

# Singing the Bluenoser blues

Well, it's that time of the year again. That's right, the time of the year when newspaper columnists like to look back in the year that's just passed, take a deep breath, and try to make sense of it.

## EDITORIAL

At least, that's the traditional practice. Tradition is something we at the Gazette don't normally put much stock in, but I'm sure you'll humour me this once.

I'll say this: 1990 does not leave me proud to be a Nova Scotian. Of course, patriotism is a silly thing anyway, but when my Upper Canadian friends at Dalhousie shake their heads in disbelief at how messed up and backward Nova Scotia is, I've always stood up for my province. I'm finding that awfully hard to do these days.

If there's one thing 1990 proved, it's that politics in this province is about as squeaky clean as the Point Aconi coal-fired power plant is likely to be. The Tories have been running this place like their private fief. The even sadder thing is, the Liberals in power before them and in opposition haven't been any better. Vote-buying scandals have hit both parties. Patronage, kickbacks and corruption made headlines like never before in 1990.

Almost makes you want to pack up and leave town, doesn't it? Apparently that was

John Buchanan's idea precisely. We won't miss you John.

Meanwhile, public funds were inexplicably disappearing. Fish plants were forced to close. Daycare was told the pot was empty. The education budget felt the squeeze, and teacher layoffs will probably follow. Universities such as Dalhousie, already operating under massive debt burdens, were forced to hike tuition fees and slash programs as provincial funding dried up.

Of course, there was always money to be found for projects that REALLY mattered. We're getting a new Bluenose, after all. And Province House will have no shortage of toilet seats for at least a few years. Greg Kerr got millions of tax dollars to build a water slide for his kids in his Upper Clements backyard.

But even more distressing than the individual acts of stupidity by our politicians were the revelations that Nova Scotia's

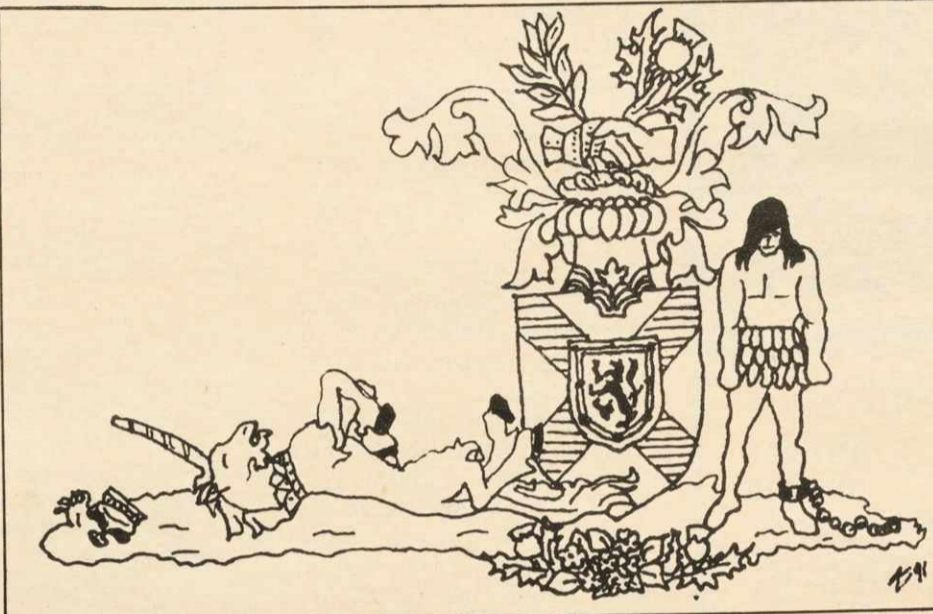
problems are deep, and entrenched, and unlikely to be erased by a simple change of government.

