

FREE

March 2nd to March 9th, 2006

ISSUE 138-21

Dalhousie's Student Newspaper since 1868

# Gazette

## BURNED

Chris Dabrowski's Edward Street flat was gutted by a fire he didn't start — and he may be stuck footing the bill.

PAGE 5



Volleyball Tigers contend at CIs

PAGE 26

Life after the Burdocks

PAGE 21-22

Election madness

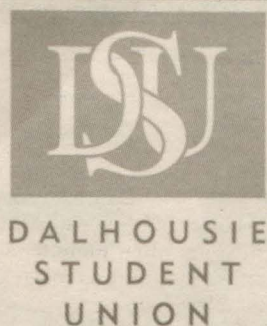
PAGE 3



## DALHOUSIE VOTES 2006

DSU ELECTIONS GUIDE INSIDE

This is a weekly communication about happenings around the DSU.  
Check it out, right here every week.



## The Faces of Dalhousie



### Dalhousie ... Diverse??

For our Council orientation last October, DSU President Ezra Edelstein asked me to facilitate a discussion on "diversity" for the entire group. I quickly discovered that if you want to make a room full of loud mouth student leaders shut up, it's most likely the best subject to bring up. Why is diversity such a sticky subject for so many people?

This year I chaired the Committee for the Promotion of Diversity on Campus, a permanent committee of the Union otherwise known as the **Diversity Council**. The committee is comprised of various "B" level student societies that spread awareness about underrepresented groups on campus. The committee was consumed with questions about its identity, and furthermore simple questions such as: What is diversity? Why do we value it as a student union and a university? I will not pontificate and give you any rambling answers. Rather, the **Diversity Council** is going to let you form your own questions and find your own answers this March.

The **Diversity Council** is proud to present the **Faces of Dalhousie Campaign**. During the entire month of March, there will be events at the DSU which will reflect the diversity of the student population here at Dalhousie and its importance in maintaining the integrity of the student body.

Over the course of this year I have found out that the women's community cannot handle all of the "gender" issues by themselves. The black community cannot tackle all the "black" issues alone. However, together, we can all strive to create a campus community we want to live in. From Native drumming demonstrations, to amazing guest speakers, to thought provoking roundtable discussions, we invite students and all Haligonians to think critically about our society and university, and to engage all the student societies who will make this campaign possible. Almost all the events will be free, and all individuals are most welcome.

For a complete listing of events, visit [www.dsu.ca](http://www.dsu.ca) and click on the **Faces of Dalhousie Campaign link**.

Or, stay tuned to this column over the coming weeks, as well as the posters that will be plastered all over campus. Special thanks to the Dalhousie Native Student Association, DalOUT, the Dalhousie Aboriginal Law Students Association, the Black United Students Association, the Dalhousie International Student Association, the Dalhousie Women's Centre, and Lisa Buchanan of the DSU Residence Relations Committee for their collaboration and efforts.

#### Faces of Dalhousie events for this coming week

#### International Women's Day

Wednesday March 8<sup>th</sup>, 6pm at the Gorsebrook Lounge, Saint Mary's University  
Presented by the Dalhousie Women's Centre and Friends

Join the Raging Grannies, Alexa McDonough, speaker Ardath Whyhacht, and many more guests for a potluck, starting at 6pm, and an evening of entertainment from 7-9pm. Celebrate International Women's Day with people from all over Halifax. All are welcome, entrance is free. For more information call 424.1419. Proceeds from the event will benefit the Single Parents Resource Centre in Spryfield.

#### Perspectives I - A Lecture Series on Diversity and Sexuality

Wednesday March 8<sup>th</sup>, 7pm in SUB 307

Presented by DalOUT

Join community activist Eric Smith as he gives us a historical account of the LGBT movement, highlighting the importance of understanding where it came from and how it has evolved.

#### International Night

Sunday March 12<sup>th</sup>, 6pm in the Dalhousie Student Union McInnes Room.

Presented by the Dalhousie International Student Association

Come and enjoy food and entertainment from around the world. Dalhousie students will demonstrate how the global community is represented here within our university. Tickets are \$20 and are available at the International Student and Exchange Services office in the Killam Library. Tickets will also be available at the door.

The next meeting of the DSU Council will be on March 15<sup>th</sup>, second floor of the SUB in Council Chambers. All are welcome.

If you should have any questions or concerns, stop by or call anytime. I work for you!

Best Regards,  
Phil Duguay  
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[dsuvpi@dal.ca](mailto:dsuvpi@dal.ca)  
[www.dsu.ca/my.dsu.ca](http://www.dsu.ca/my.dsu.ca)

## Women's Health Clinics

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[www.thefamilyfocus.ca](http://www.thefamilyfocus.ca)

[dalgazette.ca](http://dalgazette.ca) [dalgazette.ca](http://dalgazette.ca)

# STAGE NINE

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SATURDAY, MARCH 4, \$5

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WITH SPECIAL GUESTS | CLASSIFIED, JAY BIZZY,  
MIC BOYD & DJ Y RUSH

Blue  
sunday

SUNDAY, MARCH 5, \$2

New Wave/ Alternative Pop/  
80's Classics + More

ROCK CHURCH

TUESDAYS, \$3

to play ROCK CHURCH - email:  
[stageninetuesday@hotmail.com](mailto:stageninetuesday@hotmail.com)

Mar 7: CP & D + guests

Mar 14: CORNER POCKET + guests

WEDNESDAYS, \$4 (\$2 before 11pm)

REGGAE NIGHT  
with  
VERBAL WARNIN'  
presented by Appleton Rum

FRIDAY, MARCH 10, \$5

A MUSIC FOR LIFE FESTIVAL EVENT  
with The Satellite Rides  
+ Hourglass Class  
+ Todd Michalik  
(Portion of the proceeds will go to Oxfam Canada)

SAT, MAR 11, \$5

JON MCKIEL  
CD RELEASE PARTY  
with  
FALL HORSE

FRIDAY, MARCH 17, \$6

KING KONQUERER!  
with special guests

SUNDAY, MARCH 19, \$2

SHADOWBOX alternative dance music  
from the dead of night

# Let the madness begin

CHRIS LAROCHE  
Editor-in-chief

As if the depression of Valentine's Day, the languor of reading week and the hopelessness of mid-winter weather weren't enough, all of us poor, bankrupt Dalhousie students will soon be subject to one of the most bankrupt circuses of them all.

Indeed, posters will go up, debates will be thrown, and 21 of our fellow students will battle tooth-and-nail for their one shot at stardom, their best pitch for 15 minutes of fame, for...

...er, a student union portfolio.

Yes, it is that time of the semester again.

It's student union elections time.

Exciting!

Get your pencils and your ignorance ready folks — because your venerable student union will soon ask you to vote for someone you've probably never heard of, based on a platform full of issues you probably don't care much about, and let's be honest here, the candidate with the best "in between my real names" nickname is certain to win.

(Well, so long as it isn't a lame nickname. And don't ask me to tell you what makes a nickname lame or not. A good candidate nickname is more of a warm, fuzzy feeling that connects with your most passionate electoral feelings.)

The election comes right on the heels of "study" break, and promises to run rampant through essay deadlines, a few midterms, and, as you would expect, the pages of this newspaper.

Yes, for all your electoral fantasies come true, please see our DSU election coverage insert beginning on page 9.

Otherwise, forget that nonsense I wrote about pencils and ignorance. This year, all the DSU election goodness will be held in the virtual ballot boxes of the World Wide Web — don't worry, it's... uh... hacker-proof — so that we Dalhousie students can point and click our uninformed way a new student government into, er, our Gmail inboxes.

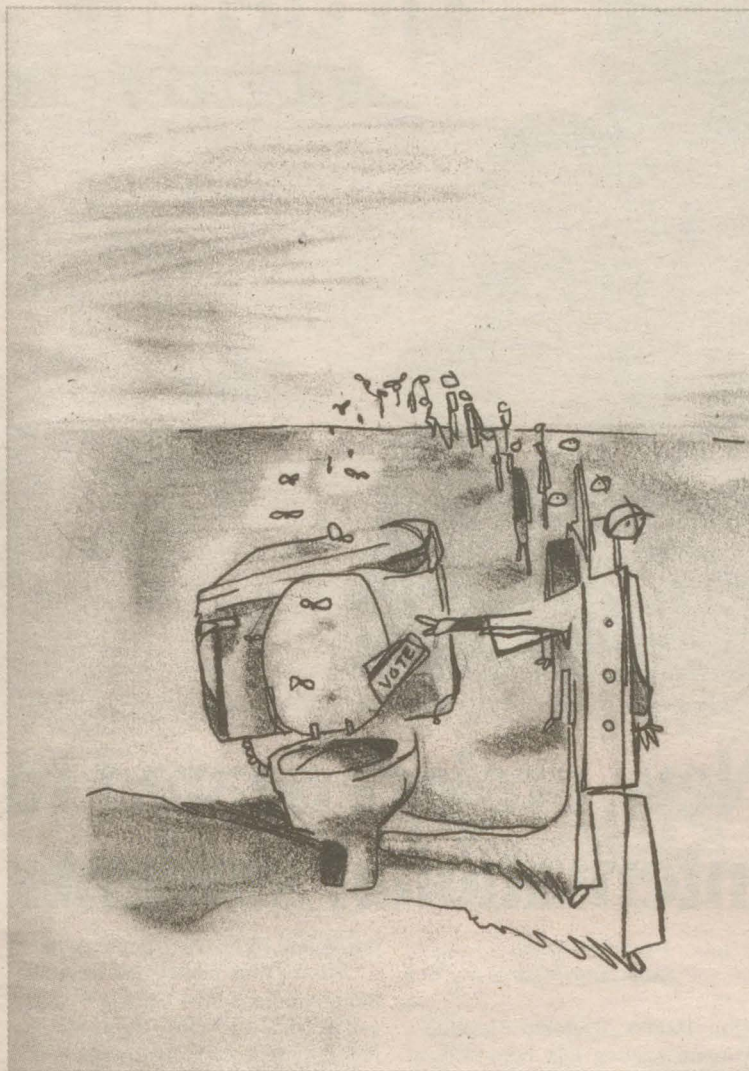
Exciting!

\*cough\*

By now you've realized that this column reeks of skepticism, disdain, ennui, more skepticism, indifference, apathy, and perhaps, if you really fill your nasal palette, a hint of strawberry.

(Don't worry. These strawberries, too, are skeptical and indifferent).

The source of my skepticism is nothing more than that something we call the "democratic process" — you know, the bit of philosophy



about "everyone" having a say in the "political process," invented by the Greeks, thrown out by the Romans, left in the cold for fifteen centuries or so, reinvented by John Locke and Jean-Jacques Rousseau and finally applied to Western societies through force of guns and beheadings, er, democratic revolutions.

But we've come a long way since then — I think — and democracy, in principle, is still a good thing. After all, democracy means that we all get a say in how much we pay in taxes, who will fix our roads and what interests we want defended/spouted abroad.

(And this is all made more attractive in light of what came before: primogeniture, feudalism, taxation without representation, and everyone's evening favourite, the black plague.)

Democracy in practice, however, isn't always perfect.

Case in point: the upcoming DSU elections.

Last year, online voting had great effect on voter turnout. Presumably, because online election systems reduce barriers to voting, more students felt inclined to weigh in on the electoral process — informed or not. An email sent out to all under-

grad students mid-way through the election saw a jump in the number of online voters. Simultaneous to this, all the candidates listed first in each category saw an increase in their portion of the vote.

Coincidence?

Online voting presents the DSU with a dilemma. It can increase the number of voters, to be sure — but is this necessarily improving the democratic process?

And at what point does the will of the masses no longer reflect the greater good?

Indeed, democracy is good — in principle.

But this principle, like many things in political life, is open to interpretation.

In 1989, the collapse of the Soviet Union inspired neoconservative Francis Fukuyama to jump up and down and publish a book called *The End of History*. In it, he declared that democracy would bring about (coincidentally) the *End of History*, the final stage of a dialectic enlightenment in which the perfect political idea — liberal democracy, of course — is discovered, and now only had to be adopted by all societies to stop humanity's endless bickering, bombing, beheading, firing guns

into the air, and what not.

After selling many books, cashing a few royalty cheques and perhaps calming down a tad, Fukuyama was almost universally derided.

But despite the underlying ridiculousness implicit in his argument, certain elements of Fukuyama's manifesto ring truer now than ever.

The idea of Post-History — a magical state of being in which we all become fat, bored and spoiled from the silly excesses of absolute material satisfaction — should rattle a few rusty bells in your mind.

Just think of social jewels such as *E-Talk Daily*, *People Magazine*, or that queen of post-material stupor, Paris Hilton.

And the global desire for democratic systems of government is now widespread. Take the recent elections in Palestine, for example — or closer to home, our elected student union.

But where Fukuyama's interpretation of democratic absolutism fails to convince the intellectual peanut gallery (or at least me), however, is in his blind belief that liberal democracy can be applied everywhere and to everyone, as if it were a one-size-fits-all solution, a universal cookie cutter waiting to be pressed down into the homogenous social dough of the world, creating bite-sized republics and parliaments where cultures and traditions once stood.

The idea that one type of democracy can remedy all of the world's ailments as if it were the political equivalent of Buckley's — or even that all cough syrup is the same — is absurd.

Instead, democracy remains open to interpretation.

The recent free and fair election of a "terrorist" government in Palestine proves that global democratization may happen on guns-firing-in-the-air terms, rather than Western ones. Despite President George W. Bush's affinity for rifles, I doubt he would be pleased.

We don't even need to look at the Middle East to prove that democratic processes can be wildly different from place to place. Social democracies in Scandinavia are among the most successful Western nations on earth in terms of quality of life, literacy, crime, and perhaps even boredom — flying in the face of Fukuyama's insistence on the superiority of free market economics.

And in sunny California, reliance on "direct democracy" means that poor ol' Ahnold must launch referendums on a whole range of issues just to pass legislation.

Doesn't sound bad, right?

It also means that California policymakers must rely on Califor-

nia voters to be aware of the issues, which are often more complicated than the plotline to a David Lynch film.

Given the growing apathy towards all things government, this may be a bit of a leap of faith.

And thus we come full circle to the DSU election: direct democracy at work.

Or is it?

Unlike governments, who levy taxes, and Presidents, who can wage war, our student union has little visible effect on students' lives. We are busy, we pay tuition, we smoke the occasional doobie, we incur student debt. Although the student union lobbies both the university and government on many of these issues — ganja excluded, of course — it has no direct power over them. Our student union is just that. A union. A lobby group responsible for defending our interests in the face of bureaucratic adversity. The issues it tackles are complicated (can you explain the Memorandum of Understanding in a sentence?) and they rarely have direct influence on students' lives. We still pay tuition; we still hand in papers.

Bankrupt student life goes on.

But the workings of the union matter, whether they are complicated or not. Without student unions constantly harping down government throats, universities could feel free to charge whatever tuition rates they saw fit without needing to fear any protest. Without our union, societies and publications such as CKDU and *The Gazette* would not exist. Nor would you have access to the Student Union Building, The Gradhouse or The Grawood. Frosh week? Gone. Shinerama? In the dust.

As trivial, absurd and overly complicated the DSU elections may seem, who gets elected to office this month matters. Our union needs qualified individuals who can tackle portfolios that — as skeptical as you might be — are certainly more complicated than the plotline to a David Lynch film.

Online voting reduces barriers to voting and encourages more students to decide. My advice? If you aren't aware of the issues, and if you don't know the candidates' platforms, don't vote. An informed, but smaller voter turnout is preferable to a large but uninformed one. The principle of democracy is simple: you have a right to vote. But democracy in practice means that this will only do our student government good if it is an informed one.

You have the right to vote, yes — but you also have the responsibility to exercise that right in an informed, socially accountable way.

## Student Employment Centre

### The Etiquette of Business Skills

Are you a student interested in a professional polish that will give you a competitive edge in your job search strategy? Sharon Skaling, a professional Image Consultant says "your image affects the way you feel, making personal image a critical factor in determining your career advancement and overall career success". Join Sharon as she shares her expertise and advice with you.

Date: Wednesday, March 15th, 2006  
Time: 11:30 - 1:30 pm  
Cost: \$5 per person (cash only & non-refundable)  
Event Location: SUB, Room 224  
Tickets: SEC, 4th floor SUB, for any further enquiries call 494.3537 or go to [www.dal.ca/sec](http://www.dal.ca/sec) for more details

### Upcoming Events Information Sessions

Dal Alumni Fast Track Their Careers with Moulding & Millwork

And You Can Too!

Date: March 6  
Time: 10:00-11:30am  
Location: SUB, Council Chambers

Clarica Sun Life

Date: March 7  
Time: 12:00-1:30pm  
Location: SUB, Room 302

 DALHOUSIE UNIVERSITY  
Inspiring Minds

# Gazette

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## THE FINE PRINT

A "staff contributor" is a member of the paper defined as a person who has had three volunteer articles, or photographs of reasonable length, and/or substance published in three different issues within the current publishing year.

The Gazette is the official written record of Dalhousie University since 1868 and is open to participation from all students. It is published weekly during the academic year by the Dalhousie Gazette Publishing Society.

The Gazette is a student-run publication. Its primary purpose is to report fairly and objectively on issues of importance and interest to the students of Dalhousie University, to provide an open forum for the free expression and exchange of ideas, and to stimulate meaningful debate on issues that affect or would otherwise be of interest to the student body and/or society in general.

Views expressed in the Hot or Not feature, Top 10 listing, and opinions section are solely those of the contributing writers, and do not necessarily represent the views of The Gazette or its staff. Views expressed in the Streeter feature are solely those of the person being quoted, and not The Gazette's writers or staff. All quotes attributed to Joey Ryba or Chris LaRoche in the Streeter feature of this paper are written, in good humour, by staff, and do not necessarily represent the views of Joey Ryba or Chris LaRoche. This publication is intended for readers 18 years of age or older. The views of our writers are not the explicit views of Dalhousie University.

All students of Dalhousie University, as well as any interested parties on or off-campus, are invited to contribute to any section of the newspaper. Please contact the appropriate editor for submission guidelines, or drop by for our weekly volunteer meetings every Monday at 5:30 p.m. in room 312 of the Dal SUB. The Gazette reserves the right to edit and reprint all submissions, and will not publish material deemed by its editorial board to be discriminatory, racist, sexist, homophobic or libellous. Opinions expressed in submitted letters are solely those of the authors. Editorials in The Gazette are signed and represent the opinions of the writer(s), not necessarily those of The Gazette staff, Editorial Board, publisher, or Dalhousie University.

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All contributions in this issue of *The Gazette* were made by the staff listed above and the following contributors: Neil Cody, Li Dong, Joel Durling, Sarah Feldman, Aaron Gillis, Lindsey Hepburn, Rachel Howse, Dave MacEwan, Dawn MacPhee, Salam Nahzat, John Packman, Ben Saifer, Judy Shupac, Hillary Titley, Dave Wentworth, David Wilkie, and Holly Gordon.

Contributor meetings take place every Monday at 5:30 p.m. in Room 312 of the Dalhousie SUB starting the first week of the new year. Our offices are officially closed from Thursday December 1st 2005 until the first week of 2006. Whether you want to write, give us ideas, or take pictures, we can find a place for you.

**Corrections:** in last week's issue, *The Gazette* mistakenly reported that the DSU response to the University's budget was released on March 21, 2006, when it was actually released on February 21, 2006. *The Gazette* also mistakenly reported that proposed tuition hikes for professional students range from 5.9 to 9.9 per cent, when in fact they range from 5.9 to 8.9 per cent.

## STUDY IN EUROPE ON \$45 A DAY

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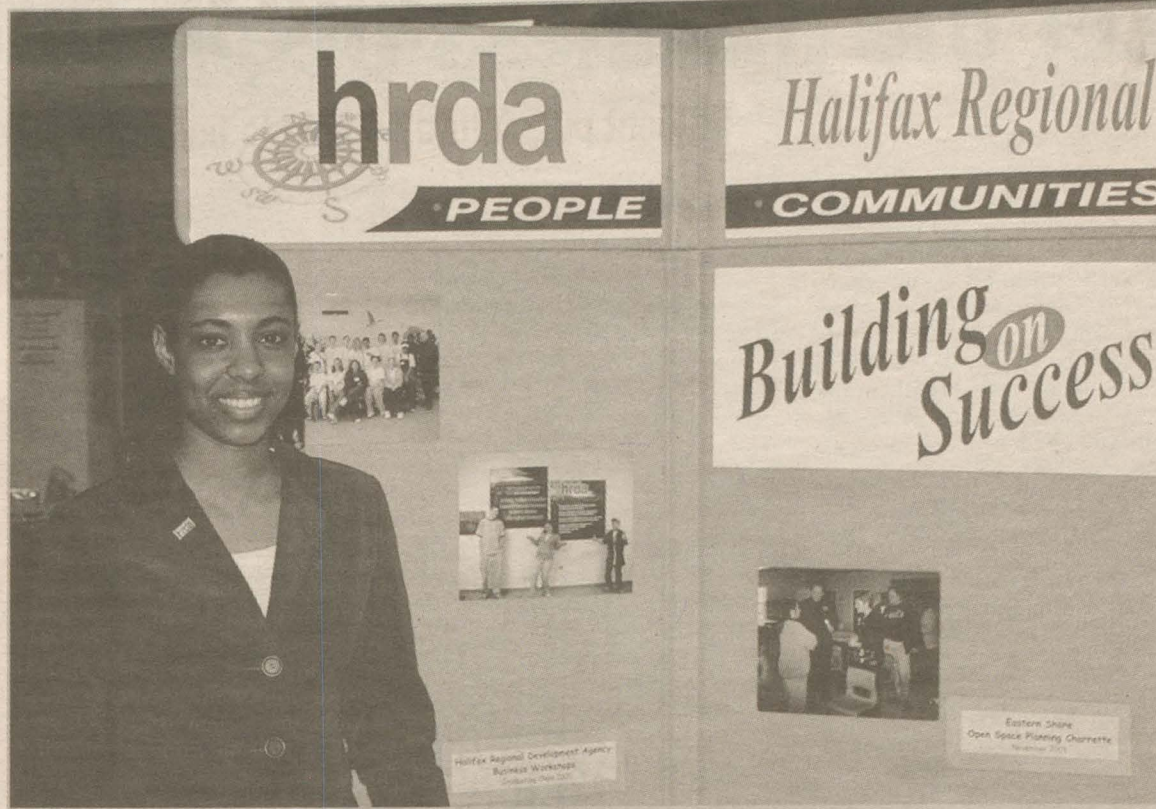
Apply for a scholarship online: [www.LessingInstitute.com](http://www.LessingInstitute.com)

# Gazette: News

News Editor: Reid Southwick

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Shemma Adlain, a recent graduate from St. Lucia, says she understands the challenges that face international students seeking post-graduate employment.

