

CROSSCANADA

Vaccine costs \$35 at Carleton

OTTAWA (CUP) — Carleton University's student council is reacting angrily to the Ottawa health department's decision to limit free vaccinations against the meningococcal virus to students under 19 years of age.

About 250,000 children and teenagers in Ottawa and surrounding areas will be vaccinated, and the health department will be immunizing students on Carleton's campus. But students over the age of 19 must get their vaccine at the university's health service for \$35.

Student council president Samantha Sheen said all students should be inoculated if they want to be, regardless of age.

But David Pfeiffer, Carleton health services director, said the average university student is at "very low risk."

"The vast majority of the general population is immune, or are able to fight it off with their natural immune system without any serious sickness. There's a minority group that will not be able to fight it off."

The virus is transmitted through direct contact with another person such as kissing, and sharing cigarettes or drinks. Symptoms include a high fever, headache, a purplish rash and swollen throat glands.

Students convicted of fraud

TORONTO (CUP) — Ontario continues to prosecute students who have bilked the government's student assistance plan.

Joscelyn Scanes-Astin, a provincial student aid investigator, said there are many ways in which students cheat on their Ontario Student Assistance Program applications.

One student faked a marriage certificate to escape assessing his parents' income, and a parent listed "Marcie" as a dependent and sibling to the applicant. Marcie turned out to be the family dog.

Deanne Fisher, a liaison officer for the University of Toronto's part-time student association, said media reports on loan fraud can be misleading.

"The public and the media focus on obscure cases," Fisher said. "With any program set up there's going to be a small number of cases of fraud. If fraud is on the increase, it's because OSAP is so limited and students are forced into it."

When students are charged and convicted of fraud, they must repay the loan and become ineligible for future loans from the provincial and federal governments.

Paper refuses to apologize

ST. JOHN'S (CUP) — A Reform Party of Canada member is pushing the student newspaper at Sir Wilfred Grenfell College to apologize for an article about the party entitled "7 Up, Good Head, and Neo-Fascism."

Agnes Fitzpatrick's lawyer has sent a letter to the college's board of directors, demanding an apology from the author, Queue and the college.

Lynn Cole said her client "found [the article] to be inaccurate in its description of the party, and offensive in its vulgarity."

Cole said the use of the term "neo-fascism" in the headline was "inaccurate and its connotations offensive."

The article also made a number of factual errors about statements by Fitzpatrick, and it accused the party of being anti-Newfoundland and anti-French, Cole said.

The staff has refused to apologize and has offered the party an opportunity to respond in the paper.

Date rape trials criticized

TORONTO (CUP) — In the wake of a December acquittal in one of Canada's first campus date rape trials, women's groups say universities must take far stronger action.

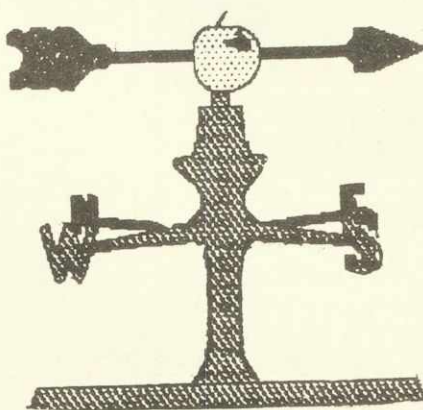
Robert Van Oostrom, a graduate of Queen's University, was charged last fall with four counts of sexual assault against three women between 1987 and 1989. Van Oostrom was a Queen's engineering student at the time, and all the complainants were Queen's students.

Women in Kingston staged protests after the decision, which the crown is appealing. The crown attorney has since been criticized for saying the judge in the case refused to recognize the seriousness of date rape.

Women's groups said the decision could make it even harder for women who had been raped by an acquaintance to go to the police.

"Women aren't going to come forward if they think their trials are just going to be thrown out, anyway," said a member of the Queen's Women's Centre.

NEWS



Nova Scotia PIRG

Be a part of the action

Our mail arrives. There are letters addressed to PRIG c/o Dalhousie University, P.E.R.K. at Dal., Dalhousie PRING, Attention: Mr. Dale Pirg... Ah, the education about our catchy acronym continues.

