

# Farewell Dalhousie

As my five years of torture and joy at Dalhousie come to a close, it is apparent that many a lesson has been learned outside of the classroom. Having succumbed to the prosperous lure of southern Ontario, I offer merely a few words of humble advice before my departure. You may disagree with my opinions, but these are things I wish someone had told me five years ago.

*Get involved, or else.*

Academia alone does not constitute an education. Despite your compulsion to study at all waking moments (ha!) it is highly satisfying to be a well rounded individual. There are a myriad of interesting things happening on and off campus; surely something must peak your interest. And a hesitation to divert your energy to something other than school and socializing may be your demise. Most importantly, involvement brings excellence to a resume. Employers don't care how well you regurgitate facts on exams, they want to see what you can do.

*Don't be afraid to fight the administration.*

While students are fuming away silently in their homes, Dal's ombudsperson is sitting in his office, watching the clock tick, fiddling aimlessly with pens, and fetching his 65th cup of coffee that morning. Not only is Dalhousie a publicly funded institution, but you pay them for their services. Ergo, you are the customer. The first rule of the service industry is that the customer is always right. Post-secondary institutions have an unconscious tendency to devalue undergraduates, but under no circumstances should you accept this mistreatment. If a student has reason to believe that she has been treated unfairly, or that something seems not at all right, nothing can possibly be done unless that student acts upon her convictions. If academic staff or administrators treat you with contempt or disdain, then talk to their superiors. Don't be intimidated by titles or snobbery, for the pur-

pose of this institution is to serve you, the student. If you make a righteous stink about an issue, those in charge will listen. Trust me.

*Get wasted regularly...not.*

Fact: 97 out of every 100 students who shamelessly call mom and dad for money near the end of term have spent it drinking them-

the Dalhousie Student Union. However, elections of the DSU executive have abominably low voter turnout. First rule of bitching: absolutely no whining about anything unless you have already tried to do something about it. If you don't take two milliseconds out of your day to vote, you do not have the right to comment on the performances of electees. Since it bothers you so much that you waste time complaining, why didn't you vote in the first place?

*Be respectful.*

The geek behind you in algebra whom you snicker at childishly with your friends might one day be your surgeon. People who are tormented traumatically do not forget about such treatment overnight. Being openminded and amicable now is sure to land you excellent connections in the future. So cherish your university friendships, they may be unparalleled in the future.

I can hear you all right now, if you've made it this far. "Yeah mom, whatever. Is this lecture over yet?" But after spending seemingly forever here, mastering the art of studentship, it is one's prerogative to be selfrighteous. Just remember, I'm finished, and you're not. So please, take my cheesy, lame advice to heart. You just might thank yourself one day.

Janet French



## EDITORIAL

selves into a stupor. Alright, I made that up. Yes, it is hard to resist the peer pressure when you arrive in dorm for the first time, terrified, alone, and desperate to make friends. However, common sense dictates that people who tease and torment you for not desiring to spend every evening plastered and delirious are not worthy of your friendship. Besides, you're not paying the second-highest tuition in Canada to watch the room spin, you're here to learn. But if the urge to party incessantly is overwhelming, then get out of school and let some other poor sap who wants to learn have your spot.

*Order your transcripts 14 years in advance.*

The folks at the Registrar's office may not remember my name, but they quake with rage when they see me coming. Numerous jobs, scholarships and various other applications have been ruined as a result of their incompetence, leaving me with no option but to loosen my tongue. However, dramatic improvements have been noted in both expediency and politeness in the past three months. Still, once bitten, twice shy, and I wouldn't trust them with important documents further than I could throw them. If something is important, and depends on their co-operation, plan in advance and wait patiently for Murphy's Law to materialize: everything that can go wrong, will.

