

Fire extinguishers are abused at Studley



HARTT/DAL PHOTO

Playing with fire extinguishers has become an expensive pastime at Howe Hall.

By Cathy McDonald

Vandalism threatens the safety of students at Studley House in Howe Hall, according to Umesh Jain, student representative on the Dalhousie Safety Committee. Jain was alarmed at the incidences of emptying fire extinguishers by spraying the water in the halls for amusement. Tampering with fire equipment is a criminal offense and prevents an immediate response to a fire.

Max Keeping, Director of Security, said fire extinguishers have been left empty for periods of time, during the year. All the extinguishers were recharged with water on January 22, to be found empty the next week, with one missing, Keeping said.

Tony Smith is the maintenance person responsible for filling the extinguishers once a month. Smith said he fills them quite frequently at Studley House.

"I filled them last week and they were empty again after the weekend" Smith said. "Every time I fill them they're empty again. I can't go there at any old time, I have the whole campus to take care of."

Ross Miller, Don of Studley House, said using the extinguishers as spray guns is nothing that cannot be controlled.

"(The guys) like to have their fun" Miller said. "It is put to a halt quite quickly and is usually stopped before much happens."

Anne Lavours, Assistant Dean of Men, said she was not aware of any unusual abuse of fire extinguishers recently. Another person who was not aware of any serious vandalism at Studley House was Steve Curry, incoming president of Howe Hall and resident of Studley House.

"Anyone who does it will be in trouble," Curry said.

Presently the Residence Council is fined for extinguisher abuse, said Jain. The Safety Committee has sug-

gested that the fine should be more than the cost of refilling the extinguishers, as it presently is. Art Chisolm, Director of the Safety Committee, said the fine should reflect the higher cost of a potential fire.

"This must be taken fairly seriously", Chisolm said.

Greg Tynski, outgoing president of Howe Hall, said emptying of extinguishers has been a concern all year. Tynski and Dean Marriot, Dean of Student Services have had meetings once or twice this year with Studley House residents over this concern, Tynski said.

Fire alarms are much less frequent this year than in past years at Howe Hall. This has been attributed to a poster campaign during frosh week discouraging residents from pulling the alarms. Miller said students are becoming more mature at Howe Hall with respect to abusing the fire alarms.

Ballot stuffing has no effect on elections

by Paul Creelman

Ballot stuffing, leftover election posters near polling booths, and other irregularities had no result on the outcome of the election, according to Umesh Jain, electoral officer.

"There was absolutely no problem in discounting those ballots", said Jain regarding the stuffed ballots, which all occurred at one or two polling booths.

"I had four scrutineers there while we were counting the ballots," said Jain.

"And they all agreed on every single ballot that was suspicious. It was so damn easy. We found the ballots together in a nice neat little bundle, all unfolded, and they all had the same pencil marks. We could pick them out carefully so they wouldn't fall apart."

Jain said that the average number of ballots in the box was counted, and there was found to be an excess equal to the number of suspicious ballots, thus confirming the invalidity of those votes.

