

Bookstore Defends Mark-Up \$200,000 IN THE BAGG

by Alex Burton

Are the high prices of school books getting you down? Well, "you don't have to buy the books. You can look over someone's shoulder," says Dalhousie bookstore director Bob Bagg.

Asked to comment on the fact that nursing students will spend over \$700 this year on textbooks and medical students will spend up to \$1000, Bagg said, "What can I say? We're not in the business to bullshit anybody. The same kids who bitch about paying \$300 a year for books still spend \$50 a night downtown."

Bagg has been the bookstore's director for the past four years. The bookstore is "a wholly owned subsidiary of Dalhousie University" and has no ties to the DSU, says Bagg. "We don't deal with the Student Union at all. They have no access to this space." This is a common arrangement for university bookstores, Guelph University in Ontario being the only school left in Canada with a cooperative bookstore.

A book's price is determined by a complicated system of suggested retail prices, academic discounts, and mark-ups by Toronto publishing companies. Bagg says the university bookstore has a markup of only 20 per cent, added to cover the costs of operating the store. He described it as a "tiddly piss margin". Don Harper, manager of the Saint Mary's bookstore, agrees, saying, "my increase is not as big as the publishers' in Toronto."

University bookstores have a virtual monopoly on the sale of textbooks, but Bagg says this arises not by design but from economic reality: other bookstores don't sell textbooks because there is no money to be made. John Townsend, owner of Schooner Books on Inglis Street, agrees. "The cost of textbooks and the fact that the editions change so quickly and often makes them difficult to stock," he says.

Bagg says the university bookstore itself should be a revenue-neutral operation; however, it is listed as an ancillary operation by the university. "If the bookstore has a very good year, we might generate some revenue," he says, "but if we do make money, it goes to the university coffers to help keep fees down."

However, Harper admits to generating approximately \$200,000 on sales of \$2 million last year, saying "most university bookstores are making money in Canada."

Most university bookstores in Canada charge similar prices for the same books, though there is some discrepancy due to freight costs. Dalhousie students pay marginally more than students at Queen's University in Ontario,

which is closer to the distributors in Toronto. Bagg says freight costs last year were more than \$150,000.

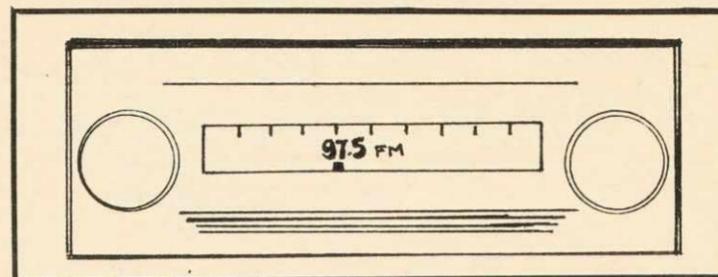
But Harper says the difference in the price of books is often based on the year in which you buy them. One Dalhousie marine biology student noted that one of her textbooks cost \$66.45, but inside the book was an advertisement for the same book at \$51.95 plus \$2 shipping and handling. When shown these figures, Bagg said many of the books in the store were purchased from the United States and the high exchange rate of several years ago was responsible for the high price of some books. But Harper says "99 per cent of the books (Bagg) has for sale he got this year. You can't use (the high exchange rate) as an excuse. That was a long time ago."

Other students are not as upset about the price of books. Mike Dunbar, a second-year medical student, says he realizes "the nature of medicine means you've got to buy new and expensive books." He says the field changes

so quickly that only a few of the very basic medical texts will last over a year. Dunbar admits, however, that some of his colleagues travel to the United States to buy their books because "it's a lot cheaper".

One way of avoiding the high price of new books is to buy and sell used ones. Bagg says at least twice a year, a second-hand book company is invited to Dalhousie to buy back books from the students. In addition, the university bookstore will "buy back any book at 50 per cent of the original cost, clean it up, mark it up to 75 per cent of the original cost, and reshelve it". The catch is that the book store must know that the book is going to be used again next year.

Another avenue for used books is the DSU used book store. This service operates at the beginning of each term, giving students a chance to sell their own books to other students via the DSU. The Student Union mark-up is 15 per cent on whatever price the student selling the book wishes to charge.



CKDU manager resigns

by Ken Faloon

September 30 marked the end of an era for CKDU, Dalhousie's radio station. After three years on the job, Mark McLeod is being replaced by a new station manager, Paul Shields. Shields was chosen by the CKDU selection committee, made up of CKDU Board members and staff.

McLeod resigned, but the resignation was in response to a non-confidence vote by the CKDU Board of Directors.

McLeod feels it was an unfortunate decision made by the board, but understands. "They are my only boss and we disagreed on a number of issues, so they did what bosses often do."

