

More action, less talk on housing

Student housing is an annual problem here in Halifax. Lined up at pay phones in the SUB with a piece of paper in one hand and the classified section of the *Chronicle-Herald* in the other, students desperately searching for affordable accommodation are a familiar sight.

The housing crisis is a regular item on the news sked for the first few *Gazettes* each year, the stories almost paralleling the previous year's saga.

The housing crisis here is as inevitable as homecoming is at other institutions.

The question is, why doesn't someone do something about it?

It is not like the solutions are non-existent.

Students should be hired during the summer to canvass door to

door to find potential rooms for listing at student housing. A massive publicity campaign should be launched in July and August to persuade landlords to rent to students.

The idea of a central Halifax student residence serving the city's numerous institutions has been batted about in student union quarters, although no action has ever been taken in pursuing that goal.

At other universities the student union has bought private residences and turned them into co-op student housing.

We don't need more moaning and complaining about student housing—we need action from government, the university and the student union. We need that action now.

Just like real unions

During the summer student union vice-president Rusty James proposed at a DSU executive meeting that the name of the Dalhousie Student Union be changed to the Dalhousie Association of Students.

James thought the "union" might alienate students because of the connotations of organized labour.

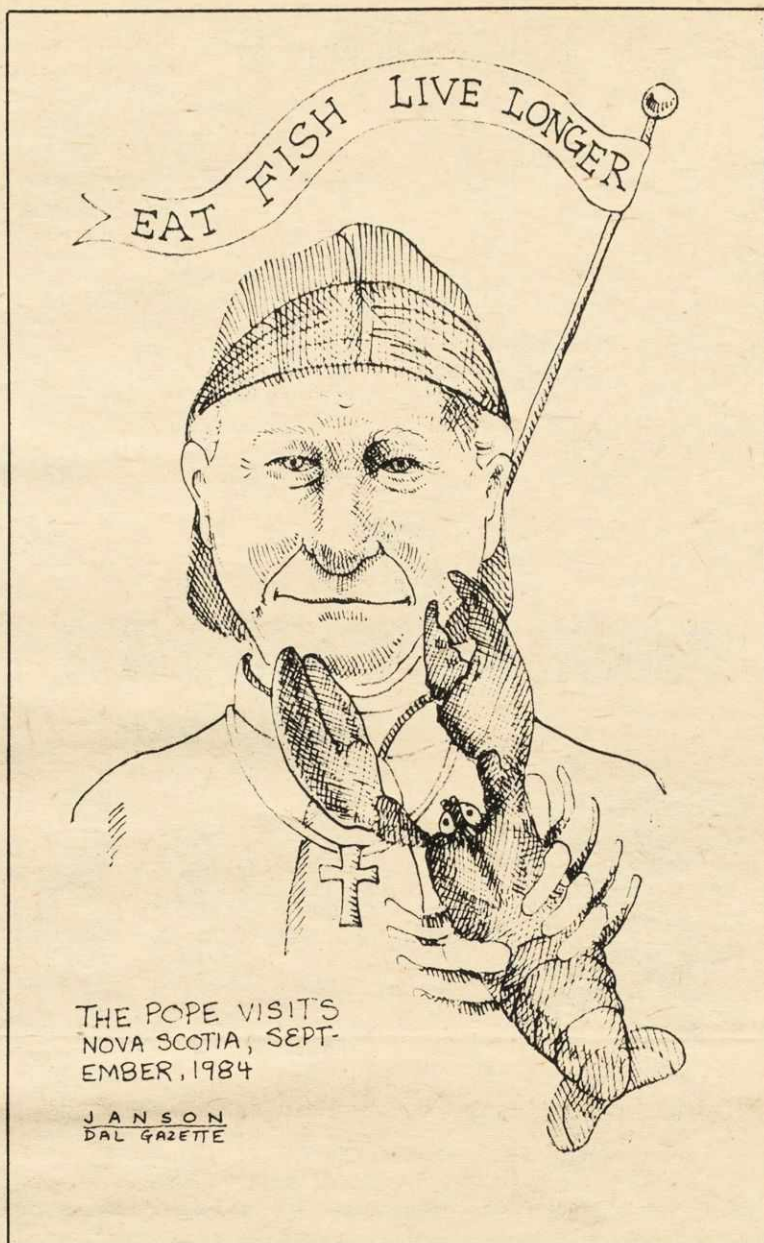
Needless to say the idea didn't go very far when it was discovered the change would take an act of the provincial legislature and \$500 in legal fees.

Although the issue is a dead one, it is a strong indicator of how our student union perceives itself.

These are dark days for students.

Education funding is being reduced (in real terms) by both federal and provincial governments. The quality of education is seriously threatened. Tuition fees have increased dramatically over the last five years. Student housing is in a state of crisis.

