

Quiet year for Student Union

He says the year's biggest accomplishment was the restoration of credibility and stability to council among the university administration and outgoing president Dick Matthews is probably right. Student opinion is now sought more than it has been in the past. What remains now is for the incoming president Gord Owen to make sure that opinion is student opinion and not just that of the student union executive.

It has been an interesting year for council. The best word that one can use to describe the past year is even-keeled. No real ups, no real downs. More or less a house-keeping year that was needed by the university. Perhaps a little too quiet, but more on that later.

Matthews has had some commendable successes. The council can be proud of the agreements reached with the graduate students. Dalhousie Student Union will not suffer the serious and crippling break that has paralysed other student unions in Canada (U of T for example). The Dalplex management Board was another very good idea that came to life during this executive's term. Council-press relations have improved (at least we will speak to each other, even if it is at very loud levels).

Matthews himself has come to realize the importance of SUNS and what it can do for the students of Nova Scotia. Not enough was done by council to help support SUNS, but hopefully this will continue to change into a more supportive role.

His biggest disappointment. The 'shit' he took over the CKDU issue. Matthews feels he was unjustly accused of trying to kill the CKDU-FM proposal. This may or may not be true. It depends which side happens to have your ear on any particular day. However, cooler heads on both sides did prevail and hopefully CKDU will be FM within a few years.

It was not a bad year for council, but it certainly was not a banner year either. The one area they fell short in was the one that was probably the most important. Communication among the students, to and from council, was almost non-existent. It was in many ways the 'Unknown Council'. And how can a council operate in an efficient way if the voice of students is quiet. It is the job of elected representatives to go out and find that opinion, even if it is buried beneath student apathy.

This is the biggest tasks of the new council. They must try and get the average student involved. Council is on steadier footing now, thanks to Matthews and Co. Now is the time to move towards this very important goal.

the Dalhousie Gazette

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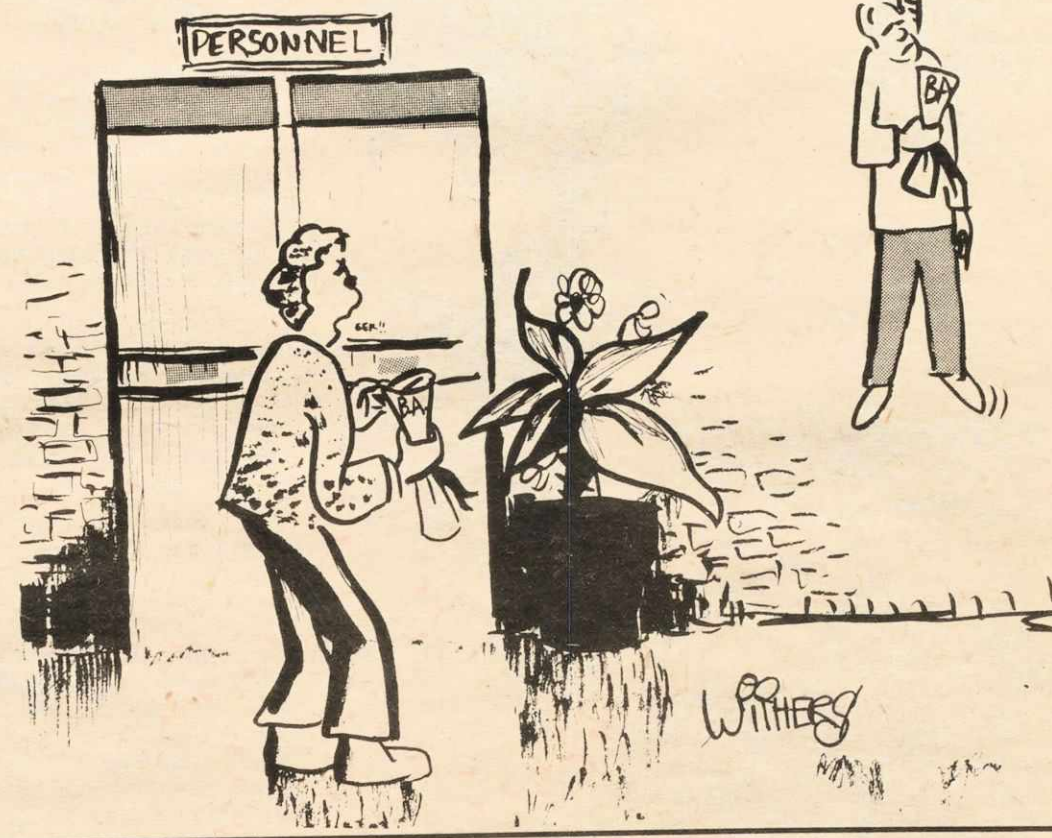
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Letters to Gazette

