

Travails of the wilted flower

Brother, can you spare a rose?

Romance is hard. I'll bet even Casanova, the legendary Italian stallion, had days when the only love he got was a slap across the face. Point being, men (I'll only presume to speak for my own gender) need all the help they can get.

But one group of cupids we'd be better off without are the roving posse of rose peddlers that invade Halifax's downtown every weekend. A more interfering and ill-intentioned group I have met nowhere.

Sure, it all seems innocent, but the last thing these people care about is your love life. They're thinking commerce, and you, like me, as an 18-24-year-old male, are a prime target. You have no money, or brain cells — but you have a penis and you have a sex drive. Combine these four variables and the end of an evening out with a woman looks like this: you go to bed — *your own bed* — alone, you're the cost of a rose poorer and the girl has dumped the half-wilted symbol of your affection into a trash can along with any respect she had for you. Don't forget that she had to carry this thing with her all evening, undoubtedly to the envy of all her friends. In this case, there's only one winner — the guy she goes out

with next weekend. Remarkably, that's not you.

The red rose, as I remember it, is an object of passion. Its soft, gentle petals, contrasted with a brooding crimson colour, are supposed to evoke feelings of amour and intense longing. But the ones hawked in Halifax's various nightclubs, pool halls and coffee

shops are fittingly wilted. They don't whisper "desire", they pathetically whimper. "I'm desperate, I'm horny and you walk upright."

It used to be only a few brave souls would don a third-rate tuxedo and bully impressionable young men into forking over the dough for a rose. But the magnates behind the rose cartel have wised up. Instead of fending off burly men, we're now bombarded with mascara-ed, artificially and conventionally sexy women with rose buckets in hand. And their effect on your night can only be positive.

"Excuse me sir, would you like to buy a rose?" she asks.

Now you're in a spot. If it were a guy, you'd refuse.

But because it's a woman offering the flower, it's not so easy. But before anyone thinks it is because men think with genitalia and nothing else, let me say you are wrong. It is because

we are backwards, plain and simple. Call us sexist, or idiotic, or insensitive, or even politically incorrect — but it is far easier to be a rude bastard to another man than it is to shun a woman in a business transaction. It just doesn't feel proper.

So, if your response to rose-girl is "yes", your sincerity is questioned by your date (as it should be — if you really want to buy her flowers, do it *before* you go out) and you look like a jerk. If you say "no", you feel like a jerk. Regardless, her presence causes the natural flow of your evening to go from that of a gentle river to something resembling the counter-clockwise swirl of a flushing toilet.

But back to the point at hand. The purchase of a rose from these people, under any circumstances, says more about your personality than a woman really needs to know. If, at any time, you want to buy one of these things, stop, think and slowly put your cash back in your wallet. And don't use inebriation as an excuse — a woman in the Palace is no more impressed with a lurching, cleavage-staring drunkard buying her a dried-out, plastic-wrapped flower than most men would be with a gift bag of bath soaps from La Senza.

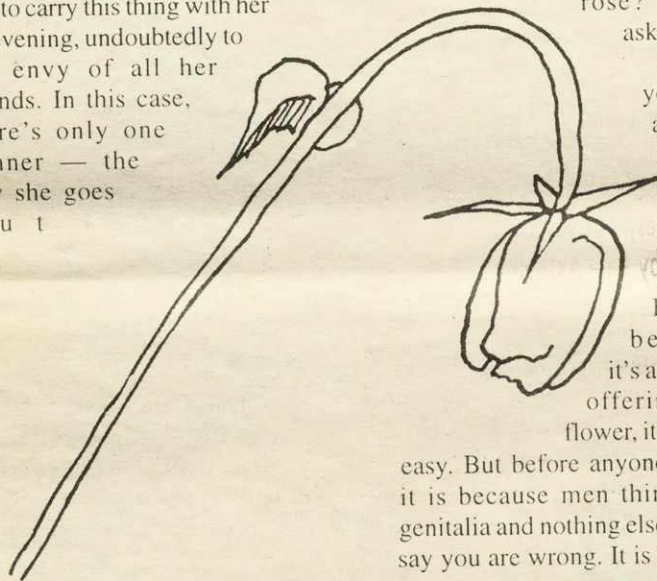
And yet some insist.

Many Haligonians haven't wised up. There's always that one moron who thinks the rose will have the preferred effect this time — even though it has failed on numerous previous occasions. Because of him, the trade continues.

