

Engineers' vandalism hurts whole community

by Paul Clark

Last week, as predictably as winter, certain unnamed members of Dalhousie's Engineering Society raided seven or eight thousand *Gazettes* off the newstands to stamp on in red an advertisement for their November 28 Engineers Ball. This year, as in past ones, the Engineers could also be predicted to do something unpredictable.

All members of the Dalhousie community are eligible to contribute commentaries to the *Gazette's* Op-Ed page. Submissions should be typewritten, double-spaced and not exceed 750 words in length. Commentaries express only the opinions of the individuals who write them and need not express any editorial policy of the Dalhousie *Gazette*.

Two years ago, when the *Gazette* fooled them by putting old issues out on the newstands, a group of Engineers angrily burst into our offices to seize the new issues. In the process, one of our staffers was knocked to the floor where she hit her head and suffered a concussion which confined her to bed for several weeks. When the *Gazette* proceeded to sue them, then Engineering Society president David Bolivar settled out of court for a not insubstantial sum. Last year there was no violence, but in their good sense the Engineers failed to return a good number of newspapers to the stands.

This year the Engineers returned all of our papers, albeit in an amorphous lump more attractive to the recycler than the reader. But before they returned them they took the liberty of clipping a front page article out of practically every copy of the paper.

Why is this action so reprehensible? Certainly not just because students could not read about a

would take it upon themselves to mutilate \$2,000 of their property in the name of an immature joke, funny to no one else but themselves.

Further, you lose more than just that issue. We have to send copies of every paper we produce to our advertisers. Clients whose ads have been slashed, torn or been left unread in a damaged and unattractive issue justifiably refuse to pay and discontinue advertising with us. Consequently, with this revenue lost, we either have to reduce the size of our newspaper or ask you for more money.

Perhaps most important is that the Engineers' actions constitute an infringement on your rights to know what we have to say. Imagine if this was a story about President MacKay or the Nova Scotia government, an issue vitally affect you as students, and an interested few decided to prevent you from reading it? You would justifiably be very upset. Recently we printed a rather savage commentary by an ex-grad rep on council criticizing the council executive. Student president Gord Owen, who disagreed strongly with much of it, said he would have loved to censor the article, but didn't. The Engineers disagreed with

Gazette-Engineers hockey game [see the "Letters to the Editor" section if you want to read about it]. The action was actually an infringement on the rights of every student of Dalhousie.

The Dalhousie *Gazette* is the property of every student attending this university. You pay about \$2.50 each out of your student union fee every year for a service which we, to the best of our ability, toil long hours every week to provide you. Adding our ad revenue to your student fees, we spend about \$2,000 in the production costs of every issue. Students should be upset that a small few



Photo by Richard Duncan

an article [of an uncritical nature] and decided to prevent everyone from reading it. So much for the machismo behind their drinking songs. So much for their respect for freedom of the press and the laws of our country.

Over and above the disservice the Engineers have done to the entire Dalhousie community, they have also hurt their own faculty. The Engineering Society really only encompasses a small percentage of the Engineers on campus. They tend to be first and second year students, male, single, and lonely souls looking to find in the way of comradery and unconscionable social

acts what they are lacking in culture and meaningful human relationships with either sex. They wear their human impotence on their sleeves. All Engineers aren't like this. We have engineering students on our staff and at Dal Photo who are well balanced, good people that put the Engineering Society's stereotype to shame. Through our work with other organizations we frequently encounter Engineers who have better things to do in their spare time than storm women's residences and destroy newspapers. It's sad that such an unrepresentative few have to give everyone else such a pitiable reputation.

Letters to the Editor

Dear Editor:

On Thursday afternoon, November 13, 1980, I was among a number of people who were involuntarily subjected to a burst of very loud propaganda. The place was the locker space at Dalplex. The propaganda was about a just completed exercise of intrigue, red ink, stamping and scissor skills.

The propaganda seemed to be directed at reinforcing a certain conviction that the exercise just completed against the Dalhousie *Gazette* was indeed an exercise of recognizable heroism, intelligence, and speed; not to mention that "they" had done the university and student body a favour.

I was annoyed by having this propaganda forced on me, but also stimulated to find out what the facts were. For one of the great virtues claimed in favour of a university education is that one learns to analyze things, situations, actions, etc., objectively, with a high degree of skill and accuracy. One is taught as a fundamental guiding principle—do not pretend something is what it isn't. Get a hold of the truth.

With this in mind I looked at the activities behind the propaganda. The facts uncovered were straightforward. A group of students snatched up the *Gazette* when it was delivered to Dalhousie from the printers. After the seizure, the papers were defaced with red ink, an article cut out, and the damaged papers dumped in the Student Union Building.

I agree that the right to dream should never be taken away from anyone. But there still remains the need to analyze objectively our activities. To call them what they are. That is the way to freedom. Such an analysis of Thursday's activities shows us:

- destruction of student property;
- an attack on the freedom of the press;
- censorship;
- the wasting of student union fees;
- stealing of advertising.

There seems, therefore, to be some discrepancy between what the involved students claimed they were doing—the propaganda and the objective reality of what they were actually doing.

When one becomes aware

of such a discrepancy in one's life, one should not but see it as an opportunity to grow in humility and a challenge to grow by overcoming the discrepancy. To be able to move in such a direction is to acquire an asset that will help one to contribute positively to whatever profession one pursues as well as to the society in which one lives.

May I conclude with a quote which is on my office wall. "The truth will set you free but first it will make you miserable."

Sincerely,
Father Joe Hattie, O.M.I.

Editor's Note — For our readers' satisfaction, we have reprinted below the front page story methodically torn from 9,500 *Gazettes*.

Revenge is sweet! After many years of oppression at the hands of the Engineers, the *Gazette* has finally fought back. Tuesday at seven a.m. we hit the ice and by eight it was all over for those bullies. We won! 10-5 was the score. Goal-tending was the difference. Brian MacKenzie played brilliantly for the *Gazette*, but the Engineers' goalie was never in the game. (He didn't show up).

The *Gazette* has now 2 wins with no defeats and is

on the road to the championship behind a fast skating, high scoring offense. Big scorers against the Engineers were Chris Hartt with three, Chris Young and Graham Blakey sent home two, Sandy MacDonald, Steve Taggart and Michael McCarthy each scored once.

The Engineers' Ball is this Saturday and if tradition is followed, they have probably stamped the front page of this *Gazette*. But we all know that the real stamping took place Tuesday morning.

Dear Editor:

May I respond, by way of this letter, to your Nov. 13th editorial request for constructive comment on the Government's constitutional proposals?

Repatriation is not the issue. No one opposes repatriation. Control of the Constitution is the issue; and that control will lie in the hands of whoever possesses the power of amendment. The definition of the amending power is the bread and butter issue because it will determine how every other choice about our political life will be made, and which level of government will make it.

Surely the definition of the formula which will control both levels of government cannot be arrived at by one government acting alone. Can an argument between two parties be settled by one side declaring that it has the amending formula is the correct answer as to how constitutional change is to be made. It follows, that in order to become constitutional law, all changes must receive majority approval as that majority is defined in the formula itself.

Since the federal Government is instructing the British Parliament to change the Constitution by enacting a Charter of Rights binding on both levels of Government, are we not justified in asking whether such a change would receive the majority consent required under the Government's own amending formula? If the proposed Charter of Rights does command the majority required to become constitutional law, why not wait and let Canadians entrench it in the Constitution for themselves? If the Charter at present does not command such a majority, how then can the federal Government ask the British Parliament to enact something which Canadians would not adopt for themselves?

Yours sincerely,
Jonathan Eays