

Never forget high school

"You haven't seen the world until you've seen it through the eyes of Forrest Gump." That was the catch phrase of 1994. In 1996, I predict a more subtle, but far more profound predilection towards remembrance of a different sort.

Last night I saw *Mr. Holland's Opus*. Just a few weeks ago, I raved about the movie biography of Richard Nixon. That was a great movie, an Oscar shoe-in, or so I thought. *Mr. Holland's Opus* has made a horse race out of it. This is an excellent movie.

I believe in each of our lives, there is one teacher who has made a profound impact. Actually, for me, there were two. A history teacher who taught me to be who I wanted to be, and an English teacher who showed me what I could be. That's what their job is, and that's why they became teachers, but that does not make it any less special.

Mr. Holland Opus captures this feeling of a man with a passion. His passion is music, and he passes that passion onto his students. Any teacher that is able

and willing to open themselves up like that to their students will shed a little light on a blinded life.

When I was fifteen, I was going nowhere. I had the brains, but I was just spinning my wheels. I had so much anger, pride, and misdirection that I was lashing out at any and everybody around me. The two people I mentioned above took my raw energy and gave it focus. I overfocused and eventually failed out of my high school, but it changed my life.

I changed schools, became an Ontario Scholar, and then came to Halifax. Driving me all this time has been the wisdom and guidance of those two teachers so long ago.

I recommend you all go and see this movie. Maybe you'll gain a little insight into your life, your passion, and maybe even your inner child. You may even find direction in the portrayal of this teacher (played brilliantly by Richard Dreyfus). And if nothing else, then go see this movie to see how the last thirty years have impacted on an extraordinary man in very ordinary circumstances.

After seeing this movie, and reflecting on the experiences offered to me by my high school teachers, it occurred to me that these times are over. There are so many people here at Dal who still don't have the direction they need. University professors often don't have the time for their students that many high school teachers do.

Olympia Dukakis' character tells Dreyfus when he first starts teaching, "A teacher has two jobs. One is fill a mind with knowledge, and you do that fine, but the second is to give it direction like a compass. As a compass you are fixed in one position."

This is a fitting analogy. Although many of us have decided where we want to go, and what we want to be, the rest are still spinning in circles trying not to slide into anonymity.

Many professors will tell you that their job isn't to be a babysitter, and that is true. To gain direction we don't need a babysitter; we need an inspiration.

DANIEL CLARK

opinion



Friendship in a bottle

I was at JJ's just before Christmas for a few moments to say goodbye to a couple of friends who were heading home for the holidays. I watched hundreds of people "having a few drinks" and attempting to communicate over the deafening roar of the music. It's not like being drunk is a new and creative way to spend time. Really, it's been done before — it's actually a pretty tired segment of recreation. I was curious as to why people do this on a very regular basis.

There's a huge line outside the Grawood every Thursday night as people wait to pay money to get inside to drink, "have a good time," and escape from reality for a little while. What is it in us that makes us wait in sub-zero temperatures for an hour or two to get into a place that is totally not conducive to spending quality time with our friends? What really happens is you have a few drinks, get a buzz on, get out on the dance

floor and be with people you barely know, and sit around and yell at your friends over the din of the music.

What are we looking for? Everyone goes to have a good time, but after a few drinks you aren't

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who you really are anymore and the music is so loud that you can only understand a quarter of what the person next to you is screaming in your ear. Makes you wonder if it's really quality time. Makes you wonder if we really care about each other.

Then there's the "you don't have to drink to have a good time" argument. Think about it — sitting around with inebriated friends who are no longer themselves and being unable to REALLY talk with anyone inside the bar gets pretty tiresome, if not lonely, after the first five minutes. Why do we have to drink to cut loose and be who we want to be? What's wrong with who we are? We put on our happy face, hide who we are with a few beers, and separate ourselves from everyone else in the room with loud music.

