

letters

Cox complaint narrow

To the editor:

I was appalled to read comments made by the president of Dalhousie's Student Union in reference to the impending tuition hikes (Gazette, March 21 1996).

David Cox complained that arts students, such as himself, should not have to pay more tuition than science students. This complaint is not only self-serving and narrow, but it is entirely untrue. Science students, as the Gazette article explains, pay over \$4,100 in tuition as opposed to the \$3,700 paid by arts students like Mr. Cox.

Mr. Cox should remember that he was elected to represent the students of Dalhousie, not the arts students, and not himself. The tuition hikes may be objectionable. If Mr. Cox feels he should comment publicly as the representative of the students of Dalhousie, then he should object on their behalf instead of foisting the blame on others who are already shouldering their share of this burden. This is especially true when these assertions are based on inaccuracies and hyperbole (I would like to believe that all science students are destined to high-paying careers, but it is simply not true).

Apparently Mr. Cox does little to represent scientists here at Dalhousie.

Patrick Keeling,
4th year Ph.D.
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Election undemocratic

To the Editor,

"Isn't it ironic." These words are not only familiar lyrics from Alanis Morissette, they also describe the past DSU election results.

As an average student at Dal, hearing about and seeing the events that took place in the past few weeks, I am extremely frustrated and disappointed.

Firstly, I am disappointed with the conduct of the 95/96 DSU executive. Throughout the campaign period, they were showing very obvious favouritism to particular candidates while openly and brutally attacking others. This was unprofessional and almost embarrassing on their part. How can a fair and democratic election be held with such biases?

Secondly, having acquaintances as poll clerks, it was appalling to hear and see how disorganized the Chief Returns Officer and his team were. There were countless instances where people were allowed to vote without identification, and many others where poll clerks left their polls unattended or allowed friends to watch over them. How can a fair and democratic election be held with such chaos? If this were a municipal, provincial, or federal election, we would be at the polls all over again.

Thirdly, to explain the irony in it all, is to hear that most of the 95/96 DSU executive, the CRO/ERO team and the recently elected 96/97 DSU executive are all best friends! Not to mention the patronage recommendations made by the new executive in a quiet Wednesday night meeting where the old president, the CRO, and the ERO were all appointed to council positions.

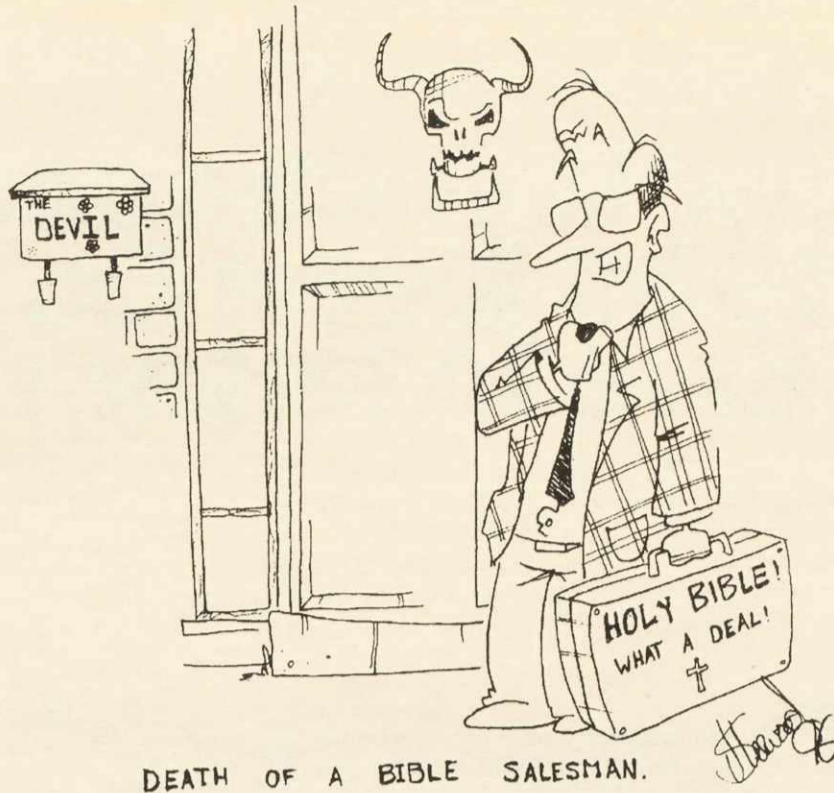
This makes me question how fair and democratic this election really was. My message to the previously mentioned characters: You want us to take the DSU seriously? Treat it seriously. The DSU is here for all of us, this isn't a playground for you and your friends.

D.H.

\$11 million debate

To the editor,

Daniel Clark's attempt in the Gazette of March 14 to report on the confused and unfocused discussion in



editorial

Countdown to summertime

Hey everybody, it's time to burn out!

Yeah!

Whoopie! Let's get excited about March and April!

Not only do you have to worry about the impending doom that is exams, there are also all of those papers that you've forgotten about which — of course — are now due tomorrow; and then there's always that yearly bliss of finding a summer job so that you can actually afford to come back to this place next year.

And hey, do you have a cold? For the past two weeks, everyone I know has had either a cold, or the flu...I of course, have both.

