

Halifax union tries to help

by Jeff Round

Although the Metro Coalition for the Unemployed has been in existence in Halifax for five months, another group, the Union of the Unemployed, was formed in the city six years ago.

The Union of the Unemployed was formed by three volunteer workers in the old Neighbourhood Centre. "People were coming in with no jobs and problems in getting their UIC. At the time there was no group to help them so the Union of the Unemployed came out of that," said Shirley Gillibaard, one of the original co-founders of the union.

The aim of the Union was to help unemployed persons find work and help those having trouble with UIC, landlords, mortgages and monetary problems. They made arrangements and began to work with Manpower as well as the Unemployment

Commission, dealing with individual cases through various departments. Frequently, arrangements were made with Social Services to forward money owed to people, thus avoiding bureaucratic obstacles.

Gillibaard criticized the Coalition of the Unemployed for procrastinating. At their last meeting the Coalition made a motion to elect a slate of executive officers from the ranks of the members, but postponed the actual election for a later meeting. "At the last meeting they could have elected an executive slate. Instead they chose to postpone it another month. What happens to the people who are having UIC problems right now?"

Gillibaard also criticized the Coalition for placing politics ahead of the plight of the unemployed. "The Coalition knows we exist, even if they do claim to be the first

organization to help the unemployed. If they had chosen to work with us people could be getting help right now. The ground work has all been laid out by the Union but the Coalition want to do it their way—a political, radical way. What about the ordinary person who wants a job and needs help with UIC now?"

At the last meeting of the Coalition this very point was raised by a member. Gillibaard reaffirmed this opinion saying "politics has no place in trying to help somebody

with a UIC problem."

At one point the Union was meeting regularly and had churches backing their efforts, but now has been temporarily "laid in the mothballs". The Union realizes the main problem is lack of publicity for the group. A meeting is being planned, however, and announcements will be made soon. In the meantime, those needing help with unemployment problems are urged to contact Shirley Gillibaard at the Halifax Health and Welfare Office, 2164 Gottingen St. B3K 3B4.

Hospital butts out

by Geri Geldart

"We promote the idea of a clean environment, healthy living and positive role modeling behavior." This statement is part of the Victoria General Hospital's new policy on smoking. In conjunction with the National Education Week on Smoking the V.G. has designated "No Smoking" and "Smoking" areas throughout the hospital.

Executive Director of the Canadian Hospital Association, B.L. Brosseau, stated, "The hospital can no longer be regarded as simply a 'repair shop'. It has now become a centre for community health and must assume an important role in health education and health protection." Using this as a basis, a committee, chaired by Florence Bell, was established to design an educational program which would effectively implement and publicize this new policy. Supported by the Board of Commissioners of the V.G., the committee began their task. On January 23-24 a program, consisting of films, displays and

educational booths, was conducted for the staff and the public. Response to and cooperation with the program has been excellent. Bell said that the hospital plans to make this a permanent program.

The dual purpose of this program is to make the public aware of the adverse effects of smoking on their health and also to decrease the inherent fire hazard. Staff, visitors and ambulatory patients are only allowed to smoke in designated areas. Patients who are confined to their beds are allowed to smoke in their rooms if no medical gases are in use. Although it seems paradoxical that this major fire hazard, smoking in bed, is allowed, one must consider the psychological effects that an already ill patient would experience if such a restriction were enforced.

The V.G. realizes that they can't eliminate smoking in the hospital, but they are taking a major step toward creating a successful control system.

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The screening, sponsored by Oxfam, will be on Monday Feb. 6, and Monday, Feb. 13, at 12:30 in the Killam library auditorium. Both are free and everyone is welcome.

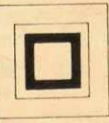
Gazette staff meetings have been changed to Sunday afternoons at 2:00



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