



GAZETTE PHOTO BY DANIELLE BOUDREAU

# The new breed

*It all started at The Great Taste Coffee Shop. I wanted to write about the phenomenon of studying in a public place. I had been raised to believe that preparing for exams required complete silence and a desk, so the idea was beyond me. I found this new fad intriguing. I spent a week in the upstairs section smoking cigarettes and learning to relate to this new breed of university student. Here is my horrible and deranged journey.*

BY JOHN CULLEN

I was immediately out of place. Everyone was staring at me. There I was, obviously not a 'regular' and doing a very poor job at infiltrating. In the land of fleece pants and everything Mountain Equipment Co-op, a bowling shirt and jeans was as passé as Pet Rocks. The stares I received were enough to send me running. I left my latte and bolted for the front doors. At home I sulked like a beaten dog. I needed to get to know these people but I didn't know how to go about doing it. Then it hit me. You must become one to understand one. So, I went shopping.

First off, I needed some hiking boots. Fruitlessly, I scoured the city's second-hand shops. It seemed that others had beaten me and already jumped on the bandwagon. Dejected, I went into a trail shop and bought some new ones. And what a jackpot the trail store was! I was in neo-hippie heaven. I spent a small fortune on Fleece pants, fleece pullovers, fleece-lined mitts...even fleece toilet paper (reusable, of course). I bought padded North Face vests and super Gortex ski pants for ultra comfort. With the new clothes in hand, I made my second stop of the day: the hair salon.

I have short blondish hair. That does not cut it in the world of the New Breed. So, I spent \$75 on getting hair extensions and a fake, scruffy beard. I even got the hair dresser to make it look dirty and unkempt. Unfortunately, I didn't

have the time to let it get oily naturally — I had a deadline.

The last part of my fantastic voyage involved the use of my roommate's Toyota Camry station wagon. All these new clothes were great, but something was wrong. I couldn't walk into the Great Taste looking like I just bought these clothes. No, I'd look like a fool. They had to look worn; like my older brother owned them first. Throwing the heap of clothes and boots on the street, I drove over them with relish until they were respectably soiled.

That night I dressed to the nines and called my friend (one thing I learned is that it is cooler to study with someone else). Nothing like some idle chitchat to make your work take longer. Armed with Nietzsche's "Thus Spake Zarathustra," we climbed the stairs to our lair of learning. About halfway through our Café Americano's, my friend — who had obviously been effected by reading too much Nietzsche — stood up and proclaimed, "God is Dead!" A loud thunder of applause erupted from the others, littered with the occasional "right on, dude." We had been accepted by the New Breed. It did not cross the other patrons' minds that my friend was acting. To them, we were now brethren. Forgetting their "oh so important" homework, people flocked to our table for a rousing discussion on religion. Stroking my beard, I listened intently to the views put forth.

Our table was a sea of corduroy bell-bottoms and fleece. I had never been happier. At closing time we all decided to relocate to the Wardroom to carry on the conversation.

For a full week I ate, slept, and studied with these people. But, good things never last. I had to leave my new friends; the deadline was at hand. But I couldn't just leave without a goodbye, so I decided to reveal that I was a phony.

On the last night, during a conversation on the impact of Oliver Stone films, I stood up. Ripping off my beard and yanking out my hair extensions, I calmly told them that I was nothing more than an imitation of the real thing. They looked truly hurt, but that quickly turned to anger and hatred. They chased me all the way home, beating me with Psychology textbooks.

This story is an exaggeration by all definitions of the word. However, I use it to prove a point. Lately, this fad of hanging out in coffee bars has really caught on. Every time I walk into one, there are usually a dozen students with their tables piled high with books, and another dozen having "deep" philosophical talks.

The problem is, they rarely look like they are working. Most of the time they are chatting with their friends about how much work they have. And the noise level is so high, you wonder how they could get any work done even if they weren't talking. I have talked to people who say, "Oh, I get so much work done when I'm at the coffee shop." This may be true, but it seems like a one hour assignment is lengthened to five.

One night I got an evil glare from some girl who was obviously doing an essay. She looked at me like I was committing a sin by having a conversation over coffee. I guess this girl had never heard of the library. Hopefully, this is just a trend.

# Protect yourself

*Exam stress is a disease*

BY SARAH ROBINSON

Scared to pick up your books and discover the extent of your ignorance? Exam stress isn't a figment of your imagination — it's an epidemic, and it's spreading like the plague. Almost everyone suffers "final flu" at some point, with first year students and the conscientious ranking among the hardest hit. Unchecked, stress-induced illnesses can hinder academic performance to the point of failure. Fear not, there is a light at the end of the tunnel, or more appropriately, an office at the top of the Student Union Building (SUB).

