

Harassment of Dal Women linked to Security Breaches

by Alec Bruce

If you're a woman student at Dalhousie you probably know better than to travel the campus late at night, but the administration remains strangely indifferent to the nocturnal hazards women face on the biggest campus in Atlantic Canada. The Halifax crime rate is no worse than that of most Canadian cities, but Dalhousie's feeble security system makes this part of town especially dangerous for women.

"One of the biggest problems," says Students' Council Women's Committee Chair Susan McIntyre, "is the lack of security manpower. The security department here just isn't large enough to ensure the safety of students at night."

Facts support her claim. A report compiled by Dalhousie Students' Council this year on the security departments of Atlantic universities compares Dalhousie unfavourably with smaller schools. Acadia University, with a student population of 3200, maintains a security force of 98. Dalhousie, with 10,000 regular students, employs only 13 full-time guards.

The number of assaults on women, walking alone on campus after dark, has risen disturbingly in recent months. On November 24 of last year, unknown assailants harassed two different women. One was chased all the way from Sherriff Hall to the Killam Library. The other lost her purse in a brawl with a youth outside Alexandria Hall. Again, these attacks, apparently unrelated, involved different victims at different locations on the same night. That does not speak well of campus security.

"The security system on this campus is geared more towards protecting property than protecting people," says Chris Hartt, students' council Security Committee Chair. "This is due partly to reduced manpower and the extensive properties the administration must protect."

Dalhousie administers 125 buildings at locations all around Halifax, a situation that puts a tremendous burden on security resources. It leaves exactly one patrol of two men and a van to look after all the streets and walkways. At night, when the forces are mobilized in the buildings, and the streets and walkways thus remain unguarded for hours at a time, students must fend for themselves.

But the most appalling, recent assault against a woman on campus occurred not on the dangerous walkways, but in the supposed safety of a university residence. At about 2:00 a.m. last November 4, a resident of the Glengary apartment building awoke to the sound of an intruder near her bed. She screamed, and he fled. He had apparently climbed in through a first-floor window. An investigation revealed security in the building was terribly deficient. There were no screens on the windows, a faulty security door, no buzzer system, and no full-time guard.

Screens are now fixed to the windows, and the front door remains locked during the day, but Chris Hartt insists Glengary is still

far from intruder-proof. "If you had a wire-cutter," he says, "you could still get through those screens. As for the rest of the reparations, I've heard very little. But I wouldn't be surprised if someone else breaks into that building."

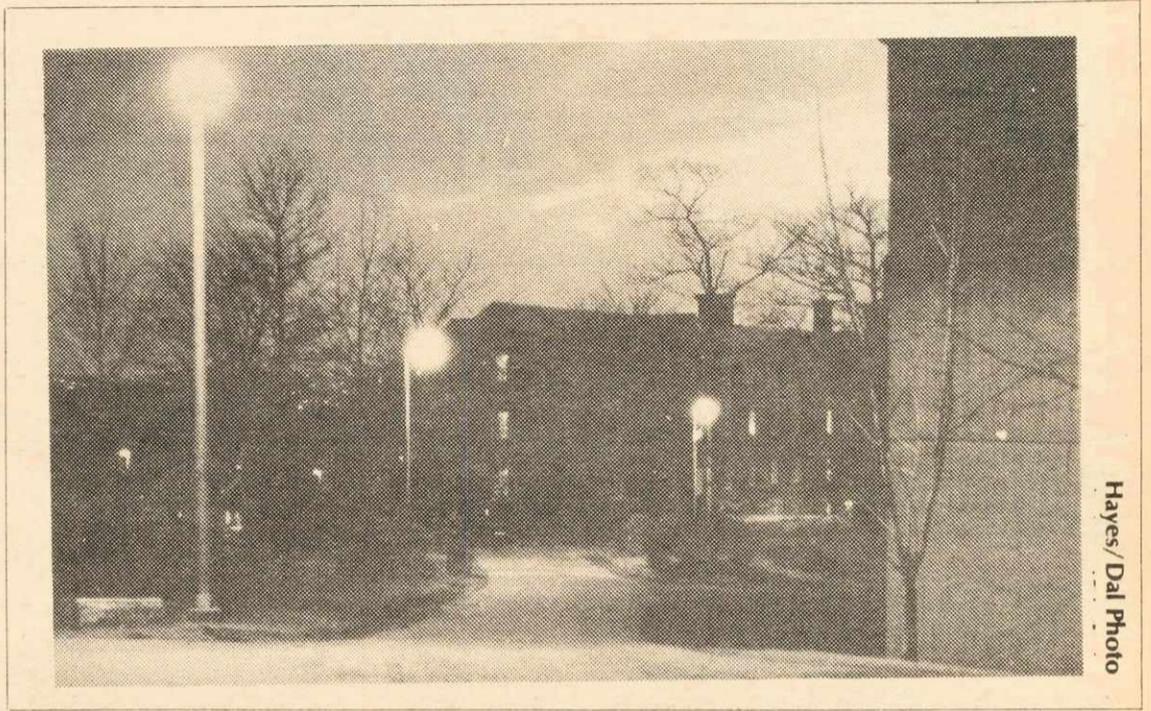
Max Keeping, Dalhousie's Director of Security, recently submitted a memorandum to Vice-President Robbie Shaw. It cites nine breaches of campus building security in the last three months. Hartt says this reflects the dismal state of Dalhousie's security force: "I haven't heard of any break-ins recently, but that doesn't mean they don't occur. I'd say two or three incidents — related to insufficient security personnel — every week isn't unusual."

