

Leaking the news

Most people on campus at Dal probably don't even know a new president is being chosen, let alone that the process is secret, let alone who the candidates being considered are.

Whether this secrecy is right is an extraordinarily contentious issue and one which should be discussed by everyone.

"Who will be President?" is a question which affects all of us. It could mean the difference between having your tuition raised or a new government student-aid policy decided. If there is a strike by faculty or the cleaners, the new President will be instrumental in determining how soon it is settled. The policies of individual departments, the political character of Dal, the relations between the administration, faculty and students, will all be influenced by the kind of president who is chosen.

The importance of getting input from everyone is a powerful reason to make the selection process public.

On the other hand, it is argued there were discussions and meetings with interested groups before candidates were selected. The Presidential Selection Committee has members from Senate, the Board of Governors and the student body, all of whom have supposedly been chosen to represent everyone's interests.

Until now the *Gazette* found it easy not to take a stand on this issue or, more precisely, hold opinions favouring openness of discussions without talking or thinking very much about it.

Last Sunday, however, the DFA broke off discussion with the Presidential Selection Board, reaching an impasse with the Board on the confidentiality issue. On Monday, somebody, desperate that students and faculty know the names of the presidential candidates and perhaps a little vindictive toward the Selection Board, anonymously revealed the names on the Board's "short list" to the *Gazette*.

So the *Gazette* was forced into taking a stand on the question, whether we wanted to or not.

On the surface, if we printed the names we'd be siding with the DFA, if we didn't we'd be siding with the Selection Board and the Board of Governors who have been endorsing their position.

Our personal feelings on the secrecy of the presidential selection, however, shouldn't obscure the fact that the DFA, unlike any of the groups who were allowed confidential consultation with the Selection Board, broke the rule of silence they apparently accepted by telling the *Gazette*.

But sometimes there are considerations—like the state of Dalhousie University for the next six years—that take priority over rules.

We've been told, however, that two of the three candidates from outside the Dal community accepted their nomination only on the condition that it would be kept confidential. It was made known to us they might withdraw if we made the names public.

But one wonders about the integrity of a candidate who is shy of publicity.

Above all, though, shouldn't we rest our trust in the decisions of those people we've elected to represent our interests rather than try to undermine their functioning?

It was an agonizing decision, and we'll be hated for it, but we finally decided to print what we knew.



Letters to Gazette

Hostages are murderers

To the Gazette:

This letter is being written in response to the article on page 4 of the last issue of *Gazette*.

In the first place I would like to point out that it is not ludicrous to accuse all the hostages in Tehran spies. For until now American imperialists have not given up the dream that the Shah, or any person like the Shah, the representative of their interest in Tehran, will be able to rule the country again. The embassy is nothing but a cover of CIA's criminal activities. They distort, on purpose, the image of Khomeni as if he were a nut in order to have the excuse to overthrow him. But the people of Iran know this conspiracy very well, and they hope all the people of the world will support their just struggle.

How many innocent people has the Shah killed in aid of CIA? The hostages are not only spies, but murderers!

Sincerely yours,
Ben Ninsl
Department of Philosophy

Not all games are bad

To the Gazette

Spurred on by Paul Creeman's recent article (*Gazette*, 112, #11) I feel that I am obligated to present some more information about Computer abuse at Dalhousie.

The most flagrant misuse of facilities is by the professors who send droves of uninformed students winging merrily on down to the computer center to do a "simple assignment". I have been a programming assistant for the computer center for several years now, and these students arrive having absolutely no idea what it is that they have to do. This precious majority have been asked to use the most precious resource; the terminals. If anyone wants to look into this for themselves, I am sure they will find the same things that I do.

Anyone who has done any programming has learned that programmes do not work on the first run. As part of the process of correcting (debugging) these programmes, many cards have to be re-typed and others removed. The student, in fear that his repair job will not work, will save the reject cards. When he has his program working he will usually just leave the rejects for the next guy to throw into the trash bin since they represent a lot of work and he cannot bear to throw them away himself.

Also irritating this problem is the advanced state of disrepair of most of the keypunches. Introducing vending machines for these cards will not solve the actual problem of vandalized equipment and will surely present yet another drain to the poor student who can't seem to get a program running until he has used up at least 200 cards.

I agree that there is too much game playing during computer prime time but recently I got my number suspended for playing games

(actually I was writing a game to test out a new series of programs that promised to be useful to the department) on one of the computer center terminals when the terminal room was almost empty! Before you ask about crowded dial-up ports, may I remind you that all of the terminals in the computer center are 'hard-wired' which means that when not in use, the port is not released for dial-up use.

I disagree that students should be subjected to such harassment when writing programs which use what they have learned in a new, if somewhat unorthodox manner. It is against the spirit of a university to discourage individuals from learning, which is what happens when students write programmes. . . even if they are not for a course.

David M. Swan

Still two movements

To the Gazette:

I would like to comment on the letters to *The Gazette* which have appeared in the last two issues (112 No.8 & No.9) on the critical questions facing the student movement. First of all, the fact that these two letters exist, is a practical proof of the correct "judgement" that there are two lines in the student movement

Ms. Mrenica claims "students have yet to come to grips with the critical situation that the students face"; this spring over 3,000 students came forward to show our

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the Dalhousie Gazette

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