

Women take back the night

BY KATRINA HAWCO

It is early Friday night and a spotlight shines on a mike stand that has been placed just in front of the statue in Grand Parade Square.

Standing at the mike with her friend next to her, Jill tells her story, which ends with the words "Tonight I'm taking my anger out on the street instead of taking it out on myself at home!"

The crowd of silent women standing in a semi-circle around Jill intently erupt into applause and cheers. Voice after voice, women bravely come forward and share a little piece of their story to make this night more real, more important. You can't ignore the fear, anger, or hope of these women after they share their experiences so openly.

Take Back The Night marches are held every year in cities all across Canada. Each year, women voice the hope that soon there won't be a need to march. Mothers hope they won't have to march for the safety of their children; that children will be valued as persons in the near future. Partners march for each other, hoping that someday being a lesbian will be something that is embraced, not shunned. Dalhousie students march in anger for fellow students who were recently assaulted on campus, wanting a safe campus where women will no longer be afraid to come and go from class. Women march looking towards the day they will be able to walk the streets themselves without fear. Every woman is here with a



hope for freedom, safety, and a fearless future.

The march begins and as the crowd trickles onto the street, the chants slowly begin. The voices are hesitant at first, but soon they become strong and loud.

Cries of "Hey hey! Ho ho! Violence Against Women Has Got To Go!" and "However We Dress, Wherever We Go, Yes Means Yes, and No Means No!" fill the streets.

When over a hundred women march the streets of downtown Halifax on a Friday night, they are guaranteed to get attention.

People on the street join in the clapping, others cheer, and some ask, "What's this all about?" Someone among the marchers replies, "It's for women, so you better treat us right!"

It was 30 minutes of unity, 30 minutes of empowerment, and 30 minutes of screaming anger out into air of the same city these

women fear to be alone in each day. Then the march ended.

These were the same women in the same square that they had left only moments ago, but the overall feeling was different. The chants have stopped and it suddenly seems very quiet again. Some of the marchers look lost in a well of emotion brought on

by the testimonies and the march. Other women stand in small circles, hugging each other, laughing and smiling, feeling victorious and proud. Some women continue on to the Khyber where a reception is planned to celebrate tonight's march. But a lot of the women enter back into the real world. The idyllic setting is gone now and reality sets in. The streets are the same streets they had to walk the night before, the fear is the same fear they deal with every night. Was there any point to any of this? The fear still exists, the streets are still a hazard. There is no more safety offered in the Square.

There is a point. Now at least women can take comfort in the fact that they are not alone, and that people are fighting for change. Awareness is being raised and silence is being broken. This isn't about male bashing or being radicals, or any of the other ridiculous accusations that fly each time this march takes place. This march represents a woman's right to be safe, secure, and independent. Women are no longer willing to be victims of this society. Three hundred and sixty-five days a year, they are silently fighting and one night out of the year you hear them loud and clear. Hopefully, you will join them in celebration, not condemnation.

Tiger patrol provides security on campus

BY KATHARINE DUNN

Do you feel safe walking around the Dalhousie campus alone at night?

Or even during the day?

Campus security affects all students, staff, and visiting public. Awareness of the daily role of Dalhousie's surveillance department thus becomes an important issue.

At any time in a 24-hour period, there are four security officers on duty. The supervisor stays in the main office (6139 South St.), while the other three officers patrol the campus via car, bicycle, or on foot. Day shifts are managed by the Chief of Security, the Deputy Chief, the Secretary, and the Traffic Enforcement Officer.

The officers all have emergency first aid and CPR training. As well, most have taken seminars on sexual harassment, race relations, employment equity, and suicide prevention, among others.

The core group of campus security work identical shifts with the Halifax Police Department. According to Chief of Security Sandy MacDonald, this greatly facilitates the working situation, since a rapport is built between officers who work the same hours.

MacDonald emphasises that the Halifax Police do not stay away from the Dalhousie campus simply because we have our

own security department. He believes that "the more eyes the better" when it comes to daily surveillance.

In addition to the fulltime employees in the department, there are 96 students who are employed on a part-time basis.

Tiger Patrol, launched in 1991, is Dal's on-campus security service. Running every night of the week, teams of two students — a man and a woman — act as escorts to any student who does not want to walk home alone. The hours of operation are 6 p.m. to 12:30 a.m. from Sunday to Wednesday and 6 p.m. to 1:30 a.m. from Thursday to Saturday. This service does not go off-campus.

A drive-home service for students was introduced last year and runs every Sunday to Friday. The van has a scheduled route departing from several locations around the city. There are posters around campus with specific route times.

Student Guards work evenings and weekends in six buildings on campus: the Tupper, Dental, Weldon, Life Sciences Centre, Killam Library, and Arts and Administration buildings. These buildings are often open past regular hours and the students are there to control access, patrol the area, and do basic visual security.

Finally, one student occupies the Operation Provident position. This job involves engraving and

doing inventory of equipment on campus in case of theft.

All Student Security receive emergency first aid and CPR training, as well as participating in other instructional sessions given by the Security Department.

Dalhousie Security has taken other measures to help safeguard our campus.

Each summer since 1991, representatives from several Dalhousie organisations get together to assess lighting on campus. Poorly lit areas are noted and prioritised following the "lightwalk".

As a result, Chief MacDonald said that "an excess of \$100,000 has been spent on lighting on campus."

This money is drawn from the annual Physical Plant and Planning budget.

When an assault occurs on campus, the Security Department reacts by posting bulletins at several locations around the University. Information given describes what is known of the assailant's appearance and the estimated time of the incident.

The key, however, is to prevent the attacks from occurring at all. With this in mind, basic self defence courses for women are offered through Dal Security and are free of charge. MacDonald feels the courses are important to "increase the level of awareness" of women on campus. To enquire, contact the Security Office at 494-6400.

Women's conference addresses environmental rights

BY CAROL MCQUEEN

HUAIROU, China (CUP) — For forty years nuclear devices were detonated less than one hundred miles away from Galina Sumarokova's village in Kazakhstan, part of the former Soviet Union.

From 1949 to 1989, the Communist government operated an above-ground nuclear test site. Shrouded in secrecy, the site released radioactive clouds into the atmosphere for decades, polluting and contaminating the surrounding area.

This week, Sumarokova stood before the Global Tribunal on Accountability for Women's Human Rights in Huairou and demanded that all nuclear test sites in the world be closed down permanently, arguing that their existence is an infringement of basic human rights.

She specifically called on the governments of China and France to put an end to their nuclear testing.

"Radiation pays no attention to geography or to gender," said Sumarokova, "It penetrates everything and kills everyone."

According to Sumarokova, cancer and blood defects caused by contact with nuclear radiation have already claimed hundreds of thousands of victims.

In her own village 300,000 children have been born with birth defects.

"In my village, children are more sick than their grandparents," said Sumarokova.

Anna Syomina agrees. As founder of Mama '86, an organization which supports mothers and children with health problems stemming from the Chernobyl nuclear disaster, she encounters children who cannot grow hair or who are suffering from leukemia.

She is armed with devastating statistics which reveal the deadly effects of the radiation that escaped from the Ukrainian power plant ten years ago.

"Seventy per cent of children born in the Ukraine since 1986 have some sort of health problem, ranging from chronic tonsillitis to leukemia to a non-functioning immune system," she said.

"Of the 30 per cent of children born healthy, only 20 per cent are still perfectly healthy when school begins five years later."

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