

Autonomy: Act One

Last week members of the *Gazette* retired to the country to do some thinking about the paper, discuss a few ideas, and drink a lot of beer.

The most important decision to emerge from the Musquodoboit talks was that of structural independence for the paper.

The *Gazette* is currently published by the Dalhousie Student Union, although the strings of attachment are entwined around a publishing board ensuring at least of modicum of distance between the council and the paper.

The problem is this: if a large segment of our funding comes from the student union, how can we effectively cover the student union in our pages without possibly endangering that funding? In other words, we are constantly risking our supply of cookies by biting the hand that feeds us.

Why are we accountable to the student union?

Gosh, we don't know. We feel we should be directly accountable to students rather than those who have an obvious conflict of interest in dealing with the paper.

Are we paranoid? We don't think so. The history of student newspaper/student union battles is a long and bloody one. At St. Thomas University, the council

closed down their student newspaper with a series of mumbo-jumbo excuses they refused to elaborate on—with anybody. The *Sheaf* had similar threats at the University of Saskatchewan. The student union at Algonquin College in Ottawa unilaterally tried to pull the student newspaper there out of Canadian University Press with the staff members kicking and screaming in revolt. The decision was made by a council that wasn't even too sure what Canadian University Press was, aside from being a line item in the paper's budget.

The stories are endless, some of them ending in the deaths of student newspapers.

Relations with the Dalhousie Student Union have not always been smooth, and this year does not promise to be a great one with our publisher. We live with the fact that we could be next.

At some point this year we will be coming to you, the students, to ask for independence from our student council. We will be petitioning for a referendum question that would see the paper guaranteed funding and ensure fiscal and editorial responsibility.

Freedom of the press is a fundamental tenet of our society. We would like to see that freedom not only enshrined in principle, but in action.

Inroads into housing

Each spring the most dominant political issue discussed by student leaders is the increase in tuition fees.

Tuition fees make up a sizeable portion of a student's expense in a given year, but it is by no means the largest of expenses for those students who do not live at home.

The cost of housing can be as much a barrier to post-secondary education as tuition, yet we see little discussion and little in the way of proposals to deal with that high cost.

At University of New Brunswick the student union is doing something about the housing problem. They have mortgaged their student union and bought up real estate in

Fredericton to be converted into student housing.

Although one can debate the pros and cons of mortgaging a student union building, we are encouraged that some creative initiative is being taken there.

In Halifax the idea of a co-op residence built by the student unions of the three major post-secondary institutions has long been bantered about. Instead of just talking about it, and dreaming about student nirvana, we'd like them to take some action—and quickly.

Housing is not a nice little optional service—it is something basic and badly needed by students through-out the city.

exams is quite incompatible.

Some students may consider it inconvenient to have a break prior to exams if they are only going to be writing a few exams, however, those students who have four or five exams to write which are often scheduled in quick succession without a break, as is often the case with those in Science programs, the study break would be a welcomed relief and a time in which to adequately review and prepare for the impending exams.

Letters

Deadline for letters to the editor is noon, Monday before publication. Letters must be typed double-spaced and be less than 300 words. Letters can be dropped at the SUB enquiry desk or brought up to *The Gazette* offices, third floor, SUB.

Pre-exam break-Yeah!

To the Editors:

I was glad to read that Dalhousie has finally considered having a brief study break prior to Christmas and final exams. I can speak from three years of experience that completing assignments assigned during the term and studying for

