

# opinions

## King's isn't just a collection of jokers

I am a student at King's College. Yes, King's, that strange corner of Dal campus whose spire can be seen from the Dal A&A building, looming over the top of the bays like the mast of a ship.

It seems that King's is the place most people love to hate. Our image is conservative, elitist, Upper Canadian, snobby, 'soul-less', introspective, and obnoxious when we associate with the outside world. It is no wonder too, if you look at our representation at Dal and in the community. Whenever some person with long hair, hiking boots, a patagonia sweater and a bong walks by, everyone supposes that he or she is from King's.

In defense of King's we are not really what we seem. The nature of our purpose and community as a university is both misrepresented and misunderstood. King's is a small arts college. The area of our specialty is the arts, focussing on the interpretation and creation of ideas. Arguably,

that is the purpose of all universities, but at King's this is our focus. Everything we read, study, and hear in lecture teaches us to question popular opinion and to create our own ideas from scratch. This approach to academics has a tendency to creep out into everything else we do, instilling the desire to make everything unique and to push the thresholds of convention. Almost everything we do at King's ends up having a slant towards this method of doing things. Some of what is produced is admittedly crap, but sometimes something really good is produced as a result. The way people dress and present themselves is also reflective of this experimental, creative atmosphere. There are a great deal more green-haired heads and pierced nipples at King's than at your average university. This all-encompassing approach to a way of thinking is what characterizes colleges as opposed to university. Rather than teaching courses, we are being taught a way of

thinking. (In theory, of course.)

People seem to think that we are elitist. It is true to an extent, all universities are elitist. The very process of writing an exam is elitist in itself. Compared to other universities, however, King's is probably much less elitist in nature. In terms of individual elitism, it is almost impossible to fail the foundation year, and it is equally impossible to get an A+. What results is that most of us are in a bulk mass of B and C achievers. Motivation for doing your reading is found by most not in the promise of a good mark, or passing, but interest in the topic at hand. In terms of us being elitist in comparison to other universities, the only way you could say we are advanced is in the fact that we are specialized. In terms of content, our courses vary from the average in terms of approach, but this by no means makes them harder, or elite in any way.

It is true that our entrance requirement is slightly higher than Dal,

but entrance requirements are only a result of the demand for a particular university, they are not a means of ensuring that you only get people who attained high averages in high school. Arguably, high school averages are by no means a measure of intelligence anyway. Ironically, when you consider what a degree in liberal arts makes available to you, the area in which we are specialized is likely to thrust us into very limited careers, economically speaking, anyway.

I am from "Upper Canada." So are almost half of the people at King's. I own hiking boots, but I purchased them for use at camp and kept them for winter. I have long hair, that is the style I prefer; it is curly and looks dumb short. I went to boarding school in St. Catharines. I don't know how to ski, and I don't own anything made by Patagonia or similar companies. I can sympathize with people who hate ostentatious, pretentious assholes who have lots of money because their parents are rich and think that it somehow makes them better than other people. People like that are usually unpopular in Ontario as well. Not all rich people are like that, and not all people from Ontario are rich.

Not everything that King's does in the greater community is obnoxious, or at least meant to be offending. We do contribute positively to the community in our own way. The St. Andrew's missionary society helps to run soup kitchens. The King's Women's Action Committee raised money for a battered women's home. The Coast was started and is run by former King's students. The Chestnut tree theatre group, centred in Halifax was begun by King's students. Some of these may be considered "token acts," but these sorts of token acts demonstrate that we actually give a shit, and are a leap away from doing nothing. Many of the other things we do in the community may be obnoxious, but that is partially the result of our academic environment; it is a part of how we are being trained to think to do things which aren't conventional, and to take convention and wrench it by the balls.

The next time you see a long-haired Upper Canadian with hiking boots and a patagonia painting a large phallus on the side of a building, he may be from King's, but he really isn't all that bad of a person.

James W.M. Ross

### Dalhousie Arts Society General Meeting and Elections

March 9, 6:30 pm  
Council Chambers S.U.B.

#### Positions:

President  
Vice President  
Treasurer  
Secretary  
Chair  
2 DSU Representatives

Nominations now open. Packages are available at the S.U.B. Enquiry Desk and must be completed and returned to the Enquiry Desk by 4 pm on March 7.

Any questions?  
Call 494-1313 or e-mail to DALARTS@ac.dal.ca

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