

A mis-appropriation of facts

Do students really need a break from the cycle of school-work-school? Or is the eight months of school and the four months of summer work with no time off except for a week at Christmas the norm? People with jobs get holidays and time for vacations, so why is it that when some students take a trip, they're looked down upon?

In the *Daily News* last week (Tuesday, March 14), Sandra Porteous wrote about students who were on a plane with her from Toronto to Halifax. These students were on their way back from Spring Break in the Dominican Republic and Jamaica.

These students are taking a break from what? she asks.

"How can kids who live on Kraft Dinner find the coin to fly away to a tropical paradise?" she wrote.

I think most of the students can't and don't.

Porteous' column left readers with the impression that students are squandering their money on frivolous trips they didn't even earn. Did she ask if those students had student loans to worry about? Or how well they budgeted their meagre savings all year to afford it? Maybe those students had someone else footing the tuition and paying for their trips. They may not have the student debt that many others have. They may live with their parents and not pay rent or ever have to travel home to see family.

There may have been dozens of tanned students in the Toronto airport, how many un-tanned students had to work or study during Spring Break. Or how about those students who won't see a vacation for many years to come because of their overwhelming debt.

Porteous may have seen dozens of tanned students on their way home from a week on the beach, but she saw them in an airport, waiting for their flight. Where else would you find them?

She left readers with the impression that all students did this — that this was, in fact, the norm. Out of the thousands of students going

to university or college in Nova Scotia, she saw a select few who were fortunate enough to afford a vacation, and then left readers with the impression that all students do this.

EDITORIAL

She backed it up with a recent study which found that most students are no longer wanting to go home for a week with the 'folks', but have higher expectations for "something more unusual."

Now, that I agree with. Most students would prefer a trip to the tropics over a trip back home. But is this a reality or just a dream for most of them?

Practically everyone I know have picked up travel brochures about a month before Spring Break with a sparkle in their eye as they dream of lying on a beach in sunny Mexico. But the reality is, those same people spent Spring Break with their nose in a book or writing an essay. A trip just wasn't financially possible.

But lucky for some students, vacations are becoming cheaper. Out of curiosity, I priced a plane ticket to Cuba for \$499 plus taxes. A trip to Newfoundland cost about the same if you were to book right now with a proper airline and not a charter. With trips to the tropics costing little more than a trip home to see your parents, which do you think most students would prefer?

A beach in Jamaica seems much more appealing right now,

during this stressful time of year, than visiting my home on the cold, wet, and foggy rock called Newfoundland. (And I couldn't even afford that. I only made it thanks to help from my parents).

Students have realized that there's more to education and learning than reading text books. Sometimes seeing something for yourself can make a world of difference. Though, I admit, spending a week drunk on a beach isn't very educational.

But there are other ways to travel, cheaper ways where you can see the world and learn more about it too, and it doesn't cost a fortune. I hope this cheaper alternative of working as I go to cover the costs is my only option. I won't be lying on a beach in the sun. While a summer kicking around Ireland sounds nice, most of the trip will actually be spent working to pay for it.

But that's actually how I like it. I'm not only visiting a new place and culture, I'm immersing myself in it. Travelling in my case would be a way of seeing the world and learning more about it — things you can't learn from a book, but have to see yourself. I think people are realizing that students want to see what they read about, and are creating more travel opportunities for students.

"They developed a taste for touring and their rationale is that college would not get in the way of a good time," Porteous said of the student travellers in the airport. This may be true for some people, including those she shared her plane with, but I don't think it's fair to classify all students in this category. School may get in the way of a good

time, but for most students, there's nothing that can be done about that.

Her column left readers with the impression that if students can afford to travel, they can easily afford school without more money for loans and lower tuition. Why lower tuition and give more money in student loans when students are just going to take the money and run to Mexico?

But I don't think this is the case.

I'll agree that, like Porteous, I'm jealous of all those students who went South for the break, while I went back to cold, rocky Newfoundland to spend time with my family. I'd take Jamaica any day. But I can't afford that. And many other students can't either.

"The most important thing you learn in college is that you can

do more with less," says Porteous. In terms of travel, that means taking those Spring Break road trips with the car packed so full you can't see out the back window, and the window has to be cracked at all times in the dead of winter because nine bodies in a car for a week can get a little raunchy. Those people are still around and those trips still exist. But I guess they're not as obvious as several dozen golden tanned students in an airport. They're the ones taking the back roads and sleeping in the car because they ran out of money and can't afford a hotel. There still out there. But you won't see them waiting in an airport. You just might have to look around a little harder to find them.

Lee Pitts

CHUCK WAGON

BY CHARLES LACERTE

Food is sensual, and I am not referring to a bathtub full of Jello. Throughout history, some foods have had aphrodisiac properties associated with them. The more exotic the food, the greater its reputation. Food can give oneself a sense of euphoria. From the first asparagus in spring to falls last zucchini. Chocolate, due to its content of sugars and caffeine, is a stimulant and oysters have had a long history as an aphrodisiac. So if one could just combine the two ... who knows?

Other foods that have a superstition behind them are avocados and strawberries, due to their shape, the nutritional value notwithstanding. Herbs and flowers, such as nasturtiums and borage have a great fragrance that can easily stimulate a couple of one's senses (a combination of aroma therapy and holistic medicine) and they taste great too which is something that cannot be said about artificial fresheners. So eat, indulge and have fun playing with your food or someone else's.

CHOCOLATE FONDUE

8 oz semi-sweet chocolate
2 oz unsweetened chocolate
1/2 cup light cream
3 tablespoons rum or liqueur (optional)
Assorted fruit pieces (oranges, bananas, strawberries)

Melt chocolates with cream on low heat, stir until smooth.

Remove from heat and add alcohol.

Place in fondue pot and keep warm, serve with the fruit.

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