

letters

Let's be Realistic

Although I commend Nick Smith for writing about the many positive aspects of North End Halifax ("The North End: Where's All The Danger?", the *Gazette*, October 24), I would have to disagree with some of what he said in his article. It's true, two of the coolest places in Halifax, the Bike Shop Cafe and Wormwood's Cinema, both of which, as a Dalhousie student I frequent, are located on Gottingen Street. However, his comment about not being able to find "hookers, pimps, and pushers" in this region of Halifax is pretty surprising. One only has to go around the corner from the Bike Shop Cafe to see pimps and prostitutes. The recent police crackdown on street level trafficking in the Creighton and Gerrish Street area highlights the North End's crack problem. If Nick doesn't see any of these problems then maybe he should talk to some of the other local residents who are affected by them.

While these problems are isolated to only a few small areas of the North End and reflect the lifestyles of just a handful of the many thousands of different people who live there, we shouldn't pretend they don't exist. Like Nick, I encourage students to visit the Gottingen Street area and experience the many great things this part of the city has to offer. But keep in mind that there are problems. Let's be realistic, ignorant glossing over of them won't make them go away.

Eric Bednarski

The Halifax Experience

I approached the decision with fear and trepidation. When I finally decided to come to Halifax from frosty, barren Winnipeg, I wasn't quite sure what to expect. I had never been to the Maritimes, never really knew or thought too much about eastern Canada — all I knew about Halifax and the surrounding hinterland was that everyone fished a lot, played a lot of folk music, had an inordinate number of universities and copious amounts of precipitation.

Canadian capital cities, I reasoned, must have certain similarities. Vancouver, Toronto and Montreal, for instance, can claim many resemblances — they are all big, diverse, cultural centres. But what of the similarities between Winnipeg, the quasi-prairie, virtually hick-town that no one ever leaves, and Halifax? Could the two

even be compared? It's like that math problem you get in grade two about not comparing apples and oranges because you just can't do that.

There were some glaring differences between my home village and this new land — the onslaught of rain and wind, for example. I'm sure that every student not from the east is currently reminiscing about the "beautifully clear autumn weather" back home (Saskatoon, Lethbridge, Thunder Bay, Ottawa, or wherever), which, in all probability, is just as shitty as it has been here. What is it with this rain? I'm not sure why some entrepreneur has not yet opened up a yellow rubber jacket and umbrella stand right here on campus — surely it'd make a killing.

And then there is this strange understanding between the

Haligonian automobile driver and the Dalhousie pedestrian. There is an unwritten custom out here in the far east that whenever a pedestrian approaches the curbside of any street, the pedestrian must continue to march onward across the street without looking left or right. At this point the driver must come to a screeching halt, nearly causing massive vehicular genocide, all the while smiling and waving at the pedestrian.

Going out at night in Halifax seems to present further peculiarities which, I think, can only be found here in this city. For instance, it seems virtually impossible to eat anywhere in the city after 10 p.m. — except, perhaps, if you have a hankering for donairs or Subway. Of course, trying to find vegetarian food — once again especially after dark — would be like trying to find fresh

lobster in Winnipeg. Perhaps this is made up for by the fact that there is a coffee shop at every turn, in every nook and cranny — for some reason, most seem to want to satisfy some kind of obsessive Haligonian craving for bagels and samosas.

But then there are many charms to this city which certainly set it apart from other centres in Canada, and which make it a unique and interesting place. Halifax is beautifully garnished with historical buildings which truly demonstrate its place in the historical nexus of Canada. Moreover, the affability and amiability of the people of Halifax far outstrips that of other places in Canada. Instead of the Torontonians custom of averting one's eyes to every passerby, instead of the Vancouver habit of trying to out-cool every other slickster on the street, Haligonians genuinely care to look up and smile, actually making eye contact with utter strangers on the street. Everyone seems only too pleased to offer directions, orient non-Haligonians in the city, and recommend interesting places to go.

Perhaps it is not possible to offer a thorough comparison between one Canadian capital city and another: part of what makes Canada unique and beautiful is its utter diversity and eclecticism. It is sad that more Canadians do not find the time to travel in their own country, choosing instead to take off for the exotic allure of Asia or India, or traipse across Europe with a backpack. Having the chance to live here in Halifax for a year is possibly one of the best ways to grasp the enormity of this country, to understand that there is unity in diversity, that there is something thoroughly Canadian to be found in every end of the country.

ANTHONY SKELTON



What are you people doing?

As I sit in a corner of the Killam atrium observing the new atmosphere, I become uneasy and feel the urge to yell "WHAT ARE YOU PEOPLE DOING!" Don't get me wrong, I think the idea of a coffee shop at the library is wonderfully convenient.

However, all too convenient is the ease at which people are buying their coffee in STYROFOAM cups. I recently talked to the Second Cup manager who politely explained that they use whatever products are shipped from the head office in Toronto. So that's where my next letter is headed.

There is no need for coffee to be sold in STYROFOAM (Robin's and Tim's don't use it for coffee anyway!) and there is absolutely no excuse for students to buy it (I shouldn't have to explain why). I'm not suggesting a boycott of the Second Cup because their coffee is delicious and the staff is friendly. However, I am strongly suggesting you purchase a mug for under \$5 (refills \$0.90) and if you can't afford that, please request a paper cup. The consumer holds the power, please make the right choice!!

Jennifer Surrette

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96

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