McLeod is confident he was doing a good job. He says, "Sure they could cite examples of an improper management, but who is right on this comes down to a matter of opinion. I just think the board could have worked with me to help me improve in areas they felt were weak instead of asking me to resign."

Libby Baxter, chair of the Board of Directors of CKDU says the decision for McLeod to leave was not an arbitrary one. The board had been studying the management of the station since December. "We made efforts to hear the concerns of everyone

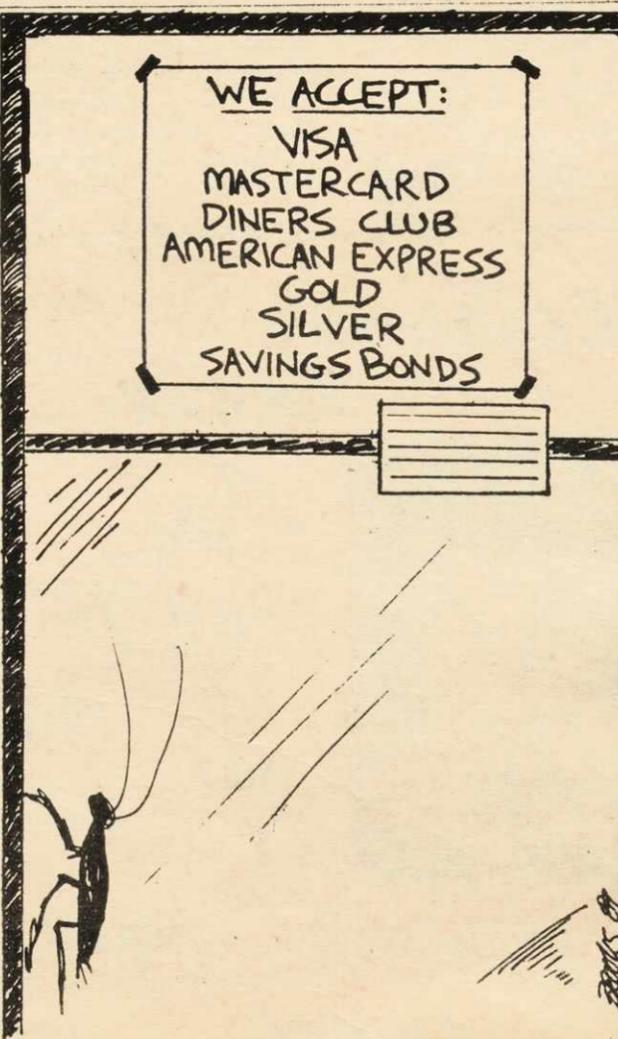
involved with the radio station," says Baxter. She feels the situation is an emotional one which can make both McLeod and the board look bad. "Mark has managed CKDU for three years and has done a lot of excellent things and we don't want to give the impression he did nothing good for the station."

Baxter says the station needs someone fresh and they would like to try a different management style. For those who claim the station has an excellent sound now, Baxter says that should not change. McLeod's job as station manager was not to dictate the sound.

McLeod, who has been involved in campus radio for ten years, has seen a lot of station managers come and go. He recognizes the average burn-out time for managers is about three years. "I thought about coming back myself and decided I had another year left in me," says McLeod. "It would have been an important year because I wanted to prepare the station for the next manager. The way it is now will make Paul's [Shields] job a difficult one."

Lee-Anne Gillan, assistant music director at the station, says it's unfortunate that politics creep in where they don't belong. "This is a radio station and the goal is to play good music."

DAL BOOK STORE



♀ Walk safe

ANTIGONISH N.S. (CUP) — As women marched to Take Back the Night last week, a student was assaulted at Saint Francis Xavier University.

Over a hundred people marched through the streets of Antigonish to protest the intolerable conditions women face when they walk the streets after dark.

Local RCMP officials say she escaped without serious injury.

"Just because the woman escaped without physical injury doesn't mean that the crime has been lessened," said Katherine Reed, executive director of the Antigonish Women's Resource Centre.

In September, 1988, St. Francis student council started a walk home program for students on campus. The program is for anyone who doesn't feel safe when they walk home.

"I feel safe when I walk home, but some women don't. That's why the service is provided," said council vice-president Helen Tubrett.

"The program is a good start," said Reed. "It doesn't begin to address date rape, or other forms of assault, but it does help prevent women from being dragged into the dark by strangers."

An official with the Service For Sexual Assault Victims in Halifax said 70 to 75 per cent of sexual assailants in Canada are known to their victims while 25 to 30 per cent are strangers.

She said in the Halifax area strangers have become responsible for 40 per cent of reported assaults in the last six years.

In the Antigonish area there have been thirteen reported sexual attacks within the last five months.