

Groups pan "gay-bashing" conference

by Padraic Brake

HALIFAX (CUP) — Lesbian and gay groups have condemned a

conference for people "desiring freedom from homosexuality" as homophobic. Two Halifax religious groups,

the Inter-Varsity Christian Fellowship and the New Beginnings Ministry, are hosting the conference "Homosexuality and the Church" January 20 at the World Trade and Convention Centre beginning at 9 am.

Robert Allen, a representative of the Persons With AIDS Coalition, said New Beginnings' message is similar to holocaust revisionist Jim Keegstra.

"I find it disturbing that such a group even exists, and that they provide this type of service said. "It's based on the premise that homosexuality is some kind of sin."

"The bible is used against many groups including women, blacks in South Africa, and lesbians and gays," he said. "The real illness is the pathology of homophobia."

A promotional pamphlet for the conference describes New Beginnings member and conference speaker Pat Allen as "released from homosexuality."

Another speaker, Walter Schlech, will be giving a seminar on "the psychological and spiritual implications for people with

AIDS," said conference organizer Barrett Horne.

The pamphlet says Schelch is a "committed Christian and elder at the First Congregational Church of Halifax."

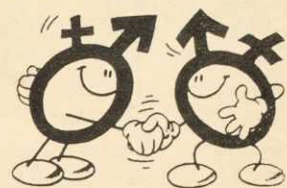
The FC Church left the United Church after it decided to allow congregations to elect lesbian or gay ministers.

"Schlech's seminar is based on the whole idea of AIDS being God's wrath on gays," said Allen.

Schlech is also a professor of Medicine at Dalhousie University and sits on the federal government's National Advisory Council on AIDS.

The original site of the conference was St. Paul's Anglican Church but was moved, according to the conference organizers because "the church hall was not big enough to accommodate the numbers of people planning to attend."

Peter Wood, a member of the PWAC, said that he "called Bishop Peter and told him that it appears that the Church is being seen as supporting this conference by allowing it to use its facilities."



graphic/McGill Daily

"I would not be surprised if they were forced to find another location," said Wood.

A minister with Dalhousie's Christian ministry described the conference as a gay-bashing event.

A coalition of lesbian and gay groups in Halifax are planning to attend the conference "to participate constructively, but we may have a few differences," said Allen.

Fun ice...

Winter carnival takes place from Thursday, January 18th, through Sunday, January 21st. And this year, there's a difference. Chairperson Donna Hachey says that in previous years, fierce competition among the residences and a few societies was the thing, and it killed a lot of the fun for everyone involved. And it left a lot of other people out in the cold. Hachey knows about the need for fun in our lives and the importance of breaking down barriers to participation. A recent graduate of the Recreation Degree program, her expertise extends beyond administration to planning events "that are fun for everyone involved — to get everyone involved."

The theme "Breaking the Ice" signifies breaking down barriers on campus. Barriers between societies that tend to compete so ferociously (Hachey's organizing committee is comprised of members of various societies, all working together to make carnival a terrific event), and between the younger and non-drinking students at Dal and those who think of drinking as their favourite form of recreation. Events are geared to everyone — no events take place at licensed bars, and the Polar Cruise beer garden party featuring the Aviators offers non-alcoholic drinks for those who want them.

The fun starts at noon on Thursday. Some of the events include Chilly Checkers, played with human checkers. Watch for double jumps and "crown me's. Shake & Bake is a food tasters' contest, and the foods are — unusual. The traditional ice sculpture breaks with tradition this year. It's moved indoors, and castles will be built from playing cards. (So now you don't hold

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MAUREEN McTEER

Author, Columnist & Lawyer



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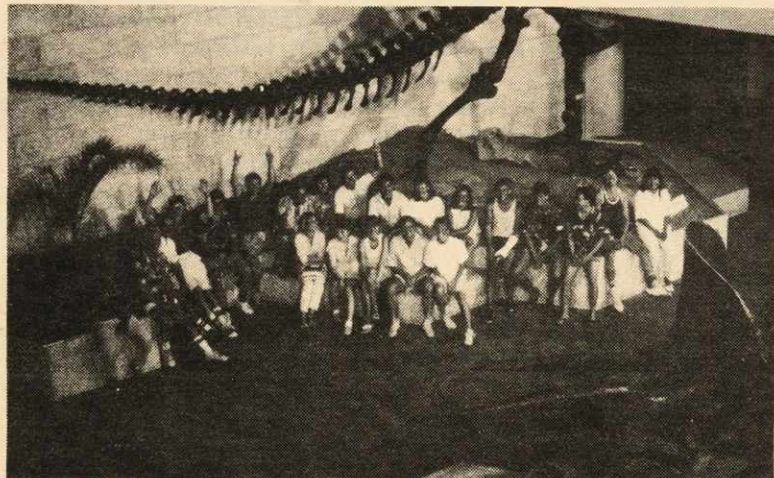
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