*Vote*

Many a Dal student has been known to mutter and whine about

## Dal's poor service

To The Editor,

I am writing this letter to complain about the service provided by the Registrar's Office on Monday November 15, which was the last day for registering for winter courses. I went to register as early as I could, at 2 p.m., after class and work, to find the line-up was out the door. There were three people assisting students, while two other people, sometimes three, fulfilled administrative tasks at the terminals at the main desk. I had attempted to register at a more convenient time on Friday November 12, only to discover that the Registrar's office was more privileged than other departments in the university, and was closed for the day (it was the day after Remembrance Day, and the day before the weekend).

As I waited for 30 minutes in the line up, I came to the conclusion that while the university is quite happy to take our money, it is not prepared to provide a useful service to us in return. It prefers instead to treat us as cattle.

I have better things to do with my time than stand in what I believe to be an unnecessarily long line up. In order to stay in that line up I had to call a neighbour to arrange to pick up my son from school. Why was I unable to register on Friday November 12, when I had more time and flexibility?

Just to make matters worse, I also stood in line as directed by information in your office, to pay a deposit for my course. After waiting 20 minutes I was told I didn't have to pay any fee at all until January 24, 2000. I was informed that the office had posted the information about the deposit erroneously, and that it should have been changed. I was not the only student who was misinformed.

I think it's appalling that an important office such as the Registrar's should be allowed to close for one day, at such a busy time of year, when the rest of the university is open for business. Given that closure, why weren't more people scheduled to process registrations on Monday November 15? It doesn't require a Ph.D to know that this is not a new problem, and occurs every year at this time of year. With a little forethought the lineups could have been reduced considerably.

What quality indicators does the Registrar's office use to determine whether or not good service has been provided? After reading the university's mission I now realize that treating students as customers does not feature in the university's priorities.

So I would like to thank the Registrar's Office for further complicating life that day. I don't want apologies, just changes, and students should be informed of those changes. Incidentally, my comments are not directed toward the staff members who were at the front desk. They were diligent, helpful, cheerful and polite at all times.

Janis Brown

## Mis-informed

To The Editor,

As administrator of the 1999 Open Waters Festival, I would like to thank Daniel Rabin for his informative and well-written review, "Frank Zappa and the Open Waters Music Festival" (November 25). I do, however, need to point out one peculiar set of errors.

Mr. Rabin wrote "Bassoonist legend and master blower Barry Guy then stepped onto the scene. Barry was featured in the conductor's own piece, 'Monkey!,' a piece that — like its title would suggest — was very ape-like."

Now, while it is quite true that Barry Guy is a legend, to my knowledge he has never touched, or blown into, a bassoon in his life. He is a spectacular *bass player*. He also didn't perform at this concert at all. "Monkey!" is a composition for bass clarinet and orchestra, and the equally spectacular player in the performance was the Upstream Ensemble's own Jeff Reilly — who also doesn't play bassoon.

As for the piece being "ape-like," I'm still wondering what this could possibly mean. It really had swing? It went completely bananas? How to understand all this...? Perhaps it's best to let the man himself have the final word:

"Some people Crave baseball — I find this unfathomable — but I can easily understand why a person could get excited about playing a bassoon."

— Frank Zappa

Christopher Majka  
Administrator  
Open Waters Festival

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Volume 132, no. 12

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All submissions must be typed double-spaced on paper, e-mailed, or on a Mac or IBM 3 1/2 inch disk, in a WP version not greater than Word 6.0 or equivalent. The deadline is Mondays at 4:30 p.m.

Founded in 1869 at Dalhousie College, the Gazette is Canada's oldest student newspaper. With a circulation of 10,000, the Gazette is published every Thursday by the Dalhousie Gazette Publishing Society, of which all students of Dalhousie University are members. The Gazette exercises full editorial autonomy and reserves the right to refuse or edit any material submitted. All editorial decisions are made collectively by the staff. To become voting staff members, individuals must contribute to four issues. Views expressed in the Gazette are not necessarily those of the editors or the collective staff. Unless otherwise noted, all text © 1999 the Dalhousie Gazette Publishing Society.  
ISSN 0011-5819

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