

Surely you jest

If you talk or listen for more than twelve minutes without a laugh, your attention span begins to drop off severely. That means every twelve minutes, you should have a chuckle to keep you attentive.

How long does it take you to read this paper? Certainly more than twelve minutes. So why isn't there more humour in the Gazette?

Humour is undoubtedly the

hardest kind of writing. The fact is that everyone has a different conception of what is funny. Humour can be broken down into different styles. There is physical humour, the Marx Brothers' type. They are humorous because they bash the hell out of one another. Slapstick is hard to re-create in print (although if you come to layout night on Wednesdays, you are sure to see a good amount of this.)

The rest is wit of different sorts. Shakespeare claimed that the pun was the lowest form of humour. We have absurd humour, situational comedy, gentle insults aimed at a person or group, mocking their habits and traits.

Here it gets a little dangerous. The kind of humour found in the Gazette, unless you catch the extreme wittiness of our headlines, is humour that pokes fun at a person or group. It's dangerous

because humour is often at the expense of someone. Newfie jokes are at the expense of newfies: they re-assert the stereotype that Newfoundlanders are stupid. This is not a problem: usually it is the newfies who have the best jokes.

However, it is a problem when random faceless people like us begin to poke fun at groups "out there". Native Canadians, women, gay men and lesbians, and the handicapped have been the object of ridicule for some

time. Due to this, the Gazette established its anti-racist, anti-sexist, anti-homophobic policy.

But we want to help maintain your attention span, and we want to make you laugh. To do this, we have to pick someone to poke fun at. So, we should follow the Newfies' example. If you want to make fun of someone, find that which is laughable in yourself or find a group that has been exempt from the proddings of humour.

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Who benefits from Wilson's predictions?

The Goods and Services Tax (GST) is a 9 per cent tax to be imposed at the retail level on finished goods and services. As of January 1, 1991, the tax will be brought into effect.

The idea is to tax a wide variety of goods and services in order to raise revenue for the government. Many things not taxable now will be taxed. However, exemptions will include:

- 1) most basic groceries
- 2) prescription drugs
- 3) most medical devices
- 4) most health and dental care
- 5) most educational services
- 6) daycare services
- 7) provincially authorized legal aid

- 8) long-term residential rents (1 month or more)
- 9) financial services already untaxed
- 10) municipally funded passenger transport

Who benefits from this? Well, obviously the tax people will have a few more bucks — approximately \$5.5 billion by the end of 1991. Also, those receiving the sales tax credit — singles earning between \$6000 and \$35,000 and families of four earning less than \$40,000 — will officially benefit from an increase in the tax credit. Of course, if Michael Wilson's

predictions come true, there will be a few more jobs, and consumers will benefit from eventual lower retail prices.

Who doesn't benefit? Well, obviously the taxpayers: they lost 9 per cent every time they buy something, assuming no retail price decreases, and exceptions notwithstanding. Also, small businesses making over \$30,000 won't be overjoyed at the extra paperwork and expense needed to figure out how much tax to pay. Since most transport is to be taxed, this implies that anything transported may be more expensive (food, for instance), so there may be unhappy people in the

supermarket yet, especially in isolated areas.

The idea of replacing the old hidden sales tax of 13.5 per cent is generally accepted by the economic 'experts'. However, there is certainly some debate as to the specifics of this new tax. Some say it's too much. Others say it's not enough. Still others believe the tax covers too many goods, and other say it's not comprehensive enough, since the tax credit system would aid fairer taxation even if food were taxed. Once this is certain: this new tax cannot be, as Wilson claimed, 'revenue neutral' if it's going to bring in an extra \$5.5 billion for the government.

Is the tax 'right'? Well, it would probably be better to look at it from the standpoint not of how much more a six-pack may cost, but from more commonsense criteria. The criteria are:

- 1) What are the objectives?
- 2) Who benefits? Who gets shafted?
- 3) Have the tax people done what they said they'd do?

Now, of course, it does seem a bit unlikely the average consumer will lose too much sleep over Wilson's tax. Nevertheless, it does warrant some attention and comprehension, two things rarely exhibited by the electorate in general.

