

Dumb-ocracy

Another DSU election winds to a close... So? Big whoop.

What does that mean for you? Well... if you're among the more than 80 per cent of the student population who doesn't vote, then I guess it doesn't mean a whole hell of a lot to you.

On the other hand, if you're among the small minority of people who do vote (the less than 20 per cent of the student population), it could mean a great many things. Chances are you know someone who's running, or your friend knows someone who's running, or your classmate's boyfriend's sister knows someone who's running. Perhaps you saw a neat poster.

Yeah, I admit... There are other reasons why people vote.

I, myself, take voting pretty seriously. In just over a year, I voted at my first referendum, my first provincial election, and my first federal election. Being kinda new at this, I wanted to be sure of the decisions I was making on those ballots.

I thought, "Hey cool, I'm a voter. Oh, the weight of responsible citizenship that falls upon my shoulders now!" So with that eager and naive outlook (a.k.a. rose-coloured glasses syndrome), I absorbed a whole lot of information on the issues and candidates — just like any responsible citizen (or student) would do... thinking that my one vote is going to have a significant impact... Yeah, right.

Well, let me tell you that trying to be a "responsible voter" is a pretty frustrating experience — especially since I've come to realize that my own expectations have been overly idealistic.

First of all, going to the DSU election forums turned out to be dismally disappointing. This encounter with the candidates proved to lack lustre, fiery debate, and basically, substance. I guess, in general, that's the way I would describe all the election campaigning I have been witness to.

Instead what I have observed has almost made me want to spoil my ballot and tell the whole world that's just what I did. What happened to platforms addressing genuine student concerns, real debates, and voting for candidates based on merit not on popularity or the best poster design?

The kind of stuff I expect to see in a real, hard-fought election has been overshadowed by silly rumours, irrelevant gossip, many election rule violations (for putting up posters where they are not supposed to be, etc... yes, there are individuals who went around, looking for any violation of the election rules, and ratting on each other!), and petty rivalries — and not just between the candidates. Seems like anyone who has some kind of stake in this election is getting involved.

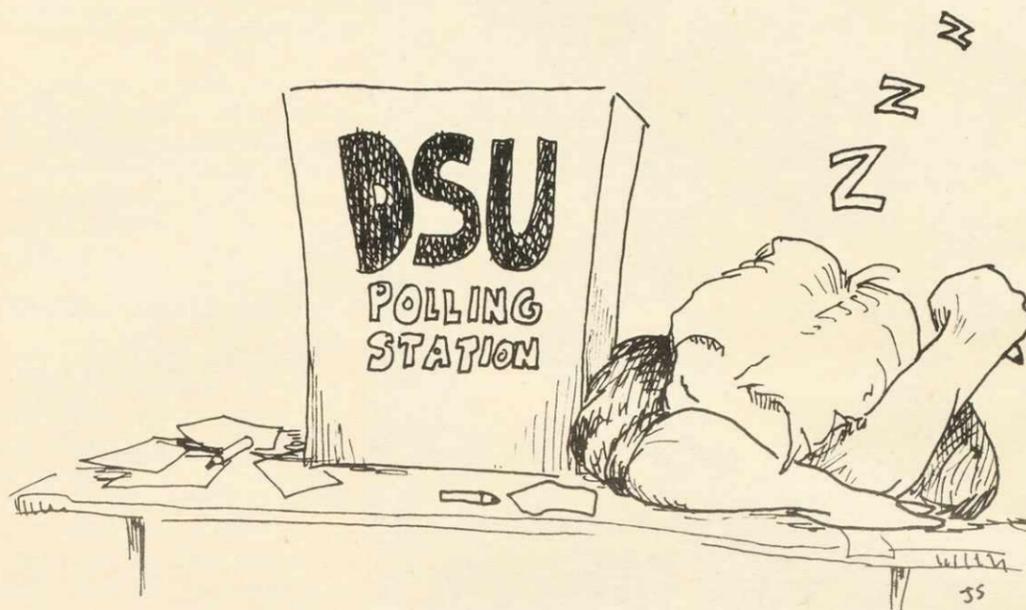
And to throw some more twists into this rat-race is the status of two candidates who once withdrew their nomination but are still in contention because their names still appear on the ballot. No one really knows how this has happened and what to do about it.

