

# 49th and goal

The front page of a newspaper is designed specifically to get people to pick up the paper. The best way to do this is to have a picture that is shocking or exciting — something that elicits a strong emotional response.

This past Monday, the Chronicle-Herald ran a picture of a guy in a New England Patriots hat. The story? Probably one of the most meaningless, trite, banal, ridiculous, stupid stories I could've imagined for a front page cover. He was hoping that his team would win — this is the day after the game remember.

It's not the fact that the picture or the story was stupid that upsets me. What does concern me, however, is the fact that the editors of the Chronicle-Herald were probably right in printing it. This picture of the Patriots fan with twelve Patriots hats would reach out and grab people and make them pick up the paper.

People are enthralled with the NFL, despite the fact that this year's Super Bowl was the most colossal disappointment possible, again.

Let's face it, Sunday's game was entirely boring except for a brief outburst of competitiveness somewhere near the end of the first quarter. By the third quarter, even the announcers, men paid to make the game sound interesting, were talking about the ventilation. The most entertaining part of the evening was the strongman contest over on TSN at the same time.

And yet, you still find people who innocently bleat: "I just like the NFL better, it's a better game."

Increasing numbers of people are voicing this same opinion. Why? For eighty years the CFL has been cherished as a great and valuable Canadian institution. What's changed?

We have.

We've fallen for all the hype and sensationalism of the NFL. It's hard not to be swept away by the brilliant marketing strategy, lucrative broadcasting deals, and the insurmountable power of the almighty buck.

Sure, the CFL has deteriorated

in recent years. This season saw the demise of the B.C. Lions and the Ottawa Rough Riders but the league hasn't deteriorated because the product on the field has changed. It has deteriorated because the product on the field no longer has the support of the people in the stands.

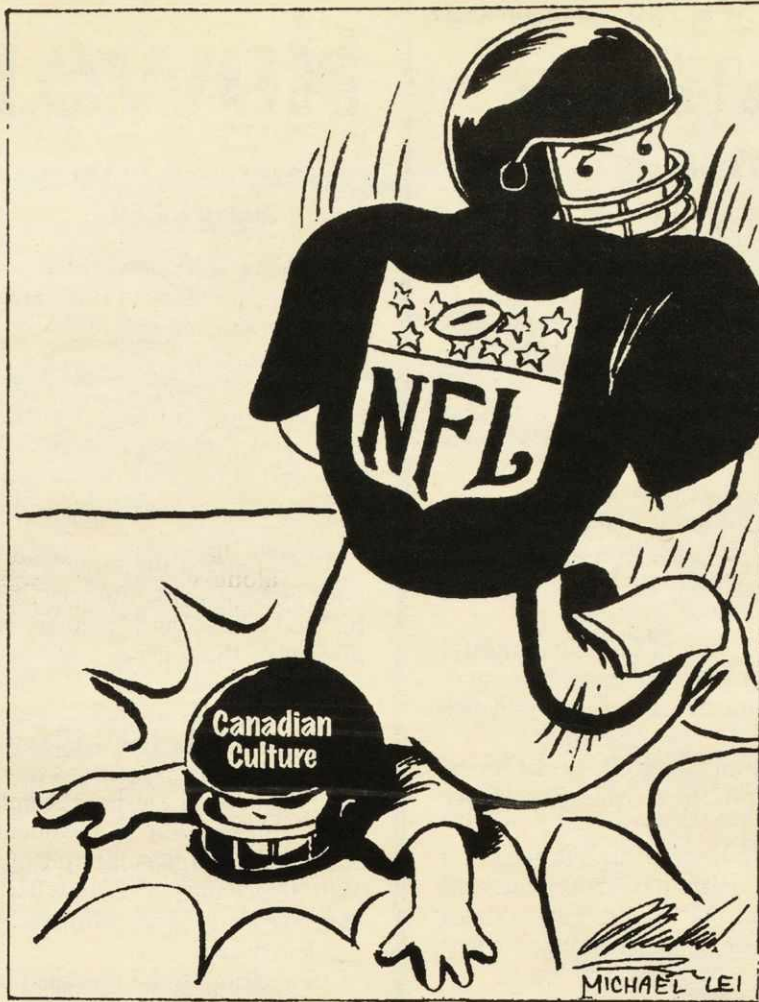
It's no fun to be a football fan when no one else appreciates the useless stats you rattle-off. It's no fun to be a football fan when no one knows enough about the game to make an intelligent wager on its outcome. Winning sucks if no one cares. This lack of interest is the nasty spiral that leads to sports league oblivion.

