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TAs agree to hold strike vote in January

BY STEVE PETRIE

A strike vote has been delayed to next term in order to gather strength and momentum in the local teaching assistant and part-timer's union.

The Canadian Union of Public Employees (CUPE) Local 3912 held a general meeting Saturday, November 1. At that time, a vote was taken that gave union executives the mandate to call a strike vote at Dalhousie, Mount Saint Vincent's (MSVU), Saint Mary's (SMU), or all three universities.

A strike vote is planned for sometime at the beginning of the second term.

During the meeting, there were

calls by some MSVU members to hold a strike vote immediately. At present, teaching assistants (TAs) and part-timers at Dalhousie and MSVU are in a legal position to strike, but SMU still has one more conciliation meeting. Since the schools will be in a legal striking position for the next six months, it was decided that all three schools should work together.

The union is organizing its members by distributing information to them. Currently, CUPE is distributing information concerning the strike to students

and faculty members to make its position known and to gain their support. In the event of a strike, the TA's and part-timers have already been given the support of the Dalhousie Faculty Association.

CUPE Spokesperson Kelly Murray feels that momentum is building for the TA's and part-timers, and that a strike will occur. According to Murray, the general feeling among TA's and part-timers at the three universities is that of anger towards the offers that the universities have put forth. The

current offer from Dalhousie would give part-timers a minimal pay raise over three years, and would standardize TA's pay.

According to Mike Earle, secretary/treasurer for CUPE 3912, Dalhousie has not offered anything new to TA's and part-timers since June. He says that Dalhousie has never given anything to the union that it has asked for without pressure like the threat of a strike

vote. He says that he also feels without a pay increase, the quality of education will decline.

As far as the University is concerned, Michael Roughneen of Dalhousie Personnel Services says that Dalhousie has no specific planning in the event of a strike, and otherwise had no comment.

At a university Senate meeting held October 27, senator Ugursal

continued on page 3...

"...Dalhousie paid its TA's at a rate only slightly higher than that offered by McDonald's."

Province Reverses Decision: Barren will be Protected

BY CHRIS MILLER

The Nova Scotia government announced last week that it will reinstate the Jim Campbell's Barren as a protected area, ending a long and bitter struggle between environmentalists and developers that attracted national attention.

The 1,709 hectares of bog, barren, and old-growth forest in the Cape Breton Highlands was initially chosen for protection in 1995 as one of 31 sites in Nova Scotia's Systems Plan of parks and protected areas, but was delisted last November to allow an Ontario based company, Regal Goldfields Ltd., to explore the site for gold.

"We must protect a priceless piece of our natural endowment rather than risk its loss to the uncertainties of exploitation," Premier Russell MacLellan told a news conference on October 29.

The Premier also told reporters that Cape Breton needs sustainable industries to overcome its economic hardships and that the benefits of protecting the barren outweigh the costs.

The much anticipated decision came as welcome news to a coalition of 50 environmental, native, and tourism groups pushing to have the barren re-listed.

"We're absolutely thrilled. It was the right choice," said Elizabeth May, speaking on behalf of the Sierra Club of

Canada.

Dr. Martin Willison, a conservation biologist at Dalhousie University who has been examining the events surrounding the barren, was also thrilled with the decision to protect the site.

"The barren became a symbol in the fight to protect wild nature in Nova Scotia. If this battle had been lost, it would have been an enormous blow to the entire concept of protected areas," Willison said. "A great deal was at stake: the barren itself, the protected areas Systems Plan, and the open public process which had been used in approving the plan."

Richard Brissenden, President of Regal Goldfields, was clearly not as enthusiastic.

"We are disappointed with the decision," Brissenden said.

The Premier's announcement effectively excludes the company from exploring the barren for ore deposits. Regal had been planning to spend \$1.4-million on its Cape Breton exploration program.

Brissenden would neither confirm nor deny whether Regal was planning legal action against the province.

"At this point in time we are reviewing all of our options with the investors and directors of the company," he said.

The Jim Campbell's Barren is home to numerous rare plants and lichens, contains an unusual combination of habitats, and

protects the headwaters of three major watersheds. It also provides an essential forested corridor for the moose and Canada lynx populations — both of which are at risk of local extinction if they do not have sufficient interconnected wild space.

