

...cont'd from previous page

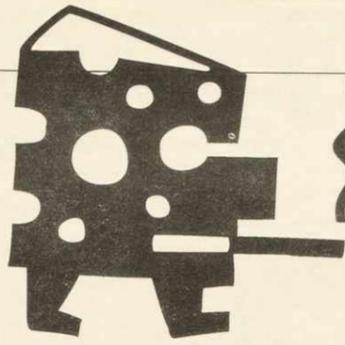
try to be positive and encouraging, but when I'm around certain people they make me feel like a loser because I don't have a well-defined physique. I personally don't care what they think — I'm satisfied about working to be fit at my own pace. Unfortunately, their perceptions affect how some of my friends at the pool perceive themselves.

I'm truly grateful for the rights and freedoms I have as a Canadian — please understand. But, when I go through the day, I often come home wondering if it really matters if they're there at all. We've entrenched equal treatment to the point of bordering on discrimination in reverse.

What I want to know is, how does what the Charter of Rights says sink into the lives of everyday people like you and I? The laws are admirable, but how do they translate practically? Longer sentences? Steeper fines? Better administration?

Thirty years of advocating civil rights has had some positive effects, but we're still fighting for them because the changes have to be in the attitudes of the heart, not on paper. There's got to be something more to life that creating regulations addressing these problems that cause plaintiff and defendant so much pain. Politics can't solve the world's problems — we've never learned that from history.

I propose we quit doing things the way we know how to do them and start trusting in something else besides the constitution or the almighty buck. Any suggestions? **PAUL WOZNEY** ([pwozney@is.dal.ca](mailto:pwozney@is.dal.ca))



As a smoker, I sometimes feel I'm in a catch-22 situation. I am aware of nonsmokers and often feel guilty when lighting up around them. But the other half of me says, "Screw you, I shall smoke where I see fit."

I think many smokers can identify with my complex. So

where is the problem? Well, it lies in the fact that smoking has become such a societal *faux pas* that us smokers have lost all our rights. We can complain all we want about our rights, but honestly, we are past the point of anyone listening.

The new smoking regulations in the SUB are an inconvenience but this one seems written in stone. The smoker's lobby at Dalhousie (if there is one) just isn't powerful enough to change the growing concern for people's

## opinions

# Smoke 'em if you got 'em

lungs. The word is out: Smoking Kills. There is not one person who can deny that (well, maybe Oliver Stone thinks it is a conspiracy set up by the Surgeon General). But drugs, alcohol, sex, driving too fast, and everything else under the sun kills too. One older woman came up to me the other day and said, "If you cared about your health and those around you, you'd quit." If this complete stranger cared about herself, why would she come anywhere near me. Hadn't she heard of the

dreaded Second Hand Smoke? I am making fun of this situation, but seriously, anyone who smokes knows that it is bad for them. We do not need righteous people telling us to quit. Smoking is an addiction, and a very hard habit to break. So on that level, let's have a little sympathy. Contrary to some people's belief, we are not out to give the world lung cancer. Nor are we fatalistic masochists. We are addicts to a potent drug.

**JOHN CULLEN**

# Jerusalem: a perspective

Jerusalem has been annexed by Israel for the last twenty-eight years; its topography, environment, and historic aura have been massively intervened in, forcibly changed, and demographically tampered with. Yet, this remains difficult to perceive by the outside world. Before I returned to visit in the summer of 1995, I had last been in Jerusalem nine years earlier. I was dismayed by the massive architectural, demographic, and political metamorphosis that this city has experienced. By this image of Jerusalem, Israel was able to communicate to the world

an idea of Jerusalem that contradicts not only its history, but also its very lived actuality, turning it from a multicultural and multireligious city into an "eternally" unified, principally Jewish city under exclusive Israeli sovereignty.

Recently, the west has witnessed the Palestinians' euphoria as the Palestinian Authority regained control over one third of the West Bank, as they were promised by Israel in the Oslo agreement. The question that should be considered in this context is why Jerusalem, which al-

*By this image of Jerusalem, Israel was able to communicate to the world an idea of Jerusalem that contradicts not only its history, but also its very lived actuality...*

ready had been annexed illegally and aggressed against in all sorts of ways, was left or conceded to Israel from the outset of negotiations? The answer lies in two closely connected facts: that Israel, being much more powerful and backed by the U.S., simply unilaterally reserved for itself the right to do what it wished in Jerusalem and elsewhere; and, that the Palestinians made this and many other concessions because they were convinced that they had no alternative.

Israel's building continues to extend over Jerusalem's gently rolling hills as we speak. Roads, apartment houses, and malls are creeping up everywhere, so much so that the five kilometres of "urban distinction" between Bethlehem and Jerusalem is being erased. High-rise hotels and office buildings right up against the ancient walls blot out everything Arab and Muslim, keeping with the aim of the Likud mayor Ehud Olmert. On the other hand, for all Palestinians, East Jerusalem represents the heart of the West Bank. Its current closure to the inhabitants of Gaza and West Bank reveals the separation scheme which is being pursued by the Labour government. This plan will result in great hardship as it amputates Jerusalem from its natural connections with the rest of the Palestinian territories. Also, it will create a gaping hole that will handicap the territories permanently. This strategy is, in effect, to dispossess Palestinians and turn them into a numerical

minority, and at the same time enrich the Jewish presence that will dominate the city's numerous actualities. In this plan, Israel was supported by the U.S. congress, who started a drive to move the U.S. embassy from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem.

