

# editorial

## No explanation necessary

Dalhousie's corridors are thick with theories these days. Everybody's got an explanation of why Howard Clark did what he did, why he did it in the way he did and at this particular time. Two weeks after he shook the foundations of the university with his 'vision', people are still speculating about it.

When people feel overwhelmed by forces beyond their control, conspiracy theories abound. They help to bring a sense of order to the atmosphere of crisis, and stave off the desperate feeling that goes with being left out of the loop when momentous change is taking place.

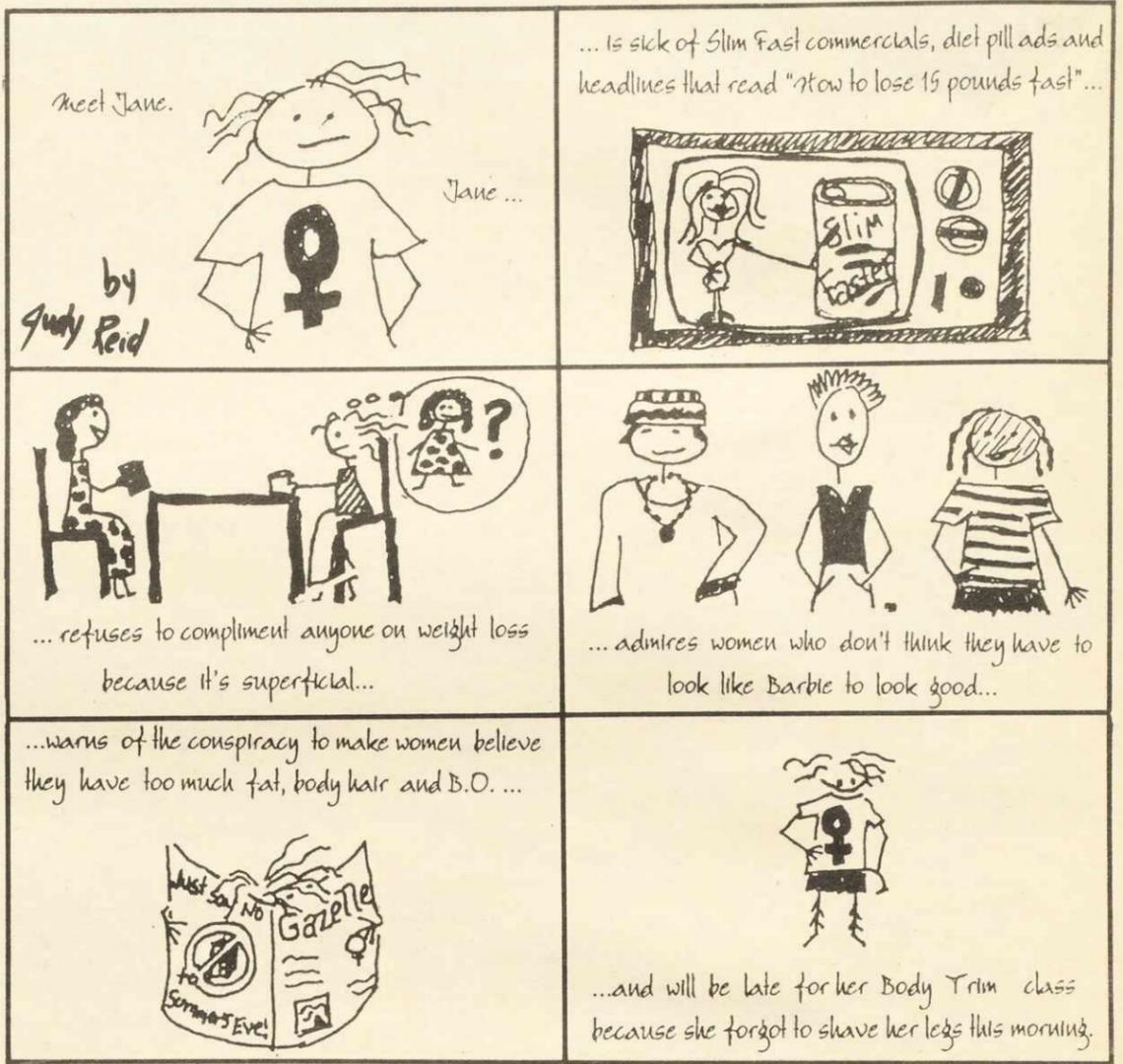
The number, variety and intensity of rumours and theories which are circulating may serve as a measure of the extent to which most of the university community feels powerless in these times. Cutting costs appears to be the dominant imperative at work, and the more the media zeroes in (in its coverage of university, provincial and national news) on the necessity of reducing deficits, the more many people are cowed into thinking there are no other options.

Not being personally inclined to paranoid inventions, I nonetheless have come to harbour the suspicion that powerless is how we are supposed to feel in this situation. Howard Clark has repeatedly emphasized that failure to support deep cuts in the form he has described is to risk allowing Dalhousie to collapse into "mediocrity". Meanwhile, as the Faculty Association has argued, Clark has preempted due process and attempted to secure a *fait accompli*, by personally and publicly targeting certain programs for elimination, over the heads of faculties and before the Senate and the Board of Governors have met to discuss the idea.