We need a student union now more than ever. We need a strong voice to speak up for us at various levels of government and on various university bodies. The student union is there for more than providing basic services and entertainment to the student body; it is there to look out for the interests of us all. Just like real unions, eh, Rusty?



Hey! Let us in

The beginning of the academic involves more than merely opening the doors and letting the students in.

Those involved in organizations such as the student union, CKDU, or the *Gazette* have already been toiling away for some time now preparing for the influx of students.

The last couple of weeks we have all been gearing up and preparing for the starting gun of this academic year.

For those of us who showed up last weekend, our work was partially hampered by the fact that the student union building was closed and locked as tight as a drum.

Having had advance warning, some of us had the foresight to put ourselves on a security list to be let in by Dalhousie's finest. Others weren't so fortunate, including students who had come to the SUB in hopes of checking the housing board.

The funny thing is that the SUB has been open—albeit for limited hours—on weekdays throughout the summer, mostly because of paid bookings of rooms in the building by non-student groups. Why close it now, just when the building is in need by those who the SUB was originally intended to serve—the students?

Election victory a marketing triumph

By RICK JANSON

The election of Brian Mulroney's Progressive Conservative Party was not so much the selection of a course for Canada's future as much as Canadians choosing Coke over Pepsi.

With little difference in stated policy, the two major national parties were more involved in competitive marketing than in sincere political debate.

The quest for power found both the Liberals and Conservatives closely eyeing the polls—not just to assess their performance, but to map out a strategy to attain that power.

The game plan is simple. Rather than risk adopting some policy that may be beneficial to the country but unpopular with the voters, the electorate is polled and policies are sold on the basis of what voters want to hear—which isn't necessarily what is best for the country nor what the political party plans to do after obtaining power.

The Grits have long been masters of election polling. Keith Davey has made his political mark by crafting numerous election victories for Pierre Trudeau with the aid of pollster Martin Goldfarb.

The election of Mulroney was very much a victory for market research and good polling.

Not only were the polls useful in telling candidates what to say and where to be, but in some cases actually helping in choosing candidates themselves.

One such example is the Ontario riding of Nipissing, where Moe Mantha was chosen to carry the Tory banner on the basis that he was the type their research had said voters in the riding would cast their ballots for. An ex-hockey player, Mantha hardly dazzles with his intellectual prowess, but his simple folksy style was what the research identified as desirable.

One fundamental question has to be asked in this kind of an election: If parties are selling themselves on the basis of what we think, not what they think, will they govern once in power as we think, or as they think?

Surely only the most naive would suggest that the PCs would govern according to the polls. The political parties do have agendas, as fuzzy and ill-defined as they may be. These hidden agendas are what we will find out about in the coming session of parliament.

In this past election, we looked at the candidates only to see mere traces of them hiding behind mir-

rors, reflecting ourselves. Now that the election is over, Canadians will undoubtedly have to discover just who the people behind those mirrors are.

When those men and women step forward we will find a variety of faces, some of them right wing and dangerous, others who would probably be more at home in the NDP than with their current bed-fellows. Who is to hold sway in this rag-tag coalition is anybody's guess.

The other question is, should the Tories decide to follow up on their election promises, would government by public opinion be necessarily a good thing? It could be argued that drafting policy according to public opinion would be the ultimate in democracy—but how wise would it be to try and govern according to the unprioritized demands of a public? Also it is important to examine just how public opinion is shaped, and who would inevitably draw power in such a scheme.

In this past election we have had few strategies or programmes that will produce any fundamental change for Canadians. We have voted on image and marketing. In the coming months we will find out who is truly better, Coke, Pepsi, or that other brand lurking in anticipation on the shelves.

Letters

Deadline for letters to the editor is noon, Monday before publication. Letters must be typed double-spaced and be less than 300 words. Letters can be dropped at the SUB enquiry desk or brought up to *The Gazette* offices, third floor, SUB.

Prisoner look for letters

To the Editors:

My name is Lamont Parks, I am presently incarcerated here at Lonelon, Ohio correctional institute.

I am writing this letter to you as an agent of appeal for correspondence and friendship.

Respectfully
Lamont Parks
173 - 644
P.O. Box 69
Lonelon, Ohio
43/ 40-0069
USA

Brazilians too

To the Editors:

Correspondencias Internacionais is a Brazilian organization set up to assist Brazilian students correspond with students from abroad.

Students wishing to participate should write to us giving details of the language they wish to correspond, their age, sex and interests, and details of the age sex and interests of the person to whom they wish to correspond. We will forward their letter to a suitable person who has requested to write to someone of their age, with their interests, and of their sex, in that language.

This offer is absolutely free.

I would like to thank you for assisting us in our endeavours to bring together students in both countries.

Yours Faithfully,
Guayra Nobrega