

Dalhousie's Student Newspaper since 1868

# Gazette

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DALHOUSIE STUDENT UNION



## DSU Council Meeting

The next meeting of the DSU Council will be on January 26<sup>th</sup> at 6:30pm in the Council Chambers.

## Society Info

### Society Fair:

Anyone interested in joining a society come out to the McInnes Room on Tuesday, January 25<sup>th</sup>, 11:00am – 3:00pm and check out all the societies Dalhousie has to offer.

View the DSU's Audited Financial Statements (Year ended March 31, 2004) at [www.dsu.ca](http://www.dsu.ca) > About Us > DSU Finances

Dalhousie Student Union Annual Charity Ball  
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## Tiger Patrol

The DSU, in collaboration with Dalhousie University, provides students with a free shuttle service. Check out the schedule and routes online at [www.dsu.ca](http://www.dsu.ca).

Anyone interested in getting involved with Social Life on Campus by joining the Community Affairs Committee, contact Mark Szepes, VP (Student Life) at [dsuvpsl@dal.ca](mailto:dsuvpsl@dal.ca).

The DSU gives out \$40,000 in Grants to students and societies each year. Each student is eligible for up to \$100 per semester and each ratified society is eligible for up to \$1000 per semester. For more information, contact Tamara Conrod, DSU VP (Internal) at [dsuvpi@dal.ca](mailto:dsuvpi@dal.ca).

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# Editorial

Catherine Cooper  
Editor-in-Chief

When I was in elementary school in southern Manitoba, every morning before class we recited the Lord's Prayer and were read a passage from the Bible. Meanwhile, the non-Catholic kids had to sit quietly or leave the room. Later, in Sierra Leone, my entire school assembled every morning before class and again after lunch for a 15-minute assembly at which we recited Christian prayers. Attendance at this assembly was mandatory.

These days, having prayers in public schools is unheard of in Canada. Of course, it's good that schools don't exclude non-Christians any more, but the alternative should be to include all religions in schools rather than excluding religion from public education altogether.

In last year's religion issue of the *Gazette*, news editor Jenn Morrison wrote an opinions piece entitled "Who Killed Pontius Pilate?" In the article, Jenn addressed our generation's lack of religious education, and wrote that "most people I know in their early 20s are atheists... or agnostics. Those rare 20-somethings who do have faith have it quietly."

It does seem like there is a trend among young people in this part of the world to reject organised religion. I can't count the number of times I have heard someone say, "I believe in something, but I don't know what." The one thing that most people in their 20s are sure of, however, is that organised religion is a tool of control and a cause of violence.

In the past, rejecting religion was dangerous, or at least socially unacceptable. Now it seems like this attitude has been reversed, and we are suspicious of people who *are* ardently religious (see page 7). It's OK to identify yourself as Catholic, for example, but abstaining from premarital sex or alcohol because of your religious beliefs? Weird. Talking to people from outside your religious community about your faith? Cultish.

I used to find it discouraging

that so many people are so cynical about religion.

Recently, however, it occurred to me that it might actually be a good sign. I remember being shocked when I realised that no one at my school in Sierra Leone actually knew the words of the prayers that they were saying—they just mimicked the sounds. In retrospect, I'm not sure how different that assembly was from our morning prayers in Manitoba—we may have understood the language, but we didn't really think about the meaning of the prayer, nor were we encouraged to.

As a kid, I never used to ask questions about my religion. I said the same prayer every day, but I never thought about what it meant. Religion for me was all about fear—you had to be good or God was going to strike you down.

The rejection of organised religion might indicate a break with blind tradition that will lead to the

page 5). But if religious education is optional and is not offered until high school (if at all) only those who are already open-minded about the topic will study it.

Learning about religion is important to the development of individuals and societies. It is a topic that is interesting both as an anthropological and historical study and as a part of the development of young minds and souls. As long as it is excluded from conversations and classrooms, there will be religious intolerance and ignorance.

It will continue to be an uncomfortable subject, and young people will continue to have vague beliefs that they can only explore privately because talking about religion is not socially acceptable.

Understanding other religions, seeing the similarities between religions and even just being able to discuss and explore their beliefs would clear up a lot of the misconceptions that people have about

## History has shown us that we can't always rely on parents to educate their children

development of spirituality that comes from within rather than being imposed (see page 7). It's good that people won't accept sitting in church in a trance and saying prayers on autopilot. It's good if people want something more meaningful, but rejecting religion altogether and excluding it from education and conversation is not the answer.

It seems like in our society religion has become a taboo subject. In schools we are taught that it is inappropriate to discuss religion—it's as if religion has replaced sex as an unmentionable topic. Of course it's wrong for teachers to proselytize or for schools to impose Catholic prayers on young people, but, as journalist Jim Smothers said in a recent editorial, our laws "guarantee us freedom of religion, not freedom from religion."

Comparative religion courses are now offered at university and some public high schools (see

other faiths (see page 4). Obviously, a lot of parents would get upset if their children were learning about other faiths in school—but there was a time when people didn't want their children going to school with children of other races. History has shown us that if prejudice is going to be weeded out, we can't always rely on parents to educate their children.

Sex-ed is a contentious issue, but it is still taught in school because it is a recognised part of healthy development. Religious education would teach young people to respect those from other faiths and enable, even encourage them to develop and talk about their own belief systems. If young people are allowed to explore their spirituality without the fear of being ridiculed by their peers or ostracized by their religious communities, they run far less risk of ending up confused, intolerant or cynical.

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If you are interested in contributing to the Gazette, feel free to email us your article to: [gazette@dal.ca](mailto:gazette@dal.ca) or better yet come to our weekly volunteer meetings every Monday at 4:30 Room 312, Dal SUB.

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# Gazette

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### Upcoming Events

**Investors Group**  
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Council Chambers, SUB

**Enterprise Rent-A-Car**  
January 20, 1:00-2:30pm  
Room 307, SUB

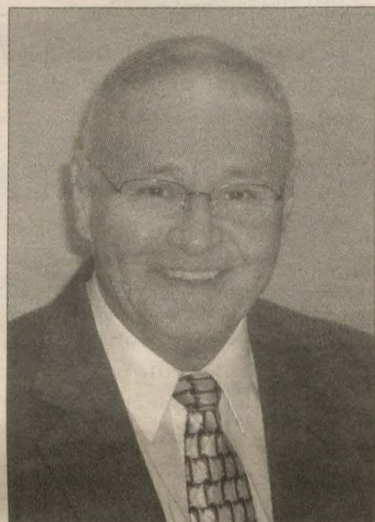
**Iron Ore**  
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## The Doors are Open at Dal's Chaplaincy Office



Chaplain Clement Mehlman.

Kevin Wasko  
Staff Contributor

A chaplain is usually pictured as a holy man cloaked in a robe with a Bible in his hand. But if you were expecting this image upon visiting Dalhousie's Chaplaincy Office, you may be in for a shock.

Clement Mehlman is the coordinator of the Chaplaincy Office and one of eight chaplains working at Dalhousie University, and he doesn't fit the typical chaplain image. A pleasant man with a jubilant and welcoming approach, Mehlman came to Dalhousie in 1997. The role of chaplain has been a second career for him, after spending years as a high school English teacher.

But within moments of sitting down with Mehlman, it is evident that this is the job he was born to do.

"It's like a hobby," says Mehlman. "I like doing it."

Situated at 1321 Edward St., the Chaplaincy Office provides campus space to pray, meditate, engage in conversation and seek spiritual guidance. "It's a place to respond to the needs of students, staff and faculty at Dalhousie," says Mehlman. "We consider the entire range of needs but our specialty is spiritual needs." The building even includes a prayer and meditation room, available

to people of all faiths.

The chaplains maintain office hours so that one is on duty each day from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. The chaplains hold consultation sessions with the advisors of Dal's religious societies twice a year to develop relationships and plan joint projects. They are also present at student and faculty orientations and campus events, and they conduct the interment and memorial services in June for those who have donated their bodies for medical research. The office also organizes lectures and other special events, which are aimed at nurturing the faiths of the Dalhousie community.

The Chaplaincy Office serves a diversity of religious needs. "During Ramadan, students gathered here for evening prayer and to break their fast. On Mondays, there is noon time Buddhist meditation, Tuesdays there is Christian meditation, Wednesdays there is Labyrinth spirituality, and so on," says Mehlman. "We also provide leadership within our own faith communities to students of those particular faiths."

The concerns that bring students to the Chaplaincy Office are as varied as their religious belief, says Mehlman. Still, he wishes that more students would use his service. He thinks that the relocation of the office to a house on the edge of campus from its former location on the fourth floor of the SUB has attributed to a decrease in traffic.

"We struggle to be available to the university community," he says. "That's one of the biggest issues. If I had a goal for the office for the upcoming year it would be to make more students aware of this place as a place for quiet reflection and satisfying conversation."

For more information about the Chaplaincy Office, visit their website at [www.dal.ca/chaplaincy](http://www.dal.ca/chaplaincy) or stop by the "faith fair" in the lobby of the Student Union Building, Jan. 19.

## DSU Abandons Controversial Indemnity Form

Philip Carpenter  
Staff Contributor

A Dalhousie Student Union indemnity contract requiring individual society members to accept liability for legal mishaps at society events has been abandoned after months of controversy.

The DSU executive announced at a Dec. 1 council meeting that a new "acknowledgment form" would replace the much-maligned indemnity form, citing society concerns as the reason for the old form's reassessment.

The new form is designed to make society directors aware of their responsibility to abide by all DSU policies, by-laws and regulations. The revised form also explicitly reminds signatories that their societies may be subject to disciplinary measures under the DSU's society policy for any violations, much as the Law Students' Society was sanctioned last semester. But unlike the indemnity form, the acknowledge-

ment form does not make society members incur legal liability when their activities go wrong.

"This is the culmination of all concerns expressed to us and the result of a choice to reexamine what impact the indemnity form was having," said DSU president Curtis McGrath.

The replacement of the indemnity form was announced the day before a question and answer session with the DSU lawyer Tim Hill and insurance broker Jim Henry.

According to McGrath, Henry has given the DSU some feedback on its new form. "We received generally positive remarks," McGrath said. "[Our insurers] are happy that we are taking all necessary precautions and due diligence to reduce their possible exposure to a claim."

McGrath also said that the acknowledgement form would be attached to a revised society policy as an appendix later this term. This may appease some opponents of the indemnity form, who were concerned about

the way it was implemented.

"A lot of people had problems because the [indemnity] form was just thrust on us by the executives ... and the indemnity form was not what is in the society policy," said Ezra Edelstein, the Board of Governors representative to DSU council.

According to Edelstein, the acknowledgement form will still present difficulties for the DSU. "This is an issue we have to deal with and [the acknowledgement form] is an amicable solution."

Liam O'Brien, president of the Dalhousie-King's Conservatives Association, said that the new acknowledgement form is "a step in the right direction," but declined detailed comment until the association could consult with its members. Before the DSU's change of heart, the association had asked the DSU Judicial Board for an advisory opinion on the indemnity form. In an upcoming meeting, the association will discuss whether to continue with its application to the board.

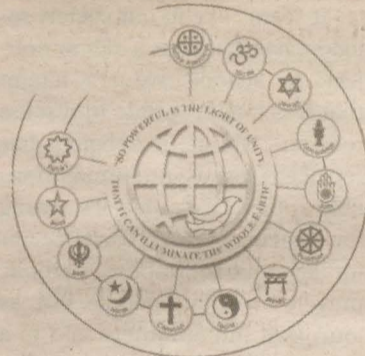
## Celebrating World Religion Day

Catherine Cooper  
Editor-in-Chief

"Let your vision be world embracing, rather than confined to your own self" is the theme of World Religion Day, which was first started by members of the Baha'i faith and has been observed worldwide on the third Sunday of January since 1950. This year, World Religion Day falls on Jan. 16 and will be celebrated with music, dance, readings and prayers from a variety of faiths.

2004 marked the first time that World Religion Day had been celebrated in Halifax with performances instead of panels and speeches. Among highlights from last year were the power-

ful voices of a Baptist choir, an impressively coordinated Baha'i slapdance and the beautiful simplicity of David Korn singing He-



brew folksongs a capella.

This year's celebration will focus on youth, and most of the performers will be children and young adults.

The official purpose of the

event is to "foster the establishment of interfaith understanding and harmony by emphasizing the common denominators underlying all religions," according to the World Religion Day website.

"The recent Southeast Asia disaster has fostered our sense of oneness as a human family and brought a stronger desire to celebrate that kinship," says Halifax event organizer Fran Maclean. An event like World Religion Day is an opportunity to do so.

Celebrate World Religion Day at the First Baptist Church this Sunday, Jan. 16, at 3 p.m. Admission is free, but donations for the Food Bank and for UNICEF's tsunami victims' fund will be accepted at the door.

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# Religion in the Classroom

Sarah Vanderwolf  
Staff Contributor

When World Religion Day began in 1950, it was unheard of for any public university to offer religious studies. Now, 55 years later, Dalhousie has its own department dedicated to the study of religions. But Dal's Comparative Religion Department is not officially taking part in this year's celebration.

The department looks at religions academically—the Bible, for instance, may only be taught as a historical and literary document, not as the word of God. Likewise, the close affiliation of World Religion Day with the Baha'i faith doesn't jive with the department's secular approach to religion.

World Religion Day was originally designed by Baha'i communities throughout the United States as a way of "fostering the establishment of interfaith understanding and harmony by emphasizing the common denominators underlying all religions."

Christine Kelly, a fourth-year comparative religion student and president of the Comparative Religion Society, says her society's involvement in World Religion Day is "usually peripheral" because it is out of place for any secular academic institution to endorse a particular group, such as the Baha'i faith.

The Comparative Religion Department at Dal is still very small, with only a handful of students majoring in the program

and just two faculty members: Dr. Terry Woo, who specializes in Asian religions, and Dr. Mathew Mitchell, who specializes in Judeo-Christianity.

could be valuable to students in the West, particularly to dispel stereotypes. The media often show "misrepresentations of a very complex tradition," she says.

