

Running towards death

But deciding to live before it actually happens

Death is an obvious inevitability of life.

This became harshly apparent to me after working in a nursing home for the summer. I found myself becoming very aware of death. I started doing eerie things like checking the obituaries daily and doing "rounds" in the morning and doing "rounds" in the morning to see if any of the residents had died in the night.

Nursing homes are fascinating symbols of what our society does with the elderly. We put them in these institutions in the hopes that they will live out the

remainder of their lives in happiness and without worry. To ensure this happiness we have them play bingo and watch movies. Sometimes we even take them out for rides in the van to get strawberry ice cream. However, all of these things are distractions from the real reason they are there. A nursing home is where they go to die.

I would spend most of my day talking to the residents — about everything from strawberry jam to how they would have done things differently and what will happen to them after they pass away.

Hearing 78-year-old women tell me that they wish they had travelled through England instead of starting their families early and being housewives their entire lives made me think, "fuck, I don't want this to happen to me, I don't want to watch my life go by and regret not living it".

It was these same women who would say the Rosary 80 times a day and recite Bible stories to me,

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telling me about the better life waiting for them in heaven.

Every time this happened it would boggle my mind. Why would these women go through 70-or-so years of being on this earth only for the reward of a better afterlife, if there even is one.

I don't understand this logic. It just seems so irrational and risky. It is an awfully sad way to live.

What if, to the dismay of millions of believers around the world, there isn't a heaven? Do we really know for sure? It's not like anyone's ever come back to tell us

about it. Yes, there are all the religious stories and so on, but I'm sorry I need more proof. I'm not going to spend my life counting on something that may not even exist. What kind of an existence is that?

I don't want to sit around with all my complaints hoping that I have a better afterlife. I want to do something about them now. I want this life to be the best one, because who the hell knows, it might be the only one I have. Who's to say that when we get to those pearly gates, if there are any, there isn't a big sign that says, "Sorry, heaven was all a big joke". Wouldn't a lot of people be kicking themselves in the ass then.

Because I don't feel like kicking myself in the ass just yet, I have taken a new approach to life. I don't want to worry anymore about things to come because they are coming no matter what I do. I don't want to be sitting in a nursing home when I'm 75 starting every sentence with "I wish I had..."

I want to live life and discover my talents and passions — find out who I really am and not give a damn about what happens along the way or how things turn out in the end.

My religion is life and to live it before it's over.

BRIANNE JOHNSTON

Letters

Missed the point

To the editor,

I feel compelled to respond to an article in the Gazette (Oct. 8) regarding another article from *the Picaro* (Oct. 1). 'Take Back The Bullshit' was powerfully written. In 'Mount paper retracts sexist, racist article', the authors missed the point.

For one, accusations of racism are ridiculous. There was no mention of any ethnicity. "Sexism" is also far-fetched. Rather, 'Take Back The Bullshit' uncovers the sexist attitudes against men in society. The fact that Stephen Brown had sex on the night the women were killed is not about lack of self-respect. The point is, life goes on. It's just another night. Probably coincidence. The event has almost been inflated. Yes, it's horrible, but must we dwell on it so much and let it upset our lives? Brown was not "bragging", he was just putting things into perspective.

The "problem" of language is also a farce. There were few, if any profanities, except the title. The author used technical, straightforward terminology.

The real disgrace is that the newspaper was removed from the Dal SUB. I pasted the article outside my Sheriff Hall room. Many stop and read it and the shameful response below it, taken from the Gazette. I know no one who was offended by it, only people who agree with it. Removing the paper was unjustified. Maybe fifteen people complained, but what about those people who agree with it? If people disagree with the content, they don't have to read it!

'Take Back The Bullshit' is a profound article that stands up for men's rights. We want equality, not reversed sexism. Men are not to blame for the actions of other men. They should not be made to feel like scum.

Congratulations to Brown for speaking out for his sex. Shame on

the "feminists" who are apparently too afraid to admit they are sexist. As for myself, there's a lineup of people waiting to photocopy the article outside my door.

Pam Wentzell

Freedom of the press

To the editor,

Contrary to what your Oct. 8 news story, 'Mount Paper Retracts Sexist, Racist Article', suggests, *the Picaro* does not promote sexism or racism. And it is not fair to insinuate the 'Take Back the Bullshit' article, which appeared in the last issue of *the Picaro*, does so either.

Although the article has ugly examples of deplorable actions against women and blacks, it by no means promotes these actions — no more than *Huckleberry Finn* or *To Kill a Mockingbird* promotes racism.

It is unfortunate the article's provocative examples upset so many people. *The Picaro* staff feels terrible, and will apologize for that. However, *the Picaro* never said it will retract the article — contrary to what was written in the Gazette.

Nevertheless, don't offensive opinions have the right to be heard? I think John Milton said it best when he wrote: "All opinions, yea errors, known, read or collated, are of main service and toward the speedy attainment of what is truest."

Doesn't a newspaper, especially one in a university setting, have the right to publish an article, regardless of tone, that challenges its readers to re-think and re-visit taboos? Embracing taboo issues, rather than quickly dismissing them as inappropriate, helps people better understand each other and breaks down societal stereotypes — which is a benefit to us all.

Mark Sitter
News Editor
The Picaro

WHAT'S YOUR PROBLEM PAL ?

Got a problem with something, in the news, in the Gazette, something on campus, something people do that just drives you nuts, think you can do something better than the fools doin' it now, think you can at least write about it ?

So write.

OPINIONS, THE GAZETTE, rm312 SUB

THE DALHOUSIE GAZETTE

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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 © 1998 the Dalhousie Gazette Publishing Society.
ISSN 0011-5819

Calm, cool
and with
an air of
sophistication.

