

# letters

prove each year. I hope that future editors will see that this trend continues, since the Gazette has demonstrated that it is an integral part of the Dalhousie's communications system.

It is an understatement when I say that I am glad to see students becoming more interested in the workings of bureaucratic bodies which shape their lives at Dalhousie. It is important to have students who show genuine interest in the improvement of our university both on Senate and on the Board of Governors. This quality representation on Senate becomes a difficult goal when only a few even know that these governing bodies exist.

For your interest, note that nominations opened on January 26 for both Senate and Board of Governor representatives, as well as for Dalhousie Student Union executive positions. Nominations close February 16, and forms can be picked up from the DSU Council Office (2nd floor) in the Student Union Building.

Should you have any questions about Senate, feel free to contact me at cabcampb@is.dal.ca, or through the DSU Council Office at 494-1106. Additionally, for those internet addicts, I maintain a small collection of Senate information accessible through the following World Wide Web address: <http://is.dal.ca/~cabcampb/home.html>.

Again, my thanks.

Drew Campbell, Student Senator

## CASA-strophe

To the editor:

Regarding the CASA financial mess.

Two of the three expenses on the UNB credit cards mentioned in the article on Mr. FitzPatrick (25 Jan. 95) concern me quite a bit. The three that I refer to are the Laurier Hotel, pizza, and Gap spending spree.

I think we can all agree that at least two of these expenses should never have been.

The Gap spending spree should have been on Mr. Fitzpatrick's credit card and not been allowed on a student union credit card. Is anybody really watching what is a valid CASA expense?

If he was in Ottawa on CASA business, he should have stayed at a (much) less expensive hotel — they do exist. After all, being part of an association that is fighting for post-secondary funding cuts, executive members should also show some concern for the groups' financial situation.

If CASA is to be a respected student association, it should at least show some responsibility!

Kirk Brown

## Not homophobic

To the editor:

re: "Local Café Denies Charges of Homophobia," Jan. 25, 1996.

Having been a very frequent customer of Dan Kristiano's Amadeus Café since its opening day, I am perplexed by the complaint of homophobia being directed at him by Alexander Lively through the auspices of Humans Against Homophobia.

As an openly gay patron of this café, and one who has witnessed the multitudes of other gay men and lesbians enjoying its environs, I cannot say that I have never seen any evidence of homophobia or overt (or even subliminal) discrimination displayed by either Dan Kristiano or his staff. To the contrary, having witnessed many gay people greet each other warmly with hugs when meeting at the café, and having been, on occasion, the recipient of such hugs, I feel quite free in saying that such actions never seem to raise so much as an eyebrow from anyone connected to the café.

What I have seen on occasion is Dan Kristiano trying very hard to run a business which he and his family invested much of their money and effort in, and into which they have

openly invited a wide and mixed group of people. In a small enterprise such as this café, it is imperative that customers are just that: they purchase items which allow them the right to sit and enjoy the surroundings and their friends. It is not a public space wherein you can bring pop, food or coffee from other establishments and then linger at tables with that one other friend or acquaintance who may have purchased a coffee on the premises. It is also not a free-for-all in which loud, boisterous rantings and ravings can be appreciated by either patrons or proprietors.

Having not been a witness to the incidents described by Mr. Lively in December, I do not pretend to ascribe any negative actions to either him nor his companions, but having many times witnessed Dan Kristiano having to deal with situations such as those he notes in his explanation of these two events, I feel secure in saying that his side of the events do not defy believability. Perhaps a simple difficulty in understanding the intent of his comments is to blame for a mistaken implication of homophobia.

As a gay man who came to Halifax in the early 1970s, when overt discrimination was a daily, dare I say hourly, occurrence, and as one who joined the battle against it through years with local gay and lesbian organizations, I know all too well that homophobia and its many negative repercussions still exist widely throughout our society. However, I cannot say that this 'case' against Amadeus Café and its owner stands the test of my longtime observations of the actions of its proprietors and I'd be happy to testify to the fact.

Sincerely,

John Marr

## Bite your tongue

To the editor:

Recently we have been shocked by the alarming increase in the usage of vulgar language to which we have been innocently subjected. Through the course of our daily scholastic lives, references to human body parts — not always correctly named — and bodily functions; deification among them, have polluted not only our ears, but, regrettably, the very walls — seeping down to the rapidly decaying foundations — of this glorious institution which we are still proud to call our own.

Why, we wonder, is it necessary for those with such talent, promise and ability to reduce themselves to a method of communication which preys on the most base level of language. Should a university be an institution of refinement and sublime intellectual endeavour or a raging cesspool of filth and verbal decay?

Yours truly,

Benjamin Waymark and Donald Bray

Co-presidents, Graduate Club Afternoon Billiards Society

## Wrong perspective

To the Editor:

In your Jan. 11/96 edition titled "Jerusalem: a perspective" by Muataz Noffel, this writer made the assertion that Jerusalem being a Jewish city and spiritual centre is a contradiction of history? It has no actuality.

In the Jewish claim to Jerusalem, Jerusalem has been in the centre of Jewish religious and political life since the time of King David. In 996 BCE, David captured the Jebusite fortress on Mount Moriah. In the past 3,000 years Jerusalem has been the capital for the Jewish people for 1,098 years. It has had continuous Jewish habitation with brief periods of enforced expulsion.