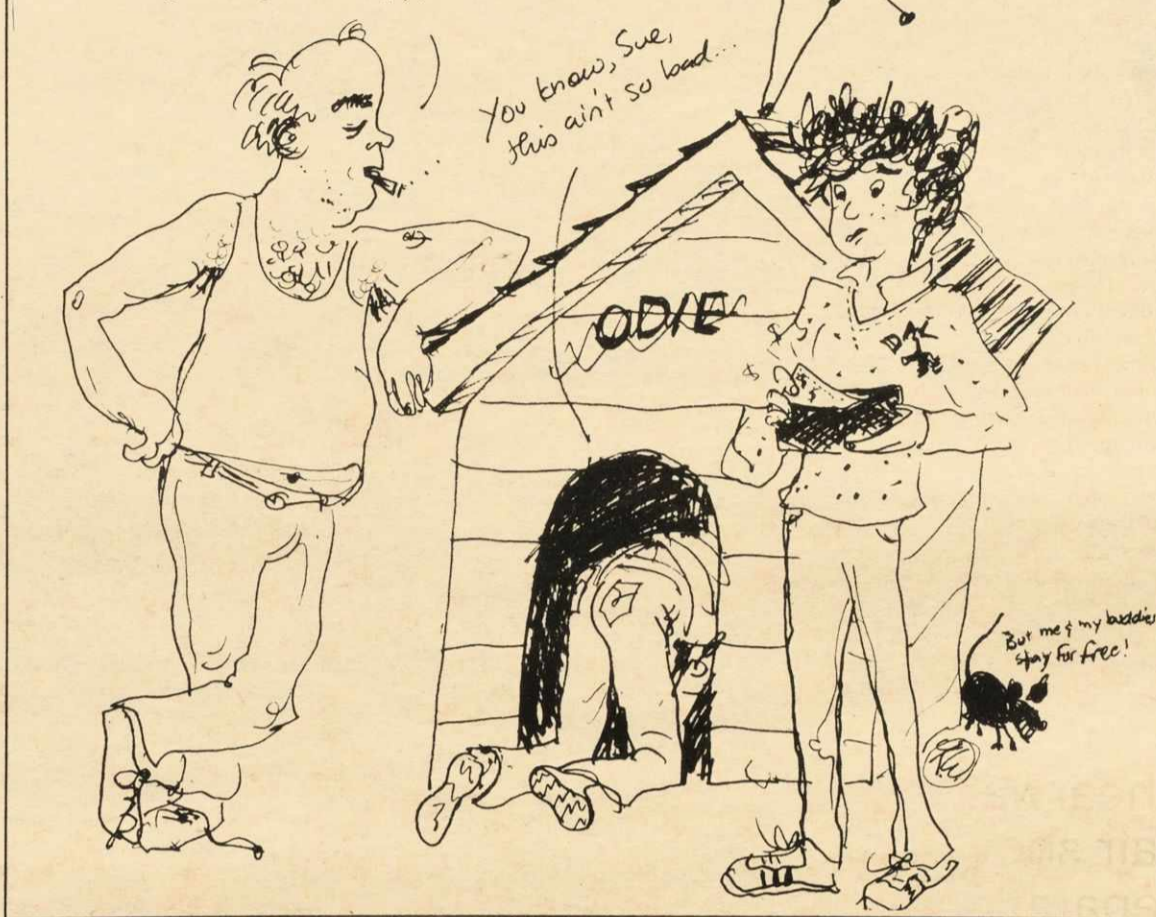
Thanks a bunch

To the editors,

Thanks a lot for delivering the *Gazette* to our school. Though we've never before expressed much

Sincerely,
John M. Embil

That'll be \$262.60 per month...
not including hydro of course...
no smoking, no visitors allowed...
no eating on premises...
oh, and oxygen will be extra...



interest and appreciation for the *Gazette*. We have indeed always been pleased to receive it.

I hope that you shall continue to deliver your paper to us and I look forward to reading it.

Thanks again.

Robert M. Tonks

Smarten-up Gazette

To the editors:

Since I first came to Dalhousie in 1981 I have been regularly reading the *Gazette*. Key issues which you have stressed through the years were the quest for world peace, an end to world hunger, arms build-up and the threat of nuclear war.

Very recently, Pope John Paul II visited our great country expressing similar views on these topics, as well as his disagreement with Communism (a view which I have failed to see in the *Gazette* since I've been at Dal).

And yet you condemn and mock the Pope with your degrading cartoons and political ideals. The very man who has the world's best interest at heart.

Smarten up, will you!!

Bernie MacDonald
Dalhousie Engineer

CFS

To the editors:

As a former executive member of the Canadian Federation of Students, I have been watching with a great deal of interest the new direc-

tion which CFS has supposedly taken under its present leader, Beth Olley.

First of all, let me say that the criticisms of Beth, made by some of the student newspapers earlier this year, are totally unsubstantiated. In particular, the implication that somehow Beth Olley is taking the CFS in the wrong direction, or that the CFS under Beth has become "right wing," is a pile of crap.

For one thing, I believe that, finally, the direction which CFS is presently taking is very much in sync with the wishes of the majority of students in Canada. Most students in the 1980's tend, for whatever reason, to be pragmatists and moderates... and Beth Olley is no exception. For the first time in, I think, the last ten years, the ideology and goals of CFS will be more reflective of those of the average Canadian student.

I should also add that I was, personally, pleased to read in your Sept. 20, 1984 issue, under the title "Olley optimistic about deficit-ridden CFS," that the CFS chair plans to ensure that CFS becomes more financially accountable to the many students who contribute to this national student organization.

I have argued for a long time that CFS has an obligation to reduce its deficit before embarking on new projects. There is no question that Beth Olley's pragmatism is a necessary step in the right direction. This does not necessarily mean that the organization is becoming "right wing," but that it has finally been forced to become a more "centre of the road" organization, reflecting the wishes of the

majority of people which it is supposed to represent. At the same time, there are still very essential radical elements within the organization to ensure that CFS maintains a progressive posture and that the national student movement fulfil its other important role as an organization which can provide leadership and enlightenment to students across Canada.

Yours truly,
Andy Knight

Registration system an improvement

To the Editors:

In last week's *Gazette* there was an article which appeared to comment unfavourable on the new registration system now in operation ("Allen says mix-up worse after changes"). The article seemed rather fragmented and I was unable to discover the true point of Ms. Allen's remarks, or what alternative she might suggest for "... freshman (sic), facing all those procedures and regulations," so I will concentrate on my observations as Chairman of the Faculty of Arts and Science Committee on Studies.

One outstanding feature of the new system is that it can alert a student to the fact that the first year requirements are not satisfied by the registration being attempted. The problem may be rectified immediately, before classes start.