

Equal opportunity for the disabled

by Nancy Ross

1981 is the International Year of the Disabled. In preparation for it, Social Services provided the Legal Equal Opportunity (LEO) organization with \$2000 to sponsor a conference from October 23-25 to formulate proposals to provide better opportunities for the disabled.

The conference had three main workshops which discussed Human Rights, Employment and Housing. The groups proposed a total of twenty three resolutions dealing with future improvement in these areas for the disabled.

LEO is a unique consumer based group; unique because it is composed of disabled individuals as contrasted with

the usual agencies for the disabled which have little participation of the handicapped individuals themselves.

Shaun McCormick, Vice President of LEO said their past efforts had often been thwarted by replies from the agencies, "that something is better than nothing." McCormick said LEO members are saying no to this. The philosophy of the disabled no longer enables them to accept these replies.

"Why should the disabled always have to be able to accept something?", asked McCormick. "For example, public transportation for the disabled is not made available on the weekends, but the

agencies say this is better than nothing."

McCormick said that, "what the disabled want is total binding legislation from the municipalities for the future."

There are two committees now working to improve the lot of the handicapped as well as numerous agencies.

One committee, chaired by Ross Thorpe, director of services to the mentally handicapped, was formed to organize events and to provide some small grants for the International Year of the Disabled.

The second committee is a legislative committee to consider programs and legislation effecting the physically disabled.

Dal Safety Committee starts up

By Paul Creelman

A new committee has been set up to deal with environmental health and safety problems on the Dalhousie Campus. Among the problems that the committee have been dealing with are dust in the ventilation systems and problems with fire protection and alarm systems, according to Dr. Walter Chute, chairman of the committee.

The problem of upgrading fire protection systems to meet the newest standards is one that the committee is working with the university to resolve, especially in areas like Howe Hall, which doesn't have any sprinkler system. Arthur Chisholm, who is full-time safety director for Dalhousie, says that upgrading fire protection is a problem in the older buildings which were constructed under more relaxed building codes.

"There are some buildings on campus that don't come up to the standards", said Chisholm.

"In most of these cases the fire code has been toughened since the buildings were built, and there are changes in the 1977 standard and in the 1980 standard. There are several buildings with no fire alarm system — of course these are two-story buildings, not huge high-rises."

"As far as I'm aware", said Chisholm, "and you have to realize that I'm not in a position to actually do anything myself, but rather to recommend it to the people who can, there will be a recommendation made to install systems in those buildings which are deficient. Hopefully, the work will be done on those buildings in which it is considered to be most essential."

Chisholm suggests that the Arts and Administration building installation, and the fears subsided."

Chute says that a lot of the safety committees work will be this kind of education and the establishment of guidelines. Chute also sees the profile of the committee as very

important, and the members have been doing publicity work so that people on the Dal campus will realize that the committee is available to help fix any conditions which are brought to their attention.

Other areas of concern to the committee are radioactive and chemical hazards on campus, ventilation in the chemistry building, and even such everyday hazards as ice on the sidewalks. Since the committee was established late last fall, it has been working with the five organized groups on campus and with the administration to improve safety conditions on campus. Formed at least partially due to the fact that the existence of the group was written into two of the five contracts between administration and organized labour, the committee has already taken action in such areas as a dust problem in the carpentry shop.

The Life Sciences building was also the scene of an uproar about environmental safety several years ago when the SLOWPOKE nuclear reactor was installed in the basement. Several professors, especially from the Psychology department, were concerned about the possible adverse effects of working over a nuclear reactor.

"There were little battles with the psychologists", said Chute, "who were afraid they were going to be shot into orbit or sterilized, one or the other. However, there were some experts brought in to talk about the actual nature of the hazards involved with this thing would certainly be a high priority for recommendation. However, he adds that no building can be made perfectly safe.

"We're not going to install emergency generators in every building on campus. No building is going to be perfectly safe. Instead, I think my job could be summarized by saying that I am trying to make Dal a safer place to be."

The Dalhousie University Safety Committee is also concerned with dust in the ventilation systems in buildings such

as the Life-Sciences complex. In the Life-Sciences building, the problem has been dust resulting from corrosion of some of the air conditioning equipment.

"From what I've seen of the analysis of the material, I can't see that its posing any serious problem," says Chisholm. "The only way we were able to get enough to analyze was by spreading a plastic sheet in an unused room for three months."

The work to repair this problem should be completed by this summer, says Chisholm, although part of the building has already been refilled to solve the dust problem.

It is hoped that an Advisory Board for the Disabled will be established as an on-going body to keep the government aware of the needs of this group. Laird Stirling, Social Services Minister, is involved in promoting the establishment of this board; "but it must be passed through Cabinet before anything can be

done", said his Deputy Minister, John MacKenzie.

Since this is the International Year of the Disabled, LEO and other groups for the handicapped will be pushing for progress as they believe it is more likely to occur this year as people become more aware of their needs and potential.

OBITUARY

Dean of Men dies

by Margaret Little and Mike Marshall

Clement (Clem) Otis Norwood, Jr., 48, Dean of Howe Hall since 1978 was found dead in his Howe Hall apartment Tuesday afternoon. He apparently died of a self-inflicted gunshot wound. Mr. Norwood is survived by his wife Barbara and his son Thomas.

Mr. Norwood's death came as a complete surprise to some of those who knew him well. Greg Tynski, president of the Howe Hall student council recalled that Mr. Norwood had shared some of Tynski's birthday cake the day before his death.

"I noticed nothing unusual then, though he was always quiet and a little withdrawn, so it's hard to tell," he said.

Dalhousie's Dean of Student Services, Professor E.T. Marriott said, "News of Mr. Norwood's death came out of the blue, completely unexpected, the first such incident that I am aware of on campus in my time here.

Mr. Norwood, a native of

Dartmouth, came to Dalhousie in 1968 to help plan the construction of the Student Union Building (SUB). He often described his time as the programme director of SUB operations as "ten wonderful years."

People who knew him then describe him as a congenial person for students to work with, able to remain on the students' wavelength despite his age and a man who did not overreact to situations but dealt with them carefully.

The SUB's Grawood Lounge is an amalgam of his name and that of his close colleague and friend, John Graham, who took over the job of Programme Director when Mr. Norwood became Dean at Howe Hall.

Besides his official connection with students, Mr. Norwood was an avid fan of the Dalhousie Tigers hockey team and rarely missed a game.

Greg Tynski said the atmosphere at Howe Hall in the hours after the shooting was "restrained and extremely quiet, not like Howe Hall at all."

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