

# The terror of graduation

May, the matriculation month. The time to toss caps and beam incomprehensibly at the latin on your degree. A stolen moment when the only thought while walking across that stage is "watch the steps, can't trip".

But the road we are going to take demands more attention to our footwork than any other time in our lives.

I spend an inexhaustible amount of time worrying about that road. Am I ready? Am I a good enough navigator to make it to wherever it leads? More importantly, where will it lead? Some fabled land of security, happiness and 2.4 kids?

Probably not.

"All roads lead to Rome," they used to say, but Rome fell hard. There are no guarantees.

I'm sure everyone has questioned why they are here at one point in their university career. Have you used the university well enough to cope outside the parameters of our little microcosm? That's the \$64,000 dollar question.

I like to believe I'll remember Dalhousie for its teachers and higher education, but I have the sneaking suspicion my reminiscing may become a little

more trivial as years go by. I'll never forget stealing a toilet seat from the now non-existent Roxbury Cabaret, but my Shakespeare class? That's another matter.

But some questions have a wider scope and can't be ascribed a value, like: has university lost its focus in the nineties? This whole strike fiasco illustrates that it has. Professors have tried to

education is in dire straights.

University isn't the only aspect of society in the 90s which has lost its focus — students have too. During the 1950s and 60s education was such a boon because anybody who sauntered on the path to the real world with a parchment in their rucksack was quickly ambushed by the private sector. Well it is not like that anymore.

That dirt path has been resurfaced and renovated into a six-lane turnpike through the most dangerous of all mountain passes. It seems all that piece of

paper does for you now is get you an economy class ticket on a rinky little Greyhound bus with no TV or air-conditioning. And there is little hope for an arts student to become the center of a corporate bidding war.

Post-secondary education is no longer a feather in your cap, it is merely another required holding tank for youth with hope of a future.

One thing is a given, though. I'm leaving Dal with way more questions than when I first set foot on campus. Hopefully in 20 years I'll be writing an editorial with some answers.

JOHN CULLEN

## Editorial

mask their labour dispute in a cloak of morals. Over-crowded classrooms and too few teachers are issues which are great to swab on a picket sign, but will their fundamental beef — money — really solve these problems? No. The complement issue is also easy to dismiss. If the administration does hire new profs, then the fresh meat should go to teaching the classes listed in the course calendar which are not really offered. And there are tons of those courses. If more money and scaled-down workloads is what motivates profs to do a better job, then post-secondary

Commons ten-fold. We fully expect to do so again in the next Federal election.

Jean Charest was a great leader and a great Canadian. But we have several great Canadians who are contenders for the party leadership like Hugh Segal, Peter MacKay, and even Ralph Klein. This is a great time to be a part of the PC Party, and I welcome you to join the ranks of the Dalhousie PC Youth and to be a part of that future.

DANIEL CLARK  
President Dal PC Youth  
drclark@is2.dal.ca

### MORE LETTERS

#### Be a part of Dalhousie PC Youth

To the editor,

As you have undoubtedly heard Progressive Conservative leader Jean Charest has resigned his position as Federal leader as of April 3, 1998. He will pursue the leadership of the Quebec Liberal party and subsequently the Premiership of Quebec.

Charest has made it very clear that this is not a rejection of the Progressive Conservative party. It was a difficult decision for him to make, leaving the party he loves or

doing what is best for Canada. He made the choice few of us would have the guts to make. He did what he believed was best for the entire country.

The Progressive Conservative Party wholly supports his decision and wishes him the best. But we would like to assure our friends and our supporters that the party is still strong and it is still the only national opposition to the Liberals.

We have a bright future as a party. Provincially we are in power in Ontario, Alberta, Manitoba, and PEI. In 1997 we increased our number of seats in the House of

# Letters

#### Students not simply "fence sitting"

To the editor,

I am writing to express my dismay at the cynical commentary submitted by A. Zachary Wells, a commentary in which he proceeded to dismember any positive sentiment that the student rally of March 17 may have elicited. I am one of those student politicians at the rally who was "uttering repeated platitudes and gratitudes".

