

## Daycare trop cher

by Jerry West



Dal photo: Maria Patriquin

## Women practice law

VICTORIA (CUP) — Women law students and lawyers are focussing on issues that affect women, and they're making inroads into the legal community and judicial system.

With 24 caucuses across the country, the National Association of Women and the Law is dedicated to improving the legal status of women. NAWL has played a key role in lobbying on issues like equality rights, family law, sexual assault and childcare.

Michelle Stanford, a law student at the University of Victoria, said UVic's NAWL group is directing its energy into a court accompaniment program where members support women going to court or prepare witnesses for trials.

"We're basically no different than other volunteers, but it's good for us. We get to see another side of it."

The national organization is working on issues such as the feminization of poverty. It is also lobbying for legal reform in childcare services and studying the implications of reproductive technology.

Stanford said it is important for women entering law to have women professors and practicing lawyers as role models, "particularly in what is a predominantly male profession."

Stanford met a woman who inspired her to practice law.

"She was a single mother with four kids. She was the first woman lawyer I'd ever seen. She had kids, a career, and ran a household."

Stanford has a nursing background, but "didn't feel as a feminist I could be effective in nursing."

## Safe sex censored

TORONTO (CUP) — York University wants to shield potential students from a campus handbook that features a graphic guide to "Making Sex Safer".

High school students shouldn't be allowed to see *Up York* when they visit the campus during the university's March 11-15 recruitment week, says the university's office of admissions.

York's student council — which published *Up York* last August — was asked by the administration not to place the handbook on an information table during the week.

Sharon Harrison, who organizes recruitment programmes for the admissions department, said she felt the contents were "inappropriate".

"I feel that some items in the handbook are offensive, but I will not comment specifically because I do not want my opinions to appear in *The Lexicon*," said Harrison, referring to a York campus newspaper.

Council president Jean Ghomeshi said he is offended by the request and plans to make the handbook available anyway.

"(The council) will likely be distributing it. We feel it is extremely appropriate," Ghomeshi said. "We feel that *Up York* sheds a lot of light on a lot of things at York that high school students ought to be able to read about."

## Strike policy vague

TORONTO (CUP) — University of Toronto administrators are sending out mixed signals about what happens to students who boycott classes during the university's ongoing strikes.

The university has been hit by three separate strikes. Teaching assistants walked off the job Feb. 27 and library workers joined them the next day. Full-time physical plant staff broke out their placards March 4.

U of T's existing Grading Practices Policy states that, in the event of a disruption, students "must be treated in a fair manner recognizing their freedom of choice to attend class or not without penalty."

Boycotting students can — "where possible" — have "reasonable extension of deadlines for the course requirements", and have tests rescheduled.

"The policy states that students should be held harmless, and I would expect the course instructors to respect that," said vice-provost David Cook.

These rules have been sent to all registrar's offices, faculties, departments and instructors, Cook added.

When asked, however, some registrar's offices weren't clear about the policy. Assistants at University College and Trinity said students who skipped tests would get zero. And Trinity registrar Bradley Adams said he didn't know what the rules were in such a case.

"I honestly haven't seen anything that says one way or another," Adams said.

Financing a university education is hard enough. Doing it while raising children is next to impossible.

In addition to the cost of feeding and clothing a child, Halifax parents would face a minimum cost of \$3,700 per year for daycare. A government subsidized space could bring the price down considerably, but there are only 2011 subsidized spaces in Nova Scotia.

According to Eve Wright, director of Dalhousie's child care centre, the spaces aren't getting any more numerous either.

"When we opened ten years ago we had 70 spaces, 30 of which were subsidized. Now we're up to 130 spots but there are still only 30 subsidies," said Wright.

It's not only the subsidized spots that are in short supply. In Halifax, if a parent were to remove a child from daycare for the summer, to cut costs, that child would be back on a waiting list when fall arrived.

