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Injured frat brother top priority

by Joanna Mirsky

Saturday night, September 10, was supposed to be Phi Kappa Pi fraternity's kickoff party to end Frosh Week and begin the school year. This year's rush drive was one of the best in years, with fraternity brothers participating on the orientation committee and as leaders. The party was packed, with money collected going to muscular dystrophy. However, the events that followed, resulting in the hospitalization of Darren Watts, 20, have been the focus of much attention recently. His condition is believed to be critical—his family has requested that daily reports on his condition not be released.

According to a press release from Phi Kappa Pi, three members went to help a young woman being assaulted on the street outside the frat house. While trying to stop the assault they were attacked by a group of approximately fifteen young men. All three fraternity brothers were seriously injured, including Darren Watts. The case is under criminal investigation and police are not commenting.

The few days since the incident have been like a roller coaster ride for Darren's family and fraternity brothers who have had to deal with a demanding press, their own grief and feelings of guilt as they begin the new school year.

"All we were doing was going to aid a woman who was being assaulted. We're not angels, but that [assaulting a woman] is just completely unacceptable," says Tom Wilson, active president of the fraternity.

One of the most difficult things for the young men to deal with is the constant onslaught of media demands and the conflicting and inaccurate rumors that have been flying around the city.

Asked why the fraternity and the

family did not release a statement right away, Wilson says his friend is the fraternity's top priority.

"Darren is a good friend of ours, our fraternity brother, and at Phi Kapp that means more than just being a member of our 'club'. I wanted to make sure that the family was taken care of. They didn't want a [media] circus, and we respected that," says Wilson.

Wilson and Eric Davis, alumni president, describe the "bad rap" the fraternity has received by the uninformed through word of mouth. Right after the assault, inaccurate media reports stated that fraternity brothers assaulted a man at their own frat party. Davis takes issue with that.

"A couple of days later, one of our brothers was walking down the street and approximately six people approached him and said, 'You're not so tough when there isn't fifteen of you, are you?'" Davis says.

According to Wilson and Davis, the group responsible for the violence outside the house is not associated with the fraternity in any way. Local newspaper reports state some of the attackers are believed to be high school students.

Students, faculty and many members of the community are supporting Watts by wearing yellow ribbons in the hope he will soon be home.

As Wilson describes him, Watts "is always doing something for somebody." As an active supporter of many charities, and well-known for his involvement in various organizations around Halifax, Watts has recently been the focus of prayers and encouragement from the many people who know him. Over a hundred supporters attended a prayer service at the King's College Chapel on Tuesday, overflowing the small building and continuing a silent vigil down the steps onto the lawn. The Phi Kappa Pi fraternity brothers were all wearing their fraternity letters as they were giving out ribbons.

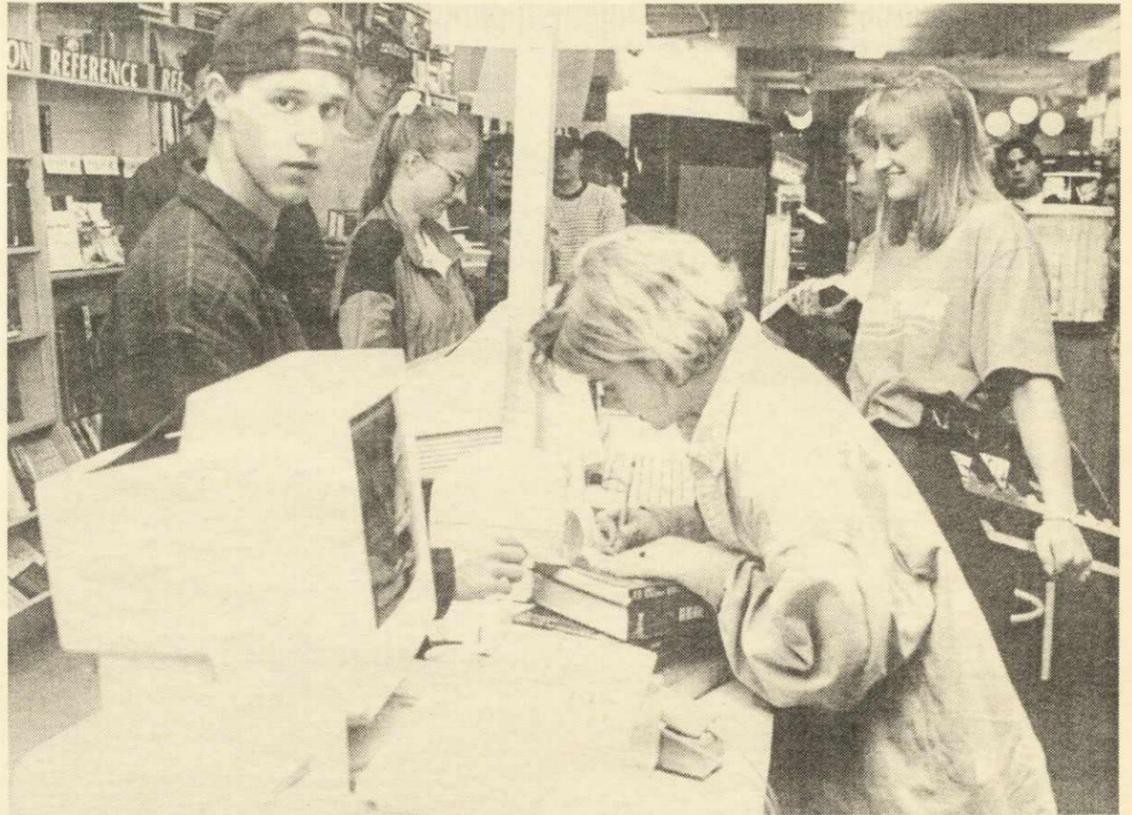


PHOTO: MIKE DEVONPORT

Finally, made it to the cash register!

