

## editorial

## Getting your clichés together

Lately 21 feels so old.

Sure, 30 years from now I'd laugh at the naivete and arrogance behind such a statement, but I don't keep the next 30 years in mind as I'm evaluating how I'm feeling now.

When you're six, you struggle to be heard as more than a baby, at 10, as more than a child. At 16 I bristled at being told that "older was wiser" — but this is different.

21 is the first time I've been old by society's standards.

It's not even really 21 that's old. The first six months of being 21 last forever. They're glory days we've absorbed from all the things you can already do in Canada, but are finally allowed to do (legally) in the States. So it's not exactly 21, it's almost 22 that's the problem.

Almost 22 is firmly in the twenties, and the twenties is when you're supposed to be doing all those things that everyone does — when they're in their twenties.

Women in their twenties are suddenly recognized by *Cosmopolitan* — recognized as having different skin conditions, hair styles and sexual energies — but recognized. Trends are described as appealing to twenty-somethings, and the decisions of people in their twenties are studied as if approaching 22 you suddenly have more in common with 29-year-olds than 19-year-olds.

Of all decades, the twenties have the most expectations, and the least rules. They suck for it. Cultural stereotypes would have you believe the ten years you devote to being in your twenties is like the fabled high school prom. These are some of the best days of your life. Ten years given over to the same kind of myth that leads people to puke all over satin dresses in the washroom of a hotel. Cool.

Presumably you spend your twenties partying so hard, you'll forget you're approaching thirty. Thirty, when birthday balloons first start being associated with

Over the Hill theme parties. Thirty, when suddenly everyone you know is a responsible stick-in-the-mud who stays home to watch re-runs of a show named after a decade of people so boring the show got cancelled.

But here's the kicker: if being unemployed and aimless is a life-style at twenty, and makes you an idiot as soon as you hit thirty, when do you do all the ass-kissing, brown-nosing, ladder-climbing, late-night grunt work that counts as building a career. In your twenties. The same decade that has you pegged for long-term Kwik-Mart employment. Society can't get its clichés together. Alex P. Keaton or Ethan Hawke.

22 is scary because it's that much closer to a deadline I can't pinpoint. If all goes according to plan, I'm graduating at 23. 23-year-olds with a degree in political science. Isn't there an ugly statistic somewhere about those

odds. It's not the job market that scares me, it's deciding when to enter it.

Can you have a real job and still love the A-Team? Does kitsch become classic when an easy listening radio station starts including your decade's music in its countdown? What's the one clear sign that it's time to grow up? That's the worst thing about the twenties — there isn't any sign. You just better be careful that wherever you are on the slacker continuum, you're dressed for it. Don't worry, The Gap's got it covered.

Being included in an age that would have me both stoned and buying a house, well it makes me nervous.

By the way, Douglas Coupland — the Canadian author who wrote the book on Generation X — he's in his thirties and lives with his parents.

SHELLEY ROBINSON

## Gazette Section Editor Elections

In a state of delirious election fervor, the Gazette will be holding more elections next week. We will be electing four of our section editors for next year at our staff meeting this Monday, March 24th.

If you are interested in running for these positions, just show up at the meeting. If you can't be at the meeting right at 4:30 p.m., leave a note indicating your intentions with someone at the office or in the box on our front door, SUB 312. You must be at the meeting to run, but we can hold off the elections for a short while.

You are allowed to run with someone, as a team, for a position.

The positions to be elected are: Focus Editor, Science Editor, Sports Editor and Arts Editor.

## the Gazette

## the Dalhousie Gazette

## editorialboard

**Managing Editor** Shelley Robinson **Copy Editor** Tim Covert  
**News** Gina Stack **Arts** Andrew Simpson & John Cullen  
**Sports** Aaron Bleasdale **Opinions** Michael Alves  
**Focus on Dal** Kaveri Gupta & Tamara Bond **Dalendar** Sophia Maxwell  
**CUP Editor** Mark Reynolds **Photography** Danielle Boudreau  
**Science & Environment** Adel Iskander & Anthony Skelton  
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The Gazette welcomes letters to the editor and commentary. All letters will be printed up to four per week. The printing of additional letters will be at the discretion of the Opinions Editor.

Letters may be edited for length above 300 words and we reserve the right to edit commentary.

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.

## contributors

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All editorial decisions are made collectively by the staff. To become voting staff members, individuals must contribute to three issues. Views expressed in the Gazette are not necessarily those of the editors or the collective staff. Unless otherwise noted, all text © 1997 the Dalhousie Gazette Publishing Society. ISSN 0011-5819

## letters

## Don't shoot my dog Science rebuttal

I would like to add my voice to those who are expressing their concern and disgust with the decision to print a photograph of a dog with a (plastic) assault weapon pointed at it (Gazette, March 6). I was first confronted with it on the door of my carrel where a colleague had taped it so that I would take note that a dog that looked very much like my own dog was on the cover page of the Gazette. I was shocked not only by the close resemblance but also by the image which was depicted.