**Dalhousie has had its own department dedicated to the study of religions for 55 years. But Dal's Comparative Religion Department is not officially taking part in this year's [World Religion Day] celebration.**

Although the department covers most of the world's major religions, its small size shows in one area: there is no specialist for Islam.

"I think it's absolutely dreadful, just dreadful, that there's no Islamist," says Woo.

According to Christine Kelly, knowledge of the Islamic faith

The only class on Islam offered this term has a full wait list, indicating that interest in the Muslim faith exists, even if the teaching resources do not.

Woo says that an education in religions is useful and increases awareness of cross-cultural differences in beliefs and attitudes. "There is faculty-wide support

for courses in comparative religion," he says.

Because church and state are supposedly separate institutions in North America, religious study used to be taboo in Canadian and American universities. But the matter was brought to a head several decades ago when a group of ministers took University of Washington English professor Dr. David Fowler to court for teaching an English class entitled "Bible as Literature."

The case went all the way to the U.S. Supreme Court, which ruled in favour of the university's right to teach courses on religion. The verdict had a ripple effect across the continent and gave many universities the assurance to establish a religions department without fear of reprisal.

## Christians on Campus Want You to Believe

Katie Maskell  
Staff Contributor

On this year's World Religion Day, the Dalhousie Navigators and Campus Crusade for Christ are placing their faith in Christianity.

Both groups believe in the ultimate power of God and the Bible, and their members seek to spread God's word and apply it to their daily lives by maintaining their faith and reaching out to others.

about issues."

The Navigators and Campus Crusade for Christ, both local subdivisions of international organizations, offer Bible studies and discipleship groups at Dal. Yet for society members, going to church and reading the Bible only scratches the surface of their faith.

"It's one thing ... to go to church and learn stuff," says Adam Cox, a Computer Science student and logintime member of the Navigators. "It's another

by death and destruction.

"I think in a situation like this it's really easy to say 'Oh, there is no God,'" says nursing student Anna Thomson, another member of Campus Crusade for Christ. "But I think we kind of have to not look past it, but look at it being an awesome opportunity for you to actually consider if there is a God or not because I think a lot of people don't even want to go there. I think a crisis like this almost makes you step back and say 'Okay, what is my life all about? Is there more than just me here?'"

Mattheis gives a similarly complex answer when asked about worldwide affliction.

"I say that we as Christians believe that we essentially live in a world that is fallen, impure, without a hope," he says. "We say that through Christ and through what He taught and through what He said He offers a light to the world, a way out. He, in the end, has said He's going to come back and He's going to make things right, back to the way it was supposed to be before people sort of messed it up. It's not going to make life easy, but it gives life purpose, it



Top: Dalhousie Navigators



Bottom: Campus Crusade for Christ

gives life hope, and it puts things,

I guess, in a perspective that is difficult to understand. It offers a real hope as opposed to a man-made hope."

Whether you believe in Christianity, another religion or no religion at all, these students want you to remain open-minded. "I would encourage people who don't know about our group ...

to come out and see what we're all about," says Thomson. "By no means are we pushy ... but we do want to provide an opportunity for Christians to get involved and to feel like they're a part of something. And we do want to give people who don't know a lot about Christianity the opportunity to learn more."

**"It's one thing ... to go to church and learn stuff. It's another to kind of let it affect your whole life and things day-to-day. It's not a weekly thing or something you learn or have a class in."**

- Adam Cox, Dalhousie Navigators

"Our main purpose is getting what we do out there," says Tyler Mattheis, an IDS student and a member of Campus Crusade for Christ. "We seek to introduce [people] to Christ, to show them what Christianity is. We try to create a place where they go in their faith, where they can ask questions, where we can debate

to kind of let it affect your whole life and things day-to-day. It's not a weekly thing or something you learn or have a class in."

In today's troubled times, particularly with last month's tsunami in South East Asia, students may question how Christians on campus can maintain their faith in a world seemingly overridden

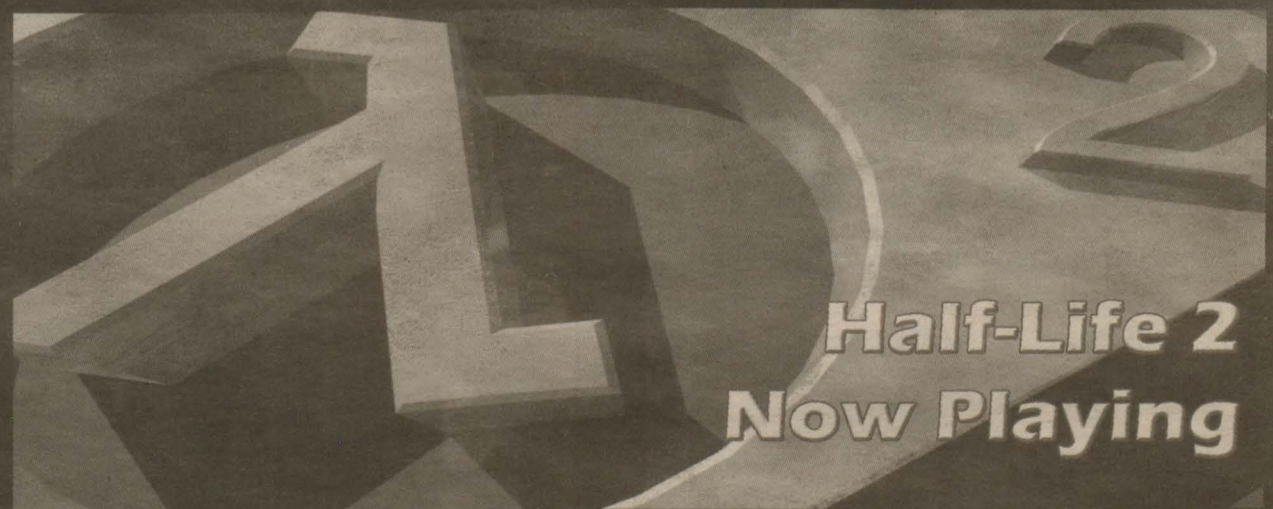
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# The Jewish Students Association

Laura Hynes  
Staff Contributor

Dalhousie is home to several religious organizations that promote the ideas behind events like World Religion Day, and the Jewish Students Association (JSA) is certainly one of them. The Dal branch of this society says it strives to play an important role in the community.

"The JSA is an organization that promotes Jewish identity and provides a comfortable and welcoming environment for students," says Sari Disenhouse, Dal's JSA president.

The JSA is an Atlantic Canadian group that functions in association with local and national Jewish organizations, such as the Atlantic Jewish Council. The Dalhousie chapter alone has 500

members.

"The JSA holds many different activities, including Shabbat dinners, Israel advocacy groups, Holocaust education and a variety of speakers," says Disenhouse. The JSA ran Halifax's recent first-ever Holocaust Education Week. Their other events are aimed at university students but have also been attended by several high schools and community groups.

As part of its broader mission, the group took part in a collaborative event last year to promote peaceful relations between the Jewish and Muslim religions, Disenhouse says. "It is a goal for the JSA to improve relations and fix misconceptions between Jews and other groups or religions."

# Scientists Put More than Faith Behind "God Gene"

Neal Cody  
Staff Contributor

Do humans need to believe in a higher power? Although this has been a philosophical question for ages, new research shows that we may actually have a gene that drives us to believe in God.

Geneticist Dean Hamer, chief of the Gene Structure and Regulation Unit at the U.S. National Cancer Institute, discovered the gene, after analyzing more than 2,000 DNA samples and extensively interviewing over 1,000 people. He details his theories and findings in a new book, *The God Gene: How Faith Is Hardwired into Our Genes*.

In his study, Hamer drew a line between religious activity and spiritual feelings, saying the two are not necessarily the same. To measure spirituality separately from religion, he used a scale of "self-transcendence," what Hamer describes as "at-one-ness," or a measure of someone's capacity to reach beyond one's self.

Hamer ranked subjects from highest to lowest on the self-transcendence scale and began digging for a genetic link. He discovered a gene variation known as VMAT2, which was directly related to self-transcendence. Curiously, women are about 18 per cent more likely than men to have the gene.

VMAT2 is linked to the control of crucial brain chemicals, the same chemicals released by drugs that induce "mystical-like experiences." These chemicals influence spirituality by altering the sense of consciousness—the awareness of ourselves and the universe around us.

Hamer thinks the gene may exist to give humans an innate sense of optimism, instilling a will to live despite the foreknowledge of death. It could also serve to draw us closer together, giving our ancestors a reason to band together for safety.

Despite his research, Hamer explains that VMAT2 is unlikely



"The question of 'Is there a God?' may be beyond science, but a deeper understanding of why we believe in God may be within our grasp."  
— Dr. Dean Hamer, writing in the *Toronto Sun*  
Photo: Rafal Andronowski


to be the only gene involved. "There might be another 50 genes with a similar ability," he told the *Edmonton Journal*. "And environmental influences are just as important as genetics."

Hamer's research isn't the first to look at biology's role in spirituality. In 1979, University of Minnesota researchers followed 31 pairs of fraternal twins and 53 pairs of identical twins who had been separated at birth. The scientists were looking for traits and habits that the separated twins had in common. They theorized that traits found more commonly among the identical twins were likely to be passed genetically (due to their identical DNA), whereas traits shared equally amongst identical and fraternal twins were more likely to have been caused by their en-

vironment. As it turned out, the identical twins were twice as likely as fraternal twins to share the same level of spirituality. However, the correlation didn't hold when comparing their dedication to organized religion. Scientists concluded that while spirituality was hereditary, commitment to religious rituals was a product of one's environment. Similar studies in Virginia and Australia confirmed the study's findings.

Hamer does not think his scientific research on religion confirms or denies the existence of God.

"The question of 'Is there a God?' may be beyond science," he writes in a recent *Toronto Sun* article, "but a deeper understanding of why we believe in God may be within our grasp."



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## Unity of Faith

An Altar boy's story of life in Dakar

Philip Duguay  
Staff Contributor

I'm guilty of being a Catholic. Or am I just a guilty Catholic? Sometimes I don't know. I live 25 meters from a Roman Catholic church but I rarely attend mass. Nor have I been to confession in years. I am pro-choice, pro-gay marriage, prophylactic... well you know what I mean. About the only thing the Pope and I agree on politically is that the war in Iraq is wrong. I held all these beliefs when I left Dalhousie last year to go on an exchange. Upon arriving in Dakar, Senegal, I had a hard time swallowing the dominant role of religion in the Senegalese lifestyle.

As a former altar server and devout Catholic schoolboy, I felt that I knew a lot about faith. I became alienated from the Church at the age of fifteen. I realized when studying for my Confirmation that 98 per cent of my classmates had no idea why they were joining the Church organisation. Confirmation is when a young Catholic—usually in the throes of mid-puberty—reconfirms his or her faith in front of their parish and family. Following the ceremony, the Confirmed become full members of the Catholic Church. One's teenage years are oftentimes tumultuous enough, so when the Bishop comes over from the city, slaps you on the cheek and spreads oil on your already pimply face, it's rather traumatic. To make matters worse, our parish inherited a more hard-line, stern priest around this time period. His style and demeanour contrasted sharply with the priests I had known growing up. I stopped attending church and didn't pray for years.

In Dakar, I saw people of the country's two major faiths intermingling very comfortably. Catholics would always be invited to Muslim feasts, and vice versa. The Senegalese displayed their faith in everyday actions and words. I learned that Muslims see Jesus Christ as one of the great prophets. My Muslim friends were convinced that we all prayed to the same God, and that more united us than divided us. Catholic mass in Dakar was exhilarating: choirs in colourful

gowns sang in the indigenous language of Wolof, accompanied by djembé (tam-tam) players. Passages from Scripture were read with force and meaning.

I feel that we in Canada are slightly afraid of prayer, public signs of faith and even talking about faith, for that matter. We are so obsessed with political correctness and the avoidance of offending anyone that we tend to quash our thought processes on faith and spirituality. For example, this past weekend's national commemoration for the Asian tsunami victims was seen as controversial by many be-

**In Dakar, I saw people of the country's two major faiths intermingling very comfortably. Catholics would always be invited to Muslim feasts, and vice versa.**

cause it included a multi-faith prayer service. Yes, faith is an inner dialogue, but openly sharing our thoughts and concerns can provoke more soul searching. While I know that no religion is perfect—especially the one I was born into—I am confident that religion can have a positive impact on everyday life.

When I now hear a sermon I don't agree with, I remember that a) the priest giving it does indeed have good intentions, and b) he doesn't represent all the millions of members of my Church. I will search for the good in every faith from now on, just as we should all search for the good in each other. We have more to benefit from open talk about religion, spirituality and faith than we do from ignoring these subjects altogether. For years I demonized my faith because of ignorant Confirmation classmates and one wacko priest. I've come to realize that ideas are bigger than people. Many ideas espoused by the Catholic Church are omnipresent in other religions, and in turn permeate general moral wisdom. On this common ground, struck between the world's various religions, we can all move forward together—but we can only meet there through open dialogue.

## Coming to Terms with Spiritualism

Greg Hughes  
Staff Contributor

I have a deeply confused relationship with what is called "God."

I'm a good person. I love my family, work hard and confront my failings with truth and determination. I love doing community activities and charity work. I like to think—as most of us do—that I'm on the right path.

But I'm also a sinner.

I wake up every day with the same existentialist fear and loathing as we all do—my life is a sea of ideas and passions that make me wonder if, on my death bed, I'll have to repent, for the end is nigh. But for some reason, I doubt it.

I know I've made mistakes, as everyone has, but for my destiny to be determined by the rigidity of blind faith is something I can't live with.

In truth, any relationship I have with "God" involves a mixture of history, politics and day-to-day actions. I've been exposed my idea of "God" not through a minister (a profession I have the deepest respect for), but through the lenses of the human heart, uncertain what it all means or if there's even a way to understand what "God" means. I've seen it while looking into the eyes of ex-girlfriends late at night, my mind questioning why a supposedly compassionate God would make me choose between loving someone—before marriage—and abstinence.

