

Happy rocks you'd never find here

"There is no truth but in transit." — Ralph Waldo Emerson

"Be nice to the person behind the counter, what makes you think you're better than them." — Piggy

Sarah had met Hugh in Siberia, and now I was driving to Alberta so she could move in with him.

And on the way we drove through a lot of small, Canadian Siberias — small towns that made up small counties that eventually made up big provinces. Small towns so small they escaped jokes about small towns and are reduced to being quaint as people drive through them.

Small towns are a lot like teenagers.

Both feel the need to stand out from their peers. So every town has a different mascot, fruit festival and bizarre highway claim to fame — like the inexplicable "Happy Rock" outside Gladstone, Manitoba — the same way leagues of teenagers have piercings, dolphin and butterfly tattoos and limp, processed hair of some particularly unnatural Kool-Aid colour.

But just because they are small, and maybe a bit weird, doesn't make them insignificant.

Dal's population is easily 10 times greater than most of the places I drove through this summer.

And the implication is that all the people traipsing around campus are infinitely more than the people who shop at the Co-op.

More in touch. On the edge. Faster.

Whatever.

University is a place populated by a parade of similarly-aged, similarly-dressed, similarly-

blessed people — mostly from similar backgrounds.

Small towns are populated by everybody else.

So this country may be run by people in Ottawa who use lots of words that end in -ize, but it is

Everybody loved it.

I have a feeling it would've got nothing but eye rolls here.

So yeah, more and more Canadians have gone, are going, or will go to university. But lots didn't, aren't and won't. And thinking they suffer for it is unspoken, condescending and completely untrue.

Students are more insulated

against the 'real world' than almost anyone — regardless of their hick status.

So how come we're so much better than people who don't go to school? When we get drunk downtown, are our slurrings more enlightened? Does the ability to cram for a calculus midterm and having the time to discuss the finer points of *Dawson's Creek* versus *Party of Five* elevate our decision-making ability?

See, the problem isn't that university students don't actually learn as much as they think they do, or aren't exposed to enough different types of people or ideas. That'll all come once we actually graduate. The problem is if when we encounter different types of people and their ideas we automatically disregard them.

Superiority complexes are pretty insidious.

So, unless things change, the people in Ottawa who make decisions will always likely have come through university.

And if they think they're above everybody now, what kind of decisions will they make then?

SHELLEY ROBINSON

Editorial

populated largely by people who watch *The Wheel of Fortune*, and drive pickup trucks.

And we are probably better off for it.

Canada is full of the people who paid 15 bucks to sit in bleachers in the middle of a field in



Happy Rock, Gladstone, Manitoba.

the middle of nowhere-prairie-land — population: haybales — to catch two plays in *Bob's Wild West Adventure Show*. The plays featured a chubby, hairy guy who dressed up as a woman, a 10 cow "cattle run", cap guns, crackling microphones, and cheesy, cheap costumes that matched the acting.

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Letters

Talking to the Ad-man about honesty

To the editor,

There has been a lot of debate recently concerning sponsorship of events and advertising on campus. The debate has centred around tobacco companies sponsoring concerts and Pepsi Cola's campus-wide contract. We as a community need to talk honestly about these issues. These issues in my mind consist of three significant questions. First, what is the significance of these agreements in a whole community context? Secondly, should we continue to allow tobacco interests access to our Student body through co-promotions at any level? Thirdly, and perhaps most importantly in my mind, who should make this choice for all of campus?

The Pepsi contract and the presence of tobacco advertising are in fact insignificant when compared to the trend towards a greater commercial presence. For example, the top two floors of the new computer building will be devoted to private industry; the revenue generated by this arrangement will be used to offset the cost of construction and other related costs. This arrangement begs the question: what will the future hold for departments with less obvious commercial applications? Can we look forward to a new Philosophy wing with the top two floors devoted to private industry?

While the presence of Pepsi may irritate some, it is unlikely that it will have an effect on the price of tuition or change the quality of education at Dalhousie. I do not know what the effect of 20 million dollars in research grants means to tuition. I do know however that research grants rarely cover the overhead associated with these projects. These costs add up, into the millions. I am not suggesting that we should not solicit research dollars, however we need to ask where these dollars come from. What access to the research conducted do the donors receive? Who owns the research and who owns the intellectual property produced? Is there a point when these research dollars make it possible for the donor to begin to determine the results of the work and the mandate of the university? Is there a point when tenure will be granted in part on the ability to generate research dollars? Have we already reached that point? We as a university community need to examine our priorities; we need to look less to the easy targets for conversation and look directly to the issues that effect the quality of education at an institution we are all stakeholders in.

There still remains the question of tobacco sponsorship at the Student Union. Personally I think the world would be a better place without tobacco companies. I cannot think of a product or industry that has brought more pain and wreckage into this world than tobacco. We as a society have allowed them to sell a product that makes addicts of our children and which kills people who have never taken a puff. In my opinion a more

hateful cynical, deceptive group of villains you would be hard pressed to find. That is my opinion, and that's the rub. That's all it is, for what it's worth. With regard to continuing sponsorship, I suggest the following solution. We are a community of educated adults; I cannot off-hand bring to mind a community more qualified to make a choice, or form an opinion independently.

Here are the facts to date: (1) no student has complained about the Belvedere concert advertising to the Student Union, and (2) the Student Union made no money through this sponsorship, through savings or otherwise (the savings translated into lower ticket prices).(3) The show was a complete sell out.

Does that mean students don't care or that they approve of the product being promoted? Absolutely not. With no protest or complaint should one person make a moral decision for every Dalhousie student? Absolutely not. I will be the first person to say that we should make a decision about this relationship, but we must make that decision by using the democracy that exists in our community. I will be the first to pose a question; however, I would never be so arrogant as to answer that question for anyone other than myself.

It does not take a great deal of wit or effort to say that Government should contribute more to education — of course it should. And in fairness, while despising tobacco interests is both understandable and appropriate, both positions are of limited usefulness. We certainly do not need any more coffeehouse self righteousness. What we need is viable alternatives and approaches to returning funding to a reasonable level. Once again a more qualified group of adults to produce these alternatives I cannot bring to mind.

Brian Kellow
DSU executive vice-president

Playboy espousing hate against women

To the editor,

I am writing with respect to "Playboys respond", a letter that appeared in the Oct. 1 issue of the Gazette. Playboy campus reps Yip and Wildsmith imply that Shelley Robinson's critique is a personal view, and thus insignificant. I'd like to clarify some points for the Hefner reps. Ms. Robinson's opposition to hate literature is neither personal nor is it insignificant.

Yes, you heard me right — Playboy reps Yip and Wildsmith are advocates of hate literature on campus. The fact that pornography represents hate literature against women is not the insignificant personal opinion of this writer. Rather, it is a codified element of Canadian Human Rights legislation. Let's be perfectly clear on this issue — Hugh Hefner's pornography conglomerate has nothing to do with free speech and everything to do with the subjection of women.

Yours truly,
Mary MacDonald