

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.

# Bad "taste" or just a bad President?

On September 11, independent prosecutor Ken Starr released the culmination of a four year, \$40 million investigation into the President of the U.S.A. As everyone accepts one man's opinion as truth we are still left with the same questions: is the President's sex life fair game? Do we care?

Some say "impeach", some say "censure", some "resign". Over 60 percent of the American public think Clinton is doing a good job, and it seems thus with low unemployment, low interest rates, and strong economic growth. However, a similar majority is appalled by Clinton's "doggy" sex, as one CBC program described it. So what is to be done with him?

Now of course we all miss the quick and simple mob lynchings of times gone by, but maybe that

would be going to far. The "outraged" public says, hypocritically, that Clinton's behaviour has set a terrible example for "our children" while they sit watching Jerry Springer in droves. They act as though they forget that this President probably has less mistresses than most of his predecessors.

The public also supposedly says they are appalled by the lurid media coverage and blame them as an easy and visible scapegoat. But face it, if this wasn't about the sex, it wouldn't sell. And, as James Bond once said, "the first rule of mass media entertainment, give the people what they want!" So what does the public want?

The Canadian public seems to be getting a bit of a laugh out of watching Americans obsess about something which could never really

happen way up north. Canadian politicians can have affairs but no children look up to our politicians as role models, so...

If the American public doesn't want to know — ironically the "Don't Ask, Don't Tell" policy was initiated by this same president — then why does the media keep shovelling it? Perhaps the media has finally reached an egotistical plateau where they know what the people really want and so give it to them whether they want it or not. Oh good, now we don't have to have our own opinions or morals, we can let the media tell us what they should be!

But seriously. Now I would agree with everyone else that it is probably bad "taste" to indulge in natural human tendencies to "bring forth thy seed and multiply". So

again, what is to be done with this horrible, horrible man? Oh the humanity!

What most who call for resignation don't realize is that this is the leader of the free world and what he says goes. The very mention of the word "impeach" sends fickle midlife crisis stockbrokers to the nearest window. Why would you get rid of the person most responsible for helping the economy grow?

Now many say that this is affecting his job performance. I would contend that the *Wag the Dog* playing card has been dealt because the media forced the hand. If I was President and I had an affair and I needed to prove that I was still in control, I would probably launch some missiles and show some national testosterone to dis-

tract the media from my own. Maybe Clinton is not focusing on what is "really important" because that's not what the media says is important.

The solution at this point seems rather obvious. Severely censure the President for indulging himself and others, censure Ken Starr for clearly having nothing better to do with the last four years of his life than write the most political porn story ever; censure the media for swallowing every rumour they hear and spitting it back at us, and last but not least censure Monica Lewinsky for revealing humanity at its most revealing.

Chin up Bill. Head down Monica.

TRISTAN STEWART-ROBERTSON

## A bus operator's response

A recent column by Dan Clark comparing the strikes by pilots and bus drivers warrants a response. Like Mr. Clark, I am not a big fan of strikes either. Neither are my fellow employees at Metro Transit. Would you give up five weeks out of your budget to prove a principle and advance your cause?

I will try to address each point in Mr. Clark's column I think should be addressed.

### Point #1 (paragraph 3)

Mr. Clark says that after a strike, both employees and employer need to apologize to the consumer and let them know it is business as usual. The employer, Metro Transit, apologized to the media many times, but then why not, when they are using your money to apologize to you?

Our union representatives said many times they regretted the inconvenience to the travelling public, many of whom are regulars we meet on a daily basis. The union especially regretted the problems visited on the disabled, although the union gave Metro Transit a solution to that problem which they rejected, and a group representing the disabled told Transit not to put the Access-A-Bus on the road.

### Point #2 (paragraph 5)

Mr. Clark admits to a bias in favour of the pilots mainly because they are highly trained and skilled and operate complicated pieces of machinery. As the saying goes, "what are we, chopped liver?" Sounds very elitist to me, Mr. Clark. You state the pilots took pay cuts and lost parity to help the airline get its books in order. The Liberals broke a legally binding contract with us and other employees and froze and cut back our wages to bolster the deficit — a seven year

wage freeze for us while management continued to get bonuses and increases. Did you notice, Mr. Clark, that bus fares increased every year while our wages were frozen? Where did that money go? Not to us! We didn't get parity and we didn't ask to get paid the same as our American counterparts as the pilots did. Our pay was just above the drivers in Banff, the lowest paid drivers in Canada serving a population of 3500 people!

