

System the offender, not women

I know you're tired. I know you've heard more opinions than you ever wanted to hear on the abortion debate within the past few weeks, but this is one debate that will never generate the "last word". My chosen side of the debate is pro-choice. That is my opinion. Now I'd like to present you with some facts.

I want to share my experience of what it's like to stand outside the Morgentaler clinic while abortions are being performed inside. The day in question is November 2; the clinic is located on McCully Street.

This short residential street is lined with cars and people. We (pro-choice supporters) are mostly women; we stand outside the clinic gate, and drink coffee and shiver. We aren't there in protest; we stand in support of Morgentaler's initiative to establish an abortion clinic in a province where the agenda is set by conservative and reactionary elements.

We escort women in and out of the clinic. We watch the gate. We watch the media, mostly men, who watch us with their cameras and outnumber us all. We are divided from the media by a small group of anti-abortionists, who are walking up and down the sidewalk outside the clinic, with their baby strollers and their signs

of protest, lips pursed in disapproval, saying nothing.

Walking with them is a young woman in a leather jacket. She stares at us very hard, as if memorizing our faces. We soon find out that she is an undercover cop.

We find this out when a group of women emerge from the clinic, supporting another woman who has apparently just had an abortion (a decoy). The group trots off quickly down the street. The media run after them. The young woman marching with the anti-abortion group breaks away and pursues the women. When she catches up she pulls out a badge and calls out, "Did you have an abortion? Did you have an abortion? We can use you as a witness."

She does this all day. After a while we begin to notice more undercover cops. They have set up surveillance cameras across the street. They sit in cars with video cameras. One, whom we dub Inspector Gadget, follows us on foot if we go in for coffee. One group of women is tailed by car to the Dal SUB.

There's nothing illegal about standing around outside a clinic, yet we feel harassed. There's nothing illegal about entering a clinic to obtain an abortion, yet

these women are made to feel like criminals.

Some women come from New Brunswick and Newfoundland, where province-wide access to abortion is not available. Others are from Nova Scotia, where, contrary to the Buchanan government's assertion, there are problems with access. Some women are faced with a three-



week wait to obtain an abortion at the Victoria General Hospital. Women under the age of nineteen are required to have parental consent to obtain an abortion at the VG. What does a sixteen-year-old do when she doesn't want her parents to know she's pregnant, much less that she wants an abortion? The young women coming

to the clinic are taking their chances, hoping they won't be seen on the six o'clock news.

I leave the clinic with a bad taste in my mouth. I don't understand what the police, the politicians, the church, the media, and the "moral" minority conspire to make women feel ashamed.

In my mind, the worst offender is our justice system, a system which shapes our society, a system which is confusing, inaccessible, and male-defined.

You may have lost track of the legal tangles surrounding the issue of abortion in Nova Scotia. This is how the situation stands:

The provincial government has enacted legislation in the form of a Medical Services Act, which prevents the establishment of free-standing abortion clinics in Nova Scotia.

Morgentaler has defied the law and performed 13 abortions at the clinic over a period of two weeks.

The Supreme Court of Nova Scotia has upheld the province's injunction to prevent Morgentaler from performing abortions here. Morgentaler is charged by the province on 13 counts of violating the Medical Services Act. He has pleaded not guilty. The trial is set for March 5 in Halifax, the earliest date at which a full

week in court could be obtained.

If Morgentaler is found guilty, the law allows only for a fine; he can't be sent to jail for his actions. The fine for each count can range from \$10,000 to \$15,000. Morgentaler estimates that lawsuits have cost him approximately \$1 million over the last 20 years.

Morgentaler will not defy the injunction by returning to the clinic, but he will appeal the case to the appeals division of the Supreme Court of Nova Scotia.

The clinic will continue to operate as a counselling and referral service.

Meanwhile, the Canadian Abortion Rights Action League is appealing a mid-October ruling, which determined that CARAL does not have the right to take the province to court to challenge the constitutionality and legality of the Medical Services Act. The appeal will be heard in January.

On the federal level, a new abortion bill has been introduced in the House of Commons. Each bill goes through three readings; the first reading was carried out on Friday, Nov. 3. The government plans to push the bill through before Christmas. The law would put abortion back in the Criminal Code, but does not prohibit the operation of free-standing abortion clinics. However, if the bill is passed, it will have no effect on the legal standing of the Nova Scotia government. The bill does not address the issue of provincial government medical legislation.

