

MAPUS newsletter sparks debate

Letter questions value of Student Union

MAPUS (the organization for mature and part-time university students) recently sent a newsletter to all MAPUS members, upsetting a number of people. MAPUS president Gail MacDonald says the letter, which questions SU funding, was taken out of context. MacDonald feels that things were blown out of proportion. She said that the letter was meant to reach the silent majority of Mapus members. "We need to know what they want to do with MAPUS...we want to reach more people...It is a small number of people who are running Mapus now, we need to know how others feel." She wants to provide suggestions to the members to get some feedback from them on what to do with MAPUS.

Others took offence to this letter. S.U. president Todd King saw the letter as MAPUS wanting mature full-time students' fees going to MAPUS instead of the S.U. because, MAPUS feels, they can serve this section of the student population better than the S.U. can.

But can they? CFS (Canadian Federation of Students) lobbies the federal and provincial governments on behalf of all students in Canada and is paid for through our S.U. fees. When asked, Gail MacDonald didn't know much about CFS and couldn't say whether or not MAPUS could represent mature and part-time students better than CFS does.

MacDonald did say, though, that MAPUS lobbied the provincial government last year for better student loan funding, but she does not feel that they will get anywhere with lobbying because "it's all decided federally anyway."

One member of the "silent majority" in MAPUS was upset with how MAPUS is run. "I am very offended and very disappointed in MAPUS as an organization. I would suggest to MAPUS that it is their own organization that is failing the needs of mature students on this campus."

No one from MAPUS represented mature and part-time students at the candidates' forum during the federal election campaign, and no one has filled the MAPUS chair at any of the Senate meetings this year.

This raises some questions as to what MAPUS is actually doing, and how their members' money is being spent.

The MAPUS newsletter suggested that some students may prefer to have their money go towards a better medical plan "which would cover you [sic] or your family's dental or eye care" instead of the X-Press. Yet, the X-Press

only costs each student around \$9 per year. An improved medical plan would cost students an additional \$128 per year, so the X-Press's budget would not cover the additional cost. Interestingly, the current medical plan is also another benefit that mature full-time students receive from being part of CFS.

MacDonald says she feels badly that, as a mature, full-time student, she doesn't pay for MAPUS, although she uses it. "I feel like a freeloader, that is why I work on the executive...I'd like to reach the part-timers who do pay for MAPUS [but don't use it]". She also

feels that MAPUS and the S.U. can make things better for mature students. The S.U. is looking for a solution. They voted last Sunday night to form a committee looking into the needs of mature and part-time students, and how these needs should be addressed.

Those who are unhappy with the present situation can pass their concerns on to MAPUS or the S.U. There will be a meeting this Friday in the MAPUS lounge, and all are welcome to voice their concerns. The X-Press also remains ready to serve as a forum for these issues.

REBECCA MOORE

PEI group battles AIDS

AIDS PEI organizes fundraiser

AIDS PEI is an organization that provides education on AIDS and HIV for the province. They also help AIDS victims and HIV-positive people build a support system through counselling; and, they provide some financial assistance for victims to help pay for the expensive and numerous drugs that they must take.

There are 23 HIV positive people on the Island, and eight of those people have developed AIDS. This may seem a small percentage, but these are only the people who have been tested, and the population on the Island is only about 130,000.

So what? You may say this article doesn't apply to me. I don't have AIDS and I'm not HIV positive. Maybe not, but do you really know how you can contract HIV? And when was the last time you or your partners wore protection when you had sex?

If you have any questions at all about HIV and AIDS, you can pick up a brochure or book available at the AIDS PEI office, 199 Grafton Street.

If you want an information session for a group, AIDS PEI can give one. They have videos and books, but they need to know who wants the information before they can provide it, so give them a call.

AIDS PEI needs our help to be able to continue their work in our communities. The executive director is an M.D. from Jamaica, and the administrative assistant is a social worker, but they depend a great deal on trained volun-

teers.

The organization also needs money. (Surprise, surprise) This month they have a fundraising drive on. They are having a 12 days of Christmas draw. When you buy one \$5 ticket you are eligible to win one of the 12 packages, one drawn each day, worth over \$700. Each package includes weekend getaways, clothing, hair cuts, Body Shop products, gift certificates and the list goes on.

Tickets are available at the following locations:

CHARLOTTETOWN LOCATIONS: Black Forest Cafe, Bookmark, Charlottetown Farmer's Market, Charlottetown Flea Market, Charlottetown Mall, Confederation Court Mall, Debonair Hairstyles, Off Broadway Cafe, Off the Wall Video, Picasso's, Roger's Hardware, Root Cellar, Shopper's Drug Mart, Southport Pharmasave

OTHER ISLAND LOCATIONS: Saunders Variety, Alberton; South Shore Pharmacy, Crapaud/Borden; A&M Coffee Shoppe, Georgetown; Royal Canadian Legion, North Rustico; Eugene's General Store, Tignish; Crockett's Jewellers, Summerside; Waugh's Quik Mart, Summerside.

If you'd like to volunteer, call 566-AIDS (2437)

Look for more information in the next issue on World AIDS day- December 1.

REBECCA MOORE