## New project geared to helping international students find work

DAWN MACPHEE  
Staff Contributor

The Halifax Regional Development Agency has launched a project to help international students find jobs after they graduate.

The International Students Post-Graduate Project will help participants with resumes and cover letters, and will arrange networking events with employers willing to hire international students.

"I think the most positive thing is to equip students for a job search, anything that can help increase the students' sense of confidence in themselves," says project coordinator Shemma Adlain.

International students who graduate only have 90 days to find a job that is related to their field of study to be eligible for a work permit that allows them to stay in Canada. If they don't find a job, they have to leave the country.

Adlain says she has a personal understanding of the challenges international students are up against. A native of St. Lucia in the Caribbean, Adlain faced the 90-day window to find employment after her graduation from St. Mary's University in October 2005.

"I didn't realize how fast 90 days could go by, in the blink of an eye," says Adlain, who did manage to get hired at the local non-profit agency. "You can't give up, and a lot of students do because they don't realize

how much you have to go through."

For the first phase of the International Students Post-Graduate Project, which is underway, the agency is holding a series of focus groups at local universities to gather information about international students' needs.

Once that phase is complete, the development agency will offer services that international students identified as lacking, most likely providing workshops, resources, and organizational assistance for international students on the job hunt. The third phase will aim to connect international students with potential employers.

Adlain says she understands why students want to seek work in Nova Scotia when they graduate from the province's universities. After five years studying in Halifax, she was familiar with the city, she says, and the bottom line is that opportunities are often better here than in students' home countries.

"Economically, things are not very good at home and our dollar value is lower," Adlain says of her Caribbean home country. "I would like to pay off my student loan before the grandchildren are born."

But Henning Fotland, the vice president (finance and operations) of the Dalhousie International Students Association, says the new project isn't going to help.

"This is not the problem," he says. "It's more the fact that we're the most financially discriminated

[against] group on campus, and we're not allowed to work while we're here to support ourselves."

Fotland and other international students are frustrated by the delay of a plan that would allow them to work off-campus. Officials hoped permits would be available as early as last month, but the plan was put off when the recent federal election was called. Currently, international students can only work on campus.

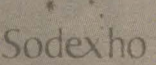

The Nova Scotia Department of Immigration is staying in contact with Citizens and Immigration Canada to make sure the agreement doesn't fall from the new government's agenda, says senior policy analyst Meaghan Edwards.

"We're predicting it will be at least a month before we hear any news," says Edwards. "For now, we're waiting."

Adlain still has friends looking for work and says it hurts to see the sacrifices international students have to make because their education is so expensive. But she's hopeful about prospects for a new work permit agreement.

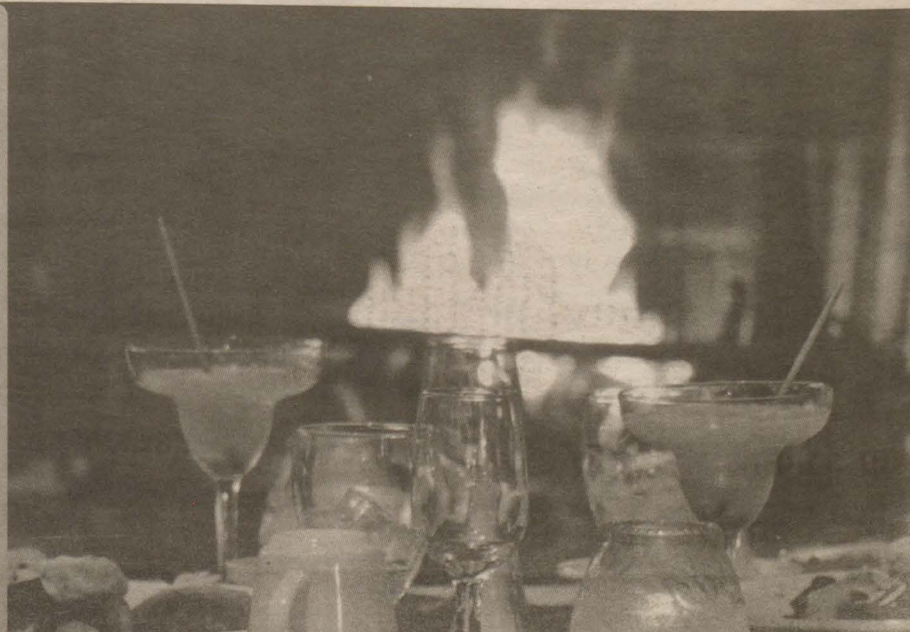
"I am very excited about it, and was hoping it would happen before my graduation," says Adlain. "It will help students get the chance to work in their area of study before graduation and also help with payments."

Adlain will analyze information gathered in the focus groups and move onto phase two over the next two months.

## Win a St. Patrick's Day Dinner for Two!

Enter at Union Market in the SUB



Every Purchase Gives You a Chance to Win a Free Dinner for Two!

# Life in limbo

## Student puts future on hold to fight lawsuit for damages he didn't cause

JESS McDIARMID  
Assistant News Editor

Former Dal student Chris Dabrowski was in Ignace, Ont., biking across Canada when he learned he was being slammed with a lawsuit holding him responsible for damages to a former apartment that he didn't cause.

The 25-year-old UBC masters student is being sued for one-third of damages resulting from a fire his roommate started in their Halifax flat more than three years ago.

The flat he shared with three friends at 1535 Edward St. went up in flames in January 2003 after one of his roommates, Martin Day, left a candle burning in a bedroom.

The resulting fire gutted the apartment and now, Dabrowski says the landlord Jay Abbass's insurance company is trying to recoup roughly \$80,000 in damages for costs incurred to fix the flat.

Following the fire, Dabrowski and his roommates, then Dal students, moved out for several months while the flat was renovated. But they had to move back in for the summer of 2003 to fulfill their year-long lease, which expired in August of that year.

When they moved out, Dabrowski says Abbass neither returned the students' damage deposits nor gave them an explanation for withholding them, as required under the Residential Tenancies Act.

And Dabrowski thought that was the end of it.

### Under fire

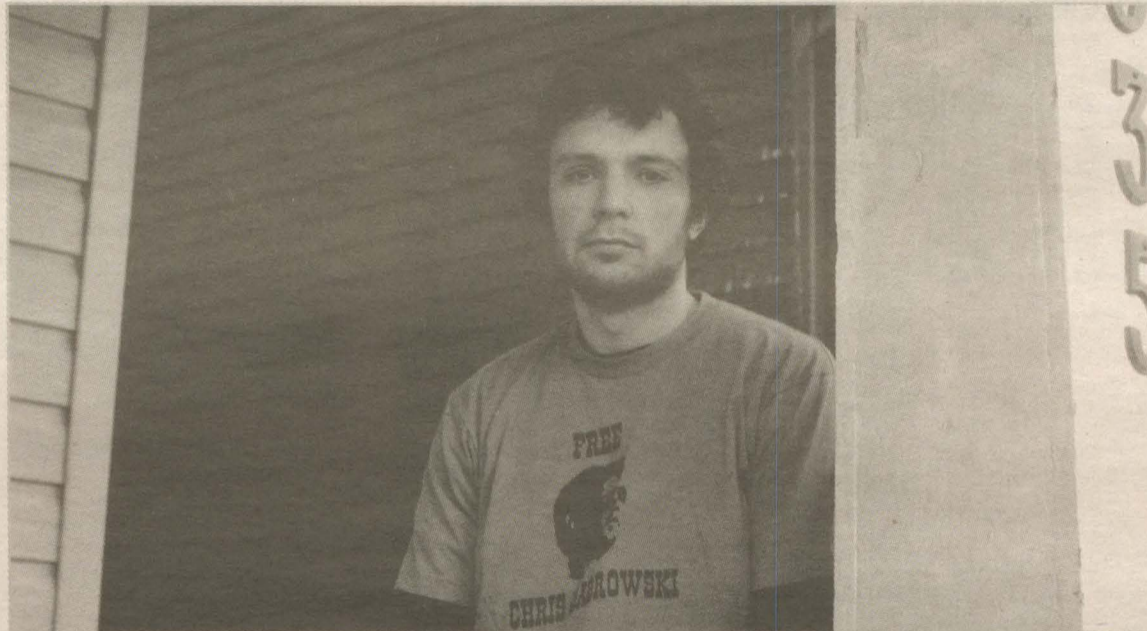
But in May 2005 — more than two years later — Dabrowski received an email from Mike Lovas, another of his former roommates, who said he'd received a statement of claim.

They were all being sued. "At first, I didn't really take it seriously because I didn't think, I was like, 'There's no way I could be held responsible,'" says Dabrowski.

Dabrowski was in Tofino, B.C. on a hiatus from school and didn't worry about the claim, he says. He exchanged e-mails with Day, who promised to deal with the matter, and he forgot about it.

And then, while pedalling through western Ontario last August, he received an e-mail from Phil Chapman, the lawyer who filed the claim against them. Dabrowski says Chapman told him to seek legal counsel and questioned his whereabouts in order to serve him a statement of claim in person.

"It was kind of funny," says Dab-



Chris Dabrowski says he wants his case to inspire changes to tenancy regulations so people won't be so vulnerable in the future. The student is defending himself against a \$26,000 claim. / Photo: Rafal Andronowski

rowski. "One of the nights I was camping, I met this guy from the States who just happened to be a lawyer. I told him my situation and he said, 'Yeah, you probably are responsible. You should deal with this.'"

Under the Residential Tenancies Act, every person on a lease can be held legally responsible for damage to property, even if they didn't cause it. If one tenant declares bankruptcy, their share of damages transfers to the others.

Canada Direct Trading Limited, a company owned by former landlord Abbass, is listed as the plaintiff on the statement of claim. But Dabrowski says Chapman told him it's a subrogated claim — meaning Abbass's insurance company is suing the students.

Chapman, when contacted by The Gazette, said he couldn't comment on the case or verify any information regarding it.

Lawyer Andrew Inch says that when an insurance contract is entered, usually the insured party gives its right to sue any wrongdoers over to the insurance company. When an accident happens, Inch says, the insurance company reimburses the insured party for its loss, and then may go after the wrongdoer for the amount paid. In a subrogated claim such as this, the insurance company sues in the name of the insured party, says Inch, rather than under the company's name.

Marlene Landry at the Insurance Bureau of Canada says unless tenants have their own insurance, they're responsible to pay damages.

"I tell everybody when there's

multiple people living in one residence to make sure you've got your own insurance," Landry says. "If that's not there, you're not covered."

Day, who started the fire, didn't have insurance. Neither did Dabrowski.

### On the hook

Dabrowski's other roommates — brothers Mike and Dave Lovas — are protected by their parents' insurance company in the lawsuit.

"I'm lucky because I was covered under my parents' insurance," says Mike Lovas. "The lawyers for them are taking care of everything."

While the Lovas brothers don't have to worry about defending themselves or paying any damages ruled by the court, Mike Lovas says his parents' insurance premiums are still going to increase because of it.

"We're still getting screwed," he says. "But not as much as [Dabrowski]."

Day, meanwhile, declared bankruptcy last summer.

When he was notified of the lawsuit last May, he consulted a lawyer. "It became very clear that it was just the first step and afterwards, everyone would redirect [their claims] toward me," says Day, because he started the fire.

Since Day has declared bankruptcy, the \$80,000 in damages has been redistributed between the Lovas brothers' insurance company and Dabrowski.

Day, who's now studying in Waterloo, Ont., says he had no idea that everyone on a lease could be held

liable for damages caused by one person.

"I'm sorry for everything that's happened to all these guys that I've been very good friends with," he says.

### Putting up a fight

Dabrowski returned to Halifax in October 2005 and consulted a lawyer, who told him legal representation to fight the claim would cost roughly \$20,000. Otherwise, he could either declare bankruptcy or defend himself.

He decided to take the case.

Scouring legal information from books, websites, old cases, legal hotlines and friends in law school, Dabrowski submitted his defense in December 2005.

His former landlord's insurance company, under the auspices of Canada Direct Trading Limited, is suing them for negligence under the Residential Tenancies Act.

Dabrowski's defense alleges that, among other things, Abbass failed to maintain the apartment so as not to constitute a fire hazard and failed to ensure the flat was equipped with fire detectors and fire extinguishers.

Chapman, the lawyer for the plaintiff, didn't respond to The Gazette's phone messages requesting an interview.

Since December, nothing has happened on the legal side of things, says Dabrowski. The suit is currently in the discovery process — each side is compiling its case, which it will have to exchange with the other.

Dabrowski says he hopes that once he receives the plaintiff's case,

he'll at least know which insurance company is behind the suit against him.

Meanwhile, Dabrowski and some of his friends have launched a campaign to raise money and awareness.

"It started as kind of a joke," says Dabrowski. A friend suggested they sell shirts to raise money and he agreed. They ordered 100 shirts with their slogan, Free Chris Dabrowski, printed across the front and his face gazing upward in a Che Guevara-like pose.

All 100 shirts were sold within five days.

To date, they've sold roughly 250 shirts. They've also contacted media outlets throughout the Maritimes and launched a website that has received roughly 3,000 hits.

"It started as a fundraising thing," he says. "It's become more of an awareness thing. We figure if we get enough media attention, [we might] get the name of the insurance company that's suing us."

If the insurance company's name goes public, Dabrowski says he hopes the company will drop the suit instead of tarnishing its reputation.

### No end in sight

Dabrowski says he's going to see the case through to the end, even though it means putting his life on hold. While he wasn't sure if he was going to return to UBC this academic year, he can't now — he can't leave Halifax.

"It's just tiring, it's like a ball-and-chain," he says. "My life is in limbo."

Dabrowski says he hopes he doesn't have to pay up or declare bankruptcy.

"For this case, or whatever this turns in to, to have some kind of influence on future laws, so that people aren't vulnerable to this in the future, that would be great," he says.

Dabrowski says he hopes his case might inspire changes such as mandatory tenants insurance, or a stipulation that requires landlords to explicitly communicate the risks of not obtaining insurance.

Mike Lovas, like his roommates, supports Dabrowski in his legal fight and hopes the campaign will increase people's awareness of what they're liable for.

"We didn't know that signing the lease meant that we were 100 per cent responsible for any damage or negligence," he says. "Hopefully a good thing that's going to come out of Chris's campaign is that people are going to realize what they're getting into when they sign a lease."



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# Petty thieves make amends during amnesty

ZAK MARKAN  
News Contributor

A picnic table and a handcrafted canoe paddle were among several stolen objects returned during a recent amnesty initiated by Halifax universities and police in hopes to recover items stolen in a recent rash of petty thefts.

"These thefts are as much a nuisance as anything else," says Dalhousie spokesperson Charles Crosby. "It's a pain for the authorities to come back and replace this stuff."

Operation Amnesty, which ran from Feb. 3 to Feb. 19, offered complete immunity to anyone who brought back things they'd swiped. Dal students and community members could return stolen items to the SUB reception desk or Gerard Hall, no questions asked.

Crosby says the university wanted to provide an opportunity for thieves to right their wrongs. "We wanted to give them the chance to make amends," he says.

In all, seven items were recovered at Dal during the operation: five street signs, the picnic table, and the canoe paddle.

The canoe paddle, a treasured heirloom to a South End family, was returned with a note containing the address from which the paddle was taken.

"Obviously someone felt a little bit of remorse for taking a personal item from a family," says Crosby.

But two Molson Canadian banners stolen from Wickwire Memorial Field on Studley Campus, valued at \$500 each, didn't make it back. Crosby says whoever stole the banners took their time.

"Someone had gone to a lot of trouble to take them down," he says. "They either used a ladder or scaled the fence to cut it down."

Crosby says it's unknown if university students were responsible for all or even most of the thefts reported to Halifax Regional Police or Dal Security.

"It could be anyone," says Crosby.



Seven items — a picnic table, five road signs and a handmade paddle — were returned during a recent amnesty period. / Photo: Rafal Andronowski

by. "But we wanted to at least give anyone here a chance to return stuff."

As soon as the university returns all the items to their rightful owners, the Dalhousie University Community Committee will evaluate the operation to decide if it should be done again, says Crosby. This community advisory board includes representatives from university administration, the student body, local residents and police.

Dalhousie doesn't have the resources to crack down on petty theft, Crosby says, and because of the low cost of offering amnesty, another would be worthwhile.

Catherine Stevens Doane, a South End resident and DUCC rep, says there's been a marked increase in petty theft and vandalism in the university neighbourhood in the last year or so.

"Maybe amnesty should be an annual thing, but I do think that students should accept responsibility for their actions," says Doane.

She also says she thinks it's only a small percentage of students who cause problems. "Perhaps there's a group of people who sort of do it as a challenge," she says.

While Doane says there's no proof that university students are responsible for missing street signs and other items, she says they have to become better integrated into the surrounding neighborhood.

"They've got to be made aware that they're joining a new community," Doane says. "If [Operation Amnesty] is going to raise the awareness and give people a chance to think twice about their actions and give the community an opportunity to feel better about the situation, then it's probably a good thing."

## FROM THE GAZETTE ARCHIVES



### In this issue 25 years ago

• Police began investigating a possible arson in the Dalhousie SUB after a fire began in the Grawood dressing room. Sprinklers and fire alarms were triggered, forcing beer drinkers and SUB staff out into the winter cold. Firefighters arrived and quickly extinguished the "medium-sized fire," commending students on their speedy evacuation.

• Students grilled provincial education minister Terrence Donahoe this week in 1981, as he delivered a night lecture in the SUB. The Gazette reported that Donahoe was "occasionally at a loss for words" when faced with some of the students' questions. During the forum, Dalhousie student council President Gord Owen presented the minister with 400 postcards signed by students, which lobbied for lower tuition fees. Donahoe defended his government's implementation of differential fees for out-of-province students and advocated the elimination of duplication and competition between metro universities.

• John Cairns' feature, "A Peek at the Past," looked back to a winter 1951 issue of *The Gazette*, at which time the school was suffering from an influenza epi-

demio. Student council members, athletes, and even *Gazette* editors fell victim to the highly contagious disease. The editor-in-chief at the time took decisive action, forbidding his writers and editors from becoming sick, though compassionately, did allow them time to be ill after their deadlines had passed.

### In this issue 10 years ago

• Two more SUB employees lost their jobs this week in 1996, making them the third and fourth SUB workers to be let go that year. Both the SUB General Manager and the Bar Services manager were fired earlier that year due to irregularities in their portfolios. The DSU, however, said the most recent ex-employees had been let go due to a new restructuring plan that aimed to cut costs at the union, and not because of poor job performance.

• *The Gazette* interviewed Leslie MacDuff, who studied commerce at Dal from 1927-1929, about what the college was like in the earlier part of the century. "There wasn't anything from Seymour to Oxford Street," recounted MacDuff, "It was all farmland."

He recalled attending dances at Shirreff Hall, where girls would schedule dances with boys on their dance cards, and he also remembered groups of couples visiting friends' houses and dancing to music on their gramophone. But "there was none of this nonsense of staying overnight," he noted sharply. MacDuff also fondly recalled the annual football games against Acadia, and the dances and plays that would be held in the gymnasium, until it burnt down in 1929.

• The top three albums on the CKDU charts this week were Eric's Trip's *Purple Blue*, Moonsocket's self-titled release, and *I Like Fucking/I Hate Dagger* by Bikini Kill.

FROM THE GAZETTE ARCHIVES is a "semi-regular" feature compiled by Neal Cody as he thumbs through archived issues in The Gazette library.

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UNI BRIEFS

Dal Briefs

Dal prof receives Order of Canada

Dalhousie law professor Wayne MacKay was presented with the Order of Canada by Governor General Michaëlle Jean at a ceremony in Ottawa on Feb. 17.

The former president of Mount Allison University received the award for his work in human rights and social justice.

MacKay attended Mt. A. and Dal and said both universities provided the supportive stages to pursue "greater social justice and equality for those who are on the margins of society."

Cross Canada Shorts

UofS to reject CFS vote results

Four months after University of Saskatchewan students voted to join the Canadian Federation of Students, an elections board committee has recommended that the results be overturned.

In its final report tabled last week, the committee said, "It could not ratify the result, given what it sees as a seriously flawed referendum process," the school's student paper, The Sheaf, reported. The committee also recommended that a new referendum be held at an appropriate date.

The student council must vote on whether to accept the committee's conclusions, but has been advised by legal counsel not to reject the findings.

Complicating matters is an earlier report from the Referendum Oversight Committee which advises that the election results be accepted.

Lucy Watson, a CFS official and member of the now-disbanded ROC, told The Sheaf that USask students would still be considered members by the CFS, even if council accepts the EB decision. Council president Gavin Gardiner denied the claim and said they are waiting for legal opinions from their solicitor.

USask students voted last January to leave their national lobby group, the Canadian Alliance of Student Associations, after 10 years with the group.

Student groups settle Travel CUTS dispute

Four student associations and their former national lobby group recently reached a pre-trial settlement in a quarrel that's lasted more than a decade.

The University of Alberta, University of Western Ontario, Queens University, and University of British Columbia will receive a 24 per cent ownership share in Travel CUTS, a discount travel agency company geared toward students, with the Canadian Federation of Students Services branch (CFS-S) retaining the rest.

