

the Dalhousie Gazette

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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 libelous, sexist or racist nature. Deadline for commentary, letters to the editor and announcements is noon on Monday. Submissions may be left at the SUB Enquiry Desk c/o Dal Gazette.

Commentary should not exceed 700 words, letters should not exceed 300 words. No unsigned material will be accepted, but anonymity may be granted on request.

Advertising copy deadline is noon Friday before publication. The Gazette offices are located on the 3rd Floor 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 Student Union, the editor or the collective staff.

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How 'it' works - and doesn't (for the last time)

Is it lemmings to the sea or rats from a sinking ship? Whatever it is, a deluge of resignations from positions intimately associated with the Student Union signals something is dreadfully amiss.

In December Lois Fearon, involved with the programming department (which brings bands to the SUB and such) did not renew her term. Right after the Christmas Break, Kerri Loiselle left her position as chair of the DSU communications committee. Then in rapid succession, Gazette news editor Ken Burke and Gazette editor Catherine Ricketts called it quits. Chief Elections Returns Officer Michael Tilley and his committee of four threw in the towel. And then the bug bit Cafe Genesis XXII manager Michael Crystal.

Resignation. For one reason or another these people with high hopes and good intentions finally had enough of banging their heads against walls of apathy. The disparity between what **needs** to be done and what **can** be done becomes overwhelming. The frustration of trying to meet others' expectations without getting their support means physical, mental and emotional bankruptcy. Hey, this is not the movies—the cavalry doesn't come swooping down a distant hill with bugles blaring and guns a-blazing.

Like lemmings, most of those who volunteer for positions of responsibility in the student community blindly follow their predecessors. Their short life-span is marked by frantic activity—"Someone's got to do it, right? Someone's got to do it right!"

Student volunteers fought the administration down from a 25 per cent tuition hike proposal, but Dal still has the highest fees in the country.

Seven hundred summer jobs were created when a handful of students convinced university, faculty, administration and alumni that pressure had to be put on the provincial government.

Another handful of students thought women shouldn't have to risk their well-being while crossing campus at night after studying in the libraries.

Then there's the students who host Orientation, Winter Carnival and the coffeehouse for everyone to enjoy—it isn't magic, it's blood, sweat and more sweat. Students run elections, hype school spirit—by God, they put out the **Gazette**.

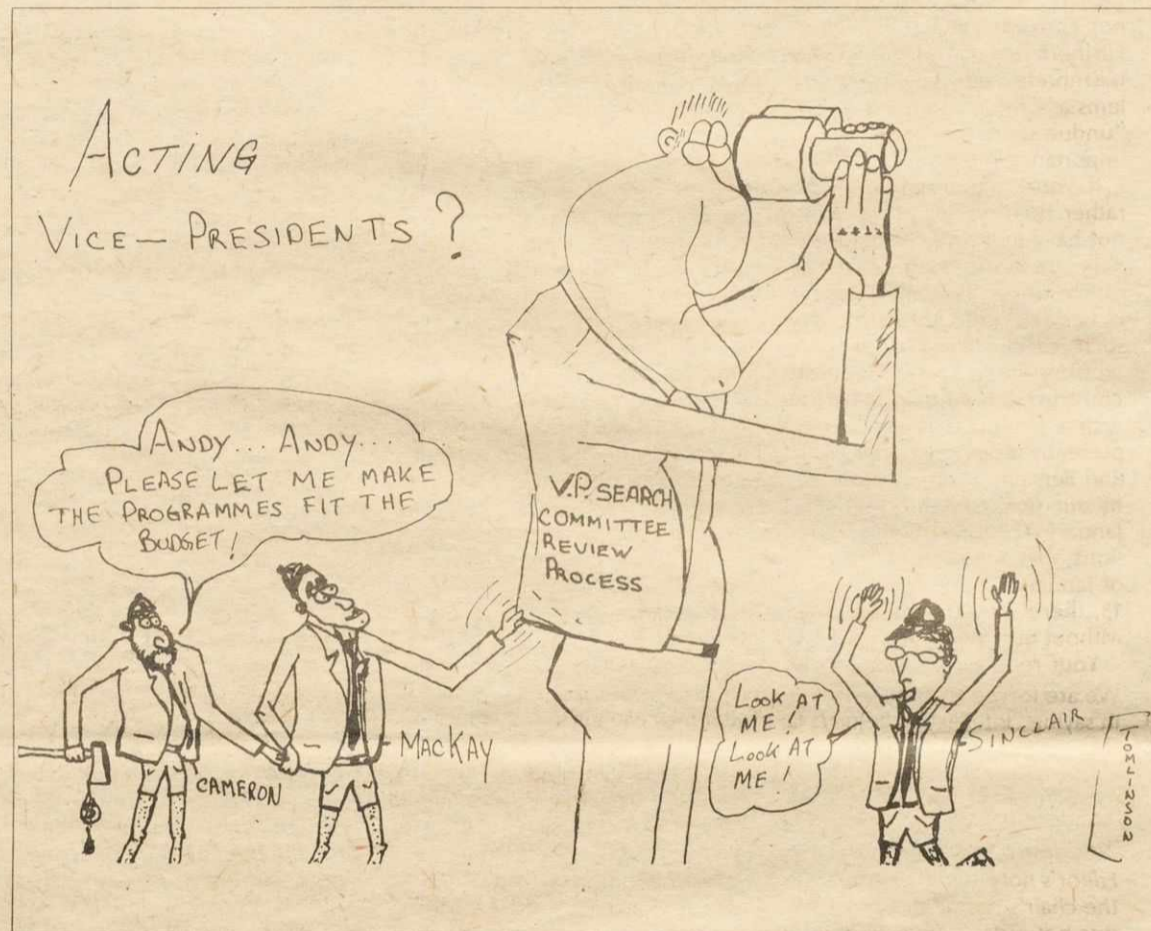
The recent slew of resignations is actually more likened to rats abandoning a sinking ship. The Dal Student Union is now at the apex of a political cycle—from school spirit (Logan and Logan) to renewed awareness in politics (Rans and Russell) through fine tuning the executive machinery (Hill and McIntyre).