I saw it the night I was drunk beyond the pale, sitting on a dank bathroom floor and wondering why He seemed affixed to Captain Morgan's face—and I saw it yet again when some friends of mine died for no reason, other than from being in the wrong place at the wrong time.

For a time, I cursed God and hated whatever "it" was. Upon quitting my church at 17, I tried to find any excuse I could to relish my anger towards faith and what I perceived as the rampant "judgmentalism" of Christianity. I used the West's cultural weapons against the divine. I took up



I looked at Ned Flanders on *The Simpsons* as an all-too-literal example of how the Church can take unabashed joy out of your life.

books like Umberto Eco's brilliant *In The Name of The Rose* and selectively enjoyed parts that were decidedly anti-Christian. I read extensively on the role of Christianity in Western history and turned my back on faiths of all stripes. I looked at Ned Flanders on *The Simpsons* as an all-too-literal example of how the Church can take unabashed joy out of

longer think religion is a force that does more harm than good—quite the contrary. I can see the varying shades of spiritual grey that comes out of books like *In The Name of The Rose* or acknowledge the vast swaths of irony that envelop Ned Flanders and *The Simpsons*.

Yet perhaps I don't subscribe to the unblinking need for organized religion anymore, nor do I think people should go without some idea about spirituality in their lives. This is fundamental to me: blind faith is dangerous, but ever-evolving ideas about the spiritual life can be a form of personal salvation. Perhaps one day I'll go back to the Church. Or maybe I'll become a Buddhist. Or Muslim. Or none of the above—the point is, it doesn't matter, does it?

Maybe this is what matters about being human and spiritual in 2005: the recognition that I'm not wedged on some rigid path on the road towards the divine. We can let our ideas about faith change—that is what we, as people, do everyday.

**For a time, I cursed God and hated whatever "it" was.**

your life.

Today, I'm still not Anglican and not sure if I'll go back. I still love *The Simpsons* and Umberto Eco. I still think history is fraught with the Janus-faced role of religion. And here we are, in 2005, and our primal need to know the essence of ourselves still lends itself to violence, mass murder and intolerance.

But I've come to a point of peace in my spiritual life. I no

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# Letters

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## Good work, but...

I have enjoyed just about every issue in the *Gazette* this year and I also really appreciate the *Gazette* staff's efforts to cover a range of topics and opinions.

This week's issue was of particular interest to me because Quentin Casey discussed his thoughts on Danny Williams' latest actions in the offshore oil dispute. I've been following this issue extensively as I am a Newfoundlander, an individual who's interested in political issues, and an undergraduate economics student whose main thesis topic is Canada's Equalization Policy.

Up front, I'd like to thank Quentin for his great editorial. Danny Williams is asking for something quite unreasonable. Why should the province of Newfoundland and Labrador receive special exemption? I haven't quite figured out if Newfoundland would become a 'have' province in the short term if the province were to gain 100 per cent control over its offshore oil revenues. If that is in fact the case, I feel that full control still shouldn't be handed over unless many extreme restrictions, penalties, and deadlines are imposed. I mean come on, this is all politics: there's still room to screw up even if Danny gets what he wants at the end of the day.

Danny Williams is also acting like a baby. Pulling down the Canadian flags is only going to make the province's image and problems worse.

The only criticism I have to put on the table is of Quentin's background research. In his editorial he said: "Poor, 'have-not' provinces like Newfoundland and Nova Scotia receive equalization payments from 'have' provinces that enable them to provide programs and institu-

tions equal to those in central and western Canada."

In reality, have-not provinces actually receive their equalization transfers from a pool of funds specially allocated from the federal budget. According to "Intergovernmental Fiscal Relations in Canada" by Boadway and Hobson: "...equalization payments to the have-not provinces are funded out of general federal revenues rather than through direct transfers from the have provinces."

Quentin's incorrect claim is not unusual. I have come across other media articles that allude to the same idea. However, it still demonstrates poor background research. I do not want this email to be taken as harsh criticism toward Quentin or another Newfoundlander getting all up in the *Gazette's* face and defensive. I merely wanted to point out the mistake and provide some information. So Quentin and the *Gazette*: keep up the good work! As for that "fashionable" Sartorial Eloquence column, that's a whole other story...

Frances I. Middleton

## Response:

Thanks for your reply and encouragement of our work. One comment: My portrayal of equalization payments was simply a rough and quick description of a very complicated issue (as is apparent from your writing a thesis on the topic.) My approach is similar to all of the national news articles and commentaries that I consulted for research purposes. I am aware—and I hope most people are, too—that equalization funds are not sent from individual 'have' provinces directly to 'have not' provinces like Newfoundland or Nova Scotia. Ralph Klein doesn't personally sign a

cheque to Danny Williams. Yes, the money comes from the feds and is allotted by the government in the budget, but the point is that the money comes from somewhere—namely wealthy provinces. The tooth fairy certainly didn't drop it into the federal coffers. QC

## Oil and gas editorial: A load of hot air?

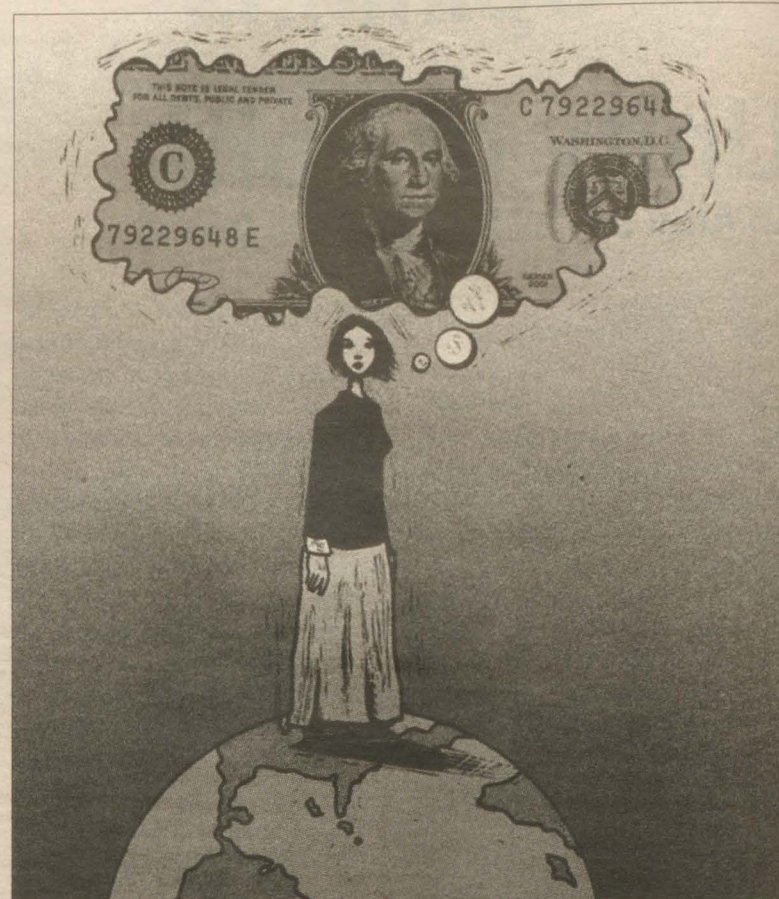
I am writing to express my disappointment with the most recent editorial in the *Gazette*. At first I thought it was simply going to be an article depicting Danny Williams' decision to remove the Canadian flag from Government buildings as a cheap political stunt, which I agree with. Condemning Williams' behavior is all well and good, but I think you did an awful job of providing background for the story.

For someone who has no foreknowledge of the issue, this is the situation you present: Danny Williams wanted 100 per cent of offshore gas revenue, the feds agreed but rather than being pleased Williams acted like a raving lunatic because he "is acting out of spite and for media attention."

Ok, it's an opinion piece. You want to say that Danny Williams is "foolish, petty and whiny" then go for it. But there's a problem when you deliberately distort the situation.

I'm referring to Ralph Goodale offering 100 per cent of offshore gas revenue. Not true. From what I can see, either you refused to print the conditions the government attached to the deal because it didn't fit with your point of view, or you didn't know the whole story, in which case you have no business writing on the

Continued on Next Page...



"You can be happy with money. The point is to remember the rest."

## God is a Concept Materialism makes the world go 'round

Jimmy Kapches  
Staff Contributor

is to remember the rest.

John Lennon sang: "God is a concept, by which we measure our pain." I'll say it again: God is a concept, by which we measure our gain. It has always seemed that the poker game we play with death was about the cash-out; death wins, we go to heaven and give up worrying about losing.

The rules have changed, and now we can win.

Materialism is the new religion. We don't admit it, we don't want it, but we've bought into it and we don't even care if the price may have been our souls. Pop music is about sex, money, fine drink and over-consumption. Television is about sex, money, cheap thrills and the buzz we get from trash. Day-to-day life is about sex, money and the lack of one or the other. Materialism makes the world go 'round.

If you can afford it, you can have whatever you desire. Even the joys and gains of education bring us into wealth, no matter how roundabout the way may be. Once we happy students go sauntering off into the world of the educated workforce, be it with a debt or a PhD ("Papa has dough"), we'll be playing for pay. If you want it, you've got it; if you have it, you've bought it—the beauty being that with money we've got ourselves a nice base to drink happiness from. You can be happy with money. The point

Death creeps up on the wealthy and impoverished alike. No one can ever forget about the inevitable endpoint to our miniscule existences. Thus the guiding tenet of Materialism (aside from "buy low, sell high") is that you should never feel ashamed for having a good time. You can't take your cash with you into the afterlife—apart from the two gold pieces that you pay to the boatman. And he doesn't take tips.

Neither dare we forget that money can make good. Those who have it and are willing to spend it on themselves should be ready to dish it out for those who lack it. The beauty of being Canadian materialists is that we already truncate our incomes substantially to help others and ourselves. If one has more, one should make an effort to do more. Materialism makes it possible to give with one hand and take with the other.

Does this mean that religion is dead?

On the contrary, it means religion is beginning to gain more and more dominion in our immortal souls, but it is losing its grip on our earthly bodies. Go and worship, love your supreme power: it will make you a better person. Life is good, share as much as you can—but never forget that cashmere is certainly and immutably the finest of base-layers in the struggle with our materialist Canadian cold.

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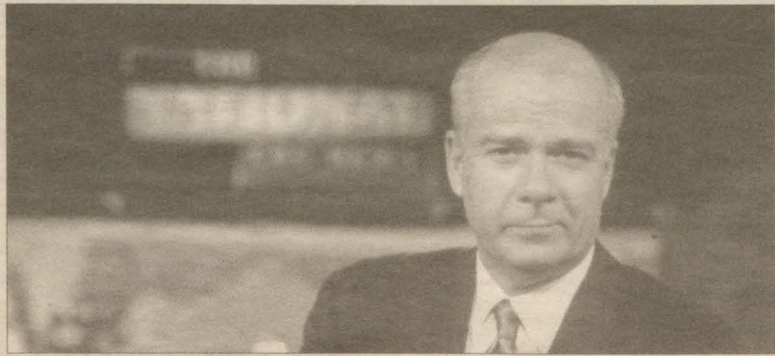
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# The Media at Large

If you don't know how dishonest it is, then this is news to you



Mansbridge noted that it was a "surprise" the BMD issue had made its way into conversations between the Prime Minister and the President.

Reid Southwick  
Staff Contributor

At the heart of Canadian identity is its distinctive cultural, ethnic and religious diversity. The most recent census figures show that Canada is one of the most multicultural nations in the world: our national population is composed of persons from more than 90 different ethnic origins. Where, then, does a national newspaper get the audacity to feature a mural of baby Jesus, Mary and an angel on the front page of its Dec. 24 issue when up to 97,000 Canadians celebrated Kwanzaa and more than 300,000 celebrated Hanukkah during the holiday season?

Notwithstanding its reputation as a right-leaning conservative daily, the *National Post's* Christmas Eve issue is a striking example of the news media's continuous misrepresentation of public interest.

For more than two months in 2003, the SARS epidemic dominated newspaper headlines across the country, breeding fear and anxiety in the collective Canadian mindset. Inundated with news of quarantines, travel advisories, hospital closures and increasing numbers of suspected cases, many Canucks lived in a constant state of apprehension.

Donna Davies, then a resident of Hundred Mile House, B.C., refused to leave her house for days, fearing her town of approximately 10,000 residents would be the next target of the malignant disease.

Davies, however, is never afraid to jump into her 1978 Chevrolet pick-up truck even though thousands of Canadians are killed every year in auto accidents—and just a few dozen died from SARS.

"The media always over blows medical stories," University of Toronto professor of medicine Stephen Vas was quoted as saying in an April 4, 2003 issue of the *Ottawa Citizen*. "Instead of trying to spread knowledge and understanding, they go with the sensational aspects. If only a handful of people have died from SARS, it gets handled by the media in the same manner as a mass murder, and I don't think it's right."

Making the distinction between right and wrong, fact and fiction seems to be an area our media constantly struggles with. In the days leading up to U.S. President George W. Bush's first official visit to Canada, news outlets across Canada focused on the notion that our neighbor to the south was simply interested in smoothing out U.S.-Canada relations while conducting a pageant of thanksgivings.

But with the threat of another terrorist attack on the American continent so real and the finalization of the ballistic missile defense (BMD) deal looming in the future, how can any objective, critical-thinking observer not foresee Bush promoting his security agenda on Canadian soil?

In fact, Peter Mansbridge, in anchoring CBC *NewsWorld's* coverage of Bush's visit to Halifax, noted that it was a "surprise" the

BMD issue had made its way into conversations between the Prime Minister and the President.

Mansbridge made only passing mention that many of the people representing the communities that opened their doors to thousands of American airline passengers following the Sept. 11 attacks did not know they were invited to the private conference in Pier 21 until a day before the event. This is quite a curious detail considering thanking those communities was reported to be at the top of Bush's agenda more than a week beforehand, but the connection still fell under the radar.

After dealing with the formality of thanking Maritimers for their generosity and compassion, Bush blatantly called on his Canadian "allies" to join in on his plans for a missile defense shield. By brilliantly using the words of former Prime Minister Mackenzie King, Bush willed those allies to the frontlines of the war on terror.