The back of the line might have been as close as some people thought they would get to the bookstore on Tuesday. A wait of up to two hours greeted students on Wednesday as well.

Parizeau takes power

Change or separation?

by Milton Howe

The Parti Québécois was swept into power with a widely predicted majority government on Monday night, but the details seem to show that Quebecers are sending a mixed message to both the Assemblée Nationale and the rest of Canada. Despite winning an overwhelming majority of seats, the P.Q. only garnered 44.8% of the votes, a mere 0.6% above the Liberal's 44.2%.

In Québec City, P.Q. Leader Jacques Parizeau and federal Bloc Québécois Leader Lucien Bouchard addressed a rather dismal crowd of supporters, most of whom were kept at home due to inclement weather.

"The third period starts tomorrow morning," Parizeau said about the inevitable sovereignty referen-

dum, referring to a hockey metaphor he has used since the federal election which sent the separatist Bloc Québécois to Ottawa as Her Majesty's Loyal Opposition.

"We must become a normal people in a normal country," Lucien Bouchard shouted to much applause at the La Capitale music hall just outside the historic St. John's Gate in old Québec City.

Despite the apparent jubilation in the Péquiste camp, most political analysts are calling this somewhat of a victory for the PLQ (Liberal Party of Québec). It was widely believed before the ballots were counted that any more than 40 seats for the Liberals would be a strong show of support for the newly-elected leader Daniel Johnson and his ability to strengthen the federalist side in the referendum.

When the final totals were in, the Liberals counted 47 seats to the P.Q.'s 77, with one seat going to Mario Dumont, the 24-year old leader of the newly-created Parti Action Démocratique.

Federalist voices across the country were united in the opinion that this represented merely the desire of Quebecers for a change in government after nine years of Liberal rule and not a mandate for sovereignty. Prime Minister Jean Chrétien—who stayed remarkably silent throughout the campaign—spoke optimistically about the coming referendum. His tone was almost unanimously repeated among the other big players in the Canadian melodrama including Nova Scotia premier John Savage,

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New national student organization threatens CFS

by David Chokroun

TORONTO (CUP) — Canada's only national student political group, the Canadian Federation of Students (CFS), is going to have some competition.

The federation, which represents 70 universities and colleges, has been heavily criticized by student council leaders from Dalhousie, Western, the University of British Columbia, the University of Ottawa, McGill and Bishop's. Student leaders are charging the 13-year old organization is inefficient and fails to represent student interests.

The dissident student councils are in the planning stages of forming their own national student group, the Canadian Alliance of Student Associations (CASA), said Rod Macleod, president of the Dalhousie Student Union and chair of the alli-

ance.

One of the new group's main criticisms of CFS concerns its involvement in social issues, ranging from the environment, abortion rights, and the economic involvement of Pepsi Cola in Myanmar (Burma), where the government has oppressed pro-democracy activists, many of them students.

A CASA document states that CFS "chooses to focus on boycotting Pepsi instead of running an effective advertising campaign on education ... If education is to be saved, this must change."

But according to Mike Mancianelli, CFS deputy chair, the depth of the federation's involvement in social issues has been overestimated by its critics.

"You have to remember that these types of policies come from the members and are voted on and passed by

the members," Mancianelli said.

"We don't spend money lobbying for a boycott, and it costs maybe a few cents to add that motion to our policy manual. If schools want to

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take up these issues, how can you ignore that? You can't ignore what the majority of students want."

Members of the new group also

criticize the system of voting representation at CFS. Although the membership fees of CFS schools are calculated according to their student population, all members receive one vote in plenary meetings.

"A school like York University pays more into the system, but has the same voting power as the University of Prince Edward Island," Macleod said.

Macleod said the new group is considering two alternatives. The first is a system where all institutions would still have one vote, regardless of size, but would all pay the same fee.

The alternative is a weighted voting system, where member schools would receive one vote per 5,000 students, with a maximum of three votes. In this case, larger schools would also pay higher fees for greater voting power.

Gareth Spanglett, president of the University of Toronto's main student council, said he doubts that the new group will provide a viable alternative to CFS.

"I don't think they're trying to create anything different from CFS. The way they're trying to set it up, they're doing the things CFS originally did and is doing now," Spanglett said.

In Nova Scotia, seven universities are members of CFS, including Dalhousie. Two years ago, St. Francis Xavier University at Antigonish withdrew from the organization. Among the remaining members, Dalhousie, Acadia, Mount Saint Vincent, and University College of Cape Breton (UCCB) are facing membership referenda this year, where students will decide whether or not to continue membership in CFS.