

More press councils, please

One of the recommendations of the Senate Committee on Mass Media chaired by Senator Keith Davey in 1970 was that people who care about newspapers seriously consider forming press councils.

A press council is an organization of newspapers which oversees the functioning of member papers with respect to a journalistic code of ethics. The councils are there to provide accessibility to anyone with a complaint concerning a member paper.

Members of the Council study and rule on complaints, and the paper at which the complaint is directed is bound to print the findings of the council.

Since the Davey Committee made their suggestion, four such councils have been formed. Three provinces -- Alberta, Quebec, and Ontario -- have formed provincial councils, and one city, Windsor, Ontario, is unique not only because it has its own council but because they have cross-media representation.

Each of the four councils has evolved independently of

the others, and each has its own personality and structure.

The Ontario Press Council consists of both daily and weekly newspapers, and is composed of ten members from the papers and ten members from the public.

The Ontario council has operated successfully since 1972, and is gaining confidence in its abilities as a mediator and judge. As a result, their credibility with the public is increasing, more people are directing their complaints to the council, and more complaints are being successfully resolved.

The Council has also published a brief on sexism in member newspapers and another questioning the fairness of publishing the names of persons accused of minor crimes before they are proven guilty.

It appears that some newspapers do care about journalistic integrity, and are willing to put their efforts where their principles are.

In the midst of Kent Commission recommendations calling for the estab-

lishment of government bodies to keep an eye on how well newspapers are measuring up to their own Statement of Ethics, newspapers who object to government involvement in

their papers might do worse than to voluntarily join press councils, where they exist, or start their own, where they do not.

Newspapers truly desiring to maintain a tradition of

independent, responsible journalism shouldn't be waiting for the government to tell them how this can be achieved. The industry as a whole should take the initiative upon itself.



LETTERS

Cartoon distorts Muslim image

To the Editor;

We are shocked and dismayed at the defamatory caricature by Paul Withers which was published in the **Dalhousie Gazette** on December 3, 1981.

Such biased, distorted and bigoted insinuations do not only hurt the religious feelings of fellow Canadian Muslims, but they stand as well in the way of better understanding and cordial relationships between segments of the Canadian society.

On behalf of the Islamic Information Foundation, we wish to communicate our deep

concern, protest, and request for an immediate apology. We also hope that the **Gazette** will not allow its pages to be used to promote such ethno-religious bigotry.

Thank you in advance for your understanding and cooperation for the good of all Canadians.

Sincerely yours,

Jamal A. Badawi,
Chairman,
Islamic Information
Foundation

DSA explains concern for job evaluation

To the Editor;

I would like to clarify some of the statements made in the article on job evaluation and the Dalhousie Staff Association which appeared in the January 14 issue of your paper.

First of all, the DSA is not making accusations that Dalhousie University intentionally and in spite of the existing job evaluation system is paying unequal wages for work of equal value. Although we have had some complaints from members suggesting that this may be happening, those are complaints only, and have not been proven to be true.

As I pointed out to the interviewer, thus far we have been hampered in our ability to verify

mation on the workings of the system has always been limited to only those people who actually serve on the job evaluation committees. Our representatives on these committees take their responsibilities seriously and do their work well, but this committee work is volunteer activity and is therefore done in addition to their regular jobs. In all fairness we could not ask these people to take on the additional load of reviewing the system for its objectivity in relation to possible sex discriminatory or personality influence practices. So the complaints have been taken note of, but could not really be examined properly or acted upon.

Furthermore, I expressed the

DSA's concern over the possibility that the technical and clerical committees have gradually grown apart in some aspects of their methods of evaluation over the past 6 or 7 years since the job evaluation system was introduced. This concern is based on our knowledge that the two separate committees do from time to time introduce changes to their own evaluation mechanisms. An accumulation of minor changes in each committee may, by now, have resulted in the unintended existence of two separate job evaluation systems: one for clerical work, one for technical work.

For anyone who is at all familiar with the equal pay for work of equal value concept, the relative under-rating of clerical work, which tends to be done primarily by women, is a well acknowledged fact. As a union which represents a significant number of clerical workers, it behooves us to examine more closely the value our employer places on the work done by these women. However, we cannot and did not state as a fact that the value of technical work at Dalhousie is over-emphasized in relation to clerical work. If anything, there is a pretty general sense in the DSA that insufficient recognition is given for both the clerical and technical work we do. (Hopefully, by developing a higher profile on campus in the coming years we will be able to draw more attention to the essential, but generally behind the scenes, work we do to provide students

with their education, and hopefully this will lead to greater recognition of our contributions from students and faculty, as well as the university administration.)

Our position is therefore that, given the experience in the general labour market with the relatively lower value placed on clerical work and our own suspicions about the possibility of inequality in the structures that determine our pay scales, our job evaluation system must be reviewed. Only then will we be able to issue factual statements about the relative value placed on clerical and technical jobs or the work done by women or men.

Finally, I would like to thank the staff of the **Gazette** as well as the numerous students who have maintained a continuing interest in our progress through our recent contract talks.

Yours very truly,

Delphine du Toit
Executive Director
Dalhousie Staff
Association

Baker is evil at heart

To the Editor;

Senator Mary-Lou Hames is in critical need of enlightenment. In her January 7 letter to the **Gazette**, Ms. Hames makes the naive supposition "I'm sure Mr. Martin Baker... can be a very nice person." He is, of course,

nothing of the kind.

I have known ex-senator Baker for a number of cruel years, and each day of our acquaintanceship has led me farther down the blackest river into a true heart of darkness. Baker is a genius of the horrors of this existence, Ms. Hames. There has never been a single benevolent deed documented in his wretched biography. Even in his youth his name generated torment in younger children and small domestic animals. The man is utterly destitute of compassion, of charity, of healthy Christian goodness.

Breath easy, Ms. Hames, for you have not been slighted by this twisted caricature of humanity, by this gargoyle. Baker's capacity for evil is so overwhelming that his apparent abuse of your station is but his perverse humour at play, his toying if you will. Therefore, be grateful. When the shadow of the mighty hawk passes over - but spares some shrew of the field, Ms. Hames, one tiny heart should brim in ecstatic jubilation.

Yours quite seriously,

Brent Bambury

In defense of entertainment

To the Editor:

Here are just a few responses to a couple of articles I've read in the **Gazette** concerning entertainment at Dalhousie. Firstly,
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