

## New Democrats speak out on youth issues

By DAVID OLIE

UNEMPLOYMENT AND fear of the future are making young Canadians apathetic and cynical, says Howard McCurdy, New Democratic MP for Windsor-Walkerville and chair of the NDP Task Force on Youth.

The sense of immortality among youth is gone, says McCurdy. "When we were young we had the feeling we could do anything," he says. "The essential message we've been receiving is that your perspective has changed."

McCurdy and other members of the Task Force made their remarks in a press conference on Oct. 30 and at a meeting of interested students in the SUB that evening.

"The way we see it, the youth of the world is in a state of crisis," McCurdy says. "This seems to be focused around the issue of unemployment."

"Some youth today may never have jobs," he says.

"Surely it's not too great an expectation to have a job and a place to live," adds John Rodriguez, MP for Nicel Belt and another member of the Task Force.

McCurdy says the concern of youth over unemployment is even limiting their participation in the political process.

"In Sydney we were somewhat shocked by the response, 'If we appear at an NDP meeting we may not get jobs.' We consider it a tragedy that these young people should feel this way," he says.

"They are very apathetic or ignorant about politics, says Kevin Deveaux, president of the Nova Scotia Young New Democrats. "Let me get an education, let me get a job, and maybe then I'll start to worry about politics," is the attitude," he says.

McCurdy says the changing role of the family, the changing role of the community, and the lack of having someone to talk to add to these problems.

"If we've heard one word from every young person across the country, it's the word 'counseling'," he adds.

"Young people are saying things are not going to go back to the way they were, so we have to find something to put in their place," he adds.

McCurdy says another thing the Task Force has heard consistently is that "the universities are hurting." He says this concern has become even more pronounced since the announcement of \$6 billion in federal cuts to Established Programs Financing.

"The provinces are already cut-

ting back, and now the feds are joining them. It's a damn poor way to convince the provinces to contribute more to post-secondary education," he says.

McCurdy says another problem with the education system is its inherent discrimination against certain people.

"Our education system is a middle-class system and it can be very alienating for a whole range of non-middle class social groups," he says. "We haven't yet figured out how to get the children of lower class families into the education system."

McCurdy says the idea of the Task Force grew out of a number of practical concerns.

"If I'm supposed to talk about youth in Parliament it makes sense that we talk to youth, to try to do the best job we can for them," he says.

McCurdy serves as the NDP critic for youth affairs.

"We want to hear what youth say, and not what people say youth say," says McCurdy. "This will lead to developments in party policy."

As well, McCurdy says, "We want to encourage young people to participate in the political process."

"It's also important that we increase the participation of youth in the NDP," he says.



Members of the NDP Task Force on Youth address student issues. Left to right (in foreground): Howard McCurdy, John Rodriguez, Alexa McDonough. Photo by Todd K. Miller, Dal Photo.

## Aquinian forced to leave CUP

**FREDERICTON (CUP)** — The student union at St. Thomas University here has cut almost \$4000 from the proposed budget of its newspaper, the *Aquinian*.

The paper's staff requested a \$12,115 grant from the STU student union, only \$703 more than what the paper received from last year's council. The student union

responded with an \$8155 grant for the bi-weekly paper.

Neil Toner, the *Aquinian*'s editor, says the biggest cut is in the paper's membership fees for Canadian University Press, a national co-operative of student newspapers.

"Council says the *Aquinian* doesn't have to be members of

CUP, so it won't pay the fees. And since the paper won't be CUP members, it doesn't need a travel budget or a mailing budget," says Toner.

Toner says the *Aquinian* staff want to remain members of CUP and receive advertising from Campus Plus, the group's national advertising representative.

The student union, on the other hand, doesn't want CUP services or its ads. It also cut the \$3000 in advertising revenue the paper projected it would receive from Campus Plus.

Toner says he doesn't know what the student union has against CUP.

"I guess council doesn't understand why it is important to belong to a national organization. That's ironic, since the SRC belongs to the Canadian Federation of Students," he says.

Toner says without CUP the *Aquinian* will be cut off from outside advice on how to run a paper if the council won't pay the paper's \$2394 CUP fees.

"We're going to fight the move on CUP. At this point we're not certain what we can do, but we do know we want to be members of CUP," Toner says.

At last week's council meeting, Greg Davis, the St. Thomas student union president, said he didn't want to cut into the paper's operating expenses but he did want to trim "unnecessary expenses from the budget proposal." Toner says it's hard to trim an already bare bones budget.

The paper publishes fourteen issues a year, and none of the staff receive salaries or honoraria.

## Bus passes pick up speed

By NAA DEI NIKOI

THE DRIVE FOR A BUS PASS for the 20,000 post-secondary students in the Halifax-Metro area continues to pick up speed.

The results of the survey of students from eight institutions, conducted under the auspices of the Students' Union of Nova Scotia (SUNS), shows an expected increase in ridership with the introduction of a monthly pass.

"I'm pleased with the results. They go a long way in helping to prove our point," says Reza Rizvi, executive vice-president of the Dalhousie Student Union (DSU). The DSU lost their bid for a student bus pass three years ago on the grounds that they lacked support from other student councils. This year a coalition comprised of members of student councils of Metro area institutions has been formed under the umbrella of SUNS and is determined to see a student bus pass introduced.

Results of the survey indicated most students live between six and eight kilometres from their

various campuses and that those who make use of the transit service do so between seven and 11 times a week.

When given a choice of a monthly pass costing \$18 and valid only in off-peak hours, or a \$20 or \$25 pass valid at any time, students expressed a preference for the \$20 pass and indicated that they would use the bus service more often if the pass was offered.

Criticisms of the transit service most frequently levelled were the high cost of its use, the overcrowding of its vehicles and the lack of late night operations.

Other complaints included the inconvenience of having to carry around change, the long distances some students have to walk in order to catch a bus and the fact that buying tickets in large numbers in Halifax, unlike in other cities such as Ottawa or Toronto, offers no discounts.

The Metropolitan Authority (MA), headed by Halifax mayor Ron Wallace, has asked the Metropolitan Transit Commission (MTC) for its recommendations

on a bus pass system. The MA did so in response to letters from city councillors and students.

Already operating at a loss of \$300,000 this year as a result of delays in the implementation of its GoTime computerized bus schedules, the MTC is hesitant to commit to any plan it feels will lose revenue.

In the meantime, the student council coalition is looking for more support in the form of letters from university presidents and endorsements from local politicians.

"All the support can be generated, but the MTC has the last word," says James LeBlanc, chair of SUNS. He says the coalition is preparing for a 'frontal attack' by planning a press conference to announce the results of the survey.

With the impending fare increase looming, the student council coalition plans to meet next week to finalize a report which will be the basis of their formal proposals to senior management and the board of the MTC.