By these actions, Israel strikes an assault not only on the geography of the city, but also on its culture, history, and religions. For whatever else it may be, historical Jerusalem and indeed Palestine exhibits a mixture of interrelated cultures and religions engaged on the same plot of land. Yet, this land and its multicultural and multireligious nature has been seized and possessed by the Zionist vision. Certainly for the last 3000 years there has been a Jewish presence and, for a short period before and after the beginning of the Christian era, there was a Jewish kingdom with its capital in Jerusalem. But the continuous Muslim presence and rule in Jerusalem has been longer, and there has been a very dense Christian presence as well. Jerusalem's co-existing traditions have maintained their presence throughout its recorded history over the past 10,000 years during an enormous series of conquerors. Giving the right of exclusive sovereignty over the city to the Jews does not stand against the face of historical fact. By claiming Jerusalem as its eternal undivided capital, Israel does damage to the city's rich-textured history of religious, cultural, and political significance.

**MUATAZ NOFFEL**

## Coming up for air

*A lifetime swimmer decides to move on*

To swim or not to swim, that is the question. Though my inquiry may not seem as weighty as the original Shakespearean reflection, to me it is no less of a dilemma. What began for me as a biweekly after school activity over 14 years ago quickly turned into a major commitment and a way of life. Competitive swimming has helped shape my identity since I was seven years old. How can I possibly think of quitting the one thing in my life that has changed me more than I could ever fathom, and given me infinitely more than I could ever hope to give back?

I often find myself scanning my bedroom for things in it which are unrelated to swimming. The fact is, almost everything I own, be it a poster or a CD, and everything I am, I owe to this incredible sport.

However, for the first time in my life, I can see beyond the realm of an eight lane, 25 meter tank of water. I envision myself without chlorine infested hair and skin. I picture a world where morning begins at sunrise. Most of all, it is the thought of achieving success in something besides a sport that excites me. Yet it is increasingly difficult to let go of the past.

"Swimming is life." That is how I and most of my friends felt as we plastered goal times and Alex Baumann posters on our bedroom walls. I ate, breathed, talked, and dreamed swimming. My family often grew weary of my obsession with the pool and its domination of my life. I grew tired of myself. But every summer I would get a break just long enough to remind me that I was incomplete out of the water.

My swimming friends have always been the most important people to me. Any athlete can appreciate the intense bond felt between teammates who train hard and play hard, day after day. Swimmers are undoubtedly the most fearless, rowdy and team-spirited athletes around.

I have committed to memory dozens of practices where I felt like I was flying. With every pull I was getting stronger. There was never a hesitation, doubt or fear that entered my mind. I will forever cherish those days. An academic victory has yet to be tantamount to those feelings, but I hope that will soon change.

Growing up, the swimming world was my surrogate family. When my pubescent hormones raged

and my parents were no longer my friends, the pool was my refuge. When my boyfriend and I were fighting, swimming was an outlet for my anger and tears. Scream as loud as you can underwater, no one will hear you.

At an age when other kids were coasting through high school dazed and confused, I had a focus. I was exercising regularly and travelling at least once a month. I learned how to manage my time and work with others. I have experienced feelings of euphoria and pride, as well as extreme frustration and pain. I have been a winner and a loser, and have learned to handle both. I have made the best friends I will ever have.

When I was tired, lazy or sore, the pool would call my name, enticing me to dive in and meet its challenge. I would always go and give 100% at practice, vainly trying to 'beat the clock.'

When I entered the swimming world, I worshipped the older and much faster swimmers and dreamt of becoming like them. All of a sudden, I was one of them: the older swimmer whose aged wisdom through experience is supposed to serve as encouragement for the younger generation. But the intense passion I once felt for competitive swimming has now subsided. I am no longer driven by a fervent desire every time I set foot on the pool deck.

Certainly, the idea of getting one more best time or winning one more race is alluring. But my heart, mind and body all have to be in accordance, yet today, when I think of swimming, they are at odds.

Unlike before, the call I hear these days resounds not from the four walls of the pool, but from a manifold of places. I have yet to pinpoint my direction, but I feel as though I am on the right track. I have idealistic dreams and indefatigable determination in my favour. Will the next phase of my life present to me as many opportunities for growth as swimming has? I am uncertain and a bit frightened, but eager to proceed.

Fourteen years after I first joined a competitive swim club, I am on my way out. Forget the countless hours of gruelling training and anxiety-ridden competition. Retiring from this sport is the hardest thing I have ever done.

**KATHARINE DUNN**



OPINIONS

got an axe to grind?  
write an opinion  
piece for the Gazette.

SUB room 312