

EDITORIAL

A new outlook through blurry eyes

In the Gazette office there is a glass, conspicuously displayed near the door so that it immediately catches a visitor's eye. The glass appears to be coated with greenish mold and it's affixed with a sign: "Can we get a culture reporter to do a story on this?" I resolve that this glass be sacrificed to the nearest waste receptacle, as a symbolic gesture of the Gazette's fresh new outlook in '87.

"What? A new and improved Gazette?" you sneer. "Remember what happened to the New Coke .

." The Gazette isn't offering a new formula for extensive, insightful news coverage a la Jamie Glazov, or a fabulous new visual packaging. In fact, the superior second-term Gazette depends only on an inexpensive but morally satisfying staff overhaul.

First, the staff should initiate a funding drive to give Editor Toby Sanger elocution lessons, possible even haircuts on a regular basis. (But we love the colour, dahling!). The funding ends abruptly after all the beer bottles

stacked around the office have been returned, however. Other staff resolutions for self-improvement will have to depend on student press ethics alone.

1. No staff member shall support any groups further right on the political spectrum than the NDP.

2. All sports writers shall hereby give up the pursuit of basketballs, volleyballs, highballs, etc. and convert to the religion of Real News reporting.

3. The Ad manager shall relinquish his *Village People* tape to

those with genuine musical taste. (Unravelling, the tape would serve beautifully as extra-bold line tape.)

4. Typesetters shall learn to snarl menacingly at those writers foolish or brave enough to hand in copy two days after the final deadline.

5. In accordance with the above resolution, staff shall make a concentrated effort to finish lay-out within a 24-hour period, possibly before the first light of dawn illuminates above Editor's 23-hour facial growth.

6. All staff members will be required to become more visibly radical — ie. refusing to pay bus fare, and offering back issues of the Gazette as fair compensation.

7. The Gazette will offer condolence to those readers stuck with year-long subscriptions to professional-quality city newspapers, and not receiving the full benefits of the Gazette staff's boundless wisdom.

Erin Goodman

LETTERS

Parker rises to bait

To the Editor,

I would like to reply to Dr. M.A. White's comments (Vol. 119, no 13) concerning my article "Biting the Hand that Feeds" (Vol. 119, no 11). First I would like to say that I am very pleased that a reply was sent, especially by someone so closely associated with NSERC. My goal was to stir up some thought on the matter, and it seems that it was successful.

I also thank Dr. White for clarifying the internal mechanics of later-year graduate awards. As I wrote, there was some disagreement between the two people I interviewed as to how they were awarded. Apparently my perception of the system, arrived at by looking at the actual outcome of the awards system, was incorrect. I did not, however, "incorrectly state that all (undergraduate) years are used in calculating the academic standing" for postgraduate scholarships. That particular snippet of information was gleaned from a paragraph concerning undergraduate awards.

There are some points Dr. White and I don't meet on. If, as she admits for the Undergraduate Research Awards, "...allocations (of awards) to the departments would allow more rational decisions to be made" by making interviews possible, why would the same not be true for first year graduate students? I cannot see why the basis for the assessment of research potential in new grad-

uate students with little or no research experience should be intrinsically different than that for undergraduate students.

As for the "informal" quota system I am guilty of not writing as clearly as I should. A better word would perhaps have been "unofficial". It is the opinion of several of the professors in the Biology Department that such a system does exist and that it is a politically motivated method to ensure that no regions (or universities) are left to feel overlooked. In the process, some deserving students get left out. As I have said, this is an opinion, it is based on the observations of several people who have been watching the system for many years, it cannot be proven to be fact other than by an admission from NSERC.

With reference to the rule concerning health sciences candidates, I believe that the intention, as well as the wording, of the rule should be changed. Students who have applied to a professional school have definitely signified their intention to pursue a professional career. The Biology Department is especially hard-hit by this as many "pre-med" students study here. If it is the goal of these awards to promote research interests I then strongly feel that those students who have applied to professional school should be disqualified from the running for summer Undergraduate Research Awards.

Finally, I would again like to thank Dr. White for her support on the need to change the undergraduate award system. Of the two (undergraduate and graduate awards) it is the one more in need of change, and the sooner it changes the more potentially val-

uable researchers, who for one reason or another have not been able to obtain an 'A' standing, will be given a start on their careers.

I would like to end by inviting any comments the readers might have on this subject. I would like to see something done about the current state of the NSERC awards system and more opinions would help me form a stronger argument. I can be reached via campus mail in the Biology Department.

Sincerely,
Terry Parker
Biology Dept.

Anti-education

To the Editor,

As a concerned student I am deeply disgusted by the handling of the "students' course withdrawal dates" situation as discussed by Jamie MacMullin (see Letters, Dal Gazette, Dec 4, 1986), and earlier issues of the said paper.

It is absolutely illogical, unfair, silly and yes, even criminal to dare to even consider changing the course withdrawal dates. Life as a student is stressful and difficult enough without having to deal with extra pressures put forth by the Dalhousie Administration. This is just another fine example showing how the administration is more concerned with leaving work early and lessening paperwork instead of caring for the well being of students. Quite simply, the Dalhousie Administration is anti-education. There is no intelligent reason why the withdrawal dates should be pushed back.

Let me clarify the scenario for those who have forgotten what it is like to be a student. Obviously I direct this to the academia and the registrar's office. A student enrolls in a course at the beginning of a semester with intent to do well, but if he/she is faced with a very early withdrawal date (Oct 6), he/she is forced to make a very hasty, emotional and quite possibly a wrong decision, especially if the course in question is a required course.

It is bad enough to begin with to have to forfeit the money already spent on the course and the textbook. The student has two choices. If he/she drops the course, it may jeopardize his/her academic career and most likely an extra year of study. It is also impossible to really know how well he/she is doing in the course after only one month of study.

The withdrawal date for withdrawing without academic penalty should be no earlier than the first week of November and the first week of March. This is only fair. Midterms have ended by then and the students are more able to judge whether they should continue or drop the course.

My personal opinion is that the grade of W should be eliminated. It is a very ambiguous grade, and is very unfair to students who were trying hard, tried to "stick it out" a bit longer but eventually dropped the course. The problem with this grade is that it is equated with the grades of F or FM. This is very harmful because it makes it very easy for a student to be required to withdraw even though he may or may not have failed courses. Students should be able to drop courses any time before final exams, without aca-

demical penalty. If a student writes the final exam and fails the course, he shall be given a F or FM. Equating an F with a W, and stupidly establishing earlier withdrawal dates opposes education.

Come on Dalhousie Administration! What can you be thinking of? It is not very wise to antagonize the students. Do you remember what happened in France recently?

Since eliminating the W has little chance of catching on, I propose that the withdrawal date with academic penalty should be any time after the withdrawal date without academic penalty, and any time before final exams start.

To the students of Dalhousie: It is up to you and it is your responsibility as concerned students to voice your opinions on this important matter, and it is very important. Write letters to the Gazette, CKDU, Dal Student Council/Union, the Senate, Dal Societies, and everybody telling them that you want the withdrawal dates pushed forward. If the registrar's office and her "wise" associates care about students, they should gladly and eagerly accept these changes. After all, is university for the students or simply a playground for the administration?

An open forum and a democratic vote by all students should be implemented instead of students' futures being decided behind closed doors. If we as students get organized, we can fight this thing.

Sincerely,
A Very Concerned Student
(Name withheld by request)

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Commentary should not exceed 700 words, letters should not exceed 300 words. No unsigned material will be accepted, but anonymity may be granted on request.

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