I don't believe that students are apathetic anymore. We all know that Dal has a communication and awareness problem. And after all that I have seen, I can understand how those who have put the effort into being informed have been frustrated into indifference.

But, y'know what? I'm still going to vote. Why? Because there are, despite all this election crap, some good candidates out there working hard to get my vote, and who deserve it.

However, as another election comes to a close, I can't help but agree with James Reston who said in 1968, "All politics are based on the indifference of the majority."

Lilli Ju



LETTERS

The Dalhousie *Gazette* welcomes letters to the editor. Letters should not exceed 500 words in length and should be typed and double-spaced. The deadline for letters is Monday 4 pm before publication. Letters may be e-mailed or submitted on MacIntosh or IBM-compatible 3.5" disk.

Barred from bar

To the editor:

My wish is to make a complaint about the admittance policy of the Grawood.

On Saturday night a friend and I went to the Grawood to see the Waltons. We arrived at 9:15 pm, and were about number forty in line. By 9:45 we had made our way to the front of the line, not because people were being let in, but because they were frozen from the cold and had to leave. Those working at the Grawood informed us numerous times that once the band begins to play and people start to dance the waiting line would move in quickly.

Exactly what kind of policy is this? Those of us standing outside with cold toes offered to dance but this offer did not get us in the door. They had said this would take place in about twenty minutes. It was a mighty long twenty minutes. After about thirty more minutes of waiting, they said it would be about five more minutes. During this long twenty-minute wait they admitted about seven people from the line, after which they came outside and said, "We are sorry but we can't let anyone who isn't on the guest list!"

So after two hours of standing outside with frozen feet and false beliefs of when we were going to be let in, we were refused admittance! What is even more maddening is that in the two hours we stood outside with false impressions we witnessed people come out from inside and get friends as well as some gaining admittance through the side door. One Grawood employee had even told us that we shouldn't

have come down so early! I thought that was awfully odd. The advertisement did say 9:00.

I think the events of the evening were unprofessional and rude. I will not lie and say that I understood the concept behind a university bar having a guest list which excludes a lot of students, because I don't. Furthermore, I wouldn't be writing this letter if I hadn't been misled by the employees of the Grawood.

For future events I strongly suggest that you not advertise, and that you send private notices to those worthy of a guest list. To all Dalhousie students, I strongly suggest not getting into a line at the Grawood, and if you should do so anyway be sure to have a heavy coat and alternative plans!

Cheyanna Scott

positions of power generally do not live in the communities they are making decisions about. This results in decisions which may maximize profit for the corporation, but which have a tendency to forget about the needs of the community.

I agree that David Suzuki is well worth ten grand, and I'm not taking issue with that. However, the livelihood of communities across Nova Scotia (and the world) would be best served by putting power where it belongs, in the community itself, and I know that Dr. Suzuki is an advocate of this concept as well.

Wayne Groszko

More Vernon

To the editor:

While reluctant to join the fray re: the 'Vernon controversy', Elanne Mikale McDonald's letter of Feb. 3 requires a reply. In sum, Ms. McDonald endorses a 'blame the victim' rationale with reference to rape, her premise(s) are:

1) rape is inevitable (a fact of life).
2) as a consequence, women should use "common sense" and modify their behaviour.

3) to do otherwise is to implicate oneself in one's own victimization.

In contrast to the above-outlined perspective, the "radical feminists" whom Ms. McDonald deplores propose an alternative approach. Simply stated, a feminist view posits that sanctions and behaviour modification should apply to the perpetrator, not the victim. Loreen Clark's book, *Rape: The Price of Coercive Sexuality* is helpful in deconstructing the sexist assumptions implicit in Ms. McDonald's viewpoint.

Mary MacDonald

People power

To the editor:

In the opinions column concerning David Suzuki (February 10), the executive of the Dalhousie Science Society (DSS) states that "in order to maintain the livelihood of coastal communities across Nova Scotia, large corporations in conjunction with biologists, economists and sociologists must work together to form a viable solution". Who did the DSS leave out of this grand statement? How about the people who live in those communities? The idea of having so-called "experts" get together to come up with a solution and force it on communities from the outside has been attempted many times all over the world. This strategy has resulted in disaster after disaster. The decision-making structure of large corporations is such that the people in

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the Gazette

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