There is enough gratuitous violence in the world that this kind of "satire" (if that is what it was) appeals only to the minds of those who regularly and routinely do evil to others (whether animal or human). As any humane dog owner will testify, canine intelligence and love is something people can learn from, celebrate and respect. My dog (a therapy dog) keeps many people smiling...for all the good that they give, they deserve only the best from us!!

Diane Babor

## Cover defence

I may be a member of the "Pulp Fiction generation" but I thought the cover of the March 6th Gazette (with a picture of a gun pointed at the head of a dog) was entertaining and effective. It may have used sensationalism but it worked to help bring voter turnout to a high of 20 per cent.

The reason for my letter is the unfair abuse the Gazette has received about the cover. It has occurred to me that some of the people who wrote letters to the Gazette "didn't get it," i.e., didn't understand or don't know the reference the satire is based on. In the 1960s and 70s, protesters of the Vietnam War threatened to kill a dog if the war wasn't ended. This caused a huge international outcry. People from around the world were appalled by the lack of humanity and injustice displayed by the protesters.

This is exactly what the protesters wanted. Their point was that millions complained about the killing of one dog when most didn't care about the hundreds of people being killed everyday in the war. Good point.

After this had happened, National Lampoon published a magazine cover that read: "If you don't buy this magazine we will shoot your dog." Some people found it funny and others were offended and complained. The bottom line: it was effective, got people's attention and they bought the magazine. Recently the Gazette used a similar strategy in an attempt to increase voter turnout which some people loved, other people hated it and wrote letters. Regardless of people's opinions of the cover, it brought much needed attention to the election (which had to cancel a public forum because only a couple of people bothered to show up) and may have helped to increase voter turnout.

Don't get me wrong, I support animal rights and love dogs but I don't think people will go and shoot their dogs after seeing the cover of the Gazette. As for the people who were offended by the picture, I am truly sorry. However, if the paper were forced to only produce a product that wouldn't offend anyone it would be reduced to mindless dribble absent of all content and humour. If that were to happen, I would feel nauseous.

On a final note, I would like to mention my disapproval of the "ditty" called "Jigging the Lydon". The song was in response to a joke told by Chris Lydon that offended some people. I think the authors of the song could have dealt with the issue differently, instead of resorting to immature name calling.

Chris Day

I am writing with regards to the article by Jason Morrison, "The Demise of the BSc" (Gazette, March 6). At first glance I would say that this article was written by an arts student. However, I would say that it was written by a science student who has failed a multiple choice exam. Myself being in my third year of an advanced major in Marine Biology, I have a few problems with what Mr. Morrison has said.

My first problem I have is that Morrison writes, "...to all the science students who make the jokes, the joke's on you: arts students pay a lower tuition yet receive a better education, and should be more employable at the end of their degree."

Yes, arts students pay a lower tuition but I don't think they get a better education. I personally feel that I am getting an equal education as that of any arts student. I am perfecting my skills on reading, writing and thinking, plus I am learning practical science-related skills. In my eyes, an arts degree basically teaches people how to fabricate ideas and to be creative and a science degree how to research, analyze and think about the things around us.

Now this may sound as if I think that a science education is better than an arts education, but I assure you this is not the case. For the past two summers I have worked with Human Resources Canada and I can tell you there are just as many good jobs that require a BSc as jobs that require a BA. Let me put this in an easy to understand way; there are plenty of jobs in the world for people who can be creative and there are just as many if not more jobs for those who can research and be analytical.

This leads me to my second major problem that I have with Morrison's article. He continues to write, "A liberal arts education does a better job of emphasizing and evaluating essential skills such as reading, writing and most of all thinking, than the average science program does." Excuse me, but I would not be here at University if I could not read or write or think. Yes, science programs don't focus on creative writing as much, but I would not go as far as to say that science programs don't teach people how to read, write and think. The one aspect of a science program that Morrison overlooks is the importance of labs. Further along in his article, he states that science is all about memorizing and multiple choice, and I would like to slightly disagree with him there. Yes, in science there appears to be a lot of memorizing but it is usually the fundamental basic principles which are required in order to do science that are memorized. Besides, arts students have to memorize far more than any science student does, take History for example. Science is truly not how well you know your facts but rather how you use them and how you apply them to problem solving. That my friend, is the true meaning of science — the ability to solve problems. Science students in every lab are faced with a problem that must be solved. Science students must be able to use information to solve this problem and then communicate the answer to others.

This year in my Marine Animal Physiology class, a large portion of my class mark is based on my ability to communicate and think. We have bi-monthly seminars, in which we present and critique a research article. Now I don't know if you know this Mr. Morrison, but in order to do that, first you must read a scientific paper, than think about what it is telling you and then talk to other people about the paper and finally tell others what you thought of it. As seen in this everyday,

cont'd on p.3: "letter"