



The Gazette's mandate

To the Editor:

On October 27 I attended a general societies meeting at the SUB as the representative for Medicine. The meeting was to discuss the possibility of producing an Entertainment Committee newsletter to inform all students of upcoming society events during the next week. I entered the meeting fully intending to try to squash this proposal: why spend money duplicating something **The Gazette** should be covering anyway? I expressed my sentiments to the meeting and was subsequently informed that the newsletter would be very inexpensive to produce and would hopefully reach more students than **The Gazette** does.

How could this be possible, I naively asked? Doesn't everyone read **The Gazette**? I was informed by several society representatives present that many people refuse to read **The Gazette** on principle; something about it not having anything worth reading in an average week. A copy of the new **Dal Dispatch** was circulated and I have to admit, it looked really good. On one side of a legal-sized sheet was an item of news for almost every society on campus, and miracle of miracles, there was even a section on Intramurals (something **The Gazette** won't bother to print anymore). Nothing on El Salvador or President Reagan but who really cares: **Time** and

MacLean's cover these stories pretty well.

What's wrong with **The Gazette** anyway? "Thursday To Thursday" has been taken over by off-campus groups such as A Woman's Place and the Halifax Public Library. Not a scrap of society news to be seen anywhere. If you don't like rugby or punk rock there's really not much for you in **The Gazette**. Sure, there's some news, but it's largely national or international, not much local and none about societies.

So I, once a loyal **Gazette** reader, have been converted. Once I've seen your reply to this letter, I'll not bother with **The Gazette** again, on principle. How can you call yourselves "Canada's oldest college newspaper" and a "publication of the Dalhousie Student Union" every week and sleep soundly afterwards? Something is desperately wrong when this same Student Union has to initiate another publication to get the news it considers worthwhile reading out to the students. Obviously, you are neither a **NEWS**paper nor a representative of the Student Union.

Therefore I challenge you to answer this letter in print and justify the continuing existence of **The Gazette**.

Jim Stephenson,
Treasurer,
Dalhousie Medical Students
Society

Editor's reply

Agreed, the **Gazette** has a mandate to provide students with the basic happenings around campus, including sports, entertainment and society events. The only thing preventing the **Gazette** from fulfilling this mandate is limited resources in student input.

The **Gazette** staff is, after all, no more than a group of student volunteers who conduct interviews and write articles with the time they have after courses and homework.

If you want to review a non-punk record, or tell us what is going on in your society, please do. (A phone call last week to the president of the Medical Students Association revealed that things are great in the med faculty, and when there's something students would like to hear about, she will let the **Gazette** know.)

The battle to recruit would-be staffers is an ongoing one. Readers may have noticed the development of the **Gazette** sports section this year from nothing to two pages, with intramural news to boot!

The **Gazette** has many mandates as a student newspaper. It seeks to cover a range of issues relevant and important to students, primarily those which affect students' education, including what student council is up to.

But the news does not stop there. **Time** and **Maclean's** mag-

azine and the **Chronicle-Herald** do not have a monopoly on off-campus and international news. In fact, a university community has in its resources a much richer outlook on issues, and students and the **Gazette** are here to capitalize on lectures and information available on campus.

The **Gazette** wishes to be more representative of issues students are studying. Getting away from the **Gazette's** liberal arts bias, I'm sure students are also interested in technological endeavours, in genetics, computer science, or the latest crystal technology that will soon revolutionize our telephone system.

If Mr. Stephenson wants nothing more than a news bulletin of campus events in his newspaper, I question why he is in university.

The **Gazette** is trying to improve in several areas, and I would say slowly and successfully we are doing so.

It's easy to criticize, and the **Gazette** is open to criticism, but the best way to change the paper is to do it yourself. It doesn't take 15 minutes to write a brief summary of the intramural game you played in, or anything else that interests you that other students would like to hear about.

Anyone who has visited the **Gazette** knows that we are not an elitist group of opinionated cliqueish radicals who would like nothing better than to stuff the pages full of our particular propaganda.

Consider yourself a staffer, you have all the qualifications.

At the meeting of the Communications Committee that launched **Dal Dispatch**, the **Gazette** supported the concept as something that could only enhance the dissemination of news on campus. **Dal Dispatch** is a direct and handy briefer.

Mr. Stephenson's criticism of the Thursday to Thursday page

is well-taken and the **Gazette** will take a closer look at what gets into page two. The reason there are few announcements of society events is because the societies don't tell us, whereas A Woman's Place does. It's a free service, and societies should take the opportunity to promote themselves.

If Mr. Stephenson is going to boycott the **Gazette** 'on principle' because his colleagues do, I would ask him why he has read it so far, and suggest that there's a bit more to the **Gazette** than a campus news bulletin.

How can we call ourselves a publication of the Student Union and sleep soundly afterwards? Join us some Wednesday night at layout, and experience for yourself how it feels to straggle home at 4 a.m. after putting the paper to bed. We sleep quite well, thank you, when we have time.



the Dalhousie Gazette

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The views expressed in the **Dalhousie Gazette** are not necessarily those of the Dalhousie Student Union, the editor, or the collective staff. We reserve the right to edit material for space or legal reasons, or if it is considered offensive to our readers.

The deadline for articles and letters-to-the-editor is noon on Monday. No unsigned material will be accepted, but anonymity may be granted on request. Letters should not exceed 500 words and must be typed on a 64-character line and double spaced. Local Advertising is handled by DAL-ADS — the advertising department of Dalhousie Student Union: Tel. 424-6532. Ad copy must be submitted by the Friday preceding publication.

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