ceremony coined by newspaper writers as *Hell Week*. Fraternities and sororities have run into trouble with police, university authorities, and neighbours. The result is a massive list of damages and injuries.

During the 1950s, four students were killed in the US. Two of these students were struck and killed by motor vehicles while returning from missions assigned by their prospective chapters. In 1968 a student from the University of Southern California choked to death trying to swallow a piece of raw liver, fed to him as a *Hell-Night* prank.

Despite the severity of these cases, they are only a small fraction of the Greek population. And even in light of these horrific occurrences and to the dismay of college and fraternity officials, some psychological studies have reported that *Hell Week* activities may give aid and comfort to the participants.

M. G. Walker in *Original Type, Rites*
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