

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.

# Answering your questions about Dalhousie

We are Level Chan and Andrew Philopoulos, your student representatives on the Dalhousie Board of Governors. What is the Board, and what are your student representatives doing, you might ask? The purpose of this piece is to answer these questions. A lot of people don't know exactly who runs this show called Dalhousie University and even more importantly, how they run it. There are probably some things around campus that you ought to know about. For instance, what is that big hole across from the Law School? How much money are you going to have to pay next year? And what happened with the strike last year and what has resulted from it? This is your 800-word crash-course about the Board of Governors and what we've been up to.

First of all, what is the Board? The Board of Governors is the most powerful decision-making body at this university. The members include: Allan Shaw, the Chair; Tom Traves, president of the university; fourteen members appointed by the government; four alumni representatives; three Senate representatives; and three student representatives.

So, what is that hole across from the Law building? That is

eventually going to be the new Computer Science building, and will be opened for Sept. 1999. Something that may interest you about it besides its illustrious, modern design is that there will be no real classrooms in this building (this is due to over-budgeting). If you are a DalTech student you may be interested in the Morroy expansion, which is being renovated and expanded to house Industrial Engineering and Continuing Education.

What about the new Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences (FASS) building? Well, this building will be substantially larger than the Computer Science building (4 times as large), and will be located across from the SUB. Construction on the FASS building will begin shortly. You may have noticed a few of the houses being torn down. The French house left standing is going to be moved to another location. In the meantime, the lots where the other houses were standing are being used for parking. These new lots are there to offset the space lost to the construction behind the Central Services Building where they are currently building a new two-storey parkade. As construction of this parkade nears completion, ground-breaking will

begin on the FASS building. A considerable amount of student consultation has occurred in the design of these buildings so feel free to see us for more info.

How much are you going to have to pay next year? The budget approved in May 1998 projected a possible tuition increase of 5 percent for next year. We will be working with administration, along with our counterparts in the Senate, in committees and meetings to keep this as low as possible.

In hopes of making the first steps towards regulating tuition, we are currently working with the Board Executive to add an item to the "Critical Issues" of the Board. This is a list of objectives that the Board seeks to meet from year to year. We are proposing to add the issue of "Accessibility for Students" with a focus on using tuition hikes as the last resort for additional revenue. If we can get this added to the Board's policy, it would give us a basis to assess the

performance of the Board and lobby the government for funding changes.

And finally, what about that strike last year? What is going on now? Well, the Board is aiming for a 'renewal' of its relations with the faculty, students and community in hopes of addressing the damage done to Dalhousie's image. With this in mind, Dalhousie is aiming to improve communication with everyone involved with the university. Its new slogan says it all: *Learning. To make life better.* As far as the Dalhousie Faculty Association (DFA) negotiations in particular, there is currently a ratified collective bargaining agreement that expires in 2001. When this contract ends there will once again be another set of talks. In anticipation of this, we as your student representatives, are working towards an agreement with the Board and the DFA that will allow a 'student observer seat' at these talks. In planning ahead, we hope

to avoid the communication problems that arose during the strike. Also, there remain two unions on campus (NSGEU and IUOE) which are still in conciliation with the university.

As your student representatives, we are both a voice and resource for you. If you would like further details, we have information in the form of building plans, university budgets, survey results, etc. If you have any remarks, suggestions or frustrations you would like to share with us about the university, feel free to contact us by phone (494-1277/1106), email (bog@is2.dal.ca) or check out our webpage at <http://is2.dal.ca/~bog>. We will also be in the DSU Council Offices (2nd Floor SUB) every Friday from 3 to 5 pm.

LEVEL CHAN AND  
ANDREW PHILOPOULOS

## Utterings of common sense?

"You can fool some of the people some of the time and most of the people all of the time." Good quote. I don't think I could find another one that could imply a lack of common sense any better. Who is going to disagree that people, who are only human and can make mistakes, go off on foolish tangents that don't involve common sense while the main road is lost? This passage does the same thing in parts, except there is a sense of where the main road is and I am hoping someone will follow me there.

Now, how many people have read one of the larger articles that appeared in the last edition of the MSVU newspaper called "On Common Sense?" We can't, in good conscience, assume too many people who wrote letters to the Gazette last week did.

The article was supposed to be a neutral composition that highlighted views from both sides of the 'war of words' over women's issues from the past four weeks. It then went on to posing possible solutions, in the case of violence, in order to put all of this writing energy into some sort of productive action. As far as violence went, it said "If the individuals are fighting over who has been victimized more, or how to define individual cases, then what parties are fighting the criminals? One would think it is the criminal mindset that should be targeted (instead of cases)."

It also said that young males in university more or less have their hands tied when it comes to correcting equal opportunity and pay because they don't have the authority to do those things yet. It didn't merely "put them off" but it will take a few years before this generation of men can do anything that has a big impact as far as those two things go, which is fair to say. The fact that many young men are aware of the issues didn't go unnoticed nor did the sense of urgency to correct things on behalf of women. The main point was that the biggest issues of today, for the

younger generation, should be addressed — the environment, disease, employment, and struggling world markets.

