

NEWS

Singing the three dollar bookstore blues

BY MIKE MACDONALD

Every year the Dalhousie bookstore fields numerous complaints regarding its \$3 reshelving fee. Contrary to popular belief, the bookstore is not trying to penalise students through this practise, says manager Bob Bagg.

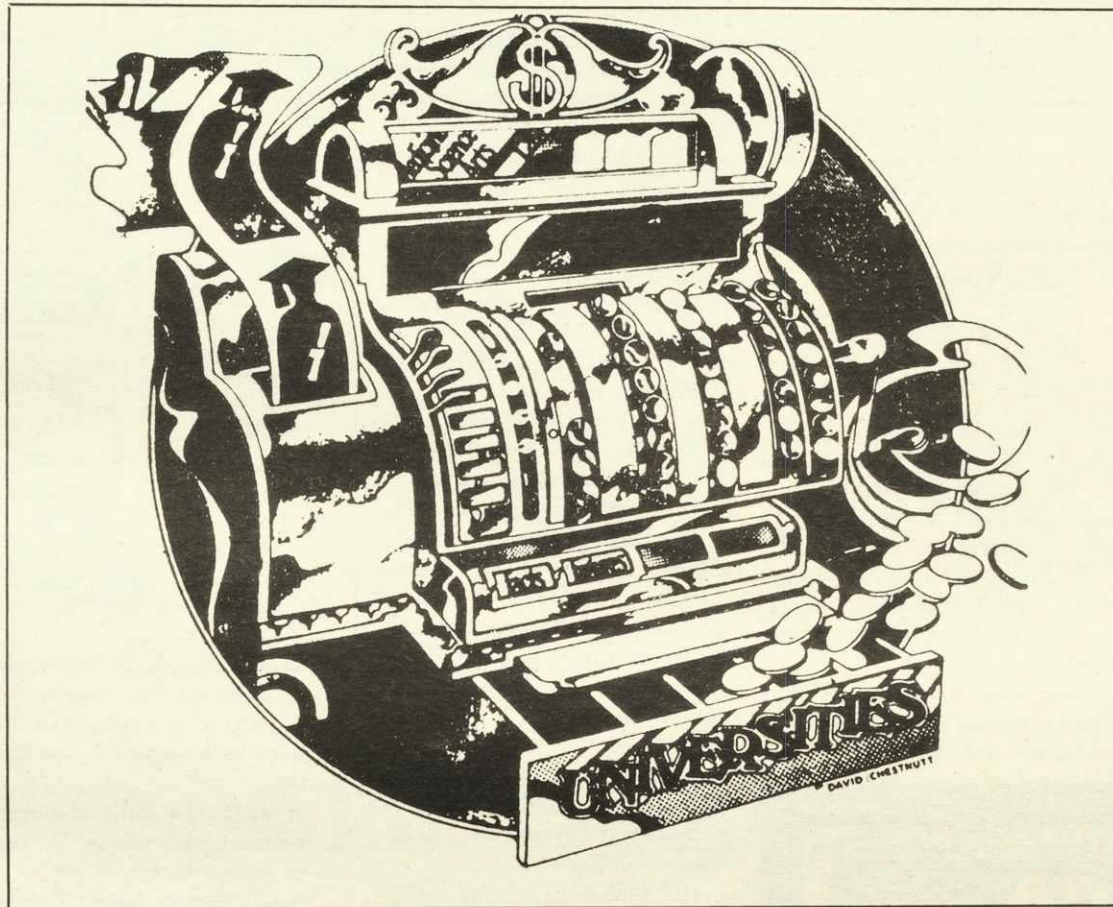
"The purpose is not to hammer students between the eyes," says Bagg, but rather it is a necessary cost which the bookstore would otherwise have to absorb.

The bookstore has handled about 2,000 returns so far this year, and they hired an extra employee just to handle the workload.

The fee, which is fifty per cent of the cost of the book up to \$3, is supposed to cover the cost of reshelving and the price of shipping the books back to the publisher.

The job of taking a book back involves more than just putting the book back on the shelf, he says. Return forms must be filled out and filed, adjustments have to be made to the sales slips and the inventory figures, and often the book needs to be repriced; the actual reshelving is the easiest part, but it is time-consuming.

Sometimes students will buy the texts before they actually get in a class. Thus the bookstore sells out and is forced to order more. By the time these books arrive, those who



could not get into the class have returned their books and the newly-ordered texts must be sent back. In other words, students who can not even get into the classes they need have to pay \$3 for the privilege.

The bookstore tries to be fair, says Bagg: "We will not penalise

students who have a good reason to return the books."

If, for example, a professor suddenly decides that a book is no longer needed for a course, then the bookstore will take the book back with no return fee charged.

However, if a student finds a book cheaper at the second-hand bookstore, and decides to return the bookstore-bought book, then the fee will be charged. Similarly, if the student drops out of a class and return the books, the fee will also be applied.

