

## A personal reflection

Dalhousie's Fifth Annual Week of Reflection... and I'm tired.

For four years I have been involved in the Week's activities and this year is no exception. Every year many people have similar comments. They ask (assert) that isn't it time we found a new cause? Do we need to reflect? They say that it's too much about women, too emotional.

People seem distrustful of my and others' interest — just another time to men-bash. And when I am tired and disheartened about all this I need to reflect.

In my Grade 11 year I was working on a dairy farm. Along with milking and shovelling, it meant early winter mornings. On the morning of December 6, 1989 I was already listening to the CBC by about 5 a.m. Instead of music, there were confusing bits of news commentaries, updates... until I finally deciphered that someone had gone on a shooting rampage in Montreal.

Something like this in Canada — it was horrifying. That morning in the barn, the cows and I listened intently to the words from the radio.

It had been fourteen women who died. And almost double that had been shot. Men and women from across the country were calling in and saying words like "patriarchy," "sexism" and "misogyny."

I arrived home after work to a quiet but not peaceful home. In addition to early mornings that year, I also had lots of late nights. I was living with a stepfather whose moods were unpredictable, aggravated by alcohol, and I waited at night to know if my mother needed help. If I needed to lock us in my room. If I needed to call the police.

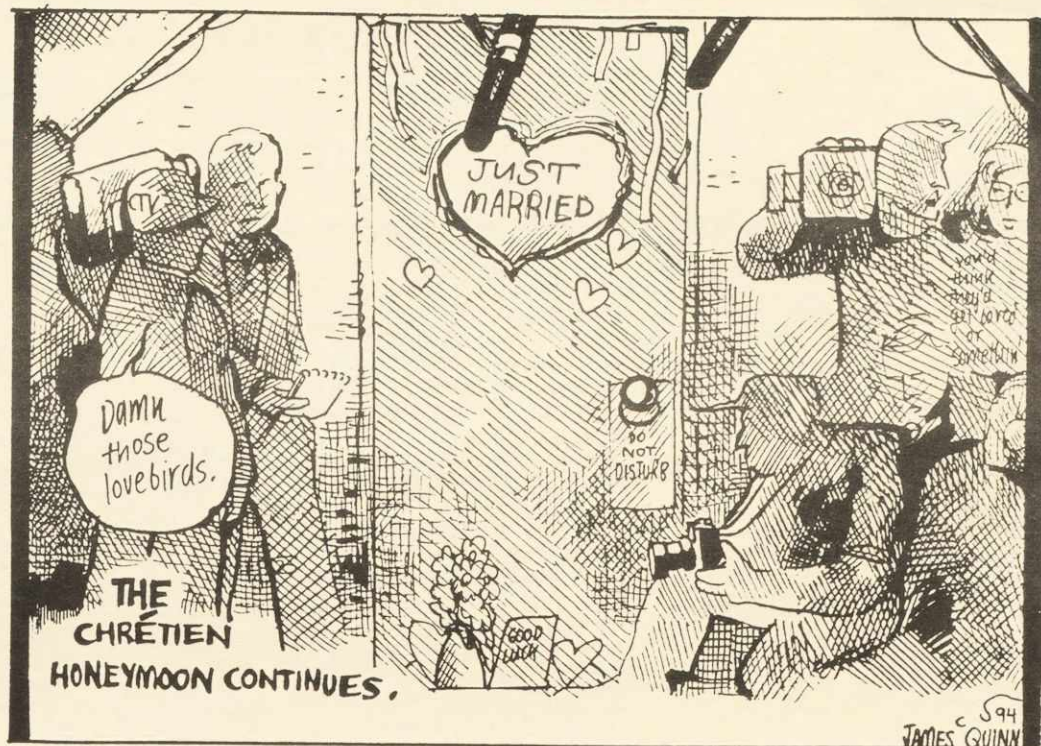
And so these words and the discussion around them were interesting. I got out the dictionary and looked up some of the words. Misogyny — "the hatred and mistrust of women; the societal division between men and women." It seemed to explain everything I had been living for years. My experience had a name. I was not the only one. As the country mourned, grieved, raged and swirled in confusion, I, with a dictionary in my hand, stood in a moment of pure clarity.

So every year I hope that just one person thinks about Montreal. I hope someone gets angry and thinks about why. And I hope that something that happens next week helps one woman find words for her experience, a commonality amidst the isolation.

We have to hear women's voices and experiences because so much is excluded and so much is misinterpreted about women in our culture. We've come so far and have a long road ahead. Some people have questioned if this is a proper editorial. Last year someone asked me in front of a crowd, "why Week of Reflection?" I swallowed my real words that spoke of my experience and told a story that would fit into the unemotional boundaries set by society.

