

opinions

Falling off the TV wagon

Television. It numbs the mind, kills ambition, lowers the GPA, and keeps people in touch and up to date with everything in the world that is unimportant.

Without this magic box I have become both ignorant and inspired, or at least, I'm planning on becoming inspired. Stick with me, I'll explain.

When I moved into an apartment in September, cable television was not in the budget. I was confident, however, that I would be intelligent and imaginative enough to entertain myself — a slight error in judgement.

I don't think I'm a boring person, but saying that might be a contradiction since I'm about to describe how I can't even amuse myself.

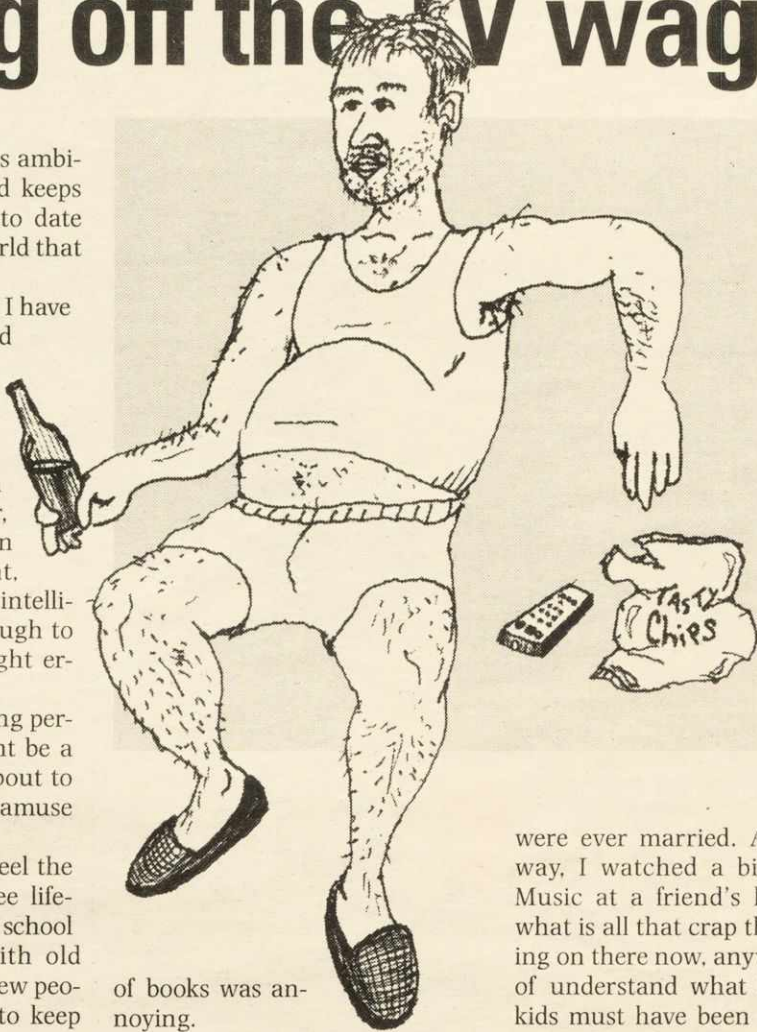
At first I didn't really feel the impact of a television-free lifestyle. The beginning of the school year brings reunions with old friends, encounters with new people, and enough money to keep the alcohol flowing.

But, by mid-October, the jig was up. Days passed slowly and the nights came to a complete stop. On a typical weeknight, my roommate and I would be sitting around with nothing to do by nine o'clock. Around that time a dialogue would usually break out sounding something like this:

"Hey."
 "Yeah."
 "You bored?"
 "Yeah...you?"
 "Yeah...Wanna' go for a beer?"
 "Sure."
 "O.K."

You can see the problem. Beer is nice, but you can't have beer as a replacement for television. That much beer would have you in a clinic somewhere with nothing to do but watch television and go to group meetings.

For a while I convinced myself that I could read books instead. Each book I started got dull quickly, so I started lots of books and jumped back and forth between them. This sub-conscious attempt to recreate the effect of channel surfing was a flop, and the clutter



of books was annoying.

The breaking point came on a dark day in November. We had an old television and a VCR of the same vintage and it was decided that we had to get at least some reception out of the old tube. Equipped with pliers, screwdrivers, a wire coat hanger, and a couple of beers, we went to work.

After about an hour of banging, shaking, and jamming the coat hanger into the back of the television, we managed to break it so that it could no longer be hooked up to the VCR. In return for this sacrifice to the television Gods, we received two fuzzy English channels and one crystal clear French channel. The television Gods have a cruel sense of humour.

Without a daily dose of pop culture I have become a virtual hermit. I no longer know who's dating who on Beverly Hills or Melrose and in many social circles such ignorance is unacceptable. When the next big celebrity divorce hits, I'll probably be as shocked by the divorce as I will be to discover that the celebrities

were ever married. And by the way, I watched a bit of Much Music at a friend's house, and what is all that crap they're playing on there now, anyways? I sort of understand what living with kids must have been like for my pop-culture-hermit parents.

So, no television, no VCR, no books, and no beer. What's left? Coffee? I tried the coffee shop scene for a while, but then everyone started doing it and then everyone started making fun of everyone who was doing it.

So here I sit now, alone in front of my word processor pondering my final option. It scares me that it has come to this. I guess everyone has to face their moment of reckoning, take the bull by the horns, look trouble straight in the eyes, buckle down and give 110% (I find cliches really help in these situations). It's time to do what I'm here to do. Study, and study hard. Instead of sitting around every evening wasting my life away, I'm going to do something positive and constructive with my time. I'm going to get good marks in school.

