

Rape touches everyone

Crisis Centre needs people to care

By SARAH INGERSOLL

Paula Wilson needs your help! Who or what is a Paula Wilson? She is the coordinator of the Fredericton Rape Crisis Centre and she needs volunteers. The job entails being available to take phone calls, interviewing the rape victims, police, doctors and lawyers. Because of the need for mature people, both male and female, the policy is to be 21 years of age or over.

Female volunteers are needed to take care of the female rape victims and their needs. Male volunteers are wanted to talk to husbands, lovers and fathers of the victims, trying to make them understand what has happened and erase the myths that surround rape. Myths such as "the woman asked for it", and that somehow

she is now dirty. The husband, lover and father feel anger at what has happened to their loved one.

Not only are the male volunteers required to deal with these people, but with male rape victims.

People don't really think of male victims very often; probably because they don't want to think of it. But it happens, and these people need just as much sympathy and attention as females. The attitudes of the volunteers are all-important as they have to try to understand how she or he is feeling at this moment. Beyond this initial reaction is a much deeper set emotion, known as "rape trauma syndrome". This could be a long-term reaction between the time she/he is raped until she has

the whole thing resolved within his/her own mind.

As far as dealing with the police, there is no problem, as the "men and women in blue" are extremely cooperative.

At present, two rape cases are in the process of being prosecuted, and as Paula Wilson states, it's difficult to foresee the outcome of a rape trial because of the various factors involved. Evidence of violence and force is needed; and how the victim and witnesses handle their testimonies. Of vital significance is the attitude of the jury. "More and more" explains Wilson, "the public has to be made aware of truths about rape". People still believe all those myths concerning this hush-hush crime.

According to Wilson and RCMP, only about 10 percent of rapes are reported (this being a conservative number). The reason for this is that the victim is afraid of what will be thought of him/her. In the case of the woman, she is told that she was at fault, is a loose woman and she must have done something or been wearing some article of clothing that tempted the rapist. The situation at present is that "rape reflects not on the rapist but on the woman".

What the public does not realize is that rape is not a sexual crime, says Wilson. "It is a crime of violence; assault. Rapists are not men who are deprived of a sex life. Most have normal sex relations with wives or lovers. Nothing about rape has to do with sexual practices or women's appearances."

The rapist is a man who wants to dominate and humiliate another person. These are the two main characteristics of a rapist. It is easier to physically dominate a woman (or in the case of a man, one who is physically smaller.) Women are, and always have been treated as sex objects, not as people. They (women) are known as "a piece", "a skirt", and "legs", which, says Wilson are "inhuman attitudes."

Presently Rape Crisis Centre is operating smoothly and efficiently. They have a 24 hour telephone

service, good volunteers, a handbook and an in-service training.

This in-service training takes place at the Doctor Everett Chalmers Hospital, where, Wilson adds, the cooperation is fantastic. The nurses, who assist the doctors in gathering evidence from the rape victim, just can't seem to do enough to help. The hospital staff has referred many people to the Centre, which has helped the victims "who have never really heard of us. These people know who we are and what we do." Victims are confident about Rape Crisis now; "they trust us, knowing that we are competent and well informed."

So with everything under control as far as mechanics Wilson wants to get more involved with speaking to groups and having workshops. Did you know that any person from 10 months to 80 years old, male or female can be and are raped? This is one of many points that the Centre wishes to bring to the public's attention.

Another aspect Rape Crisis would like to get into is how to

handle cases of child molestation. These cases are "harder to handle" according to Wilson and must be handled with great delicacy and understanding. The child who is sexually assaulted cannot deal with the experience

as well as women or men can. They can't think through what has happened to them. Rape Crisis wants to become aware of what the child is feeling and thinking at this crucial time and be able to deal with him/her. Helping the child to understand and accept what has happened and to help the parents of the victim is of vital importance. Many parents have deep guilt feelings like "I should have been watching him better," and the Centre wants to make them realize that you can't be chasing after your children 24 hours of the day.

Rape Crisis Centre is beginning a volunteer training program in early October, so get in touch with Paula Wilson at 454-0437. After all, the Centre is there to help and protect YOU!

Murray snubs NUS boycott

By SHEENAGH MURPHY

In June of this year, delegates from various universities across Canada attended the annual Board of Directors meeting of the AUCC (Association of Universities and Colleges of Canada.) This was in direct disregard of a National Union of Students (NUS) recommendation to boycott the meeting.

The recommendation was made on the strength of what NUS termed bad representation. The Board of Directors has 16 members, 3 of which were students. NUS felt that students did not have enough voice in the organization and termed the Board of Directors "the Old Boys Club".

Jim Murray, president of the Student Representative Council represented the University of New Brunswick. He said there was a caucus meeting of student representatives a day before the

representatives had previously submitted three nominations in accordance with the three positions available for students on the Board. These were made on the recommendation of the nominating committee.

Nominations can be made on the morning of the election though this is not the usual practice. Two more nominations were proffered therefore, on that morning, in accordance with the student caucus of the previous day.

The result was that one of the older board members was replaced by a student, thereby giving the students four votes as opposed to the previous three.

Murray said that this arrangement will continue in future years, thereby giving the students a greater edge.

Representatives at this time include Jay Sparks from Alberta, Louise Abraham, Mt. St. Vincent, Halifax as well as a representative from Quebec and from Ontario.

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