

## Stuck in neutral

ITS REALLY SWELL THAT elected representatives of the Dal Student Union (DSU) have decided to remain neutral in the Faculty-Administration contract dispute. After all, that's being fair, isn't it? That's letting the process work itself out isn't it?

Too bad this image of neutrality washes away with a little splash of reality. The "neutrality" queasily pushed forward by the DSU actually supports the administration and participates in not-so-subtle union-bashing.

Let's look at the objective stuff done so far by the DSU folks in "looking out for the best interests of students" as their "strike information" leaflet states:

Creating a petition "urging both sides to avoid a strike" is rather ridiculous. If a poll were taken of DFA and administration people, you'd find none too many were thrilled with the idea of a strike. The petition gives tactile support to the administration as, of course, the status quo suits them just fine. And it doesn't take a genius to figure out that students want this settled, so why the petition in the first place?

Mailing out their "Strike Information" leaflet in the administration's mass mail-out links the two groups fairly overtly. It is a way of reaching students, but it also justifies the administration using the money and tools it has to influence students. The DFA has no such easy ways to get its views across. It has, for example, to pay for an ad in *The Gazette*.

Under the heading "What do we think about strike action?" the cat gets let out of the bag. "While we are sympathetic with many of our faculty (sic) concerns we cannot condone strike action

which will seriously affect students." Oooops, so much for neutrality. It seems Dal Faculty can be underpaid, frustrated in most areas of the contract, and get the DSU's sympathy, but they aren't allowed to do anything about it. How can "neutrality" not allow a union the basic right to withdraw its services when they have no contract? This position also seems to put the blame at the DFA's feet for any strike automatically because they are the ones "seriously affecting students", ignoring the administration's role in forcing a strike.

Maybe the swell folk at the DSU forget what they belong to — a student union. That means more than just a last name — fees are collected from every student and put towards their common use (theoretically). The students democratically elect their union leaders to work for them and negotiate for them, and vote on those fees paid. They'd be upset in a hurry if a group attempted to make paying student union fees optional — or limit the amount of fees that could be paid to the union. But when it comes to supporting another genuine union, of saying that principles mean something, the DSU folds up like an origami spineless, gutless, jellyfish.

It's no surprise that earlier this school year VP-Internal Rusty James checked into the idea of changing the name of the DSU to the DSA — Dalhousie Student Association. Maybe some student could be offended by belonging to a union, you see. So what's in a name? Sometimes, there's some integrity in there. And some people prefer names like "neutral."

I have read other of Mr. Dawson's works and, unfortunately, I do have statistical justification for what I am about to say:

Mr. Dawson, I am really very sorry for you.

Signed,  
M.J. Ackermann  
Med I

## Sorry for Dawson

To the editors,

Setting aside completely the question of the *Tupper Times'* qualities as a newspaper, I would like to address another issue which arises out of Peter F. Dawson's letter of Nov. 29.

I am certain, and perhaps the mathematicians in the audience would care to back me up on this, that any extrapolations drawn from a sample of one would be statistically worthless. I am further convinced that only a very select minority of people are not, intuitively if not formally, aware of this fact.

To make a broad sweeping statement about the general nature of anything after having examined only one example is an illustration of just how easily prejudice and narrow-mindedness can arise, even in our enlightened academic world. And yet Mr. Dawson has felt he is justified in doing exactly this, having read, by his own admission, only a single issue of the *Times*.

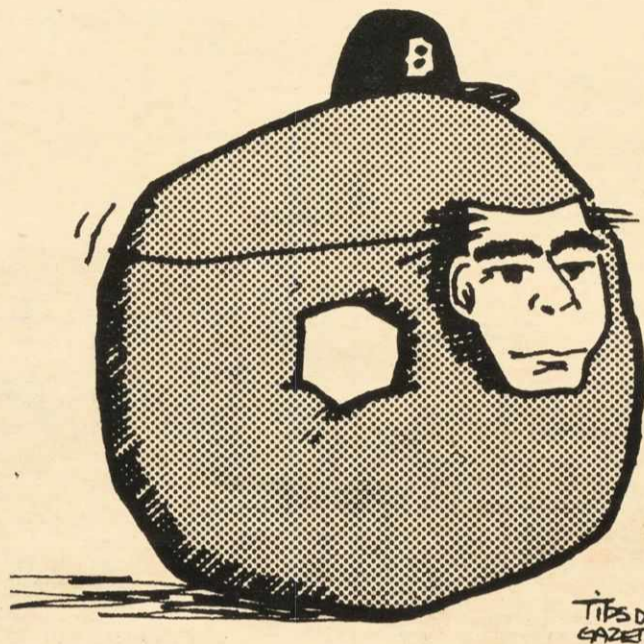
## Killing the unborn

To the editors,

During coverage of the recent re-opening of Dr. Morgentaler's clinic in Toronto, one clinic-supporter expressed her desire for an 'egalitarian society' in which poor women would have equal access to unrestricted abortions.