It's hard to understand this decline in fan support. Look at this year's Grey Cup, in which the Toronto Argonauts beat the Edmonton Eskimos in a nail-biter decided only in the last two minutes of play. Not boring. The teams played in the deafening silence of a chaos-inducing snow storm. Football's equivalent of the Zamboni cleared the playing surface at every intermission. At halftime the Nylons came out donning mittens and parkas and did their best to serenade fifty thousand fans who were huddled together under blankets and couldn't stand to cheer if they wanted to. Picture it. The Nylons...in parkas...in a snow storm...but the show must go on. Wonderful! What's not to like? But we never saw a single picture of this Herculean musical defiance of Mother Nature. The editors of the Chronicle-Herald insist on showing us the Patriots fan with twelve hats.

So what, who cares if people prefer the NFL over the CFL?

We must care. It's more than just footballs and field lengths. The CFL is one of Canada's greatest cultural treasures. It's a symbol for every form of Canadian self-expression currently under siege by a flood of American culture.

American stuff fills our airwaves and jams our print. Only one in twenty movies shown in Canadian theatres is Canadian.



Virtually all of our television is American. Next time you watch the news and see a story about taking back the streets of some American inner-city, you're seeing it not because the story is actually relevant to our lives, but because the American feed was simply cheaper for the Canadian station to pick up. 85 per cent of publishing houses are currently owned by American interests. That means that U.S. businessmen dictate the lion's share of what's printed in Canada. Since money is their bottom line, they'd rather publish a tried and true American best-seller like Danielle Steele instead of giving young Canadian writers a chance. The result of all this cultural flooding is that most Canadians know more about JFK than they do about John A. MacDonald, John "the Chief" Diefenbaker, and Pierre Trudeau combined.

Our stories are American stories. When we unconsciously absorb this flood of entertainment and news from the South, we are participating in the destruction of our own story-telling tradition. We are constantly

living new stories, but we are failing to tell them, to preserve them. Nothing will remain. When will these foreign stories we tell start to shape us? When will we become them?

I'm not saying that Americans are bad people or that becoming more like them is a bad thing. It's too easy to scapegoat them for our problems. What I am saying is that failing to value our own forms of expression is the most hateful thing we can do to ourselves.

Our failure to recognize the uniqueness of our own game, the CFL, is a symptom of our greater failure to recognize our own dreams and identities. If we fail to recognize ourselves, no one will do it for us. We will, for all intensive purposes, be American, though we'll deny it fiercely.

Take pride in the small joys our country offers, like the Nylons in parkas at halftime. Defend them and support them because in fifty years they could be gone and we would miss them more than we can ever know.

AARON BLEASDALE

## letters

### Mgmt. responds

This letter is a response to Mary Hamblin's Letter "Finally Heard" appearing in the Gazette's January 9, 1997 issue. I was more than a little surprised at her capability to take her issue so far out of context but I hope that this response will put the facts into perspective.

Mary is correct in that she was let go (September 12, 1996) because of a long held policy at The Graduate House that states that you must be participating in Graduate level courses to be employed there. However this is where the facts end. No one denied Mary the right to be heard. Upon applying for employment Sept. 1, 1995 she was made aware of the policy and knew her employment was for one year, and had accepted this as a condition of her employment. Twice this issue was brought to DAGS council last year and both times the policy was upheld, and Mary was informed of their decision on both occasions.

