

Notes From A Stale Freshman

by Anne Keenan

Orientation week of hazing days. Hundreds of wide-eyed, open-mouthed eighteen-year-olds settle into residence. Coralled by upperclassmen, the frosh wear war-paint and banners and serenade buildings by the dawn's early light.

For a relatively small percentage of the entering class — those twenty-two years and older (designated of entry forms as "Mature Students") — hazing is of a different character.

The 'mature frosh' has likely had a fair share of experience in the work-a-day-world, and has fulfilled some degree requirements in the school of hard knocks. Consequently, the notion of shaking up with the above — mentioned post-pubescent hords is shocking. Those precious experiences garnered far from the world of academe need a proper setting.

A room with a view

Establishing a residency in Halifax in early September may be easier than stalking the wild asparagus in mid-January-but it aint no bed of roses.

On dark, misty, midnight streets, attic and basement windows glow brightly. And inside these stuffy garrets and subterranean rec rooms live disparate students who have shrunk their appetite for personal area, and now content themselves with someone elses crumbs. ("Ya know Mable, if we took out that wall in that big closet, and put up a partition—we could take on two more boards!")

While pounding the pavement pursuing a 'hot tip' on housing, or while reclining on the cot in my alcove, I find myself slipping into daydreams along the theme of... "My ideal temporarily permanent living situation"... The house is large and graceful, inhabited by studious yet fun-loving people who

by a quirk of blessed fate are losing a fellow house member. The vacated room is one with southwestern exposure and an expansive view. There is ample space for pacing.

The four or five individuals in Dreamhouse no. 1 live a harmonious and economical existence. Not only do they belong to a Good-Food-Co-op, but because the house is so well lit, lettuce, spinach and other greens can be found growing in long flats under windows. Everyone likes to cook, and each has a particular ethnic specialty.

As my well-meaning landlady passes me a bowl of Chef Boy-ar-dee spaghetti piping hot from the can — I lose sight of the dream.

Business as usual

The business end of getting an education headquartered in the Arts Administration building — is composed of many concerned, thoroughly approachable, and sympathetic individuals. However — on mass — they have decreed certain iron-clad policies regarding the first year program in which the needs of the few (those super-annuated frosh), are sacrificed to the more common variety.

No, its not possible to substitute two course requiring considerable written work for the required writing course. Why? "Well, you see, these courses are specially designed to test your written ability. And, of course, if you can't write... we might have to send you back." Back where?

And no, despite the fact that you may be entering with advanced credit in your major — no courses taken in that area in the first year will count as credit towards that degree.

And alas — sweat by any other name would smell more sweet. No Physical Education-courses are accepted as elective credit in Arts and Science, but Modern Dance disguised as Theater 202 gets under the board.

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Cove road (including Spryfield area), Purcells Cove road, St. Margarets Bay road, Dutch Village road, Chebucto road, and last but not least Quinpool road. Traffic converges on the rotary from all these various bi-ways creating havoc on the frustrated minds of the more frequent customers. At rush hour the rotary is completely congested and the pace of the traffic is reduced to that of proverbial snail. The residents of the Spryfield area are affected by this rotary more so than other city residents because there is no geasible alternative route for them to use, consequently the motorists waits up to about 40 minutes for the pribledged use of this (there is only one word to describe it) MESS. A few suggestions have been put forward in hope of clearing up a mess that will seemingly be with this City foe ever and the one predominant suggestion which seems to be the most reasonable if not the least-expensive is the proposal of erecting a bridge across the North-West Arm. The residents in question are literally begging for an opportunity to avoid the daily race to arrive at their respective occupations at some decent hour. With the rate of population growth in this City increasing a fairly rapid pace, the traffic problem of the rotary is going to be even more impossible (if that is at all possible) than it is at this present time.

The Arm Bridge would alleviate some of the congestion at the rotary in question, but at the expense of disrupting the peace and serenity of

certain influential residents of the south end of this city where the proposed bridge would release thousands of cars. Of course more traffic hassles will ensue and there will be another traffic mess in an exclusive residential district. Construction on the bridge wouldn't start until 1977 which means the Spryfield residents have at least 4 more years of suffering long lineups.

Another issue which I will run through quickly involves campaign funding. Many of the candidates do not have the personal financial resources to pay for their complete campaign, so in order to save some of their own money they accept contributions from their various supporters. In past campaigns contributions have been fairly secretive with little or no publication of where the money came from. If these were known, the electors might think twice about voting for a candidate who received a contribution of considerable size from say a local paving company. So in order to ensure that the politicians remain honest, the candidates are limiting the amount of money they will receive from individual contributors.

