

## Sucked into standards

Tomorrow is a big day for me. Depending on the price, time and pain involved I may choose to permanently alter my appearance.

I'm going to the orthodontist.

So braces aren't a big deal. Most people have had them and usually before they're 23 years old I'm sure. Still, I have to ask myself why after all these years I've decided to change the way I look when I've always been conscious of not swallowing society's idea of beauty.

I don't know anyone who isn't concerned with their appearance, but for some reason it seems that this concern is magnified by ten in women.

Ever listen to a group of women who are standing next to the chip bowl?

"Oh I really shouldn't. Do you know how much fat is in that stuff?"

"There goes my diet. I'm such a pig."

"I'll only have a couple. I promise I'll go to the gym tomorrow."

I wish women didn't think they had to make excuses to eat in public. It leaves me feeling frustrated and I often find myself inhaling the contents of two or three chip bowls in retaliation.

"Hey everybody look at me! I'm eating chips and I don't care!" is what I'm saying in my own special way. At which point, depending on the time of year and month I'll either get comments like, "Wow. How do you stay so thin?" or complete silence.

Silence means I've gained at least ten pounds since they've last seen me but they're much too polite to mention it.

I'm trying to pinpoint the year when telling someone they've lost weight started becoming the greatest compliment you could give a person. I'm sure it's been going on for a long time but it was only a few years ago that I started to take notice of this phenomenon.

In 1991 I found out a friend of mine was bulimic. I was very angry at my friend for caring so much about her weight that she would put her health at risk. Over time I've learned that eating disorders are more about asserting control than weight but there is no denying that society's definition of beauty has a role in an anorexic's or bulimic's life.

Let's say a person's home life is so screwed up that she don't feel like anything she says or does is of importance and the people around her have more control of her life than she does. Everyone has to have some sense of control over their lives whether it's through athletics, studies or sorting his or her sock drawer.

Some people decide to control the way they look.

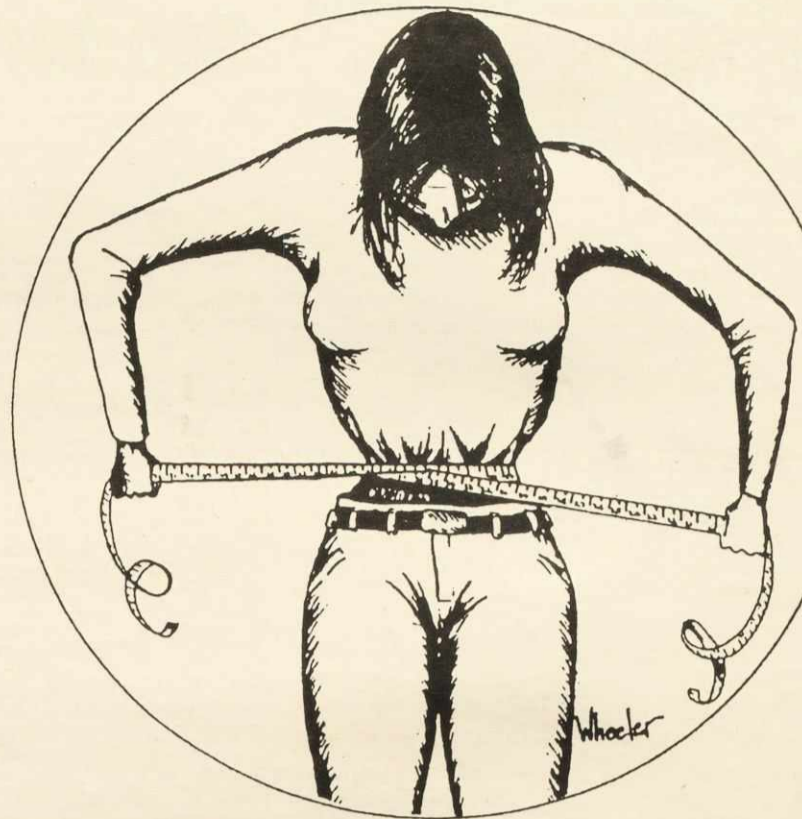
Being obsessed about one's appearance probably wouldn't lead to such self-destructive behaviour if we had reasonable standards of what's considered attractive. Unfortunately all we see on TV, on billboards and in magazines are six-foot tall models who would be out of a job if they weighed more than 115 pounds.

One killer of a model to live up to don't you think?

