

Wife assault cases need more priority

"We know how many television sets there are in New Brunswick but we don't have statistics on the number of wife assault cases", said Jeanne d'Arc Gaudet, Chairperson of the New Brunswick Advisory Council on the Status of Women, in releasing a study on male violence in relationships.

"Statistics are a first step to dealing with an issue. We should give wife assault enough priority to keep a count of the cases reported and the charges laid. Recommendations to that effect were made to the government 10 years ago. We urge the government to order all police forces in the province to compile these statistics," said Ms. Gaudet.

"What statistics do exist show that few charges are laid in cases of wife assault. The Advisory Council calls on the Solicitor General to issue a clear directive to all police forces in the province to lay assault charges in all cases where they have reason to believe that an assault did occur, just like they do in cases of serious assault between strangers", said Ms. Gaudet.

The only statistics available from the Department of Justice are the number of charges laid in cases of assault between partners, but these are clearly inaccurate, according to the report, "Male Violence in Re-

lationships and the Justice System".

The official Department of Justice count of charges laid is 47 for all of New Brunswick in 1988. However, the RCMP alone report laying 165 such charges.

The Advisory Council also asked each police force in New Brunswick to provide statistics. The RCMP and about half of the municipal forces complied. A total of 973 domestic dispute calls had been answered by those forces who replied. But the statistics are inconsistent.

"How else to explain that in Moncton, population 54,000, police report they received 32 calls in 1988, while in Edmundston, population 11,000, police answered 119 calls? Does Edmundston really have 20 times the level of violence of Moncton?", asked Ms. Gaudet.

"Our research also studied the practices and attitudes of interveners, such as police and prosecutors", said Ms. Gaudet. "We found that the attitude of some of the police chiefs and police officers in New Brunswick were clearly part of the problem that assaulted women face. Some police representatives told us these were "garbage calls"; some said women like to be beaten. Some police officers and victim services representatives discourage victims from laying

charges. Some judges excused the offender too readily by talking of his being under stress, for example."

A recent survey of some assaulted women in Fredericton showed that only one in three report that the police played a positive role when she called for help.

"Our research demonstrates that there are gaps in the application of the Criminal Code in cases of male violence in relationships. A law can help in the prevention of crime to the extent that potential criminals are certain of arrest and of appropriate penalty. The law on impaired driving

has shown to what extent enforcement of a law can be effective in preventing criminal behaviour. The same could be done for wife assault."

The Advisory Council recommends that an information campaign be organized to increase public awareness that violence in relationships is a crime and to promote equality between the sexes.

Training sessions for police and other interveners were also called for in order to end the tendency to minimize the seriousness of the crime and to provide a uniform and fair response to these calls.

The Advisory Council also

recommended that sentences imposed on wife assaulters reflect the seriousness of the assault and include, whenever possible, mandatory counselling; and that the provincial government take an active role in the fight against sexism and sexual discrimination. Equity programs should be adopted to create equality between the sexes.

The Advisory Council research has been presented to the Premier and to the ministers concerned with the issue, the Solicitor General, Health and Community Services and Justice.

International cuisine sample

by Brunswickan Staff
writer

On a chilly Friday night last week a number of students, faculty, and members of the Fredericton community were treated to a variety of dishes from all over the world. The Board of International Students hosted a function billed as "The Gathering of Nations" which proceeded a seminar on Caribbean Cuisine in the Faculty Club, UNB. In an atmosphere of cultural

interchange, guests sampled dishes from Kenya, China, Turkey, Malaysia, India, Trinidad and Guyana. The food was prepared by International students attached to the various cultural organizations on campus. The dishes included richly flavoured beef stew, seasoned rice from China, delicious fresh fruit cocktails prepared by the Malaysian students; spicy meat dishes from India; curried dishes from the Caribbean among other exotic selections.

The Faculty Club was filled with people from all nationalities who mixed and chatted about food, politics, winter and music. The event represented the first official gathering of International students for the year and the Board of International Student Executive along with the presidents of the various organizations were quite pleased with the outcome of the event.

Wednesday Night Movies

Coming Jan. 10

BATMAN

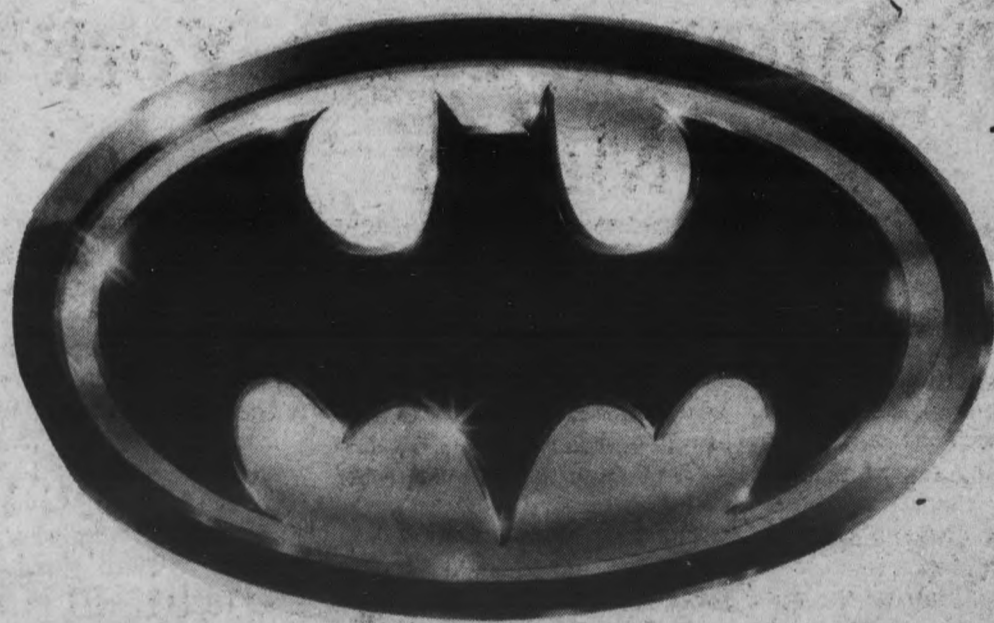
Showtimes 7:00 and 9:30

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presented by the

UNB Student Union



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