

The day the music can die

Music may be a universal language, but it is not always appreciated. Especially not if it's blasting through your windows while you're trying to sleep.

How inconsiderate you say? But what if you consciously chose to move into Halifax's downtown bar district? Do you still have the right to say pipe down? No, it serves you right.

Last year, the Barrington Gate apartment building opened to tenants in the heart of Halifax's bar district. Since that time, its residents have launched increasing numbers of noise complaints against their neighbours at pizza corner, but more specifically, The Blues Corner.

The bar, located on the corner of Argyle and Blowers Streets, has had a license to serve alcohol since 1983, and entertainment privileges (a license for live music) since 1987. Current owners, Paul Boomhower and Paul Monahan opened the Blues Corner last fall. As its name suggests, the bar features live blues music. Before the pair opened The Blues Corner, a huge DJ sound system had been blasting tunes from the building (formerly known as The Graduate) for almost a decade.

The first noise complaint was lodged against The Blues Corner last December. Complaints continued to increase as the time to renew its entertainment license approached. As a result of the complaints, the bar's license is being held in abeyance while public hearings take place to determine the future of the venue.

Last week, the public, as well as residents of Barrington Gate,

expressed their views on the future of the bar during three days of hearings. After a 45-day period, the bar will have its chance to present a case. Following the next set of hearings, a decision should be reached in January.

The Blues Corner has become a popular venue, not only for blues fans, but bar goers at large. Despite its incredible popularity and choice location in the downtown core, it may be shut down. If the residents of Barrington Gate get their way, the bar will no longer be able to play live blues music, and may even be limited in terms of volume on DJ music.

I can appreciate the fact that most people like peace and quiet when they are trying to sleep, but why move to downtown Halifax if that is the case? When you are looking for

short of shutting down, there is not much else they can do.

The Blues Corner is acting perfectly within its rights as a commercial business in a C-2 commercial zone in the city. In addition, it is a healthy addition to the downtown area which has been designated a "cultural sub-area" for the enhancement of the arts.

At first glance, it may seem obvious that residents of Barrington Gate don't have a leg to stand on, but they have already had success in their mission to tame the downtown quarter. Residents of the apartment building were crucial in preventing The Birdland (a popular, live music venue that shut down last spring) from relocating to the old studio location currently operated by Moe's Bar and Grill.

Action by new residents to change the downtown from a place of entertainment, to a place to sleep peacefully must be stopped. A dangerous precedent is being set when a business operating completely within its legal rights could be forced to shut down.

Where will action like this stop? Short of building some kind of buffer zone between commercial and private zones, there is no way to prevent residents who live beside or amongst commercial businesses from experiencing the consequences of where they chose to live.

Residents in the downtown must stop playing stupid and take responsibility for where they chose to live. If they seriously thought that life in Halifax's bar district was going to be quiet then that's too bad. Get some ear plugs or move out.

BY GINA STACK

Editorial

a place to live, you don't pick a place and then force it to conform to your ideals, you choose a location that fits in with your ideals. These new residents to downtown Halifax have no right to try to alter a scene that has existed and been enjoyed by locals and residents for years.

The Blues Corner has taken a number of steps to reduce the amount of noise being generated by its live music. These actions include: lowering the volume, installing acoustic panels, the addition of 35 hanging plants to absorb sound and moving the stage so the sound will travel away from the apartment building. None of these concessions has been enough, and the owners say



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Letters

Broken Promises

To the editor,
Alan LeBlanc's article on the Promise Keepers in the last Gazette, ("PK", but not "PC") was too simplistic a view on the new socio-political movement in the States. The mandate of this all male group is a "return to family values"; a mandate which LeBlanc is clearly in favour of. However, much of his argument lacks support and credibility. For instance, LeBlanc maintains that men, congregated in a football stadium for quasi-religious ceremonies that "reduced [men] to tears", could not possibly be the same brutes who dominate their wives. Obviously, LeBlanc has chosen to ignore a select era in American history when slave owners would faithfully attend church and return home to brutally beat and rape their slaves. Just because men are religious does not mean that they are incapable of dominance.

I am not arguing the notion of family values as a master/slave relationship between men and women, but rather that "family

values" puts the man at the "head" of the family, bringing home the bacon and looking after his "little woman" and children. This is obviously detrimental to the autonomy and economic-agency of women. Women are placed in positions of subordination under their husbands as their relationship is not egalitarian, but rather based on a structure of power. Men as "head" of the household have financial independence and therefore social power, while women are positioned in the conventional (and unpaid) "June Clever" homemaker roles.

While homemakers are a valuable asset to society, it is a lifestyle choice that should be decided by each woman rather than forced upon them by "family men". For men who are "not seduced by power", the Promise Keepers seem to be holding all the cards. I question LeBlanc's assertion that Promise Keepers practice "servitude" to their wives. Can you recall how many times Ward Clever made dinner or cleaned the house for June? There is another agenda here, and yes it does include power.

CATHERINE CRAIG

On November 11, we hope that you will take a moment to think about a time in our history when young Canadians were asked to put aside their individual aspirations and make the ultimate sacrifice.

IN FLANDERS FIELDS

In Flanders fields the poppies blow
Between the crosses, row on row,
That mark our place; and in the sky
The larks, still bravely singing, fly
Scarce heard amid the guns below.

We are the dead. Short days ago
We lived, felt dawn, saw sunset glow,
Loved and were loved, and now we lie
In Flanders fields.

Take up our quarrel with the foe:
To you from failing hands we throw
The torch; be yours to hold it high.
If ye break faith with us who die,
We shall not sleep, though poppies grow
In Flanders fields.

— John McCrae before his death in an Army hospital, 1918

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