

Why New Year's is more important than Christmas

As the carols fade into the far reaches of our brains for another year, we watch the holiday season come to a close. Weeks of gooey Christmas specials on TV have numbed our centres of critical thinking and overdoses of holiday muzak have caused chronic illness nationwide.

The "Christmas" season has steadily become less and less about Christmas and more about the popular culture that surrounds it. Sometimes you see signs that implore one to "Put the Christ back in Christmas." These good christians want us to celebrate the holiday for the reason it was created: to mark the date of the birth of Christ. Christians are supposed to remember this gift from God. The holiday season should be, they maintain, about that one special day, not about all the surrounding hoopla.

I disagree. The holiday spirit which is so celebrated as a time for "peace on earth and goodwill towards all men" should be represented by a dif-

ferent day, exactly one week later: New Year's Day. That's right, the day when a good proportion of the populace wakes up recovering from hangovers to bleakly stumble around for a few hours before collapsing into fitful slumbers until day two of the new annum rolls around. This is the day that should hold the most significance for all of us, christian or not.

Jesus wasn't even born on December 25th. Scholars heatedly debate the actual date, but it assuredly wasn't in the Julian calendar's month of December. The date christians celebrate as the birth of Christ was chosen by the Romans at a time when the ranks of Christianity were swelling. A popular pagan festival celebrating the winter solstice — on December 21 in the Julian Calendar — was changed to become a celebration of the birth of Christ. Different name, same party.

Still, every year christians around the

world celebrate the 25th of December with singing and dancing and prayers and the like. Churches fill to overflowing as the faithful inexplicably come out of the woodwork. Charities are briefly prosperous. For one brief shining day the christian world is at peace.

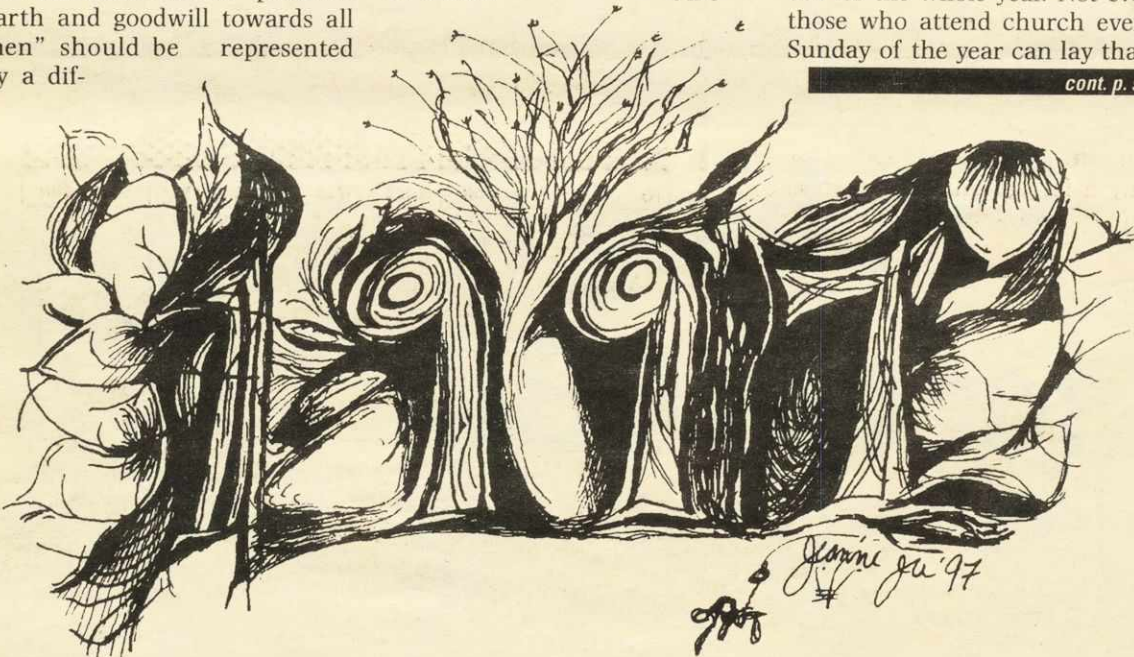
Then the next day it's back to buying and selling and homicide. It's back to the business of day to day life, the way it's lived for the other 364 days of the year.

"Sure, I'm filled with the holiday spirit, SIR, but I'm afraid we don't do freakin' refunds. Now back off before I blow you away."

But New Year's...ah, there's a holiday with the right idea. And I'm not referring to the indulgence of alcohol, or the midnight kisses with strangers, or even those fabulously annoying party horns.

On New Year's Day, people around the world resolutely pledge to make themselves better people. Not for one day of peace and love, but for the whole year. Not even those who attend church every Sunday of the year can lay that

cont. p. 5



letters

Finally Heard

I am writing in response to the article of Nov. 7, "Grad Council Investigates Firing". I am very pleased to receive fair consideration of this matter by the current DAGS Council. When I filed my grievance in September 1996 (over being dismissed because I was in the Law year of my MBA/LLB combined studies program), I had expected only more of the same denial of interest and responsibility as proffered over last spring and this fall by the former manager, Sandy Ross, Zdena Cerny and the former DAGS council.