And this came much to the media's surprise.

The news media are charged with the significant responsibility of presenting calculated, objective accounts of world events to the public. The outpouring of aid for the tsunami disaster in Southeast Asia proves that journalists can effectively mobilize the public with integrity and honesty. But delivering on this role consistently is an area that desperately needs attention.

letters@dalgazette.ca

Continued from Previous Page...

issue to begin with.

What you should have mentioned is this: Paul Martin promised 100 per cent of revenues, without condition, to Nova Scotia and Newfoundland in the election and now refuses to honour that promise. Furthermore your turkey analogy is simplistic to the point of being useless. Danny Williams has gone on at length about how Newfoundland is a have-not Province in part because of the government (i.e. Newfoundland's fisheries being destroyed by federal government policies). Perhaps your readers wouldn't think Williams was so "irrational" in leaving the talks if they knew the government outright refused to offer complete 100 per cent revenue and would not negotiate that point. Or maybe they would. The point is that you didn't present any sliver of information that showed Williams side.

I'm not from Newfoundland and I'm no advocate of Williams cause. I'm certainly not saying he's right in his claims. What I am saying is that the issue is not black and white: Williams has a case. I'm writing this because I would like to see a higher standard of writing in the Editorial than the one in the recent issue.

Paul McLeod

#### Response:

You claim I have "deliberately distorted" the situation. Yet, you offer nothing resembling concrete evidence to the contrary.

You are right on one point: Paul Martin and the Liberal government did initially rescind their promise for both Newfoundland and Nova Scotia to keep 100 per cent of the oil and gas revenues. However, very early in negotiations they waffled and agreed to honour their promise: initially over a period of eight years, and finally, a period of 16 years. Here's proof:

1 - "Federal Finance Minister Ralph Goodale says he offered a full exemption on energy revenues."

2 - "The federal government says it is willing to give the province all of the revenue for up to 16 years... 'Newfoundland and Labrador has, for some time, sought access to 100 per cent of its offshore oil and gas revenues,' Mr. Martin said. 'It is disappointing that Premier Williams now rejects the very agreement he has sought for months.'"

The question of whether the government's election promise included 100 per cent of revenues with no restriction, or 100 per cent with restrictions (as in a time limit and special conditions, like Newfoundland having to eliminate its \$700 million deficit) is another matter, and one I can't answer. As one story noted in November, "Martin has said there was an understanding there would be a time limit and a cap on the deal with the provinces, while the provinces say there were to be no conditions." QC

## GOVERNORS' AWARDS

In 1992, to mark the 125th anniversary of the founding of the Dalhousie Student Union, and to recognize students' contribution to the quality and vitality of the University, the Board of Governors established a set of awards to be known as Governors' Awards.

Up to four awards can be made each year, for exceptional contributions or leadership in the extracurricular realm in such areas as university governance, development of a sense of community on campus, community service, internationalizing the campus, visual or performing arts, minority access or athletics. To be eligible, students must have a minimum cumulative GPA of 3.0 or equivalent. Otherwise, all students - undergraduate, graduate or professional faculty student, full or part-time, at any stage in their academic career - may be considered for an award.

Recipients are chosen by a committee consisting of the President, three members of the Board of Governors and the Vice-President, Student Services. Nominations are invited, but the committee may consider other persons as well. Awards, in the form of a plaque, are presented annually in the spring by the Chair of the Board or designate.

Nominations should include a written description of the student nominee's contribution to the University and up to three letters of support. Nominations should be forwarded on or before Friday, March 4, 2005, to:

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## BEND IT LIKE BENSON

Benson plays the part of Dr. Radio Rooster in the King's Theatre Society production of Darren O'Donnell's *Dr. Radio Rooster Says That's Bad*. Catch the play at the KTS Lecture Hall in the King's College quad, running Jan. 13 to 14, 7 p.m. Admission ranges from pay-what-you-can to \$7.

## MAIDEN HEAVEN

Halifax is a tribute band headquarters. Scream your favorite Iron Maiden and Ozzy Osbourne ditties this Saturday, Jan. 15 at 7 p.m. when 2 Minutes To Maiden and Dear Diary play an All-Ages show at the Pavilion. Admission is \$7.

## CHAOS IN HALIFAX

The *Gazette* has yet to see magazine publish a "Top Albums of 2004" list that doesn't include K-Os' new album *Joyful Rebellion*. And that is why it is crucial to attend Hi Talk on the Politics of Hip-Hop at the Grawood this Thursday, Jan. 13 at 3 p.m. K-Os is playing a show at the Marquee on Friday, Jan. 14, at 10 p.m.

## Hot Spots

# "A Remedy For Cabin Fever"

Verve Mwendo dance company plan to get Haligonians out of the house.



Jenny Gowing and Jacinte Armstrong. / Photo: Kate Hayter-Reid

Natalie Pendergast  
 Arts Editor

According to Jacinte Armstrong, co-founder of Verve Mwendo Dance Company, the remedy for cabin fever is a strong dose of dance. The Halifax-based company, comprised of Armstrong, Cory Bowles and Jenee Gowing are set to perform their show, the aptly titled, "A Remedy For Cabin Fever." In the process, they plan to infect their audience with "dance fever."

"It's like an explosion of dance after Christmas when everyone was cooped up inside all the time," says Armstrong.

Armstrong describes the show as "practiced improv." Based on her experience in the past with improvised dance, she says that there was always a lack of direction and it was difficult to choreograph movement on the spot that flowed well without hesitation or interruption. With the "Cabin Fever" show, the lack of direction is a non-issue since the group has been working on the project for two weeks rather than just one day.

"It's like jazz, where the musician has the basic idea of what he is playing in mind but the specifics of his song structure don't come out until he plays live," she says. "He improvises them with

the direction of what he knew going into the performance."

Influenced by their experience with all different types of dance, the Verve Mwendo choreographers have infused the show with the creative styling they admire in African and Brazilian capoeira dance. These exotic genres take everyday movements such as the motions of the working body (picking fruits, washing clothes), and the aggressive appeal of martial arts and make them artistically beautiful.

In addition to this unique approach to spontaneous dance, Armstrong says the roles of the musicians and dancers are blurred. Danny Oore, a T.A. at Dal's Music Department, and his brother Sigur Oore will be creating the sound that accompanies the dancers' movement, and in "A Remedy For Cabin Fever," they play as much a role in the choreographing as they do in the making of music.

"In most productions the dancers do their own job of choreographing and performing the movement and the musicians do their respective job of playing the sounds," says Armstrong. "But in our show everyone works together; the dancers help make the music and the musicians help create the movement."

This interaction between

dance and music is what Armstrong says is the essence of the performance. Unlike many contemporary or ballet shows where there is a storyline, Cabin Fever instead puts the art of dance into focus.

"There are little stories within each series of movement," explains Armstrong.

"It is not a narrative as a whole, but the parts of it can be narrative if the audience uses their imagination a bit."

The show will be entertaining insofar as the audience members will find themselves assessing the meaning of the relationship between sound and physical movement.

Of their few rehearsals Armstrong says, "the musician would interpret the dance that we would spontaneously create and then we would all recreate the dance based on the musician's interpretation of it."

"In the arts it's all about process and exploration... this is a just bit more exploration."

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<sup>†</sup> NO PURCHASE NECESSARY. Promotional Period: December 20, 2004 through March 11, 2005 at 11:59 PM (ET). Visit [www.dentynecontests.com](http://www.dentynecontests.com) to enter the Dentyne<sup>®</sup> "Heat up the Hill" Promotion and Sweepstakes. Correct answer to skill testing question required. See website for full prize details and Official Rules. Regular text messaging fees apply to entries into the Promotion or Sweepstakes by text messaging. PROMOTION: Open to residents of Canada who are 18 years of age or older. Prizes: 50 x Oxygen<sup>®</sup> Snowboard Iodds 1 in 36,090, (ARV) \$499.00, 100 x Boot Dryer Iodds 1 in 18,045, (ARV) \$59.99, 100 x Hydration Pack Iodds 1 in 18,045, (ARV) \$55.99, 250 x Peruvian Ski Hat Iodds 1 in 7,218, (ARV) \$10.00. Limit of one (1) prize per person. The number of entries into the Promotion is limited and entry available only while the supply of game plays lasts. SWEEPSTAKES: Open to residents of Canada who are the age of majority and older in their province of residence. Prizes: Five (5) Weekend Trips for three (3) to Banff, Alberta. Some restrictions apply. Approximate retail value (ARV): \$6,000.00 based on a Toronto departure. Odds of winning depend on the number of eligible entries received. Limit of one (1) prize per person.

<sup>††</sup> Actual discount programs vary by participating ski hill. Discount programs in effect from January 1, 2005 until the earlier of the close of the 2005 ski season or April 30, 2005. Restrictions and blackout periods may apply. See [www.dentynecontests.com](http://www.dentynecontests.com) and click on the ski lift ticket icon for full program details. Discount can not be used in conjunction with any other discount or promotion.

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## CKDU Charts Top 100 Albums of 2004

Dalhousie's campus and community radio station has eased through another year full of airing interesting new underground and independent tunes. There were a few artists, however, who stood out from the rest. Well, actually there were 100. Here are CKDU's choice 100 albums from their 2004 airwaves...

- 01 • Burdocks - *Airplane Tracks*
- 02 • Brent Randall & His Pinecones - *Quite Precisely, Brent Randall & The His Pinecones*
- 03 • Arcade Fire - *Funeral*
- 04 • Hold - *Noise Blood Assault*
- 05 • Unicorns - *Unicorns: 2014*
- 06 • B.A. Johnston - *In Situation Bad*
- 07 • Laura Peek & The Winning Moments - *Sneak Peek*
- 08 • Death From Above 1979 - *You're A Woman I'm A Machine*
- 09 • Franz Ferdinand - *Franz Ferdinand*
- 10 • Modest Mouse - *Good News For People Who Love Bad News*
- 11 • Hayden - *Elk-Lake Serenade*

- 12 • Falconhawk - *Hotmouth*
- 13 • Jack MacDonald & The Hotel Faces - *Don't Touch My Animal*
- 14 • This Message Will Self Destruct - *S/T*
- 15 • Jill Barber - *Oh Heart*
- 16 • Organ - *Grab That Gun*
- 17 • Tragedies - *Are Made Of People*
- 18 • Skrtach Bastid - *Better Ask Somebody*
- 19 • Hidden Cameras - *Mississauga Goddam*
- 20 • Sixtoo - *Chewing On Glass & The Other Miracle Cures*
- 21 • Various - *Just Friends Compilation*
- 22 • Joel Plaskett Emergency - *Truthfully Truthfully*
- 23 • Mario Poupette et Les Chevettes - *S/T*
- 24 • Julie Doiron - *Goodnight Nobody*
- 25 • Royal City - *Little Heart's Ease*
- 26 • Les Baton Rouge - *My Body The Pistol*
- 27 • Destroyer - *Your Blues*
- 28 • Stars - *Set Yourself On Fire*
- 29 • Little Miss Moffat - *Miss Canada*
- 30 • Sixtoo - *Boxcutter Emporium*
- 31 • Mike O'Neill - *Owl*

- 32 • Heavy Blinkers - *The Night And I Are Still So Young*
- 33 • Tilly And Wall - *Wild Like Children*
- 34 • Barmitzvah Brors - *Mr. Bones Walk*
- 35 • Pipi Skid - *Funny Farm*
- 36 • Dusty Sorbet - *Wanderer's Ground*
- 37 • Porcelain Gods - *Emergency Band Meeting*
- 38 • Q And Not U - *Power*
- 39 • Magnetic Fields - *I*
- 40 • Hurtin' Unit - *Country Soul*
- 41 • Deerhoof - *Milk Man*
- 42 • Mardeen - *Demo*
- 43 • Feist - *Let It Die*
- 44 • Second Front - *Sound Of Progress*
- 45 • Charizma & Peanut Butter Wolf - *Big Shot*
- 46 • By Divine Right - *weet Confusion*
- 47 • Liars - *They Were Wrong, So We Drowned*
- 48 • K-Os - *Joyful Rebellion*
- 49 • Les Savy Fav - *Inches*
- 50 • Ruth Minnikin - *Marooned and Blue*
- 51 • Various - *CBC Radio 3 Sessions: Vol. 1*

Continued on Page 16

# Strange Ventures

Lindsay Dobbin  
Assistant Arts Editor

For those of you wondering what it is like to live in the shoes of self-proclaimed "nerd rocker" B.A. Johnston—who just signed on to a 60-album, \$50-million recording contract deal with Halifax-based Just Friends Records—well, you'll just have to read on.

A warning, though: only one or two of the above statements is true.

One cannot help but find "nerd rocker" B.A. Johnston's sarcasm and self-deprecating modesty intriguing.

(You may now cross the recording contract off the list).

It's fairly typical for a musician to give off an air of being beyond the immediate world. These are the musicians the general populous generally aspire to be. Rarely does a musician come along that represents who we, the music-buying public, are—ordinary people with ordinary interests and ordinary hardships.

If the songs on Johnson's new album *My Heart is a Blinking Nintendo* are any indication, the nerd rocker's interests and hardships include the Hamilton Tiger Cats, poutine, squirrels, video games, love and being replaced in relationships by younger men.

The "age factor" seems to be a common source of tension in Johnston's life. "I was playing a show in Peterborough and I started talking about a love

song I was going to play," says Johnston. "Some guy in the back started yelling 'emo' at me. I said to him 'I'm so old I don't even know what that means.'"

Johnston may be a bit bitter about his coming-of-age, but he is making an event out of it by celebrating his 30th birthday and Jan. 20 CD release concurrently—at the Tribeca Lounge with friends the Stolen Minks and the Porcelain Gods to boot.

"If you've heard the new album and you see me live it's a major disappointment," he says. "It's just me usually forgetting the words."

The album, featuring members of the Sweet Tenders and Eleanor King, was recorded by Stephen Kelly of Dead Bum Records, a label Kelly and Johnston created in high school.

Johnston describes it as a "one hit wrapped in filler, like all my other albums."