But look on the bright side, it's almost over.

Sadly, the Gazette is almost at the end of the publishing year, but don't despair, there's a lot to look forward to.

The days are getting longer. Half-way to school today, I ran into a friend who wanted to know if I had time to go and play a game of golf. Ah, spring is in the air and in a month we'll actually be able to enjoy weekends without worrying and guilting-out about that exam or essay that's coming up on the following Monday.

What are you doing for the summer? As hard as we all bitch about how difficult it is to find a job in Halifax, there's nowhere that I'd rather be. Without the spectre of the G-7 looming over us this year, we'll actually have the opportunity to enjoy all of those improvements they made last summer — without worrying about the snipers. We'll finally have an opportunity to enjoy those smooth roads for a couple of games of cycle/rollerblade/skateboard 'hit the tourist.'

What is there to do in the summer in Halifax? If you've decided to stay here for the first time and are apprehensively awaiting the day that all of your friends head back to high-paying jobs in Ontario,

never fear, you will definitely find out just how cool this city can be.

All you have to do is spend a couple of weeks wandering from coffee shop to coffee shop; and then one morning half-way through the summer, you'll wake up, get out of bed, and realize that every third person on the street is saying hello to you and you're happily waving back.

Besides coffee shops, you can have a lot of fun without even doing tourist things. Relax with a book in the Public Gardens (you can hang out there with loads of Haligonians, yet you still get an opportunity to laugh at the tourists), or play frisbee in front of the Library. Or, hey, sneak your mountain bike into Point Pleasant Park and ride. Besides that, there is cheap, but really good live music at a number of venues around the city, the inevitable rave or two, and a pretty good selection of independent theatre. Look closely for the posters...and make sure you listen to CKDU so that you can find out about what's going on even after the poster police have made their nightly rounds (it is assumed that Halifax pays people to wander around all night and tear down posters).

And if you can stomach the thought of being a tourist for awhile, go and check out some history at Citadel Hill (chances are, some of your friends will be working there anyway, so go with another friend and smirk at them in their uniforms). Explore Peggy's Cove, or check out Busker Fest in August. Rent/borrow a car and go for a drive — there's neverending fun for those who have a car.

So, relax for a moment, forget about your stress, and ponder the endless possibilities of the summer. It won't make it all go away, but you'll feel a lot better; and that's all we really need at this time of the year, isn't it — to feel better.

JEN HORSEY

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the Senate a few days earlier is commendable. Negotiations between the Board of Governors and employee groups regarding the "use" of Dalhousie's large pension surplus have been underway since June, 1994. To grasp some of complex issues which have arisen, one must realize that one way of "using" the pension surplus is to reduce pension contributions by the university, employees, or both. Large amounts are involved: about \$11 million a year, if both sides make no contributions.

A key issue, one with direct implications for students, is the extent of application of the Board's pension contribution savings to debt retirement, versus partial relief of the budget over the next three to four years. Employee groups took particular note of Vice President Mason's statement in his financial report last June that the Administration had a plan to pay off Dalhousie's "problem debt" over the next dozen years, even if no pension surplus dollars were available. Some time ago, the administration introduced the idea of using pension contribution savings to cover a significant portion of rationalization expenses which might arise in the next year or two. Since academic programmes have suffered from cutbacks for several years, and this promised to offset some extra adjustment costs, the employee groups found this idea more attractive than using all the Board's pension contribution savings for more debt reduction, particularly when Dalhousie's debt was scheduled for eventual retirement anyway and its reduction would yield benefits only in a decade or so.

More recently, the Administration backed away from its own idea; it now wants faculties to cover 90% of the costs of "restructuring," and, in the opinion of employee groups, seems resigned to the negative impact this may have on academic quality and student choice. The Administration (in its own words) "wishes to use the bulk of the Board's share of the pension surplus to pay off debt." The DFA's most recent proposal is not totally opposed to this, but it does set aside substantial, yet flexible, sums to protect academic integrity of programmes at Dalhousie.

This is the issue which divides employee groups and the Board: preservation of the integrity of academic programmes at Dalhousie versus significant reduction in the quality of education.

Think about this: what justifies undermining the teaching and research programmes at your University unnecessarily in order to reduce debt which Dalhousie owes to itself?

Paul B. Huber

Negotiator for employee groups
Department of Economics

Capitalism good

To the editor,

It seems to us that the tunnel vision of the International Socialists is their greatest failing. It would appear that their loathing of the Canadian system has clouded their judgement. Yes, Canada has its faults, and the UN may not be perfect, but tell us please, which country that is modelled on socialist dogma is better than Canada? Without doubt, some citizens have slipped through the cracks of our safety net, and right now Canada's unemployment is high, but is this grounds for revolution? Certainly not.

Could the fact that the status of women in Canada has slipped from second in the world to ninth justify your revolution? Perhaps, but would women in Canada be better off if we treated our citizens like China does? Ahh, but we forgot your brilliant point that humans are freaks of revolution — perhaps that can explain the need for revolution. Have you forgotten that humans are also freaks of war and murder? Perhaps after you stage your little revolution, we can all get together in our perfect new society and invade our neighbours to the south. That would make as much sense. Or perhaps you would murder all those who didn't agree with you. But that would never happen in a