

Letters

Alumni Association responds to criticism

To the Editor:

The suggestion was made in the March 10th Gazette that the Dalhousie Alumni Association operates under an outmoded bylaw that is unfair to women.

I would ask that readers consider the following facts:

1. There are 18 women and 13 men on the Board of the Alumni Association. I am sure we would recognize and correct any bias, if it existed.
2. There are 6 men and 6 women on the Board of Governors of Dalhousie University appointed or elected by the Alumni Association.
3. The bylaw in question relates only to the members elected to the Board of Governors directly by the full membership of the Alumni Association. In addition, the President and Vice President of the Association are members of the Board of Governors for a 1 year term. The President of the Alumni Association in 1981-1982 was a woman and the Vice President is this year. If one of these officers already holds elected membership on the Board of Governors, the Alumni Board can appoint a replacement.
4. The bylaw in question was introduced to ensure that at least one of the three elected members would be a woman. It should be noted that the membership of the Alumni Association is not equally divided between men and women, as stated in the Gazette. That is true of the students of today and graduates of recent years. However, the Alumni Association includes many graduates of the period 1920 to 1950, when there were more men in universities than women. There was a tendency for male candidates to be better known to the Alumni voters.
5. As previously indicated, all of the bylaws are under review, and this is only one of the several which will be considered.

I wish to thank the Gazette and the Council of Students for their interest in the Alumni Association. I hope the graduates of 1983 will continue that interest and assist in the organization of Dalhousie Alumni branches in the communities where you live. There is a great deal that can be done by university graduates in helping the students of tomorrow and in bringing to public attention the needs of the institutions of higher learning, not just Dalhousie but all Universities.

Yours very truly,
Chester B. Stewart, M.D.
 President, Dalhousie Alumni Association

(Ed's note: The statement that there are 6 men and 6 women on the Dalhousie Board of Governors appointed or elected by the Alumni is true. However, those are broken down into 9 elected positions (of which 6 must be male), and 3 others, which are only filled by women by virtue of their being elected to Alumni positions open to both sexes. This means women are represented equally despite the quota, not due to it. If women make up a majority of the Board of the Alumni Association through elections, obviously the "tendency for male candidates to be better known to Alumni voters" isn't a detriment for women in elections now. We hold to our position that the quota should be dropped.)

Love is stronger than kindness

To the Editor:

Re: Catherine Ricketts' article on Abortion, Gazette 10/3/83:

Any well-trained and integrated scientist has been taught to look carefully at what he observes and call it what it is. And to do that whether he likes what he sees or not. To have that kind of courage does require a child-like honesty and humility. It is the message in the fable of 'The Emperor Who Had No Clothes'. There was only one real scientist in the crowd.

It is thus doubly disturbing to discover, at an institute of higher learning, physicians who pretend to be Knights like St. George, ready to rescue valiantly fair ladies from the clutches of fire-eating dragons, namely the innocent defenceless child in the womb.

Scientific knowledge in the field of human reproduction and development has progressed far beyond the point where there is any doubt that with conception a new human being comes into existence. A human being who is able within a few days to take control of its new environment - the lining of the uterus, a lining specially prepared for the new person's arrival.

With these scientific facts so well established, the bottom line in the abortion question is: To love my new neighbour or not? A well-trained and integrated scientist knows that at this stage of life, love of one's new neighbour requires providing for him or her, a bit of time for growth, a bit of nourishment and some space for shelter and exercise. Love asks for a

response to my neighbour who exists now. Real love does not get hung up on how my new neighbour arrived in my life; nor does it condition its response to criteria like: I only respond if I have invited you into my life.

When we talk about love, we talk about God, for God is love and wants good for us. In teaching about love, He leads us, we do not lead Him. And so He has given us the essential parameters, inside which love operates. These are also the parameters inside of which control over one's body will be at the service of love. I refer you to the famous thirteenth chapter of First Corinthians, verses 4 to 6. (R.S.V. edition).

Love is patient - thus love will give time to grow.

Love is kind - thus love is not violent.

Love is not jealous or boastful - love will share what it has.

Love is not arrogant or rude - love will not use its strength to offend or hurt another.

Love does not insist on its own way - love will respond to the needs of others.

Love is not irritable or resentful - love will welcome the unexpected person who changes its plans.

Love does not rejoice at the wrong, but rejoices in the right - love does know right from wrong and chooses right.

Love bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things - love is prepared to pay the price of love.

To paraphrase the words of Dr. Donald De Marco; Love affirms what is; and courage takes on the effort that every affirmation of being requires. Without courage, love tends to degenerate into sentimental kindness and as C.S. Lewis observes, such "kindness consents very readily to the removal of its object."

Fr. Joe Hattie, O.M.I.
 Roman Catholic Chaplain

Mis-conceptions and responsibility

To the Editor:

RE: Bradley Blanchard's comment on C. Rickett's article "An Ounce of Prevention, a Pound of Cure."

I found close to everything Mr. Blanchard said objectionable, though I need only deal with three points. I do not think Andrew Ager's letter deserves a response.

