

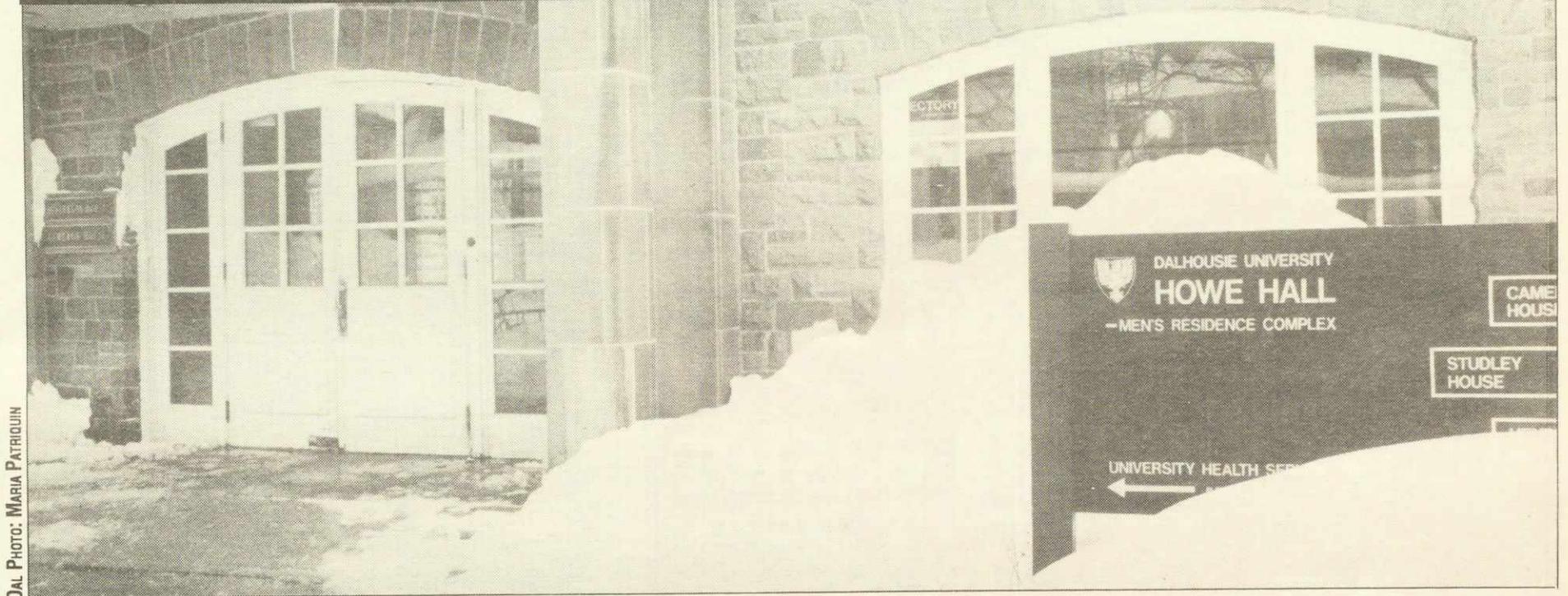
THE GAZETTE

THINK PINK

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DAL PHOTO: MARIA PATRIQUIN

Welcome to Dalhousie

BY MIRIAM KORN
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How does Dalhousie deal with criminal behavior? Poorly, according to recent complaints.

A first year student living in Shirreff Hall reported she was sexually assaulted in November of 1991. The accused, a resident of Howe Hall, was banned from all residence premises by Heather Sutherland, the Director of Housing. The accused did not appeal the decision.

In January of 1992, the accused was seen at a Howe Hall smoker. Upon hearing this the woman consulted Bonnie London, Residence Co-ordinator of Shirreff Hall. London, in turn met with Terry Gallivan, Director of Residence Life.

It came to light that Gallivan had granted visiting privileges due to a request from the accused. Gallivan however claimed these privileges excluded social events such as a smoker.

In response, the woman wrote a letter of complaint to Eric McKee, Vice President of Student Services. He, in consultation with residence administration, reinstated the full ban and sent a letter of apology.

This is the first case of sexual assault to have gone through disciplinary channels at Dalhousie.

This woman's experience is not an isolated incident. Another first year resident of Shirreff Hall reported being sexually assaulted in January following a Howe Hall dance. Afterwards the woman was taken by a Howe Hall Residence Assistant (RA) to Shirreff Hall. Her floor's RA took her to the hospital. A police report was filed.

