

# Just when you think its safe...

One of the first things a young woman learns upon coming to university is never to walk alone. The world is a dangerous place, with a sinister man lurking behind every building and around every corner.

The city can be a scary place — we were warned by our parents before we came here and we are always reminded of this by our friends, student union and the media. Our actions and activities are governed by fear.

Slowly, you learn to always travel with a friend — if there's no one to walk with you, you don't go. You memorize well lit walkways and the locations of telephones and blue lights in case of an emergency.

And eventually the fear becomes such a part of your life it makes you feel safe, because you think you know exactly what to do about it.

Until, one day, you turn on the news and an American fugitive has been arrested in Halifax. He was living in the Sigma Chi fraternity house, just down the street from the Student Union Building. You may have seen him everyday.

Imagine this man, convicted of manslaughter, sexual abuse, sodomy and unlawful treatment of a minor, sitting beside you in the cafeteria, or behind you in line at the bank machine. What might he have been thinking? Imagine all the times you were following all the rules and naively thought you were safe. He could have been standing

right beside you. A few years ago, a friend of mine was taking an evening class, and I remember her talking about a guy in her class who would sit as close to her as possible and then follow her home. Naturally, this frightened her. Eventually she worked it out with some guys in her resi-

dence that there would always be someone to walk her home. While we all sympathized with her concerns, I remember telling her she probably had nothing to

won't leave. Possibly, the guy following my friend was harmless. And, sure, most men on campus are harmless. The problem is, how do we trust that now? How do I, when I meet someone new, trust that he is who he claims to be, and not someone dangerous? I can no longer say to myself, "things like that just don't happen here," because all of a sudden they did.

This past summer, a woman was raped one block away from my apartment, on a route I routinely walked alone. I thought this was a safe place. I was wrong.

Now I feel like I was also wrong to feel safe on campus. Yes, there are blue lights and emergency phones and Tiger Patrol, and these can all help me avoid an emergency. What they can't do is stop me from forming a friendship with someone who isn't who he says he is. I can run to a blue light if someone is chasing me across campus, but a blue light can't stop me from giving my phone number to some guy I think I can trust, but really can't.

I was just settling in to a feeling of comfort on campus. I thought I was safe, thought I knew who I could trust. That's all gone to hell. I don't want to fear men for the rest of my life, but I'm beginning to wonder if I have a choice in the matter. How do I ignore what is going on around me?

NATALIE MACLELLAN

## Editorial



CUP GRAPHIC: Curt/Carillon 1997

worry about and that he was probably just some freak with a crush who would never do anything to hurt her.

Now I have to wonder. Would he have hurt her if he had the chance? Who was he? Two years ago, the thought that a fugitive was hiding on campus would never have crossed my mind. Now it

# Letters

## Misrepresentation of facts

To the editor,

I am writing to express my concern regarding the misinformation in the opening sentence of the article "Taxes push building into the red" (The Gazette, September 10, 1998).

As you know, both vice president Mason and I were interviewed by your reporter, Kaveri Gupta, and we took pains to provide her with a clear statement of facts about the project. In particular, we made it clear that the university did not forget "to account for sales tax." It is most regrettable, therefore, that, while Ms. Gupta's article is substantially factually correct, the opening sentence cannot but leave your readers with a totally false impression. In fact, I understand this sentence did not appear in the copy submitted by Ms. Gupta but, for reasons best known to them, was added by your editorial staff.

While I recognize the editor's role in "shaping" articles (e.g. — to meet the demands of space, syntax, etc.), I submit it should never be exercised at the expense of the facts. Your acknowledgment of this cardinal rule, and a correction, in the next edition of The Gazette would be much appre-

ciated. Sincerely,

Bill Lord  
Director, Facilities Management  
Dalhousie University

## Transcription errors

To the editor,

Several errors and omissions appeared in my opinion piece of September 10, "Persons with disabilities patronized at Dal". Those errors, addressed as follows, occurred during transcription by Gazette staff.

error: if the university announced that a white person was elected...

should read: if the university announced that a white person was selected...

error: some compensatory effects can still be taken...

should read: some compensatory efforts can still be taken...

omission: non-disabled staffers should be required...

should read: non-disabled staffers of the ASWD office should be required...

Yours truly,

MARY MACDONALD

## Take Back the Night

### A March for Women

Friday, September 18, 1998

7:30 pm Pre-March Reception

Grand Parade Square, Halifax

Women are encouraged to bring loud voices, instruments, noisemakers, banners, signs and children.

Let's claim our streets.

For more information or to become involved, call the Dalhousie Women's Centre at 494-2432.



CUP GRAPHIC: Joanne Guillemette/the Fulcrum 1996

## THE DALHOUSIE GAZETTE

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### contributors

Katie Teed • Lee Pitts • Janet French • Kaveri Gupta • Andrew Simpson

Student Union Building, Dalhousie University, 6136 University Ave, rm 312, Halifax, NS, B3H4J2.  
editorial tel. 902 494-2507, facsimile 902 494-8890. e-mail. GAZETTE@is2.dal.ca

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The Gazette welcomes letters to the editor and commentary. All letters will be printed up to four per week. The printing of additional letters will be at the discretion of the Opinions Editor. Letters may be edited for length above 300 words and we reserve the right to edit commentary.

All submissions must be typed double-spaced on paper, e-mailed, or on a Mac or IBM 3 1/2 inch disk, in a WP version not greater than Word 6.0 or equivalent. The deadline is Mondays at 4:30 p.m.

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98