

EWOC: not just for Star Wars anymore

by Jennifer Hoar & Steven Smith

What is EWOC, and who is involved?

EWOC is an acronym for the Educational Workers' Organizing Committee. We are all members of the

Dal community - graduate students, post-doctoral fellows, professors - who are concerned about the working conditions of educational workers.

How did EWOC get started?

In April, 1991, the Dalhousie As-

sociation of Graduate Students (DAGS) formed an ad hoc committee to investigate how teaching assistants (TAs) were treated at Dal. In February, 1992, this committee circulated a questionnaire to TAs across campus to find out how they felt about their current situation. Most people who responded were dissatisfied with their present conditions, and either wanted TAs to form a union, or wanted more information on unionization. To begin redressing the situation, the TA committee contacted the Canadian Union of Educational Workers (CUEW) and, in conjunction with other interested parties, formed EWOC.

What are EWOC's goals?

EWOC's mandate is to improve the working conditions of part-time educational workers at Dalhousie. To do this, we are trying to unite the TAs, tutors, markers, part-time (sessional) lecturers, and other educational workers (whether graduate or undergraduate) at Dal who are not presently represented by a union. Together, we hope to form a recognized local of CUEW at Dal.

Isn't this type of work just part of my education?

Yes, such work is good experience. However, this doesn't negate the fact

that you are working for University and providing a valuable teaching service. Like any other worker, you deserve to receive fair compensation for your labour, and to have reasonable working conditions.

Why CUEW?

CUEW is an independent national union which already represents 10 000 TAs, sessionals, and other educational workers in locals

to improve the working conditions at Dalhousie

in Alberta, Manitoba, and Ontario. They know the problems we are facing, and EWOC feels we can use their experience to help us address some of the problems we face here at Dal.

Is a union for educational workers really necessary here at Dal?

We feel that it is. The faculty have a union - the Dalhousie Faculty Association (DFA) - to represent their concerns. The staff have a union - the Dalhousie Staff Association (DSA) - to protect their interests. But TAs, sessionals, and others don't

have anyone to represent them. As a result, the 36 departments at Dal have 36 different policies for dealing with TAs. Sessional lecturers are paid only \$2470 for completely organizing, preparing, and presenting a course. Neither group has dental, health, or pension plans, or any policy on concerns like maternity leave, unlike members of the DFA and DSA. We feel that this is unjust, and that our working conditions should be improved. Like the faculty and staff before us, we feel a union is the best way for us to work together to improve our working conditions.

Will I have to pay union dues?

Once a union local is formed, all members of the bargaining unit will have to pay union dues. This is how a union pays for the services it provides to its members. Dues are tax-creditable, and will represent about 1-3% of the wages you receive when employed as an educational worker. When you're not employed as a TA, marker, tutor, sessional or other educational worker, you will not have to pay dues.

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To see or not to CBC

by Peter Angione

I thought we just changed our clocks back last week! If you are a regular viewer of CBC prepare yourself for some major time changes to network programming. The CBC began implementing sweeping changes in its prime time schedule on November 2, when The National/Journal package now replaced by 'CBC Prime Time News' moved to 9 pm., effectively splitting the public networks prime time grid into family and adult programming blocks.

"The most dramatic change is the move of the national news to 9 o'clock," says Bill Donovan, Regional Director CBC Maritimes. The new program is hosted by Peter Mansbridge and Pamela Wallin. The CBC is the first network in North America to do their major newscast right in the middle of prime viewer time.

"We will have an hour-long seamless program which will cover the same ground but will not have that artificial barrier between so-called news and so-called current affairs at about the one-third mark," says Donovan. He adds that if the news of the day demands it more time can be devoted to in-depth reporting and analysis of that news event.

Another change is the expansion of the supper-hour news to 90-minutes. "Here in Halifax, we will be running a program called, The 5:30, within the context of that 90-minute

block," says Donovan. The first segment will be 'The 5:30' with Frank Cameron. It will include newscasts hosted by Jim Nunn and Norma Lee MacLeod followed at 6 by 1st Edition. Within that 90-minutes the CBC promises to have news and current affairs and information segments that they now have plus a lighter view of the world at large.

The CBC hopes this additional thirty minutes will allow a major

artificial barrier between so-called news and so-called current affairs

reflection on what's happening provincially. It also will allow for greater emphasis on current affairs and long-form journalism. The downside to this is that the very popular program that Frank Cameron has hosted for many years, The Maritimes Tonight, has been cancelled.

The CBC maintains that a distinctive CBC supper-hour program will not be an exact mirror image that you would find on a private station. "We tend to be driven less by the day's news events, although we cover them selectively and thoroughly, but we are driven by what we

consider to be principal issues and we will deal with them in documentary form when it's appropriate," says Donovan. The 90-minutes gives the CBC that much more freedom to assume that kind of agenda as opposed to an endless series of very brief news stories.

"The whole purpose is to create blocks of time in the television schedule," says Donovan. He says the main objective of these changes is to provide CBC television and its audience with a totally distinctive look and feel. He adds, the view is that if they are the public broadcaster, which is heavily subsidized, they have to be distinctive.

The new schedule will form two prime-time program blocks separated by an hour of news programming. The early evening block from 7-9 will be for family entertainment such as Road Movies, Material World, and Road to Avonlea. The national news and current affairs program called CBC Prime Time News will air between 9-10 and then from 10-12 a new block of time aimed at an adult audience. That will feature things like Canadian movies, documentaries, and drama.

"Given the fact that we are publicly financed it is our view that we cannot just look like the other guys," says Donovan. If they look like just a purely commercial television operation than people will demand of us why they are paying out all of those tax dollars", adds Donovan.