The making of this policy was never the responsibility of Management. Management's role was to carry out the policy's directives. Mary's grievance on this matter was not accepted for the very fact that she failed to follow the grievance procedure outlined in the collective agreement, which was explained in the letter she had so selectively quoted. Even after my response she had two weeks to go back and CORRECTLY grieve the issue. My responsibility as manager was to carry out the procedures set out in the policy and collective agreement, not to challenge them. Change is the responsibility of DAGS whom she now deems her "knight in shining armour", even though they were the ones who failed to handle the policy issue.

When this policy issue was brought up at a recent DAGS meeting, a committee was formed and I provided them with relevant information, including a copy of the Collective Agreement and House Policies, so they could make an informed decision. I was also assured that myself and the previous manager would be contacted so that all the facts would be considered. As seems to repeatedly be the case, DAGS has failed to follow procedure outlined to carry out any changes and has not contacted anyone on the issue. I will reiterate, the rules are there to protect all involved, like it or not. You can't just follow those you like and ignore those that are inconvenient or stand in your way.

Since Mary has not worked under my management, any reference to my abilities and attack on me, is personal and has been obtained through idle gossip and tainted with bitterness over being terminated. Before going public with further accusations, I would recommend to Mary that she do her research and find out who was really to blame for the policy issue.

Zdena Cerny

### Anti-business bias

I was shocked by the obvious anti-business student bias displayed in the front page story "Business students in wet T-shirt contest" (vol. 129, no. 15). The story implied not only that overt sexuality is disgraceful, but also that it is a GREATER disgrace for students of business to engage in such behaviour since it does not emphasize "the seriousness of our new business leaders of tomorrow."

Ribald games such as those played at Concordia help business students in the following way: it reminds them that they are human, with base desires and a sense of youthful fun, just like everyone else in the world and keeps them from repressing their natural desires. Treating business students as if they are different from other people only reinforces the negative stereotype of bankers and financial analysts as humourless hierarchical stick-assed monsters.

Taking things a little less seriously might help to produce a future fresh herd of sexually unrepressed business people devoid of the vicious inhumanity exhibited by many of our present administrators of financial power. Please remember this after graduation when you miss your first student loan payment and the bank people come a-calling.

Jason Shipley

## the Dalhousie Gazette

### editorial board

**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  
**Online Manager** Daniel Clark **Office Manager** Natalie MacLellan  
**Art Director** Peter Ross **Ad Manager** Amit Batra

### contributors

Andrea Ward, Monica Gillis, Laura Ryan, Stephanie Pieri,  
 Andrew Cooke, Carmen Tam, Greg White, Eugenia Bayada,  
 Alexis Milligan, Elaine Beltaos, Neal Graham, Greg McFarlane,  
 Sohrab Farid, Brooks Kind, James Worrall, Zdena Cerny,  
 Jason Shipley, Alan LeBlanc, Jennifer Graham, Jim Delaney

Founded in 1869 at Dalhousie College, the Gazette is Canada's oldest student newspaper. With a circulation of 10,000, the Gazette is published every Thursday by the Dalhousie Gazette Publishing Society, of which all students of Dalhousie University are members. The Gazette exercises full editorial autonomy and reserves the right to refuse or edit any material submitted. 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 © 1996 the Dalhousie Gazette Publishing Society. ISSN 0011-5819

## Vol. 129 / No. 16

Student Union Building, Dalhousie University, 6136 University Ave., rm 312, Halifax, NS, B3H 4J2  
 editorial tel. 902 / 494-2507  
 fax 902 / 494-8890  
<http://is2.dal.ca/~gazette/home.html>  
 e-mail GAZETTE@is2.dal.ca

For advertising information, call 494-6532 or visit our ad manager, 9am to 5pm daily.

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.

97

Only thirty-two  
puckering-up days left  
until the DSU election  
campaign period begins.

Write letters and  
commentary to the  
Gazette.

Come one,  
come all,  
come short and  
come tall.

(You can even be running  
mates if you like.)