During this period of uncertainty in Nova Scotia, women and men who support choice cannot afford to sit back quietly and wait for the verdict to fall. Where is our representative government? The premier is certainly not representing our views at a "pro-life" conference in Yarmouth. Where is the justice for women in Nova Scotia? Let's stand together on this issue, and channel our anger into action. We have nothing to lose but our rights.

Erin Goodman

Have we forgotten our war dead?

by Debora Dunphy

The banners waving "welcome Home, Boys" have long been taken down and the cheers of victory and peace have faded like the newsprint that announced the end of both world wars. It's been seventy-one years since the signing of the first armistice and forty-four years since the end of the second world war. The only thing left to remind Dalhousie students of the former alumni and students who played a role in both wars are a few tarnished plaques dedicated to the memory of student-soldiers and the deteri-

orated and faded copies of "The Gazette" in the archives.

The aging copies of The Gazette tell of a different world in a different time. The 1914-1918 issues (subscriptions then for only \$1 a year) are riddled with letters from France, obituaries, and frequent apologies for late issues due to the Halifax Explosion and the Spanish flu epidemic. When November 11, 1918 finally came around, the Gazette's November issue was yet to be published. By November 27, along with an apology for the delay in the release date, the article below expressed the excitement of the end of the "war to end

all wars";

In celebrating the signature of the armistice, staid old Halifax threw aside every shred of her traditional reserve and for forty-eight hours, with few intervals, went completely and joyously insane. Horns blew, bells rang, firecrackers popped and every street was gay with myriad flags and streamers . . . Dalhousie played her part in the celebration. On the historic Monday morning, dozens of the students of both sexes joined in the impromptu procession that made Barrington Street resemble New Orleans at the

height of Mardi Gras carnival-time. They made quite as much noise as anyone else, which is a great compliment, and engaged in a fight with a rival cortege which was reminiscent of the days when Dalhousie students were frequently placed on the Crime Book record in the police court."

The 1940-45 issues were less enthralled with the war overseas. The headlines were more concerned with the debating finals, the Sadie Hawkins dances and the elections for student president. **continued on page 14**

Policy?

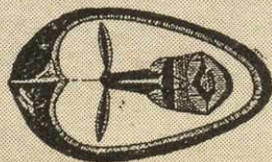
Dear Editor,

Was that you I saw melting into the wallpaper at that funky granola leftist drinking establishment that other evening? I hope it wasn't you I saw wilting under the unwarranted criticism of some mad woman. After all we expect our Editors to display courage and moral fortitude. Would Lou Grant have melted when Mary Tyler Moore roared? I'm starting to wonder if this newspaper of yours has any steer-

age or direction at all. Are we pulping trees into paper simply to print a Gazette so spineless that a protoplasm looks tough in comparison? Myself and some other of your devoted readership would like to know exactly what you and the Gazette stand for these days.

You had better believe we are sincerely yours,

Charlie Cappadocia
Lisa Barry
John Carmichael Angus
Peter Ross



Oops...

To the Gazette:

I am writing with respect to the article "DSU decides no decision a good decision" (Nov. 2 edition). As one of the students who was interviewed for the article I was disappointed to see that I was quoted as saying I would not support a referendum on the matter of women's choice (see page 14). I believe this reflects the view of one of my colleagues, but certainly not mine! I support the idea of a referendum to find out

what Dal students think about the matter of choice. The issue is not going to go away, and if we are to accurately reflect our student body at future CFS conferences we should know how they feel. Who knows maybe the DSU itself will get some guts and take a stand!!

Sincerely,
Lara Morris
DSU Rep.
Board of Governors

The statement Morris refers to was actually made by Charlene Ashe. Morris' name was substituted for Ashe's as the result of a typographical error.

The paragraph should have read:

Although she contends that any DSU abortion policy made should have a lot of student input. Ashe thinks a referendum would not be an appropriate mode of establishing such a policy since it is "an issue which deserves a different kind of approach." It would be unfair to all those people in the "middle of the wide spectrum of opinions" concerning this complex matter.

We apologize to Lara Morris and to the author of the article for any misunderstanding the error might have caused.