

SEXUAL HARASSMENT

by Barbara Leiterman

A chemistry classmate washes her test tube and mine and that of the student beside me while surreptitiously waiting for someone else to finish their lab so that she might have some company walking from the Chemistry Building to King's at eight o'clock at night.

A girlfriend asks if she can sleep in my residence house on Wednesday nights because she doesn't want to walk home alone after her evening class.

A friend buys a heavy-duty flashlight for his girlfriend as a weapon for when she is walking alone at night across campus to meet him.

The goal of Dalhousie University is to open our minds, and yet half of its students have to close their thoughts to the helplessness that "not walking alone" at night implies.

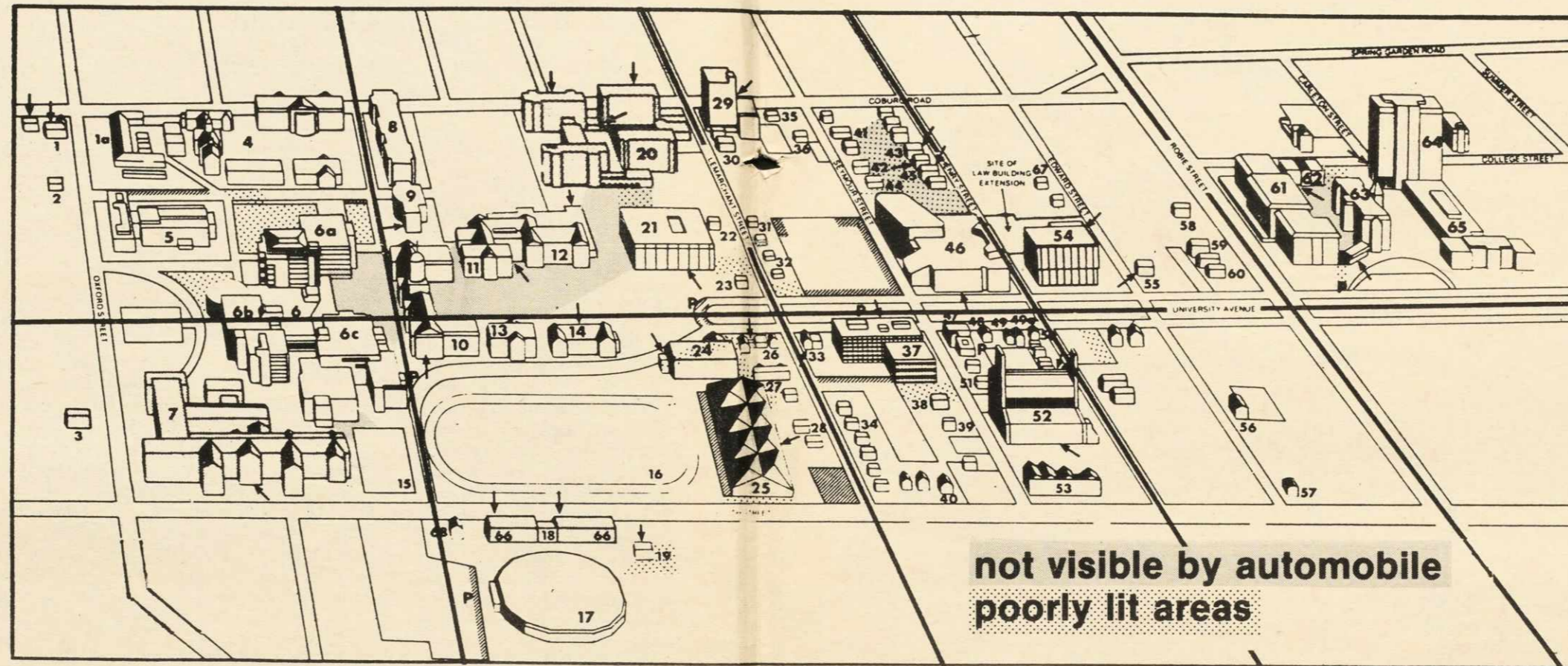
On October 14, I have an appointment with the Chief of Dalhousie Security, Sandy MacDonald. The Chief of Security is very busy. He said he was "amazed that they let you through to me."

The Chief of Security has already dealt with the *Gazette*. He spoke with Melanie Haggart for the article "Man arrested after pursuing woman" in the September 21 *Gazette*. In that interview Chief MacDonald assured Dalhousie students that physical assaults are relatively rare on campus. He also assured Dalhousie students that in the one reported incident of 1988, in which two women were grabbed by a man and escaped, the women escaped "without injury." One must assume this indicates absence of emotional as well as physical injury. Certainly, being physically assaulted by a hidden stranger and escaping with only a glimpse of the possible outcome would not emotionally disturb anyone I know.

A "rape awareness" pamphlet put out by Dalhousie Security advises female students to avoid wearing revealing clothing at night. Could this be a warning to female students not to dress in a way that might entice a man beyond his level of control and "invite" attack? Is there a less archaic explanation for this advice?

Dalhousie Security patrols the campus by car at night and patrols several buildings by foot, but leaves huge areas of campus untouched by authorities after dark.

There is a marked disparity between campus security's statistics and information coming from student sources who report hearing of four sexual assaults on campus within the first two weeks of school. Possibly these reports are only rumours, but it is sad to think the victims of these



High risk areas on campus

This campus guide was compiled by three people, two of whom are trained in martial arts. The guide does not include underbrush, trenches or blind corners, and it was assumed that all of the lights seen at the time would remain on for the entire night.

supposed attacks are not approaching our on-campus law enforcement officers, nor giving evidence to the campus community of the immediate threat to our safety.

Fortunately, the Halifax Police Department are concerned. They have issued a warning to students to be "aware of personal security when walking around the south end and the vicinity of the campus." A "Woman Alone" protection seminar was given by the department on September 27 to women living in university residences. A voluntary walk-home service should be in effect by this week for women in residence.

So while some highly commendable steps are being taken, much remains to be done to secure the safety of women on Dalhousie campus. A very simple step would be to improve the lighting on campus in certain areas. Security could define and patrol by foot 'high risk' areas. While walk-home services are an excellent temporary response, they reaffirm women's inability to defend themselves. Self defense and night awareness classes educate and empower women, but are not presently offered because there has not been a demand for them. As awareness of a problem on campus increases, the demand for such classes will increase.