These are some of the major issues which deal more with the individual wards rather than with the general overall story.

Nominations are still being received and next issue a comprehensive report on what the politicians are actually saying instead of a general review of the issues.

Fun and Games

Evening falls and frosh are drawn to the pulsating rythms of the SUB sock-hop. The ticket-taker at the door asks for my age ID. "I don't have one with me." My palm is stamped "Dry" in gothic green script. "But I'm twenty-three!" I hopelessly plead. "Oh yeah? you're the third person tonight whose tried that line!"

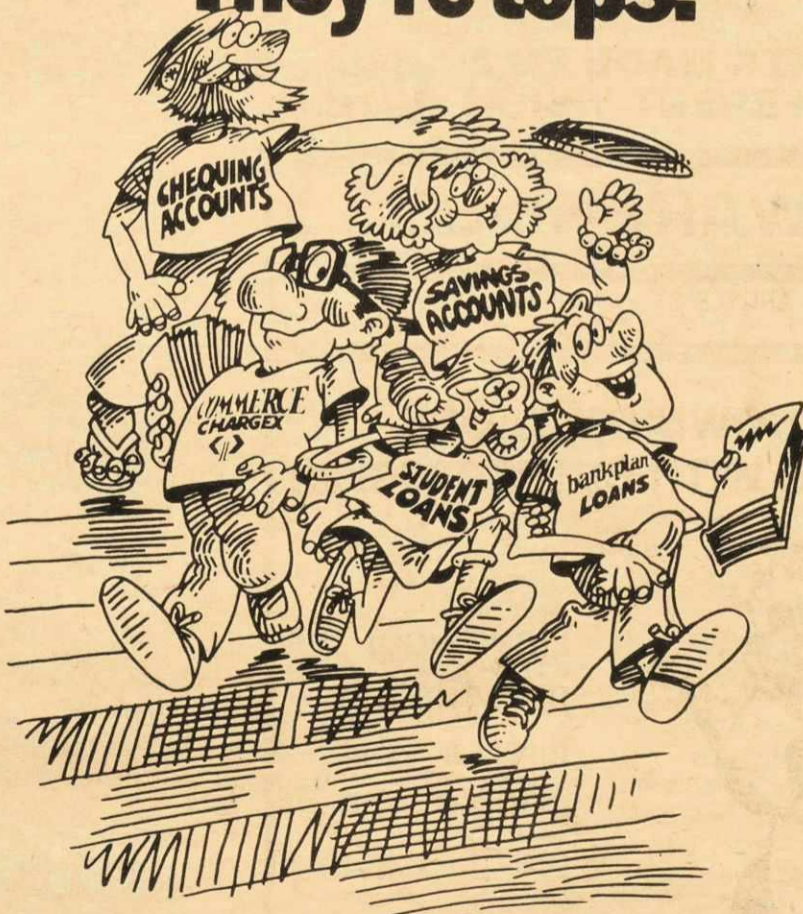
The week chugs on and record hops evolve into rock and roll concerts. To be a mature frosh is to accompany a beaming C.P. up to the SUB stairway, only to find out at the top that the sign he is holding reads "Sold Out". The group has been doing a ten minute 'number' involving considerable take-offs on Frank Zappa taking-off on rock and roll. As they enter their fourth chorus of yodels—I split for the nearest alps, to count my blessings and pennies.

Academic approaches

A Wednesday-noon "Free Banquet for all Freshman" provides a mid-week respite from inflation. The not quite capacity crowd is greeted by Dr. Hicks, president of Dalhousie. His welcome message is friendly, and he credits his listeners with intellectual curiosity and self-motivation. Shortly thereafter he is reminding us that we will face "stiff competition" — namely each other. Gee, I guess that I was under the delusion that grades expressed a relationship between the student and the material covered, rather than between students and co-students. But hopefully, that number or letter in the file cabinet is not ones sole source if intellectual identity. Anatole France offers consoling words to all students — past, present and future. "...Exams were made by exam-makers for exam-takers, to trap the intelligent."

I do think I might like it here at Dalhousie after all. Any place where one can feel eighteen again—shedding five years in five days—can't be all bad. Time machines are hard to come by in these times.

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