The recording process was a lot more demanding than previous releases because of more instrumentation, such as drums, which is a first. Despite the changes, Johnston says his recording techniques haven't changed.

"I don't like recording anything more than once. That means that most of the takes are really bad but I don't really care," he says. "Because they don't know it's bad until they've already paid for it. By that time, I've got their money."

Having just recently moved



Where can you cash in a cheque that big? "At a bank with tall people," says the ever-tongue-in-cheek B.A. Johnston (left) pictured with Dave Ewenson (right), CEO of Just Friends Records.

out of his mother's basement in Hamilton, Ont. (which he says is the best city in the world), Johnston—AKA Christian Johnston—has now relocated.

He has found many a muse in the SuperCity.

"I tried to get a membership at Video Difference but I couldn't because I had an out-of-province ID, and that really made me mad," he says. "So I started writing a song about how if Pac man was alive and I rode him around I would get more respect."

Johnston plans to tour Canada solo, by way of the Greyhound bus, beginning at the end of this

prompter when performing. "Ideally that is how I want to end my career: Not giving a shit

**"Ideally that is how I want to end my career: Not giving a shit about anything, making tons of money and wearing jumpsuits."**

month. The tour has been "Christian-ed" *No Fans, No Money, No Chicks, No Car*. And he hopes he will tour enough so that when he is really old he can be like "old Elvis"—reading his songs off of a

about anything, making tons of money and wearing jumpsuits." B.A. Johnston's CD release party, featuring the Stolen Minks and the Porcelain Gods hits the Tribeca Lounge on Thursday, Jan. 20.

# Streeter

What belief do you hold that requires no proof?



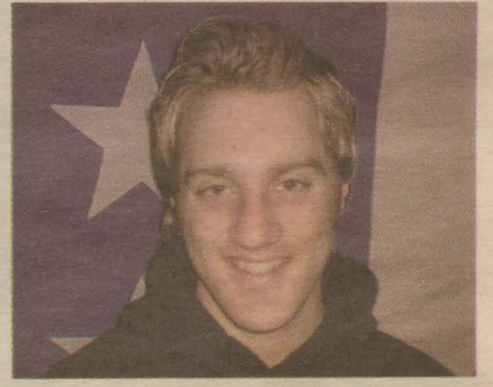
If it's meant to be, it will be.  
- Stephanie Hall,  
second-year English



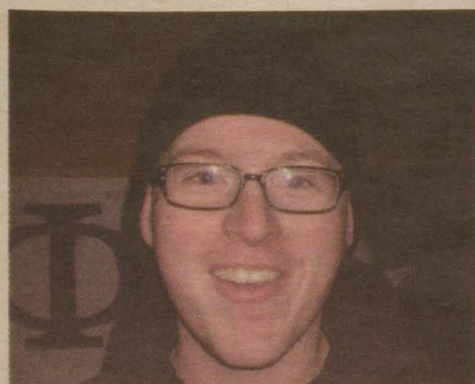
I would have to say that I believe in God.  
- Sapna Jha,  
second-year microbiology



I believe in my parents' love.  
- Katherine de Sousa,  
second-year theatre



I believe in karma. What you put out there always comes back.  
- Shawn Legere,  
second-year community planning



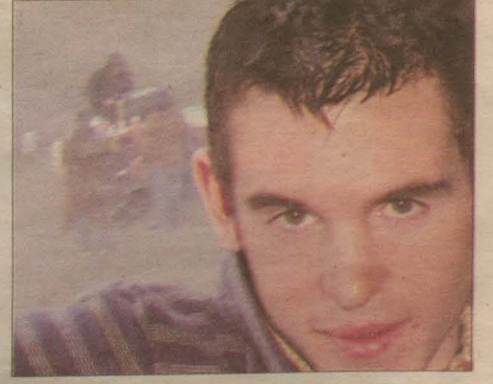
I believe in the McDeal.  
- Adam Graham,  
third-year leisure studies



I believe that bunnies are soooo cute.  
- Leyna Gillingham,  
second-year English



I believe in fate. There's somebody out there for everybody.  
- Nataline Andrusyk,  
first-year arts



That God is a King's student.  
- Chris LaRoche,  
eighth-year narcissism

## BURN BABY BURN

After years of Morrissey-induced depression, Natalie Pendergast decided to turn over a new leaf in 2005 by burning all of her Morrissey albums in a cathartic bonfire (while screaming "the queen is dead," of course).

Okay, that's not entirely true: nobody burns albums when they can sell them at Random Play Record Store for a good profit.

And so Pendergast, now Morrissey-free, has done a different sort of burning: her favorite happy tracks are now written to CD for all to enjoy.

### HAPPY MUSIC

- Salt-n-Peppa "Push it"
- Elvis Costello "It's a Doll Revolution"
- The Monkees "Valerie"
- John Lennon "Watching the Wheels"
- Kiss "I was Made For Loving You"
- Elton John "Island Girl"
- Patsy Cline "You Belong To Me"
- Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart "Eine Kleine Nachtmusik"
- Roxette "Joyride"
- The Police "Walking on the Moon"
- Elvis Presley "Trouble"



Hamlin swears by his "Hemingways" t-shirt for maximum good karma. / Photo: Trevor Murphy

## Rock 'n' Roll Machine

The Dean Malenkos to host Marquee closing

Trevor Murphy  
Staff Contributor

There are only four people in Hell's Kitchen when the Dean Malenkos walk through the yellow double doors of the bar. The musicians load their equipment on the stage piece by piece. They're running late. The amplifiers, the drums and the instruments all had to be carted over from a jam spot just down the road.

Under the red, yellow and green patio lanterns that hang from the ceiling, the Malenkos set up the stage like they do every Tuesday night: drums in the middle, bass on the left, guitar on the right. They're yelling obscenities and making fun of each other, the way they always do.

The punk-rock trio hosts the weekly Hard Rockin' Jamboree in Hell—an open mic night for bands in the basement bar of the Marquee.

Every Tuesday for the past seven months, the Dean Malenkos have hosted some of the best bands in Halifax and, of course,

some of the worst. With the announcement of the Marquee closure last November, the band hosted their final Tuesday night on January 11.

"This is a job that we have to do," says Jon Epworth, drummer and vocalist for the Dean Malenkos.

There is no calling in sick or skipping a day of work. Every single Tuesday, the Dean Malenkos show up to play. Some nights it's worth it.

"Sometimes there's a lot of bands [that show up], and they're awesome. That makes for a wicked night," says bassist Shane Kerr. "Then there are the nights where there's only one band, and that band is us."

Regardless, the show must go on.

Like any other job, it can get monotonous, says Epworth. Loading the gear in every Tuesday night is "a pain in the ass," and playing the same songs every week isn't too appealing.

"It reminds me of touring without the excitement," says Craig Hamlin, guitarist and vocalist for the Dean Malenkos. "You don't get excited about your songs as much because you're playing to people who, for the most part, have heard them a lot."

They do try to keep it fresh. From time to time they'll throw in surprises, like playing the World Wrestling Entertainment theme song before and after every song the way they did last week. But with each of them busy during the days, it makes it hard to practice new things like this to break up the monotony.

Aside from the once-a-week gig, the members of the band still have to work other jobs. Epworth works at an art store in downtown Halifax, Kerr is still going to school (studying math), and Hamlin shuffles between

booking shows, being a sound technician, a waiter and a clerk at a video store.

Playing a steady weekly gig has also hurt the possibilities for Dean Malenkos shows in Halifax on other nights of the week. Even though the band doesn't normally play a large number of shows, they find it even harder to set something up on a weekend because there's a chance to see the Dean Malenkos every week.

Hosting the Hard Rockin' Jamboree and playing a full-fledged set are two totally different things, says Hamlin. A Tuesday-night set isn't as extensive as another show might be.

Despite the down sides, the band still enjoys showing up each and every week to play and to entertain the possibility that some great bands will show up to play.

"It was the same thing with boy scouts," says Kerr. "You never wanted to go, but once you got there you had an OK time."

The gig has also helped the Dean Malenkos financially. Since they're getting paid to play once a week—a rare feat for an independent rock band—they've been able to use some of the money to pay for their upcoming album, which is finally being released at the Marquee (upstairs this time) on January 28.

With the Hard Rockin' Jamboree now coming to an end, the band will have more time to focus on promoting their new album.

Before they hit the stage to tune their instruments and test their levels, the band says they think tonight will be one of those nights where nobody shows up.

"It's not like we're the most famous band [in Halifax] or anything," Epworth says to Kerr.

"We are the most famous band," Kerr says. "In everything!"

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# 18 to 24 Great Spins from 2004

(continued from last week)

Chris LaRoche  
Copy Editor  
Michael Gorman  
Sports Editor

Last week the *Gazette* featured six of the greatest albums of 2004—Green Day's *American Idiot*, Interpol's *Antics*, Wilco's *A Ghost is Born*, the Streets' *A Grand Don't Come For Free*, Velvet Revolver's *Contraband* and Franz Ferdinand's self-titled debut.

But those were just to whet your appetite.

Here are the final greatest 18 discs of the year in alphabetical order, picking up where we left off

## Funeral ~ The Arcade Fire

Apparently it is now too trendy to like the Arcade Fire, the much-trumpeted Montreal-based group that unites huge arrangements with even bigger choruses, a revolving door of instruments and more onstage theatrics than KTS. Although *Funeral* allegedly draws its inspiration from death and despair, the end result errs more towards life and jubilation. It's fun in a Polyphonic Spree sort of way—enjoy it, and try not to think too much. -CLR

## Good News For People Who Love Bad News ~ Modest Mouse

The good news is that this album is chalk full of typically-quirky pop tunes, brining listeners to that lofty space in pop heaven where the experimental, catchy and tongue-in-cheek all hang out together. The bad news is that the song you've already heard—the runaway single "Float On"—is the album's best cut. You, being a pessimist or optimist, should buy it regardless. -CLR

## Grab that Gun ~ The Organ

If Interpol is a bit like the Smiths updated for the new millennium, and the Organ is arguably Vancouver's psychedelia-laden answer to Interpol, then hypothetically speaking the Smiths are really just the Organ, minus the all-female thing, done two decades too early. All of which, to be blunt, probably won't make sense even after you have taken this list's advice and bought/listened to *Grab that Gun*. But take our word for it, the

Organ is exactly that—apply your own description—and they do it very, very well. -CLR

## Hot Fuss ~ The Killers

After the dust settled and the radio stopped playing "Somebody Told Me," you could finally hear—from other singles, of course—that the Killers aren't a one-hit wonder. *Hot Fuss* is a solid album heavy on synths and '80s influence. You should, of course, get it while it's hot. -MG

## How To Dismantle An Atomic Bomb ~ U2

HTDAAB, or *Dismantle*, or simply "the new U2 album," is not a return to form. Like U2's last release, *Dismantle* has an unbearably long title. And despite the Edge's rediscovered guitar prowess, it's still has many of the same overproduced synth-pop qualities they've been cursing their fans with since the early 1990s. Most of the lyrics are too cryptic to mean anything; Bono often substitutes profundity for obnoxiousness. Why is it on our list? Because any U2 album, despite these trappings, is still a damned, damned good album—and this one is their best since *Achtung Baby*. -CLR

## Joyful Rebellion ~ K-Os

Finally, a Canadian rapper who will go beyond Canada. *Rebellion* has a rare, always desirable combination: beats that cook and words that say something. Check out K-Os at the Marquee later this month. -MG

## Legs to Make Us Longer ~ Kaki King

If you thought you knew the acoustic guitar—even Chet Atkins' or Leo Kottke's acoustic guitar—get *Legs to Make Us Longer*. Following the pattern set by her debut, *Everybody Loves You*, Kaki King turns the instrument into a percussive force, pulling out almost every trick in the new acoustic book (tapping on the guitar, artificial and pinch harmonics, palm muting, hand-over-top, thumb fretting, the list goes on). Low and behold, all that virtuosity still creates listenable—even moving—instrumental music. -CLR

## Let It Die ~ Feist

Feist is one of best voices in any genre of music. She's versatile enough to fit in almost anywhere, be it the club scene of Toronto or the big stage at the famed Montreux Jazz Festival. Let it Die has been criminally overlooked by many—but as Feist continues to gain steam, all that criminal activity shouldn't last very long. -MG

## Light ~ Kary

If you've ever seen this Halifax heavy rock outfit you already know they're music kicks ass. If you haven't that's too bad—you probably won't get a chance to: the band is now defunct. Their first album, *Light* is now out of print, but you can still grab it from Newmusiccanada.com. -MG

## Live in Tokyo ~ Brad Mehldau

Brad Mehldau is the most original pianist to arrive on the jazz scene since Chick Corea, Herbie Hancock and Keith Jarrett all staked out their own corners of the post-Bill Evans idiom in the 1970s. Mehldau's sound digests all three of these voices—Jarrett's gospel-influenced left-hand, Corea's fiery Latin right-hand and Hancock's electronic leanings—while adding his own appreciation for the contemporary to the mix. *Live in Tokyo* finds Mehldau, alone at his acoustic piano, doing daring things for a pianist of such pedigree: the highlight of the album is a thirty-minute, barnstorming cover of Radiohead's "Paranoid Android." -CLR

Continued on Page 15...



## Report Card Joel Plaskett & The Tragically Hip

Date: December 5, 2004  
Venue: Halifax Metro Centre  
Reporter: Chris McCluskey  
Stage Presence: A  
Audience Reaction: A  
Sound: A  
Effort: A  
Get-It-On-Ability: A

Dartmouth-bred Joel Plaskett took the stage first for a 45 minute set, capped off with a standing ovation from the hometown crowd—a rarity for supporting talent. Along with band mates Ian MacGettigan and Dave Marsh, Plaskett proved to be the perfect opener with the audience instantly recognizing and singing along to every song. Although many on hand were more used to Plaskett's usual intimate venue—the Marquee Club—the trio filled the sizable venue nicely.

The Tragically Hip hit the stage for their 23-song set after a short intermission. It's been a few years since they were last through town, and those in attendance were happy to be on hand to be reminded why the Hip are one of Canada's most respected rock acts.