The universities have been fighting for a share in the company ever since its ownership was transferred from the now-defunct Association of Student Councils Canada to the CFS-S in 1987. The schools, which had been members of the association but didn't become members of the CFS immediately afterward, argued the transfer was inappropriate and unfair.

A spokesperson from the CFS said the settlement was a compromise that would help avoid bitterness between the student groups. The schools' media representative agreed, saying that settling out of court was the best outcome for students' concerns. Both groups indicated the settlement isn't likely to disrupt the daily operations of Travel CUTS.

McGill students lead charge to get universities' business out of Sudan

The McGill University chapter of Students Taking Action in Darfur (STAND) is leading a national campaign that urges universities to dispose of their investments in companies that do business with Sudan.

According to STAND, which has clubs on at least 10 campuses in central Canada, Sudanese government forces and government-backed militias known as "janjaweed" are committing war crimes and ethnic cleansing in the Darfur region of Sudan.

The violence began in February 2003 when rebel groups captured the main airport in Darfur's capital. The United Nations estimates as many as 2 million people have been displaced and 200,000 killed — labeled "the worst humanitarian crisis in the world."

The STAND group at McGill is investigating whether the university has any endowment funds that invest in Sudan, saying it hopes to work cooperatively with universities on the issue. The group's clubs in Ontario may have more difficulty, however, because universities are not subject to Freedom of Information requests under Ontario law.

LSAT fingerprinting raises privacy concerns

Privacy concerns are being raised at the University of Victoria about a fingerprinting verification process used during Law School Admission Tests.

Fingerprinting is used to associate the identity of test-takers with their examinations, but students at UVic are concerned the U.S. government is appropriating the records and that their privacy rights could be violated.

Under the U.S. Patriot Act, which was passed in 2001, governmental security agencies can access any information they deem vital to national security without informing the person whose records are accessed. This includes records obtained by American companies that collect or store information outside the U.S., including fingerprint records from LSATs.

Several Canadian law deans have appealed to the LSAT council to reconsider the fingerprint requirement. They would like to see the requirement lifted for Canadian students or students' records kept out of U.S. databanks.

Failing that, law schools will need to choose between dropping their LSAT entrance requirements and forcing students to be fingerprinted.

South of the Border

Harvard President Resigns

The president of Harvard University announced last week he will step down at the end of this semester, halfway through his decade-long term.

Lawrence H. Summers' term as president is the shortest since 1862 and comes just one week before the faculty association was to vote on a non-binding motion of no confidence in his presidency.

Summers has attracted criticism over his leadership style and controversial comments on women in science last March. Summers suggested that inherent differences between the sexes might explain why fewer women than men pursue careers in math and science.

Sources: *The Excalibur* (York), *The EyeOpener* (Ryerson), *The Strand* (Victoria U.), *UofT*, *The Ubyssy* (UBC), *The Harvard Crimson*, and *CNN.com*.

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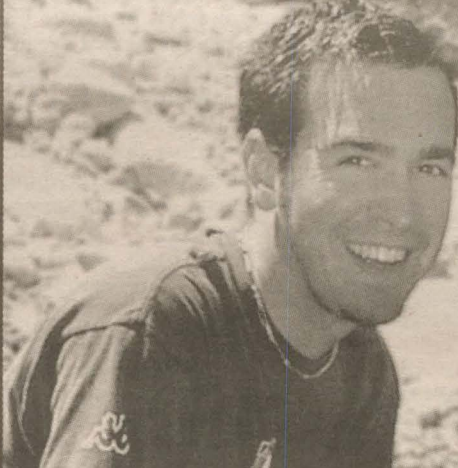
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# Gazette

The Gazette is a student-run publication. Its primary purpose is to report fairly and objectively on issues of importance and interest to the students of Dalhousie University, to provide an open forum for the free expression and exchange of ideas,

and to stimulate meaningful debate on issues that affect or would otherwise be of interest to the student body and/or society in general. The views of the Editorial Board are not the explicit views of Dalhousie University.

## Gazette: Opinions

Opinions Editor: Sarah Vanderwolf

Contact: [opinions@dalgazette.ca](mailto:opinions@dalgazette.ca)

Letters: [letters@dalgazette.ca](mailto:letters@dalgazette.ca)

### VENT: THE NEW FIGURE SKATING SCORING SYSTEM

Saman Jafarian / Staff Contributor

The Olympics this year have been, for me, a huge disappointment.

The new judging system spawned by the figure skating scandal at the 2002 Olympics was supposed to give the sport a new legitimacy and eliminate the possibility of crooked judging.

Judges' scores are then tallied and the final score is shown.

There are two big problems with this, however.

First, this new system doesn't eliminate the possibility of block judging. If anything, it encourages it, because judges' marks are kept anonymous.

The biggest problem is that the new system of judging is much more forgiving of technically easier programs, and on falls.

In 2002, the men's figure skating competition almost required a quadruple jump in order for the skater to end up on the podium.

Now, a triple-triple combination is worth almost the same as a quadruple jump, and Sasha Cohen placed second in the women's competition despite falling twice.

Considering that the Olympics place emphasis on perfection in sport, this is absolutely appalling: flawed performances can still place over relatively clean skates, and athletes are not required to push their limits.

As someone who figure skated until last year, I'm glad to see a remedy to a long-standing problem of block judging, but the system is far from perfect.

At this point, it only encourages mediocrity — a far cry from the aesthetics of an Olympian.

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## Retail therapy or capitalist conformity?

SAMAN JAFARIAN  
Staff Contributor

Maybe it's because I was reading a book by a Marxist author during reading week, or maybe it's the fact that spending almost a year's tuition on clothing in a few days would offend any broke student, but as I watched *What Not to Wear* this week, I realized that this television show symbolizes almost everything that's problematic in contemporary capitalist society.

Consider the basic premise of the show: people are nominated because, according to the hosts of the show, they dress poorly. They are then given \$5,000 to buy a new wardrobe, provided that hosts Stacy London and Clinton Kelly can throw away any and all clothes they deem inappropriate.

I've come to accept that snap judgments are made about a person depending on how he or she dresses. I don't like it — but I've accepted it. So, on the surface, the show shouldn't bother me.

But, as I delved deeper, the show became increasingly appalling. What's being thrown out in some cases, yes, looks absolutely terrible, but at least it's unique.

The end result is far from that. Participants are sent to a limited number of stores — I've been able to spot 10 different ones in total — and end up with attire that is, in essence, a duplicate of other participants' wardrobes, to the point that if you've seen enough episodes, you can easily predict the fashion rules that Stacy and Clinton will dole out.

Not only are the "before" wardrobes replaced with indistinguishable wardrobes from chain stores, but viewers are subjected to blatant shots of store names, both outside the store, and on shopping bags. Recently, commentary from Stacy and Clinton regarding the high quality and benefits of the store has become a regular occurrence, as well.

And, anyone paying attention will also notice that the always-



The idea constantly rammed down our throats that one's problems can be solved primarily — if not solely — by a good week of shopping.

prominent VISA card is swiped at the cash register in such a way that blatantly demonstrates that the bit of plastic is, indeed, a VISA card and not a different brand of credit card.

Is product placement unique to this show? Of course not — it's hard not to find a television show without advertising in it, from *Law & Order* to *The Gilmore Girls*. I've yet to find, however, programming that is this blatant with its product placement, and gets away with it so easily.

And maybe that's why *What Not to Wear* is so offensive to me: no longer do producers believe they even need to pretend that there's a point to the show besides showcasing places to shop, and teaching you how to spend your money.

But, what irritates me most is that, without exception, every person on the show claims to have undergone some kind of life-altering transformation.

I'll give credit where credit is due: though participants do look alike by the end of the show, most look significantly better than they

did to begin with. And I'll be the first to admit that something as simple as getting a good haircut can make you happy. And without such corporate sponsorship, it would probably be impossible for the show to exist.

But the idea constantly rammed down our throats that one's problems can be solved primarily — if not solely — by a good week of shopping (at certain places, buying certain things) is what I can't stand.

I'm far from a fashion guru. Anyone who knows me well can attest to that. For that matter, anyone who has met me, or even seen me on the street, will tell you that my knowledge of what's fashionable is mediocre at best.

Maybe that's why I'm so addicted to *What Not to Wear*. It convincingly presents itself as almost an educational show, if not a public service. Or maybe it's just that I enjoy living vicariously through the people on the show.

Or maybe it's because Stacy's shoes are so pretty. I wonder where she got them.

## Who's afraid of the big bad bird flu?

JIMMY KAPCHES  
Staff Contributor

Eurasia may not be one continent, but you can still drive across it from Antwerp to Beijing. Not only can you drive it, but also, if you are a migratory bird from Indo-China, you can fly it. Many birds migrate from Laos, Cambodia, China and Vietnam to spend the summer in Austria, la belle France or wherever else they land.

These carefree birdies are bringing a bug with them, and 250 kilometers from my insular Internet café in Dijon, France, the ducks are reportedly dying in droves.

Enter the bird flu.

The media loves the bird flu ("la grippe aviaire," if you're a franco-phone), because it's terrifying. On the morning of Feb. 24, *Le Figaro*, a well-read and well-written French daily newspaper, had the headline, "Avian flu: the virus installs itself in France."

Sure enough, in Bourgen Bresse, the chicken capital of France, there are dead ducks and dying turkeys

— all because of the so-called H5N1 avian influenza virus. The bird flu sells news papers like cafés sell coffee, but is it really going to kill us all off?

The media has hyped up the mortality factor of the bird flu, but we don't know if they are exaggerating just yet.

Officials are locking up fowl all over France, and running about like chickens with their heads cut off trying to contain a virus that, a short while ago, was Asia's problem. Suddenly, bird flu is no longer just in Vietnam. Should we be scared in Wine Country? Should you be scared on your side of the Atlantic?

Many people think the publicity is merely a scare tactic. Such residents tend to say things such as, "The papers are trying to spook us." They have trouble believing a government that told them the radiation cloud from Chernobyl stopped directly at the French border. They seem to shrug at the pictures of bio-hazard-suit-sporting veterinarians fishing dead swans out of placid lakes in city parks.

Essentially, this virus is bigger than all of us. True, the newspapers are making a few duck deaths into a doomsday prophecy, but there may be reason to be scared. The Spanish Influenza of 1918 killed between 20 and 40 million people worldwide, but they didn't have the medical advancements of today. It will be a fight between a tiny bug and the great powers of the world if it comes down to it.

Making money is very important for big media syndicates, but when it comes down to getting sick, CEOs and journalists are just as vulnerable as the next consumer. Our generation needs positive affirmation, not fear mongering.

Instead of being worried, we should be working together with other nations, especially the ones that can't handle this problem by themselves. The best advice to see in print would be the old Tibetan proverb: "If a problem can be solved by worrying, you've just solved it, stop worrying. If a problem can't be solved by worrying, why waste your time worrying about it?"



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Full-time Dalhousie students are all members of the Nova Scotia Public Interest Research Group at Dalhousie. The NSPIRG-Dal is a non-profit and non-partisan human and environmental rights group.

Students voted through referendum to create the organization, in an effort to provide resources and opportunities for students to get involved in human and environmental rights work, and also in recognition of the fact that balance in academia requires the understanding of alternative perspectives.

All full time Dalhousie students who paid full DSU fees are entitled to receive \$2 per term if they wish to "opt-out" of funding the NSPIRG-Dal. NSPIRG-Dal is the only DSU Society that is required to have an opt out period.

If you wish to "opt-out", drop by the NSPIRG-Dal office in Rm 314 of the Student Union Building Mar 09 - Mar 29 between 10am and 1pm.

NSPIRG-Dal, 494-6662. <http://www.nspirg.org>



# DALHOUSIE VOTES 2006



# The blind leading the blind

Clueless candidates just might romance the naïve student vote... but you can stop them

REID SOUTHWICK  
News Editor

In the University of Calgary's student union election last year, roughly 500 students voted for a rock. The six-foot-tall boulder placed third in the presidential race, beating out six human candidates.

Under the union's election rules, a student who secures a nomination can remove his/her name from the ballot and replace it with a fake one. But if the so-called "joke candidate" wins the election, he/she would be disqualified on the grounds of misrepresentation.

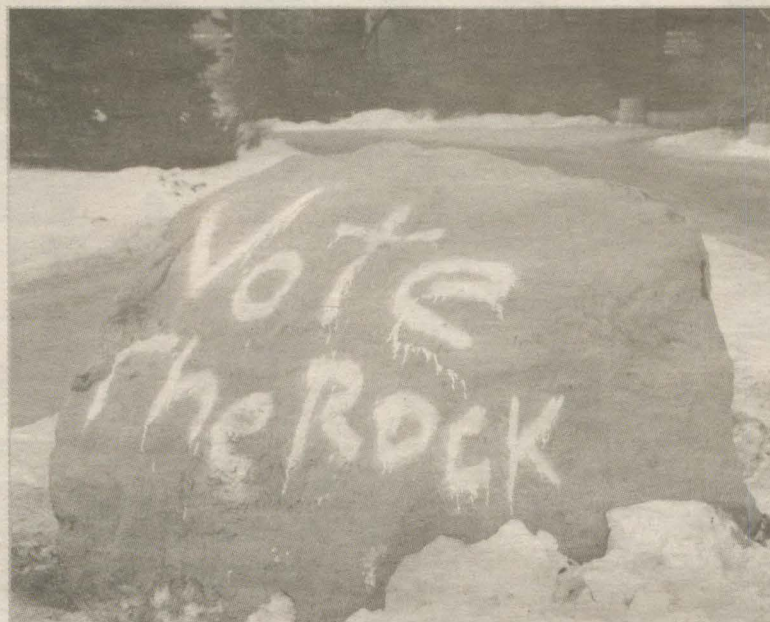
Regardless, the campaign itself is fair game for any rock, pink elephant, blow-up doll or the like.

When I asked the union's president, Brian West, what a rock's electoral success says about students' faith in their campus government, he said he didn't know. But he suggested that joke candidates in general create some excitement around election campaigns, which could only be positive.

Maybe I'm an idealist, but I fail to see anything positive in a rock splitting the vote in a race that already has eight human candidates running. And I don't think "joke" is the right word. I'd call it a mockery.

Student apathy is already an epidemic that seems to be sweeping across nearly every campus in the country. And UofC is no exception. In 2004, roughly 29 per cent of the student body cast a ballot. That number dropped to 23 per cent a year later — when "The Rock" ran its solid campaign — and shrunk to 19 per cent in this February's elections.

Such a rapid decline in turnout is



a major cause for alarm that should be raising red flags in the offices of the student union.

Admittedly, there's a whole swath of forces that contribute to political apathy: familial upbringing, educational background, interaction with the media, relative importance of the current issues and the strength of the candidates, to name a few.

And many of these influences largely can't be changed or manipulated by those who have any measure of control. But the last two — relative value of issues and candidates — clearly can.

The major challenge facing all democratic organizations is not so much increasing the value of those influences, but communicating that value.

In my mind, a student union is

sending the wrong message when it allows a rock to run next to candidates who could give their constituents a strong voice in external lobby efforts, or help the university retain students by creating a magnetic campus.

Rather, a rock's candidacy potentially cements the view that both the organization and the electoral process are meaningless wastes of time and money.

On Dalhousie's campus, The Rock's message should remain clear and present as DSU candidates finish up their campaigns. All 21 students in the running have a responsibility to prove not only that they are the most qualified for the respective jobs, but also that those jobs matter.

Strangely, the union's relevance in students' lives is a subject that

## Timeline

**Campaigning:** Feb. 27th to March 6th.

**Voting period:** March 7th to March 9th.

### Remaining Events:

**Friday, March 3rd** - Forum in the Student Union Building at 1:30pm

Photo courtesy of *The Gauntlet*, UofC's student newspaper.

candidates rarely address directly. Classroom talks and debates are largely taken up by personal introductions and key policy points.

But why should apathetic voters care that a candidate promises to involve them in making important decisions when they don't know what those decisions mean to their lives?

How can students be expected to support a candidate who wants to strengthen societies' roles when most aren't involved in societies and some don't even know what they are?

The obvious answers to questions like those are unsettling, but the strength of each candidate will be based on his/her ability to prevent them from being asked.

Indeed, many of this year's candidates don't have a clue what their desired portfolios involve, nor do

they have sufficient experience to back up any claims to having the potential to do the work.

To make matters worse, these hacks — or "joke candidates" — can, and do, seek to compensate for their inadequacies by exaggerating what they can accomplish.

As a result, the remaining contenders must make even greater attempts to illustrate how their ideas and proposals would have a meaningful impact on students' lives.

Given that *The Gazette* also assumes the responsibility to ensure students make an educated vote, we've respectfully provided them with extensive coverage.

In the interest of fairness and objectivity, we've reported, within the scope of ethical journalism, only what each candidate said and outlined key responsibilities for their respective portfolios.

While considering each profile, students must determine if the candidates' promises are in step with both their backgrounds and the requirements of the job.

Ultimately, members of the DSU hold in their hands the power and the responsibility to deliver the student voice to university administrators, the provincial government and even the leader of the country.

Passionate and determined union leaders can also, at the very least, lay the groundwork for a richer community that draws all students into the fold.

It's now up to the electorate to acknowledge these and other capabilities, and bring in a group of students who could best fulfill them.

But I can't help them do it. I don't even go to this school.

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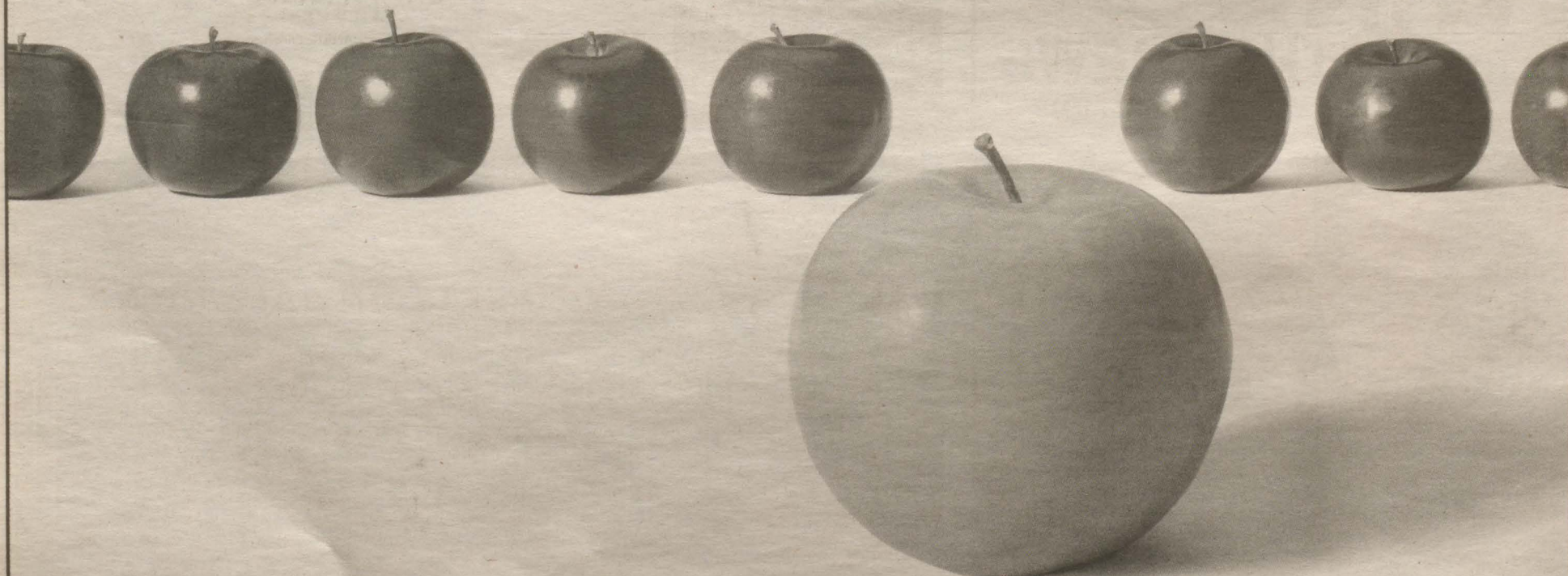
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## Issues facing the union

### President

**Student apathy:** The DSU is currently disconnected from the students it represents. The incoming president should work toward giving the union a higher profile across the Carleton, Sexton and Studley campuses, while communicating to the student body what the union does and why it's important. The president will also have the option to continue Destination DSU, a program that aims to involve students in determining the future direction of the union.

**The university's budget:** The memorandum of understanding — an agreement that puts a cap on tuition fees for all students except for those who come from abroad as well as those enrolled in medicine, dentistry, and law — imposes significant constraints on the university's budget. Administrators typically support increasing tuition for these students to avoid a deficit. The incoming president should be an effective voice for these clearly disadvantaged students, meanwhile proving to the entire student body that his/her actions are achieving results.

**Providing leadership:** An effective president must have the confidence and resolve to lead the union in a direction that's in step with students' needs and desires.

### Vice President (Internal)

**Shinerama:** The 2005 fundraiser brought in roughly \$16,000 less than the year before, marking the first campaign in seven years to not surpass the previous record. The vice president (internal) needs both creative and organizational skills in order to launch a successful fundraiser.

**Strengthening communication:** DSU societies can play an active role in efforts to involve more students in the union's activities. The winning candidate should facilitate these efforts while helping to create a more magnetic campus that will hook students in to staying at Dal.

### Vice President (Education)

**External lobbying:** The vice president (education) works closely with the union's provincial and federal lobby groups and must be up to date on government activities and lobby points. The winning candidate should be a strong communicator who can effectively and confidently represent student concerns when addressing political leaders. These skills will likely prove to be extremely important for the incoming vice president (education), as a provincial election may be called during his/her term.

**Academic integrity:** Two years after Dal released its plagiarism report, which found that 30 per cent of undergraduate students admitted to plagiarizing within the previous three years, academic dishonesty is still an endemic problem that threatens the reputation of the university. As the head student senator, the vice president (education) should work closely with various senate committees to help determine effective means of educating students about the university's policy and recourses for violation.