No society may be called 'egalitarian' which permits the killing of its helpless or unwanted members. Should we permit the destruction of human beings simply because they have not yet been born? Any reasoning which denies the rights of these children is at best arbitrary and sophistic.

Yours sincerely,  
Lori Clifford



Alex Gigeroff convinces a plain sugar doughnut to take his place at the water dunk under the condition that milk will not be used.

## Dunkin' Donuts at the SUB

AHHH. INTO THE MIDST OF an otherwise politically and meteorologically chilly winter carnival time, comes an event we can really sink our teeth into — The "celebrity dunk tank."

Just imagine, boys and girls...In the SUB from 12-1:30 on the tenth and eleventh, with proceeds actually going to a good charity (Oxfam Canada), you, me, all sundry get a chance to submerge a "celebrity" in a few feet of hostile H<sub>2</sub>O. Opportunities like this shouldn't be taken lightly.

Take Thursday's line-up, for example. With president MacKay on the firing line, all students (and DFA members) can give blandly Andy a taste of what it's really like to be senior officer on the Titanic. As for student union prez. Alex Gigeroff... well, just what is the natural habitat of a "spineless, gutless, jellyfish?" We also suspect that unless a certain Cape Breton Labour Party MLA is in the audience, NDP leader Alexa McDonough may end the day the driest of the initial trio.

The fun continues on Friday with an equally enticing schedule of bathing beasties. Provincial minister of education Terry Donohoe will show all whether he can soak up water as well as the provincial government does education funding. Ex-student union prez. Tim Hill should hope his stay on the dunking bar generates more excitement than his recent NDP candidacy bid against Mr. D. Robbie Shaw can test the employment waters following his stint as VP-finance of a university with a \$10 million debt, or cash flow problem, or whatever. Rusty James...oh, just go on and dunk him. We don't even want to bother thinking about it.

Lastly and mostly, anyone who thinks singing *Dolly Parton's Tits*, or harassing people who object to sexist idiocy isn't funny, should save their nickels and dimes for Friday's matinee show. The Swell Guys are on the line. See you at the show.

## Pay television carries pornography despite the absence of Playboy

SHORTLY AFTER FIRST Choice began airing *Playboy* productions on its network, a group of Halifax women marched in front of a video shop on Quinpool Road denouncing the proliferation of pornography in the mass media. They were not alone. Under great pressure and media attention, First Choice reluctantly withdrew *Playboy* material from its schedule, and most considered it a hard battle won.

The pay television industry in Canada has fluctuated wildly in the last few years; C-Channel flopped earlier than expected, MuchMusic and TSN sought and won special interest audiences, and First Choice and Superchannel amalgamated to form one large general interest channel. Despite all this activity, some things have not changed at all: First Choice, for instance, still shows pornography.

Once *Playboy* disappeared, so did the voice of the "First Choice — No Choice" movement. However, pornography has been resuming its prominence on the First Choice playlist, and one would be hard pressed to spend the average night without finding it cluttered with soft-core porn. Most First Choice presentations border on the banal, and the quality drops late

at night when porn becomes the standard fare. First Choice has yet to account for its new policies, although a small public relations feature, "Mailbag," apologizes for lapses in quality by defending selections as in the interests of the majority.

Pornography insults our sexuality and our intelligence. It's a pity that we have forgotten about First Choice, and in our silence have let the network continue to show degrading material. We all deserve much better.

## Letters...

The deadline for letters to the editor is noon, Monday before publication. Letters must be signed and include a telephone number where the author can be reached (although telephone numbers will not be printed with the letters). Letters are subject to editing for style, brevity, grammar, spelling, and libel. Letters can be dropped at the SUB enquiry desk, mailed to our address (on page 2), or brought up to the *Gazette* offices, third floor, SUB.

