

Pusillanimous Persons



You may have noticed the *Gazette* came out a bit late last week. The printers called their lawyer to make sure they would not be held responsible should the contents of the newspaper be deemed obscene. They felt the public may have to be protected from being exposed to poems like "Raped in Heaven" and headlines such as "Gender Fuck." You may have noticed one could not get a *Gazette* at Dalplex last week. Someone, as in many years past, threw the lot of Lesbigan issues in the garbage.

These self-proclaimed morality squads should be sent a simple message: "Get a life." Their reactions demonstrate how accepted homophobia continues to be in our society, and how slowly attitudes towards the gay/lesbian/bisexual community change. Misconceptions and insecurities surrounding people's own sexuality obscure the recognition of this group's right to express themselves in the manner they choose.

While this hubbub goes on concerning a university newspaper's contents, countless examples of truly undesirable material are readily available to the public. Snuff films, whereby women are raped, tortured and often killed on-screen are allowed to run in theatres under the banner of freedom of expression. This is not art, this is blatant degradation of women.

It reminds me of a scene in the film, *The Adjuster*, where a woman working as a censor of pornography draws a parallel between her job and her husband's work as an insurance adjuster who must evaluate property damage after disasters, "We both have to determine what is of value."

The GLB supplement provided a forum for the voice of a traditionally marginalized group. It was truly disturbing to see how quick so many people were to dismiss its worth.

~Miriam Korn

the Gazette

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editorial

Not the thought police

How to combat misinformation? How to get people actually to find out information related to what they talk about, and then actually think about what they want to say? It's a problem we all run across, teachers and students alike. These days, it's surfacing around the proposed Discriminatory Harassment Policy at Dalhousie. A lot is being said, and not enough of it is based on actual reading of the policy.

People are talking about thought police. No one wants thought police. But then, this policy doesn't create any kind of thought police. How to explain that to someone who hasn't read it?

People talk about legislating away language or behaviour that some people don't like. Who would waste their time and energy doing that? But this policy doesn't try to legislate it away. Instead, it gives us a mechanism for responding to situations that are harassing and damaging. It will allow people to look into these situations and make recommendations about how to avoid them in the future. It also allows for education into issues that are of importance and interest to every member of the Dalhousie com-

munity. It then leaves it entirely up to us mere mortals to think about the issues and decide for ourselves what kind of things we want to be saying and doing to the other people on our campus.

Last night's Radio Canada's "Ce soir" reported that the policy creates a committee that would have the

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power to fire people. People are saying this, yes, but anyone who has the draft policy in front of them would be hard pressed to find where this power is given to anyone, let alone to the committee.

People are talking about this policy as part of a "politically-correct" agenda. You've got to wonder how Howard Clark feels about being called

politically-correct, since he's the one who directed the policy be drafted in the first place. It's not related to a politically-anything agenda. It's a policy in response to real problems of real people at our university.

Some news articles talk about professors having problems with this policy. Well, yes, some very vocal professors do have problems with it. They seem scared, although if they have read the policy, it's hard to see why. There are, however, a lot of professors who support it. That, for some reason is not being said. Let's say it here: some professors at Dalhousie University support the draft policy.

So many patently false things being said, and so many misinformed things accompanying them. How to clear them all up? There isn't enough space here. Probably the most important thing anyone can do is this: get a copy of the present draft and read it. When the next version comes out in March or April, get it and read it too. We have to form our own ideas. We have to stop letting people tell us how to think, and just do some thinking of our own.

Stan Beck



LETTERS

The *Dalhousie Gazette* welcomes letters to the editor. Letters should not exceed 300 words in length and should be typed and double-spaced. The deadline for letters is Monday noon before publication. Letters may be submitted on Mac or IBM-compatible 3.5" disk.

Can't get no satisfaction

To the editor:

I write to express my concern about some of the materials you published in the lesbigan supplement carried in the February 11, 1993 edition of the *Gazette*. It is true that you seek to satisfy the Dalhousie Publishing Society's (of which every student is a member) mandate by your commitment to publishing material that is not racist, sexist, homophobic or libelous. But does that preclude you from exercising discretion as regards to what you publish? I don't think you can excuse yourself for the blatant exhibition of nudity in last week's paper by a commitment to publishing "a paper that is not racist, sexist, homophobic or libelous."

Enock Delaporte.

Distorted truth

To the editor:

I am writing this reply in response to a letter you received from Julie Sims (Feb. 11, p 17), concerning the "racist map" located on the third floor of the A&A. She contends that some "white" countries were deliberately enlarged

relative to other places, supposedly for the purpose of racial propaganda.

I believe the problem lies not in racial prejudice, but in the difficulties inherent in map making. The map in the A&A is a Mercator projection, and as such shows distortion of land areas which increase the closer one gets to either pole. Distortion is an unavoidable problem when one projects a three dimensional globe on a two dimensional surface. Mercator projections are ubiquitous because they are useful for navigation and have a visually pleasing rectangular shape. However, as far back as 50 years ago people were having much the same concerns as Ms. Sims (note for example Europe appears to be the same size as S. America even though it is only half as big).

Cartographers are sensitive to the use of maps as propaganda and would rather Mercator projections not be used as political maps, only as navigational aids. There are several other types of more suitable map which show all land masses in their true proportions. The assumption that this is a political map is easy enough to make since the map is right in the heart of the political science department, but it seems to me to be simply an unhappy juxtaposition.

In any event, although this map is distorted, it is not overtly racist. That maps tend to be biased in that Europe is in the centre and north almost al-

ways points up is another matter. There are several excellent books on this subject in the library for those interested (look under Cartography).

D. E. Slauenwhite

Dept. of Oceanography

Amoré concerned Christian

To the editors:

I am writing in reply to a letter in the Feb. 11, 1993 edition of the *Gazette* by a "Concerned Christian". I was deeply disturbed by the supposition that because "the truth of Christ is the truth of love", any form of love is okay. While Christ did teach us to love our neighbour, he never once condoned sin. God ordained in the beginning that sexual love was only to occur within the marriage relationship between a man and a woman (Genesis 2:24). God has not changed since then, and neither has how she views the behaviour of human beings. Have we any right to presume that as the world has changed that God's standard as to what is sin has changed? I think not!

C. Keilher

CONTINUED ON PAGE 13

The *Dalhousie Gazette* is Canada's oldest college newspaper. Published weekly through the Dalhousie Student Union, which also comprises its membership, the *Gazette* has a circulation of 10,000. * As a founding member of Canadian University Press, the *Gazette* adheres to the CUP Statement of Principles and reserves the right to refuse any material submitted of a racist, sexist, homophobic or libelous nature. Deadline for commentary, letters to the editor, and announcements is noon Monday before publication (Thursday of each week). Submissions may be left at the SUB Enquiry Desk c/o the *Gazette*. * Commentary should not exceed 500 words. Letters should not exceed 300 words. No unsigned material will be accepted, but anonymity may be granted upon request. * Advertising copy deadline is noon Monday before publication. * The *Gazette* offices are located on the third floor of the SUB. Come up and have a coffee and tell us what's going on. * The views expressed in the *Gazette* are not necessarily those of the Students' Union, the editors or the collective staff.