

heads read as follows "Barbara Beach may be a nice person, but..." The implication was that the position of Housing Secretary that Barbara Beach had taken could have only limited effectiveness. To take this out was not only petty but wrong.

As applied to this case there are three criteria the editors should follow: 1) Don't exclude opinions that are not yours; ones you don't like. 2) Work on the premise that your readership is highly intelligent, as opposed to the commercial media. 3) Give commentators full freedom of speech.

The Gazette is a soap box for students willing to use it. Comments, whether by the editorial board or the individual, are open to counter-comments. People should not hold back what they are valid and relevant opinions for fear of offending others. If people did not screw things up all the time then commentators would be unnecessary. But they are necessary, and the more opinions, no matter how strong, the better.

A free atmosphere and constant dialogue in a student newspaper is necessary to insure its usefulness to the student body. We at the Gazette

will be performing a disservice if that atmosphere is not perpetuated and censorship becomes a tool of the editors.

Hopefully the violation of the student's rights and the tenets of good journalism in this minor instance was, and will be, an isolated incident.

Mike Greenfield Assistant Editor

Here's to the Kingmaker...!

To the Gazette:

I was quite pleased, and amazed

to see Ken MacDougall's article "In Pursuit of the Big Apple."

Once in several months one of your writers makes an important statement, and although I am unwilling to believe "everything I read" I find his statements on the recent "elections" to be most interesting.

Mr. Crossman, the King-maker, if that is truly what he is, is certainly an interesting character. However, he is also very dangerous. I suggest gentlemen that we deal with him in the normal manner.

So "spppppppppph" to you Mr. Crossman.

Sincerely,
Michael Wile

Ken MacDougall's view

Of Goldilocks and Chicken Little :

by Ken MacDougall

Well, it's rapidly coming around to that time of the year: examinations are four weeks away, term papers are coming due, there's a run on bennies at the local pharmacies and, most importantly, students are running out of money for beer in the Grawood. As if things aren't bad enough, we now have Chicken Little running around saying that the worst is yet to come. I'll give you an example of what I mean:

"Due to the economic position of the country, the current position of post-secondary students in Nova Scotia and Canada is the worst of many years. At this point Dalhousie students are facing the following: a provincial Treasury Board that this week (March 8th) is examining critically an already deficient Student Aid program; a university president who last week announced consideration of a further tuition fee increase, albeit Dalhousie's tuitions have been consistently the highest of the country for several years; a federal student summer employment program ... These problems are evident without even venturing from our own backyard."

Chicken Little, in case you're wondering is our very own Student Union President, Bruce Russell.

But, aside from a few grammatical changes, I don't think I could have summarized the plight of students any better. The unfortunate truth of the matter, however, is that Russell's Council, more than anything else, has contributed to this state of affairs.

Last year the provincial government decided to do a hatchet job on Student Aid. Simultaneously the Dalhousie Board of Governors decided to increase tuition for the Faculty of Arts and Science. How did Council respond? Not very well, I'm afraid. Russell literally had to be dragged into the Student Aid confrontation. And, when Graduate Students, led by PoliSci student Paul Evans, offered to organize a fee boycott (Russell's responsibility, actually, if it was to be conducted in the name of the Student Union), the GSU was given a cold reception.

Perhaps there was some legitimate ground for failing to tackle the fee hike. Peter Clarke, a Student Senator who worked on the Student Aid campaign, stated at the time that, because it was summer, there was little chance of organizing an effective boycott. It seemed far more logical, therefore, to concentrate student effort on regaining the lost ground with the Aid Program.

I'd agree with that approach, if the Student Aid Programme wasn't designed to benefit the middle class. But that's irrelevant for now. The important thing to note is that this was the direction in which student effort was channelled last summer.

