

Student eating habits impressive

by John DeMont

Perhaps it is the result of media-hype or better education during the lower grades or maybe it is another manifestation of Tom Wolfe's "me-decade". Whatever the reason, the fact remains that Dalhousie's students are becoming increasingly aware and concerned with their personal eating habits.

Mary Connors, the manager of the Howe Hall cafeteria and a dietician working for Beaver Foods, the food suppliers to Dal's three cafeterias, says student eating habits are definitely improving. Students are eating more salads and drinking more milk and fruit juices, she said, but there are still some areas which bear watching, especially where the men's residence is concerned.

"The men are more prone to overeat, while the women, on the whole, are more conscientious eaters. They don't eat as much and on the whole aren't as wasteful, taking only the amount of food they feel they can finish. Women are also greater salad eaters, an area in which the men are somewhat lacking", Connors said.

At both Shirreff Hall and Howe Hall a regular food committee made up entirely of students meets regularly with Beaver Food management to discuss cafeteria menus. "If they decided they want something changed, within reason of course, I can't turn them down", said Connors.

She also said students are not shy in approaching staff members with suggestions as well as complaining on the various comment sheets provided by Beaver.

"Beaver supplies food from all the basic food groups; milk and milk products, cereal and grain products, meat and fish, and vegetables and fruits," Connors said.

Of a small group of Shirreff Hall diners interviewed, most

were pleased with the residence food. Several were very complimentary of the Shirreff Hall Chef. One woman, who wished to remain anonymous, praised "the flexibility of the staff, especially the Chef, who are more than willing to arrange special diet and vegetarian diets." Others praised the balance and variety found on the menu. One grievance appearing, however, in the small group interviewed was the lack of fruit at meals and Beaver's seeming reluctance to give out more than one piece.

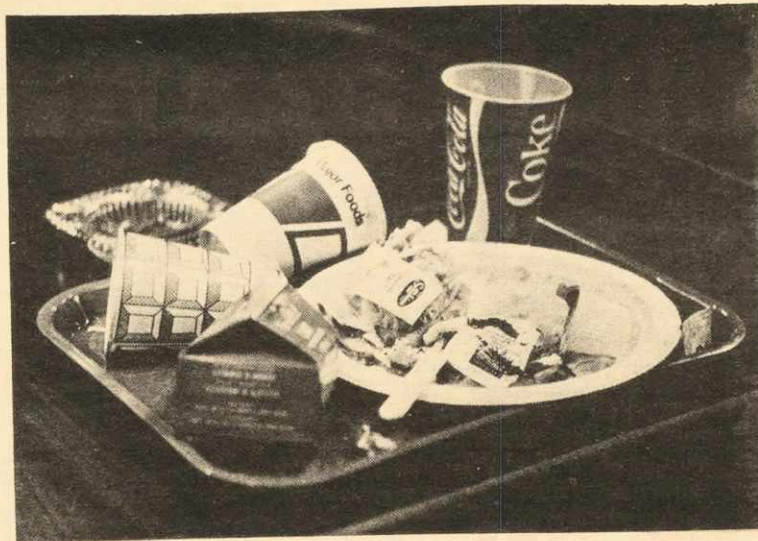
The men interviewed were also in general happy with the food. Derek Nesdoly, a medical student who lives off campus but eats his meals in Howe Hall, said he "couldn't afford to eat this well anywhere else. You get fresh fruit and vegetables even in the middle of winter, all for three or four dollars a day, you can't beat it. I'd like to see anyone else eat this well or eat period for \$800 a year."

The group interviewed found nothing lacking in their diet. Most were also generally sympathetic to the problem of feeding such a large group of people at one time and also praised Beaver for "Pushing the nutritional foods." In general there were few complaints. The sentiment with those interviewed, as stated by Billy McMurdo, was that, "These people are probably better off than they know they are."

The other eating establishment on campus, the newly renovated "Garden" in the Student Union Building, is an entirely different setup from that found in the two residences.

Where the residence cafeterias have controlled environments, and often unlimited supplies of food and drink for the student, the "Garden" operates strictly as a cash operation where each separate item is paid for individually.

In most cases this would



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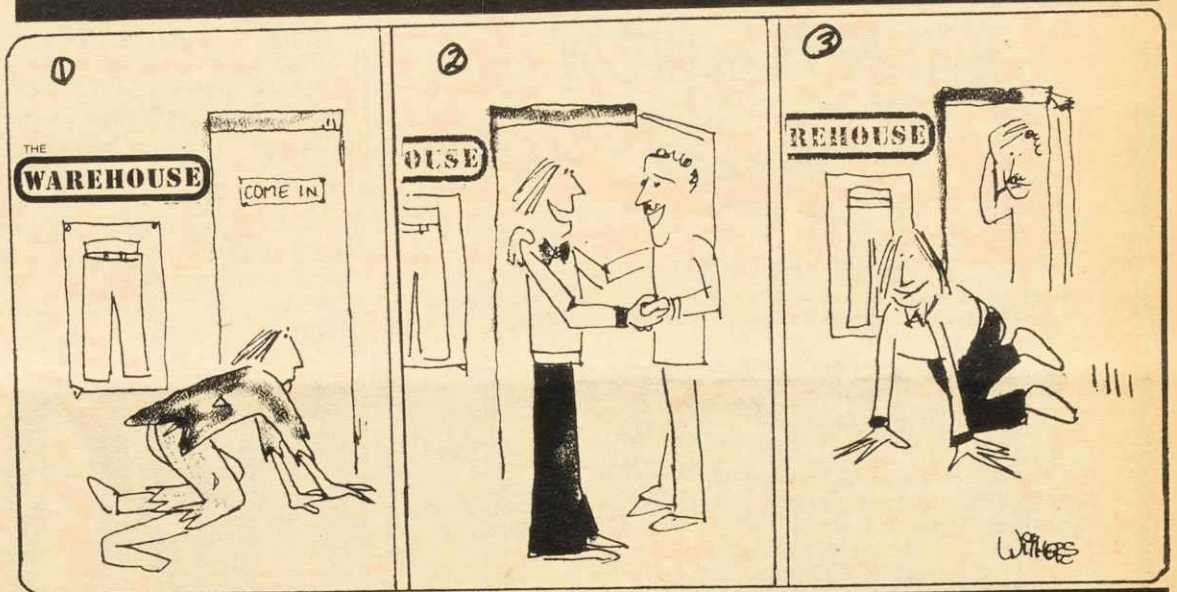
influence eating habits as people tend to eat differently when there is unlimited access to food, but if anything, the students at the "Garden" are

probably more conscientious. Dominik Machek, District Manager of Beaver Foods, has been "surprised, but impressed" with the students.

"They aren't flocking to the fast food area and bake shop as was expected, but instead a reverse trend has emerged, as students are lining up at the nutritionally superior hot food area and Deli-bar," said Machek.

On an average day at the "Garden" 36.8% of the profits come from the Deli-bar, 31.1% from the hot food area, while only 14.5% come from the Bake Shop and 17.5% from the grill.

This tendency is by no means consistent with the other university cash operations which Machek has been involved with. We cited the University of Alberta and York University "where in both cases there has been a much greater demand for deep fried food, fish and chips etc." It signifies a trend at Dalhousie which will hopefully continue and possibly even improve in the future.



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