### Vice President (Student Life)

**The Grawood:** Dalhousie's campus bar has recently attracted a growing number

of students. Events featuring local, inexpensive acts with mass appeal are giving many critics the confidence that the campus bar can be pulled out of the slump it has been in for many years. Students should ask what the candidates plan to do to maintain the bar's recent successes, while making it even more of a central meeting place.

**Frosh Week, Charity Ball and other major events:** A student's first week at university leaves a lasting impression, and there are always new ideas about how to make next year's orientation week the best that it can be. The vice president (student life) is responsible for organizing all of the other big DSU events and for motivating fellow students.

**Campus spirit:** Bringing together roughly 15,500 students from three different campuses isn't easy, but someone's got to do it. The successful vice president (student life) must try to revive Dal's school spirit, which most candidates admit is lacking.

### Senator:

**Academic integrity:** The plagiarism report of 2004 revealed that academic integrity, or a lack thereof, is of major concern at Dalhousie. And not quite two months ago, the co-chairs of the senate discipline committee—the body that deals with plagiarism cases—resigned due to disagreements and misunderstandings between them and other academic bodies on campus. Student senators must push academic integrity to the forefront, and in doing so, protect the worth of every Dal student's degree.

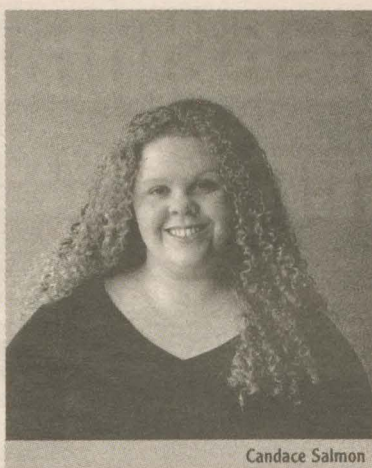
**Committees:** Much of the "grunt work" of senate is done at the committee level. Senators must keep up-to-date on major developments and concerns. They're also responsible for seeking student opinions to give them an educated perspective while on senate committees.

### Board of Governors:

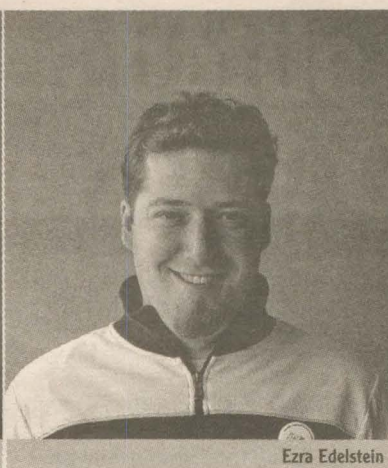
**MOU:** The memorandum of understanding, the document that caps Nova Scotia tuition increases at 3.9 per cent until 2008, isn't all good news. The faculties of medicine, dentistry and law, which are only offered by Dal in the province, are excluded from the agreement. International differential fees and full-cost recovery programs, such as masters of business, are also excluded from the cap, as are any additional fees, such as "renovation" or "renewal" charges.

**BAC Report:** The university Budget Affairs Committee recently released its recommendations for next year's budget, which include tuition increases for international students and professional programs ranging from 5.9 to 8.9 per cent. As the body that approves the budget, student representatives on the BoG are responsible for bringing student concerns to the board. A silent protest last year, coordinated by student societies and the union, contributed to the board members delaying their vote on the budget.

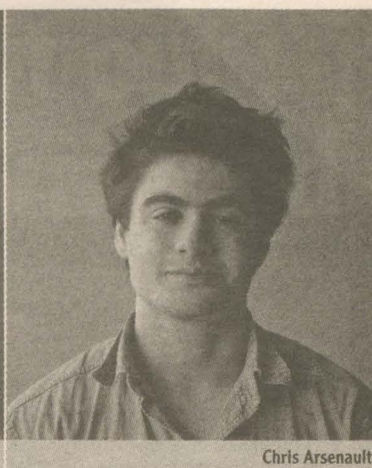
**International Differential Fees:** A tuition revenue ceiling put in place by the province means Dal may no longer be in the black — and the university is looking to recoup its losses in other places such as international student differential fees.



Candace Salmon



Ezra Edelstein



Chris Arsenaault

# President

REID SOUTHWICK  
News Editor

**Responsibilities:** Chief executive officer of the DSU, act as the official spokesperson for students, sits on the board of governors and the senate, develops and formulates policy, reviews federal, provincial, municipal and university policies that affect the academic, financial and social interests of students, and recommends to council appropriate action. The president also represents the interests and policies of the student union and its membership during policy formulation by external organizations of which the union is a member.

### Jeremy de Jong

Age: 20

Hometown: Plymouth, England

**Major:** Third-year neuroscience and biology

**Past experience:** President of Risley Hall, 2005/06; Studley house president, 2004/05; Member of neuroscience society, 2003/04; Floor representative work in Studley house of Howe hall, 2003/04

**Sexiest woman alive:** Beyonce Knowles

**Amount of time regularly spent in the Grawood:** Trivia night every week on Thursday

**Most amount of beer consumed in two hours:** 100 shots in 100 minutes

**Most amount of clothes taken off during strip poker:** Never played

de Jong says he can bring a fresh perspective to the president's office of the DSU.

He says current President Ezra Edelstein, who has also been a member of the board of governors for three years, has become "bogged down" with the current direction of the union.

Dalhousie's student government is isolated from the people it represents, says de Jong, and can't reach its potential unless students become more aware about what it has to of-

fer.

Although he supports the premise of Destination DSU, Edelstein's brainchild that aims to engage students in helping steer the direction of the union, de Jong says the current president hasn't played a big enough role in the process.

He's is critical of Edelstein's decision to involve Tim Mary, a freelance entrepreneur, with the union's program.

"He was elected to represent the students," says de Jong. "You'd think he would try to lead the efforts."

Taking a leading role in improving communication with students is a large part of de Jong's campaign. He says he wants to help market CKDU-FM more effectively so that students will tune into the station to learn about DSU activities as well as the university's budget and how tuition is set.

"If students know what decisions are being made and how they can contact the people making the decisions, they would probably have a higher confidence in the student union," he says.

In the battle to lower tuition fees, the DSU's lobbying activities through the Canadian Alliance of Student Associations must be given a higher profile so that students will be able

to provide input and feedback on the efforts, says de Jong.

"A louder lobbyist group and more student involvement in the lobbyist group would probably help out in lowering tuition," he says. "And I think if students were part of that and saw it happening, they would be more confident the union is doing something for them."

### Candace Salmon

Age: 21

Hometown: Woodstock, N.B.

**Major:** Fourth-year, political science

**Past experience:** DSU senator, 2005/06; DSU councillor, 2005/06, chair of DSU executive review, 2005/06; frosh week executive, 2005/06; member of senate discipline committee, senate committee of learning and teaching, 2005/06

**Sexiest man alive:** Johnny Depp

**Amount of time regularly spent in the Grawood:** Four hours a week

**Most amount of beer consumed in two hours:** "I don't remember."

Salmon wants to help build a sense of community on campus, which she says is currently missing.

Continued on next page...

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## Presidential candidates

Continued from previous page

She says she wants to unite students from the Carleton, Sexton and Studley campuses.

"We can do a lot more to promote the community of Dalhousie and build lot of pride in our school and, in turn, that affects enrolment, which affects tuition," she says.

If elected, Salmon says she would launch a "Dalhousie Day," similar to Canada Day, when students would sport their Dal threads and throw parties in celebration of their love for the school.

To get students more involved with the union, Salmon says she would advertise and hold more events across the three campuses, placing greater emphasis on Carleton and Sexton.

And she says her experience with chairing the executive review committee, the union's watchdog for the five executive members, has given her a broader perspective on what students want to see in their student government.

As a former board member of Mothers Against Drunk Driving Canada, and current member of MADD Halifax, Salmon says she has the leadership skills needed to capture the imagination of the Dal student body. She says current President Ezra Edelstein hasn't lifted the bar high enough.

"In terms of getting students interested in the DSU and letting them know what's going on and giving them pride in their campus, I don't think he's done a great job with that so far this year," she says. "And that's where I would focus."

Salmon is also concerned with the negative implications that the university's proposed increases for the international student differential fee would have on enrollment.

She says there is a link between the hike of \$810 and the drop of international student registration by 79 students that coincided in September 2005.

"It is very important to lobby and make sure that the administration understands why this is such a huge problem," she says.

### Ezra Edelstein

Age: 25

Hometown: Kettleby, Ont.

Major: Chemistry major and math minor on hold

**Past experience:** DSU president, 2005/06; board of governors representative, 2003/06; Envision Halifax participant, 2005; student residence and relations committee member, 2003/05; DSU councillor, 2004/05; chemistry society president, 2004/05; University Neighbourhood Watch Association, 2004/05; NSPIRG board member, 2002-2005; Runoff whitewater kayak society founding member and president, 2001

**Sexiest woman alive:** Angelina Jolie  
**Amount of time regularly spent in the Grawood:** Eight hours a week

**Most amount of beer consumed in two hours:** "I have no idea."

**Most amount of clothes taken off during strip poker:** Never played

Edelstein wants to keep his job and he's confident he won't get fired.

He says he's running for re-election in part because he wants to ensure Destination DSU, a program he launched this year that aims to gather student input in determining the direction of the union, becomes an annual event.

Although this year's turnout was largely limited to society members, Edelstein says that students are already becoming more involved with the union, which he says is evidenced by the roster of nearly two dozen candidates running in the elections. But Destination DSU will take time before its full potential becomes realized, he says.

"Anyone who thinks they can come into these positions and change the DSU in a year is totally out of their mind."

To further improve the visibility of the union on campus, Edelstein wants to set up tables in common areas in all three campuses where he would also promote the services it offers, such as Campus Copy, the Student Advocacy Service and legal services.

And because he's already got his feet wet in the union's offices, he says he won't have to spend a large part of his term figuring out his capabilities and responsibilities as president.

"Students will get an extra four months of actual work out of me," he says.

Edelstein says he's proven his leadership skills by dealing with problems that arise during the day-to-day operation of the union, by mitigating fights between staff members, and by giving Dal students a voice through his provincial and federal lobbying efforts.

On campus, Edelstein and DSU policy analyst Karen Kwan prepared a formal response to the university's operating budget proposals, calling for equal tuition fee increases for all students. To ensure Dal balances its books, the union under Edelstein suggested that the budget committee reduce spending on its new recruitment program.

"We have proposed some very reasonable alternatives to the BAC XXII report and we'll see what the committee comes out with," he says. "Until then, I'm just going to have to wait and see."

### Chris Arsenault

Age: 22

Hometown: Halifax, N.S.

Major: Third-year history

**Past experience:** Helped create Students Taking Action in Chiapas, a Dal society that's now a national student organization, 2001; worked with CBC, 2001; writes for *Chronicle Herald*

**Sexiest woman alive:** Penelope Cruz

**Amount of time regularly spent in the Grawood:** "Not a whole lot."

**Most amount of beer consumed in two hours:** 13 keg glasses

**Most amount of clothes taken off during strip poker:** "Everything."

Arsenault says the current members of the DSU haven't provided students with enough leadership in challenging the provincial government on widespread tuition increases.

"All they have been doing is holding closed-door meetings with politicians and that's not where political power really comes from. It's through mobilizing the students and I don't think we've seen that from the current government," he says.

Although he respects the memorandum of understanding signed between the Tories and the province's

universities, which has been criticized for allowing schools to balance their books on the backs of international and professional students, Arsenault says such agreements can be broken.

The province-wide student strike in Quebec, for example, forced the Charest government to reverse its decision to cut \$103 million in bursaries.

"If you become a force for political power and have people in the streets, you can do things," says Arsenault.

The sometimes *Chronical Herald* columnist, who is running with a slate of candidates including Elaine Major, Seth Leon and Nathan Derejko, says he and his team wants to hold a referendum on severing the union's membership in the Canadian Alliance of Student Associations, a federal lobby group.

Arsenault says CASA has been ineffective in mobilizing students. He says his team would rather direct the union's money and resources to the provincial level where it can focus on the MoU.

Arsenault also says he will use his public speaking and writing skills to improve communication with students. He plans to continue using CKDU and *The Gazette* to spread the union's message across campus. And he says he will hold classroom talks during the beginning of the school year, and set up tables across campus year-round.

"Through communication and mobilization and being a guy who is easily accessible and really down to earth and who's been around this town for a long time, I think I can really reach out to students and lead this union."

### Kate Parker

Age: 22

Hometown: Miramichie, N.B.

Major: Forth-year commerce with focus on international business and finance

**Past experience:** Marketing and logistics officer for the Dal international business society, 2003/04; member of commerce society, 2002/03; Canadian youth ambassador to Brazil, 2001/02; president of the New Brunswick youth council, 1999; chair of national youth council, 1999;

**Sexiest man alive:** John Travolta

**Amount of time regularly spent in the Grawood:** Five hours a week

**Most amount of beer consumed in two hours:** 12

**Most amount of clothing taken off during strip poker:** "Whatever it takes."

Parker says she'll have an open door policy with students if they elect her president of the student union. She says she's willing to hold office hours in locations other than on the second floor of the SUB, which she sees as an intimidating place to approach student leaders.

Students could meet Parker at the Grawood or the T-Room to provide feedback and pitch ideas, she says.

"The best ideas come from the students," says Parker. "If people aren't going to go to your door then you should be willing to go to them."

Parker is critical of what she sees as "the DSU clique." She says the DSU executive and council are closely-knit groups that sometimes discourage students from getting involved.

"But we should all feel part of the union because we are all members. We all pay student fees," she says.

Parker, a former youth ambassador to Brazil, says a lack of communication has created the current gap between students and the union. And she suggests establishing a separate committee, holding regular classroom talks and poster on campus as possible methods of bridging that gap.

Parker is also confident that she can provide leadership within the union because her definition of the word involves teamwork.

"You have your portfolio but it is so crucial that everyone works together. And as president, you have to facilitate it," she says. "People are going to get down and, as a leader, you have to pick them up."


And Parker says she can lead students because she identifies with them.

"What I say to people is that I'm real," she says. "I understand the issues, I relate to a lot of the issues, I suffer from a lot of the issues and what makes me a leader is that I'm willing to take the initiative."

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## Vice-President (Education)

AARON GILLIS  
Staff Contributor

**Responsibilities:** Manage the DSU's Student Advocacy Service and the DSU's course evaluations, develop and formulate policy on academic matters, represent the DSU on Senate and on Senate Academic Priorities and Budget Committee, Senate Committee on Academic Administration and Senate Nominating Committee, and responsible for lobbying the government on education-related issues through the DSU's federal and provincial lobby organizations.

**Honorarium:** \$18,000

### Seth Leon

**Age:** 25  
**Hometown:** Point Claire, Que.  
**Major:** Second-year masters of developmental economics (MDE)  
**Past experience:** Member of NSPIRG's board of directors 2004/06; chairs a "handful" of committees  
**Sexiest woman alive:** Kim Gordon  
**Amount of time regularly spent in the Grawood:** "I've had lunch there, once."  
**Most amount of beer consumed in two hours:** "Too much."

Leon wants to fight for improved access to post-secondary education.

"Dalhousie is such an important institution in Nova Scotia, and in the community as well," says Leon.

As member of the board of directors for the Nova Scotia Public Interest Research Group, Leon has an active interest in community and environmental concerns and says he would bring those skills to the vice president (education) office.

"Being active in the student community is the first priority," he says. "Not being at a desk, in an office, held away."

Leon says that in discussions with the provincial government on behalf of students, it's important to actively involve and mobilize the student population.

"If we have thousands of students that are engaged and support these ideas, it's a lot different than trying to negotiate over a table where your relative position is much smaller."

Leon would like to see the vice president (education) take a more active role in supporting and lobbying for access to education for single mothers.

"People on social assistance can't apply for student loans, or aren't granted student loans," he says. "There's a high correlation between

single mothers and being on social assistance."

### Yuriy Shelkovyy

**Age:** 26  
**Hometown:** Chernigiv, Ukraine  
**Major:** Second-year public administration  
**Past experience:** Student senator, 2005/06; city councillor in Chernigiv, Ukraine, ???  
**Favourite local bar:** Athens Restaurant  
**Sexiest woman alive:** Maria Sharapova  
**Amount of time regularly spent in the Grawood:** "Sometimes with friends."  
**Most amount of beer consumed in two hours:** "I didn't count."  
**Most amount of clothes taken off during strip poker:** "A tie and jacket."

Shelkovyy says he will lobby the provincial and federal government to reduce sales taxes on textbooks and increase access to education for students from average-income families.

Obtaining off-campus work permits for international students is also a priority, he says.

"A lot of international students are waiting for this decision," says Shelkovyy. "I think the DSU may be a very good player on this issue."

He says he would work with the university's international student services to ensure the permits get to students faster.

Shelkovyy currently sits on the university senate, and says it's important to make students aware of the internal decisions of the university.

"It is important to make sure students know the academic regulations, and make sure they have a better quality education," he says.

He also plans to create a round table for discussion with societies

and student faculty associations.

He says the forum would help students become more actively involved in the decision-making process of the union.

This forum would also allow for more dialogue between the university and the DSU, he says, and could allow the university to spend money more effectively and optimize costs based on the expectations of students.

### Ann Beringer

**Age:** 21  
**Hometown:** Kezar Falls, Maine  
**Major:** Fourth-year history and German  
**Past experience:** Chief returning officer for DSU elections, 2005; DSU international student representative, 2005/06, chair of the Dalhousie arts and social sciences society, 2005/06; vice president of the German society, 2005/06; vice president (external) for the international students association, 2005/06; president of the history society, 2005/06  
**Sexiest man alive:** Paul Bettany  
**Amount of time regularly spent in the Grawood:** Two days a week  
**Most amount of beer consumed in two hours:** Three yards  
**Most amount of clothing taken off during strip poker:** "I suck at poker."

Beringer says Dalhousie's academic regulations must be changed to better serve the interests of students, particularly in the areas of academic integrity and plagiarism.

"Obviously, something has to be wrong if both of the chairs of the senate disciplinary committee resign in protest," she says.

She also says the university must clarify basic academic standards, such as the use of Canadian spelling.

"Students are being brought before the senate disciplinary committee because they would use Americanized spellings in their papers and their professors would fail them," she says.

Dalhousie's use of the anti-plagiarism service, turnitin.com, is a concern, she says, as it undermines the intellectual property rights of students. Dalhousie's contract with the service expires this August.

Beringer previously worked with Premier Rodney MacDonald during his tenure as minister of immigration.

She says MacDonald shares her commitment to off-campus work permits for international students and improved access to education.

"If Nova Scotia wants to grow and expand, you have to want us to be here and want us to stay here," says the Maine native, on behalf of international students. "He wants to make it a viable place for that to happen."

Beringer would like to introduce an "anti-calendar," a student-initiated contrast to the Registrar's Academic Calendar. This would replace DSU course evaluations, which were eliminated in 2004.

"It gives you the opportunity to think about classes in a broader context from people who have taken the subject before and know what they're talking about"

### Mike Tipping

**Age:** 21  
**Hometown:** Orono, Maine  
**Major:** Fourth-year political science  
**Past experience:** Society president of Halifax Action, 2005; political activist and lobbyist with the Maine People's Alliance, a citizen's action group; speaker at a state convention of the League of Women Voters, 2005

**Sexiest woman alive:** "Scarlett Johansson... I mean, my girlfriend."  
**Amount of time regularly spent in the Grawood:** Couple of hours a week  
**Most amount of beer consumed in two hours:** "I don't remember."  
**Most amount of clothing taken off during strip poker:** "I was down to my boxers once."

Mike Tipping is running for vice president (education) because of a lifelong interest in the political process.

"I feel I owe it to Dal," he says. "I find this kind of work incredibly exciting, when I'm fighting for a good cause like education."

He says academic integrity must be a focal point in this position.

"There's huge debate right now with academic integrity," he says. "There needs to be a cohesive central policy on that for all students and all faculty."

Tipping says education costs are long-term problems, so the DSU must work today to improve the lives of future students.

"It's not going to go down this year. It's not going to go down next year," he says. "But if we start working now, if we start getting students involved, we can reach these goals."

The DSU must take a position between aggressive protest and apathy, says Tipping, adding that a pragmatic perspective will engage a greater majority of students.

At the national level, Tipping would lobby for a dedicated, per-student education transfer.

He says the support of Dal's federal lobby group is essential for achieving this goal.

"We need to get CASA on board," he says. "Our national lobby group isn't representing, in this instance, the best interests of Dal."

Otherwise, he says CASA provides the university with strong representation on other issues



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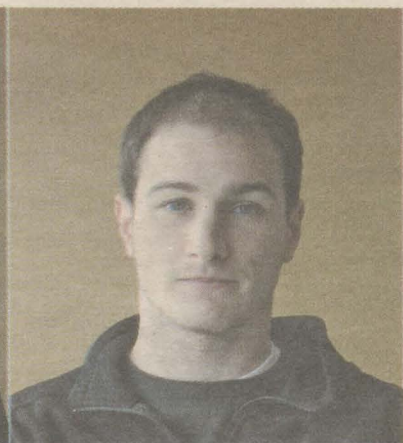
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Elaine Major



Fendi Michael Kovendi



DALHOUSIE  
STUDENT  
UNION



Chris Ide



Jennifer Smith

## Vice-President (Internal)

REID SOUTHWICK  
News Editor

**Responsibilities:** DSU's chief communications officer, serves as the DSU liaison for Carleton and Sexton campuses, societies and residences, ensures communication between all individual members, societies and organizations of the DSU is clear and consistent, looks after the Student Accessibility Fund, Shinerama, the Student Handbook and the DSU website, and chairs various DSU committees: the Council for the Promotion of Diversity on Campus, Grants Committee, Health Professions Council, Residence Council, Sexton Campus Advisory Committee and the Society Review Committee.