As a student member of the Dalhousie Board of Governors, I must disagree wholeheartedly with Wells' scathing condemnation of the worries expressed by students, specifically about losing their year. While some of the students did mention these concerns, these were peppered with genuine pleas to both the Board and the Dalhousie Faculty Association (DFA) to resume negotiations and ensure that students are not forgotten.

For Wells to assert that the students "blindly allied themselves with the BoG" is erroneous. One only had to hear the loud cries of "bullshit" from the students at Dr. Traves' speech to the board to see that. Students at this rally did not overtly side with the Dalhousie Faculty Association nor the board. The message was only that the students want a voice, the students matter, and that the students want a resolution on the part of both sides.

Wells doesn't seem to want to acknowledge that the students are not "fence sitting". To fence sit is to express no opinion, to waffle between one side and another. The students are firmly on a side — the student side, the best means of representing student interests. And contrary to his beliefs, this rally did have an inexorable effect on the board.

Comments by members of the board included a vein of surprise and many were thankful at having had the opportunity to hear what the students had to say. To be sitting in the sedate board room with the yells of support from the students outside meant a lot. It fortified the position of the students inside, helped let the board know that students care, and reminded all parties concerned that students are indeed an important part of the university and should not be foregone.

This is not to say that Wells' arguments have no merit, nor is it my intent to undermine his words. I agree fully that blind devotion to a cause can be extremely dangerous. But to give students so little credit as to assume that blind faith motivated

many at the rally is to undermine the intelligence of students and to assume that these students would succumb to a type of blind devotion to a cause.

At a school which sometimes has been criticised for its apathy, a showing as we had at the rally last week is certainly indicative of a cause about which the students are informed and obviously care deeply about. Students at Dalhousie do not always exercise their right to a voice, and so when they do, one should not be too hasty at trying to undermine their initiative. Please do not destroy the spirit of the entire endeavour.

ALIX DOSTAL  
Board of Governors  
Representative

#### DSU stance on strike lacks definition

To the editor,

I am writing to express my outrage at the stance taken by the DSU with regard to the current DFA strike. The executive has so far failed to say anything more substantial than "the strike is bad", and although they talk a lot about the best interests of students, they consistently refuse to define what they think those interests are.

I appreciate that the DSU's activity has kept the effect of this term's strike on students in the public eye. This approach, however, does not look beyond short-term impact to the long-range implications of the issues. Does the DSU really think that our loss of time at the end of the term (difficult though that is) is the only risk to our education in this situation?

The continued loss of experienced faculty is a tremendous threat to the quality of education at Dal for all of us who are going to be here past this year. Not only does the university lose teachers for its already too large first year classes, but we lose the experienced scholars required to teach upper year core classes. Our interests as students go far past this term; they include future years at Dal as well.

As a student I expect substance and action from my student union representatives. I also expect them to look past short-term loss and support long-term gain. So why has the DSU decided to talk loudly but say nothing? DSU, stop wasting time and effort sitting on the fence — support the DFA. We will be back in classes faster, and you will have helped fight for student interests for a long time to come.

STEVE MCCULLOUGH  
PhD candidate, English

## THE DALHOUSIE GAZETTE

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Karen Parker • Paul Mansfield • Karan Shetty • Phil "The Dartmouth Demon" Lewis • Patrick Shaunessy • Katie Teed • Jennifer Lamont • Janet French • Daniel Clark • Lisa hereby wishes Cutie Ken a very happy birthday and dedicates this issue to him and his many virtues.

Student Union Building, Dalhousie University, 6136 University Ave., rm 312, Halifax, NS, B3H 4J2.  
editorial tel. 902 494-2507, facsimile 902 494-8890. e-mail: GAZETTE@is2.dal.ca

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All submissions must be typed double-spaced on paper, e-mailed, or on a Mac or IBM 3 1/2 inch disk, in a WP version not greater than Word 6.0 or equivalent. The deadline is Mondays at 4:30 p.m.

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LEAST ANOTHER WEEK FOR  
MY PAPER!



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