

The Letters/Opinions section of the Gazette is meant as a campus forum for all Dalhousie students. The opinions expressed within may not necessarily be those of the Gazette staff or editorial board. We welcome all submissions, but reserve the right to edit for style and content. It is the Gazette's mandate not to print racist, sexist or homophobic material.

Don and Abhi; expressing their view

At the conclusion of CBC's coverage of the Nagano Olympics, Don Cherry, the outspoken Canadian icon, made some choice comments which upset the Bloc Quebecois. Cherry called Jean-Luc Brassard, the Canadian mogul skier, a "French guy, some skier nobody knows about." This was in response to Brassard's earlier comments regarding his regret for carrying the Canadian flag in the Olympics opening ceremonies. Brassard, who won gold in the 1994 Olympics, failed to have even a podium finish in Nagano and attributed his poor performance to the coincidence that flag bearers typically do not do well in their events.

It is understandable that the Bloc would be upset with such

a comment made towards a French-Canadian from Quebec. To further upset the Bloc, Cherry commented on the Bloc's complaint that there were too many Canadian flags at the Olympics. Cherry was quoted as saying "I've never seen such a bunch of whiners in my life...They don't want the Canadian flag but they want our money."

As a result of these comments, the Bloc requested that Cherry be taken off the CBC because they felt his remarks were unjustified and that they go beyond the ethics of allowable sports commentary. The CBC's response to these demands were that Cherry is hired to express his opinions, as strong as they may be. Furthermore, the CBC

stated that they do not necessarily share Cherry's view. In summary, the CBC is not firing Don Cherry because in Canada free speech and freedom of the press are fundamental rights.

This story is a familiar one for the *Sextant*, as we often receive complaints regarding the opinions expressed in our publication. One column that generates such feedback on a routine basis is Abhi Samant's opinion column "From the mind of Abhi." In each issue, Abhi expresses his view on a particular subject and at times this view is controversial to some readers. As a result, some individuals write to the *Sextant* complaining that such views are not appropriate for publication.

It is important to remember

that viewpoints expressed in any publication are exactly that — opinions. There is no right or wrong; an opinion is only an individual's notion or belief. That is why the *Sextant*, just as the CBC, has a disclaimer that states that opinions expressed, whether it's from Don Cherry or Abhi Samant, are not necessarily shared by the publication. Having the opportunity to share ideas and opinions is the fundamental idea behind freedom of the press. Taking thoughts and ideas, which are otherwise trapped in the minds of individuals, and bringing them to a public forum for discussion is the foundation of today's society. To quote Thomas Jefferson, "Where the press is free and every man is able to

read, all is safe."

That is why, as advertised by the Gazette, voting yes for the Sextant's referendum question is saying yes to your right to know what is happening at Dal, and the right to voice your own ideas and opinions. You may not share the views of Don or Abhi, nor will everyone necessarily share your viewpoint on any particular topic. However, what we must share is the ability and the means to communicate information to each other.

Vote yes to the Sextant referendum question. Vote yes to freedom of the press.

TIM SCHAEFER
Editor-in-Chief,
DalTech Sextant

Five seconds of silence: prelude to an oops

It is amazing how five seconds can epitomize 18 years. Five seconds of Russell MacLellan's "deer in the headlights" impersonation during last Thursday's leadership debate was like a preview to his biography, "Life as a Liberal" — blank.

For 18 years MacLellan sat in Ottawa and earned, courtesy of the kind folks of Cape Breton, a nice salary, a huge pension, and federal perks that would make the Canadian Union of Postal Worker's mouths water.

In that time he did an impressive impression of expelled Senator Andrew Thompson. He was often absent and, even more often, silent. Supposedly he chaired a

committee, but no one knows which one, or what it did.

And now Russell has come home. In nine months of leadership he has become best known as "the guy with the toll highway". After five years of cuts to education and health care, in a vain attempt by John Savage to balance the budget in one term, Russell assures us that despite more than \$100-million in new spending the budget is still balanced. Really. He promises. Really, he does.

Then came the fateful moment last Thursday night when Tory leader John Hamm asked the question his advisors had pleaded him to ask: "Russell, if the budget isn't balanced, will you resign?"

Liberal hopefuls were waiting for a violent exclamation or derision or acceptance of the challenge. They wanted their leader to exhort his certainty in his budget. They pleaded for Russell to say...anything.

There was no joy in Wolfville, for mighty Russell struck out. Liberals across the province were doomed as their leader looked straight into the camera and said, not a reply of eloquent mastery, not a brilliant retort, but...nothing. And he said it twice.

CBC's *NewsWorld* reminded viewers across the country every hour on the hour — all night long. Late night shows, morning shows, talk shows, and

opinion shows, all reminded the voters of the Liberal loss the night before.

Just three years ago an upstart golf pro from North Bay, Ontario, rode an offer of resignation all the way into Queen's Park. Russell MacLellan may well ride his

inability to do so all the way back to Cape Breton, and like David Dingwall before him, Russell MacLellan's business card may soon read "the former member from Cape Breton".

DANIEL CLARK
President
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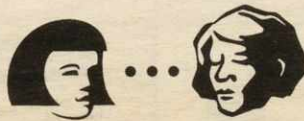
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