We are Nova Scotia PIRG, the Public Interest Research Group at Dalhousie University. Like the letters arriving in our SUB mail box, Dalhousie students are just beginning to become aware of what the PIRG really is.

Although PIRG began at Dalhousie through a student referendum in 1989 and officially opened its office in September 1990, the PIRG concept has been around since Ralph Nader's consumer advocacy movement of the early 1970s. Public Interest Research Groups exist across Canada and the United States. PIRGs have been instrumental in motivating environmental and social justice research and action on recycling, toxic waste disposal, transportation, affordable housing, violence against women, and energy conservation. Like its elder counterparts, Nova Scotia PIRG is a student funded, student directed research organization which aims to put the skills, talents and knowledge of students to work for the public interest.

Public Interest Research. Another catchy phrase. But what is it? The goal of public interest research is to make information available to the general public; information which enables the public to make informed decisions on issues, understand and possibly influence decisions made by others on their behalf.

The PIRG Board of Directors is comprised of nine Dalhousie students who determine policy, budget priorities and organizational structure. (A new board will be elected in March. Nominations are open to all Dalhousie students.) PIRG employs a part-time coordinator to act as a liaison between students and the Board of Directors. This allows a consistent PIRG presence on campus during the summer and other student holidays. Beyond this administrative structure, PIRG's

primary energy source is provided by volunteer students and community members.

What has PIRG been working on in 1991-92?

- **Composting Workshop, February 4:** The Campus Environmental Action Group and PIRG will be educating students about the ins and outs of apartment and small space composting.

- **Call to Research Campaign:** PIRG is collecting student papers on local waste management in Nova Scotia, four of which will be

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published in the first edition of the PIRG journal *Weatherwane*, Summer 1992.

- **The Incineration Debate in Metro:** With the Ecology Action Centre and the Medical Society of Nova Scotia, PIRG's Waste Management Alternatives working group opposes the building an incinerator as a solution for Metro's waste management problems. A newsletter on waste management alternatives is scheduled to be printed in February.

- **Lecture:** Dr. Paul Connett, professor of Chemistry at St. Lawrence University, New York, (characterized by Ralph Nader as the "only person I know who can make waste interesting") spoke to over 200 people at Dalhousie in October about the health, environmental and financial hazards of incineration.

- **The Supermarket Tour** informed students and community members of the food issues lurking in grocery aisles. What can be done about excess packaging? Why is

fresh produce dominated by United States imports? What additives preserve our humble loaf of bread for weeks on end? were a few of the questions posed by the tour. The tour was aired on CBC's Maritime Noon, October 15, World Food Day.

- **Guide Book:** The Nova Scotian edition of the *Single Mother's Survival Guide* by Master's student Brenda Thompson has been enthusiastically received across the province. It has served as an example for other PIRGs to create their own province-specific guide for women surviving with children on a low income. 2,000 copies have been distributed.

- **Fact Sheet:** "Pesticides and Christmas Trees" focuses on the lack of regulations surrounding pesticide use in the Christmas tree industry in Nova Scotia, December 1991.

- **Fact Sheet:** "Endangered Species of Nova Scotia", November 1991

- **Submission:** *Citizen's Inquiry into Peace and Security*, October 1991

- **Working Groups:** A student group on homelessness in Nova Scotia and an animal rights/research group are active and looking for interested members.

- **Project Grants:** The Black Students' Association, CKDU, *Perspective* magazine collective, the Ecology Action Centre, Dal Women's group and Metro Peace Action Network have benefited from one-time project grants.

Full-time students at Dalhousie are members of Nova Scotia PIRG and contribute two dollars per term to PIRG's work through student union fees. It is PIRG's policy to make this refundable for students who disagree with the directives of Nova Scotia PIRG. A refund period will be held, working days, 10:00 a.m. - 12:00 p.m. Jan. 30 - Feb. 21. Better yet, work with Nova Scotia PIRG and learn who and what's behind that catchy acronym. Projects? Questions? Want to volunteer? Contact the PIRG office at 494-6662, or visit Room 310, Dalhousie Student Union Building.