

Artful negotiations



Yes? No? Maybe so...

By ERIN GOODMAN

"Sex is a hard thing for most of us to talk about," says psychologist Dr. Brad McRae, introducing his presentation **Relationships: Saying Yes, Saying No.**

Dr. McRae and Ann Bully, Health Co-ordinator of Planned Parenthood in Halifax, have been holding seminars for residents of Shirreff Hall and Howe Hall for several weeks. The sex experts strongly believe that "men and women often send mixed messages, resulting in uncomfortable situations," and consequently they have set out to "open the lines of communication among men and women, relating this to university life in their presentations.

The male-dominated crowd attending a lecture held at Howe Hall on Monday night may have been expecting a discussion dealing with the potential hazards of casual sex, such as teenage pregnancy or sexually transmitted diseases. Instead they were treated to a lecture that dealt largely with rape and with personality traits that may cause lack of communication between couples.

The students viewed two movies, each dealing with sexual assault, and then were asked to discuss the communication problems that led to the assaults. The general feeling of the audience seemed to be that women must be careful not to use body language, and to be aware of possible innuendos in conversations held with men, lest they be misinter-

preted and assaulted by a confused male. This ain't the stuff that built Ms. Magazine...

Commented Ann Bully, "I think sometimes females are as much to blame (as males)... so harmful situations occur." I hear Gloria Steinham gasping in horror...

When Ms. Bully asked the audience if they ever felt men were victims pressured into unwanted situations when a female makes sexual overtures, one honest Howe Hall resident answered, "Saying no, it's a ridiculous thing for a guy to do." This statement seemed to annihilate the object of the discussion; if men are always going to say a resounding "Yes", is it the woman's responsibility alone to decide between Yes or No?

Instead of pursuing this important line of thought, the discussion suddenly turned toward communication between partners in a relationship, or more accurately, How to Effectively Argue. Students were asked to argue with a partner over the pressing issues of, "How to refuse a friend asking for \$20" and, "How to convince your partner that he/she is spending too much time with friends". Perhaps some other members of the audience derived some benefit from this exercise: I've been arguing effectively since early childhood.

One Studley-Hall resident, who had contributed most of the evening's opinions, felt that the presentation had been beneficial.

"People don't know how to talk," explained David L. "Animosity develops between kids our age... I think those are skills that ought to be developed now."

When pressed, David said he felt the presentation was somewhat ambiguous, and agreed that it didn't really relate to first or second year students.

The lecturers often referred to problems experienced by married couples they had treated, which held little interest for a single audience.

At the end of the two-hour session, students were asked to fill out a questionnaire rating the effectiveness of the presentation. Sorry, Brad and Ann, but I think those students that benefitted the most were probably the no-shows.

By HEATHER HUESTON

FACULTY AT THE NOVA Scotia College of Art and Design voted Friday to walk out on October 16 if a collective agreement with the college's Board of Governors is not signed by that time.

Both sides sit down this weekend to a two day bargaining session, a last-ditch attempt to make some progress before the strike deadline.

The union and administration have been negotiating since August 1985 for the union's first collective agreement. Relations between the two groups have become increasingly strained in the past few months with accusations from both sides that the other is not bargaining in good faith.

If a strike is called by the union, the administration will try to cover classes affected by the walk-out with a "Strike Readiness Committee" of 34 administration staff and part-time and sessional lecturers.

Both sides are uncertain how many of the lecturers will cross the picket line, as some of them have applied for union membership in a second bargaining unit of part-time and sessional lecturers.

Gary Kennedy, president of the college, says the college will close only if the board felt nothing worthwhile was being offered. Students will be offered refunds that are "fair and equitable."

Union president Alvin Comiter says closure of the school will depend on the administration

and whether the students respect the picket line, a statement student union president Ken Robinson called "passing the buck".

Kris Rogers of the Concerned Students Committee at the college says both the administration and the faculty had narrowed the options but she believed they both wanted to settle and doubted a strike would last more than two weeks because it would interrupt the upcoming NSCAD centennial.

The biggest concern for students, besides their possible loss of money, time and academic reputation, is the moral dilemma of what they should do in the event of a strike.

Anne Moir, a student at the college, says "it's a choice between your education and what's right. It's so small here, you're friends with your professors. You feel like your friends have let you down, but you support them too.

The strike date falls one day before the deadline for payment of deferred tuition fees for students on financial aid. Kennedy says notices will simply be sent out to students who didn't pay in time.

The main issues under negotiation are a grievance policy, job security and an institutional pay scale on parity with other universities.

Comiter says he's surprised the union is having a hard time setting standards common to other unionized and non-unionized universities.

In many areas we are something other than the standard," says Kennedy. "We have our own traditions, to have union standards superimposed would show little respect for the school."

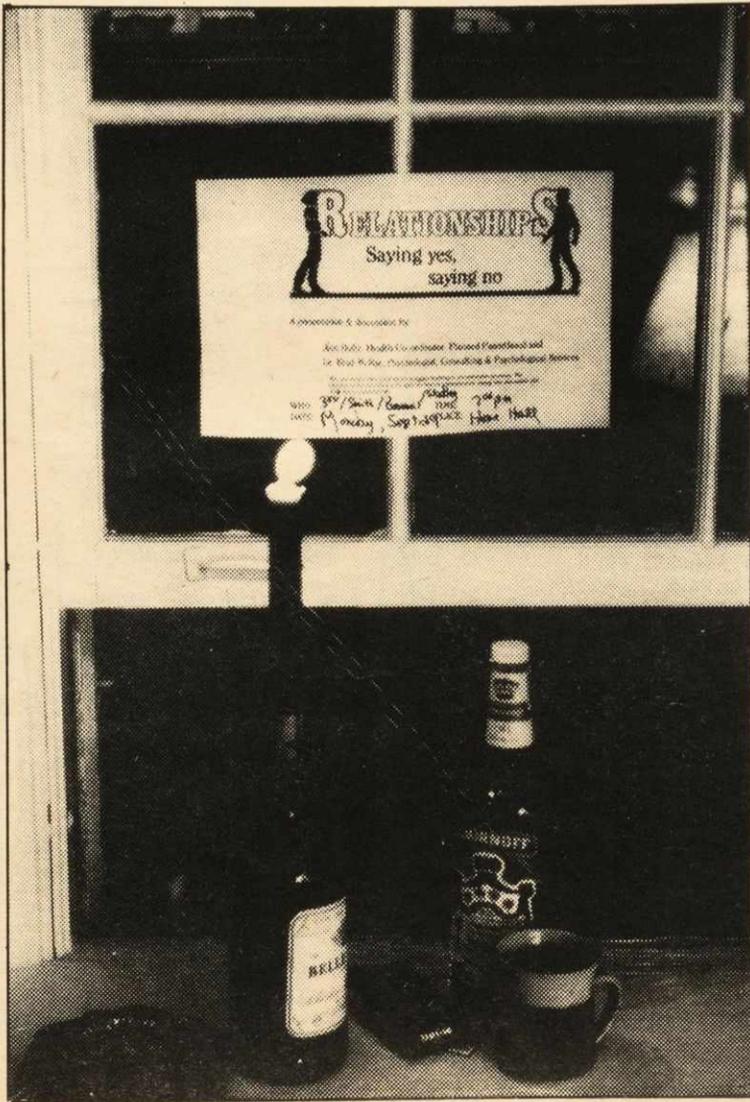


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