

Looking for answers

Editor,

Ere the outgoing DSU Executive and their actions are obscured by history, it may be useful to recap a few salient points of the past year.

September 17: the DSU General Manager is dismissed by council — on the recommendations of the President and Treasurer. Councilors are not allowed to obtain information other than that presented to us by the executive, though this is requested; and are forced to vote that day. On October 29, David Cox states: "I have no problem discussing the details with students as soon as everything is cleared up." We're still waiting.

January 7: the Manager of Bar Services is dismissed, after a review of the Grawood's finances reveals discrepancies to the tune of \$20,000. Enter Mr. Cox: "We will keep students informed of the matter as we are able to." Really?

In a recent Gazette: Mr. Cox comments on the recent dismissal of two more DSU staff: "I have always been a big supporter of student jobs. I want to put a student in every possible student union position." An admirable sentiment, until one finds that over the summer, it was he who created both these positions in the interests of "staffing consistency." After removing the students who did those jobs up till then.

People are fired, large sums of our money are gone; and we know nothing. The Treasurer spends more time dictating policy than the Executive Vice President (whose job this is). The President and External Vice President, strong supporters of CASA at the outset, have little to say when there is a referendum to remove us less than a year later.

Perhaps student politics aren't that far removed from the real thing after all...

Ryan Benson
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Heterosexuals ignored

To the editor,

It seems that I in my transgendered state was wrong. I now realize the fact that according to Webster, I am homophobic. However, as Bill should realize, life is not about Webster's definition of any word, it's about perception. A phobia is perceived as an irrational form of panic whereas dislike or distaste is perceived as a rational decision or choice. It is this perception to which I was referring. In response to Mr. Fernley, I would certainly not deny him the right to decide what to do with his own orifices. Obviously my objection was not to any sex act from the mechanical point of view, but to the idea that both participants have the option of growing a beard. However, both of these letters chose to ignore the point which I was making. Homosexuality was incidental in the argument. The point was that the issue was biased and completely ignored heterosexuals as a group with respect to Valentine's Day. That was the point.

Thank you,

J. Eastwood

Freaks of nature

Editor,

Two weeks ago, both of us took the liberty to attend an International Socialist meeting in the SUB. We had seen their posters up around campus about 'Revolution,' so we were not too sure what to expect. A group of 18 people were there, and how immature and pathetic they did seem, telling one another how bad their country is and why there has to be an International Revolution to put the bricks back together. Reality check. It amazed us that here, at Dalhousie, in the SUB sat a party that were engaged in conversation about the overthrow of their government. What freaks of nature. Whatever makes them think that they will succeed in such an implausible plan? Crazy, nay, "sick" is the word for them. Maybe I am going a bit too far



editorial

Involvement is more than a cast ballot

By the time this paper is out on the stands, Dalhousie students will have cast their votes and elected the new leaders of the Dalhousie Student Union.

Of course, there's always the possibility that the elections will be overturned by a distressed candidate who comes up with some sort of complaint about holes in the election regulations...but barring that, you've made your decision.

Did you vote? With papers and exams and strenuous amounts of work to be done at this time of year, did you find two extra minutes to mark your X on the ballot?

Or do you care?

As a member of the Dalhousie Student Union, you have the right to have your say in deciding who will be representing you both in the internal arena of university politics, and to the outside world. With restructuring here at Dal (cutting frosh week springs to mind) and external issues such as the inevitability of cuts to spending in education causing tuition costs to rise at the speed of light, are you confident in the ability of your new leaders to do what you want them to do?

At this point, even if you haven't voted, there are still opportunities for you to speak out.

The Student Union offices are on the second floor of the SUB. If the door's open, go in and talk to your new president, the old president, or both. If the door's closed, phone and complain (494-1106). Every second Sunday (less often during the summer) council meets in Council Chambers. These meetings are open to all students and you don't have to be a voting member to ask questions of the people who claim to represent you.

As a member of the Dalhousie Student Union, you are entitled to take a look at the constitution — it was written by students just like you, and although it may seem confusing at first glance, take a read through it and make sure you agree with its contents. It is the document that determines how things run around here.

