

The Letters/Opinions section of the Gazette is meant as a campus forum for all Dalhousie students. The opinions expressed within may not necessarily be those of the Gazette staff or editorial board. We welcome all submissions, but reserve the right to edit for style and content. It is the Gazette's policy not to print racist, sexist or homophobic material.

OPINIONS

Beautiful bodies: the easier road to education

Being a student at Dalhousie for three years, I have noticed an interesting trend. After walking on this campus every weekday, I see that Dalhousie is a place filled with "beautiful people". Everywhere I look, the proportion of physically attractive females at Dal is higher than anywhere else I spent the same amount of time in.

Now I know that people who just read that last sentence are going to ask, "well, what is physically attractive?" And every definition is different. But look around at the students at Dal, mainly members of the sex *you* prefer. I feel it's safe to say that the proportion of the people that *you* find physically attractive is greater here than in the average population you saw before coming to university.

How did I come up with this idea? Well, aside from what I see, here are some general facts that I think everyone can acknowledge partially exist.

Our society places great importance, if not the greatest importance, on looks. Our economy depends on everyone looking in the mirror, and occasionally not feeling

up to par to whatever the mass media encourages us to look like. Usually, stars on television, in movies and so on are considered by the masses as physically attractive, and we all, at some point, want to look good to others as well. Also, attractive people usually have more opportunities at relationships than the people that society considers less attractive.

As much as people may disagree, honestly think about this: say someone who looked just like a movie star, considered the most attractive person for a recent year in magazines, were to all of the sudden come to Dal. Aside from their resemblance to a famous star that society has drooled over, they could be a date rapist, serial killer, or a really nice person. Initially their appearance is all you know.

Wouldn't you be more inclined to date them over the average new student, who is known only for his/her looks initially as well? Wouldn't that unknown star be the one you want at your parties, your pub crawls, as your date to a semi-formal over the average guy/girl that you got to know in a class?

People could say that they were friendly looking and the average looking student was in a bad mood and looked angry, or the star look-alike had a better personality. But guys, if a woman that looked like, oh, let's say Sharon Stone, or Cameron Diaz, and ladies, if a man that looked like Mel Gibson or Leonardo DiCaprio, were to walk by you visibly angry, would you honestly say that their attitude completely turned you off? Would personality matter as much? I will confidently say that your answer would be more likely to be no for them, and more likely yes to a less attractive person.

What does all this have to do with the large proportion of physically attractive people at Dalhousie? Physically attractive people are naturally selected to do well in society, one obvious result of that phenomenon is the over-proportionate amount of physically attractive people at Dalhousie — a post-secondary institution. And while finance is quickly becoming the single factor in determining who goes to university, you still need the 70 percent average, and it seems

that more physically attractive people are making the grade.

Do they work just as hard? Yup. Are they marked easier? Nope. They work just as hard and deserve the same amount of credit. The difference is, the things that are important to a teenager from grades 9-12 (or 13) are easier for them to achieve than the less attractive student.

Things like finding a boy/girlfriend, having friends, being popular and being wanted, are all things that students at that time focus on. And if they are able to get the previously mentioned things due to their greater physical appearance, wouldn't this make them happier students than those less attractive? Wouldn't school be a place that they enjoyed more? I think you could safely say that would be the case. And with those vital things coming easier, wouldn't that provide a better chance for them to focus on grades over the student that cannot get some or any of those things due to a less attractive physique?

While good appearance only gives the "beautiful people"

opportunities for better grades, they are opportunities most would kill for in high school. And although a great personality can cause exceptions in this rule, I believe that a person's personality is greatly affected by the way others treat them. After all, if you had a lot of people noticing your "beautiful" appearance, wouldn't a friendly personality be easier for you to have than if they were ridiculing you everyday?

Unless an unattractive student is fortunate enough to go to a high school that didn't focus on looks (as I did), their marks most likely would have fallen short of what they could have been if school, and life in general, had given them the smoother social ride that is enjoyed by physically attractive people.

I often wonder how many potential doctors, lawyers, dentists, engineers, artists, musicians, philosophers and so on, who could have changed our world for the better, did society select for extinction?

WALTER DERENGOSKI

From 1998 to 2000 in one night

I know I was around on New Year's Day, not on the floor from too much revelry, but awake and aware of this 1999. But I think I might have missed it.

The newspapers only had reviews of 1998 and panic reports about 2000. Perhaps never before has the *new* year been mentioned so little on New Year's. Somehow we skipped an entire year.

Now luckily, 1998 has been largely reviewed, our women and men of the year have been chosen, and we can settle into the current year. But we're not. The *Telegraph Journal* back in my home New Brunswick started a segment in the business section called "Y2K: 364 Days" (this was on January 2). The first papers of 1999 talked exclusively of 1998 and 2000. The *Globe & Mail* had already selected the "100 Most Important Persons of the Millennium". Now, I'm still convinced, like many, the century ends in 1999, and the millennium ends in 2000. So the list is at least a year-and-a-half early. But that doesn't matter. A TV producer in Britain is preparing for "Nooky Night" to properly inspire April 10 conceptions for millennium babies (but you need to start *thinking* about it on March 17, apparently). The year 2000 is here now, packaged, signed, sealed, and delivered conveniently to your door, for a reduced price of only 12 easy payments of \$29.95 (please add GST, HST, and all 110 taxes; not available to residents of Quebec).