We need to reflect as long as approximately 100 women a year are killed in Canada by their partners or ex-partners. We need to reflect as long as women on this campus cannot stay late at the library without worrying about getting home. We need to reflect until women's experiences are considered every day in our society. And I'll need to reflect until people are not so eager to silence women.

Lisa Lachance



## 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 4 pm before publication. Letters may be e-mailed or submitted on MacIntosh or IBM-compatible 3.5" disk.

### Course evaluations

To the editor,

Well, that's it. Week after week I pick up *the Gazette* and, not surprisingly, there is a variety of opinions on what goes on at the DSU [Dalhousie Student Union]. Mostly it's heartfelt, sometimes it's informative and educational, sometimes it's off the wall. It seems that a student can write absolutely anything about anyone at the DSU, and it will be printed. Hopefully readers don't believe everything they read, but I'd like to respond to a few things said by Jenn Hockey in her article last week.

If Jenn had come to talk to me (not difficult — she sees me every day), she would have discovered that I too am disappointed with the Course Evaluation guide from last year, but that I am committed to doing something to change it. She could have discovered the number of things that are being done differently this year. For example, every faculty member who teaches a course in Arts, Science, Management, Education, and Health Professions has been sent a letter and a brochure regarding our Evaluation. They have been asked to submit their concerns, and R.S.V.P. their participation. This way we will be able to directly address their points. Everything possible is being done to garner their support. Also, guides this year will be printed by June 15 in order that the 1000-level evaluation results can be put in the registration packages of all incoming first-year students. I am also trying to establish a system where any other student who wants a full guide and does not live in the area can be mailed one.

I understand the problems that Jenn expressed about Course Eval, and I can empathize with other peoples concerns about the DSU. What I can't understand is the people who consider it more worthwhile to take 20 minutes to complain about something by writing an article than to take 5 minutes to find out what is going on, and what

she/he can do about it.

If you're not part of the solution, you're part of the problem. (I love a good cliché)

Beth Owen  
DSU VP Academic

### Caped crusader

To the editor,

"Before the causeway was built — to connect Cape Breton with the rest of the world — Cape Bretoners lived primitive, almost savage lives."

That was a quote from a history professor during a lecture last year. Although this prof made an observation about life forty years ago, such a condescending attitude can be heard at Dalhousie even today.

Certain people at Dal do harbour low opinions of Cape Bretoners. They see us as uneducated, bigoted, alcoholic, lazy and clannish. These are very petty thoughts for people who pride themselves on attending such an enlightened institution. This shouldn't and shouldn't happen to Blacks Natives, or new Canadians.

Cape Bretoners have received a bad name from Ontario. These people see us as taking needlessly from their areas and never paying it back. But we are partly to blame because we are unconcerned about outside opinions. The truth is: Cape Bretoners are industrious, tolerant, fun-loving and kind, and it is enough that we ourselves know that.

Sure we adore partying. Sure we may be downright crude at times, but are none of us imperfect? When people shelled out \$14 to see Ashley MacIsaac, did they think he was "just" a Caper? Even if you did, I'm sure he's enjoying your money as I write this.

I still like Dalhousie. But I love Cape Breton. So when someone makes a crude comment about my home, it enrages me. But by knocking the teeth out of that person, I would only be fuelling the misdirection of a "Cape Breton barbarian." So I turn the other cheek, knowing that I will always be a Cape Bretoner, and that person - envi-

ous. As for that misguided prof, if ever he is driving over the Cabot Trail, I hope his brakes don't fail. That would be sad. And when the causeway crumbles into the Strait of Canso, I hope I'm on the RIGHT side.

We will rise again!

Cape Bretonly yours,

John McNally

### Remember Canadians

To the editor,

*The Gazette* has shown bad taste, journalistic sloppiness and outright disrespect in its cover photo last week, supposedly honouring Remembrance Day.

November eleventh is the one day of the calendar that we, as Canadians, remember the countless, nameless, young and old Canadian men and women who fought and died for their country. Some of them were scared young men gassed in the trenches of the First World War. Or beleaguered prisoners who starved to death in Japanese PoW camps. Or brave paratroopers killed in battle during the liberation of Europe. Or dedicated nurses and doctors who lost their lives during the London Blitz. Or fatally injured soldiers who froze to death on some barren hill in the Korean War. Or career officers killed while on U.N. peacekeeping duties.

It was their sacrifices that have not only helped to forge the Canada we know and are privileged to prosper in, but also contributed to the ideal of freedom and liberty the world over. In turn, we recognize our fortune to be alive and free as Canadians, while remembering as humans the horrors and ultimate price of war, for all nations, for all people.

Remembrance Day is not Memorial Day, and "Lest we forget" really does mean something, so why then was there a picture of U.S. Army Captain's gravestone on your cover? Have we forgotten the meaning of Remembrance Day?

Angel Figueroa  
Matt Townsend

# the Gazette

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