But even with this stand, Russell's contribution to the campaign

was minimal. It was Mary Pat MacKenzie, former Editor of the **Gazette**, who used her media influence to get Russell on ATV's "Counterpoint," it was MacKenzie who destroyed Education Minister Gillis's credibility on CBC's "Metro Action", and it was MacKenzie and Clarke who prepared the press releases, set up meetings with other unions in the province, and button-holed the support of the New Democratic Party, the Nova Scotia Federation of Labour, Dr. Hicks, President of Dalhousie and, somewhat belatedly, the Progressive Conservative Party. Barry Ward and Gary Armsworthy, two Third Year Law students, provided the bulk of research, and eventually supplied Council with the most comprehensive Student Aid report ever compiled in Canada.

The campaign received excellent co-operation from the Nova Scotia newspapers, especially the **Halifax Herald**, but not untypically, ran afoul of obstructionist tactics from the liberals at **The 4th Estate**. The efforts, however, proved successful, and the lost ground was regained. Then the torch of leadership was thrown to Russell and Council. Nothing of substance has happened since; this, in spite of the fact that the provincial government was strongly hinting at a coming programme of fiscal restraint.

Then, two weeks ago an editorial appeared in the **Gazette**. It condemned Council for failing to appoint a permanent Student Aid Task Force, while emphasizing the direction Liberal fiscal policy was taking. Russell condemned this statement in private; soon, however, he was approaching Ward and Armsworthy to prepare him another paper on Student Aid, which would be presented to the new Minister of Education, Dr. MacAskill. Last week, Russell began voicing the same concerns as the **Gazette**.

The gut response by Russell, of reacting negatively to even minor criticism of his term of office, is typical of the "need-a-boot-in-the-ass-to-get-me-moving" mentality that has pervaded this Council. But facts have to be faced. For too long the Dalhousie Student Union, supposedly the "leadership" union of the Maritimes, has been playing Goldilocks, sleeping in the beds of the university, the Regan government, and whosoever else that might have been wearing the stripes of Liberalism. Now, with the Liberal government sensing a change in public attitude away from "welfare" handouts to student bums, the end product of this tactic is coming to rest around the necks of students in the province.

Russell's bleating about the plight of students, I must admit, is magnificent camouflage. With only one and a half months left in his term, he isn't going to be around to fight the battle with the Liberals, anyway. Gord Neal will have the

pleasure of that task. He may have the help of Anne Gillis, if she doesn't need her stomach pumped from eating her SUB "banana split". Neal certainly will also need the backing of the Council, the bulk of whom supported John D'Orsay and Dave Brown.

The year of lost effort is going to require immense co-operation. And people wonder why I am "not giving Gord and Anne a chance." Christ, I wouldn't give most people a chance of bailing students out of this mess.

The coming summer struggle will depend, not just on strong leadership, but on student willingness to face reality. The Liberals aren't going to whimper away like they did last year, and they aren't going to risk losing power again for the sake of supporting higher education. Dr. Hicks made that mistake when he was premier of this province, and Bob Stanfield ate him alive. Gerry Regan, no raving intellectual, at least can read history.

Students may have to kick ass this summer - the Establishment's ass. We may need pickets, petitions, strikes and other weapons of militancy, if further cutbacks in educational funds are in the offing. Has the student body the collective willpower to even consider this type of action? Probably not. For too many years Student Councils have concerned themselves with turning their Unions into Beer Gardens, allegedly the end result to students, with the aid of their apathetic to care.

Perhaps that sounds cynical. But then, some people question my judgment, regardless of my position. So do I. For, you see, it was I who urged Mary Pat MacKenzie to have the **Gazette** support Bruce Russell and Ann Smiley last year.

Even I can make mistakes. **Notes in Passing:** Someone may have noticed something wrong with my column last week. The Guzzling Gourmet pasted some of the copy in in the wrong order. I may have solved the problem this week, by ordering rounds in advance in the Grawood.



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National Lifeguard Recertification

All National Lifeguards whose pool option qualification runs out before or during this coming summer. Dartmouth Regional Vocational School Pool Sunday

March 28, 9:00 a.m. Anyone planning to work in aquatics during the summer should plan to attend. Last chance before your summer job starts.