

Mid-term myopia

Sense of humour suffers at this time of year.

For students, late October and early November is when assignments, essays and mid-term exams converge in a mental and emotional logjam. Your frame of vision sharply narrows to enclose neatly the six, stark square feet of desk in front of your face. The lamp glaring over your head throws the surrounding world into dull shadow. Outside, the waning light reveals only skeletal trees and soggy mulch on the streets where once had been the colours of early autumn. You immerse yourself in the tidy, drab pages in front of you rather than risk dealing with the apparent desolation beyond your window.

Parental loans are a week dry and government ones haven't come in yet. Library books are running overdue. Sleep is erratic and every second person is your class — you included — is sniffing with a cold.

Your term paper isn't started yet and it's due in three weeks. When someone asks, "How's it going?", you mechanically answer by quoting a deadline. They don't notice, though — the same thing is on their mind.

You're starting to see the cranky side of the prof you loved at the beginning of term. Kim Campbell jokes are suddenly passé. You stopped going downtown with your roommate two weekends ago and are now concentrating on not strangling them, for no reason you can readily identify. You're down to the Hallowe'en candies you can't stand but for some reason you eat them anyway.

Happily, it need not be thus. The trick to mental health is seeing the absurd and doing it, stepping back and looking at the world from a different angle, or sideways, or upside down. The *Gazette* staff has pooled its creative imagination and wealth of experience to offer a handy handful of suggestions on how to beat the blues that come with this time of year, after the malls dismantle their Hallowe'en decorations but before they put up the Christmas ones.

- Sneak into the Lord Nelson and play hide and go seek.
- Cover one wall of your room with an eight by ten sheet of paper, get some water paints, and do whatever comes to mind.
- Answer your examination questions in a non-English language. Good way to find out if there's a rule against this. Mandarin and cuneiform would be particularly effective. (Note: does not apply to language courses.)
- Light a bunch of candles and give your partner a back rub with soft music in the background. Or drink and play Abba really loud. Whichever.
- Take a day off and do something totally unrelated to your studies. Or, if you don't have time, eat LOTS and LOTS of chocolate.
- Walk along Connaught Avenue and jump from front step to front step, squashing the leftover pumpkins. Pick up the mess but leave orange footprints everywhere.
- Cheer up — you could be a former Tory Member of Parliament.
- Find someone you've been wanting to be mean to all term and be mean to them.
- Rent a bad movie, get some friends together, turn the sound off and fill in the dialogue yourselves.
- Make snow angels on Citadel Hill. In the absence of snow, make leaf-mulch angels.



FALL BLUES?



SWALLOW A COATHANGER.



LETTERS

The Dalhousie *Gazette* welcomes letters to the editor. Letters should not exceed 300 words in length and should be typed and double-spaced. The deadline for letters is Monday noon before publication. Letters may be submitted on Macintosh or IBM-compatible 3.5" disk.

Grad gripes

To the editor:

I am writing to express my anger with the offensive and highly inappropriate President's Address at my convocation ceremony last Saturday, October 16, 1993.

Dr. Clark used the occasion of Convocation to expound upon his recently suggested budget and departmental cuts. These cuts are not a *fait accompli*. Indeed, the proposals are based on a projected deficit of the cost of salaries which have yet to be negotiated, and do not take into account the ongoing process of rationalization of the academic excellence and employment rates of graduates in these programs. Regardless of where one stands on this issue, however, convocation is definitely not the place for such an address.

It is ironic that President Clark's address was followed by a musical piece commissioned by the University and composed by a graduate of the Dalhousie Music Department. Dr. Clark's praise for the outstanding accomplishments of Music Department graduates clearly contradicted his attempts to justify cutting Dalhousie's music program.

Further, to add insult to injury, the honorary doctoral candidate, a Bay Street investment broker, delivered an address which amounted to a political

speech, cautioning graduates that they should not be hopeful about finding work and that they should look for jobs elsewhere, even if it meant leaving the country altogether. He stopped just short of asking for votes for the PC or Reform party. This in the middle of an election campaign! His hero appeared to be an American businessman who had become a billionaire at age thirty-seven — no doubt by using the ruthless 'me-first' tactics so precious to the Bay Street piranhas. Those of us who have spent long years living at subsistence level in order to afford an education are affronted by his remarks.

Dalhousie Alumni no doubt needs the support and donations of graduates like myself. It won't get any from me as long as President Clark and his business friends on Bay Street offend graduates and professors alike.

Kim Rilda LeBlanc
MA '93

Gaz gripes

To the editor:

In the off chance that you'll print this letter I'm writing as an ex-staff member in hope that people will become a little more aware of the hidebound political ideology surrounding the *Gazette*.

A school newspaper, which is essentially supposed to be an informative and objective disseminator of information,

has been relegated to serving the private agenda of a few bemused writers. If it wasn't for their subjective insularity they might be able to recognize the parity between the "manufacturing of consent" and the manufacturing of dissent.

How the editor-in-chief, who presumably is a graduate of history, could fail to realize the importance of informing the student population about the ideological basis of deficit spending and its practical effects on our future escapes me. Our social programs, our environment, our quality of life and our very freedom are being jeopardized by shifting our financial responsibilities onto our children. When it comes time to pay off those debts people will be reduced to a state akin to slavery, where everyone will be so clamouring for jobs they won't have the time for anything else, least of all reading to become better informed or struggling to protect the environment.

More likely history is looked upon by some people only as entertainment, rather than as a store house of collective experience that can be the road map to change.

It is precisely such people who should study their history more carefully and understand their responsibilities more fully, lest someday they be duped by another Hitler-like despot who promises them prosperity but robs them of their freedom, for the only feature of fascism they could recall was a peculiar moustache, not an erroneous ideology or subversive techniques.

Amir Izadi

the Gazette

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Founded in 1869 at Dalhousie College, the *Gazette* is Canada's oldest student newspaper. With a circulation of 10,000, the *Gazette* is published weekly through the Dalhousie Student Union by the Dalhousie Gazette Publishing Society, of which all Dalhousie University students are members. • The *Gazette* exercises full editorial autonomy and reserves the right to refuse or edit any material submitted. Editorial decisions are made by staff collectively. Individuals who contribute to three issues consecutively become voting staff members. • Deadline for commentary, letters to the editor, and announcements is 4:00 pm on Monday before publication (Thursday of each week). Commentary should not exceed 800 words. Letters should not exceed 300 words. No unsigned material will be accepted, but anonymity may be granted upon request. Submissions may be left at the SUB Enquiry Desk c/o the *Gazette*. • Advertising copy deadline is noon on Monday before publication. • The *Gazette* offices are located on the third floor of the SUB, Room 312. • The views expressed in the *Gazette* are not necessarily those of the Dalhousie Student Union, the editors or the collective staff.