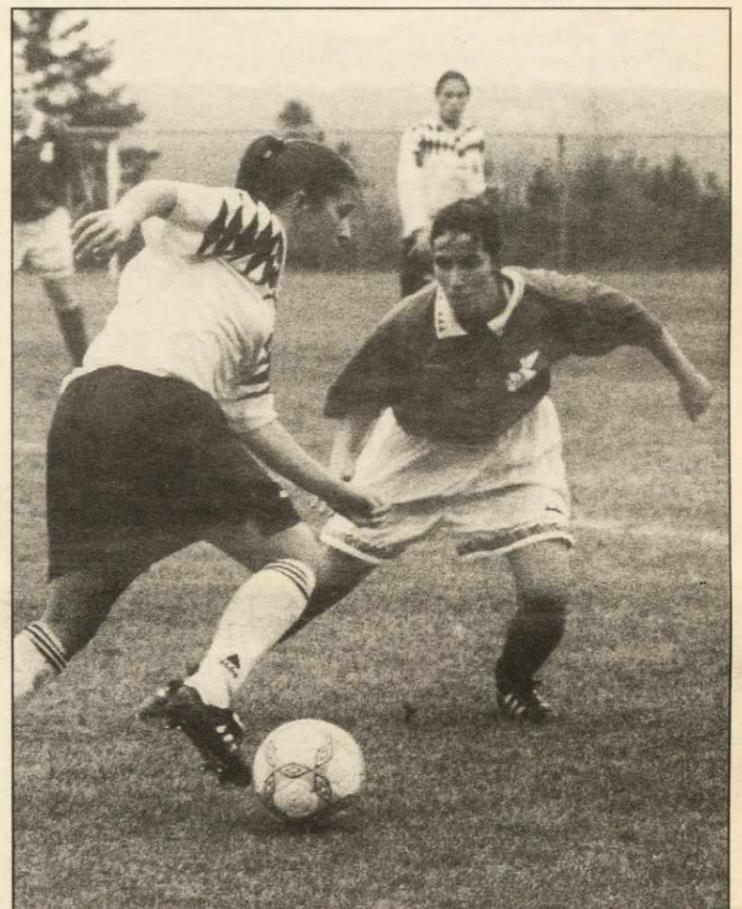
Premier Russell MacLellan also announced that the responsibility of managing protected areas would be transferred from the Department of Natural Resources, which has a mandate to both conserve and develop, to the Department of the Environment.

"This transfer reaffirms our determination to protect our priceless natural assets from the temptations of the marketplace and bring sharper focus to the government's environmental agenda," said MacLellan.

This transfer of power is being met with some criticism. Willison is concerned that the Parks Division will encounter more difficulties within the weaker Department of the Environment. He suggests that the Crown Lands Directorate — the division of government responsible for allocating public lands — should be transferred along with the Parks Division to strengthen the department.

The decision to reinstate the Jim Campbell's Barren does not affect the on-going RCMP investigation into allegations of wrongdoing by government officials during the

continued on page 11...



Men's and Women's soccer win AUA titles and advance to the CIAU championships this weekend. See stories on page 16. Photo by Rachel Jones.

Liberals take Halifax Citadel

BY MARK REYNOLDS

Tuesday's by-election in the provincial riding of Halifax Citadel saw Ed Kinley narrowly beat the NDP challenge to become the riding's first Liberal MLA in nearly 20 years.

Kinley, a surgeon at the Queen Elizabeth II hospital, took the riding by a slim margin of 161 votes over NDP candidate Peter Delefos.

Though the riding has gone with the government for almost 50 years, most observers believed that the NDP would capitalize on its federal success that saw all of Metro Halifax elect NDP members on June 2.

Progressive Conservative

candidate Kate Carmichael finished third, more than 1,000 votes behind Kinley.

Despite metro results, all three parties had reason to celebrate the by-election results. Premier Russell MacLellan managed to win a seat in the house, taking Cape Breton North by nearly 2,000 votes. The Conservatives wrested Cumberland North from the Liberals, with Ernie Fage taking more than 50 per cent of the popular vote. NDP candidate Helen MacDonald won Cape Breton the Lakes, to bring her caucus to a total of four. It is the first time the NDP has had MLA's from both the mainland and Cape Breton.

continued on page 3...

Pre-packaged ponderance

"In the future no one wins a war. It is true, there are degrees of loss, but no one wins."

— Brock Chisholm

NATIONAL NEWS

The University of Ottawa has caused controversy by accepting research funding from Nike, page 4.

Students may be surprised to learn that they are illegally being charged compound interest on their student loans, page 4.

FOCUS

Women in Nova Scotia prisons can now raise their newborn children behind bars, page 9.

SPORTS

We've got it all: Soccer, hockey, volleyball and wrestling, starting on page 15.

ARTS & CULTURE

Margie Gillis the dancing phenomenon mesmerizes at the Cohn, page 13.

CD Review purge: Bob Dylan, Smash Mouth, Junkhouse, Dr. Alban and Jonfireater page 14.

SCIENCE & ENVIRONMENT

Internet addiction, how the keyboard has become the drug of choice for lonely, sad people, page 12.

Nova Scotia wins environmental commendation for its Protected Areas plan, page 11.