

# Single mums protest housing shortage

By ELIZABETH DONOVAN

**“W**e are living on borrowed time,” says Jean, mother of two.

More than 50 women and children marched from City Hall to Province House via Barrington and Spring Garden, banging pots and pans to ensure their message was heard for more affordable housing and legislation to stop landlords from discriminating against women from emergency shelters.

Heather Schneider, spokesperson for the group, says women have been forced to leave their homes because they have been beaten and abused or the rents have been raised beyond amounts single women can afford.

“Many of us have had to get extensions in these temporary shelters and we’ve overstayed our welcome,” says one woman protesting.

The demonstration was coordinated by women from Bryony House, Adsum House, Collin House and Second Stage in response to the desperate housing crisis in Halifax.

Halifax Housing authorities confirm the lack of low-income, non-profit housing available in Halifax. The waiting list for two-bedroom units is between 700 and 800 people.

These mothers say the cost of housing is often out of reach for single mothers receiving irregular maintenance payments or social assistance.

Adding to the difficulty of scarce housing, these women think they have been wrongly stigmatized by landlords.

“We are demanding legislation to protect us from discrimination from landlords,” says Schneider.

They say landlords can get around the “source of income” amendment to the Human Rights Act.

In 1982, the Human Rights Commission says if there is discrimination single mothers have a right to report it.

Maureen MacDonald, Dal legal aid worker, says it’s not that easy.

“There are too many loopholes in the current legislation. A landlord can set an income level on a building of \$1,400 a month,” says MacDonald.

MacDonald says people are reluctant to go to the Human Rights Commission. “A single mother’s immediate concern is to get a place to live,” says MacDonald.

Before the women marched, letters were sent to Premier John Buchanan, Edmund Morris, Social Service minister and Dr. Mike Lafin, minister of Housing, NDP and Liberal provincial party leaders.

“Alexa McDonough responded first, giving full support to the women organizing the march,” says one woman from Bryony House.

One woman described the letters from the government as passing the buck. “Buchanan referred us to Morris, Morris referred us to Laf-

fin, and we still have not received a reply from him.”

MacDonald says the women did a good job of organizing the protest.

“It was significant because people who were experiencing the housing crisis organized it. If they don’t get results they’ll be back,” says MacDonald.

“I receive \$658 a month from social assistance. My rent was \$424. Take away heat and lights, transportation, laundry and expenses—this leaves me only \$100 a month for groceries for me and my two kids.”

The abject futility of the search for housing forces many of these women to return with their children to the emergency shelters.

“One woman I know looked at 409 places and still could not find a place to live. She is now living at Second Stage,” says one single woman.

Bryony House statistics illustrate the difficulties women from emergency shelters have trying to find permanent homes.

Since January of 1984 there have been 196 families that have stayed at Bryony House. Only 22 families found permanent housing and only one got into public housing. □



Illustration: Kimberley Whitchurch, Dal Gazette

## Books to burn in Alberta

CALGARY (CUP)—Although nearly 10 per cent of Alberta’s public school books have been singled out for their sexist or racist content, a provincial government official says they won’t be removed from circulation immediately.

“It will take some time for the natural replacement cycle to elimi-

nate the resources,” says Linda Youell, an Alberta education department official.

An Alberta education audit found almost 10 per cent of books and resources do not have “an acceptable level of tolerance and understanding.”

Several elementary grade history

and social sciences texts discriminate against native people, the report said. Both the student and teacher editions of the grade five music text *Exploring Music* are sexist and have an American bias, and other books have a strong male orientation, according to the report.

Provincial education minister Dave King says he is encouraged by the study’s results.

“I am satisfied that Alberta Education procedures for developing new curricula and selecting support materials have proven successful,” he said.

The government is notifying teachers about the books’ drawbacks and they are expected to correct them while teaching. □

## Visiting Soviet peace delegates leave questions unanswered

By GILLIAN STRANGE

**A** delegation of Soviet scholars visiting universities in Atlantic Canada met with mixed reaction from faculty and students at Dalhousie.

“The delegates treated this conference as an exercise in public relations and are too rigid in their ways, always wanting to control things,” said Russian history professor Norman Pereira.

The three Soviet delegates visiting Dalhousie from Oct. 6 - Nov. 4 brought with them messages about peace and education from the USSR.

Vadim Zhdanovich, head of the USA-USSR Friendship Association, met with the Canadian Peace group, Veterans for Multilateral Disarmament, to discuss peace and disarmament issues.

“Your prime minister MacKenzie King said at the end of World War II that Canada and the Soviet Union had become allies,” said Zhdanovich. “Shouldn’t we work together to keep it that way?”

Later, in an interview in Russian, Zhdanovich talked more freely about his own commitment to the Soviet peace movement.

“I became interested in international relations studying at the Institute for Foreign Languages in Moscow,” said Zhdanovich. “I contribute to the Soviet Peace fund by giving some of my work time for

free, as do 70 million of us.”

Conflict arose, though, when the Soviet scholars were questioned about the more touchy issue of civil rights in their home country.

“The only restriction is the price,” said Zhdanovich when asked about freedom of movement regulations in the Soviet Union. “We question closely how a Soviet citizen could get foreign currency and think that the money could be better spent in Russia.”

Despite these disagreements some members of the Dalhousie faculty still saw the visit as a useful exercise in communication.

Physiology professor Dr. Josenhans says the conference was helpful in improving relations between the countries.

“Canada cannot contribute too much to superpower relations because we’re too small in world stature,” said Josenhans.

Delegates also faced criticism about the monolithic nature of the official Soviet peace movement.

“There is room for all creeds and nationalities in the Soviet Peace committee and its various branches,” said Dr. Pivovarov. “Soviet law cannot accommodate any other kind of group.”

As well, Dalhousie professor of Russian Yuri Glasov questioned the Soviet scholars about the missing Soviet scientist Andrei Sakharov. They replied by saying that Sakharov was only a minor figure among the scientific community there. □

## Waterloo students evicted

WATERLOO (CUP)—Seven University of Waterloo students are suing their landlord for moving expenses and last month’s rent after he sold the house they were renting without informing them.

Kathleen Homer, one of the seven students, said when they moved in, they asked landlord Dudley Ruddock if he planned to sell the house. He denied it, although there was a “For Sale” sign on the front lawn.

Homer said the landlord sold the

house on Sept. 1, but he did not tell the students until Oct. 12. He said they had two weeks to leave.

The students had a verbal agreement with the landlord to rent, but not to lease, Homer said. They later learned their agreement made them roomers, not tenants, and as such they no protection of accommodation as outlined in Landlord/Tenant Act.

Meanwhile, the students are staying with friends and are searching for other accommodation. □

## Rubella

A rubella (German measles) screening clinic will be held on Nov. 19, 1984 from 5-7 p.m. in the Newcombe 1 Lounge in Shirreff Hall. The clinic is organized annually by students in a fourth-year health education class in cooperation with University Health Services.

The purpose of the clinic is to determine the individual’s immune status against rubella. Because of the danger posed by rubella to the developing fetus during pregnancy, it is essential that all women acquire immunity to the disease. The screening clinic is aimed at first year Shirreff Hall residents, however, all Dalhousie women are welcome.

For more details an information session will be held on Nov. 14 from 6-7 p.m., also in the Newcombe 1 Lounge, Shirreff Hall. □