Dude, the rose will not make her sleep with you, and if that's what you're resorting to, I'm guessing the ol' wit leaves a lot to be desired as well. Happy Valentine's Day. And good luck. God knows you'll need it.

GREG MCFARLANE

EDITORIAL



LETTERS

UN policy an act of genocide

To the editor,

I applaud Dr. Ingrid Swenson's courageous letter "Clinton not wagging the dog" in the Jan. 28th edition of the Gazette. It states the facts as they are.

The hypocritical policies of the US and Britain, condoned by our government, are a genocidal act against the Iraqi people, as affirmed by Ramsey Clark, the former US Attorney General, in his letter to the UN Security Council.

Denis Halliday, Director of the UN Humanitarian Mission to

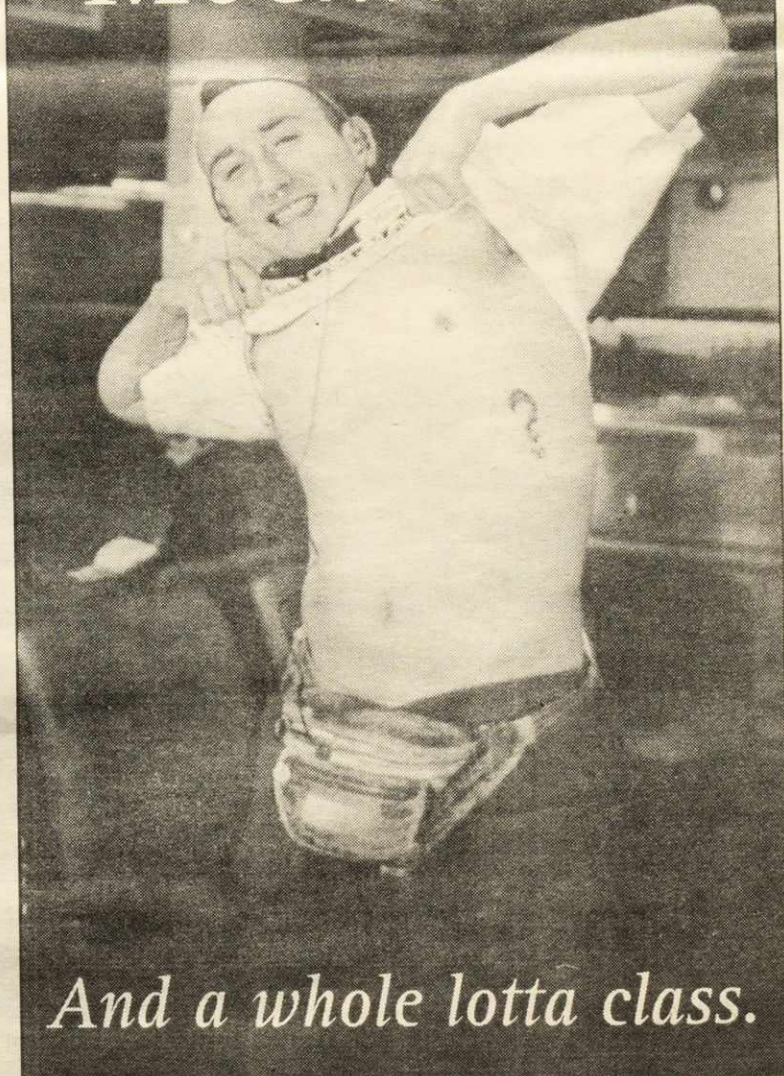
Iraq, resigned his post in disgust against these policies. He stated that six thousand Iraqi children are dying every month of starvation and disease, due to the economic sanctions. That is not to mention the phenomenal increase in the incidence of leukemia, cancer and congenital deformities caused by US and British use of depleted uranium in their bombing of Iraq in 1991. More than a million-and-a-half Iraqis have died since 1991 because of these sanctions.

If this is not an act of genocide and a war crime, I would like to know what is.

Ismail Zayid, MD



Mocktails.



And a whole lotta class.

Write for

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rm 312 SUB

meetings at 4:30 Mondays

Treats for good boys and girls.

THE DALHOUSIE GAZETTE

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Student Union Building, Dalhousie University, 6136 University Ave, rm 312, Halifax, NS, B3H 4J2.
editorial tel. 902 494-2507, facsimile 902 494-8890. e-mail. GAZETTE@is2.dal.ca

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