**Honorarium:** \$21,000 (app.)

### Jennifer Smith

**Age:** 21  
**Hometown:** Quispamsis, N.B.  
**Major:** Fourth-year sociology and social anthropology  
**Past experience:** DSU residence representative, 2004/05; vice president of Risley Hall charity committee, Shirreff hall food and environment representative on DSU council, 2003/04  
**Sexiest man alive:** Sean Connery  
**Amount of time regularly spent in the Grawood:** Six or seven hours a week  
**Most amount of beer consumed in two hours:** Nine  
**Most amount of clothing taken off during strip asshole:** Five items of clothing

Smith wants all DSU societies to have a website. She says that if important society information, such as meeting times and places, were readily available for students, they would be more inclined to get involved with the groups that share their interests.

"Dal isn't a community right now. It's more of a place where we go for school. It's purely academic," she says. "The vp (internal) is going to have to change that."

Smith says societies should play a large role in getting more students involved with the union and strengthening their sense of campus community.

But after taking a year off from student government, Smith says she realized how difficult it is for the common student to learn about the union's activities. To change that, she says she wants to look into sending mass emails and revamping the website.

As vice president (internal), Smith says she would also hold Shinerama fundraisers throughout the year, involving a broader group of students than simply frosh, to

compliment the regular campaign that runs from the end of the summer to the fall.

She says the 2005 campaign, which raised \$16,000 less than the year before, was "almost embarrassing." To make a marked improvement, she says she would put more focus on approaching corporate sponsors.

### Fendi Michael Kovendi

**Age:** 21  
**Hometown:** Toronto, Ont.  
**Major:** Third-year biology, minor in business  
**Past experience:** Soccer team representative on varsity council, 2003/2004  
**Sexiest woman alive:** Angelina Jolie  
**Amount of time regularly spent in the Grawood:** Every so often  
**Most amount of beer consumed in two hours:** Five pints  
**Most amount of clothing taken off during strip poker:** "All the way."

As vice president (internal), Kovendi says he would offer an airport shuttle service to students during peak times, such as after exams and just before and after reading week. He says he would also host an open-air pub during frosh week where returning students could reacquire themselves with their colleagues.

He says he would also hire student representatives as part-time employees to serve as liaisons between the DSU and the student body, delivering information and feedback to both groups. And he suggested comment cards or graffiti walls as other possible means that students could use to provide feedback to the union.

To strengthen the Dal community, Kovendi says he wants to promote incentives for students to join societies and for these groups to

communicate the DSU's activities to students.

"You want to have students involved, get that community feel and have everyone working toward that common purpose," he says. "The key is to keep societies organized and keep them focused on what they are doing. You want them to stay active."

As a means of ensuring the Shinerama campaign is a success this year, Kovendi says he would organize "fun and interesting" activities for the students involved so that many of them don't simply spend most of their time on street corners. During his frosh week, he says he heard of students cleaning ships on the waterfront and thinks activities such as those would help bring in more money and be more enjoyable for Shiners.

### Chris Ide

**Age:** 23  
**Hometown:** Oakville, Ont.  
**Major:** Fourth-year concentrated honours in biochemistry and molecular biology  
**Past experience:** Science representative on DSU, 2005/06; councillor on health plan committee, 2005/06; academic chair for the faculty of science, 2005/06; science representative on the academic and external committee, 2005/06; vice president of the Dalhousie biochemistry society, 2005/06; co-coordinator of humans against homophobia, a new society  
**Sexiest woman alive:** Amanda Peet  
**Amount of time regularly spent in the Grawood:** Five hours a week  
**Most amount of beer consumed in two hours:** "Enough not to remember"  
**Most amount of clothing taken off during strip poker:** "All the way."

Ide wants to help build a student union that's based on his campaign adage, "for students, by students."

He says students can offer many of the services that the union currently out-sources to private groups. Third-year law students, for example, could provide the DSU's legal services. The association for computing machinery, a Dal society, could maintain the union's website at a much lower cost, he says.

And Destination DSU, a program that aims to gather student input in determining the direction of the union, could be facilitated by a management student, and not an outside consultant such as the one brought in this year, says Ide.

"Instead of sending loads of money to all these external people and asking them, why can't we get students involved? we need to approach the students and say, 'hey, we need your help.'"

Ide says he's concerned about the lack of communication between students and the union, and the lack of students' interest in their elected representatives.

"Right now, I don't think it's arguable that student apathy is at its highest," he says.

As a means of attracting first-year students in to getting involved with the DSU, Ide says he'd work with the vp (student life) to give societies a higher profile during frosh week.

"Only the lucky few get in and get to know what's going on," he says.

Ide also wants to reorganize the Shinerama fundraiser to make the 2006 campaign more successful than it was last year, when it raised roughly \$16,000 less than the year before.

While he insists that any funds collected for a charity can never be disgraced, Ide suggests that forming an ad hoc committee for the Shin-

erama campaign would ensure that the donation pot grows.

### Elaine Major

**Age:** 30  
**Hometown:** Plymouth, England  
**Major:** First-year international development studies and Arabic  
**Past experience:** Member of Students Taking Action in Chiapas, a Dal society, 2006; training coordinator/administrator for the Royal British Legion Training Company, 2000; self-employed business analyst, 2000  
**Sexiest man alive:** Brad Pitt  
**Amount of time regularly spent in the Grawood:** Two hours a week  
**Most amount of beer consumed in two hours:** Six  
**Most amount of clothing taken off during strip poker:** Never played

Before speaking with *The Gazette*, Major wasn't fully aware of the vice president (internal)'s responsibilities involved with chairing the Shinerama fundraiser, but she says the campaign is "very important."

As a first-year student at Dal, Major says she didn't know anything about the DSU until she started getting involved with societies a few weeks ago. After she became a member of students taking action in Chiapas, she says she started to take a more active role on campus.

"I want students to be more involved and more aware of the DSU and all of the societies," she says.

If elected, Major says she would visit a different society every week. "I want to reach out to societies and take a proactive stance."

But she says she didn't know how these groups could help the university retain students on campus, and didn't have any suggestions for improving the DSU's web services.

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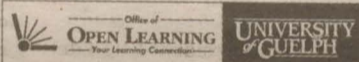
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Natalie MacLean



Christian Tschirhart



Nathan Derejko

## Board of Governors Representative

REID SOUTHWICK  
News Editor

**Responsibilities:** Represent student issues and interests at BoG meetings, plan board's lobbying strategy, and prepare a report on BoG activities for each DSU council meeting.

BoG rep. is a two-year appointment.

**Honorarium:** none

### Natalie MacLean

**Age:** 28  
**Hometown:** New Glasgow, N.S.  
**Major:** First-year medicine  
**Past experience:** First-year medicine class president, 2005/06; member of Dalhousie medical students society, 2005/06; program representative on Alberta graduate students association, 1998/98; social representative on residence council at Mount Allison University, 1998/99  
**Sexiest man alive:** Her husband, John Lewis  
**Amount of time regularly spent in the Grawood:** About two hours per month  
**Most amount of beer consumed in two hours:** Five  
**Most amount of clothing taken off during strip asshole:** Bra and underwear

MacLean says she would push the board of governors to realize more "creative ways" of raising funds to balance the university's books other than simply raising tuition.

"Students take top priority," she says. "Students are the reason why the university exists."

As a student with both undergraduate and graduate degrees who is now enrolled in a professional program, MacLean says she has a unique perspective on the constraints that tuition increases have on a student's academic life.

She says she's concerned that Dal's already high tuition fees for undergrads impose a major financial burden that may drain the resources of these students before they're able to pursue further studies.

MacLean says she'd be a strong voice on the board and aims to make it more accountable to students.

### Christian Tschirhart

**Age:** 19  
**Hometown:** Rosse, N.B.  
**Major:** Second-year political science and history  
**Past experience:** Page for the Nova Scotia legislature, 2005/2006; member of the Dalhousie water polo association, 2005/06; ideas and motivation executive for Meal Exchange, 2004/2006  
**Sexiest woman alive:** Gwen Stefani  
**Amount of time regularly spent in the Grawood:** Once every two weeks  
**Most amount of beer consumed in two hours:** Eight  
**Most amount of clothing taken off during strip asshole:** Four items

Tschirhart says he wants to bring the student voice to the board of governors.

If elected, he says he'd hold theme-based forums on campus, likely on a monthly basis, where students could learn about the issues of the day at the board and field their suggestions and concerns.

To bring additional visibility to the position, Tschirhart says he'd push for a board of governors section to be added to my.dsu.ca, the student union's online events listings.

When confronted with the challenge of pushing for lower tuition fee increases when many board members simply want to balance the university's books, Tschirhart says he'd always explore alternatives.

"We have to look outside of the traditional fundraising avenues of the university," he says.

"With that, we can look at possibly streamlining services and making spending more efficient. Involving corporate sponsorships might work as well."

### Nathan Derejko

**Age:** 27  
**Hometown:** Fort Saskatchewan, Alb.  
**Major:** Fourth-year political science  
**Past experience:** Founder of student coalition against war, 2001; founded chapters in the University of Alberta, 2001; University of Victoria, 2002; Dalhousie, 2004; member of NSPIRG board of directors, 2005/06; member of Red Cross working group on the dissemination of international law, 2005/06; member of various other grassroots organizations  
**Sexiest woman alive:** Gen Sander, his girlfriend  
**Amount of time regularly spent in the Grawood:** Once a year  
**Most amount of beer consumed in two hours:** Eight  
**Most amount of clothing taken off during strip asshole:** "I'm not a gambler."

Derejko wants to help students realize a more active role on campus.

He says students have become "passive observers rather than active participants" within the university.

"Student needs aren't being addressed right now, not at all," says Derejko. "We need to work actively with the board and Dalhousie and say, 'This is what we need.' There is a critical necessity to address this disempowerment students face."

He says he's committed to finding out what students want through activities, such as conducting surveys and setting up tables in the SUB, and meeting those desires head-on.

In the battle against tuition hikes, Derejko says he wants to push the DSU to lobby the provincial government for increased student funding.

He's also concerned with the "corporatization" of the university, and the lack of cooperative bookstores and grocery stores on campus.

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On March 7, 8, & 9 Re - Elect

# Ezra Edelstein

**Priorities:**

- More involvement with students on ALL Campuses
- Rejuvenate the T-Room
- Lobby for increased needs based bursaries
- Healthy, cheap food options in the SUB
- Increased support for student Societies
- Continue to publish weekly article in the Gazette
- Continue to promote and support Grad student participation in the DSU

as **DSU President**

"I believe that a great student union is one that provides opportunities for input from all of its members, and acts on their ideas and suggestions."

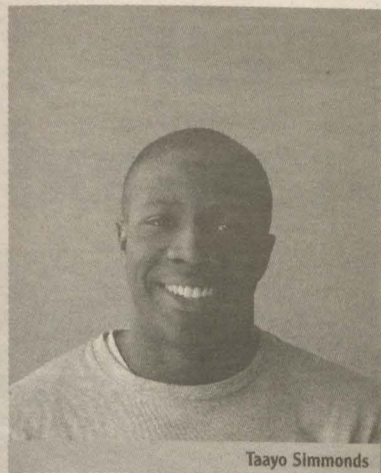
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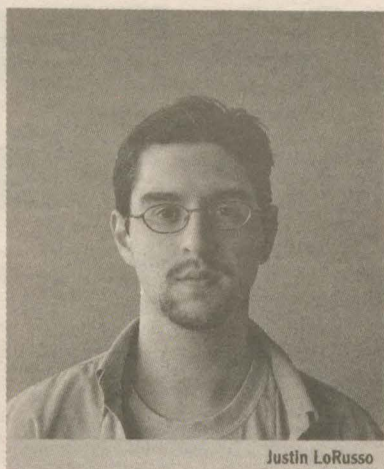




Taayo Simmonds



DALHOUSIE  
STUDENT  
UNION



Justin LoRusso

## Senator

AARON GILLIS  
Staff Contributor

**Responsibilities:** Represent and advocate for students in the university senate, plan a lobby strategy, and prepare a report on senate activities for every DSU council meeting.

**Honorarium:** none

*Note: There are three undergraduate positions and one graduate position available. Since there are two undergrads running, students must vote either yes or no for both candidates.*

### Taayo Simmonds

**Age:** 19  
**Hometown:** Halifax, N.S.  
**Major:** First-year political science  
**Past experience:** First year representative for Dalhousie arts and social sciences society, 2005/06; member of student advisory council for three years in high school  
**Sexiest woman alive:** Penelope Cruz  
**Amount of time regularly spent in the Grawood:** "Not a lot."  
**Most amount of beer consumed in two hours:** "I don't remember."

Simmonds wants to join the senate to be a voice for student concerns.

"The senate poses a great opportunity to advise the student body," he says. "That's why I'm going to be at the table, to give a student voice."

The first-year student has a long interest in student politics, serving as a first-year representative on the Dal arts and social sciences society, and having served on a student advisory council in high school.

Simmonds says academic integrity is the most important concern currently facing the senate, and he anticipates focusing on it.

"I see there are initiatives against plagiarism, and I see what the senate has done," he says. "They're raising awareness, and that's good."

He says the activities of the senate have brought the problem to the forefront, increasing knowledge and awareness among students over the

past few years.

Simmonds looks forward to working with the DSU through senate committees, including the discipline and academic appeals committees.

"I just think that's a very unique opportunity," he says.

### Justin LoRusso

**Age:** 22  
**Hometown:** Andover, Massachusetts  
**Major:** Third-year English  
**Past experience:** "I have guidance background; I don't have a political background." Fencing instructor, high school; scout leader, 1997/2000

**Sexiest man/woman alive:** "Me on both counts."

**Amount of time regularly spent in the Grawood:** Once a week

**Most amount of beer consumed in two hours:** A pitcher and a half

**Most amount of clothes taken off during strip poker:** Shirt, socks and pants

Justin LoRusso decided to run for senate to make a difference in the Dalhousie community.

"I spent almost three years complaining about how poorly-run things seem from the outside," he says. "Starting last November, I started attending council meetings because I knew a couple of people in there."

LoRusso says events in his own life allow him to relate to students

he will represent in the senate.

"Having been on academic probation and having to fight it, and having to prove that, as much as I'm accountable for my own academics, teachers as well as life experience are also part of the issue."

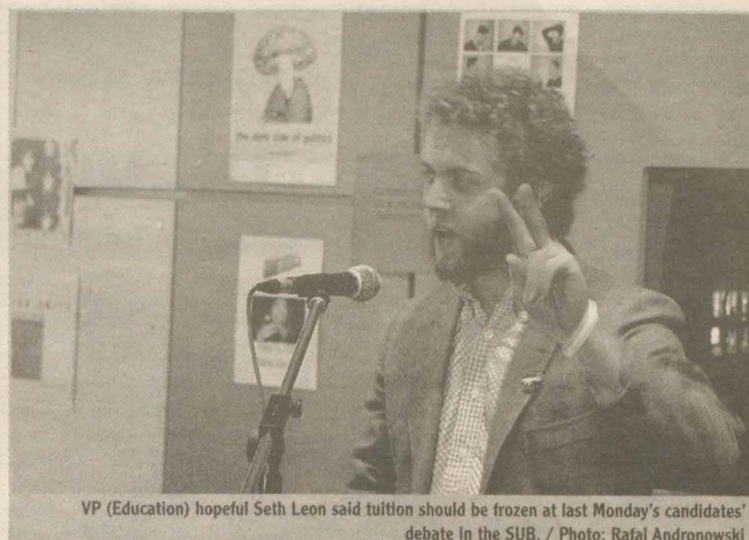
A student's academic abilities can't be judged purely on grades, he says, as personal conflicts and financial struggles can have an impact on a student's school life.

"You can't just say you're a bad student because you got 'D's,'" says LoRusso. "That's not how it works."

He says many students who run for senate positions will promote tuition or student advocacy issues just because they are popular issues, not from personal experience.

"In my case, I'm paying for university myself, and I also work a part-time job," he says. "I'm going at it alone, and I'm not really able to get home more than one time a year."

LoRusso says academic accountability and credibility are the most significant concerns faced by the Senate. The senate must crack down on plagiarism, he says, but must also work to protect academic integrity.



VP (Education) hopeful Seth Leon said tuition should be frozen at last Monday's candidates' debate in the SUB. / Photo: Rafal Andronowski

## Presidential candidates knock heads over food, tuition freeze

LINDSEY HEPBURN  
Staff Contributor

Candidates running for a place in the student union debated tuition, student apathy, and food in the lobby of the Dalhousie SUB on Feb. 27.

Contenders for the positions of president, vice president (education) and senate were given two minutes to discuss their platforms.

Presidential-hopeful Chris Arsenault, along with vice president (education) candidate Seth Leon, called for a tuition freeze. They also said they want to pull the DSU out of the Canadian Alliance of Student Associations (CASA), the union's federal lobby group.

But current president Ezra Edelstein, who's running for a second term, said a tuition freeze would do more harm than good and isn't feasible given Dalhousie's budget. He also pointed out that student referendum would be required to leave CASA.

Arsenault also said he wants the DSU to leave its food contract with Sodexo. Instead, he suggested having local foods available. Edelstein said the option wouldn't be cheap or budget-friendly.

Student apathy and the need for

more communication between the DSU and the student body were recurring themes throughout the debate.

Edelstein said the union's Destination DSU campaign has been successful and has allowed students a platform to voice their concerns and suggestions directly to the union.

Arsenault, however, said the strategy employed an overpaid consultant. He said awareness could be raised effectively through handing out flyers and organizing more on-campus student activity and campaigns.

Only a small crowd gathered to watch the candidates strut their stuff, while a steady stream of passersby occasionally stopped to see what was going on.

"I didn't even know this debate was happening today," said third-year law student Sarah Lennerton, who happened upon the event when she stopped at the SUB to use the bank machine. "If you look at the turnout here you can see the evidence of the student disinterest."

First-year history major Fiona Johnston stopped to listen to the debate on her way past. "It's a good debate," she said. "I wish I knew what it was about, though, so I could have more input."

## travel talk

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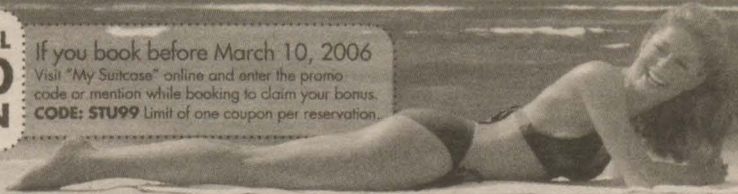
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# Candidates battle it out over Shinerama, Grawood

JESS McDIARMID  
REID SOUTHWICK  
News Editors

**Editors' note:** In an 11th-hour decision, the DSU elections committee split the all-candidates debate scheduled for Monday, Feb. 27 in half. While the debate for presidential, vice-president (education) and senate candidates remained on schedule, the remaining candidates were set to debate on Friday, March 3, when this issue of *The Gazette* would already be on the racks.

In the interest of fairness for the remaining candidates, and to provide a source of comprehensive elections information for its readers, *The Gazette* organized a mock debate, which chief returning officer Stefanie Butt moderated.

Electoral hopefuls in the encroaching DSU elections debated controversial topics such as Shinerama, the Grawood and tuition increases at a mock debate held Feb. 27.

Candidates for vice president (internal), vice president (student life) and board of governors representatives opened the forum, organized by *The Gazette*, with brief descriptions of their platforms followed by questions.

Vice president (internal) candidates discussed their plans to ensure Shinerama is a success next year. Chris Ide said Dal needs to organize how it implements the campaign, and needs to form a committee that will promote the fundraiser throughout the year. He also said a website where people could donate money was needed.

"We can't depend on this one day where people just donate money," said Ide. "What happens if we don't hit them up?"

He called for all students, instead of just frosh, to be involved in the campaign and for building a loonie-toonie train down Spring Garden Road to help create a sense of community.

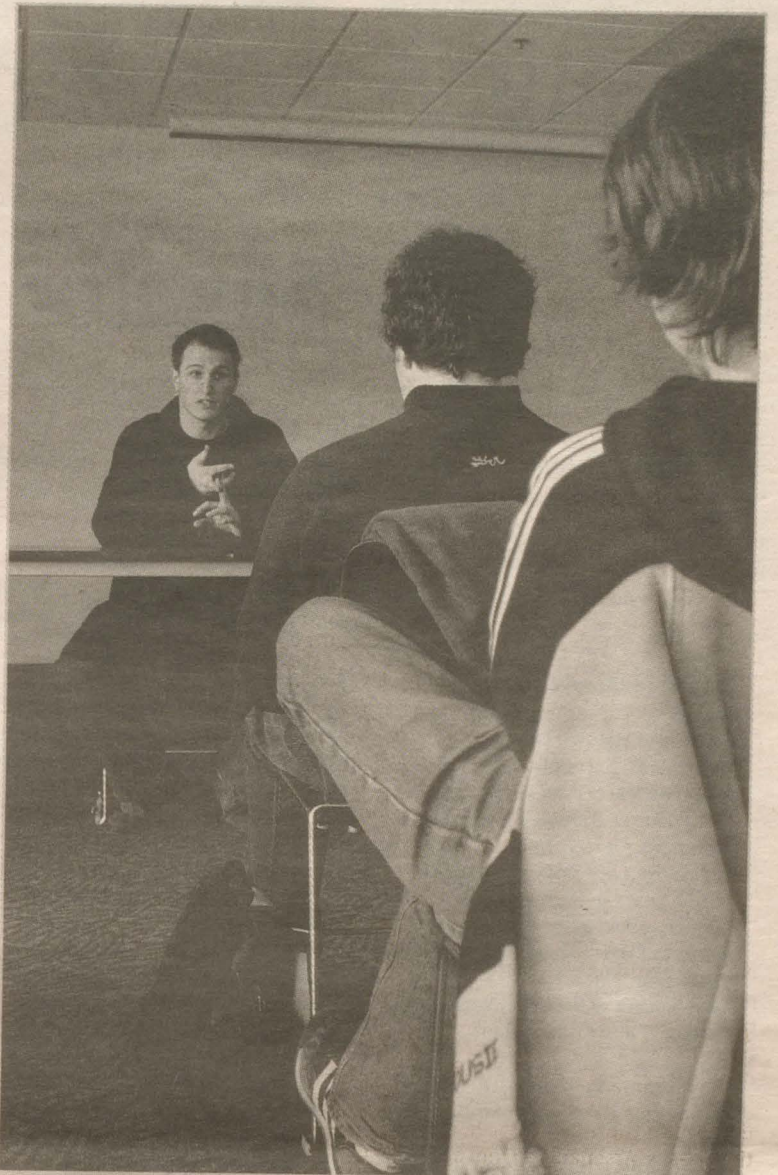
Michael Kovendi agreed with Ide that a sense of community was needed for the campaign to be a success. He said students need to get involved in initiatives other than just standing on street corners, such as hooking up with local businesses and holding carwashes.

