

# Women making streets safe

by Ken Burke

There's still a long way to go, but women are taking steps to improve security on campus, says women's committee chair Susan McIntyre.

A new escort service has been formed on campus by women interested in safety at night. "Escort to Safety" is still in its initial stages, but so far response has been "very successful" according to McIntyre, also community affairs secretary on Student Council.

The escort system consists of several women responding to the need for a "buddy system" of group security within Dal. After receiving a call, several women will arrive wherever the caller is and walk or drive them to their destination. This significantly diffuses the threat of sexual assault present when one person is walking alone on campus.

Another idea the women's committee is looking at to alleviate concern is a phone-in method for personal safety. "If women are leaving an area," says McIntyre, "They should call home and tell someone when to expect them. If they're overdue, call the police," she said.

McIntyre said the phone-in method works as a safety check. Someone an hour or more overdue should be looked at as a potential victim of assault on campus.

Brochures on personal safety have also been printed to help advise women living in the small residences and houses around the Dalhousie area.

In this concern over acts of violence against women on campus the women's committee is not alone, says McIntyre. "We are working together with the Security Committee, as our goals lie together in many places," she said.

One of the recommendations from the security committee which is currently being pursued is a request that Halifax Transit re-route its No. 1 bus line to run past the Student Union building, Dalplex and Shirreff Hall, Dal's main women's residence. Security Committee chair Chris Hart has sent a letter with the proposal to the Transit company, but has yet to receive a response.

Aside from security, the women's committee at Dal has focussed its attention on a number of issues this



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year, including sexual harassment on the job and in the classroom at Dal. It is also working on a campaign discouraging the promotion of infant formula in Nova Scotia hospitals (instead of breast-feeding).

Together with representatives from the Dalhousie Women's Faculty Association (DWFA) and women from the Dal Staff Association (DSA), the women's committee is attempting to organize one

entrenched sexual harassment complaint procedure on campus. "We're looking at procedures from across the country," McIntyre said.

Women's committee meetings have been fairly well attended, said McIntyre, and she hoped this would increase as the school year went on. Committee meetings are held every Wednesday at 12:30 in the Student Union Building, and all members of the Dal community - male or female - are free to attend.

# Harassment at MSVU spurs action

HALIFAX (CUP) - A reported sexual assault at Mount St. Vincent University has prompted quick action by students to prevent further incidents. In fact, students may even pay for it if the university won't cough up the funds.

A woman was grabbed and verbally abused in the MSVU parking lot in the late afternoon on November 4th.

A recommendation that a referendum be held asking students to pay an additional fee to improve lighting and security on campus was brought forth at a general meeting of concerned students, faculty, staff and administration on November 12.

"The University is doing all it can do right now and can't be happy much with the cuts that are happening in government funding," said Ron Glasberg, a faculty member.

Students have regularly complained that lighting at MSVU is very poor, especially around the commonly-used wooded trails on campus. Also, from seven to ten at night there are only two people handling security, patrolling just once every hour. Afterwards, there is just one person handling security.

Michael Merrigan, executive assistant to MSVU president Margaret Fulton, answered a student council memo on security and lighting by saying that it would take time to carry out any improvements.

A women's committee set up by MSVU student council on November 9th have developed more immediate plans, some of which were brought up at the general meeting.

Among the recommendations so far are:

- the institution of a buddy system,

something which would be arranged by the students themselves.

- the institution of a 'whistle stop' program, already in successful use at the University of Chicago. Students carry whistles, and in an emergency use them in succession until someone near a phone can reach security.

- having more communication and cooperation with other Halifax universities. One woman said at the November 12 meeting that she was harassed while taking courses at Dalhousie.

- creating more awareness amongst students on why men commit acts of violence against women and where women can turn for help for both physical and emotional abuse.

This would be done through a regular lecture and the publishing of a brochure.

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