

"Mellow out and grow-up..."

A silly little series of events have unravelled over the last couple weeks, with Dalhousie's Shinerama at the centre of the squabble. Things started when Dalhousie frosh participating in Shinerama — a fund-raiser for Cystic Fibrosis — were harassed by frosh from Saint Mary's.

In the same week, *The Saint Mary's Journal* published a cartoon making fun of Shinerama and the frosh who participated.

Dalhousie Student Union (DSU) President Chris Adams sent a letter to Saint Mary's University Students' Association (SMUSA) president, John Francis, and the DSU's VP Community Affairs, Terence Tam, joined in on the correspondence by sending a letter to the editor of *The Journal*.

The responses of both the SMUSA president and the cartoonist were contained in yesterday's edition of *The Journal*.

Normally, copies of *The Journal* lie untouched on the coffee table in the Gazette office, serving as extra-absorbent coasters, but this past week we've been avidly following *The Journal's* soap opera.

On the front page of *The Journal*, in a brief article with a big headline, the SMUSA president said he was "glad to see the healthy rivalry

returning to what it once was...since Dalhousie no longer has a football team, we need something to motivate students."

Tam's letter was printed in *The Journal's* editorial section. In it, he huffed about Dalhousie's contribution to the community and issued a challenge to Saint Mary's to become more involved.

We found it interesting that Tam's letter was published with four typographical errors, when a copy Tam sent to us only had one.

The Journal's cartoonist, Andy Bower, weighed in with a big caricature of Chris Adams, as a giant baby, sitting in his DSU office, sucking on a soother. In a comic strip later in the paper, the Dalhousie Tiger, an unnamed frosh and Terence Tam are depicted sucking on large phallic objects, which Bower writes: "proves that Dal does suck!!!" Ironically, Bower concludes the comic strip by advising Adams to "mellow out and grow-up. It's university..."

This is all a little absurd. In fact we at *The Gazette* can hardly wait for the next round of panty-raids, spiked-punch, and that classic liquid-heat-in-the-jock-strap gag.

Most people have lost sight of the real issues in this mini-drama. First, no matter what school they

were from, it was wrong for one group of people to obstruct another from collecting money for charity. Cystic Fibrosis is a brutal disease that afflicts children. Those with advanced cases of the disease slowly starve and suffocate as mucus coats both their lungs and intestinal walls. They can hardly breathe or digest food.

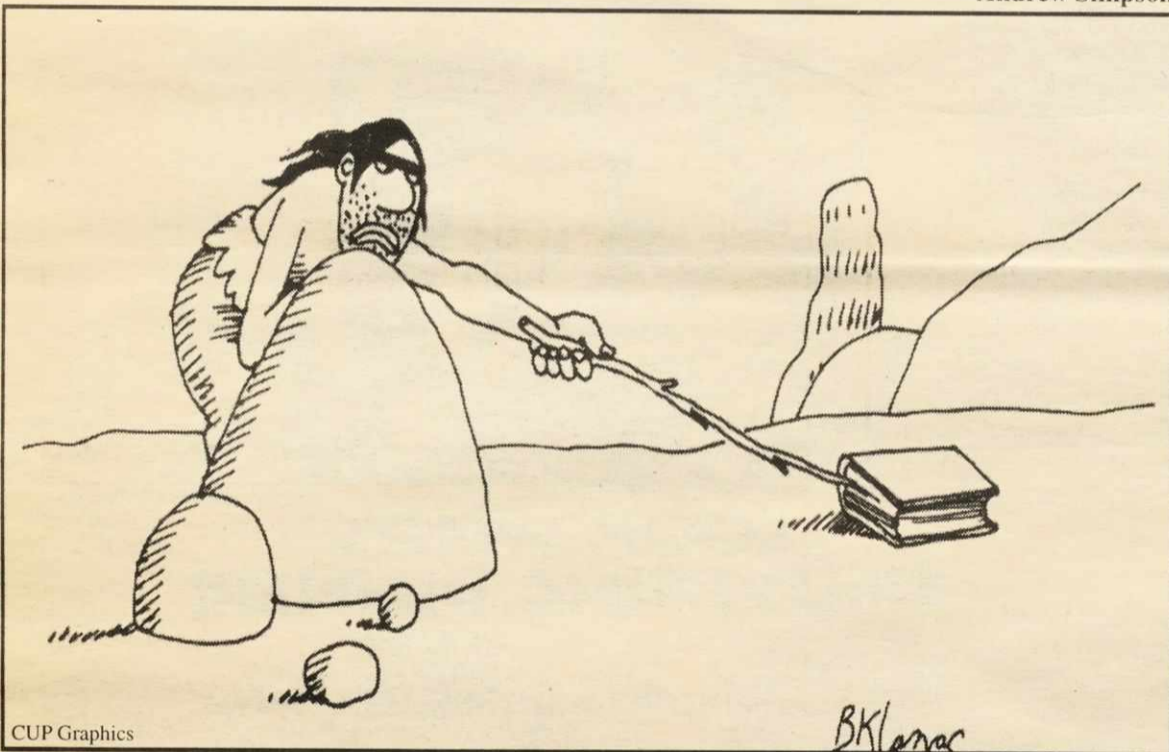
Second, to make fun of those who worked to raise money for such a worthwhile charity is crass and ignorant. You wouldn't make fun of the Terry Fox Run, or the Aids Walk — is there something especially tickling about suffocating children?