"The key is that you're getting students interested, and it is a good cause," said Kovendi. "So, you know, have fun with the cause."

Jennifer Smith said Shinerama has to be an event where Dal unites, and it has to occur all year. More money could be raised by holding bar blitzes, contracting more corporate sponsorship and holding a Dal-wide event, said Smith. She pointed out that the amount of money raised in the 2005 Shinerama campaign was significantly less than in previous years, and called it "disgraceful," though said she wasn't "saying anything against Phil [Duguay, the current vice president (internal)]."

Ide, in his rebuttal, said Shinerama this year was a topic of contention, but he didn't think it appropriate to say fundraising efforts are disgraceful. A goal for the campaign had to be set, he said, unlike last year.

"I'm committed to breaking records that we've set before, and if we don't during frosh week, we will go



Candidate for VP (Internal) Michael Kovendi said Dal needs a greater sense of community at a mock debate on Monday. / Photo: Rafal Andronowski

throughout the whole year until we do," Ide said.

Smith clarified her remark, saying comments Duguay made about not committing his entire summer to Shinerama were disgraceful. "I just believe it should have been more of a priority," she said.

Candidates for vice president (student life) had to field a question on how they would maintain and improve upon the Grawood's recent success.

Chris McCluskey said the union needs to eliminate competition from other bars, put up locked buzz boards around campus, and keep bringing in popular bands that create a "buzz" on campus.

He also said he wants to reach out to students and cooperate with the vice president (internal).

"I want to go... get their suggestions, make them feel like they're actually having a say," said McCluskey.

Shaun Naugle said bringing societies to the Grawood was very important, along with buzz boards, and called for more aggressive advertising by using companies such as Molson to create hype on campus.

"We are very involved in our school work," he said, but he calls for more student involvement in non-academic ventures.

Society nights are huge, said Andrew Cook, who said that other bars advertise in Risley Hall, where he lives. He said he sees little Grawood promotion there.

"I feel that's something that should change because it's working for [other bars]," he said.

He called for more society nights, more bands and a better menu, and for the bar to be open for lunch ev-

ery day of the week. He also pointed out that the Grawood closes early, and perhaps should be made into a pre-drinking spot for students to go before going downtown.

McCluskey, who's the current marketing and promotions assistant for DSU bar services, including the Grawood, rebutted, calling Cook's plans "Grawood interference that's definitely not in the [student life] portfolio."

"If you want that position, you want my job," he said. He's not allowed to poster in Risley, he said, adding that the bar's already blocked off a night for societies.

Board of governors representatives Natalie MacLean and Christian Tschirhart agreed that tuition increases for international students and those in professional programs recommended the university's Budget Advisory Committee's recent report were a concern.

MacLean, a medical student who saw her tuition increase nine per cent last year, said she's committed to lobbying for reasonable tuition increases, particularly for professional programs.

"While I do have concern for myself I'm also extremely concerned about the people who are in undergraduate now," she said.

Tschirhart said the BAC is in a catch-22 because enrolment is dropping and lost tuition funds need to be made up elsewhere.

"We need to look outside the traditional funding formula to try to look at different ways that we can eventually cap tuition," said Tschirhart, adding that he agreed with the DSU response to the report, which said tuition increases should be equal for all programs.

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## Candace Salmon for President

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# “Leftist slate” calls for sweeping changes to union

NEAL CODY  
Staff Contributor

An unofficial slate of candidates promises to deliver major changes to the student union if elected, such as pulling out of the national lobby group and sparking a more mobilized student government.

“We’re definitely not happy with the way the DSU has run so far,” says the group’s presidential candidate, Chris Arsenault. “We want to get in there and shake things up.”

The “leftist slate,” as it’s dubbed by some observers, is comprised of Arsenault, Nathan Derejko, candidate for board of governors, Seth Leon, candidate for vice president (education) and Elaine Major, candidate for vice president (internal).

Current Vice President (Internal) Phil Duguay, who was part of an unofficial leftist slate with current president Ezra Edelstein in last year’s campaign, says he’s happy to see a left-wing slate running.

“However, you need to temper your position when you come to power,” says Duguay. “Change is slow, especially in a big bureaucratic institution, and this is a very bureaucratic institution.”

This year’s unofficial slate decided to run and advertise together to promote its common goals of better communication within the DSU and the community and increased student leadership and mobilization.

“We want to move the student union in a more progressive direction,” says Arsenault. “One person with a seat really can’t do that themselves.” The group acknowledges they may not all be elected, but say they’re willing to work hard alongside whoever else gets in.

All of the candidates have backgrounds in political grassroots organizations, such as the Student Coalition Against War (SCAW) and NSPIRG — backgrounds they say will help them in their new roles, if elected.

A major topic on the group’s agenda is their promise to hold a referendum on pulling the DSU out



Candidates Chris Arsenault, Elaine Major and Seth Leon (L-R) are running as an unofficial “leftist” slate on promises to pull the DSU out of its national lobby organization and call for a tuition freeze. / Photo: Rafal Andronowski

of its national lobby organization, the Canadian Alliance of Student Associations (CASA).

The lobby group, they say, is ineffective and too closely-connected with the Liberal Party of Canada.

But Duguay says CASA, even though it’s a relatively new organization, has accomplished a lot.

“You couldn’t ask for better results from CASA recently,” says Duguay. CASA was successful in getting a First Ministers meeting on post-secondary education, held last week in Ottawa, Duguay says. “That’s something that CASA’s been pushing for for a long time. It happened,” he says.

He also points out that many of CASA’s demands for PSE were included in the Liberal budget before the party lost control of the government. “CASA was very successful in lobbying the Liberal government,” says Duguay. “I think CASA’s going to be successful lobbying any government.”

Arsenault also criticizes CASA’s sole focus on tuition and accessibility, and its lack of a position on other student issues such as “date rape on campus, war and poverty,” a stance he calls “disgraceful.”

“We think student issues go beyond lobbying for tuition,” says Arsenault.

The slate also wants to see a tuition freeze, a policy that Duguay calls a “Band-Aid over a bullet hole.”

Freezing tuition wouldn’t solve deep-seated issues, says Duguay. CASA and the union’s provincial lobby group, the Alliance of Nova Scotia Student Associations (ANSSA), are looking for long-term solutions with their positions, he says.

The slate’s candidates say that if it was in their hands, the union would remain in ANSSA, and they would wait to gauge student opinion before they considered joining the Canadian Federation of Students after withdrawing from CASA. The CFS is generally more left-leaning in its policies than CASA and ANSSA.

The DSU is legally bound to CASA, Duguay says.

Separating from the organization would be difficult. But Duguay agrees that students need to be more boisterous in lobby efforts on campus, and says the DSU would be happy to facilitate any students who wish to organize events.

Arsenault also says he’d like the DSU to start a co-operative house for students as a pilot project to protect them from rooming houses and unsavoury landlords. And he says the slate was endorsed by the Dawgfather.

Although the members of the group don’t dismiss the slate’s “leftist” label, Arsenault says, they stress that they’re like any other student at Dal. “We’re not a bunch of pinkos,” he says, laughing. “And we’re definitely not looking to burn down the SUB.”

## What is it like to lose a DSU election?



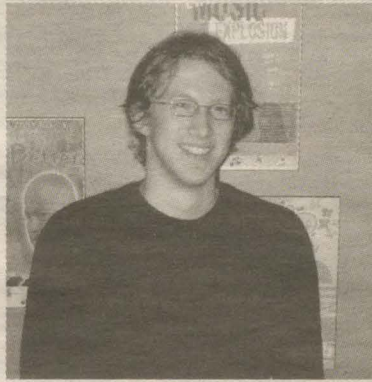
At first, it feels like you’ve just wasted a whole lot of time for what seems like nothing. Now, I realize that it was probably a gift, as I’ve benefited professionally more from losing than I likely would have from winning.

Kevin Wasko, lost election for president, 2004, 2005



Nobody likes to lose. I won the first election I ran in, and then I had the balls to run again. It was upsetting, but at the end of the day there is a whole lot more to life than the DSU.

Mark Szepes, lost election for vice president (student life), 2005



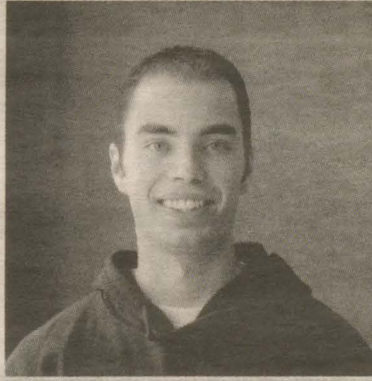
At first, maybe the same way Brodeur felt losing to the Russians in the quarterfinals. Then, kind of hungry. Finally, I decided to stay involved regardless, and strengthen the conviction I can pull off some crazy events next year.

Chris McCluskey, lost election for vice president (student life), 2005



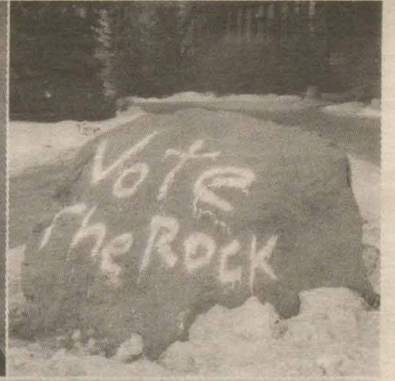
Losing an election is not easy. You work really hard to prepare for it and put a lot on the table. Basically, it sucks. Nothing prepares you for the feeling as the results are displayed and you lose. You find yourself thinking, ‘Why did I just put myself through all that?’

Ashley O’Brien, lost election for vice president (internal), 2005



I’m not going to sugarcoat it. Losing sucks big time. But, it’s making a difference that counts and you don’t have to win to do that, you just have to run. Everyone who runs in these elections are getting involved with the DSU, and that has always been my biggest goal. A little advice from a person who makes politics a profession: When you think it’s in the bag, you’ve already lost.

Matt Godwin, lost election for vice president (internal), 2005



(Declined to comment)

The Rock, lost election for University of Calgary student union president, 2005

# Lackluster losses

Former DSU president says there’s light after a disappointing election

NEAL CODY  
Staff Contributor

There are few people more experienced in the drama and drudgery of DSU elections than Kevin Wasko.

The Saskatchewan native has been involved in student government since he first arrived at Dalhousie five years ago. He’s a former president, vice-president and council member of the DSU, as well as the only person in recent memory to have run in three DSU presidential elections.

After serving on the Dalhousie arts and social sciences society in his first and second years on campus, Wasko won an election to become the DSU vice president (community affairs) for the 2003/2004 academic year.

A few months in to serving on this post, Wasko ran in a presidential by-election, and won.

He ran again for the union’s top job, and won the majority of votes, but was disqualified after it was found that one of his workers campaigned after the deadline.

Wasko gave it another shot the following year, but lost to current DSU President Ezra Edelstein by 137



“(It) isn’t the end of the world... people outside of student politics care very little whether or not you were DSU president,” says Kevin Wasko / Photo: Rafal Andronowski

votes. The drama wasn’t over yet — Edelstein was disqualified because he exceeded the limit on campaign spending, and Wasko was declared president.

Edelstein, however, was eventually reinstated after the judicial board reviewed his case.

“It’s pretty disappointing,” Wasko says of the losses, “but you can’t really take it personally. In the end, it’s worth it if you’re running for the

right reasons.”

Wasko’s electoral experience has taught him a few lessons about student politics, which he willingly shares.

“A lot of candidates who haven’t been involved in the DSU before may set unrealistic goals during the campaign,” he says.

Wasko says his prior DSU experience helped him know the limits of an executive position and he set goals accordingly, several of which he eventually achieved.

“Unfortunately, the realistic goals aren’t always the big ticket items that people like to hear about, like lowering tuition,” he says. “That’s a pretty sexy issue, but there’s very little the DSU can do directly to lower tuition fees.”

Wasko also has advice for any candidates in the current DSU elections: “Make sure you know what your campaign workers are doing at all times, don’t underestimate your opponents, and always have another option ready for your next year, in case you don’t win.”

“Losing in a DSU election isn’t the end of the world, because, really, people outside of student politics care very little whether or not you were DSU president.”

## The Preferential Voting System

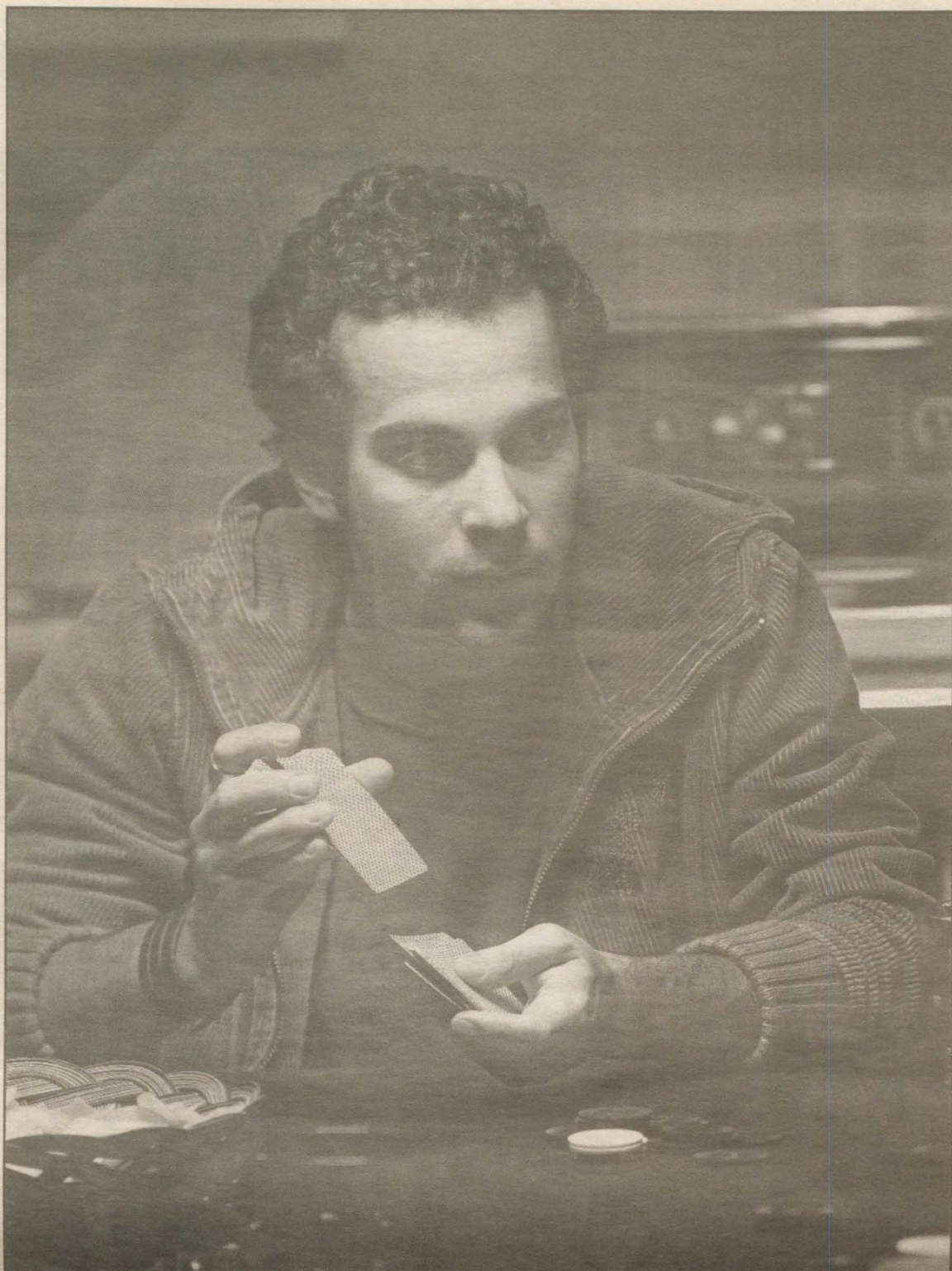
The DSU now uses a preferential voting (PV) system to elect its executive positions (president and the three vice presidents). Students will rank their candidates by preference, from first to last, and have the option to either rank all candidates, or as few as they wish.

If no candidate has received a majority after the first preferences have been counted, the person with the fewest number of votes is removed from the race. The second preferences on ballots that top-ranked that eliminated candidate are then redistributed into the original first-preference votes. If one of the candidates then wins a majority, that person is declared the winner. If not, the process is repeated until someone receives a majority.

The aim of the PV system is for the winning candidate to receive the support of an absolute majority of voters. This contrasts with the “first-past-the-post” system, used in provincial and federal elections, where the winning candidate is the one who has the most votes (a plurality), though they may not necessarily have a majority.

Critics of the PV system point out that it ignores voters’ alternate choices. In a three-way race, for example, if voters choose the winning candidate, their second- and third-choice candidates aren’t considered. Other types of ranked balloting systems, such as the recently developed Schulze method of voting, take these alternate choices into account.

The most large-scale example of PV is in the Australian electoral system, where it’s also known as instant-runoff voting.



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# Letters to the Editor

letters@dalgazette.ca

## Canada's role in Afghanistan needs reconsideration

Dear Editor,

We are writing in response to Salam Nahzat's article, "Is Canada's Afghanistan strategy failing?" We feel that this article reeks of the rampant idealism held by too many Canadians who believe that it's wrong for Western governments to help instill stability and democracy in fragile nation states.

This flawed ideology of "peace," reinforced by former external affairs minister Lloyd Axworthy's "soft power" hypothesis, fails to recognize that the only way to prevent a nation state from abusing its power over its citizens is to exert military strength. This type of intervention can promote democratic governance and allow formerly oppressed citizens to govern themselves.

We think it's important in this debate to remember who the Taliban are. These people sought to construct an oppressive, theocratic regime that stifled the fundamental human rights of Afghans, particularly women. Afghanistan was a dysfunctional, war-torn state, not a peaceful country, as Nahzat insinuates.

Nahzat asks, "Why is Canada taking part in a mission that has risked the lives of Canadians [and will] likely put Canada itself at greater risk of a terrorist attack?" Perhaps it's for this reason that Canada should be in Afghanistan. By acting as a state sponsor of terrorism, the Taliban endangered both Canadians at home and abroad. Now that terrorist groups like al-Qaida have been denied a safe haven in the region, the danger has been reduced.

The Taliban denied Afghans the freedom to elect their own representatives and threatened Western democracies by sheltering terrorists. It's therefore beneficial to both the people of Canada and Afghanistan if this region can be restored to a stable nation state that emphasizes human rights over religious fanaticism.

Secondly, Nahzat writes, "Canada has neither the experience nor the capacity to get involved militarily in the most volatile regions of Afghanistan," and, "Canada is a peace-loving nation that has some of the most talented and most civilized citizens in the world." The perception that the Canadian Forces are overstretched is correct. But why are the CF overstretched? Because Canadians refuse to put money into the military and think that Canada's role in the world can be maintained by providing moral support and aid money to questionable regimes.

Western governments cannot pander to oppressive regimes and beg them to stop abusing their citizens. Force does enforce peace and it is the only option left when groups

like the Taliban refuse to allow their citizens basic human rights. To remove rogue regimes that commit horrific acts of violence and oppression against their own citizens, you need a military - not a stuffed teddy bear.

The third point we would like to make deals with Nahzat's argument that Canada's role in Afghanistan is negative because it involves the Canadian Forces. Perhaps Nahzat fails to realize that Canada is in Afghanistan, with NATO-led provincial reconstruction teams, to help protect the NGOs who are providing aid to Afghans. Stability and aid go hand-in-hand, and you cannot expect aid to reach its source unless there is a secure means for it to get there, which the new Afghan government cannot, at this time, provide.

If you are on the side of the debate that considers aid to be superior to military force you should support this mission. Without the reconstruction aid and military presence to protect the workers who deliver it, the insecurity that Nahzat decries will only be perpetuated, resulting in even more misery in Afghanistan. Therefore, when Nahzat claims that the CF's mission in Afghanistan will provide more "insecurity," her point is misguided.

We must, as Canadians, realize that our efforts in Afghanistan are meant to promote peace by defeating a brutal and oppressive regime. The Afghans need relief, hope and human rights; we think there's a greater chance of Canada bringing that to them than the dictatorial regime we helped to unseat.

Amanda Slaunwhite  
Dru Lauzon

## Why Canada is in Afghanistan

Dear Editor,

Canada is about to send an additional 1,300 or so troops into Afghanistan in order to control remnants of the Taliban and the like. The Canadian soldiers, since taking over the mission in Kandahar, have encountered a high level of hostility, the culmination of which was the rash of attacks and suicide bombings during Jan. 15 to Jan. 16.

Last week, an article in *The Gazette* [Salam Nahzat's article, "Is Canada's Afghanistan strategy failing?"] suggested that the Canadian role in Afghanistan was misguided. The reasons were numerous.

Canada, to quote the writer, "has neither the experience nor the capacity to get involved militarily in the most volatile regions of Afghanistan." The writer also rejected the idea that the mission was about helping Afghanistan, but was about NATO's self-interest. This allegation was substantiated by the writer's

brilliant observation that "NATO is not the UN, nor is it a charity."

