

# OPINION

## A plea for student housing

To the Editor,

"Apartment for rent, no students". This is a familiar line to all university students who have looked for housing in the Halifax/Dartmouth area. Dalhousie students have an annual struggle finding affordable, adequate housing. What is needed is reasonably priced, quality accommodations, close to the university. It is traditional to call upon the Dalhousie Administration for an answer; perhaps it is

time for students to take a leading role in solving the crisis.

The extremely low vacancy rate in the metro area is less than one percent; the high cost of apartments, a one bedroom apartment can cost as much as \$650.00 per month coupled with the landlord's attitudes toward renting to students makes it very difficult for most Dalhousie students to find any form of lodging.

Dalhousie has over 10,000 students. The university provides accommodations for little over 2,000 of them. The university has shown little interest in increasing their present level of student

housing, assumably for financial reasons.

A possible solution is to have the student body, through the Student Union, fund the construction of student housing. The construction could be on land presently owned by Dalhousie; surely the university could donate or loan a small portion of its over 60 acres of land in Halifax to such a cause. It would be relatively easy for the Student Union to raise the necessary funds to finance construction costs. The Student Union presently has a budget in excess of one million dollars and it runs the Student Union Build-

ing. Why not increase its budget and run additional buildings?

With 10,000 students attending Dalhousie, it would be easy to raise money for special student housing fund. Student Union fees could be increased from their present level of \$99.00 by \$25.00 per year. 10,000 students times \$25.00 per year = \$250,000 per year. In four years, close to one million dollars could be raised.

Surely, an amount such as this could finance enough new student housing to end the present housing crisis.

Sincerely,

Andrew Simms



## In the town of Haversham...

By MICHAEL LAHEY

IN THE SMALL TOWN OF Haversham, there live only about twelve hundred purely fictitious people who are no more interested in having their biographies and their town history chronicled in a student newspaper than you or I are.

It is only with the most constant of efforts that their story has come to press, for what can be more obscure and elusive to capture than the story of a town, and that of its inhabitants, when it doesn't really exist? "Very little," I would venture, and just other day the short-tempered milkman was overheard telling the equally impatient town-crier that the feat cannot ever be accomplished, let alone well-accepted by a reading public of any intellectual vigour. "Rubbish!" exclaims the Haversham cobbler, a man of proper judgement. "Let the youth have his try, for the proof is always in the pudding!"

Haversham was first founded a

day later than was to be originally expected. This delay, way back in the earliest point of recorded time, was said to have been on account of rain and threatening hail, of which the founding fathers, George Haversham and Billy Babbershoo, not rugged men, were quite fearful. Nonetheless, the progress of civilization would not be denied and Haversham, in its most primitive stages, was born, taking for its title the surname of the man who felled the first tree to make the first cabin: George Haversham.

Billy Babbershoo, the co-founder, on the other hand, had the exclusive privilege of naming the vast neighbouring and beautiful lake that would provide fresh water, care-free enjoyment, and even a place of poetic elegance for the townspeople for generations to come. He named it "Laraby's Lake" and was quite pleased with his particular choice, because, as we can well surmise, Billy was not a gifted man in

either intelligence or alliteration, and was as pleased as could be to have struck the nail on the head for this memorable occasion.

It never occurred to poor Billy that his efforts might have been better disposed had he named the lake after himself, but who among us can cast the first stone at rash decision-making? Who among us has made all the right decisions all the time, with no amount of error or misinterpretation? If none of you speak up, why are you so unmerciful and critical of poor old Billy Babbershoo, a man who never even had the educational opportunities that you've had? Is there no sense of sympathy or compassion left in the world?

To this day, these place-names concerning town and lake hold strong, and are respected by all the inhabitants, except for Molly Fillybuster, who was always known to be rebellious beyond her years, keeping company with no one other than her pet dog, an animal of low breeding, fre-

quently subject to the tragic sufferings of both hair-balls and worms. It is on Molly, a victim herself of the curse of unremitting flatulence and more often than not the subject of town gossip, that our focus for future conversation will fall, but not today. Today our only concern is bringing into perspective the character of the town itself, apart from any consideration towards its citizenry.

Mr. Waverly Wicker is the town banker, and competent beyond the capacity of the normal person where money matters are concerned. Reputed to be a financial wizard, and an authority on interest rates, he is well respected by his neighbours and customers, and if ever you needed help in that special way that everyone does now and again, that is, financially, he was the answer to your prayers.

Waverly was blind, you see, stricken at childhood with a progressively worsening eye ailment and because there is very little difference between the feel of a

hundred dollar bill and the texture of a one dollar bill, our Mr. Wicker was always unconsciously overgenerous with loans or even in turning four shiny quarters into a paper denomination. A philanthropist in effect, while not in purpose, he never knew the good he did.

On this particular afternoon, while Mr. Wicker was miscounting the bank reserve, Mr. Kimbell, the baker, and Mrs. Montgomery, the schoolteacher, are seen to be running for the very same public office on town council. It is their personal and political merits that will provide the substance of our next investigation into Haversham, and, it has been rumoured by those close to the source, that in future commentaries an entire cast of characters will be methodically introduced in a noble attempt to depict the intertangling web of cares, concerns, friendships, hardships and ambitions that can exist in any small and seldom-talked-of settlement.

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