

Men, we can give back the night

Every September, women and children "Take Back the Night", walking through the downtown streets of various cities across Canada. The intent of this endeavour is to symbolize the right of women and children to be able to walk down a street in the evening without fearing for their personal safety. And every year, men worry, wonder, criticize and question why they are being excluded from this event.

I'll admit, the first time a friend of mine took part in the march, I asked her the same question. The argument usually presented by us liberated males is, "We want to show our support, why prevent us from doing so?"

The answer, of course, is decep-

tively obvious (Listen up, fellow males!): Women and children participate in the Take Back the Night March in the absence of men because every other night of the year, if they wish to take an evening walk, they must be part of a large group of people, or (more commonly) they must be in the company of one or more other people where at least one of those people is a male. In this way, the March is also an annual reminder of what society has become, because there may never be a time in the future when women can walk alone at night.

Granted, these days it is also less safe for one or two males to walk downtown at night, but for women and children, walking at night alone

or even in pairs is out of the question. For this reason, just once a year, women and children want to be able to walk in the evening without needing a male presence to make them feel secure. By criticizing the exclusion of men from the March, we blunt the message: Walking on a street is not a privilege which is accorded to the person who chooses an appropriate companion, it is the right of every member of society.

If we, as men, truly consider women to be our equals, we should agree that the night of the March is theirs, and we should try to share every other night of the year with them. Being excluded from the Take Back the Night March is not an affront to men, it is an effort to assert

the equality of women and children.

For the same purpose, let me suggest something which might make our nights safer for all people, women, children and men: When you're walking behind a lone person (or if you're in a group of two or more males walking behind a smaller number of women or children), get a little exercise by doing two things: (1) Cross the street to the side opposite from them; and, (2) Pass them, so that you are in front of them, where they can see you.

To quote the editorial from last week's Gazette: "...if all [the woman] can see is a shadow out of the corner of [her] eye, all men look the same." This doesn't mean that women see each and every male as a potential

rapist, but it does mean there is no way for them to know.

Because there is no way for a woman or child to know whether a male (or group of males) is dangerous or just walking in the same direction as them, I don't think it would inconvenience us males a whole lot to walk ahead of them or on the other side of the street when it's dark, or late, or they're alone. We just might be able to give them a little bit more peace of mind.

Richard Lim



Less for our \$

Have you ever gone to the library looking for a book or journal only to find that Dal doesn't have it? That not a single university library on Novanet has it? It's happened to me more than once. Every year it seems that Dal's libraries get back on yet another journal; each year fewer new books are bought.

Have you ever tried to get into a class that you need to take in order to graduate, only to find that it isn't being offered that year or that it is already full? It's happened to more than one friend of mine.

Why

Each year for the last five years students at Dal have had to face a substantial increase in their tuition only to find that each year they receive less for their education dollar. The university has entered a phase of complement reduction, which is to say that in general the number of professors in each department has decreased so that fewer classes are offered. Then there's rationalization. Universities across the Maritimes are trying to consolidate programs that they feel are redundant and thus cost ineffective. Dalhousie has gone so far as to consider axing its music department, its costume studies department (one of only two in the

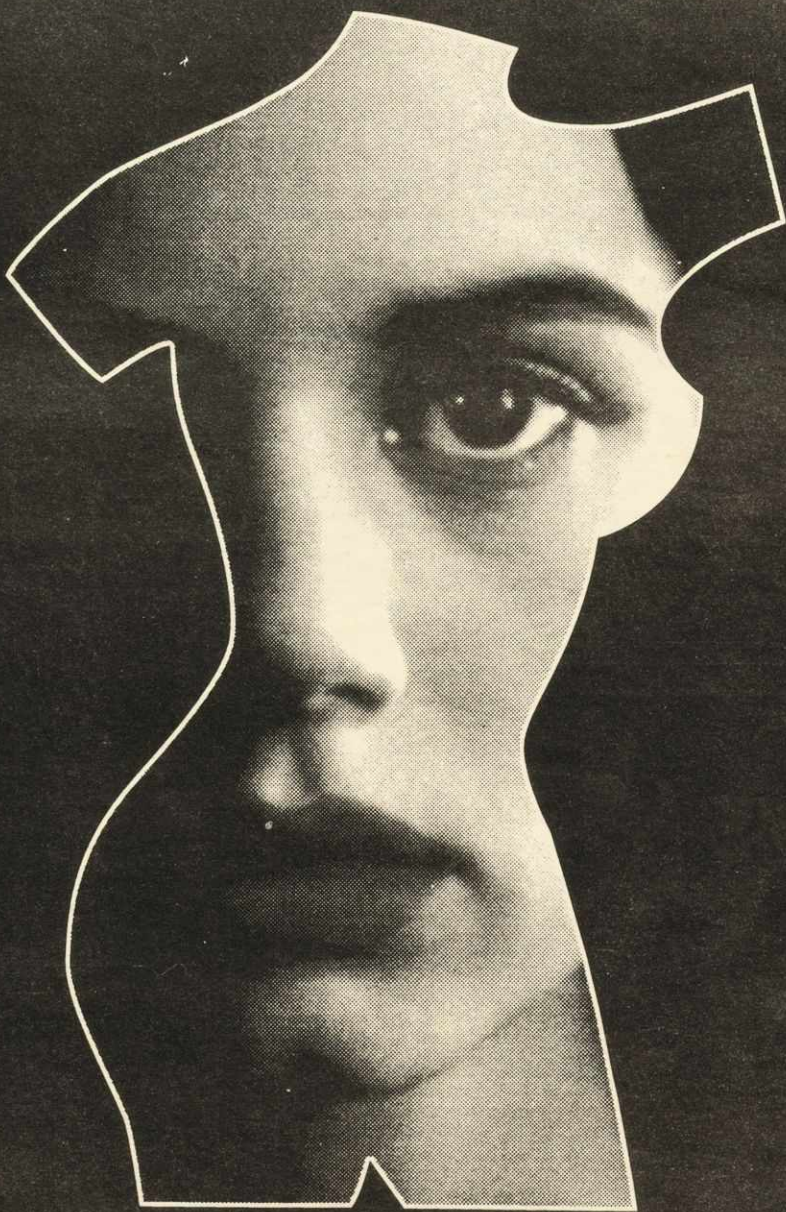
nation) and its MPA program. Each and every year students are being asked to pay more for less.

When I first started here at Dal, science students had their own library, the Mac Donald Science Library. It had a beautiful reference room with solid wood tables and chairs. There was a large fire place at one end and large vaulted ceilings overhead. It made doing research bearable, if not a downright joy, on those cold winter days. Now the old library has become the domain of the administration. Across from the old library stands Dalhousie's Faculty Club, a place where profs can get a cheap lunch. It's also a place that is running a debt of over \$500,000 and it seems the university doesn't care.

More for less. It's quite a concept if you're in business and you can pull it off. Each year the customer receives just a little less and they have to dig deeper into their pockets. Unfortunately, this has been happening to a university education as well. I honestly believe that the quality of education at Dal has declined since I first started here, while my tuition has more than doubled. And I resent that very much. You should, too.

Oscar Mire

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