Mr. Clark goes on to say that what really got him, and this seems to be what set him mentally adrift, was that the pilots showed genuine sorrow and regret for the inconvenience they caused. Swish - two points. Didn't we bus drivers grovel enough at your feet Mr. Clark? How many times do we have to say we're sorry? Give me ten percent of \$100,000 and I'll have "I'm sorry" written in the sky for you! How petty can you get?

### Point #3 (paragraph 7)

Mr. Clark said Metro Transit increased the fares the day the strike ended. Mr. Clark, don't pretend to be so ignorant about how fares are increased. Metro Transit doesn't decide today to increase fares tomorrow. There is a process in place. Fares were slated to increase long before the strike. Remember now, management continued to get their salary increases while we were under a wage freeze! As for making the drivers more friendly or open to riders, next time you ride the bus, notice how many people get on and greet the driver.

### Point #4 (paragraph 8)

In the case where the driver wouldn't let the lady on the bus, let me say that I would have let her on and I would have been in the wrong! It is not the driver's policy

but Metro Transit's policy, for insurance reasons. If that lady had slipped and hurt herself, the driver would have been hung out to dry. Still, I would have let her on, but that's a judgement call. Call it courtesy or risk-taking, I would have let her on and dealt with the consequences. Either way, we're wrong. The company will tell you to use your discretion, but if someone gets hurt, they'll say you used poor judgement and then hang you!

Mr. Clark says he is a frequent rider of Transit, yet he hasn't noticed that buses have numbers splattered all over them, unlike other HRM vehicles. If he wanted to report the driver he didn't need to get the driver's name. He only needed to get the bus number, the route number, and the time. The system usually blames the wrong driver, but it would go on their file anyway.

Finally, if Mr. Clark expects me to kiss his ass, as he asserts the pilots will, because I went on strike and want to get back what was taken illegally from me, he might as well sit down and wait for a bus because it won't happen. And when Mr. Clark gets his way and Metro Transit is privatized and he has bought all the shares he can, he won't have to take the bus anymore. Neither will he care about the huge fare increases and route cuts that will affect the little guy and students. Of course, the private company will still get subsidies from their friends in government.

Thank you for the opportunity to respond to a very slanted and biased article.

FRED BUSHOR

Metro Transit Bus Operator



## Responsible Religion?

The Gazette's coverage of the International Church of Christ makes a valid point about solicitation and harassment. Solicitation becomes harassment when a solicitor keeps it up even after being told someone is not interested. When it is a church group doing the harassment it has a tendency to go overboard "in the name of Christ".

We all know of groups that seldom take no for an answer, but keeps up the pounding verbally and emotionally. Once in the door, many of these groups seldom stop to consider the suitability of what they are saying in relation to the person they are "counselling". Often, "Are you born again?" becomes an opening for laying on a massively manipulative guilt trip; a subject's needs and basic attitudes are all too often ignored, though in some instances they are even "used" in the quest for just one more convert. The successful conversion ignores what really matters to a person based on the idea that they "talk to God". It is not enough to convince people of their need for conversion, it is also necessary to use their sin as a hold over them emotionally, something which can be used as a whip to keep them in line. Needless to say, a well informed, well understood and substantial faith is not a shallow attempt to whip the faithful with the sins laid at their door.

A truly substantial conversion and turning from sin is the one that accounts for and puts the

person in touch with the depth of their life, lived, experienced, communicated to others as wholly acknowledged and understood emotionally, intellectually, insightfully, characterized by and leading to questions relative to one's own experience. For someone to make a conversion — a choice — is not possible without making an effort to understand what they are dealing with. It is not enough for me to be told I must repent, I also must understand the larger consequences for my conscience and attitude as I live my life in faith.

A cultish attitude, on the other hand, says, "You can let me interpret and understand your experience for you. You don't need to think, just obey". It is an attitude that leads to an empty shell of knowledge and substitutes hymn singing where, once, total and comprehensive understanding and applications might have been means to devotion rather than brainwashing. Singing praises to God should lead to knowledge, not to emptiness and dependence. Church should teach a knowledge of the Spirit, and most churches do. A church which says "I have all the knowledge you might need as long as you listen and ask no questions" abdicates its responsibility and becomes cult-like, where responsibility becomes ingratitude. Harassment and aggressiveness make a mockery of the message of Jesus Christ.

PJ CHIASSON

[tips@is2.dal.ca](mailto:tips@is2.dal.ca)

Getting the news you know into the news.