

# Give students a break

There has been some discussion in the Dalhousie Senate about establishment of non-fluctuating academic year. As it stands presently the length of the year changes according to the date for labour day and for numerous other reasons. The establishment of a regular number of weeks in the academic year would be welcome to both students and faculty.

Although nothing has been determined as yet there was a suggestion that the February break be moved to late March or that the period between the end of classes and exams be shortened. The Gazette strongly favors the establishment of a set academic year but we do not feel that either the break should be changed or the study week for exams should be shortened, though this may seem a favorable proposal to the faculty.

If the break was moved to late March the normal week for study between the end of classes and the beginning of exams could be dropped and exams could be moved forward. The faculty would not be required to hang around the university till the end of April as they would otherwise be forced to do.

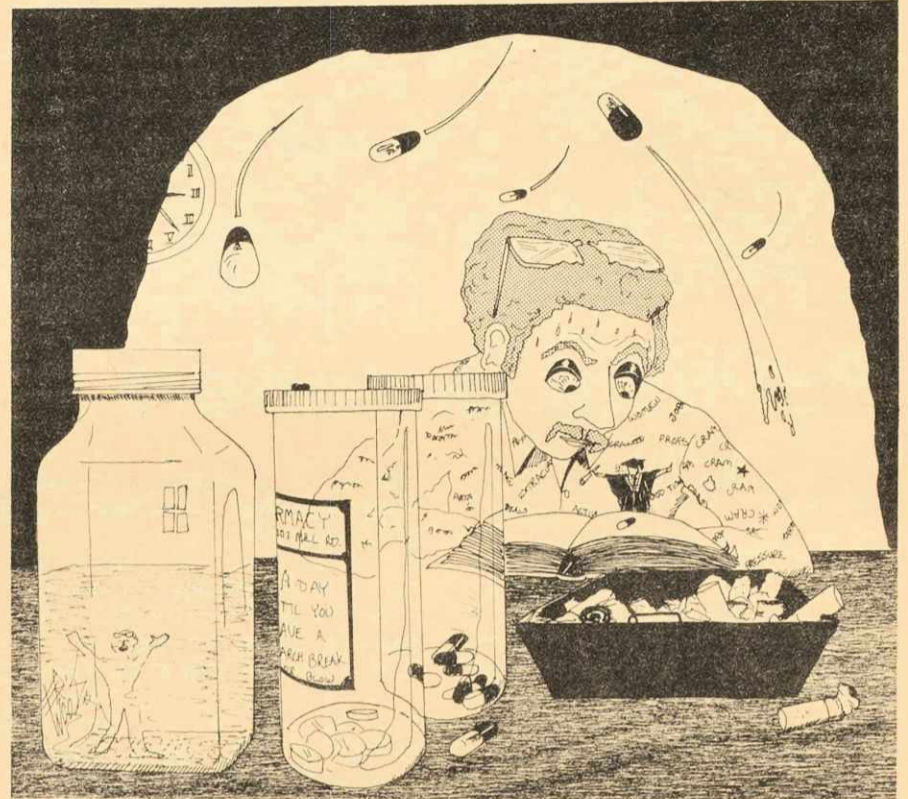
Students lose out all the way around if these changes are made. Many students use the February break to catch up on term papers, etc. before the end of the year. Graduate students are provided with one week uninterrupted by classes to get some work done on their theses, and students who are caught up on their work and have the extra cash use the week to take a much needed break in the middle of term. Moving the break week to the end of March will mean that students writing exams will have to use the time to study because their exams will follow immediately after the end of classes.

Ultimately this change would be fair to no one except the faculty. The break in February is desperately needed by most students, whether it is to catch up or to take a vacation. Though it may sound petty and silly the months after the Christmas break are the most depressing of the academic year. Students start feeling enormous academic pressures as the year draws to a close and combined with the miserable winter weather in Halifax they are prone to depressions. Anyone who has attended university in the Maritimes will attest to the fact that February is truly the most depressing month of the year for students and the normal mid-term break is looked forward to as the only salvation.

After the break students attack their academics with new energy and enthusiasm. The end is in sight and one will live through exams and final papers without too much trouble.

The final study week before exams is also needed by students. There is an enormous amount of work to be reviewed before exams and a solid week without the interruption of classes is what one needs. It may sound strange to refer to classes as an interruption but that is exactly what they are if one is trying to write papers or review past work. It is much easier to sit down for a solid week in the library, taking only a short break for meals than it is to work for a few hours, leave for an hour or so and return to work for a few hours. This may not sound like the best way to get it all done but it seems to be the way many, if not most, students operate.

Further the study week often provides students who are not writing exams one last desperate chance to hand in term papers. Most professors will accept late papers from students with good reasons if the papers are in before exams. The elimination of this study week is unfair to students with heavy paper course loads. Hard as it may be to believe many students at Dalhousie actually are overworked. Most term papers fall due around the same time and, for an arts student particularly, this may mean four or five major term papers will be due the same week. Term papers are not the only work expected however, there are also classes to be prepared for and reading to be done on a regular day to day basis.



Two weeks to use for catching up on work, study, papers, sleep or whatever is not really too much to demand. Most students start summer jobs immediately after they leave university and work through till school reopens in September so often the February break is the only vacation they get all year.

The establishment of a set academic year is a good thing provided students do not lose their two catch up weeks in the year. Sentate will be discussing this issue sometime in January and they should consider what these two weeks really mean to students.



## Letters

### Tribute to don

To The Gazette,

This article is going to avoid formalities. Second New Eddy would very much like to pay tribute to our Don, Maureen O'Connell - known and loved by all as Blanche.

From her first, "hi, I'm Blanche your Don!" each one was made welcome and readily accepted into her wide realm of friends.

Maureen's enthusiasm is contagious, leading us into such rambunctious activities as a football game with Stadacona officers. This undoubtedly opened our eyes to some of the finer off-campus activities.

To create a feeling of "all for one and one for all," our Don took the liberty to order T-Shirts labelled: '2nd New Eddy - Blanche and Her Babes' These powder blue shirts and their owners are having their marks in various locales on campus.

One S.U.B. night during Frosh week will be well remembered by all

in attendance. Who could ever forget Blanche's infamous renditions of Bye, Bye Blackbird, won't you come Home Bill Bailey, and Second Hand Rose. These represent the total number of songs in her famous repertoire.

The night she and three accomplices known in the underworld as S\*L\*A\*Y: "Shirreff Ladies Against You" pilferized the popular Tuck Shop in search of low-cal licorice to satisfy the ravenous hunger of dieters, will remain in our minds for all times.

Other activities instigated by our dear and daring Don have been: "welcome anytime" floor parties, shaving cream commotions and a tour of the entire Dalhousie Campus followed by ice-cream treats. Last, but by no means least to mention is a Punch Party which Blanche and several second year girls from 2nd

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