So next time you're out on the town, take a moment, raise your glasses and salute my newfound devotion. Hell...I might even join you, but just for one drink — I've got work to do.

ANDREW SIMPSON

blacks on blacks

Robert Nesta Marley

THE Honourable Robert Nesta Marley O.M., the Soul Rebel, the Duppy Conqueror, the original Natural Mystic, celebrated his 51st birthday on February 6. Although he died a PHYSICAL death — his body eventually succumbed to cancer after a protracted battle with the deadly illness on May 11, 1981 — the revolutionary spirit epitomized in the pulsating rhythms and prophetic lyrics of his music still survives. From across the gaping chasm separating the Living and the Dead, Marley's timeless power reaches out and embraces us and demands our active participation in the struggle to liberate Humanity from the savage of western 'civilization.'

Marley's musical masterpieces are like the precise brush strokes of a master painter creating an intricate mosaic from the histories of all of Afrika's children. We see ourselves on the slaveship, shackled in its stinking bowels and paralyzed with fear ("Every time I hear the crack of a whip, my blood runs cold/I remember on the slaveship, how they brutalised our very soul"); we experience the bleak reality of the socio-economic oppression of those living in the slums ("No chains around my feet but I'm not free/I know I am bound here in capacity"); and, we rejoice in the promise of a brighter future, where the Sons and Daughters of the Motherland stand together in the true spirit of unity ("How good and how pleasant it would be/before God and Man/to see the unification/of all Afrikans") through the Divinely inspired works of the greatest musical prophet of all time.

As we stumble blindly into the 21st century accompanied by the threat of neocolonial downpression, atomic mis-philosophy, and the genocidal epidemic of AIDS, we would do well to reflect upon the righteous words of "Zimbabwe," one of Marley's greatest creations: "Every man got a right to decide his own destiny/And in this judgment there is no partiality/So arm in arms with arms/we'll fight this little struggle/Cuz that's the only way we can/overcome a little trouble..."

Peace and Power to you, Brother Berhane Selassie. We continue to need your words of wisdom.

COLWYN BURCHALL

letters

to know that we can depend on good Christian white folks to save us in these troubling times. "I once was lost but now I'm found/Was blind but now I see..."

Colwyn Burchall

Beware of loan sharks

To the editor:

The potentially nightmarish implications of an outstanding CIBC student loan should be made abundantly clear to Dalhousie students.

While attending Dal as a full-time mature student, I received a CIBC student loan in 1994. The following year, I returned to Dal on a part-time basis and took the necessary steps in formally requesting a postponement in repayment obligations with CIBC head office. The required forms, complete with supporting documentation, were sent to CIBC in April, 1995. I received no acknowledgement or response from CIBC and my subsequent telephone enquiries were deflected.

In December, I received a letter demanding full repayment of my student loan. Days later, I was contacted at home by a Toronto collection agency. During a two-hour period, five telephone calls were received from the collection agency, whose employees were abusive in the extreme.

The following day, I changed my telephone number. In turn, I forwarded two registered letters to CIBC student loans which went unanswered. During the past two months, I have experienced intolerable harassment from CIBC collection agency employees in Toronto. Such tactics included telephone calls to my neighbours and landlord. Two months later, at my wit's end, I filed for bankruptcy protection.

Dal students beware: keep a meticulous record of all transactions with the CIBC student loans office in Toronto. If, for whatever reason, a communications breakdown should occur, be prepared for a unique initiation in harassment, which, in my view, is tantamount to stalking.

Finally, prospective graduates and job-searchers who run afoul of the CIBC student loan program and are subsequently treated like hardened criminals, remember this: Karla Homolka is entitled to a free university education in this country.

A bankrupt Dal student

People laughed

Dear Editor:

Re: CBC Show Madly Off (Dal Gazette, Feb 15, 1996)

James Worrall got it all wrong. General John Cabot Trail didn't die on stage during the taping of the CBC show at the Dunn Theatre, February 8. On the contrary, the act made the audience laugh — repeatedly.

By my calculations, the script contained 28 punch lines — 22 of them got laughs. Hearty laughs. Sustained laughs. Laughter with applause.

James, did you notice The General was the only performer to work with a script? That's because the material was new. Courageous, wha?

James, you like Maynard Morrison and Bette MacDonald. You may be interested to know that both the closing punch lines to their sketches were written by me.

James, listen to Madly Off In All Directions. Listen, carefully to The General's performance. What will you hear? Laughter. You'll hear laughter. I made them laugh. I always do.

Regards,

Dave Harley

Acadia fans scary

To the editor:

Game! What game?!...I was watching my back. I now understand why so few Dal fans go to Acadia home games. I felt like I was watching the Gladiators in *The Running Man* instead of a university hockey game. I would like to take this opportunity to commend Dal fans for their sportsmanlike behaviour. Acadia fans scare me! I knew things were starting to go awry when David Haynes was slashed in the face and fell to the ice, bleeding. After

a 30 second respectful period of silence, the crowd broke out cheering. Later, when the game was again halted because he was still bleeding, shouts such as "There's lots of blood where that came from" and "Bleed some more, Haynes" could be heard. The third period was just as bad. At one point, a group of seven half-clad 250lb men wearing crazy wigs (looking very much like neanderthal men) decided to harass the Dalhousie bench. Security was at its finest. Nobody wanted to approach these men and they were permitted to stay in the building. It did seem as if they may have been looking for these men who had 'mysteriously' disappeared, but they couldn't seem to locate the row of them sitting next to the ice and hanging off the glass. At the end of the game, leaving quickly, I tried to check if knuckles were actually dragging along the ground as is claimed by paleontologists. Another ice age will come and go before I willingly enter the land of the barbarians.

Lola A. Doucet