The boys from Kingston kicked things off with "Vaccination Scar" while Plaskett was still accommodating fans' requests for autographs on the concourse level. During slower songs such as 1998 ballad "Bobcaygeon" or *Road Apples'* "Long Time Running," the audience held their lighters—and in at least one case, a barbecue starter—high in the air.

## C L A S S I F I E D S

**REGISTER NOW!** Genome Canada Bioinformatics Course Applied Computational Genomics Course (ACGC) Canadian Bioinformatics Resource NRC Institute for Marine Biosciences, Halifax, NS Saturday, November 27 - Sunday, December 5, 2004 For more information about this course or to download a registration form, please go to [www.gcbioinformatics.ca](http://www.gcbioinformatics.ca)

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WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 19, 9:30 PM \$5  
**THE DRUNKEN MONKEY GONG SHOW**

FRIDAY, JANUARY 21, 9:30 PM \$5  
**JAC**

SATURDAY, JANUARY 22, 9:30 PM \$5  
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Arts Contributor  
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Arts Editor

### Tom Waits - *Real Gone*

Anti (2004)



One of the most daring releases of the year, *Real Gone* finds Tom Waits without a safety net. Having done away with the keyboards that have served him so well through his classic albums (*Rain Dogs* and *Swordfishtrombones*), Waits is forced to let his narrative abilities shine through. Songs such as "The Day After Tomorrow" and "Sins of My Father" are huge, sprawling pieces of music—diverse and full of strong instrumentation (handled largely by a small cast of veteran musicians), which are held together by Wait's impossibly gritty vocals. Hearing him turn his throat inside out on the churning "Hoist the Rag" or bringing it down to the level of a whisky soaked lounge singer (The eerily warm "Green Grass") are all part of the adventure of this album. Full of sonic experimentation, jazzy improvisation and some of the most adventurous vocals heard on record, *Real Gone* remains one of the best albums of the year. -RC

### Death From Above 1979 - *You're a Woman, I'm a Machine*

Last Gang Records (2004)



Think of Montreal rockers Death From Above 1979 as the White Stripes with a thick layer of '80s gloss—and without Meg's weird little bare feet. Featuring a bass guitar so heavily distorted that it would seem more at home on a disco album, *You're a Woman, I'm a Machine* has a way of working under your skin. Perhaps it's the gorilla-man drumming from Sebastien Grainger (who also handles the vocal duties on the album, creating a sort of driving, breathless effect on the opener "Turn It Out") or the distorted, synthetically driven "what the hell is that?" musicianship of Jesse Keeler. Maybe it's the message—no crying, no angst and no lesson. More likely, the album's appeal lies in the overall package. It's the musical equivalent of Las Vegas—all shiny neon. -RC

### Ray LaMontagne - *Trouble*

RCA/BMG (2004)

Ray LaMontagne was born in the wrong decade. The achingly wonderful vocals on this album belong to a time long past—the days of great singer-songwriters such as Nick Drake, before the great canon of folk music was marginalized into what it is today. In fact, at first listen, *Trouble* doesn't sound like anything we haven't heard before. Listen more deeply though, and you will find a small triumph in terms of today's music. Every smoky word delivered by LaMontagne drips with truth. There is no sad boy posturing here—the album does not simplify human emotions into three-minute ditties, it allows them to spread out and revel in complexity, challenging the listener to look below the surface. The music is rich (with masterful acoustic guitar and longing harps) and occasionally soars ("Shelter" and "Hannah"). There is so much potential here—not since Jeff Buckley's *Grace* (or perhaps Eliot Smith's *From a Basement on the Hill*) has a folkie shown such promise. -RC

### More Plastic - *What Are Yr Colours Now*

Out of the Shine (2004)



There comes a time when experimenting with traditional song structure gets out of hand. In fact, I would go so far as to say that there is a fine line between being different and being good at being different. Unfortunately, this must have slipped the minds of More Plastic while they recorded their latest effort. The Toronto quintet's five-song album is very pretty, has great lyrics and a promising poem about crocodiles inside. When they try to make brass instruments play metal music, however, all hope goes down the toilet. -NP

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Many couples delight in the pleasures of group sex. See above.

# SuperSex in the SuperCity

The more the merrier

Davie Moriné-Wentworth  
Expert

Group sex has been around for millennia and its origins can be traced back to Ancient Greco-Roman times. The most popular moniker for this type of activity—the orgy—is of Greek origin and is associated with a right of passage. This doesn't always involve sex, with some being more of a communal festivity with elements of dancing, drinking, and laughter.

Since antiquity, group sex has been put on the backburner of human sexuality. Let's face it; Elizabethan Europe is renowned for prudishness, not sexual lenience. At the same time, literature from the Marquis de Sade insinuates that group sex was never utterly abolished.

As many know, the 1960s heralded a new era of sexual exploration thanks to the Hippie movement. This generation of sexually open-minded adults revisited the idea of having group sex—and its popularity has been

suggests, this position is crafted after a Hawaiian luau and refers to the simultaneous penetration of a recipient's mouth and vagina or anus. Another suggestive term is "daisy chain." This activity can be oral or penetrative, and is accomplished by concurrent stimulation of a chain of several partners. Although daisy chains are more common in gay, all-male settings, eager heterosexuals can accomplish the same result with strap-on dildos.

A third endeavour that is increasing in prevalence is bukkake. The term comes from the Japanese buka, meaning a junior officer or subordinate employee. In practice, bukkake is the tandem ejaculation of multiple males onto a kneeling recipient's body. It is possible to take this activity to the next level by incorporating penetration. Sequential penetration of one person is aptly known as a gang-bang.

One major impasse when taking on a third or multiple lover(s) is making sure that no feelings get hurt in the process. It is es-

"Sex is a beautiful thing between two people. Between five, it is fantastic."  
-Filmmaker/comedian Woody Allen.

snowballing ever since.

The idea of group sex is stimulating to many people, regardless of sexual orientation or preference for a particular position. For some, group sex may spice up a regular sexual routine with the same partner whereas others enjoy newfound positions. Likewise, some couples enjoy sexual activities with another couple, a practice commonly referred to as "swinging."

There are a great variety of positions that can only be facilitated by group sex. As with most of our sexual lingo, the terms to describe these activities are colourful and blunt. One innovative catchphrase in orgy culture is a "spit roast." As the name

suggests, everybody is candid about what they would like. Some may want to take on a recurring playmate, whereas others want a one-time fling. Other considerations should be made based on individual desires and particularities. For example, some individuals don't like to see their partners kissing strangers. The only way to make sure that doesn't happen is to discuss things before everybody ends up in the bedroom. With basic curiosity and a bit of talking, there can be a lot of enjoyment with group encounters. As comedian Woody Allen once stated: "Sex is a beautiful thing between two people. Between five, it is fantastic."

## Great Spins from 2004

Continued from Page 13...

### London Calling (2004 reissue) ~ The Clash

The Clash's monster-success *London Calling* actually came out in 1979, not 2004, and last year's re-release did little more than simply clean up the muddy sound of the original CD-conversion, add two discs of outtakes and live material with little general appeal and jack up the sale price. Never mind all that. The original album—that is, CD 1 of the new set—is still the best album by the best punk rock band of all time. -CLR

### Me and Mr. Johnson ~ Eric Clapton

Though not as good as 1994's furious blues outing *From the Cradle*, or 1991's seminal *Unplugged*, *Me and Mr. Johnson* is certainly a highlight of both 2004 and Clapton's solo recording career. Here Slowhand does what he's always wanted to do—pay homage to Mississippi blues legend Robert Johnson. Myth has it that Johnson sold his soul to the devil at a railroad crossing in exchange for virtuosic acoustic guitar chops. He also died young, had few recordings and allegedly became mentally unstable in his last years. The material he left behind has been covered by countless groups and artists since—the Rolling Stones and Led Zeppelin included—but never given such a devoted treatment as on *Me and Mr. Johnson*. Though the album is short on spontaneity, it is heavy on a feel of authenticity and the sense that Clapton really understands Johnson's tortured soul. -CLR

### Set Yourself On Fire ~ The Stars

Some people say *Fire* isn't as strong as the Stars' last outing, *Heart*. We think those people are stupid. The group's songwrit-

ing is much stronger this time around, and the music backing those songs remains first rate. Stars' trademark lovey-dovey banter between singers Torquil Campbell and Amy Millan is still makes a presence, but is now turned into outward-looking world commentary. Like K-Os, you can check Stars at the Marquee later this month. -MG

### Smile ~ Brian Wilson

In case you hadn't heard the scoop, *SMILE* is Beach Boy Brian Wilson's long-abandoned masterpiece, the Californian precursor to Pete Townshend's unfinished *Lifehouse* recording that produced *Who's Next*. As far as abandoned, audacious rock projects go, *Smile* has a leg up on the rest: Brian Wilson finished the album, albeit some 37 years later, releasing it last year to rave reviews and much fanfare. Word has that it's as good as it was meant to be in 1967. Not being alive in 1967, or in Brian Wilson's head, we can only guess at how the project was supposed to turn out—but we can say that both Brian Wilson and ourselves are very pleased with the result. -CLR

### Sonic Nurse ~ Sonic Youth

Thurston Moore and company trade in their patented white noise "jams" for more, more, more melody on *Sonic Nurse*. There's still a Jazzmaster or two buzzing out reams of feedback in the not-too-distant sonic backdrop of even the most tranquil ballads, but for the most part the emphasis is on engaging listeners, rather than provoking them (or breaking their mirrors). Besides, *Sonic Nurse* is what the most influential band in all of indie rock (since 1985) has been up to lately, and that is reason enough to warrant a listen. -CLR

### Tyrannosaurus Hives ~ The Hives

It's short, hypnotic, hyperkinetic, and, of course, sweet. Who knows what lead screecher Pete Almqvist is actually saying—but who cares? This isn't a thinking man's band—it's good old blues-based rock and roll, played by Swedes, with a healthy dose of speed. Lots of speed. Get over the stupid white-suited bow-tie act, get into the music. -CLR

### Up All Night ~ Razorlight

We once heard someone call these guys the Strokes of the U.K.—true only if they were whiney pretentious punks who sucked. This album is super punchy and upbeat. By the time you get to the title track, it's humming along and doesn't let up until it's done. -MG

### You Are The Quarry ~ Morrissey

The fact there are no less than three references to the Smiths in this list is enough to give poor ol' Morrissey a spot on the 2004 table. Never mind the fact that *You Are the Quarry* is a damned good album. -CLR

### We wish death upon: Aerosmith's Honkin' on Bobo, the Trews' House of Ill Fame, anything Silvertide, Boy...

might as well throw in Alter Bridge's new single—minus Mark Tremonti's guitar solo—for good measure, Elton John, Sky Sweetname, Lindsay Lohan, Ashley Simpson, contrived "wardrobe malfunctions", and on and on and on and on...

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# Wanderlust: Divine Dubai

Dave Morin -Wentworth  
Staff Contributor

Jutting out of the Persian Gulf over 28 stores, the Burj al-Arab has become the pillar landmark of the Dubai skyline. This city has quickly emerged as one of the most affluent and prosperous metropolises in the Middle East. Considered to be one of the safest destinations for foreign tourists in the Middle East, along with a large expatriate community and familiar staples of westernization, Dubai attracts visitors from all the four corners of the globe. Arabic culture denotes a guest as a gift from Allah; it is therefore not surprising that Dubai prides itself on being one of the most hospitable cities on the planet. From desert safaris to decadent shopping, Dubai and the greater United Arab Emirates have something to offer all visitors.

The climate of Dubai can be surmised in one word: hot. Between November and April the United Arab Emirates is a lovely escape from a chilly Canadian winter. However, for the remaining months the heat can be unbearable, with temperatures soaring towards 50C. Regardless of when you go, there are ample opportunities to beat the heat. For those that prefer decadence and extravagance, Dubai will not disappoint.

The shopping in Dubai is unparalleled. The city has an array of Souqs that each specializes in a particular commodity. The Diera Old Souq is well known



The shopping in Dubai is unparalleled.



Burj al-Arab in Dubai, United Arab Emirates: the only seven-star hotel in the world.

for being a place to buy spices, and is a great chance to tantalize your senses. Another aromatic venue is the Spice Souq, which sells European and spicier Arabic fragrances. Finally, the Bur Dubai Souq is a superb place to pick up goods that cater to Dubai's Pakistani community, including memorable saris at bargain prices.

If you are looking for a place to lay your head than you may want to consider the infamous Burk al-Arab, considered to be the only seven-star hotel in the world. Expect to drop over

\$1,000 Canadian per night for the privilege of staying in this immaculate showpiece. Each room comes equipped with a large plasma screen television, a spiral staircase leading to a king sized bedroom and a private whirlpool hot tub.

The United Arab Emirates has a modern network of highways that make self-drive vacations a breeze. Outside of Dubai are the vast Margham Red Dunes, which act as a playground for extreme sports enthusiasts. Whether you want to cruise across velvety and gracious sand dunes in a four-

wheel drive vehicle, or get a bird's eye view by taking a 4,000-metre tandem sky dive, the Red Dunes have it, and are only a quick jaunt from downtown Dubai.

If your heart's desire is to abandon all the sleek, modernized creature comforts of opulent Dubai, push further South to the Buraimi Oasis. Nestled along the border with Oman, the Buraimi Oasis is a fantastic gateway into the desert abyss. Beyond the comforts of the Oasis' resort hotels are traditional Bedouin camps. With proper planning, one can take part in a camel trek into the desert and spend the night camping on a sand dune. Few things in the world are as stunning as watching the morning sunrise over the endless taupe dunes.

