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A postcard view of Latin America

To the Editor:

We are Americans who have made our home in Latin America for seven years. Lately, we are seeing much distorted news about the Americas coming out of the U.S. and would like to set the record straight for Gazette readers.

When we first moved to Costa Rica, bag, baggage, grandmother, teenagers and pets, we spoke no Spanish and knew little about the country. But, soon, our rural neighbours accepted us and graciously taught us their language, culture, and how a city-bred family could enjoy ranch life in a foreign land. Truly, our delightful adventures there merit a book, at least!

My husband's love for the sea (Pearl Harbour survivor, retired Navy) prompted a further move two years ago, to Colombia's Caribbean coast. We found a lovely, old coconut plantation on the Pan American Highway near Santa Marta, the oldest (457 years), most fascinating city in all of the Americas.

Imagine, green palms waving in gentle ocean breezes, blue sea and sky, pounding surf and golden sand and, towering 19,000 feet over all and snow-capped the year 'round, majestic Mount Columbus. We feel we have much...incomparable beauty, fine neighbours, perfect climate, a stable, democratic government and a satisfyingly-low cost of living.

Like Columbus, we have discovered a new frontier, with a vast potential and, being human, are driven to tell others about our dream-come-true. If you are interested in the future of the Americas...and the Birds...write us by international air mail (35¢ a half-ounce) at Post Office Box 5222, Santa Marta, Colombia. It may take a while, but we promise to answer.

Now, from beautiful Santa Marta, we wish you salud (health), pesetas (wealth), amor (love) and the time to enjoy them all!

Juanita Bird (Mrs. Lewis Bird)

Gospel music, pornography, and disarmament

To the Editor:

I must take issue with M. Scher's narrow view on CKDU's gospel music program, as expressed in the last Gazette.

In the first place, gospel music, as played in a non-church context—certainly on CKDU—is not "bible-pushing", as the writer described it. (If he/she perceived it as such, perhaps this was due to the discomfort of a much-needed message getting through!) Gospel music is a type of music which some listeners happen to enjoy, just as is country, jazz or any other. My compliments to CKDU for broadcasting a diversity of music to please varied tastes.

If someone else's favorite kind of music happened to be playing when I was in the SUB, I would have to listen to it. Would this be an infringement of my rights?

Many people don't care for contemporary/rock music, yet it is considered acceptable for them to have their ears blasted

by it in public places, perhaps by individuals too boorish to turn their radios down. Others engage in loud, foul talk where other people have to listen to it. This is noise pollution too, and an imposition on all within hearing distance, yet its curtailment would be resented. Wholesome sounds deserve at least the same freedom of expression. Not everyone's taste can be pleased all the time.

On a positive note, I applaud Andrew Ager for his attempt to have pornographic magazines removed from Dalhousie bookstore. One reason the bookstore manager has given for resisting his efforts is the weak excuse that "academic institutions should stand for something", namely anti-censorship. I think a more appropriate view would be that anything which degrades half the population is not the kind of thing that academic institutions should stand for. Ideals are of value only if they are worthy ones.

I also appreciated Craig Carnell's sensible letter about the perils of defencelessness. Disarmament is to be preferred, if it is universal, but only the hopelessly naive even remotely expect this, given Soviet deviousness (and human nature). Unilateral disarmament is suicide.

I'm glad to see that some people still have their heads on straight.

Charmaine Wood

Disarmament is necessary

To the Editor:

Several weeks ago I wrote a letter to the Gazette entitled "Nuclear Disarmament a Noble Gesture". Since then, my letter has been criticized by Kim Rilda van Feggelen in her letter "Some One Has to be First". In turn, Kim's letter has been criticized by Craig Carnell.

I agree with Carnell's opinion that unilateral disarmament is 'a threat to our security'. However, to call nuclear disarmament an illusion is 'plain stupid'. Mutual disarmament must be achieved to prevent the use of these nuclear weapons. Furthermore, to totally condemn disarmament lobby groups is ludicrous. Even if these groups cannot achieve total nuclear disarmament, their influence contributes to keeping nuclear armament expenditures at a minimum. Perhaps Kim is misinformed, but I must commend her for her humanity. Carnell's letter illustrates an attitude which is far more dangerous to the security of mankind. Carnell's letter is the raving of a deadly lunatic!

J.E. MacInnis

MacKay gets knuckles rapped

To the Editor:

Having arrived at Dalhousie in October of this past year to continue my graduate studies, I have since become aware of the financial difficulties which exist here. Such a situation is certainly not unique. Similar difficulties exist in the Ontario

educational system (specifically at the University of Guelph, which I attended for seven years as an undergraduate and a graduate student). However, I feel the difference in attitude between the administrations (i.e., the presidents) of these two institutions with respect to the financial situation is striking.

In brief, the president of the University of Guelph has chosen to fight for the preservation of academic excellence and a multi-discipline curriculum in the face of provincially proposed cutbacks, while Dalhousie seems to be resigned to the inevitability of cutbacks. Why will Andrew MacKay not publicly defend the necessity of maintaining Dalhousie as an institution where a variety of intellectual and academic pursuits flourish?

Certainly I am not so totally idealistic as not to concede that some belt-tightening is necessary given economic realities. However, cutting costs through elimination of some programs or through radical restructuring of others seems rather shortsighted. Nova Scotia does not need another technical college.

Comments, anyone? Are you listening out there Andy?

Yours in concern,
Brian Hoyle, Dept. of Microbiology

Fear and loathing of Hunter S. Thompson

To the Editor:

Are all Dalhousie students bent on generating "Fear and Loathing" among the taxpayers of Nova Scotia?

While complaining and demonstrating about fee increases, shrinking university budgets, and inadequate student loans and grants, they propose to spend \$7,000 to bring author Hunter S. Thompson on campus.

This amount is the annual average income of Canadian freelance writers.

Leaving aside the colonial mentality that this invitation displays, it's a clear indication of the values of Dalhousie students when they drool over the coming visit, as you did in your editorial.

Why not invite Silver Donald Cameron of D'Escousse to visit the campus, and talk about "Concern and Compassion on Cape Breton"? Silver Donald taught at universities, quit because he found the system oppressive, and took up the uncertain life of a freelance writer. That's a radical act - and it takes guts. He has a passionate concern for social justice, and has advanced this cause through his books and articles. And he writes superbly - in contrast to "gonzo jernalists". He's an entertaining and provocative speaker.

I'm sure his lecture fee is lower than Thompson's.

And it would be recycled into the local economy - rather than going up in smoke.

Yours, etc.,
Jim Lotz

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