Of course, this is not the only interpretation of the budget proposals. Some have suggested that by singling out the performing arts, Clark had hoped to draw out wealthy patrons of the arts in Atlantic Canada to revive these programs. It has also been postulated that the timing of the announcement and Clark's hard-line approach to defending the cuts were intended to force federal politicians on the campaign trail and provincial ones drawing up budgets to confront the issue of underfunding for postsecondary education. Still others are speculating that by recommending deep cuts and expecting public outcry, Clark has given himself room to eventually retreat (having made his point), withdraw some of his proposals and ensure the remaining ones will be accepted as more moderate. As well, at least one writer (see page 7) has proposed a link, at first not readily apparent, between the proposed cuts and a rationalization scheme to consolidate large, cheap, undergraduate programs in an Arts Centre-turned-mega-classroom.

Despite the fact that, as one student asserted to me, "These guys are business majors — they're not stupid," most of these theories smack of desperate hopes and give the budget-cutters too much credit for creativity. At bottom, they have adopted a crude, unimaginative approach to saving money, while attempting to make Dalhousie run more and more like a business, with profit-inspired motives, instead of the institution of higher learning that it is.

Ryan Stanley



## LETTERS

The Dalhousie *Gazette* welcomes letters to the editor. Letters should not exceed 300 words in length and should be typed and double-spaced. The deadline for letters is Monday noon before publication. Letters may be submitted on MacIntosh or IBM-compatible 3.5" disk.

### Cuts opposed

To the editor:

I would like to protest the proposed changes to the Masters of Library and Information Studies program at Dalhousie University. Dalhousie's MLIS program has a national and international reputation for excellence, and it is one of the few programs in Canada which are accredited with the American Library Association. It is also the only such program which exists east of Montreal.

Libraries are cultural institutions, and a vital part of the life of every community. Such a proposal should not have been made without the serious consultation of the affected parties, and without more serious consideration given to the effect such a loss would have on the larger community.

Gwen Schmidt

and mature students still tottering about campus who, incidentally, all have pleasant memories of many a joyous night in the Grawood when they first began their university experience. I, for one, remember slamming back a few ales in Ye Olde Grawood way back in 1985 (for those without the benefit of a calculator, that's eight years).

So why, then, is the Grawood management trying to get away with this? Are they trying to tell students who ate, drank and table-danced there prior to 1988 that they imagined the whole thing? Because if that's the case then they must know this: we will not forget. Maybe the next time the Grawood hires a promotions person, they'll take the time to brief them on the history of the place.

Randy Nussbaum

The primary debate over the last few months has been over process. Additionally, much of the debate has centered around whether or not CFS is a valid organization and whether the Union should be a part of it. I would argue that is not the primary issue of concern.

The issue is to ensure that all Dalhousie students have a fair opportunity to voice their opinion on the issue.

Many councillors feel that the only way to represent their constituents is to ensure that the fee increase is subject to a referendum, on which all Dalhousie students may vote. Sending this decision to a general meeting with fifty people voting is not the answer. The only choice is to hold a referendum. Despite scheduling difficulties or a referendum at the beginning of April, I feel that it is the only appropriate solution to this question.

This question, when brought before council, has often involved hours of debates that seems to go in circles. In the end, very little seems to be accomplished.

Nevertheless, I honestly feel that the systems which ensure fair representation of the student body are working, that these debates are a sign that the systems are in fact working for students.

Finally, I urge students on the personal, department society and faculty society level to get involved with this decision. Students should demand the right to make the decision regarding our future with CFS. And should the question go to referendum, students should demand that outside organizations (such as CFS, SUNS and the PC Youth) stay out of Dalhousie's elections, and allow students to make their own decision.

Waye Mason  
Council Representative  
Faculty of Arts and Social Science

### CFS stay out

To the editor:

Recently, there has been much controversy regarding the Canadian Federation of Students (CFS) and Dalhousie's current status with the organization. As the issue was raised again at this Sunday's Student Council meeting and was subject to considerable debate, I feel that I should write and help clarify some of the factors surrounding the current debate.

Currently, the Student Union is in the middle of a process which will determine whether all Dalhousie Students will pay an additional two dollars for the CFS fee, bringing the total paid to six dollars a student. Recent debate at the Student Council has been regarding how to proceed with accepting or rejecting this increase, with the understanding that a rejection would almost assuredly lead to our withdrawal from CFS.

### Birthday hoax?

To the editor:

There is a conspiracy afoot at Dalhousie, and it involves the Grawood lounge.

Recently, an ad appearing in the September 23 edition of the *Gazette* declared that the aforementioned Grawood would be throwing a birthday bash. Herein lies the controversy: the ad stated that the Grawood was five years old.

What kind of blatant misinformation is this? Did Grawood management think that they could pull a fast one on new students by arbitrarily picking an age for the popular bar and having a party? Their diabolical plot only had one flaw — they forgot all about graduate, medical, law

Founded in 1869 at Dalhousie College, *the Gazette* is Canada's oldest student newspaper. With a circulation of 10,000, *the Gazette* is published weekly by the Dalhousie Gazette Publishing Society, of which all Dalhousie University students are members. • *The Gazette* exercises full editorial autonomy and reserves the right to refuse or edit any material submitted. Editorial decisions are made by staff collectively. Individuals who contribute to three issues consecutively become voting staff members. Deadline for commentary, letters to the editor, and announcements is noon on Monday before publication (Thursday of each week). Submissions may be left at the SUB Enquiry Desk c/o *the Gazette*. • Commentary should not exceed 500 words. Letters should not exceed 300 words. No unsigned material will be accepted, but anonymity may be granted upon request. • Advertising copy deadline is noon on Monday before publication. • *The Gazette* offices are located on the third floor of the SUB, Room 312. The views expressed in *the Gazette* are not necessarily those of the Dalhousie Student Union, the editors or the collective staff.

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Vol 126 No 6 October 7, 1993

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