The writer also points out that from 1992 - 96, Afghans were engaged in a civil war while the international community "remained silent and passive... at the same time, Afghanistan was becoming a time bomb."

Two puzzling statements followed this point: "It's morally, ethically and principally wrong for democratic and wealthy nations like Canada to secure the safety of their citizens by putting the citizens and soil of a devastated nation such as Afghanistan at risk," and lastly, "force can't enforce peace."

Well, allow me to retort. The Canadian military, in its long history, has fought wars in many of the worst places in the world. Afghanistan is dangerous, everybody knows that. So was Dieppe, so was Vimy Ridge, Korea, Croatia and every other place the Canadian military has been throughout its history. To argue that Afghanistan presents an insurmountable challenge is a de facto slander of the military.

Why was Canada's military sent in the first place? We all know why - because the Taliban was harbouring, protecting and supporting Osama bin Laden's network. After 9/11, the United States rightly invoked the self-defense clause of NATO in order to invade Afghanistan. The majority of nation states in the world supported this logical, rational response.

It was in the national interest of both Canada and the United States to prevent terrorists from using Afghanistan as a training camp and launching board for further attacks against North America.

When NATO ignored Afghanistan during the 1990s, the Taliban and al-Qaida were the result. It seems curious that the writer would recognize that, during the 1990s, Afghanistan was a "time bomb," yet advocate that Canadians should do little, if nothing about it.

The military's primary role in Afghanistan is to ensure that the remnants of the Taliban and other assorted warlords don't return to power.

It's morally imperative for Canadians to be in Afghanistan, as it's an exercise in protecting both Afghans and Canadians.

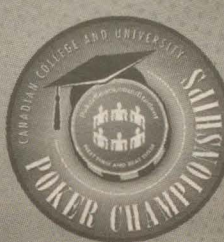
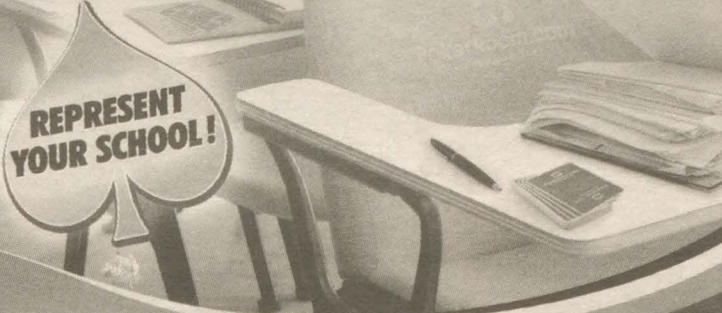
Lastly, the notion that "force cannot enforce peace" is a handy catchphrase but of little applicability. The war in Kosovo is but one example of the value of coercive diplomacy. While I appreciate the author's concerns about Afghanistan, I disagree with her spurious reasons for opposing the Canadian mission in Afghanistan.

Dave McEwan  
Staff Contributor

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Last week, it was announced that emo/alt-rock/whatever-you-want-to-call-them-now band Weezer is, for the first time, going to release a fourth single off of the abominable album, *Make Believe*. Can someone please explain this to me?

If ever there was an album that didn't call for a fourth single, it's this one. Granted, the new single, "This is Such a Pity" is one of the two songs that I can stand off of the album, and the only single in which Weezer hasn't ripped itself off. If ever there was a money grab from the

band, this would be it.

Though *Make Believe* is well on its way to becoming the highest selling Weezer album — a sad thought in of itself — all of the band's other albums, including the platinum *Green Album*, had only three singles on principle.

The band members said several times in the past that they didn't want to release half of an album.

I guess this is what happens when the "comeback album" does well.

But why are we rewarding this kind of behaviour? If there's one thing that most

bands will pay attention to, it's record sales.

But, it's not "us" buying the album. It's the new generation that started listening to the *Green Album* first.

Thanks a lot, 14-year-old teeny-boppers.

ARTS HOLE: This is such a pity

Saman Jafarian / Staff Contributor



## Do you feel you've failed?

The Gazette cuts into the rubber heart of Dog Day

SARAH FELDMAN  
Staff Contributor

You might think of Dog Day as the fresh picking-open of an old wound.

Sure, there's nothing new in all this talk of meaninglessness and final solutions, but the best songs on the punk-infused indie rock band's — comprised of The Burdocks' Seth Smith and Nancy Urich and The Hold's Casey Spidle and Crystal Thill — 2005 album, *Thank You* (Out of Touch Records), make you feel like the world is ending again for the first time.

Take Dog Day's version of "I Wanna Be Your Dog," Iggy and the Stooges' monotonous, depraved, and foot-tappingly fun anthem of indifference. Spasmed out by champions of failure from Bowie to Rotten to Cobain, the exhausted meaning of "I Wanna Be Your Dog" has always been counterbalanced by the visceral pleasures of loud and rhythmic panic.

But the Dog Day cover, though equally unrelenting, is eerily calm.

If the Stooges' was the heroin version, and Sonic Youths' was speed, then this is the lithium edition, sung by Urich in the tones of an ethereal robot, with Spidle giving it the lagging rhythm of a trying-to-stop-beating heart.

The old punks were probably right: the ice age is coming, or rather, has come. But these new ones aren't going to get all worked up about it.

The Gazette met up with Dog Day's Casey Spidle and Seth Smith at the Apple Barrel:

**Gazette:** Can you talk a little about your influences?

**CS:** We don't have any influences.

**Gazette:** No wave?

**CS:** We lean more towards new wave than no wave. Gilbert Switzer would lean towards no wave. We do have structure. We don't make noise so much. We just make songs.

**SS:** Song-wave.

**CS:** Song-wave, yeah. That's a new term that, uh, we made up.

Pause while Smith sweeps cutlery off the table and everyone scrambles to pick it up.

**SS:** I personally don't listen to a lot of music. I like my friends', but other than that... things in my life influence me: death and sickness.

**CS:** Yeah. Lung infections influence me.

**SS:** Casey had a wound in his stomach that I was picking at. That made me sing a song about it.

**CS:** He stabbed me before he went to P.E.I. In the stomach. With a knife.

**SS:** That's real. We're going to write a song about it. That's an influence, right?

**Gazette:** Can I see it?

**CS:** Yes, you can.

Spidle lifts his shirt.

**CS:** Touch it. Reach out and touch it.

Interviewer demurs.

**CS:** Just reach out and touch it. Seriously. Oh, I can do it now, again, new.

Spidle reaches for a table knife and begins to press it into his belly.

**SS:** You can't get this on audio man, don't bother.

**CS:** Oh, okay.

Spidle puts the knife down.

**Gazette:** When did you guys come together as a band?

**CS:** Night group.

**SS:** Night group.

**CS:** We used to spend time, unmusically, involved in a group, and we did certain things, magic, like, stuff, and it turned bad, and we realized during it that, "Wow, our lives are getting really bad. We're making all these bad decisions, and we need to turn it into something more productive."

**SS:** We came together as friends...

**CS:** Magicians.

**SS:** We're not supposed to talk about that.

**CS:** I've said too much. But the bottom line is we thought music would be the best escape from the bad choices we'd made in the group, the night group. We like each other a lot more now, because music makes us more positive.

Continued on next page...



## The courage of shutting up

The Burdocks' Christian Simmons goes solo with Xian

SARAH FELDMAN  
Staff Contributor

Christian Simmons seems a little nervous. Several times over the course of his Feb. 2 show at Gus' Pub, he assures the audience that he will be off the stage shortly. He's introduced his drummer and brother, Jef Simmons, but he has neglected to mention either his name or that of his band (it's Xian, pronounced ex-ian).

"Sorry," he says at one point, seemingly about nothing. Then, he adds an afterthought: "It's so late."

But all his hesitations and apologies aren't especially distracting, as they might be with another band. In fact, they're not unlike Xian's sound: bare, tentative vocals combined with intricate acoustic stuff (think Phil Elvrum on a more melodic day, or Sufjan Stevens without the bells and whistles).

I'm half-convinced it's all the act of an experienced performer who's got the indie-shrinking-from-the-limelight thing down.

After all, it's not as if Simmons is new to the local — or even national — music stage. He writes and plays in the Burdocks and Play Guitar (formerly The Academic), and he moonlights in The Hold, Attack Mode, SS Cardiacs, and Spincycle.

But with Xian, Simmons is now out on his own, and he says that's a very different experience.

"It's the amount of control you have over what's going on," he says. "It can be very freeing... to be able to stop playing guitar and just sing for a bit, or to play quieter or louder."

"But the same thing that makes it enjoyable makes it a lot of responsibility — there's fewer opportunities to mess up unnoticeably."

Never mind that Simmons doesn't seem to be doing a whole lot of messing up these days. Xian has only been around for a month and a half, but already it has shared

the stage with Steve Lampke and Will Kidman of The Constantines, caught the attention of local musician-cum-musical-institution BA Johnston, and landed a slot in this year's NXNE festival (March 18 at One World Cafe). Xian has also gone from a jokey nickname for a few solo shows to an honest-to-god band that now includes a regular drummer, Greg Napier.

"I thought it would give people something to follow," says Simmons. "I tend to have an approach to songwriting that might not be straightforward enough to come across immediately live. Drums make the songs more coherent, cause, um, I tend to play too many notes. I think maybe that's the problem."

It's still awfully sparse stuff. And though there are certain tonal resemblances to the Burdocks — an interest in chromatics, a penchant for a kind of multi-layered "sincere irony" — fans of the let's-cut-each-other-up side of Simmons' other band may be disappointed by Xian's mellow, introspective sound.

But a more careful listen reveals a music formed from the same sort of core intensity — it's just that all the specific, externalized freaking of Burdocks songs like "schooltv" and "we will all be ghosts" gets turned inward with Xian. Same problems, same endless, unanswerable questions, just it's my fault now, not my lover's or my culture's.

This makes for some extraordinary, fraught-yet-unforced music, as if the musician had considered every possible misstep or insincerity and come up with something poised just a few precise notches above silence. So what's with all the apologizing?

Simmons says he's sorry about that, too, and means to do less of it in future shows.

"I should probably just shut up and let people decide for themselves."



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Dog Day's rubber heart

Continued from previous page

SS: And you don't hurt dogs anymore.

CS: You have like, white stuff on your nose.

Smith wipes his nose, but misses the dab of whipped cream.

Gazette: Richard Hell says that Nietzsche says that everything that makes you laugh indicates a place where an emotion has died. Do you agree with that?

CS: He doesn't find what he says funny.

SS: Yeah, I'm serious. I just don't speak very well. I can't read. I can't talk.

CS: When was it you started speaking English properly?

SS: This is a true story: until I was probably around ten or eleven I lived in this isolated town called Marbelette. They spoke a kind of French there that was really broken because the town wasn't close to other towns. I couldn't speak English for so long my parents kind of got irritated, and

we moved to an English-speaking place. Then I forgot that language completely.

Gazette: Do you consider your music personal?

SS: Yeah. I'm writing the songs about myself. Some of the songs I'm writing about other people. Yeah, uh, I lie in dreams, and I sing about talk shows I saw, describing those dreams.

Gazette: Is there a story behind "Thank You But No Thank You"?

SS: That was a mistake. My brother...

CS: What's, "Thank You But No Thank You"?

SS: It's a song. We have a song.

CS: Yeah?

SS: It was on one of those European releases. I think it just means trying and not succeeding, and, taking back the fact that you were trying.

Gazette: Oh, see, because I thought it was about... Ah, never mind.

Meta-interview:

CS: Do you feel you've failed?

Gazette: Yes! Oh, you mean at the interview? Uh, yeah.

CS: No, the interview was a success.

Gazette: Yeah. I wish I'd been able to come up with more questions appropriate to the situation.

CS: You feel you're not spontaneous enough.

Gazette: Yeah.

SS: I'm the least spontaneous person in the world.

CS: We probably shouldn't talk to people, even.

CS: When are you writing this for?

Gazette: Monday.

CS: Are we going to be in it?

Gazette: No, we thought we'd use robots. Is that okay?

CS: This is all confidential isn't it? Off-the-record?

Gazette: Oh, yeah, yeah, for sure.

Burn Baby Burn



Mystery Mix

Us arts editors have come to understand that picking themes, compiling songs accordingly, and then forcing you to read the lists is a bit of an alienating process. Themes can affect your interpretation of the song. In some ways, this is a good thing because you may hear the song in a new light, but it can be limiting as well.

If our theme was birds, for instance, and we included "Rockin' Robin" in the mix, you will readily notice the subject matter of the song because the theme emphasizes it. You may not notice the little "woo" near the end, but if our theme was woos, then you may. You see how this can be really awkward?

So, there is a number of possible themes in the following mix, but it is up to you to find them. And if you find none, don't worry.

SIDE A: Lindsay Dobbin / Arts Editor

- "January Rain" - Psychic Ills
- "Before and Again" - akron/family
- "Berserker" - Jane
- "Mining in the Rain" - Colleen
- "Health and Wellbeing" - Indian Jewelry
- "God's Money V" - Gang Gang Dance
- "Prospect Hummer" - Animal Collective feat. Vashti Bunyan
- "To Each His Own" - Feathers
- "Berry Metal" - Metallic Falcons
- "Real Good Time" - Diane Cluck

SIDE B: Bridgette Sullivan / Assistant Arts Editor

- "Native New Yorker" - Odyssey
- "If I Could Be" - Alpha Flight
- "All Sparks" - Editors
- "Find A Way" - A Tribe Called Quest
- "Independence Day" - ani difranco
- "This Must Be The Place (Naive Melody)" - Talking Heads
- "Born To Be Alive" - Jay Hernandez
- "Who Can It Be Now?" - Men At Work
- "Can't Stop" - Missy Elliott
- "Wildcat" - Be Your Own Pet

TAKE FIVE

WITH SEAN MACGILLIVRAY

Q: Can you talk a little about what you've been doing post-Burdocks?

A: There were a number of projects I was involved in parallel to the Burdocks before I left the band. One of them was Great Plains, which I front. Lachie MacDonald from Beat Material plays bass, and Jeffers Lennox, a Dal student, plays drums. It's sort of a rock band in the vein of Weakerthans, Constantines, Trail of Dead, that sort of thing. I also play bass and sing for Jenn Grant. She's sort of a folk-rock performer. The third project is called Hotshotrobot. It's a four-piece, new wave/synth-punk kind of band.

Q: How is the recording of the new Great Plains CD going?

A: We just finished it on Thursday. It's done — or at least that's how I feel about it right now. J. LaPointe from North of America was the recording engineer. He's a really intelligent guy. He's really done his

homework, a good background in electrical engineering. He's got a great studio out in Mineville called the Archive: a converted room in an old boathouse.

Q: Can you explain the term "math rock" to me?

A: It essentially means music that is a little more complex in terms of time signatures, dissonance. In Great Plains, we do some "common denominator" stuff with rhythm — like in math when you take two fractions and get the lowest common denominator, only with time signatures. Time signatures are expressed in fractions. So I'll be playing in 5/4 time, but Jeffers will be playing in 4/4 time, and when we get to beat 20, they meet up.

Q: What album in your record collection are you most embarrassed to like?

A: *Adam and Eve* by The Catherine Wheels. It used to be one of my

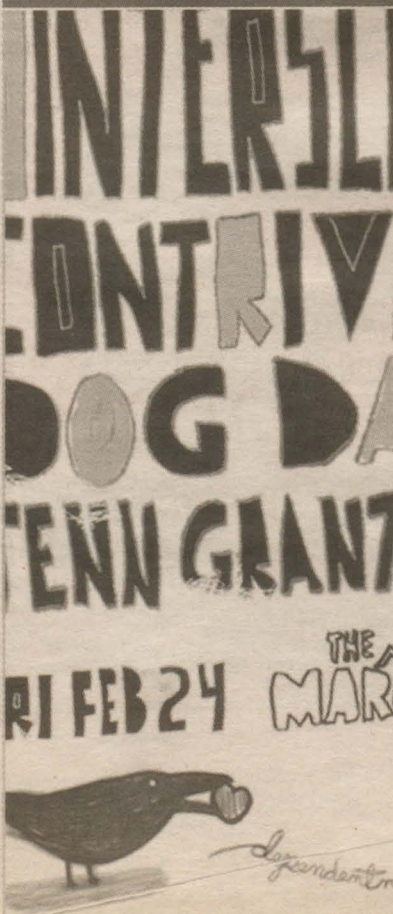
favourite records of all time, but I had a listen to it recently, and I was like, "Wow. This record has almost no substance." The lyrics are terrible — a lot of obvious clichés. There's some rock anthems on it that I was really in to at one time, but listening to them now, they seem pretty worn out.

Q: Desert island: one album and why.

A: Neutral Milk Hotel, *In an Aeroplane Over the Sea*. I just picked it up recently, after hearing snippets of it from friends for years. I don't typically listen to solo acoustic performers. Some really incredible songs on that album, like "Two-Headed Boy," have a really, really lo-fi aesthetic, which again, typically isn't what I'm in to. Jeff Magnum has a really unique approach to production, and a very distinctive vocal and lyrical style. It's very disturbing, too. I find he's a pretty great master of the grotesque in terms of the way he uses words.

Report Card

WINTERSLEEP / The Marquee / Feb. 24, 2006



Reporter: Margaret Craig  
 Stage Presence: A  
 Audience Reaction: A  
 Sound: A  
 Get-It-On-Ability: B- (Paul Murphy is no Barry White)

Despite being named runner-up for Best Local Album in The Coast's Best of Music issue, Wintersleep's performance Friday night was anything but second rate.

Local music label Dependent kicked off its cross-country tour at the Marquee with headliners Wintersleep along with label-mates Contrived and special guests Dog Day and Jenn Grant.

The opening acts played to a meager crowd, leading one to question if it was a wise move to play the Marquee on reading week.

But by the time Wintersleep took the stage after midnight, the crowd had filled out.

The show opened with Wintersleep's new music video for "Fog."

The four-members of the Halifax-based band then took to the stage in outfits that appeared to have come off the racks of Value Village — the band members could have easily been mistaken for the

boys next door.

Don't be fooled, however, by Wintersleep's unassuming stage presence.

By the second song, lead vocalist Paul Murphy had the audience singing along to the slow ballads and forming mini-mosh puddles during the guitar-heavy numbers.

Wintersleep left the sparse haunting sounds of the band's two albums (self titled, 2003 and untitled, 2005), in the studio, replacing them with a lush wall of sound.

The most memorable concert moments were the la-da-da-das sing-a-long in "Migration" and the debut of new tracks, which left the rabid Wintersleep fans frothing at the mouth in anticipation for the next album.

The Dependent show confirmed that the sugary, Beatles-influenced sound that defined the Halifax music scene in the 90s has matured into a more aggressive, yet sophisticated indie-rock.

Definitely catch Wintersleep — the band voted "most likely to move to Toronto" — while they are still playing local venues such as the Marquee.

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# Save us from Tom Ford's Hollywood

This year's *Vanity Fair* fantasy love-in is less smart and more smut

HILLARY TITLEY  
Staff Contributor

For those of you who treat Oscar season as the most wonderful time of the year, *Vanity Fair* magazine's annual Hollywood Issue is kind of a big deal.

The issue is a fat, glossy, fantasy love-in with the beautiful people who, until this year, never deviated from the portfolio of stars created by established photographers such as Annie Leibovitz and Mario Testino. Rich and warm portraits of established stars pervaded while up-and-coming actors were fortunately clumped together for group shots and thankfully not wasting pages better used for Monty Python reunions (2004), Kathy Bates with two boy-toys (2003) or Paul Giamatti doing his smug eye-brow thing (2005). Past Hollywood Issues were never lackluster — they were reliably more of the beautiful same.

Enter Tom Ford: former fashion design icon hoping to break into the movies.

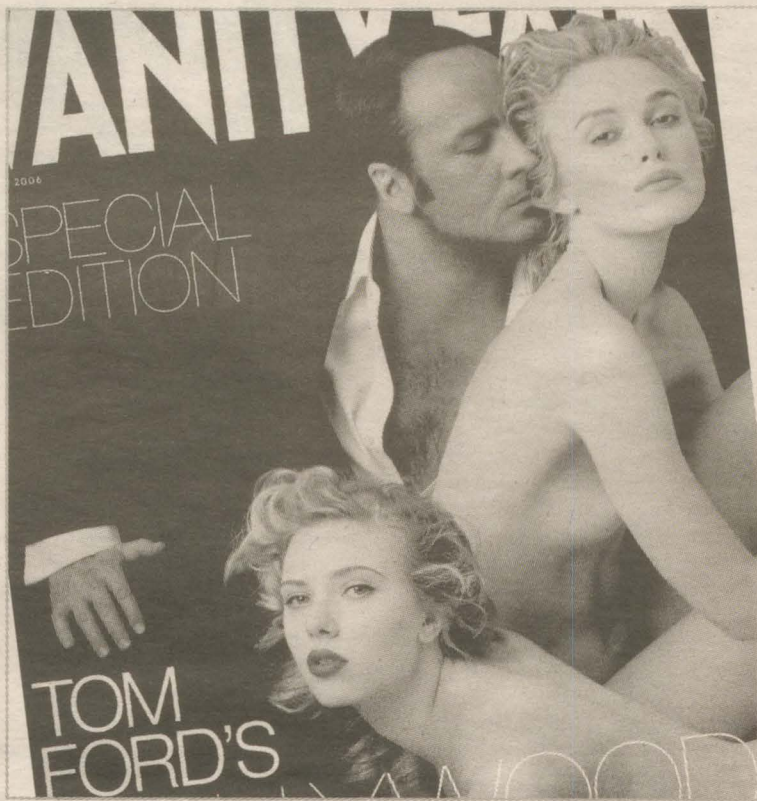
Apparently after a few drinks one night, Ford proposed to *Vanity Fair* editor (and Canadian-born) Graydon Carter that the Hollywood Issue was getting a little tired and that he would be perfect to make it over.

Carter agreed.

