

ED/OP

LETTERS

Those who say that we live in a free country do err in their statement and obviously in their beliefs. This country that we live in is only as free as the tyranny of the majority allows it to be, which at the moment is pretty oppressive.

As I look at the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms, I wonder even about the first line. It says that Canada is founded on the principle that recognize the supremacy of God. Who's God is this? The God that I know about talks about such virtues as charity and justice.

The Observer

AARON PETERS

Aaron is looking for subject matter for his new column. If you have any interesting ideas, please bring them to the Gazette

He does not vindicate hatred, racism, and oppression.

So, the document starts out hypocritical. I wonder how it ends? It goes on to say that the rights and freedoms set out in it are subject to reasonable limits,

whatever they are, that can be demonstrably justified in a free and democratic society. First, what are reasonable limits? Then, I must wonder where the free and democratic society is.

No minority person, racially or sexually, is really free to pursue their "happiness." Freedom is only that which is given by the state and if you are not of the majority, your freedom is in limited portion.

Now, as for as the term democracy is concerned, this is another story. A dictionary defines democracy as a state having government by all the people, direct or representative, ignoring hereditary class distinctions and taking into consideration the views of minorities. If that is democracy, where is it? It certainly is not in this country? Maybe not in this world. We certainly have no right to call ourselves a democracy. We disgrace the term. Those who are not of the majority in this country are treated as if they had no rights at all.

The next section talks about the right to vote in an election, at any level of government. It also says that anyone can run for office as well. One thing we know is that you cannot have, say a Black person in office. It just wouldn't be right. So we undermine the idea of true democracy, being the class-conscious, oppressive society that we are.

As for as legal rights, that section begins by saying that everyone has the right to life, liberty, and security. This is a farce. Those who are not of the majority have not the right to liberty or security. When they try to do that which "is not their place," they are treated in such a way as to make them want to just say "Is it worth it?" There is no security or liberty in such a society for minority people.

The section on Equality rights is another "clause of good intention." Every individual may be equal before and under the law, but in the outside the court-room, it is a different story. All types of disadvantaged peoples are treated unfairly, every minute of the day. Until we address what happens outside the court-room in the acts of men and women, we will always struggle for justice and find the "best" or only rendition inside the court-room, where the remedy comes many times after the fact.

The Guarantees in this Charter of our fundamental rights as Canadians are lacking in substance, I think. They look good on paper but are not reflective of what is really happening in society.

If we ever stop to consider the true definition of democracy, one will come to the realization that we do not deserve to use the word. If we all, as citizens, lived out the "true meaning of our creed," Canada would probably be much better place (even with Free Trade).

Crying wolf

To the editor:

Having read Miss Lara Morris' letter in last week's Gazette, I am struck that it was she that the Rorschach Test was designed for. To see "at least one naked body" in that cloud drawing is nothing more than projection. (I even showed it to a Psychology major). It is clear that Miss Morris is focused on, and indeed obsessed with, only one issue - and it is equally obvious that she cannot see beyond her own politics and views. Indeed, those who challenge sexism and the use of sex in advertising have won significant, and laudable, victories. However, crying wolf at cloud drawings trivializes the issue and shows Miss Morris' fanaticism, exposing her to ridicule. I'm sure that if one showed Miss Morris an inkblot that others had said looked like "a rabbit" or "a cow," Miss Morris would see it as "an expression of man's domination and exploitation of women."

Andrew W. Murphy

P.S.: Nice typesetting this year.



Costly luxury

To the editor:

I was interested to read Aran McKittrick's recent article "Exploring the Student Union budget" (Gazette Oct. 3). As Vice President of the company which provides the Health and Accident Insurance Plan to Dalhousie University, I would like

to comment on the criticisms directed toward it.

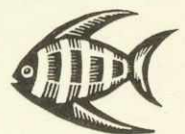
The article noted that the Dalhousie health plan has increased by \$41,000 over last year. One of the major reasons for this increment was a corresponding growth in the student population which has increased by at least 500.

On an individual basis, the premium for our University Health and Accident Plus Life Plan has only increased by \$5 per student. Let me personally assure you that this modest rise in rates was based on last year's claims statistics from Dalhousie University and not from any desire to profit excessively at the expense of your student body. In fact, in the 20 or more years that we have been providing this plan to Dalhousie, our loss ratio (claims versus premium dollar) has often been higher than 100 per cent and sometimes as high as 125 per cent. Contrary to the message in McKittrick's article, these statistics indicate that quite a large portion of Dalhousie's student population is both familiar with and using the Health and Accident Insurance Plan.

Secondly, McKittrick mentioned that while the plan does cover the cost of prescription drugs, it does not pay for oral contraceptives. Oral contraceptives are a costly luxury, used by a small portion of the student population. If they were included in your sickness and accident insurance, they would certainly affect the price of the plan for every student. I would therefore respectfully suggest that treasurer Joanne Smyth does some research - to find out if the majority of Dalhousie students are willing to support that minority which uses oral contraception - before she proposes any amendments to the existing insurance plan.

I was naturally disappointed to learn that at least one Dalhousie student is not aware of the benefits offered with the University, Health and Accident Plus Life Plan. As someone who writes for many insurance and travel publications, I would be more than happy to fill this information void with an article outlining the program. Since your newspaper identified the problem, does it not have an obligation to inform its readers with the pertinent information? On the other hand, I could also arrange for representatives from our Halifax office to conduct seminars, explaining the coverage to your students or Student Union.

Robin Ingle



Remember greats

To the editor:

I read with interest the Oct. 24 Gazette's front page report by Shannon Gowans on student gripes and related matters. While students have much to gripe about these days there are also many aspects of life at Dalhousie for which students can feel grateful. For balance I suggest that a "bouquet wall" be prepared at the same location in the SUB.

Donald Betts

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