

UNB stages date rape awareness campaign

Press Release

The escalating incidents of violence aimed at women has forced the UNB Student Women's Committee to organize the first - ever Date Rape Awareness Campaign at the University of New Brunswick.

The campaign is aimed at the statistics on rape, the way certain assaults cases have been handled by the local police force, and the lack of services for women on campus. The committee feels that their concerns of a backlash

against women were proven real by the recent Supreme Court decision that struck down a law designed to protect rape victims from further abuse by defense lawyers. The law prevented defense lawyers from questioning women about their sexual past.

"The striking down of this law has great impact on date rape. It takes us right back to the old stereotype that if you're not a certified virgin living at home with your parents and were attacked on the way to church,

then you don't have a hope in hell of finding justice within our legal system," says spokesperson Pat Smyth.

This year one in four women will be sexually assaulted and one in 10 men will be sexually assaulted - most often by another man. Eighty-four percent will know their attackers, and 57 percent of the rapes will happen on dates.

The average age when a rape occurs for both men and women (either as victims or rapists) is 18 and a half years old.

"The first six weeks of school are the most dangerous because of the drinking and partying. That's when the most sexual assaults occur, though it is a year-round problem," says Smyth. "Also most mature students don't participate in frosh week with the younger students so the campaign also has to address their needs and schedule."

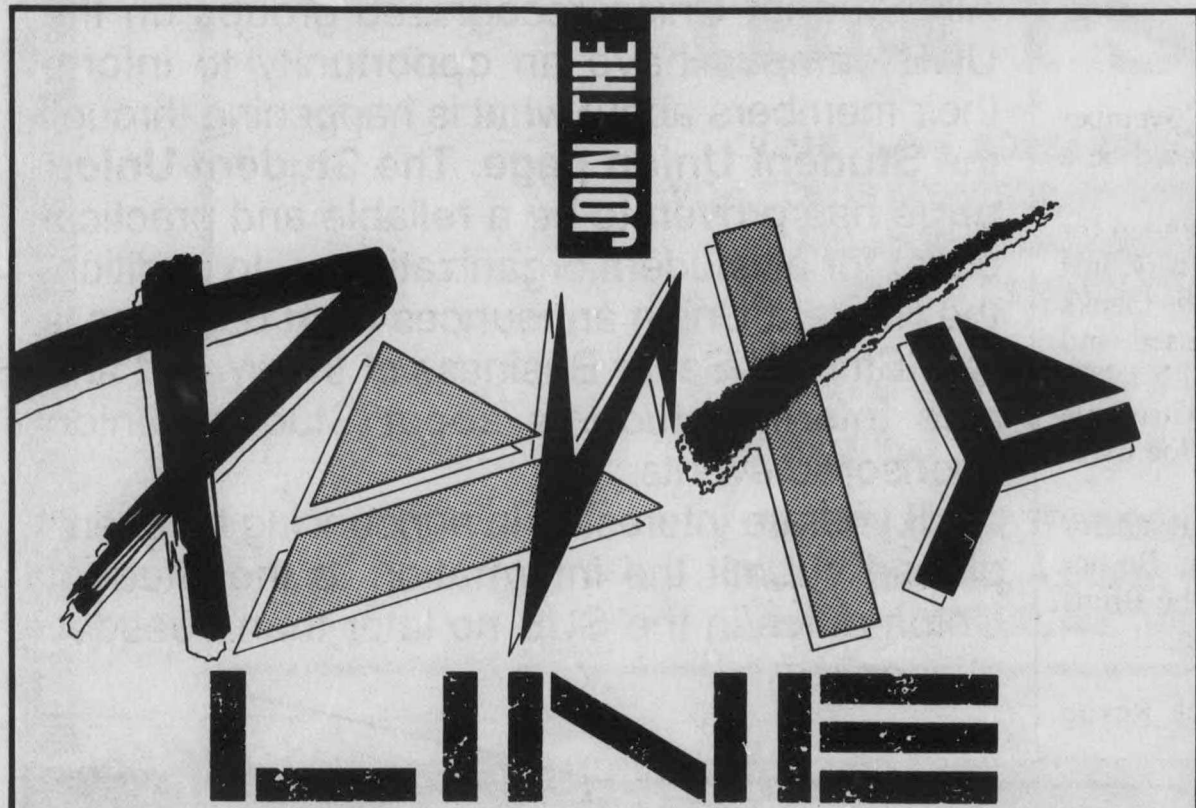
The campaign includes face-to-face awareness sessions with the frosh, two evening sessions open to all students and the public - one for men and the other for women. A pamphlet has also been written and put into Frosh kits. The campaign will officially end September 20 with the annual national Take Back the Night women's march.

The campaign will incorporate the slogan "No Means No" and

will address the many myths and stereotypes surrounding rape.

"We still have the idea that rape occurs when some seedy character jumps out of a dark alley, and that if you're not beaten half to death then it wasn't really all the traumatic. But statistics show that most people know their attackers and that date or acquaintance rape is, in some ways, even more devastating because it shatters any trust in the known as well as the unknown."

The Date Rape Awareness Campaign is being organized by the UNB Student Women's Committee in conjunction with the Fredericton Rape Crisis center and the UNB Frosh Orientation Committee with funding from the UNB Student Council.



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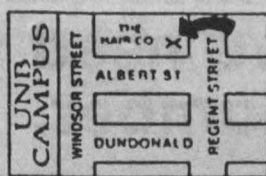
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