

Gazette needs more opinions

What is the point of the Gazette? Why do we pay student fees to have a paper that doesn't really reflect the views of students at Dalhousie? Who runs the paper anyway?

As a member of the Gazette staff these are questions I often have to answer. These are questions that my friends ask and that I ask of myself. There is not always an easy answer. In writing this editorial I am hoping to explain to you as well as to myself why we (the Gazette) are here.

The Gazette is a newspaper; logically its primary job is to report the news. However, the question arises "what kind of news?" We are not a commercial paper. That is to say we do not compete with the *Mail-Star*, the *Daily News*, or the *Globe and Mail*. It is not possible for a paper with a circulation of 10,000 and a limited budget, operated primarily by volunteers, to cover the same material as these papers. Thus we must redefine our scope.

Perhaps the Gazette should concentrate more on certain types of Dalhousie news. We should have more sports coverage

(increased varsity and some intramural), make more of an attempt to cover guest lectures on campus, to give voice for the various societies and student organizations, and let students know what is going on in the residence halls.

Maybe the Gazette should entertain some of these ideas, but I believe there is more to a student paper than this. Dalhousie is not just an institution of higher learning that happens to be in Halifax, it is part of the community. True, the Gazette covers many activities on campus, but they tend to be political or cultural issues, issues that often have some relevance to the community at large. The Gazette is distributed throughout Halifax and acts as a local, as well as a university, paper. As a result we have an obligation to make our product readable for all.

This may not be enough, you say, to defend against the accusation that the Gazette seems to cover certain types of stories. Why does the paper spend so much time and effort writing stories on issues that particularly relate to

women, why do they have a Gay and Lesbian supplement every year, why is there so much attention paid to disarmament issues, and why does the Gazette continue to present story angles that seem irrelevant to many students?

As I said earlier the Gazette is not a commercial paper. We are a student paper, and part of our

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mandate is to be an alternative news source. That is to say we are committed to covering stories that may not be covered in the commercial press. When we do have overlapping stories there is an attempt to present them from a different angle. The politicians, people in business, and other "prominent" individuals in our society get plenty of coverage from other sources. The Gazette has little or nothing to add to this.

On the other hand we can provide a voice for those who do not necessarily have access to the commercial media. Groups such as women, visible minorities, lesbians and gay men, the physically challenged, and others have a chance to be heard through student newspapers. In addition, we can give student and alternative artists, musicians, and cultural groups a chance to reach the public.

All of this does not mean we are perfect, or that we have some high moral seat to sit on. We make mistakes, we let people and groups fall through the cracks, we are very fallible. If you pick up an old copy of the Gazette you will see that only a small proportion of the paper is committed to the kind of stories and ideas I've mentioned. Ultimately, however, we are committed to providing education and awareness on issues that often get left behind.

In the end the Gazette contains the material that its contributors write. We are not a secret society, we do not discriminate arbitrarily as to what goes into the paper and what doesn't (We don't accept racist, sexist, homophobic, or libelous material). The people who run the paper are you, or people like you. Students who are interested in writing, interested

in journalism, or just interested in getting involved in some of the activities that campus life provides. If you feel a particular issue is not being covered in the Gazette come see us. We can give you some advice on how to write a story, perhaps set you in the right direction for sources and material, and the rest is up to you. We hope you will take us up on this offer and come join the group of people that determine just what the Gazette is every week.

Alex Burton



Where's my car?

To the Editor:

On Tuesday, October 31st, my car was towed from the parking lot behind the SUB. This is the second time that I've been unjustly ticketed by Dal Security since September.

I considered appealing the first ticket, but when I spoke to a Dal Security employee he told me I would have to speak to the security person who issued the ticket personally. I attempted to contact this individual on three occasions, leaving messages, none of which were answered.

In this most recent incident, not only have I received a ticket, but Dal Security went so far as to have my car towed. According to the security officer on duty, Officer A. Oakley, my car was parked illegally. He informed me

that he had my car towed because "it blocked access to a garbage bin". In my opinion, there is insufficient posting of "no parking" signs in this area. The car beside mine was still there, intact, unticketed.

I'm angry with this situation because decisions concerning parking violations at Dal seem random, depending on who happens to be on duty at the time. Also, there doesn't seem to be a direct route of appeal for parking violations.

I'd like to suggest a review of Dal Security Operations, and invite other students who have been victims of random ticketing by Oakley and his mob of traffic vigilantes to share their experiences of injustice.

Tina Berardo

Opening the door

To the Gazette:

We are the Dalhousie Advocates for the Physically Challenged (DAPC) and we are back for our second year.

We continue to focus our attention on accessibility at Dalhousie through the completion of this year's objectives; the completion of an access guide, the continued removal of barriers on campus and an increased awareness of the DAPC on campus.

Although the struggle for improved accessibility can be long and tiring it is not without its moments of enjoyment. Our

second annual dinner is in the planning stages and promises to be an enjoyable and informative evening.

We are encouraged by the growing support we receive from the Dalhousie community — a community that needs to be accessible to all students — but we need your involvement in our group.

With your help we can continue on the road to make Dalhousie more accessible.

Thank you
R. Cruise
DAPC Chair