



editorial

Diversity requires tolerance

Racism has been on my mind as of late.

I'm sure it has something to do with the fact that February is Black History Month (or Afrikan Heritage Month, depending on who you talk to). Also, I was recently involved in a situation that, afterwards, made me step back and think.

I was working in the Grawood last Thursday when a couple guys started pushing. Stupid, yes, but no real damage done. Except that friends started jumping in, and then friends of friends jumped in, and a real ugly scene seemed on the verge of developing. Fortunately, calmer heads prevailed, and after a few minutes of swarming, order was restored. Being a closet pacifist, I was glad to get back behind the bar and just serve up beers. But one thing bothered me. Near the end of the pseudo-brouhaha, a couple of white guys were goading about eight black guys. The initial scraps were not racially motivated, but there were definitely racial lines being drawn between the last two groups, and it bugged me.

I couldn't believe it. I couldn't believe the stupidity of it, and I couldn't believe the small-mindedness of it. Why would you jump someone you don't even know, just because of what they look like? I know that prejudice is still out there, but when you see that shit in action, it's shocking.

I guess what it shows is that a

lot of people are still uneducated; ignorant in the true sense of the word. And if that feeling is pervasive in the heart of a university as "enlightened" as Dalhousie, it means that there is a lot of work to do. Work meaning the continuation of mass education.

It's always scary to me when I hear the weary line that "You students are the future of the city/province/country/earth/..." Because if we are, what kind of legacy are we going to leave? Education has to change the way we approach each other; if we learn to give one another a chance, I think we'll find ourselves enjoying each other's company a lot more, rather than bopping each other on the nose. If you don't know me, you don't have to like me, but there should be a measure of mutual respect extended. Respect for my past; respect for me as a person. Don't lump me into a stereotype if you don't know anything about me. Education is about awareness; awareness of other societies, other cultures, and other peoples. When you give someone a chance, you're often surprised as to how much you have in common, despite superficial "differences."

We all have different backgrounds, different upbringings, and different histories. That's what makes interacting with others so enjoyable — you get to witness how somebody else

approaches life. You see how someone else has a completely different solution to a problem that you might have considered cut-and-dried. We travel in the name of "seeing new places and meeting new people;" well, new places and new people are all around you, don't close your mind to the opportunities at hand. Especially for Halifax, with its cultural diversity and multitude of educational facilities, there is no reason why it shouldn't be leading the march towards racial harmony, instead of continuing to collect newspaper stories regaling our racial discord.

Of course, it's going to take time. And patience. And persistence, and tolerance, and appreciation...but we've got to remember that eventually — maybe not in our generation or our children's generation, but eventually — the struggle will be over. The end will be reached, the goal will be attained. It's a dream that you have to believe will come to fruition; be a part of it.

SAM MCCAIG

letters

T-shirt affair over

To the editor

The February 1 edition of the Gazette contains a report of an incident that unfolded over the past week in Howe Hall. This incident involved a T-shirt design that was created by the Cameron House Council a few weeks ago and printed on shirts that arrived in Howe Hall on the weekend of January 27 and 28.

On behalf of the Howe Hall Residence Council, I am circulating this letter to inform those who were affected by this affair that the Council had no involvement in the creation of these shirts and does not condone or support such attitudes within our community. We feel it is important to express that the derogatory tone of the phrase that was printed on these shirts is not representative of the attitudes and principles of those in our society.

I have spoken personally with Cam Fraser, President of Cameron House Council, regarding this issue. Mr. Fraser has expressed to me that he and his council realize the damage that these shirts would have caused to residents of the building and the Dalhousie community, as well as the negative impact that it would have created for the public perception of Howe Hall, the Residence Council, and the residence community.

Now that the shirts have been obtained and destroyed by the residence administration, I feel confident in saying that the situation has been dealt with in a very serious and expedient manner.

Sincerely,

John Killam,
Howe Hall President

Howe Hall good

To the Editor

Recently, a number of students living on-campus have been complaining about how we are portrayed by the campus newspaper. The general complaint is that the Gazette seems to only report the bads and not the goods of residence life, giving the rest of campus a pretty misleading impression of the residence community. Therefore, I am writing to inform you about some of the good things we do here at Howe Hall.

One concrete example of this will appear on Breakfast Television on the morning of this coming Friday, February 9. We'll be plugging the first annual recycling contest between Acadia, St. Francis Xavier and Dalhousie. On BT, the student coordinators for each university will compete in a mini recycling olympics. The buildings representing Dalhousie include Weldon Law, Shirreff Hall, Howe Hall, and Eliza Ritchie. The purpose is to stimulate awareness of

recycling on campus and hopefully to develop some lifelong environmental habits.

The "Green Cup" will be awarded to Howe or Shirreff depending on who has the greatest total weight of recyclables per resident. Items to be recycled include fine paper, newsprint and glossy magazines, corrugated cardboard, aluminum cans, and glass. But this is not the only positive event that our food and environment committees put together. We're responsible for an energy conservation week, clothing and food drives, a major voice to present upcoming changes to campus food activities, environmental awareness week, campus cleanup, whale adoption, year round recycling, Christmas and year end banquets, pie eating contests, and many more good things.

Howe Hall is a positive influence here on campus. Through fund raising and donations, the Howe Hall Residence Council has contributed over \$2,000 to charity and good will over the past year. We're one of the largest voting blocks for DSU elections, a big supporter of the varsity athletics program, and we are the main reason that the Grawood exists today. Not to mention, we can fit 24 people into a Dodge Neon! (DSU Winter Carnival).

I hope I've made it obvious that we do care about how we are portrayed across campus and our actions for the most part prove it.

Andrea Smith

Simple solutions

To the editor,

The article "DSU general meeting highlights," stated "David Cox expressed his dismay at the poor turnout for the meeting..." At the actual meeting, a large number of people had to stand because there weren't enough chairs. There are thousands of students at Dalhousie. If the DSU truly wants better attendance, the meetings should be held in a room that is physically large enough to contain many more people than the Green room.

With regards to the article "Residence house T-shirts destroyed," the fact that the shirts were made is a disgrace, but the manner in which the problem was resolved also kind of sucks. Although I did not get a chance to see them, I am wondering why the shirts couldn't have been dyed with black ink and given to a local charity group?

It is a shame that the university can no longer afford \$25,000 a year to fund the wolf research centre. Perhaps we could build a great big fence around our \$3,000,000 soccer field, and the wolves could live there?

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the Dalhousie Gazette

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The Gazette welcomes letters to the editor and commentary. Letters are limited to 300 and commentary to 800 words. All submissions must be typed double-spaced on paper, e-mailed, or on a Mac or IBM 3 1/2 inch disk. The deadline is Mondays at noon.

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