Somewhere, I think I'm supposed to be finding out who I am at university, so why do we put on faces to hide who we are? No one wants to say it, but bars are the loneliest place in the world and we go there because we substitute a party and enthusiasm for love and acceptance in the short term. We have a lot of people at Dal who are very real alcoholics, but we're young and full of bile so we ignore it. It does matter. There are lots of lonely people at Dal afraid to be themselves, more than we would care to think about. I'm tired of being one — we're all too special to comprehend, so why is the first thing we do is to hide it? It's a shame we settle for friendship in a bottle — I'd rather have friendship with a friend.

PAUL WOZNEY
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opinion

Respect for the arts ... and the arts student

"So, what are you taking at Dal?"

Throughout my university career as a student in the Faculty of Arts, I have faced this question with a sense of dread. With my reply that I am an English major, an inevitable smirk twists the face of my interrogator and a superior gleam enters their eye.

I am tired of the countless sarcastic comments and biting remarks that follow the proclamation of my major. I am sick to death of the fact people assume I am not as intelligent as my counterparts in the sciences simply because I am in arts, and I am frustrated that I must constantly defend my area of study to those who are bright enough to pass the oh-so-much-harder science courses.

To those who assert that the Bachelor of Arts is much easier than any other degree, I would like to challenge you to enter a course where one is assessed completely on essays and where there is no absolute right or wrong. It is solely up to the professor to

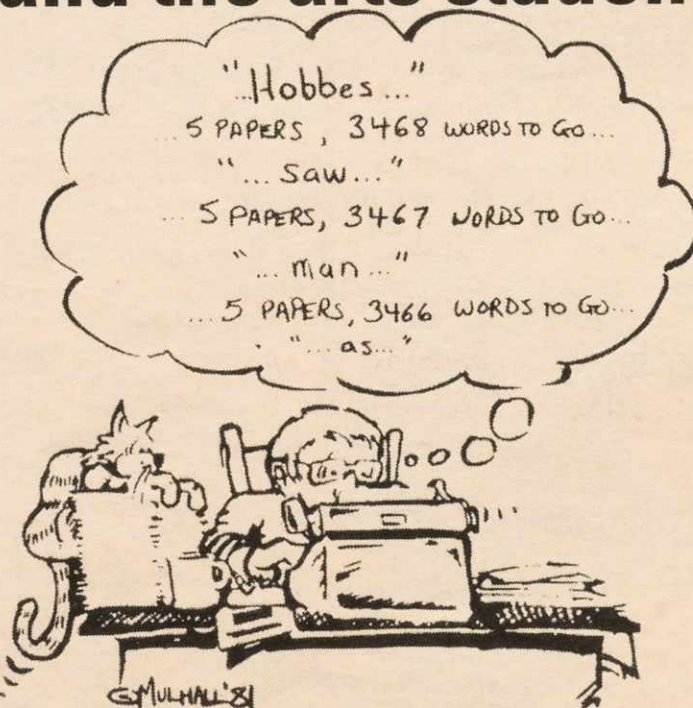
decide how well you support your thesis, and every professor prefers a different style of writing.

Although I do admit that it may be easier in arts to obtain a passing grade, it is harder to obtain an A, or even an A+, for what essay is ever perfect? In sciences, where answers are either right or wrong and not subject to a professor's opinion, it is possible to complete a perfect test and achieve an A+.

Another question which is frequently posed to me is what can one do with an arts degree. Well, what can one do with a science degree? In present times, one cannot do anything with either undergraduate degree. They are simply a springboard for further studies. I know people with science degrees as well as people with arts degrees who could only find employment in a mall. Undergraduate science degrees are no more valuable or useful to have than undergraduate arts degrees.

With the growth of technology

in our society, it is only inevitable that the importance of science be recognized. I am simply asking that arts be recognized for its valuable role in society as well. Maybe someday I will not have to



endure the taunts that accompany my statement that I am an arts major, and maybe someday I can see that unavoidable smirk turn into a look of respect.

MARSHA MOORE