SUB politics have to start again from scratch when this year's seasoned administration leaves. Although nominations have not yet closed, it appears there are few with expertise willing to take the lead and fight hard for students' basic needs.

Someone will have to fill the void. "Someone" always does.

Meanwhile, we quit.

C.R.



commentary

So that the people should know

A view of *National Review* by Michael F. Keiver

The bi-weekly *National Review*, edited by William F. Buckley, Jr., is a well-known periodical of the American right. The right is often portrayed as an uncompassionate segment of society. However, in the December 1983 issue there was a touching article by Francis Russell entitled "A Skid Row Christmas", (pp. 1598-1601).

"A Skid Row Christmas" is a personal account of a visit to the Pine Street Inn of Boston, shelter for the homeless. If there is any question of Russell's motives he writes:

I shall spend the day as a volunteer, not out of any self-conscious social-worker impulse, not (rota fortunae) from condescension, but merely because I am alone this Christmas and feel like it.

The description of the various temporary occupants of Pine

Street Inn exposes the ugliness of the situation.

A fat woman, sunk into herself, with strawbleached hair and a face like lard, is imbedded in a folding chair near the exit. A volunteer lights cigarettes for her as she chain-smokes. The bright gash of lipstick across her face looks ulcerous. Almost in front of me a pock-marked younger man, his face dark with stubble, perches on the edge of a cot, a girl beside him sprawling over his legs. Her face is buried in his shoulder, is further hidden by her greasy matted hair. She has one arm round his neck. Her face is like a mask, immobile, stoned. No one pays any attention to them. She is wearing torn mock-tartan trousers held up by a piece of twine. He fondles her in a desultory way that could be sexual or consoling. Then she tosses her head back, stares at him with glazed eyes,

and with grave deliberation he picks her nose.

Russell attempts to imagine himself as one of these unfortunates but cannot fathom their situation despite past acquaintance with others who reached a similar state. He remembers the librarian's brother, a college graduate and engineer, who became a derelict and died at the Pine Street Inn. He remembers the tragic story of a Yale classmate, winner of the award as best athlete-student at Yale of his graduating class, who became a derelict in that part of Boston.

As he is leaving, the director of the shelter thanks him for coming. "Don't thank me. Thank you for letting me in," replies Russell. There are two important conclusions to be drawn from the exposé. The compassion of the piece suggests we should re-evaluate certain myths about the right. More importantly we should attempt to imagine the unimaginable and then consider the less fortunate.