## CKDU Top 100

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- 52 • Evaporators - *Ripple Rock*
- 53 • Immaculate Machine - *Transporter*
- 54 • Numbers - *In My Mind All Time*
- 55 • Death From Above 1979 - *Romantic Rights*
- 56 • Tangiers - *Never Bring You Pleasure*
- 57 • Carolyn Mark & Her New Best Friends - *Pros And Cons Of Collaboration*
- 58 • Gabe Minnikin - *Gabe Minnikin*
- 59 • Various - *Peanuts & The Corn: Fall 2003*
- 60 • Chromeo - *She's In Control*
- 61 • Tracy And Plastics - *Culture For Pigeon*
- 62 • David Rovics - *Behind Barricades*
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- 67 • Girl Nobody - *The Future Isn't What It Used To Be*
- 68 • Beans - *Down By Law*
- 69 • Contrived - *Star EP*
- 70 • Gay - *You Know The Rules*
- 71 • Sweet Tenders - *1...2...3...Love*
- 72 • Various - *Ya Heard?! Canadian Hip Hop Parameters*
- 73 • Thesis Sahib - *Wartime Theme Songs For Modern Ego*
- 74 • Old Man Luedecke - *Mole In Ground*
- 75 • A.C. Newman - *Slow Wonder*
- 76 • Sourkeys - *S/T*
- 77 • Belle And Sebastian - *Books*
- 78 • All Purpose Voltage Heroes - *End Of Daniel Jonathan Poole*
- 79 • Kary - *Light*
- 80 • Atomic 7 - *En Hillbilly Caliente*
- 81 • William Shatner - *Has Been*
- 82 • Various - *Border Crossing: Vol. 2*
- 83 • High Dials - *Fields In Glass*
- 84 • Hot Snakes - *Audit In Progress*
- 85 • Bumblebee 81 - *Printz*
- 86 • Aaron Booth - *Our Last Escape*
- 87 • Greenfield Main - *I'll Take a Chance*
- 88 • Eagles Of Death Metal - *Peace Love Death Metal*
- 89 • Heavy Meadows - *Heavy Meadows (3)*
- 90 • Man Man - *S/T*
- 91 • Interpol - *Antics*
- 92 • Andre Ethier - *With Christopher Sandes Featuring Pickles And Price*
- 93 • Stills - *Logic Will Break Your Heart*
- 94 • eff - *Those Are Not My Bongos*
- 95 • Various - *DFA: Compilation #1*
- 96 • Fur Cups For Teeth - *Allergic To Fur*
- 97 • Spinoza - *Light And Blindness*
- 98 • Get effed - *Get effed*
- 99 • Idiom Creak - *Room From Anor Music*
- 100 • City Field - *Authentic City*

## Rosemary Gill Award

In June of 1995 the President approved the establishment of the Rosemary Gill Award in memory of Dr. Rosemary Gill, Director of University Health Services, who exemplified a high level of commitment of service to students, both in terms of her responsibilities as a physician on campus and as a member of the larger University community.

Awards are presented annually to a member or members of faculty or staff of the University who have provided outstanding service, other than teaching, to students. The selection of recipients is to be made by a committee consisting of the President, the Vice-President - Student Services, the Chair of the Student Relations and Residence Committee of the Board of Governors, and a student appointed by the Student Union.

The first Rosemary Gill Awards were presented in February, 1996, and nominations are now being sought for awards to be presented in 2005. Nominations should include the rationale for the nomination and up to three letters of support, preferably including at least one from a student or students. Nominations should be submitted to:

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# Skratch Bastid Takes Care of Business

Christina Stefanski  
Staff Contributor

"They don't keep me warm at night," says Paul Murphy—though his turntables are the love of his life. Murphy has DJ-ed throughout North America and Europe under the name Skratch Bastid since 1997. His style of blending mainstream and underground hip-hop music has generated much attention and established Murphy as a highly influential and respected DJ in hip hop culture.

So what does Murphy do other than create impressive routines on his turntables? "I make the dopest nachos in the world." He smirks. "It's a secret." He pauses. "It's the whole technique." The secret, it seems, is not in the recipe, but in Murphy's method. If salsa were the flow of music and chips were the crowd of people, Skratch Bastid would be the hot sauce dabbed on each syllable. One can only imagine how delicious his nachos taste—he mastered the craft of making them before even being interested in rap. He tells me to "dig in—you gotta taste the power."

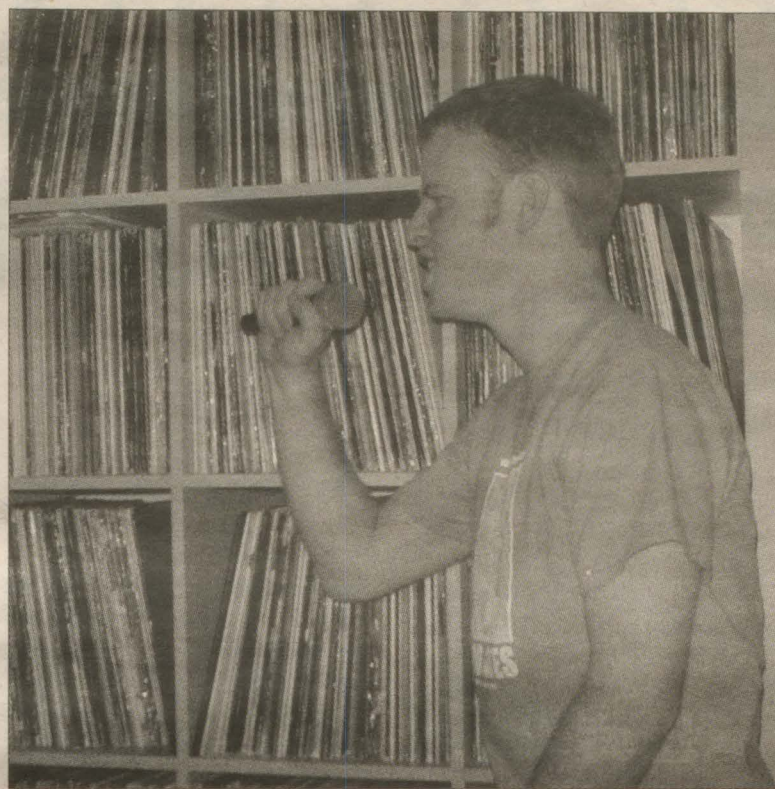
Murphy's eclectic style of

turntablism is the power he'll use to change the representation of the DJ in recorded and live hip-hop.

"It's hard to convince anybody that you make a living as Skratch Bastid and that you're a DJ [because] people don't think that DJs are musicians," Murphy says. In addition to feeling as though the element of DJ-ing in hip-hop culture is "really lost right now," Murphy acknowledges that rapping is an amazing innovative process. But he still insists that

**It's hard to convince anybody that you make a living as Skratch Bastid and that you're a DJ [because] people don't think that DJs are musicians.**

the DJ is "the guts behind the scenes." He wants hip-hop fans to recognize not only the creative vocals of the rapper but also the cleverness and hard work of the turntablist. Murphy plans on bringing light to the talent of the DJ by "making the DJ part longer with rappers still doing their own



Murphy's eclectic style of turntablism is the power he'll use to change the representation of the DJ in recorded and live hip-hop.

parts" in live and recorded hip-hop.

Skratch Bastid compares DJ-ing to baseball: the roles of the DJ and the rapper are relatable to the positions of pitcher and the catcher, he says—in both cases, team effort is vital for perfor-

mance. Sports have structured Murphy's work ethic although he insists that he was not a jock. At 23, Murphy has made DJ-ing his career, but only while balancing his other responsibilities and hobbies. He says that he was "mad into sports and played ev-

erything" before he started DJ-ing; sports honed his time management skills as they "put order in my life," he says.

Murphy's goal of attaining more recognition for DJs has been influenced by what he feels is sincere appreciation of his music in Europe. He says that Europeans have not given in to a certain "rap stereotype" that is mainly involved with North American hip hop culture.

In Europe, "it's not about the image, it's the substance." Murphy says that he is not trying to fit a certain rap image, but that he is striving to raise awareness of DJ-ing. His car mileage reads 60 000km, all accumulated in 18 months worth of traveling to shows—a testament to his devotion to turntablism, as sure as any.

The new album, *Takin' Care of Business*, features Skratch Bastid, John Smith and Pip Skid, a collaboration between Winnipeg and Halifax hip-hop scenes. It will be released sometime in January/February 2005 with a tour scheduled around March or April. "I Ain't Lazy," a single pulled from the album, has an upcoming video.

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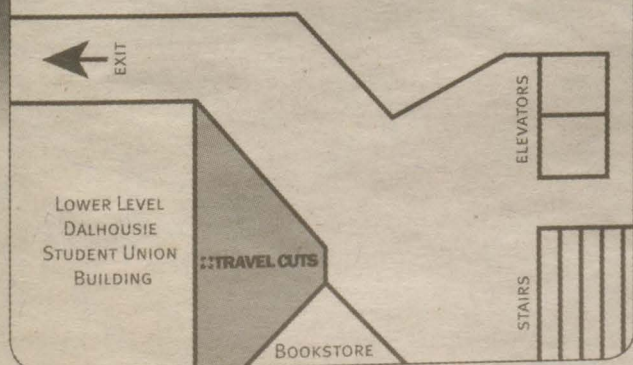


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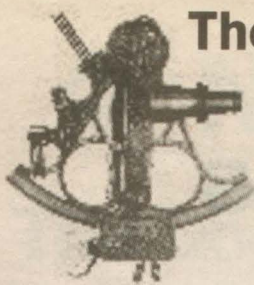
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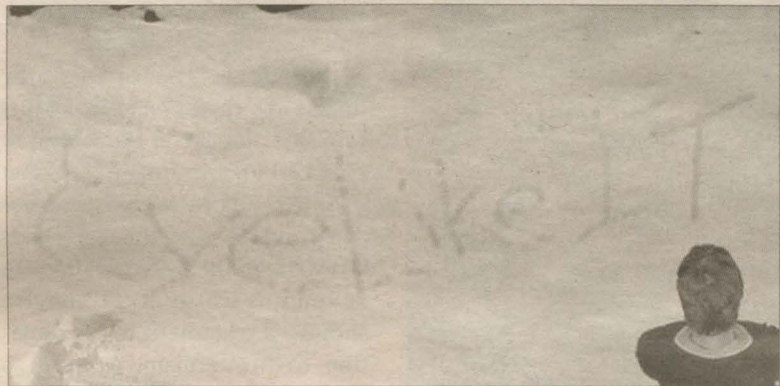
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# SEXTANT

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## It's A Fedora Winter Funderland



Chris Fedora  
Sextant Contributor

Winter Carnival Week is coming up and there are lots of fun things planned. These events are planned by very smart, organized, dedicated, politically correct individuals within the DSU. I have talked to them, and the events that are planned sound like a blast. I realized, however, that if the planning had been left up to me, the result would have been completely different. I am not organized. I am apathetic towards most things. I have been in university for nearly a decade, and I am politically incorrect like it is my job. Nope, if Winter Carnival had been left up to me, it probably would have ended up with events something like this:

### Inter School Snowball Fight (Dalhousie vs Sacred Heart Elementary)

- Let's show those six-year-olds who's boss, extra points for deadliest hit
- Bras allowed as sling-shots (Advantage: Dal)

### Snow Drawing Contest

- Drink four pitchers of beer and then draw the most elaborate picture in the snow
- If a tie occurs between a male and a female, the female wins due to added dextral difficulty

### The Citadel Hill Naked Luge

- Boys don't get snatched up by a John on your way down
- Girls may not be given handicap for body parts that make them less aerodynamic

### The Drink 'Till You Would Take Home Anything Ball

- No carnival is complete without a ball. No ball is complete with out booze.
- Wear your ugliest suit or dress and proceed to drink. The ugliest hook up will win a prize.

Iron Ring Ceremony Countdown: **54** Days

## I Am Halifamous!

Chris Fedora  
Sextant Contributor

So I'm in the Grawood last week for the World Junior final... you remember, the one where we kicked Russia's ass all over the ice. I'm sitting there joking and laughing and carrying on with my friends for a good hour, various random people spread throughout the table with whom I was not acquainted. After a while, a cute blond girl that I had talked to briefly looks across the table at me and asks, "I'm sorry, I don't know you. Who are you?" This would be an innocent question to anyone else, one that should provoke a polite and friendly introduction. It would have been, if it was said to anyone else...not me though. I looked across the table and stared her right in the face and I said, in the most (fake) arrogant voice I could muster, "Who am I? You don't know who I am? I'm Chris Fedora Goddammit, and don't you forget it."

Now, anyone who knows me would know that I was only kidding around and that in the two seconds following my arrogant outburst I would promptly smile and politely apologize for being rude and then properly introduce myself.

However, on this occasion I didn't have the chance to correct myself. My friends on either side had heard the question and my retort and had begun to chime in with references to things I have done or am doing that might jog her memory as to my identity.

One friend, Carrie McMullin, even went so far as to say, "Fedora is Halifamous." Halifamous? What was this term? I wasn't sure if I wanted to be Halifamous. I immediately stopped the praise pouring in from all sides of the table, and began to focus on this Halifamous reference. Carrie told me that The Coast had recently posted a sec-

tion in their "Best Of" issue, about people who were Halifamous. The term, as she understood it, refers to people who were, or are, famous in Canada and perhaps the world, but remain uniquely dear to the hearts of Haligonians, whether they deserve it or not.

The winner of this year's Halifamous personality went to Joel Plaskett, with first runner up being Gary Beals, followed by Rick Mercer and Mike Smith (aka Bubbles).

I look at this list and while I feel proud that some people think to include me in a list with the likes of Plaskett, Mercer and Smith, the Beals comparison deeply offends me. Sure I had a very public battle with ATV News—specifically that little fireball of a reporter Elizabeth Chiu—last year that escalated out of control. (I aint got nothing but love fo ya Liz baby!)

Sure people stop Todd Bertuzzi on the street all the time and tell him he looks like me. Sure I am one of the most eligible bachelors on campus. All this aside, do I really deserve to be on such a prestigious list (excluding Beals of course)? You damn well better bet I do.

There were some notable exceptions from the list however. Some people I thought needed to be mentioned.

Some people, who upon opening up the Coast that week and not seeing their name listed ahead of Gary Beals broke down in tears, as if they had not won the Teen Choice Award they had hoped they would. The following is a short list of names that I think need to be acknowledged:

1. Jonathan Torrens - J-Rock deserves a shout here not for his performance in Trailer Park Boys, and not for his critically acclaimed investigative work on Street Cents, and not even for his Oprah-esque domination of the talk show scene

on Jonovision. No, he deserves props for his aww inspiring, jaw dropping appearance on the Jo Schmo sequel on Spike; a performance that would make one look to the sky and see heaven and make the deaf hear again.