M. Asuncion

l e t t e r s

Thoughts about AIDS

Dear Gazette:

Having just read Cigana Raven's article "Have AIDS, will not travel," I must say that I am disgusted and offended by Ms. Raven's comparison of the treatment of AIDS patients by society and that of the Jews in the second world war.

While I feel compassion for AIDS patients and realize that there is a growing problem of paranoia regarding these people and the disease, I think that her comparison is neither reasonable nor fair. The horrific treatment of Jews from the late 1930s to 1945 was due to the hatred of a few warped individuals based on a personal dislike for Judaism and associated beliefs. The paranoia regarding AIDS is more tangible because the disease is spreading and it kills.

With regard to the reporting of AIDS carriers to the Department

of Health, I feel that this is not an unfair practice. Individuals with other communicable diseases such as hepatitis, meningitis, and various sexually transmitted diseases are also reported. People do not react so emotionally when these other disease carriers are reported because it is merely a means of keeping track of who has what so that others who have come in contact with a communicable disease can be contacted for treatment.

Fear of AIDS should be combated by education — not sensationalism.

Samantha Imrie

Drugs: a survivor's story

Dear Editor:

I remember a time when I said I'd never do drugs. I remember saying I'd only do drugs on 'special' occasions. I remember saying

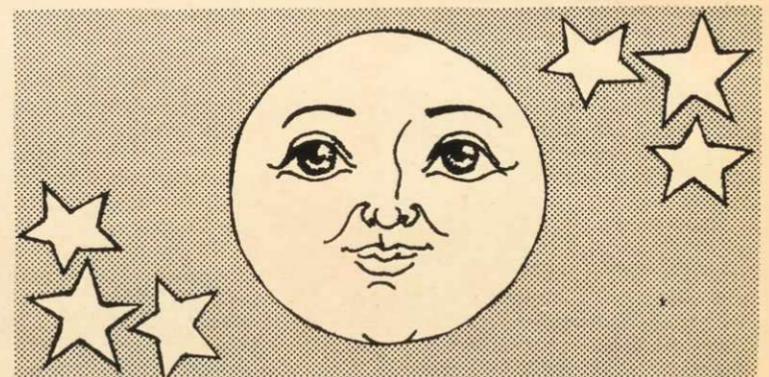
I'd only do hash. Now there's a lot I don't remember.

Hash, acid, uppers, downers, ether, coke — not exactly experience I can put on a resume. A week and a half in a psych ward was not a vacation. Choosing between food and getting high — I went hungry. My friends watched me deteriorate, tried to talk to me, but I wouldn't listen to them. I didn't have a problem. I could stop any time I wanted. I was wrong.

It was a long way back from a fringe existence — but I'm clean now. It's not easy — but I just think about all the time I lost — four years almost written off. Three brushes with death. The friends I lost, and the people I hurt along the way. A lot of painful memories that keep me clean.

I hope that by reading this, someone will stop and think about how little control they have, stop and think before they take that first toke. Don't make the same mistakes that I did. Stop and think. I wish I had.

Name withheld by request.



Equality

Dear Gazette:

I just had to comment on that, well, advertisement to promote loose values by women at Dal. I refer to 'Strange advice' by Miss Quetache who obviously is as loose as they come. Don't get me wrong, I know how to have a good time at the end of the week too. The engineers always have 'social' activities to amuse us females. But I'm shocked to see someone promoting: 1. hatred against guys, 2. the use of "...jellies and ... dental dams" ie. kinky

behaviour, 3. general unladylike behaviour.

Why does she hate men?! Is it because she has never really known any legitimate guys?! I'm not trying to insult others. I just want to point out that if we expect to be treated equally we have to treat others equally (guys too). So stuff like "sidesaddle" that article by miss Golding which is more like "Looking for Mr. Goodbar" is repulsive. Have fun sure ... but if you do it, do it for fun and not for revenge or just to satisfy sick fantasies.

Thanks.

Natalie Buchanan
Diploma, Engineer yr. 1