A couple of days later, the woman

recounted her experience to London and Gallivan. They also spoke to the accused. The woman was later asked to return for further questioning.

Residence administration decided to immediately ban the accused from residence. This ruling was appealed to Sutherland within the 24 hour time limit. She upheld the decision. A final appeal was made to McKee. On Feb. 6, the original decision was sustained and the accused was to vacate residence by Feb. 9. Throughout the appeal proceedings, the accused remained in Howe Hall.

Both women were unsatisfied with the handling of their situations. The first was upset by the relaxing of the residence ban, the second frustrated with the slowness of the process.

"They seemed to have thought that granting visiting privileges excluding social events would be okay because I wouldn't see him. But isn't the idea to punish him for what he did?" said the first woman. "It was like a slap in the face."

McKee suggests that part of the reaction to campus sexual assault should be "to send a clear message with discipline."

The woman's letter to McKee argued that, "If you desire a safe campus for women... your policies and decisions should be consistent and carried through. If your policies are so weakly enforced, you will have a lower rate of report than you already do."

However, she noted that her letter did not express the full extent of her distress. "When I first heard about it I was so upset, all I wanted to do was write 'fuck off' across the [computer] screen."

The woman was disappointed that Gallivan did not write an apology

letter himself. "I felt like I had been victimized twice. After the assault, going through this bullshit made it twice as hard," she explained. "I'm sure that Terry did not mean to hurt me, but he still screwed up."

Different problems were encountered by the second woman. She felt the questions asked by Gallivan were inappropriate. "Terry asked me 'Have you ever slept with him before?' and 'Is this the first time you've ever slept with anyone?' What does that have to do with it?"

**"going through this
bullshit made it
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In Canada according to the law, a husband can be convicted of sexually assaulting his wife.

"The guy had admitted I had said no. But Terry kept asking me 'Was it clear in his mind that you said no?'"

The first woman also criticized Gallivan's handling of her situation. "He called me a 'trial balloon'."

She said that after asking Gallivan about his decision to relax the ban, he defended himself as "an amateur. I've never dealt with this type of thing before."

Gallivan would not comment on the cases.

Dalhousie students have access to two disciplinary processes in the event of sexual assault, as well as the option of taking the case to court. One option is to argue a breach of the resident's code of conduct in a complaint to residence administration. This process addresses drug possession, noise, alcohol abuse, and disruptive behaviour. Both women pursued this route.

An incident reported to an RA is taken to the appropriate Residence Coordinator. It then goes to the Associate Director of Residence Life, who reviews the case and makes the initial decision. There are two levels of appeal, the first to the Director of Housing, and the second to the Vice President of Student Services. Penalties are limited to the sphere of residence life.

The other option is the Sexual Harassment Committee, which can examine offences ranging from constant joking to physical assault. Dalhousie's procedures allow for mediation and, if necessary, a formal hearing process. No one has ever gone through this procedure to obtain discipline in the case of sexual assault.

"We don't have a policy for dealing with sexual assault. Right now other outlets have to be used. Neither of the ways available are appropriate," said Barbara Harris, President's Advisor on Women and Chair of the Sexual Harassment Committee.

There has been some change in the handling of sexual assault cases in residence since last year. During Frosh Week of 1990, a woman was found unconscious outside of Howe Hall. The woman was taken by an RA to the hospital for alcohol poisoning. She told the doctor, "I think I was raped."

The alleged perpetrator, a Frosh leader, recently admitted to an acquaintance that he had sexually assaulted this woman. He was never disciplined or reprimanded.

Shortly after the incident, the woman's RA was asked about her lack of action. She replied, "It was Frosh Week. There was a lot to do. There was a lot of girls to look after,

and I was very busy."

In this year's reported incidences, the involved RAs were said to have been supportive and helpful. "She really took good care of me. I don't know what I would have done without her," said one of the women.

There have been efforts to improve residence reaction to sexual assault. This year's RA training session included a session with a speaker from Service for Sexual Assault Victims (SSAV). The RAs from Shirreff and Howe Hall in turn held sessions with the people on their floors in both segregated and mixed groups.

"We were talking to bring things into the open," said Colin Williston, an RA from Howe Hall. "The response was positive. It was taken in seriousness. No one was brushing it off."

Administrators in housing involved in residence life are also receiving more education. Gallivan attended a conference in the United States along with Barbara Harris last September. The Department of Housing is hosting a conference on sexual assault in March.

INSIDE
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TRIANGLE DAY**