The Counselling and Psychological Services Department (CPSD), located on the fourth floor of the SUB, offers a plethora of programs for your perusal, including studying effectively; time management; motivational techniques; and, how to psych yourself up for an exam. Take a deep breath. You don't have to be a nutbar to get help, but if you are a little whacked, they probably won't turn you away either.

Vic Day, a psychologist/counsellor at the CPSD, needs your patience though.

"In 1978, the waiting period to see a personal counsellor was a day at the most," he said. "Today [due to cutbacks] the average waiting period is about three weeks. Everyone who comes in will definitely be seen, it's just a matter of time."



CUP GRAPHIC FROM THE PLANT

Day described Study Skills alumni as leaving the program with valuable skills and new confidence in their academic abilities. With classes through however, the exam stress program, which runs every year from mid-November to the two weeks preceding exams, is long gone. Personal Counsellors are standing by for the needy. The time of resolutions is dawning, and once you recover, the CPSD could help you achieve some of yours for the coming term. Denial isn't a river.

# The huggable Christmas tree

BY JEFF BARTON

For the fourth year, the Ecology Action Centre, a Halifax based environmental group, is selling chemical-free Christmas trees and wreaths. The main market for these products have been homes with asthmatic, allergenic, or environmentally sensitive family members.

These are grown in New Ross, Nova Scotia by Family Trees. The company's owner, Sheldon Rafuse, uses no chemicals or fertilizers when growing his Christmas trees. Because of this, he is unable to export his product. The risk of transporting tree pests is felt to be too great. Another benefit of buying one of the Ecology Action Centre's trees is that they are cut a day or so before delivery, which decreases the amount of mold and spores that accumu-

lates. Mold and spores are what create the greatest problems for asthmatics and allergy sufferers. Quick delivery also provides a fresh tree that retains its needles for a longer period.

This initiative to provide an alternative to chemical sprayed Christmas trees takes a great deal of volunteer time. Also, it helps raise public awareness and supports the Ecology Action Centre and an environmentally friendly Nova Scotia business.

An Ecology Action Centre member describes the trees and wreaths as "nice and bushy and they don't look scrawny or starved."

To order yours, call the Ecology Action Centre at 429-2202 or see the table at the Farmer's Market held each Saturday in the Brewery Market. The last day to order is Dec. 8 and pick-up will be at Pier 21 on Dec. 16.

# Christmas presents for green-minded friends

BY JEFF BARTON

Are you stumped on what to get a friend or family member who is dreaming of a Green Christmas? Here are some ideas:

- A membership to a local or national environmental group provides an interesting source of information and an avenue to become more active in the environmental movement. In addition, this support will provide much needed funds to these groups. In Nova Scotia and New Brunswick, I would recommend the Ecology Action Centre or the Conservation Council.

- The Nature Conservancy of Canada and the World Wildlife Fund Canada have their annual Christmas campaigns to save Canadian wilderness and tropical rainforests. The Nature Conservancy has six "Homes for the Holidays" that

you can help to protect. Here in Atlantic Canada, they are trying to raise enough money to save the Grande Anse beaches, which are critical habitat for the Semipalmated Sandpiper. As with World Wildlife Fund Campaigns, the recipient will receive a certificate and information about the wilderness your gift will be helping to protect. For more information, contact the Nature Conservancy at 1-800-465-0029 or the World Wildlife Fund at 1-800-26-PANDA.

- The World Wildlife Fund has started a new gift fund called the Deliah Fund for Whale Conservation. Deliah was a right whale, one of the most endangered whales, who was killed by a boat three years ago in the Bay of Fundy. Your friend or family member will be reminded of your gift year round by a personalized certificate and a whale mobile/ornament.

- If you had something more concrete in mind, please remember only to buy what a person actually needs and will use. Overconsumption is the root of most environmental problems. A good book or magazine subscription is always helpful in becoming more informed about current environmental issues. Liz Crocker from P'lovers, a Halifax environmental store, suggests natural, chemical-free clothing such as T-shirts, socks, hemp bags, baseball caps, or wallets; Nova Scotian hand-crafted jewelry made from fish bones, shells, or old copper roofing; a paper making kit; or, a bat house for home owners. The latter is the environmentally friendly bug zapper.

As a finishing touch, wrap your gift in reused newspaper or wrapping paper saved from last year.

Good luck and Merry Christmas!!