The Raymond Bartlett and Donald Marshall affairs demonstrated the sexism and racism that riddle the province's justice system. Studies performed in 1990 showed that Nova Scotia has one of the worst records in Canada on pay equity. The worsening crisis in the fisheries, as we have come to realize, is the result of years of mismanagement that have depleted the fish stocks. Point Aconi and Halifax Harbour made the headlines, but are only symbolic of the lack of a genuine commitment to the environment on the part of Nova Scotia's policy-makers.

All right, if we've established that the status quo has got to go, what are the alternatives? Somehow I don't take heart at the prospect of Rollie Thornhill or Vince MacLean leading this province in a bold new direction for the 1990s. Alexa McDonough and the New Democrats may have some of the right ideas, but they've got to get their seat total in the Legislature out of the single digits first.

In the meantime, take matters into your own hands. Speak up. Make your voice heard. Write for the Gazette. The New Year may be a time for looking back, but it's also a time for resolutions, right?

Ryan Stanley



# GST a "reason to celebrate"?

## Students need not despair

by Shaune MacKinlay

As everyone is by now well aware, public outcry and Senate filibustering were to no avail in preventing the passage of the Goods and Services Tax. Although the GST has become a permanent feature of the Canadian economy the student population need not despair—the GST may make each of us a better person.

The GST need not be the source of financial woe. To begin with, there is the GST tax credit which will be awarded to those whose income falls below a certain level. Even though these cheques may be misconstrued as some type of windfall, they are intended to lessen the blow to the pocketbook. The GST credit would be best put to use if it were immediately converted to small change, thus preparing the unsuspecting student to be nickel and dimed to death.

Some forms of the GST can be easily avoided. For instance, as long hair has become fashionable for males and females alike, there should be no need to worry about the GST on haircuts. The new tax on snack foods, as well as various other sugar-containing, may help to curb some late-night study

habits. In fact, coffee, which is GST exempt when brewed at home, could easily take the place of other high calorie treats. As a result students in general may become increasingly thinner, not to mention more alert.

Despite the fact that many students live alone, or are responsible for purchasing their own groceries, individual portions of food are subject to the GST. A less costly alternative would perhaps be to get together with a dozen or so friends and buy a side of beef. If the purchase of larger food quantities puts you in need of a deep-freeze, try not to fret—the price of large appliances is supposed to decrease.

Fortunately, the cost of tuition is not subject to an additional seven per cent. However, school supplies have suffered a different fate. If the price of loose leaf and pens becomes too taxing there is always the possibility of photocopying someone's notes from the previous year.

On-campus food is not subject to any special treatment by Revenue Canada. The coffee that cost 75 cents before Christmas will now cost 80 cents, although no additional tax will be added for cream and sugar. If you like to munch on

the occasional cafeteria-style pastry or donut do not be disheartened. Rather than buying only one of these little goodies, why not buy six or more and consume them outdoors? Not only will you avoid paying the GST, but you will have probably rid yourself of any future cravings of this nature.

As is plainly apparent, the GST gives all students reason to celebrate. It allows us to spend more time with friends, do less school work, have a greater number of waking hours, all the while sporting a style-conscious "do". Thus, the implementation of the Goods and Services Tax is no time for tears. After all, Kleenex is taxable.

The federal government is giving Canadians with lower incomes a quarterly tax credit to offset part or all of the GST. Most students under 19 are eligible for the credit.

If you didn't send in that green thing in last year's income taxes, call 1-800-267-6999 (if you have a push-button phone) or 1-800-267-5656 for a pulse-dial phone, or go to a district taxation office and get the credit application form.

The credit increases the more you spend, up to a limit, after which it drops. The following table indicates approximate credits based on last year's income:

Net Income	Single no kids Credit	Single one kid Credit	Couple one kid Credit
\$0-6,000	\$ 190	\$ 380	\$ 480
8,000	229	419	480
10,000	267	458	480
12,000	290	480	480
14,000	290	480	480
18,000	290	480	480
22,000	290	480	480
26,000	208	398	398

Remember—if you don't ask for your money back, no-one's going to run after you with it.

## News disease hits campus!

Students suffering from news deficiency

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