2. Peter North - Do I really need to go into this one? My buddies ran into Peter downtown over the holidays and nearly lost their minds. Nice to see that the lure of having sex with some of the hottest porn stars in the world couldn't keep this man away from the warmth and hospitality that is his home town of Spryfield.

3. The Old Guy with the Eye Patch in Front of The Clyde St LC and the Top Hat Guy who Sells Flowers Downtown—I will remember these two fine gentlemen of the evening long after I have left Halifax. They are true staples of the diversity of this city (I really don't know how, it just sounded good).

4. Tom Traves - I was going to leave Tommy boy off of this list, but so many people know his name...it's just too bad no one knows what he looks like because he never leaves his lair atop Dalhousie.

5. Colleen Jones - The lone woman on the list, Colleen has inspired a whole new generation of women curlers who want to be weather reporters. In the next few years, the market will be cloudy and there won't be any jobs left for these girls...so for those of you who are aspiring to one day destroy the rest of the world one stone at a time, stop now, head another way, there will be no work for you. Colleen is and will be going strong with that world famous smile for a long time to come.

Anyone who doesn't know me may find this article quite cocky and may just write me off as an arrogant jerk. To those people I say "How the hell don't you know me?"

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The men's swim team is ranked sixth in Canada

The men's volleyball is ranked sixth in Canada

The women's track team is ranked eighth in Canada

The women's swim team is ranked ninth in Canada

**Bob Phipps** of the men's swim team is ranked first in Canada in the 400-metre freestyle

**Adrienne Power** of the women's track team is ranked first in Canada in the 60-m

**Leanna MacLean** of the women's track team is ranked first in Canada in the 1000-m

## Sports Briefs

# Track and Field Takes Centre Stage

Joey Ryba  
Staff Contributor

The Dalhousie cross-country season finished on a high—and the track and field team wants to maintain a similar level. In the AUS, Dal's women are the overwhelming favourites. On the men's side, Dal and SMU are expected to battle for top spot.

The men will look to Paul Chafe, Kerry MacNeil, Chris Goulet, Gerard Brae and John Corbet to lead the way.

"We need to make sure that we have a broad based program so all the events are covered," says coach Dan Hennigar. "We need all guys stepping up because the competition is really tight. It may come down to one or two guys stepping up."

Hennigar points to Paul Chafe, who had a breakthrough year in cross-country as one of the team's top athletes.

"In the past, he's had a bit of bad luck on the track," says Hennigar. "But things are looking up. Paul is way ahead of where he was last year and is our guy in the 3000-metre."

Chafe knows this season will be a challenge, but says the team is up to it.

"The men's team is training hard—we hope to have enough to beat [St. Mary's] and [l'Université de Moncton] at the AU's," says Chafe. "Chris Goulet is good form. He has a good shot at going



Mugging for the camera. / Photo: Duncan Enman

to (nationals) again. John Corbet is another guy in good form—he's our best shot at having a middle distance guy at (nationals). Josh Davidson is training to be successful and overall, I'd say the men's 4 x 800-metre relay team and the 1-kilometre and 3-km are very strong."

As for personal goals, Chafe plans to keep on improving. "I want to make nationals for the first time," says Chafe. "I'd like to see our men's team improve as well. Last year, the men's team didn't score a single point at the nationals, so we definitely want to improve on that."

The women's team is very strong. As usual, Adrienne Power will set the pace for the women. Power is the defending gold medalist in the 60-metre and 300-m events.

"Adrienne is one of the top sprinters in Canada," says Hennigar. "She's posted some of the best times and in a race in the fall, she ran faster than anyone in the country in the last two years. She's the best or undoubtedly

one of the best women's runners in Canada."

Power says that after last year's great success, the team has a tough act to follow.

"Last year, the women's team came third at CI's which was the highest ever," she says. "It's going to be tough to match or better that. We have some key losses. Janice Ashworth and Jen Pann won't be competing this year, but despite those losses we have some key athletes in Leanne MacLean, Leanne Huck and Lauren Grant."

Overall, Power is happy with the way things are progressing.

"The expectations are high this year but we have a hard working group—Leanne MacLean is an excellent athlete and wants to maintain that level. Both Huck and Grant are extremely dedicated and both want to run in the 60 m at CI's," she says.

As for her own personal goals, Power wants to keep competing and improving:

"I want to maintain my [current] level," she says, "and go as far as I can."

## Inside the locker room with ...



This week I interviewed **Carolyn Peppin**, of the women's basketball team. Carolyn is one of the top 3-point shooters in the AUS.

Theresa Anne Salah  
Staff Contributor

### What did you do on New Year's Eve?

I helped my one-armed gimped roommate get ready to go out, watched her and others drink, went to dinner with a firefighter in training, gambled a bit, watched the count down, was asleep by 12:05 a.m. and up at the crack of dawn for a basketball game. Woo hoo!

### What's your New Year's resolution this year?

No more late night baking, no more jubilee panty pillow fights in our kitchen window (it's starting to leave permanent marks), no more leaving my blinds twisted so creepy people can see me. And continue to keep my Halloween costume a secret.

### How do you plan on occupying yourself during the winter months in Halifax?

Air hockey, air hockey, air hockey. Who knew grocery shopping at the Superstore would turn into a semester of beating my roommates at air hockey? By the way, there is one table left! Best deal in town. How could you refuse?

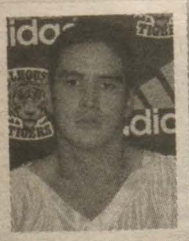
### What are three things you wish you could take back or redo from last term?

Scheduling five 8:30 a.m. classes a week was torture. Living across the street from the AAA convenience store—damn you ice cream sandwiches—and the massive amount of human waste that was floating around in our basement for who knows how long.

### What's the most embarrassing thing you ever did on a date?

I was out with the Palace dancer and he took me to pizza corner where he continued to dance on the window sill to impress me. All of a sudden he found a \$20 bill in the ATM and proceeded to purchase my pizza with his newfound treasure. I insisted he spend it on a haircut instead. All of a sudden about 30 guys started clinking knives on their drinking glasses and I had a giant wad of butter stuck to my foot. I had been shoe checked—mortifying."

## Athletes of the Week



Dan Bustillo  
Basketball

Dan Bustillo is this week's Dalhousie University Male Athlete of the Week. Bustillo had two solid performances in Atlantic University Sport regular season action this week. In Thursday's win over Acadia, Bustillo recorded 21 points in the 69-60 win earning Player of the Game kudos for Dalhousie. He assisted the Tigers' cause in Sunday's contest against the Huskies with a 14-point performance, contributing to the 73-66 victory. Bustillo is a fourth-year management student from Richmond, B.C.



Ryan McKay  
Basketball

Ryan McKay is this week's Dalhousie University Female Athlete of the Week. McKay led the Tigers in scoring in both games this week; both wins for Dalhousie over Acadia and Saint Mary's. In Thursday's contest over the Axewomen, McKay counted a game-high 17 points leading to the 80-63 win for the Tigers. In Sunday's home-court match-up against the Huskies, she drained nine-for-nine on the free-throw line contributing to an outstanding 31-point performance. The Tigers edged out the Huskies 66-58. McKay is a third-year kinesiology student from Fredericton, N.B.

### Come visit Calgary!

The Department of Neuroscience at the University of Calgary is hosting a fourth **National Neuroscience Competition**. Top applicants will fly all-expenses-paid to Calgary to tour the facilities and visit with prospective graduate supervisors March 9-13 2005.

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# The Water Cooler

Michael Gorman  
Sports Editor

At the end of last weekend's NFL playoff game between the Vikings and Packers, members from both teams joined hands and knelt in a prayer circle.

There was a time when such a sight was unthinkable. Today, it is commonplace.

Religion has become increasingly visible in sports, be it a boxer praying in his corner before a fight, a baseball player pointing to the sky after hitting a home run or prayer circles like the one that took place in the football game.

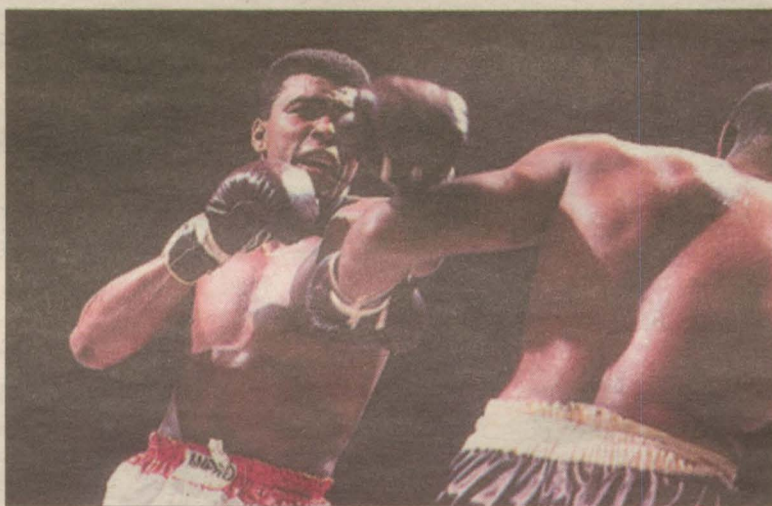
But while it's become more visible in recent years, religion in sport is nothing new.

Sandy Koufax, one of the greatest pitchers in the history of baseball, made as much news off the field as he did on it in 1965: playing in that year's World Series, the Jewish Koufax refused to pitch in the opening game for the L.A. Dodgers. Because the game fell on Yom Kippur, the holiest day of the Jewish faith, Koufax instead chose to fast and observe the date.

Koufax was celebrated for being open about his beliefs at a time when it was a taboo thing to discuss publicly.

Legendary football coach Vince Lombardi was well known for taking his players to Sunday mass each week before games.

Many professional athletes



Muhammaed Ali took what is to date the biggest religious-based stance by a professional athlete when he refused to participate in the Vietnam war.

say that having religion in their lives helps them stay grounded in the face of all the pressures and trappings that go hand in hand with leading a high profile lifestyle. Some, like the late football great Reggie White, become so involved in their faith that they actually become ordained ministers.

Of course, Christianity and Judaism aren't the only religions that have been mixed into sports.

Two of the greatest athletes of all time, Cassius Clay and Lew Alcindor, would reach their greatest successes long after converting to Islam and taking the names Muhammad Ali and Kareem Abdul-Jabbar, respectively.

Ali took what is to date perhaps the biggest religious-based stance by a professional athlete

when he refused to participate in the Vietnam War on religious grounds. As a result, he was stripped of his heavyweight title and effectively blacklisted by the sport of boxing for almost 10 years.

Some question if religion really has a place in sports. Many people would be happy if prayer circles, thanks given to God and religious symbols were kept off the playing field—but it's a debate that doesn't have a correct answer.

Regardless of whether you think religion has a place in sports or not, it's hard to debate the example of character shown by athletes such as Ali and Koufax. We would all do better to strive for such lofty goals.



Dominic Noel looks to lead the Tigers to the playoffs. / Photo: Nick Pearce

## Men's Hockey Continues to Struggle

Jenn Casey  
Staff Contributor

After a dismal first half of the season, the men's hockey team had a chance to start anew last weekend with two games in New Brunswick. But just like most New Year's resolutions, this chance faded quickly.

The last-place Tigers sputtered out of the gates with a 7-4 loss to their fellow league bottom dweller the St. Thomas Tommies. This was followed up by a 4-1 loss to the University of New Brunswick.

Dal will have a chance for redemption on Friday when St. Thomas visits for a rematch. The next night Dalhousie will have to play David to the league's Goliath: second-place l'Université de Moncton comes to town.

This isn't as tall an order as it might seem. Though they've had a lot of trouble with weaker teams this year, Dal has proven itself able to beat first-rate teams.

Fans will also get a chance to see star Tiger Dominic Noel during his first home game since the Dec. 14 finale of "Making the Cut," the reality show that granted six NHL tryouts to hockey hopefuls.

Noel, who finished the show as the leader in assists and never appeared in danger of being cut, got the nod for one of the six try-out spots.

Though he was offered a minor league contract through the Florida Panthers, Noel decided to return to the Tigers to finish his commerce degree and await the return of NHL hockey instead.

Fans of the Tigers will also get their first look at the new additions of power forward Adam Wojcik and defensemen David Hopkins and Geoff Patton.

Despite poor numbers so far, the Tigers shouldn't be written off just yet. Only 13 points separate Dal from first place, and the losses suffered haven't been for a lack of effort. As one of the hardest working teams in the league, the entire squad has been snake-bitten on the goal front.

The team hopes the new makeup and Noel's recent vote of confidence will help with goal scoring — something that has eluded Dal thus far.

The Tigers face the St. Thomas Tommies at the Dalhousie Memorial Arena on Friday, Jan. 14 at 7 p.m. and the Université de Moncton Aigles Bleus the following day.

## NFL Playoff and Previews

Michael Gorman  
Sports Editor

### Vikings vs. Eagles

Make no mistake, last week's win by the Vikes was no fluke. Randy Moss and Daunte Culpepper are both cooking right now. As for the Eagles, without Terrel Owens, they're the same bums who haven't been able to get the job done for the last three years.

**Vikings to win**

### Rams vs. Falcons

I was surprised how many people wrote off the Rams last week. This week will be a different story though. Coming off a bye, the Falcons should be the stronger team. But as usual, they will live and die by the play of quarterback Michael Vick.

**Falcons to win**

### Colts vs. Patriots

The Colts are hot and the Patriots are banged up. But the Pats have had Payton Manning's

number in the past and while the Colts may have the stronger offense, their defense is just too weak to even things out.

**Patriots to win**

### Jets vs. Steelers

Like the Rams, I was surprised how many people were betting against the Jets last week. I like Chad Pennington. But I like Ben Roethlisberger and Plaxico Burress even more. The Jets are going to get murdered.

**Steelers to win... big**

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