

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

The Mask of Terroux

In last week's edition of the Gazette, Kathleen Terroux submitted a piece on the nature of student politics. More specifically, it dealt with the issue of council members influencing others with their opinions. To be understood, I genuinely appreciate Ms. Terroux concern for the student body. However, I feel that it is useful to examine the issue from another angle as well.

In her article, Terroux asserted that DSU members should refrain from making statements that could influence others when making decisions. Citing DSU president Ted Chiasson's comments about the current impeachment, Terroux asked "how councillors are expected to make an informed and unprecedented decisions when they are not presented with an unbiased

view from their leaders," in reference I believe to Chiasson's actions. This for several reasons makes no sense to me.

First of all, all opinions are by definition 'bias' as they belong exclusively to each individual. Terroux concedes this point later on her article when stated that "I have my own biases, as does anyone who writes an opinion piece. ... but I love Dal."

That's very nice. However, because the fact that Terroux loves Dal has absolutely no bearing on the issue whatsoever, her argument is reduced to the fact that she accepts the existence of bias as a part of human nature on a whole.

This brings me to a second point. What Terroux is effectively suggesting is that the opinions of student leaders have no place in

issues such as Nick Murphy's impeachment. While I will totally ignore the impeachment ordeal, I would like to comment on this idea of withholding opinions while serving on council. As representatives of the student body, individuals such as Ted Chiasson are specifically elected to council on account of their effectiveness in government. Who wants a leader with no backbone, one who simply states the fact and nothing else? Of course people are going to express their opinions on certain matters. If DSU reps were not allowed to do so, they would be nothing more than information databases, there to do nothing other than 'give the facts'. What student governments need are direction, and direction often comes from those willing to speak their minds.

Terroux is correct in saying that the student body often lacks the appropriate information necessary to make decisions. However, that is why we elect persons whom we feel will act in our best interests, and whose opinions are in alliance with our own. On the same note, Dean Naugler's "slandering" of Dan Clarke, while perhaps unwarranted, indicates a certain degree of backbone on his behalf. He's not

afraid to speak his mind, a quality to be respected and not rejected.

I urge Kathleen Terroux to reconsider her opinion. The kind of government representation she would like to see is not representation at all. I only wish Ted Chiasson had not retracted his statements, not for the sake of Nick Murphy, but for the sake of the student body and its leadership on a whole.

Peter Tsuluhas

Politically Corrected

After reading Kathleen Terroux's April 1st article "Politically Correct", I feel compelled to respond to a few points raised.

My first concern is regarding her description of what took place at the Dalhousie Science Society (DSS) AGM on March 29th. Ms. Terroux states that I "slandered" one of the candidates who was running for a position as a DSU representative. The fact is what I expressed during that meeting does not constitute slander. Unfortunately, there are no minutes to either prove or disprove Ms. Terroux's allegations. Why? Because the discussion on the candidates was held during an in-camera portion of the meeting.

This section of the meeting was a confidential, open forum for expressing our opinions about the candidates, and regardless of what was said and by whom, it was understood that it was not to be repeated openly. Needless to say, I

was shocked to read that Ms. Terroux (who has just been acclaimed the new president of the DSS) had submitted an opinion piece to this paper in which she not only discusses confidential issues, but also accuses me of slander. I think this is a disgraceful way for the DSS and their new president to start off the new year.

Ms. Terroux's article next takes up a more contentious matter, the motion for impeachment of VP Internal (Nick Murphy) made by the rest of the DSU Executive. The article states that councillors cannot be expected to make an informed decision because of the biased opinions of their leaders. I do not feel that we resort to "political manipulations;" rather, I think that we would be very poor leaders if we were not willing to take a stand on issues of accountability and present our opinions clearly.

Ms. Terroux closes her article by urging us to realize that we should be more understanding and

that "sometimes compassion is the best example." In terms of Mr. Murphy's job performance, the rest of the Executive has in fact been very forgiving. We have had informal talks with him throughout the year expressing concerns, only to be let down time and again. Job performance aside, we believe that the incidents which occurred at the DSU's Student Appreciation Night, in which Mr. Murphy verbally assaulted one student and physically assaulted another, are in themselves serious enough that we had little choice but to make the motion for impeachment.

We all regret that our year will not be ending on a positive note. However, we firmly believe that the DSU Council will review all of the information presented to them in an objective manner and make a decision that they feel comfortable with.

Dean Naugler
VP Community Affairs 1998-1999

Not to long ago I had the pleasure of sitting on the DSU's riveting Election Trail '99 forums. Here the respective candidates were able to showcase to us the twenty students in attendance and what they had to offer us as students. Boring shit, you are probably thinking. Well it was, until a certain Mr. Brian Kellow took the floor in response to one of my friend's questions.

To be brief, the question had to do with the accountability and how as future presidents and vice-presidents the candidates could make themselves more accountable to the students.

To be even briefer, Mr. Kellow's response sucked. Incised about something my friend said, "Daddy B" responded with the eloquence and tact of a fourth grade schoolchild.

The question went something like this; "Every candidate here keeps referring to accountability and representation. In my three years here, and despite being on campus about 8 hours a day, I almost never see the people that have been chosen to represent me. What do each of you plan to do, if elected, to bring yourselves nearer

to the students you represent?" A reasonable question.

Now while I cannot remember exactly what was said during Mr. Kellow's response, I do remember the words, "No, I will not give you a break," and "you are totally wrong," appearing somewhere within his answer. From what I understand, Mr. Kellow may have taken offense to the question as he was a member of last year's executive council. However, perhaps the reason why I cannot remember the rest of his answer was because it was poorly answered and poorly delivered.

But what really struck me as odd about the entire situation was the manner in which Mr. Kellow replied. He was abrupt, unresponsive, and rather insulting. If my friend had not been of stronger character, he may have been discouraged from participating in student politics again. Yes, the question may have been critical, but Brian, that is part of the job. If questions, criticisms, and concerns will be handled in such a manner in the future, the student body will only become even more alienated from the union. Well done. Congratulations on your victory.

Peter Tsuluhas.

