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## Petition to challenge court ruling

BY JEN HORSEY & JOE TRATNIK

A working group of the Nova Scotia Public Interest Research Group (NSPIRG) at Dalhousie is handing out petitions to protest what they perceive to be a homophobic probation order. Last week, convicted pedophile Randall Scott Dignan was arraigned in Halifax provincial court charged with attempting to solicit sex from two underage males. Of the several charges relating to this alleged incident, one relates to a breach of probation from an earlier conviction in Amherst.

It has been widely reported that one of the terms of Dignan's probation is that he "have no contact with children under the age of 18 unless accompanied by a heterosexual adult."

That part of the probation order in particular has sparked controversy throughout the province regarding concerns that the wording is indicative of systemic discrimination against homosexuals.

At Dalhousie University, members of Humans Against Homophobia (HAH), a NSPIRG working group, have organized the circulation of a petition, protesting this wording.

The petition demands an investigation into the "blatant homophobic stipulation of the probation" and will be sent to the Minister of Justice in two weeks.

Michele McKinnon, the Communications officer at the Provincial Department of Justice, explained that once they receive the petition, it will be referred to the Chief Judge who will then decide the appropriate action.

David Butler, a member of HAH who is actively involved in circulating the petition, stressed that the reasons for HAH's involvement have nothing to do with the issue of pedophilia.

"This is a basic human rights issue," he said. "The wording of the order is clearly defamatory, and it perpetuates the myth that all homosexuals are pedophiles. It suggests, by its very wording, that all homosexuals are in collusion with pedophiles."

"If we consider the fact that the vast majority of pedophiles are heterosexual males, according to the logic of this judge, all heterosexuals are not to be trusted around children, and should be considered to be in collusion with pedophiles," said Butler.

Dignan's lawyer, Josh Arnold, was aware of HAH's complaint.

"I have never seen that condition before...I can understand why some people may be upset by it," he said.

Sandy Fairbanks, the Crown Attorney involved in the Amherst case, defended the judge's ruling.

"What the judge was trying to do was protect children, and what he may have done was offend some homosexuals. The focus was that the judge was trying to limit this individual, what he did not ever intend to do was insult anybody," said Fairbanks.

According to David Butler, this is just the first of many actions aimed at protesting the wording of the probation order.

"This cannot be allowed to continue," Mr. Butler argued. "Judges attend sensitivity training workshops that deal with issues such as race and gender, and we mean to make sure that this training includes sexual orientation issues as something to be aware of."

Over the next two weeks, HAH is planning several public meetings to organize various other formal protests.

## How to study abroad

BY KATHARINE DUNN

Contrary to the idealistic views of parents and professors, the main goal of many university students is to simply get out of school.

While attending classes is necessary in order to receive a degree from an institution of higher learning, there are ways of alleviating the jaded attitude plaguing many students. Various programs on campus have been established for students to travel abroad for study or work.

Many of these programs are coordinated in conjunction with Lester Pearson International (LPI). Located at 1321 Edward Street, LPI is responsible for the internationalization of Dalhousie by advancing public awareness and the understanding of global issues. This is ironic considering many people on campus have not even heard of it. However, this does not diminish the importance LPI has for students and faculty members who participate in programs such as Dal Outreach and the Brown Bag Lunch Series.

Several international exchange programs are supported

financially through LPI. Department-based programs offer a wide range of opportunities for both undergraduates and graduates in 12 departments on campus. The French, German, and Spanish departments all run programs open to non-majors. This is ideal for students who want to learn a foreign language as well as experience the culture that goes with it. Other programs are designed for majors in engineering, law, medicine, and sociology, among others.

The nondepartmental-based programs include the Commonwealth Universities Study Abroad Consortium (CUSAC); the Island Sustainability, Livelihood and Equity Program (ISLE); and, the Nova Scotia/New England Exchange.

CUSAC is a student exchange program involving 28 institutions in 13 Commonwealth countries. ISLE is a new program designed for graduate students to research/study abroad. The Nova Scotia/New England exchange offers undergraduates the chance to study one full year at one of 18 universities in New England. In the past, many stu-

dents have set up their own exchange with the help of professors or other international contacts, or through already existing organizations such as the United Nations or Canada World Youth. When an exchange is set up, students may then apply to LPI for financial assistance.

The Study/Work International Fund (SWIF) has been established as part of the Student Assistance Program for this purpose. SWIF supports study, work, or practicum placements abroad. The maximum amount that can be procured from the fund is \$2,000. However, in order to receive this amount, students must receive academic credit and be studying abroad for more than 8 weeks. If it is a non-credit exchange, students who are eligible can receive up to a few hundred dollars.

To be eligible, students must have completed one year of fulltime study and be in good academic standing. They can, however, be returning part-time. Students must also indicate financial need by filling out an application similar to that used

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## Being queer in the city

Irish activist Kieran Rose speaks at MSVU

BY LYNN O'TOOLE

They gathered in small numbers at Mount Saint Vincent University's Seton Centre on Wednesday, October 18 to hear Kieran Rose speak on the role that urban centres play in the gay and lesbian movement.

The talk was sponsored by Saint Mary's University in support of the Wilde in the Street Festival, celebrating playwright Oscar Wilde's famous trials and his adherence to his sexuality.

"Population density is proportional to homosexual acceptance," said Rose. "In larger cities, there is a sizable gay and lesbian population."

He believes that in rural areas — which encompass more traditional beliefs — homosexuals are not able to gain acceptance because instead of staying in smaller towns, they opt to relocate to cities where they are free to express their sexuality.

"More than 50 percent of gay Irish men have left Ireland for larger cities," said Rose. He draws a parallel between Ireland and the Maritimes in terms of their peripheral location and poor economy.

"Often, smaller regions will adopt the fashions and norms of larger regions to give the impression of progress," said Rose.

However, Rose contends that these changes are only surface deep and the attitudes of prejudice surrounding homosexuals is

still very much alive.

Rose's main concern is to improve attitudes in smaller towns. He appreciates the progress gays and lesbians have made thanks to cities such as New York, Toronto, and London, but he insists that a new plan needs to be formulated for smaller communities.

Rose suggested that supporters work with human rights groups rather than trying to start their own interest group. This was the approach he took in Ireland and it works, even without

a fulltime lobbyist or office.

Rose said little about Oscar Wilde. He said he considered Wilde a fine activist in general, but not a mentor for his movement.

Rose's dogged determination for change comes from his own sense of peevishness for individuals who lack respect for alternative lifestyles. He encouraged all present to continue attending talks like his to heighten tolerance and to prevent stagnation of the homosexual movement in smaller cities such as Halifax.

## Dal Security officer back in court

BY STEPHANIE PIERI

Calvin Byard, 29, entered a plea of "not guilty" at his preliminary hearing on Tuesday, October 23 in Halifax Provincial Court.

Byard is charged with sexual assault. The alleged incident took place on August 10 when a Dalhousie student was allegedly sexually assaulted on university property.

The 20-year-old woman was not hurt. The alleged assault was reportedly of a touching nature.

Byard was employed as a security officer at Dalhousie for over three years.

"[The matter] is now before the courts," said Marilyn MacDonald, a Dalhousie University spokeswoman. "The officer was some time ago suspended without pay and we will await the outcome of the court."

Byard will be back in court on July 25 for his trial.