But Shaw still maintains the security situation at Dalhousie is no cause for concern. "If there is a problem with security — and I don't believe there is — then it's not serious," he says. "We shouldn't give it any more consideration than we are right now. The campus has been safe for women for awhile. The last confirmed assault I remember was a year-and-a-half ago."

Shaw says that given the restrained fiscal climate, an operating budget of \$500,000 for campus security is adequate. "If we're going to beef up security on an operating deficit of \$2,000,000," he added, "then something else has to go. I don't think the problem warrants any more expenditure."

Meanwhile Security and Women's Committees of the Students' Council are busy launching their own campaign against lax security measures. Council plans to publish a map or pamphlet to show the safest night-time routes for campus travellers. Both committees are negotiating with the administration for lighted walkways, more security personnel, and escort services.

Until campus security undergoes drastic improvement, it may just be safer for women to take their night classes via correspondence.



Hayes/Dal Photo

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by C. Ricketts

Four Sherriff Hall women found out on January 17 that flashers do not brighten dimly-lit paths when they return to the residence from night classes. Two women were approached by a tall, slim blonde man, and minutes later, two more were approached in roughly the same spot by a medium-height slightly overweight dark-haired man.

In both cases, Dal Security and Halifax Police were called, descriptions taken and the area searched, but no suspects were found.

Last November, a woman walking from her night class on middle campus to her car in the Dalplex parking lot realized she was being followed. When she quickened her pace, the man started chasing her, but turned and ran down South Street when he saw a friend waiting for her at the car.

The woman says she reported the incident to Dal Security and Halifax Police but was unsatisfied with the action taken. There is no record of the incident in the log or in the monthly report from Dal Security, although Head of Dal Security Max Keeping says there would be a record of the incident had it been reported.

Halifax Police said they could do little more than "patrol a little more frequently" she says.

Member-at-large Erin Steuter sits on the President's Advisory Committee on Security and Parking. She thinks the administration is starting to be more helpful as they have recently spent thousands of dollars on lighting and are working at centralizing night classes at the Life Sciences Centre.

Judy Balch, one of the women

flashed at on January 17 says the top corner of the tennis courts behind Sherriff Hall is still dimly lit. There is a distance of about 50 feet between lampposts, where both flashers were seen.

Dr. Toni Laidlaw, who chairs the President's Advisory Committee on Sexual Harrassment, does not like the idea of centralizing night classes in the LSC. She says it is "probably the worst building for lighting and security" and people feel very nervous about taking night classes there.

"I would not go up there, nor would I ask any of my students to," she says.

At the January 18 meeting of Security and Parking Committee, a motion to move evening classes from the LSC to better lit middle campus buildings was defeated.

No honoraria for Orientation co-chairs

by Robert Putnam

Council took a rare step of not paying the traditional honorarium to the Co-Chairmen of the 1982 Orientation Committee in a motion by Chris Hartt and seconded by Frank Dunn. The motion passed by a vote of 11 to 5 with 3 abstentions. Two of those abstentions were Heather Roseveare and Leone Steele (both were commended in the report for their work on the committee).

George Fraser presented the long-awaited report on the committee's activities on behalf of himself and fellow Co-Chairman Greg Herrett. Councilors agreed that the orientation activities drew good crowds and were an overall success.

Treasurer Shawn Houlihan, who voted for the motion, felt that orientation was successful but he

did not feel that Fraser had performed his responsibility. "Fraser was never around for the dirty work like sticking up posters and doing the running around which is necessary to make these things work," stated Houlihan. The treasurer also had difficulty obtaining information on expenses and referred to the lateness of the report, which is normally out by the end of October. "Fraser just wanted to make deals," commented Houlihan.

An arrangement to sell penants for Howe Hall frosh packs was outside Fraser's authority, claimed Houlihan. The penants, which cost 61¢, were to be sold for \$1.00 but eventually were charged out at the cost price. Vice-President John Russell voted against the motion. He stated that "some of Fraser's

efforts were misguided but he did the job to the best of his ability."

Fraser reacted to criticism by pointing out that Council had provided no guidelines for him to follow. He stated that he attended to his responsibilities as Co-Chairman and maintained a summer job throughout his term. He said he was disappointed in the decision and would be reluctant to commit his time to such efforts again.

Greg Herrett was also disappointed by council's decision but stated "he held no grudges...and would continue to volunteer for such jobs in the future". Herrett felt that the decision was based on "personal dislike of George by some members of Council".

Russell took exception to Fraser's criticism that Student Council should not have been so negative

towards corporate sponsorship. Moosehead Breweries contributed \$3000.00 to the Super Sub and also employed Fraser during the summer. Russell commented that "we were walking a very fine line between Fraser the Orientation Chairman and Fraser the Moosehead representative."

Marie Gilkinson, a full time employee of student council who is in charge of booking entertainment for student functions and a member of the committee, described last year's orientation as "one of the better ones" she has seen. Gilkinson said Fraser attended all committee meetings during the summer where they completed a mailout to 1500 new students and obtained Gary US Bonds to play at the new Dal Rink.