To combat the shortage of licensed daycare spots parents have had to become inventive. Mount St. Vincent University's student union has recently organised a parent care lounge staffed by volunteer students.

Karen Casey of the Mount Students' Council emphasises that this is just a band-aid solution.

"We're still committed to the

bigger problems concerning daycare," said Casey, "but we have to do this for now. A lot of people using this service wouldn't be in university if it weren't for the parent care lounge."

Another option is "black market" daycare, where one woman on social assistance will take in several children from other single-parent families for about \$2 an hour each. The undeclared income could lead to a loss of social assistance benefits, but is ultimately necessary for a long-term welfare recipient to survive.

"The lack of affordable daycare forces single mothers to exploit each other," said Anna-Marie Larsen of Dalhousie's Public Interest Research Group.

The present student aid system is not much help either. The maximum loan and bursary isn't enough for a student with a summer job to make it through the year alone, and there aren't any extras

available for parents.

The Maritime Provinces Higher Education Commission estimates that a single parent with two children, living off social assistance, would go \$6,000 into debt each year, assuming daycare costs of a mere \$2,000 a year.

Often social assistance is the only way for a single parent to make it through university. This too has its costs though, and there is more than just the stigma of being a "welfare parent".

If a single parent is cohabitating with a spouse he or she can be summarily cut off from social assistance. According to Brenda Thompson, a local women's rights activist, this can lead to excessive scrutiny of female recipients' private lives.

"A caseworker can drop by unannounced and if they find a man or any evidence that a man was there, you can be cut off," said Thompson.

## CBC cuts hurt Maritimes

by Chris Lambie

The CBC's recent \$108 million budget cut has forced the demise of *Land and Sea* — the most popular news or current affairs television program in the Maritimes.

A twenty year old tradition, *Land and Sea* has been dropped from the CBC schedule due to a corporate decision (read Toronto) to cut all regional current affairs programming. Canada's minister of communications, Marcel Masse, has received thousands of letters and parliamentary petitions in protest to these programming dilutions.

Last Thursday, the CBC rejected a plethora of suggestions regarding regional programming by communities including Saskatoon, Rimousky and Windsor. CBC executive vice president Michael McEwan indicated the regional cuts are final and will not be overturned by any provincial outcry.

Frank Cameron, president of the Canadian broadcast employees union (local 192) and vice-president of the national union, says "*Land and Sea* was a show that really appealed to a Maritime audience." The fact that it had a

whopping 25 per cent of the market indicates its the kind of program we really want and need, says Cameron, "other than *Country Canada*, a show which focuses on land problems, we don't have any shows dealing specifically with the environment, agricultural issues or the fisheries."

"Not only do we want to save



the show," says Cameron, "but we do not want to see a lot of talented people get pushed out the door with it. The decisions on the cuts came down from the central-Canadian braintrust with very little input from satellite stations," he says, "they are very inward-looking people who just do not understand the region."

"They hand us platitudes," says Cameron; "we don't like to cut regional programming, but we must protect the network at all costs. They think we can do the American NY to LA thing, he says, "but while we must stick together — we are very different and dis-

tinct regions and it is important to maintain that identity."

There is a prevalent attitude at the CBC, says Cameron, "that unless programs are laundered through Toronto, they aren't any good. I understand there just isn't enough money," he says, "but personally I think we should cut more management jobs; we have fourteen vice presidents we just don't need, but then I guess you'll never see the fat cutting the fat."

They could also take a good look at how we cover regional current affairs, he says; "French, English, *Journal* and local CBC crews will all be sent to cover the same story that one team could do just as easily."

"The union is playing a big role now in trying to redirect the budget cuts", he says, "we have challenged them in the supreme court and we are now waiting for leave to sue the corporation for violating their terms of license." Cameron feels that the CBC has violated their promise of regional performance written into that license. The union is also appearing before the CRTC with the same charges — hoping to coerce the CBC into re-considering its slashing changes.

• continued on page 4