And so I'm not sure about getting braces. It's not because I'm afraid of being called tinsel teeth or that I'll have to suck my meals through a straw during the six weeks my mouth will be wired shut after they break my jaw. I'm more afraid that my concern for my 'concave' profile and chipmunk cheeks has become an obsession. After all, this operation is going to cost at least three times as much as I owe in student loans.

Maybe I'll buy a thigh-master instead.

Judy Reid



CUP graphic/ Geoff Wheeler/ The Charllatan



## 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.

### Yeah, but — yeah, but

To the editor,

Regarding Michel P. Samson's letter to Dean Taylor concerning the Arts Society, I would like to point out an omission that Samson may have been unaware of.

Concerning the Greek Council grant, a vote was put to the Arts Society, and then defeated. Abstentions from the vote were counted as "NO"s, and the grant was refused.

However, between meetings, the Treasurer of the Arts Society, who is also the President of the Greek Council, met with others in the Executive, reviewed the constitution, discovered that abstentions were not to be counted and awarded the Greek Council grant — without consulting the society body again.

When informed of this at the following meeting, the body of the Arts Society was outraged. In a vain attempt to calm members, a vote was called again. It was defeated, unanimously. Unfortunately, the Greek Council had spent a large portion of the sum already, so it was not returned.

To my knowledge, the issue has thus far ended there.

Gary Purcell

### Art not understood

To the editor,

Congratulations on your decision to print the 'Arts Issue' during a week when few people were at school to read it. In reference to the Anonymous ('Nis) poem printed in the issue; is there any selection process

involved in what gets published in your poetry section? And if so, what are your standards for a poem?

"New York City" begins with a crude statement of indifference followed by a tirade of hatred. I would not stoop to classify this as hate literature. It is simply hate, unqualified by insight or personal investment. This makes it a non-poem and as such it has no place in the issue.

"...(W)hat's the difference?" the author asks after questioning the relative virtues of killing an American or being killed by "it". This same question applies to a comparison of this work with the racist, homophobic opinions scrawled on Dalhousie bathroom walls. The difference is this: your paper, my student voice, has an editor, the bathrooms, the janitor.

Due to the fact that the paper is called *The Dalhousie Gazette* there must be an obligation (or at least an attempt) to speak for and to the students of this university. If this attempt is not being made, then we urge you wholeheartedly to buck up. If it is, then there is cause for alarm and great, great sadness.

Natalie Meisner  
Andre Narbonne

### Dear Lord Whitewash

To the editor,

I read with amazement and disbelief W.H. Lord's description of the Dept. of Physical Plant and Planning's "commitment to accessibility" and of its "dedicated and competent staff."

Anyone who visited Dal regularly during the summer of '94 can testify to the olympic and vain effort to rebuild the first floor washrooms in the SUB. It took four long months for workers to reinvent the wheel,

and get a B.F.I. bin.

After considerable time, work and expenditure, the washrooms are still highly inaccessible, particularly the sinks which seem to have been designed to encourage physically challenged persons to wash their hands in the toilet.

Even toilets seem to be beyond the abilities of Mr. Lord's staff. All the washrooms in the SUB seem to be closed regularly. The third floor washrooms can't seem to stay open for longer than a week!

The sad truth is, Mr. Lord, that if your staff was doing its job properly, no one would comment at all.

Patrick C. Gibson

Although we enjoy hearing from our readers, we cannot print your letters (and articles) unless you include your (real) name and your (real) telephone number. If you don't want your name printed in *the Gazette*, simply include that request next to your (real) name. Hope to hear from (the real) you soon.

# the Gazette

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Founded in 1869 at Dalhousie College, *the Gazette* is Canada's oldest student newspaper. With a circulation of 10,000, *the Gazette* is published weekly through the Dalhousie Student Union by the Dalhousie Gazette Publishing Society, of which all Dalhousie University students are members. • *The Gazette* exercises full editorial autonomy and reserves the right to refuse or edit any material submitted. Editorial decisions are made by staff collectively. Individuals who contribute to three issues consecutively become voting staff members. • Deadline for commentary, letters to the editor, and announcements is 4:00 pm on Monday before publication (Thursday of each week). Commentary should not exceed 800 words. Letters should not exceed 500 words. No unsigned material will be accepted, but anonymity may be granted upon request. Submissions may be left at the SUB Enquiry Desk c/o *the Gazette*. • Advertising copy deadline is noon on Monday before publication. • *The Gazette* offices are located on the third floor of the SUB, Room 312. • The views expressed in *the Gazette* are not necessarily those of the editors or the collective staff.