I very much enjoyed working at the Grad House last year and I was told, upon the Fall '96 dismissal, that this had nothing to do with my work there. I must say that I was surprised that management made no effort to sort this matter out before I had to go to the lengths of filing a grievance. When I did file the grievance, Ms. Cerny only replied after the time had elapsed, saying "In response to your letter dated September 18, 1996, I regret to inform you that your letter can not be accepted as a notice of grievance...I am sorry you feel this issue has to proceed to such extremes..."

I am aware from my former staff capacity of several instances of what I would consider unfair treatment of workers by management under Cerny; in most of these instances the worker involved failed to grieve because s/he was shortly moving away from Nova Scotia. Student employees are transient. Given that few had (formally) complained, it was a hard decision for me to file a grievance.

I believe what was missing in my case was a reasonable effort on the part of management to sort out an archaic policy; no one seemed to care. While I requested a copy of this policy on three occasions, it was never supplied to me. This approach, in my opinion, lacks intelligence. A trained, competent and effective worker is a useful resource. Replacement costs time and money. High turnover is wasteful.

I applaud the current DAGS Council for addressing this policy question in a straightforward manner. I feel like someone has finally listened to my grievance, and will examine and rectify the error in a manner that is fair. I am happy to abide by any policy that is fair. The policy under which I was let go was not.

Mary Hamblin

cling and are not subjected to government regulation. Imagine seizing a car for a minor offence or imagine mandating helmets for motorists. Don't laugh, it makes about as much sense statistically. After all, auto racers wear them.

Do you really want to be forced to carry your helmet around with you all day to class or to wear it on those 30 degree days (they seem a long way off, don't they) or to wear it when the temperature plummets to -10 (for you fanatics out there!).

Do you want muss up your new hairdo or wash your sweaty smelly hair every time you cycle? Do you want that tight chin strap driving you nuts? In fact some studies have shown a higher accident rate among helmeted riders, perhaps a result of overheating, distraction or added weight caused by helmets or of the sense of invulnerability they may induce.

Well then write or email your MLA now or otherwise register your opposition. You can find their addresses on the web at the N.S. Government home page along with the text of the proposed legislation. Write soon or it will be too late. Ontario withdrew their legislation after public resistance, so there is hope!

Neil Baines

Stupefied by "Husky goon..." article

I hope this doesn't ruin your day totally, but I couldn't let this one slip! I have to tell you I LOVE the Gazette, and think you guys do an incredible job. However, in the Nov. 28, 1996 issue there was an article concerning the "assault" of a Tiger Pride member.

I attended that hockey game and was seated next to the gang from Tiger Pride (a few of my friends were actually there as part of the Tiger Pride organization). Very few of the Tiger Priders were "feeling any pain" after the pregame party at Carman Barteaux's place, and upon arrival at the hockey game the Priders were showing that good ol' Dalhousie Spirit!

I'm not sure if I saw this correctly (cause you know maybe one of the evil SMU players slipped acid in my Hot Chocolate) but the story did not go exactly as told in the Gazette. When the roughed-up SMU player was exiting the ice, it was Carman (sporting his beautiful gold sparkled helmet) followed by three obviously drunk Tiger Priders who marched down to meet the SMU player. Upon arrival the SMU player was greeted by one of the Priders and was obviously asked to fight. At first the player declined, then returned and threw the first smack.

I have to agree that the incident was totally disgraceful and unnecessary, however, the Priders were portrayed in the Gazette to be sitting gracefully cheering on their team. Ernnnnnnnn. WRONG ANSWER!! These goons showed immaturity and did absolutely nothing for me when it came to showing Tiger Pride.

I'd just like to say to the author of the article, Greg Baby, if you're reading this: PLEASE the next time you write an article ASK someone who was actually at the game to tell you what really happened! Thanks man, you're great!

With all sarcasm aside, keep up the good work and I love ya all!

Angela Butt

Helmet Legislation

Considering the number of students who will be affected, your newspaper does not appear to have discussed the legislation that has currently passed second reading in the N.S. legislature. It will make the use of bicycle helmets mandatory for adults and provide for a fine and the seizure of bicycles of non-helmeted riders, even if you are only riding a few blocks to get to class.

Surely there must be others opposed to this draconian intrusion into what should be a personal decision. With concerted lobbying there may still be time and opportunity to persuade our legislators to exempt adults from its application or to have it modified to provide for medical exemptions, etc. Don't rely on the legislation not being enforced. Once it is in place we don't know what the level of enforcement will be.

The bill is discriminatory and hypocritical: many sports and activities produce far more injuries than cy-

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96

The Gazette welcomes letters to the editor and commentary. All letters will be printed up to four per week. The printing of additional letters will be at the discretion of the Opinions Editor. Letters are printed verbatim, with the exception of obvious grammatical errors.

The suggested length for letters is 400 words and for commentary, 800 words. We reserve the right to edit letters and commentary for brevity.

All submissions must be typed double-spaced on paper, e-mailed, or on a Mac or IBM 3 1/2 inch disk, in a WP version not greater than Word 6.0 or equivalent. The deadline is Mondays at 4:30 p.m.

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• Correction — In the Dec. 5th issue of the Gazette, John Cullen's "Feet, Needles, and the bump that wouldn't go away" contained an error. The correct spelling of the massage therapist's name is Paula Arndt and her correct phone number is 423-2450.