Exceptions are often made to the rules. "If someone brings back eight novels at \$10 each, we're not going to charge them \$30," says Bagg.

Shrink-wrapped items are a different story all together. The bookstore says they are not in favour of books coming from the publisher wrapped.

Publishers insist on the wrapping because often the books contain discs or study guides. Bagg feels that this excuse "...is a crock in most cases."

Once one person has the disc, it can be copied, and the discs probably cost the publisher no more than a couple of dollars anyway. Basically, shrink-wrapping is a way to get students to pay more, by including something, such as a study guide, which the student may not normally buy. The publishers will not accept wrapped items which have become unwrapped, and therefore the bookstore cannot take these books back.

Dalhousie bookstore has a relatively lenient return policy compared to many Canadian university bookstores. For example, most bookstores give students one week to return books, after that the students are out of luck.

The Dal bookstore allows students to return books right up to the deadline for withdrawal from classes on November 25, as long as the student has a signed withdrawal form.

Bagg has a few suggestions for students wishing to avoid the return fee. Students should go to class first and make sure that the books are still required by the professor. Also they should check the shelf cards in the bookstore closely to make sure they are buying the proper book for their section, and that the book is required. Finally, students should go to their professors and ask that they not use shrink-wrapped books for their classes, since it is the faculty who actually order the book.

The best case scenario still focuses on students finding texts they need in the many used bookstores around the city.

Sodales debaters win Atlantic championships

BY JOHN ATCHISON

Veteran Sodales debaters Stephen Pitel and Laura Stewart captured the 1991 Atlantic debating Championship with a convincing win over Memorial University in the final round. The victory capped an undefeated weekend for the Dalhousie team, which rolled off a 7-0 record. Sodales has now won four straight Atlantic Championships since 1988.

The tournament was hosted by the University of New Brunswick in Fredericton during the weekend of October 25-27. Twenty-six teams from eight universities across the region competed in six rounds of debate. Dalhousie was represented by seven teams, all of which placed in the top eight. Only Memorial broke the Sodales' stranglehold on the top positions.

Sodales fielded a number of strong teams. First-year law students Tim Costigan and John LeBlanc reached the semi-finals before faltering, as did second-year law student Nancy Palardy and third-year history student Sandy Cross. The sciences were also well

represented, as David MacFarlane, Sudanna MacDonald, Jennifer Harnum, and Bob Sandhu (medicine) all reached the quarter-finals before losing.

The champions took few risks, proposing resolutions grounded in common sense and logic. They debated the merits of the American-style judicial confirmation hearings, the importance of a valid "rape-shield" law, and the greater use of referenda on key issues in conjunction with federal and provincial elections. In the final, they appointed provincial judges in the Atlantic provinces.

For the third straight year, Stephen Pitel was the top individual debater at the tournament. He was closely followed by Laura Stewart, who also won the public speaking competition. Second in public speaking was Nancy Palardy. Rounding out the Sodales award sweep was Tim Costigan, who was the top novice debater.

Sodales now sets its sights on the 1992 World Championships, which will be held in Dublin next January. Dalhousie placed second in the 1991 Worlds in Toronto.

Carleton cries over ranking

BY SUJATA DEY

OTTAWA (CUP)—Carleton University's administration says the university gave incorrect information to *Maclean's* magazine for its recent "Rating the Universities" article.

Calling the questions posed by *Maclean's* "ambiguous", President Robin Farquhar said the university did not agree with the ranking of universities. Carleton was ranked 44 out of 46.

"When we were asked to provide some information, we were not informed by the magazine of an intention to publish a 'ranking' of Canadian universities," Farquhar said, in a recent memo. "Had we been, we probably would not have participated. We certainly won't participate in such a farcical exercise again."

The university submitted the wrong number of full-time arts and science faculty, percentage of PhDs among full-time arts and science

faculty, total value of research grants and the total value of all undergraduate scholarships and bursaries, according to the memo.

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for the
screw-up**

In one case, the university submitted a figure of \$362,296 for the total value of undergraduate scholarships while the administration maintains the actual figure is \$1,022,000.

"It was an administrative screw-up not in the original information, but at the verification stage."

Carleton had submitted the most recent figures where most universities had submitted 1990-91 statistics.

Farquhar said the university has contacted *Maclean's* and is waiting to find out the rating based on the new information.

Diane Brady, *Maclean's* assistant-editor, blamed Carleton for the screw-up.

"We sent out a verification sheet to the university. It is unfortunate that Carleton supplied the wrong information," Brady said. "The nature of journalism is that you have to trust your sources."

Farquhar called for an aggressive approach to deal with the article.

"What is required now is a strong and skilful 'counter-offensive' that will enable us to recover from this damage as quickly as possible and perhaps even to gain some further ground in terms of the public's (and our own) perception of Carleton's distinctive strengths."