Third, and both schools are guilty of this, to promote charity events as replacements to sporting events is obscene. There is something seriously wrong when the greatest motivation to participate in a charity event is the desire to beat someone else.

Finally, this rumoured rivalry between Dalhousie and Saint Mary's is bogus. The trashing of Dalhousie may be a popular pastime at Saint Mary's, but for most of the students I attend classes with, the notion of an inter-school rivalry is decidedly lame.

Besides, we haven't had a football team since 1976.

Andrew Simpson



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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.

Founded in 1869 at Dalhousie College, the *Gazette* is Canada's oldest student newspaper. With a circulation of 10,000, the *Gazette* is published every Thursday by the Dalhousie Gazette Publishing Society, of which all students of Dalhousie University are members. The *Gazette* exercises full editorial autonomy and reserves the right to refuse or edit any material submitted. All editorial decisions are made collectively by the staff. To become voting staff members, individuals must contribute to three issues. Views expressed in the *Gazette* are not necessarily those of the editors or the collective staff. Unless otherwise noted, all text © 1997 the Dalhousie Gazette Publishing Society.
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Letters

Defending NSPIRG

To the editor,
If picking on NSPIRG is the only way John Cullen can make his paper more lively, I'm guessing the *Gazette* is hurting for new story ideas.

I have a few suggestions.
Ask Beaver Foods why they don't compost when it's the law in Nova Scotia. Organics from institutional cafeterias are not allowed in landfills.

Also, why isn't a single penny devoted to bike racks in this year's Dal physical plant budget? The situation around the Killam is totally inadequate, and has been ever since they removed the courtyard rack.

There's bound to be more story ideas at Tuesday's Eco-Action meeting to which Cullen, and anyone else for that matter, is more than welcome. Cullen's poison pen is a tool that's too good to waste on NSPIRG.

David Redwood

To the editor,
I am writing concerning the editorial "The problem with NSPIRG" written by John Cullen (Sept. 11). In the editorial, Cullen questioned the effectiveness of the Nova Scotia Public Interest Research Group at Dalhousie.

I want to clarify that NSPIRG's mandate is:

1. To facilitate social change and to encourage individuals, and members of the Dalhousie community in particular, to organize around issues of public interest.
2. To give students of Dalhousie University the means to re-translate their research into positive social action and to utilize university resources to the benefit of the community as a whole.
3. To promote student participation in public fora aimed at community action and regulatory and legal reform.
4. To promote the education of NSPIRG-Dal members and the public at large about issues of public interest.

NSPIRG strives to meet these objectives with our working groups and our projects. Just to name a few things NSPIRG has done in the past two years:

Active working groups hold regular meetings, host tables in the SUB, give workshops, work on petitions, etc. Our active groups include Humans Against Homophobia (HAH), People for Animal Welfare (PAW), the Women's Health Collective, Food Co-operative, Eco-action, and Economic Justice.

NSPIRG has also hired students to work on summer research positions focussing on Multinational corporations, Media literacy skills for students, Learning Disabilities, Africville history and many more issues. These projects have produced a wide range of publications which have been distributed throughout the province and are available in the NSPIRG resource library.

The direction that NSPIRG takes is fully determined by its members and its mandate. During the 1997 Frosh Week NSPIRG solicited awareness with a very successful

open house in co-operation with the Dalhousie Women's Centre, and we are planning to participate in the Volunteer Fair September 24 and have weekly tables in the SUB.

We welcome all Dalhousie students, new and returning, to stop by the office, room 315 in the Dal SUB. NSPIRG is Dalhousie's research and education centre for environmental and social justice issues. We are receptive to student's ideas and encourage participation in community action. It is only with active community involvement that NSPIRG can tackle the issues that affect all members of the Dalhousie community. The active NSPIRG member is not "confusing public interest with special interest", but is working on issues of special interest for the public.

Jennifer Reynolds
Executive Director, NSPIRG

To the editor,
When we read your editorial (Sept. 11) about the Nova Scotia Public Interest Research Group, we were perplexed at your attack on the organization.

The problem that you initially identified with NSPIRG was that they (along with the Women's Centre) wanted a meat-free Frosh BBQ. From this point, you somehow came to question the purpose of NSPIRG.

Yet, one of the issues with which NSPIRG concerns itself is food. Is it not only logical that they would question the need for meat at the BBQ, given that they promote vegetarian food alternatives? In fact, NSPIRG was acting out their purpose in their actions.

The editorial went on to question the relevance of NSPIRG. NSPIRG is a useful and hardworking organization, and certainly relevant to the many people who have benefitted from their work. NSPIRG is involved with a food co-op and a community garden. They coordinate the group Humans Against Homophobia. The organization compiles a resource book called the Handy Dandy Guide. They've been involved in anti-racist projects such as the taped programme "Africville: Not for Sale". The list goes on.

NSPIRG's input into campus and community affairs has been invaluable, often accomplishing work that would otherwise be left undone.

Such an assault on a useful and progressive organization is unwarranted. If anyone wants to know what NSPIRG does, just ask. The list is long.

Fiona York
Station Manager,
CKDU-FM

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