Jerusalem is Mount Zion. It was for Jerusalem that Zionism could be defined not as just a colonial exercise but as a national liberation movement, a people returning to an unrelinquished home. This city has been at the centre of Jewish culture, religion, and politics since it became

known to the world. It has been for both ancient and modern Jewish society the home of the prominent schools of higher learning during both periods. Jerusalem's been within a moslem jurisdiction for a period of 1,211 years since 637 CE. In all this time this city was never an Imperial, or provincial capital for the administration of Palestine, Ramallah was chosen for that purpose. In all those centuries, there was not founded, a

single prominent school for the Islamic world. The only contribution the moslems gave Jerusalem is the El aqsa mosque and the Dome of Omar that were built in 861 CE. These shrines are third rank to "true believer's" not worthy of Hadj.

Christian claims to this city have validity only through Jewish claim. Jesus' credentials as the messiah required that he be a descendent of the Jewish Royalty. It is the Davidic dy-

nasty's duty to uphold the laws of scriptures and maintain Jewish sovereignty over Zion, this heritage Jesus would've considered paramount.

The claim that Palestinians predate the Jewish connection to Zion is a total contradiction since they claim that they are direct descendants of Abraham, and Abraham was no Canaanite.

Sincerely,

Larry Riteman

## opinions

# Red Cross should bloody well straighten up

Hey, all you crazy kids, did you know that the Red Cross was in here this week? Yah, they were here collecting blood for those poor unfortunates who happen to need blood products. I really respect the work they do, and the fact that here in Canada, people aren't paid for blood, as is often the case in the U.S.

But, (isn't there always a "but") I have some serious problems with the screening processes employed by them. Let me break it down for you. You see, they have this form that everyone must fill out in order for their blood to be used. This form goes through a number of scenarios that are supposed to eliminate those persons who have a higher risk of having acquired HIV.

The form states that if you can answer yes to any of the following statements, check the "DO NOT USE my blood for patients" box. Here are the statements:

1. If male, having sex with another man, even once since 1977.
  2. Receiving regular treatment with blood or blood products since 1977.
  3. Having sex in exchange for money or drugs, since 1977.
  4. Having a test that confirms that you have been exposed to the AIDS virus (or have the AIDS virus now).
  5. Having had sex even once, with someone who has taken part in any of the above activities, or who has contracted AIDS or has tested positive for AIDS.
  6. Sharing needles or taking street drugs by needle even once.
- Is it just me, or does anyone else see a problem with the preceding statements?
- The first statement does nothing but promote the stereotype that all gay men have AIDS, or participate in unprotected, high-risk sexual activity. This statement

is nothing short of hate mongering. And, if we ignore that aspect of statement, it does nothing to differentiate between degrees of risk involved in various types of sexual activity. You cannot equate unprotected anal intercourse (which is high risk) to mutual masturbation (which is zero risk). By this refusal to differentiate between types of sexual activity, they indict not only all gay men, but also most straight men, because most of the straight guys I know have been involved in at least one circle jerk when they were in grade school.

But, this is not a new issue with the Red Cross. They have been publicly criticised for years for the blatant homophobia of their donor forms. Because of the Red Cross's rigidity on the wording of the forms, they have even been banned from soliciting blood donations at a number of university campuses around the country. Oh well, at least they removed the questions about Haitians.

I don't want to sound like I'm beating a dead horse, but this issue just won't go away. Despite the fact that heterosexuals have had the highest rate of transmission increase for the past several years, the Red Cross still promotes the idea that only Gay and Bisexual men get AIDS. Hell, am I the only one to have heard that in parts of Newfoundland, AIDS rates have reached epidemic proportions in the heterosexual community?

The Red Cross supposedly screens all blood for HIV, so why not take blood where they can find it, and test it all rigorously? I know that I'm not HIV positive, I've been tested enough times not to have any worries about it, but I can't say the same for most of my straight friends. I know that among most of my friends, the average number of sexual partners to date is about 10. And if you consider that most of those have been without the benefit of a condom, the potential dangers are frightening. You probably wouldn't believe the number of times I've asked friends if they're using a condom, and they've said, "No, I'm/she's on the pill."

Don't think the Red Cross is doing you any favours by not allowing Gay and Bisexual men to donate blood. In fact, the blood supply would probably be safer if they were only taking blood from Gay and Bisexual men. At least we know what safe sex is really all about.

JOSEF TRATNIK  
TRATNIK@IS.DAL.CA

# Bouchard strikes again

Well, everyone's favourite Canadian traitor has managed to do it again. Upon taking over the leadership of the Parti Québécois and thus, the premiership of Québec this past week, Lucien Bouchard made statements so inflammatory that there will no doubt be an angry response from the rest of our country.

When asked about recent suggestions for a partition of Québec if the separatists were to succeed in their goals, Bouchard responded that he would never allow that to happen. This answer prompted the further question that if Québec were justified in separating from Canada, why were certain parts of Québec not justified in separating from the 'Québec state' so that they could remain as a part of Canada? His answer to this demonstrated how illogical his arguments for separation have been. Appearing quite miffed that a reporter dared to ask the question, Bouchard said that he would never allow Québec to be divided but "Canada is divisible because Canada is not a real country." It seems Lucien has forgotten that our imaginary country has been putting food on his table for well over ten years.

Much like his remarks last fall that Québec women should be producing more babies, Bouchard seems to be deliberately inflaming public opinion in the rest of Canada, hoping eventually that we will just want 'them' to go away. Unfortunately, this strategy is working on many Canadians.

Recently, on a train ride home from Montréal, I found myself sitting beside a typical young Canadian. Knowing that I would be spending the next sixteen hours beside him, I was hoping we could have some kind of polite discussion. He was obviously thinking the same thing as he started asking what I thought of Montréal. Having spent much of my free time in the last twenty years in Montréal, I said how much I loved it. He looked surprised and said that he himself hated the city because there were too many of those "goddamn French faggots." Needless to say, that killed the conversation, but it also showed the igno-

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