Now perhaps we have a fear of facing the present. The wave of fear about 2000 is hysterical and over-powering. *Everything* is a sign of impending doom (including our Christmas marks!). We do not know what will happen in less than a year

and I suspect there are few who do, conspiracy theories aside. Ignorance is a powerful weapon — but knowledge is even more so when it can be commodified and sold to the ignorant as a solution.

A commentator on *Space: The Imagination Station* (yes I watch it — but can you honestly turn down a 14 hour marathon of *Planet of the Apes!*) explained panic about 2000 to be a conspiracy by government and business to make us forget the problems we face now as individuals and as a society. Again, conspiracies aside, we are worried more about whether our electric ear-scratcher will work on New Year's Day 2000 than any poverty-stricken box-inhabitant. If you think we will be without power for several months next year, perhaps you should learn the ways of the street-sage who lives without power every winter.

There are big things happening this year — the 250th Birthday of Halifax, the creation of the territory of Nunavut in Canada's north, the return of Macao to China, another possible civil war in the Balkans (where too many wars have begun in this past century), the move to a united Europe, even a royal wedding. There are so many interesting things going on *right now* and we're missing all of them because we can't let go of 1998 or 2000. Is the here and now so frightening?

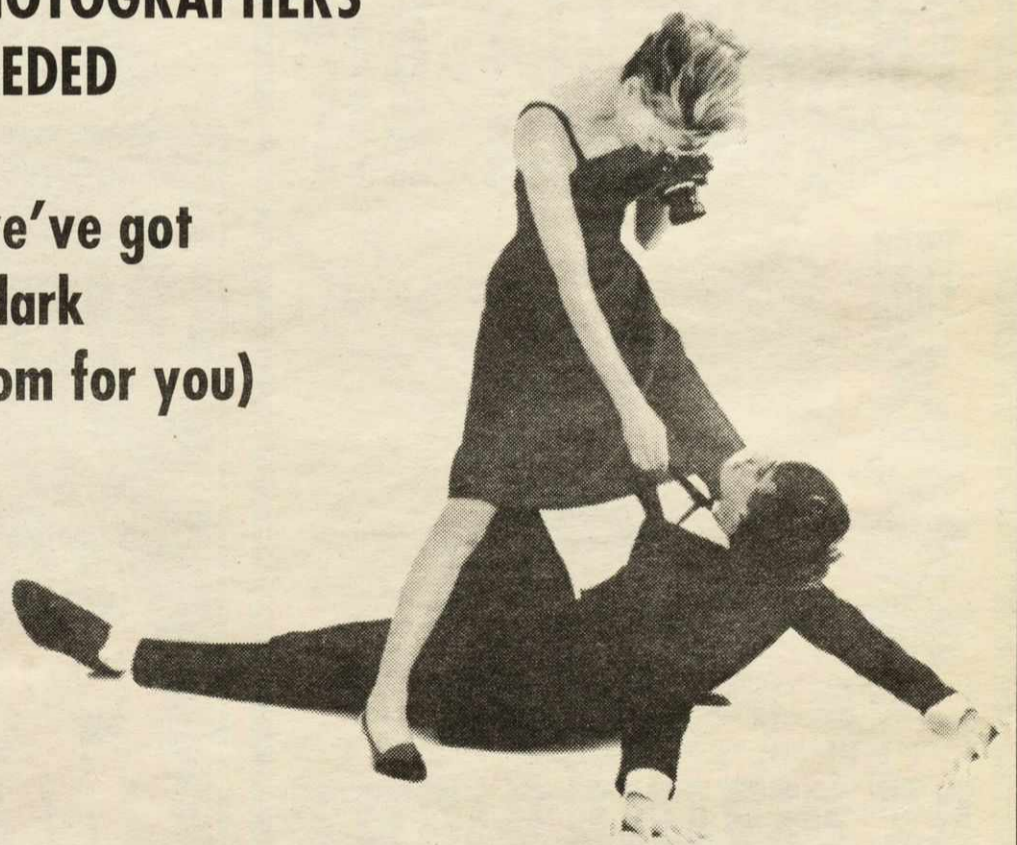
So I am living in 1999. Here I am, watching the world trying to draw attention away from the advertisers toward issues of joy and suffering right now. *Now* — careful, if you don't pay attention, you might miss it.

TRISTAN STEWART-ROBERTSON

SHOOT PEOPLE

PHOTOGRAPHERS
NEEDED

(we've got
a dark
room for you)



THE GAZETTE

room 312 SUB, 494-2507
meetings every monday 4:30pm.