Case in point, the big picture and common sense. It was believed that the main road that everybody walks on toward a common goal, their well being has been lost in small battles. That includes picking away at articles in the form of name calling and cause all the way to... masturbation or menstruation comparisons? What is that doing for the better of society? How does that have anything to do with sorting out problems by coming together? It is a way to say men and women are different which does nothing to highlight our similarities that bond us together and encourage us to cooperate more so as we can solve problems, including an unjust system of who gets what.

An alert reader will notice something about just every letter that was sent to the Gazette. They fell victim to everything that was forewarned by the common sense article which asked "Have you been seeing helpful compositions that pose logical arguments in an honest attempt to help us sort things out? Or have you been seeing heated opinion battles to which there seems to be no end?" It mentioned some pitfalls of argumentation, striking out at people or improper support to name a few. I am about to go against these fallacies in the following text.

How many of these articles have made an attempt at a solution? None. When you read them you get the same old, same old, and many unanswered questions. Here's where I get lippy, and let me apologize now for it because the good Lord didn't put me on the earth to put people down. Patricia Thomson had a wonderful article with some excellent points, but she has to let go of some things. What the hell difference does it make if 5 or 5000 people were offended by Brown's article? What good comes out of any effort to verify that? Perhaps there is some good in so

doing, but that effort is better spent lobbying for a possible solution that I am going to propose later.

And further, you cross the line with me by mentioning Mark Sitter and Tim Boudreau. Get it through your thick skull, they have a job to do and if you were offended by them publishing someone's opinion, then it sucks to be you. They admitted error, what more do you want? But no, you class them as being in on the whole thing. Tim and Mark are friends of mine, and by all that's holy, they are not sexist. Understand? It's too bad you, or anyone else who has been on their asses, hasn't bothered to see in what ways they enriched the world, they are great guys.

And you thought the date Dec. 6 reminded us of a grim event, you haven't thought too hard about everybody highlighting the mistake of Mark and Tim to the point of inhumanity. If you ask me, that is a very sad event in itself to let happen for people who are supposed to have remorse. If we were as unforgiving as that, why should we offer you any remorse for anything?

People don't deserve protection from the crimes they commit themselves. I never thought I'd hear myself telling an adult that. One last thing about this piece, it mentioned something on the number of women killed each year. Murder is unacceptable no matter who it is. And again, in this example, as "On Common Sense" warned, the individual cases seem to be more important than the big picture. That picture is detecting criminal behaviour in order to protect us *all*. If murder is stopped, so are all the cases of it.

I have taken women's studies courses at the Mount as my part in this whole caper. I know many of the issues from housework to job hunting, and I am sympathetic to the people who want to change things, I really am. I work beside girls who get harassed everyday, and I don't, and I can see where the

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## Men fear the night, too

Well, lo and behold, it's another article about the article, "Take Back The Bullshit", brought to us by the *Picaro* and Stephen Brown of Mount Saint Vincent University. My, oh my, what a completely blown out of proportion, messed up, whirlwind of perfectly valid opinions and facts that completely miss the target that we should all be aiming for.

Having read many opinions on the article, mainly written by females outraged by Brown's "backlash", it is my humble opinion that we're all discussing the wrong things. Everyone's talking about how offensive Brown and his article are and how much misogyny they think he feels and how wrong that is. That's their opinion, and they're more than welcome to have it. I have my own opinion of him, although biased, because I have actually met Brown and even borrowed a CD from him, but I am not here to discuss them.

Yes, both backlash and sexism are very bad indeed, but that isn't what Brown's article is about. It's about (at least my interpretation of it is) the women's march, Take Back The Night. The issue is not if it's a good thing or a bad thing. It's obviously a good thing. Violence against women is a sick way to gain "power" by some pretty feeble men. No, better yet, *very* feeble men. Women do need to take back the night, but so do men.

I'm sure someone is reading this and saying "you silly bastard, no they don't!" Oh, yes they do. Yes, women have a fear walking alone at night, and rightfully so. You know what though? So do I. Even in a group I'm not entirely secure.

So now I guess I'm a weak white male. (I even publicly admit that, by dictionary definition, I am indeed a feminist). So why do I fear this? No, I'm not scared of the dark.

I'm scared because violence is committed against men as well. That's right... violence against men. I know that it's not reported as often as it happens, so the statistics that some people like to throw in other people's faces don't necessarily apply. I know that both when I was mugged and the time when a knife was pulled on four friends and I, neither got reported... but it does happen. I know of three young men who beat up and robbed a woman of mine, just for kicks (no pun intended, but the concussion he suffered from was.)

Now some people say "women have a greater fear". Really? Are you sure? I know I'm not. Yes, they probably do, but no one can truly tell. I don't really fear that I will be sexually assaulted or raped, but I do fear broken bones, concussions, hospitalization, and when I remember seeing the knife pulled, I've even feared for my life. So this all goes back to the *real* issue (as I see it) of Stephen Brown's article — men too suffer from some of the same fears that women do. None of the fears that women feel are unjustified.

Any woman fed up with the fact they don't make as much money as men should not be discredited. These are very real and valid concerns. Again, this isn't the issue that was supposed to be discussed.

Take Back The Night is an excellent idea, but it shouldn't be just a march for women. Everyone should be getting together to take back *our* night. So everyone sick of hearing about the infamous Brown article and wanting to let it die, don't let it. The issues have hardly been dealt with or discussed, and they really should be.

JAMES INGRAM