

opinions

Poor customer service for consumer morons

When was the last time you got really mad because something seemed unjust, or because the system was sweeping you through the cracks, or perhaps a vending machine ate your money and produced nothing for you to eat? When was the last time you did anything about it? Once — I don't remember it, but I have been told it was real — there was a time when complaining to a manager or supervisor did something... when "I shall speak to your supervisor" was a threat. With the alternative anti-cooperate vogue in full bloom, it is astounding how few people even try to stand up for their rights as a consumer.

This morning I had trouble with a vending machine in the Arts Centre. Whoever runs these machines was not exactly on hand and I lost the money because the machine produced nothing. I don't think that I should have to stake out the machine in order to get a refund, but what can I do?

The last time I tried to do something about the way I was treated nothing happened. I was speaking to the operator on a public phone, and there were two women arguing nearby. One screamed, "bitch," which to be honest was an accurate

description of the operator who, in spite of the fact that I was being your average, complacent, consumer moron, and polite, too, hung up on me after calling me an asshole. I called the next operator and asked to speak to a supervisor. I was told that whatever I needed she could deal with. I explained the situation, and "Yeah, right" succinctly sums up her reaction.

Again, the fledgling resisting consumer is pinned to the slab, and what can you do? The system is in place and within that system there is no way to stand up for yourself, so it's 'sell your soul' and it's 'freedom or

pay the consequences'. This is horribly wrong. I'm on my way to find out

who makes those damn machines.
James Beddington

Ask Joe & Jo

Last week we were stopped by one of our readers and asked a few questions about the state of campus security. As a result, we decided to do some investigating. The issue of campus safety is a big one, so as a result, this will be our first of a two-part article.

This week we look at the shuttle bus. The shuttle bus is a great idea, and we've got Tiffany Jay (DSU Executive Vice-President) to thank for it, as well as some very generous corporate sponsors.

The night can be dangerous for many, as the threat of violence becomes too much of a reality. The shuttle bus helps people get closer to home, without having to walk alone beyond the boundaries of where the foot patrol will walk you.

This great idea has a couple of dangerous flaws though, as you will soon see. On Monday night, I (Joe) left class early and decided to try out the shuttle bus. I arrived at the Enquiry desk of the SUB at exactly 8:50 pm. I asked what time the next shuttle bus was leaving for the south end. The person working the desk checked the schedule twice to be sure, and then told me it would be leaving at 9 p.m. on the dot.

Well, at 9:15 p.m., the bus finally arrived, and I, not wanting to argue, asked if the next run would be the south end. I was informed that they were doing the north end, and that the next south end would not be until 10 p.m. The driver suggested that I had made a mistake, and then was dumbfounded when I told him that I had gotten the information from the person at the Enquiry desk, and that it was read right off their schedule.

"OOPS — guess they have the wrong schedule," he said. I ended up taking a cab.

The Wednesday and Thursday before, I (Jo) was put in a similar situation.

A kind and gentle SUB staff gave me a lift home, but the point remains: I live a half hour walk from campus. A long walk along unlit streets and through the dark Commons, but for two days in a row, it seemed worth the risk to save the time so that I could get some work done before bed.

We both feel this is a serious problem that should be addressed. Is the shuttle bus being used? Could it be that we as students are paying for this security and that we should use it? 15-ish people have been using it nightly and ridership has been increasing. If the students of Dalhousie take the time to use the take-home services, the demand may justify more buses to be added, the wait for a safe ride home will be shorter, etc., etc. (i.e., think big).

It seems almost destiny that this should be brought up during the Week of Reflection, when little things like boosting support of the services presently offered could do a world of good for safety on campus.

And remember, if you've got a question of comment, nothing's too rude, crude or stupid for us to tackle. So, ask Jo & Joe!

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it is men in society that need our attention: if we look at numbers alone, it appears that we should concentrate on violence visited upon men. However, as we are meant to reflect upon the plight of women, perhaps we should turn our investigation towards the question of why they are being unfairly singled out in this case. Why do we suppose that violence against them is more deserving of our reflection than violence against men or, better still, than reflection on violence generally? Perhaps those who conceptualized this week feel women to be weaker than men, and therefore more in need of support. One wonders. Perhaps there is a feeling that women and men are really not equal after all, and it is therefore admissible to concentrate upon their woes even when the woes of men are numerically greater. These are indeed interesting

reflections. But, perhaps there will be those who feel that our reflections have led us astray. After all, this week — commemorating, as it does, a most terrible event — could only have been inspired by the most noble of intentions. Well, perhaps. However, there seems to be something amiss when we devote a week to the remembrance of this event and its implications, and only a day to the remembrance of all those thousands who gave their lives in the various wars and the implications bound up in that.

In closing, I wish to be very clear. Violence visited upon women is a terrible thing, and as I wrote in the above, it should not be countenanced. However, exaggerating evidence and using scare tactics is a most unfortunate method of attaining a better situation for women in society. These methods are effective, but only transiently effective, and they usually foster contempt when they are discovered. Taken as a whole, it seems that it might be more useful to aim at lessening just plain violence — violence against anyone.





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