Something in the next thirty days there will be a by-election, and you could run to be a stu-

dent representative on the University's Board of Governors. You get to go to important meetings and be part of the decision-making process.

If you're hungry for power, at some point before the end of the year, a new Treasurer will have to be appointed by Council. Apply to the Recruitment Committee by the 18th of March, and you can sign other people's checks.

Maybe I'm being cynical, but the thing about student politics is that students don't, for the most part, care at all. And those that do care are gone in a couple of years, and no one remembers why they did the things they did. That lack of continuity can be distressing; however, it makes it possible for rapid changes to be made. Keep in mind that just about everything that appears to have been entrenched in the operations of the Student Union can be altered — changes are someone changed it to the way it is only a couple of years ago.

It is a lot easier to fix things if you have an impressive sounding title and one of those nice offices with a cushy chair, but the beauty of it all is that the system was designed with the intention of

making it possible for students to be involved. It's our system, right?

The point being here, that you can change things, you can get involved. The number of candidates for President and VP Executive who appeared on the ballot this year proved just how easy it is to become a contender. Next year, even if you don't want the job, you can always plan a campaign just so you are entitled to a week-long soapbox...it's been done before, trust me.

In addition to the Student Union, there are a myriad of societies and groups on campus that have been set up just for the purpose of serving students. Allow them to serve you better by giving them your input. Get involved, and present your suggestions to the people who want to hear what you have to say. If you think it's too late, you're wrong. Now's the perfect time to get involved. Not only are you trying to figure out what's going on, but so are your newly elected officials.

If you're out of time for now, there's always next year. Exercise your rights, challenge your elected officials, and ensure that what you want becomes reality.

JEN HORSEY

here, but what country has every blossomed from social? I had the misfortune to be called "comrade."

They say they wish for world peace, but how can you have peace if you intend to stage a revolution? It confused us. What are they going to be doing, throwing flowers at each other? I put forth the question asking why they don't run in the elections if they have such support that they proclaimed? This question was brushed aside. We came to the conclusion that all of the people in the room (excluding us) were either insane, bored, angry with life, or a little of each. If the UN rates this country as number one in the world, where is the major problem?

Stuart McMillan, Colin Mason

Thank you from East Timor

To the Editor,

On Saturday night, Feb. 17, the Halifax chapter of the East Timor Alert Network (a national organization committed to raising public awareness of the tragedy in East Timor and to reversing Canada's long-standing policy of supporting Indonesia's illegal and genocidal occupation of the former Portuguese colony) held a benefit concert at the Grad House. The event was set up to raise awareness for Bella Galhos — a Timorese refugee living in Ottawa — to come and give a talk at the Dalhousie Law School on March 14, at 11:30 a.m. in Room 105. While we may have fallen a little short of financial goal, the evening was a great success, with close to \$300 in contributions raised, many pages of petitions filled, and hours of outstanding acoustic music enjoyed by all.

On behalf of the members of ETAN Halifax, I'd like to extend our very warm thanks to all those who contributed their time, talent, and resources to make the evening possible. To the musicians, in order of their appearance: "Piggy" (Paul Gailunas, David Christenson, Rod Cabellero, Graham McDougall, Melissa Andrews, Jordan Musto); Alison Outhit; Al Tuck; Dennis and Jesse Cox; Steve Read; Phil Sedore (who did wonders with the sound system); Lou Duggan; and Eric Kendrick; to the Harbour Folk Society for generously lending us their sound equipment; to Sandy Ross and Stana Cerny for the use of the Grad house, the complimentary beer tickets, and helping to set things up; and, finally to everyone who came out to donate and show their support — a heartfelt thanks to all. Through your contributions, Bella's passionate plea for her people's freedom and her story of their suffering under Indonesian occupation will reach many more Canadians and may bring a little nearer the day when we finally close this shameful chapter in our country's history and end our twenty-year betrayal of East Timor.

Brooks Kind, ETAN Halifax

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