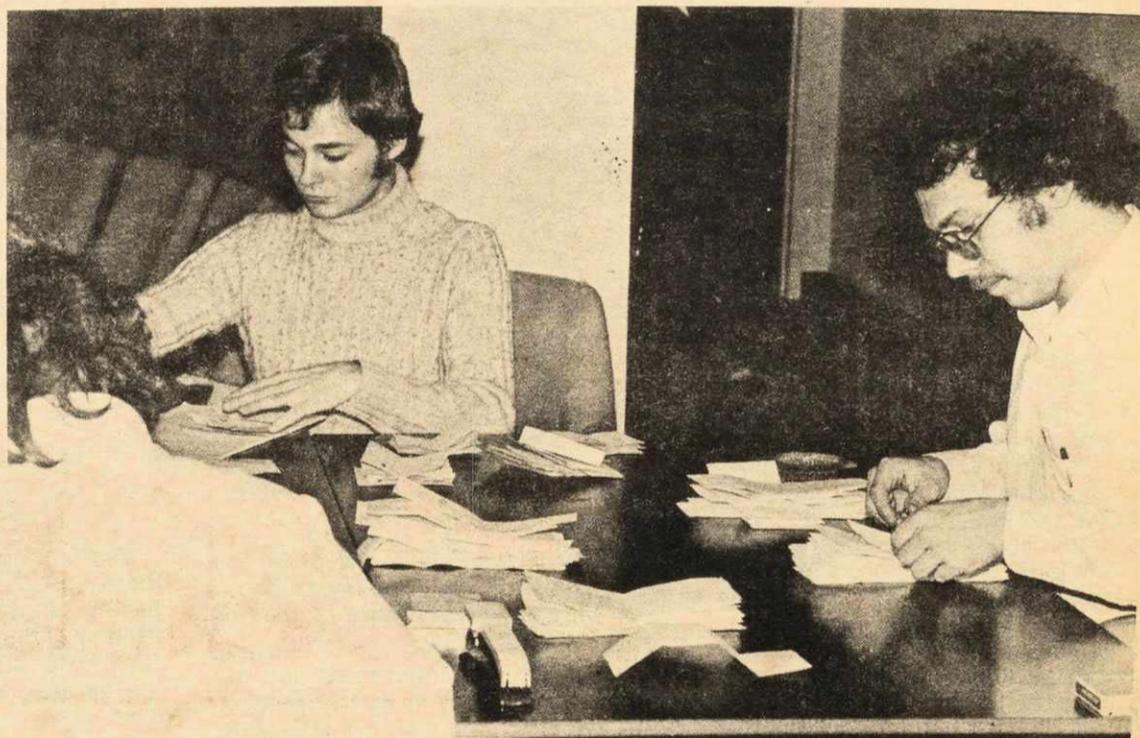
In his report to Student Council last Sunday, Jain stated that he will be making several recommendations about electoral regulations and practises to be followed in the future. Problems with security of ballot boxes were one consideration. The ballot boxes used for this year's election were locked with combination locks with the combination marked clearly on the back of each lock. Furthermore, even if the boxes were secure, it was shown that it was all too easy to grab extra ballots when the poll clerk was not looking, and then place them in the ballot box.

Another problem that Jain reported was the regulation about election materials. During the past election there were complaints about election posters remaining in full view of polling stations during the election, especially in the Board of Governors elections. The present regulations which state all electoral advertising must be removed by election day is difficult to enforce because of the amount of material the candidates are presently using. Suggesting a limit on the number of posters which candidates are allowed to use, Jain stated that a recommendation for the problem will be included in his final report.

Marie Gilkinson, Health representative, feels that a restriction on the number of advertising materials for the election will not help the situation, however.

"If you don't allow people free access to election material, then we've come full circle back to the problem we started with," said Gilkinson. "The problem is communication with the student body." Gilkinson says that if election material is not distributed freely, that students may vote uninformed on the candidates and the issues.

Minor hassles with the last election involved the running of the polling stations, since some stations ran out of Board of Governors ballots for periods of time. At the Dalplex and in the Dunn Building this happened during peak voting times on election day. Despite these relatively minor problems, however, the trouble with invalid ballots in the boxes is apparently a relatively new occurrence at Dal.



DAYAL/DAL PHOTO

This is Dalhousie University, not Guyana, but the ballot box stuffing occurs even here. Fortunately, these irregularities were cleared up in a recount.

"Certainly in the past few years I'm not aware of it," said Gord Owen, Council President. In the 1977 election, there were irregularities — for example, poll clerks leaving the polling station while they went to get a bite to eat. But as far as stuffing the boxes went I didn't hear much about that."

Owen attributes the trouble with improprieties this year to the competition and number of candidates running for office.

Boob tube numbs

REGINA [CUP]—American television is turning people into weak-willed, middle-class, neurotic losers who can't think, according to columnist Morris Wolfe.

Speaking at the University of Regina recently, Wolfe said television assumes people are like this and they become what they are assumed to be.

American television is more popular than Canadian, he said, because it delivers more jolts per minute (JPM). These jolts of rapid editing, action and music captivates people so they do not have to think, said Wolfe, but rather just keep up with the constantly changing, surreal image flashed before them.

In addition, Wolfe said, programs with high JPM tended to turn viewer to other high JPM's shows. In some cases this totally betrays the purpose of the original program.

For example, Sesame Street has a high JPM content and is modelled on television commercials.

On the other hand, said Wolfe, Canadian children's shows are much more gentle. The Friendly Giant, for example, encourages children to love books, and Mr. Dressup suggests activities that continue after the end of the program.