First, not surprisingly, Blanchard seems to believe that women (especially unwed mothers) in this society are not discriminated against, and at least tacitly "condemned." A half-century of progress has not yet seen sex education taught in most high schools in Atlantic Canada. Also, outside the major cities in Atlantic Canada, homes for unwed mothers and/or battered women are rare.

Second, Blanchard makes the standard "leap of faith" characteristic of the "Right to Lifers." He says, "Every abortion accomplishes the death of a fellow human being." Wrong. A fetus is not a human being. It may be your "fellow," but it is not mine. A fetus is only *potentially* a human being, in the same way that a zygote is only *potentially* a fetus. And, sperm and eggs have the potential to make a zygote. However, this *potentiality* argument is fundamentally fraudulent, for it is incorrect to equate what might be (baby) with what is (fetus, zygote, sperm). Babies are human beings and deserve the protection of the law. An 8 week old fetus should not have legal rights. As Roland Puccetti argues, fetuses do not have *consciousness*, nor do they have any immediate prospects of attaining it.

Third, Blanchard clearly overestimates the influence women possess in this society. Women are not a homogeneous group. Many women believe the myths perpetuated by our patriarchal society. Others do not care about the status of women in the society. Those who remain have little political power to change the *status quo*.

Given two conditions, abortion would not be a necessary feature of this society. First, there should be sex education in the schools at a fairly early age in order that people will understand how their own bodies work before it is too late. Second, men should live up to their responsibility so far as contraception is concerned.

Recently, in her column in the Globe and Mail, Judith Finlayson said that in 44% of the cases in which a woman applied for an abortion in Toronto, they had been using birth control which failed. One can assume that these women would not have become pregnant had their partners used contraception. The condom is the safest, cheapest, and one of the most effective forms of contraception. If we men would live up to the responsibility of our own sexuality, abortion would become a non-issue.

Sincerely,
 Geoff Martin

Black slavery vs. black- and-blue slavery

To the Editor:

Re: the article in the March 2, 1983 issue in the Mail Star. Editorial writer, Haliburton, implied men have the right to batter their wives when they deserve it.

The one discerning factor of human interaction here is the transaction that includes money. Blacks were paid for. Women still are. What distinguishes blacks from women is that women opt for situations that allow for their purchasability. Concurrent with the role of being a purchase of a person is the purchase of power over that thing. We have always accorded less status to any function a woman does that indicates service to a man, be it prostitution, housewifery, or posing for pornographic pictures. Men will pay inordinately for the services of all. This hierarchy is only one step away from the racial status of blacks. We outlawed their rank purchase though racism exists still.

Slavery symbolized something and gave one race an inordinate opportunity to abuse another. Pornography, prostitution and housewifery do the same. The transaction of money legitimizes the three former as it did the purchasing of slaves and a masters right to exhibit the license to abuse. We grant men in this society the same license to abuse women and to use the media to express that right. Some day, no woman will be purchased by a man as no black today is purchased outright by a white. The transaction does not buy sex, because concurrent with that simple definition comes the attitude that because he has paid for someone he buys the right to do what he wants with his property. It is not right to say that because a woman allows herself to be bought and relinquishes all power over her safety the wrong is lesser than were she in fact labelled a slave.

Name withheld by request

Shove off with self-righteous morality

To the Editor:

I'm rather tired of reading all the trash on the ugly violence of men against women, the elimination of sex stereotyping and other anti-pornography articles in the Gazette. A student newspaper shouldn't succumb so often to such naive righteousness and moralizing and do-gooder flag waving. I'm sick of other people trying to shove their values down other people's throats. This trend has unfortunately been brought on by the great media hype of the film *Not A Love Story* which was a sick, completely anti-sex, anti-male film, insulting to anyone. Now it's the bandwagon to jump on 'cause we now all understand the clear distinction between erotica and pornography, don't we?

Then in your March 10th issue I read with disgust Andrew Ager's commentary on pornography. Just how sophomoric can you get? Mr. Ager has his "dream", his "education of the heart" and his "MORAL MAJORITY". Nothing can be worse than some freedom fighter trying to impose his glorious will. Such intentions are fascist, politically, emotionally or otherwise. We've got lots of problems in this world so if Mr. Ager cares so much about righting them why doesn't he give up his schooling and go fight with the people of El Salvador.

I wonder if Mr. Ager has ever jerked off? It's about time he has. Either that or enter politics. He just might get enough votes to get himself the power his ego so obviously desires.

Sincerely,
 Michael Brennan

Clockwork Violence!

To the Editor:

I have noticed that your film listing includes such films as Clockwork Orange and Fritz the Cat. It seems to me that a university should not foster the type of attitude that encourages the brutalization and victimization of women. It is especially worrying when what is pornographic is passed off as meritorious.

Boys who 'dress up' as Little Alex on Halloween are only advocating the role and philosophy of a 'creep' that finds virtue in leading a group of gang rapists. The punishment element of the film only heightens its sexual message. It is becoming increasingly tiring to view most film making as a means by which men reflect their seedy and sickening sexual fantasies to us and the rest of the world. It becomes increasingly apparent when the role of a woman or women is isolated in seemingly 'good' films fostering the attitude that white women are good for and consistently want one thing.

Name withheld by request