Investment article misleading

To the Gazette:

Your recent article on the evils of investment in South Africa and Chile is misleading, myopic and hypocritical. Dalhousie holds no shares in companies operating in these countries, but Gazette claims that indirect investments such as in the major Canadian banks are just as bad. By this statement, every student with a savings or chequing account is also guilty. Whose money do the banks lend after all? And one's superpurity won't gain by a switch to a trust company or credit union; they are indirectly involved too because they have deposits with the major banks. Moreover, students with student loans do business with the banks as does the Nova Scotian Government, which also provides bursaries and subsidizes the costs of education. By Gazette's curious theory of guilt by indirection, all students—including Gazette staffers—are thus guilty of involvement in South Africa and Chile.

But student involvement is worse than this. Students live in houses heated directly or indirectly by oil; crude is discovered by drilling with diamond bits; diamonds come from South Africa; guilty again! Students use electricity and the telephone; wire is made of copper; Chile and South Africa are major suppliers; guilty again!

Gazette might respond that students are only slightly involved compared to Dal-

housie. But this is logically impossible. By registering here, students indirectly share any University involvement in addition to their own. Guilty again!

Some perspective is useful. The Bank of Nova Scotia is Dalhousie's largest individual investment. It has the largest international activities of any major Canadian bank; still, only 1.4% of its major earning assets are in the Middle East and Africa combined. And these assets are concentrated not in South Africa but in Lebanon, Egypt and in the oil-producing countries of the Middle East. It has no offices or branches in South Africa or Chile though it does in Indonesia, Egypt, Malaysia, and many other developing countries. Scotiabank is a major provider of banking services to the developing countries in the Caribbean. Should Dalhousie "punish" Scotiabank for meeting the needs of these countries? (Could Dalhousie "punish" Scotiabank by selling its shares in any case?)

Perhaps what really troubles Gazette is that Dalhousie invests in well-managed, profitable, private enterprise. If the endowment were only in the shares of incompetent, unprofitable firms, then no accusations of profiting through exploitation could be made. Or maybe Gazette's peeve is the fact that Dalhousie has an endowment, since virtually every conceivable investment in our interdependent world will have some remote indirect connection to countries with repressive governments.

Should student newspapers

print only half the facts—and as well, get some of these wrong? When investing for the benefit of students, should the Board of Governors exhibit greater moral purity than Gazette staffers and other students? Are Chile and South Africa the only foreign nations where repression and exploitation have been occurring? Canada's treatment of Eskimos, Indians, Metis, Blacks, and Asiatics has scarcely been above reproach; what has Gazette done about the racism and exploitation which occur right here in Halifax? Should Gazette not ponder its double standard of morality?

Dr. Paul Huber

Ed. note—Dr. Huber's letter necessitates a number of responses.

First, he claims "Dalhousie has no shares in companies operating in these countries (South Africa and Chile)". He, or any other member of the university community, has only to check Dalhousie's financial statements to see that Dalhousie owns several million dollars in shares in companies like Alcan, Inco and Noranda who, sometimes via subsidiaries or other corporate face changes, do business in south Africa and Chile.

Second, diamonds do not just come from South Africa. Indeed, according to the Encyclopedia Britannica, South Africa only produces about 17% of the world's diamonds. Neither are South Africa and Chile our only sources of copper. In 1974 (we could not get more current statistics at