Who wouldn't? Any viewer of *Fashion Television* can tell you that when he oversaw the creative side of Gucci and Yves Saint Laurent the designs were womanly and sensuous without being revealing. Ford stuck out of the landscape with his crisp and handsome style of dress and his intelligent, forthcoming and polite answers to host Jennie Becker's questions. If anyone could make an unnecessary makeover seem worth it, it could be Tom Ford.

The cover promises that this is Tom Ford's Hollywood, and Carter's editor's letter tells us that Ford had been promised "a certain amount of independence" — one can only assume that this is more of a vision-issue unlike past Hollywood Issues, which were more of a reliable form.

And Ford's vision can be surmised by the page-290 spread of Sienna Miller lounging topless and



looking about 15 years older in the grainy photography. It's indicative of the misguided nature of the entire issue — someone in her prime can come off looking worse for wear lying naked in a photo taken by Annie Leibovitz. Like the entire issue, this photo with the bad lighting, brazenly exposed breasts and minimal airbrushing (the sure indicator of expense gone to photography) has overtones of smut, which cheapens the participant and leaves the viewer feeling unsettled.

Do you ever feel comfortable about anyone being reduced to looking like cheap whore?

The other glaring example of nudity gone horribly awry is the cover composition of nude Scarlett Johansson and Keira Knightley and a clothed Tom Ford. Everybody now knows that Ford's place was to have been taken by Rachel McAdams who opted out after finding out on the day of the shoot that the women were to be naked (and, as legend goes, fired her publicist, which I hope to God is true).

Ford's justification for his three-

some is: "Three girls in a bed is a bedful of girls, two girls in bed are lesbians." He says it as if that is such a bad thing — as if lesbians are so much worse than an aging, bronzed, lecherous skin-merchant such as himself.

This year's Hollywood issue being so poorly received that one wonders if *Vanity Fair* will try again with another guest editor or swing back to its old rich, flattering portfolio next year. Ford's intention was "to put the glamour back into Hollywood" but he was weirdly oblivious to the fact that Hollywood has always been glamorous to those who dream about it, which Ford, in his desire to be a filmmaker, obviously does.

It remains to be seen if that desire will ever pan out successfully as he, with this Issue, has proven his vision to be gross and off-putting. Rachel McAdams is all the better for escaping it while causing the anomaly of avoiding a career hiccup by storming off a *Vanity Fair* cover shoot and maintaining the glamorous mystique of Hollywood by avoiding the Hollywood Issue.

## OSCAR NIGHT EXTRAS

OPEN LETTER TO JON STEWART by Hillary Titley / Staff Contributor

Dear Jon Stewart,

It's funny that you said becoming the host of this year's Academy Awards ceremony was a "desperate attempt to smoke out Billy Crystal." It proves that you are aware — along with the majority of viewers — only Billy Crystal is worthy of the job. Billy Crystal has that way of comfortably chiding the audience at the Kodak Theatre while playing simultaneously to the viewers at home. Everybody goes or stays home happy. Chris Rock, last year, admirably played to the crowd at home in their PJs and suffered with the crowd in the theatre. I personally love catty Jude Law jokes but famously Sean Penn did not. Given the audience numbers are expected to be the lowest in recent years, you can expect that those watching will be most of your *Daily Show* audience and definitely those that have seen some or all of the nominated movies (like me!). This is a tiny group but one that also tends to defend David Letterman's 1994 stab at hosting so they are worth your best effort.

All that being said, I think you have a chance to win over the theatre audience and not just because you are going to look ridiculously cute in your tux. The films nominated in the major categories are of a progressive political nature so the attendees are going to be liberal natured (as if Hollywood isn't

already). Hollywood loves to be loved so the audience will find your humour vindicating. I expect the reactions to your jokes will be more knowing and satisfied than the usual relieved whoops and hollers you get from *The Daily Show's* audience. That is okay by me, I'm smug and liberal myself, so how the Weinstein brothers laugh isn't going to put me off.

But, really, it matters very little how the evening turns out in the aftermath. You live in New York, deal in political and media satire and must have a list of New Yorker feature writers waiting for "The Call" asking them to be on *The Daily Show*. Plus, you have legions of fans that prefer the author interviews to the celebrity interviews anyway.

The only thing you have to worry about on the night is performing so well that the Oscar producers want you back year after year. If you fail, Hollywood forgives and forgets easily. The only ones who will not forget are the viewers who believe that Billy Crystal is Oscar host for life — but they most likely have not seen *Brokeback Mountain*, don't care if it wins, and won't be watching.

I'm an Oscar nut and a *Daily Show* fan so I'll be watching.

Sincerely,

Hillary Titley

OSCAR PICKS by Hillary Titley / Staff Contributor

### BEST ACTOR

Phillip Seymour Hoffman, *Capote*

This is an easy choice. Hoffman embodies the role and it truly is remarkable to see. When watching the movie, one can only see Capote's mind working and not that of the actor playing him. Truman Capote was a grating and ingratiating man all at the same time — and Hoffman's performance captures those conflicts perfectly.

### BEST ACTRESS

Reese Witherspoon, *Walk the Line*

Witherspoon's performance has stuck with me the longest. June Carter's long rejection of Johnny Cash's pursuits provides the dramatic thrust of *Walk the Line*. Witherspoon makes June's actions in this regard seem natural, sane and thoughtful.

### BEST SUPPORTING ACTOR

Matt Dillon, *Crash*

The racist cop he plays certainly isn't likable or sympathetic — but his performance is wholly compelling. This is the apex of Dillon's career playing pricks, and it doesn't hurt that I am a sucker for

actors who prove that they have talent, despite poor typecasting.

### BEST SUPPORTING ACTRESS

Rachel Weisz, *The Constant Gardener*

Weisz's activist character is the center of the mystery and the love story of *The Constant Gardener*. She is passionate and determined, never paranoid and pathetic. We want her to succeed in her work because she makes it worthwhile.

### BEST PICTURE/DIRECTOR

*Good Night, and Good Luck*, Directed by George Clooney

This film perfectly evokes the time of Edward R. Murrow and its close quarters (it's set mostly in the CBS newsroom) lends to the excitement of the story, which portrays journalists acting as journalists should. We know that Murrow succeeds in exposing McCarthy as a blowhard, but how he and his team did it is exciting. *Good Night* is clear in its message that character assassination is wrong and that vigilance is vital.

Tune in to the Oscars on Sunday, March 5 at 9 p.m.

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## SWAP WORKING HOLIDAYS

March 8, 2pm, Room 224, Dal SUB

## BACKPACKING DOWN UNDER

March 13, 7pm, Travel CUTS, 1589 Barrington St.

## AFRICA WITH GUEST SPEAKER FROM TREK HOLIDAYS

March 14, 7pm, Travel CUTS, 1589 Barrington St.

## INTERNATIONAL VOLUNTEERING

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March 15, 4pm, Room 224, Dal SUB

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# The SEXTANT

DALHOUSIE'S OFFICIAL ENGINEERING NEWSPAPER

## Show me the money

BRENNAN McVEIGH

Please allow me to paint a picture for you. It's 11:15 on a Friday night, you're between trivia rounds, and you have just finished your pitcher of rum and coke. You reach into your pocket to find a fiver and a toonie. You're five bones short of the next pitcher. You have maybe ten minutes before the third round of trivia starts.

What do you do? There's no debit at the bar, nor does it take credit. So you're forced to run to Spring Garden on a quest for a bank machine, missing half the final round of trivia in the process. Lo and behold your absence ends up costing your team the first place finish and spoiling what could have been a wonderful night out.

How could this problem have been avoided? Well, yes, you could have brought more money to the T-Room. Maybe you could have tricked someone into buying you your next pitcher. These solutions might work once or twice if you're really lucky — but they can't be relied on as a final solution.

For an actual solution, let's tackle the problem the way I usually tackle problems: by looking for people who have already solved a similar problem themselves. Yes I'm lazy — but why reinvent the wheel? Other bars have bank machines inside. So why isn't there one on this campus? This isn't a new idea. This was actually thought of a long time ago. Several problems have been raised with this idea. I'll try to explain them.

Putting a bank machine in the T-Room poses the problem of access. Basically the T-Room isn't open long enough to justify putting a bank machine in there. Such a machine only be accessible for about 18 hours a week — and this amount of access is very unfavourable for any financial institution. Ideally, bank machines are accessible 24-hours a day, or at least every day, as opposed to the two days a week the T-Room is typically open for.

Solution?

Put the bank machine outside the T-Room.

But doing this poses yet another problem. A bank machine would

not be terribly secure there: the T-Room is an out-of-the-way place. One could theoretically walk down near the squash courts some night, smash the bank machine with a sledgehammer, and make off with a couple of hundred dollars. No one would even notice until the next patrol or the next morning.

(Please note: This is not an endorsement or encouragement for this activity, in fact it probably wouldn't work, so please don't attempt this. It is a bad idea.)

How do we solve this? I seem to recall walking past a security desk on my way to the T-Room. Why not install a bank machine that needs to be in a secure location near the "security" desk?

Believe it or not, this idea has also been suggested — and security replied by saying that it would pose an added risk to the security personnel, who aren't responsible for this type of work. While I agree that security officers might not be responsible for protecting a bank machine, I'm curious as to what their actual job is. I've walked by the security desk many times without signing in or anyone really caring that I was walking past.

The other concern that was raised over locating a bank machine near the security desk was that of fire safety. It has been suggested that if several patrons were to line up at the machine and the fire alarm were to go off, there would be a problem exiting. This is downright foolish. The number one caveat of this point comes from the fact that hey, if someone is waiting in line at a bank machine and the fire alarm goes off, they aren't going to continue to wait in line.

The second problem with this line of thinking concerns the area itself. For those of you who are unfamiliar with the region, there are about 30 feet worth of hallways and doors leading directly outside. How can this be a fire hazard?

Forgive me if I have a hard time believing that a bank machine would pose a threat to fire escape routes. I'm somewhat familiar with fire codes, and 30 feet of door space provides more than adequate means of egress. So let's do what we can to get a bank machine in here.

## What does the Iron Ring mean to me? A first year's insight into receiving the Iron Ring

ROB McVEIGH

Every year as graduation approaches, engineering students across the country are invited to attend a ceremony, The Ritual Calling of an Engineer.

This ceremony was created in 1922 as a way to bind members of the engineering profession in Canada closer together. It is at this ceremony that they are presented with the Iron Ring, a symbolic ring worn by many Canadian engineers. The ring was created to remind engineers of their responsibility to abide by the code of morals and ethics to which they subscribe.

Originally, the ring was made from the remainder of the Pont du Quebec, a bridge just outside Quebec City that collapsed in 1907 and

again in 1916 due to a failure in. Today, the ring is made from stainless steel as it is easier to care for, but still serves as a reminder to all those who wear it that they must carefully consider each decision they make and ensure their designs are safe and ethical.

When I first heard of the Iron Ring, and the secretive ceremony through which it is distributed, I thought of it as a silly old tradition — just another way for engineers to hold themselves higher than the general public.

But since starting my first year as an engineering student, I have thought of the tradition in a whole new light. It occurs to me now that the Iron Ring and the Ritual Calling of an Engineer have a much greater meaning: they signify that you've

finally completed your studies and have accomplished your goal; they signify breaking the threshold between student and professional (not quite professional, but you get the picture); they are a national symbol of the pride that engineers have for their profession, a sign that they are creative, innovative, and intelligent; they are a constant reminder that as an engineer you must constantly live by a high standard of conduct, and a strict set of ethics, morals, and beliefs.

To me, the Iron Ring is a sign of professionalism, pride, and a constant reminder to consider the possible consequences of each decision you make. Hopefully I will be able to join the ranks of those across Canada and the world that already wear the Iron Ring.

## Peanuts

LEELOR HUNTINGTON

I always found Maxwell's Plum a bit confusing — and this goes for peanut bars in general. Here's why:

1. The tossing of shells onto the floor. If you went to a steakhouse you wouldn't grind the bones and fat into the carpet, but it is totally acceptable and almost encouraged at peanut bars. There is something quite liberating with this, though. Other than my own house, there are very few places where you can just toss shit around — and I wouldn't do it at my house because I'd have to clean it myself. I won't even do it outside. Weird.

2. Nobody really likes peanuts. I'm sure SOMEBODY does, but not too many people actually do. You don't go over to someone's place and see them munching on shelled salted peanuts - peanut bars prove once and for all that people love free shit. Free food generally tastes worse than paid-for food, but people will ingest their own weight in legumes because they are there.

3. Who even thought peanuts were a worthwhile crop to plant? I find shelling them myself too much work. It takes way more energy to shell peanuts than I can actually get out of eating them, so why bother? And this is without planting them

and harvesting them myself. People must be foolish.

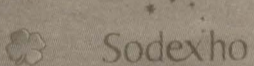


4. Ok...so you go to Maxwell's and eat tons of peanuts. Cool. You eat them at the table and as you're walking. There are baskets to take nuts with you and a big barrel in the middle of the room. Fine. The question is...why do so many men find it necessary to eat while pissing? The urinal is FULL of peanut shells. I can picture some slob with his junk in one hand and a mitt full of peanuts in the other. How hungry would someone have to be to do this??? There are some places you don't eat: church, the shower and the toilet. Enough said.

## Prof Quotes

Prof: Well, you see, it's kind of like magic...  
Class: [nothing]


Prof: Does anyone else hear that buzzing?  
Class: umm, yeah, that happens sometimes  
Prof: Oh good, I thought they'd come for me.

Prof: You would mount the infinity rigid shaft on top of the pillow block and then apply sufficient lubrication...  
Class: [giggles]

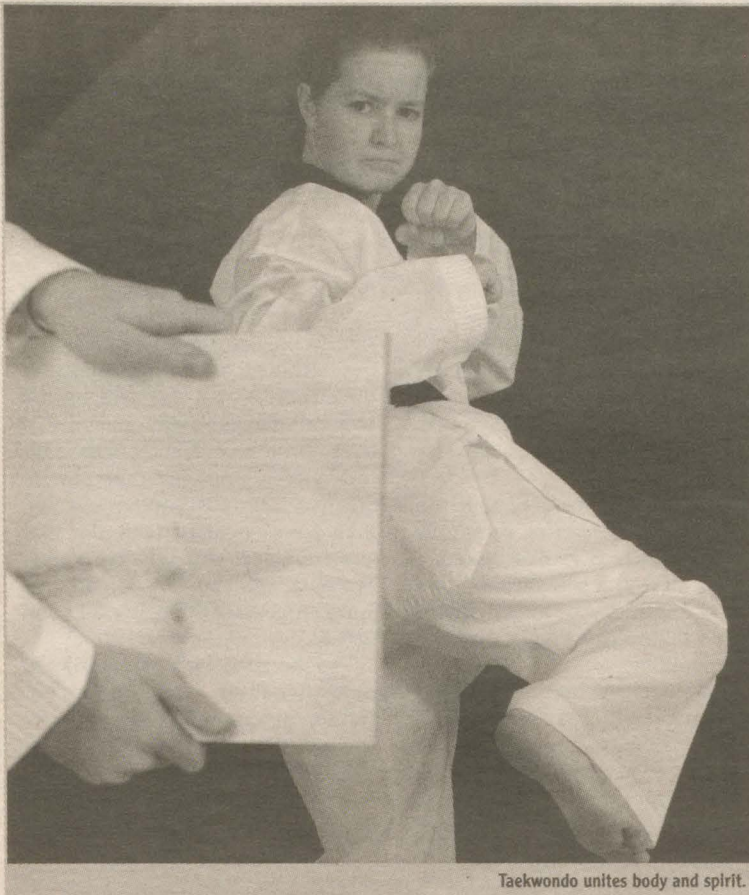




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Taekwondo unites body and spirit.

## Taekwondo instructor wants to open Korean martial arts school

### A profile of Master Il-han Kim

ESTELLE DESSOURIOUX  
Sports Contributor

Taekwondo literally means "kick punch way," but Master Il-han Kim says this martial art isn't only about kicking and punching — it's a harmony with nature, people and the practitioner.

Taekwondo, as well as the other martial arts, is a lifestyle that unifies the body and the mind, he says.

Kim, the Dalhousie University Korean Martial Arts Club president, is a fourth-degree black belt in the World Taekwondo Federation. He will soon hold the same title in the International Taekwondo Federation, and is also a certified master of taekwondo and tekkyun.

He grew up in a martial arts environment with his father, who is a grandmaster of taekwondo and tekkyun and ran a traditional Korean martial arts academy in South Korea.

Grandmaster Kim taught his son martial arts starting at a young age, thus largely influencing Kim to follow in his path.

During a visit to Winnipeg, Man., Kim witnessed the international culture festival and paid specific attention to the Korean culture and Kore-

an martial arts. He then decided to go abroad and represent his culture and knowledge of martial arts away from home.

After high school, he lived and studied in Kitchener, Ont., for two years, before coming to Halifax, N.S. The East Coast captured his focus for several reasons: the discovery of a new place, the good environment, the history, and the opportunity to display Korean culture.

Once Kim had settled in Halifax, he opened up the Dalhousie Taekwondo Club in September 2003. The club started small, but quickly grew and extended the Taekwondo family at Dal. Kim is also currently studying therapeutic recreation at the university.

He says his future plan for the taekwondo club is to give it strength. Kim wants his students to show the best attitude, behaviour and respect to others and to become healthy, and he wants to teach them the skills of martial arts.

Kim says he hopes to found the Atlantic University Taekwondo Association and open his own Korean martial arts school. With this, Kim says he will create a place where people can come to meditate, to seek advice, and to find help.

# Volleyball Tigers head to CIs as contenders

Joey Ryba  
SPORTS EDITOR

The fifth-ranked Dalhousie Tigers defeated the UNB Varsity Reds in straight sets 3-0 on Feb. 19 to win the AUS and earn a birth to the CIs.

The CIS men's volleyball championship is the weekend of Mar. 3 at McMaster University in Hamilton, Ont.

Fourth-year outside Adam Hotchkiss says the match against UNB was the first time an AUS opponent really challenged and pushed the Tigers.

"There were some tight points in the game," says Hotchkiss. "One thing we did really well is at the end of each set we executed and didn't give up too many unforced errors. We stayed steady through the sets and it ended up working out for us."

Good team chemistry is essential in helping a team win championships. Hotchkiss says this year's squad is the closest group of guys with which he's ever played and that helps the team on and off the court.

"Everyone gets along," he says. "People don't hesitate during practices if there's something somebody doesn't like to let them know and I think that generally leads to improvements on the team."

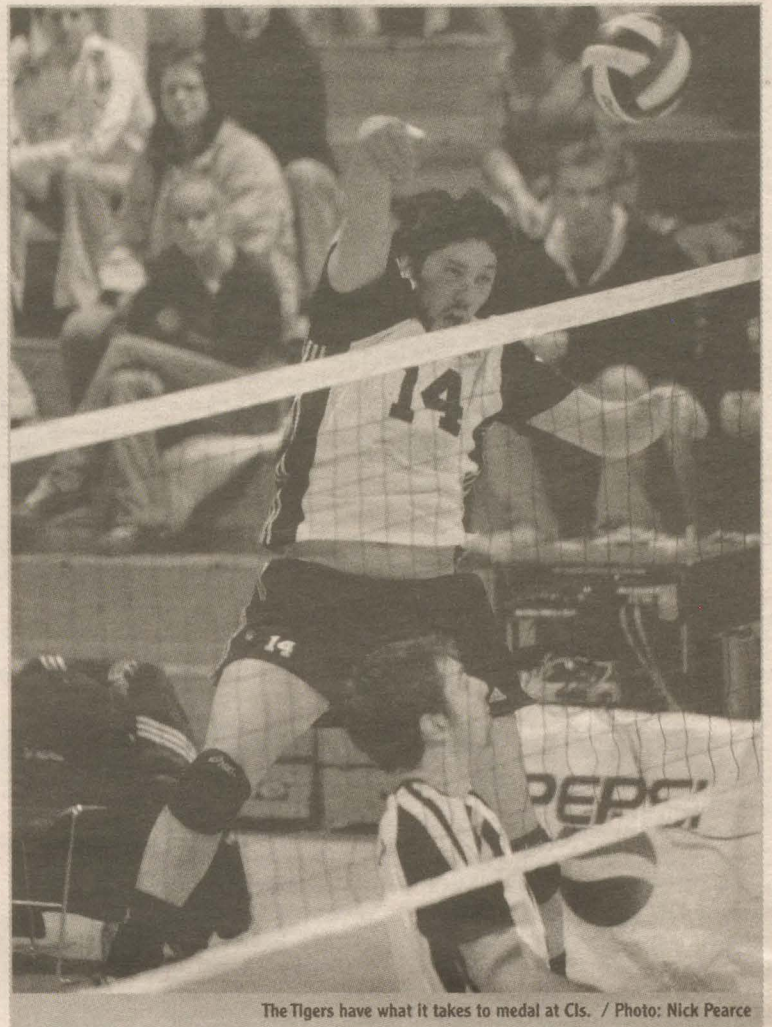
"Everyone knows that at the end of the practice or at the end of the game, everyone's still friends."

The Tigers haven't faced many high-caliber opponents in the AUS, which is the main reason for the team's lack of success at the national championship. To gain experience against some of the better teams in the country this season, the Tigers played in two interlock tournaments against Québec conference teams and also played several exhibition matches against the University of Manitoba and the University of Saskatchewan.

Third-year middle Jesse Mighton says Québec's interlock tournament in November was a valuable experience for the team.

"Anytime you have to play high-level competition in another team's gym is very important," Mighton says. "It's going to build for down the road. At nationals, you're going to face the same thing."

The Tigers hosted the Québec teams in January at Dalplex and the home team dominated — winning



The Tigers have what it takes to medal at CIs. / Photo: Nick Pearce

all four matches.

Mighton says the Tigers reached a physical peak and the team was at the top of its game during that interlock.

"We've been trying to maintain that level since then," says Mighton. "That was a great time to hit our stride... Québec [teams are] a pretty good indicator of some of the better teams in the country and we were able to deal with that without too many big problems."

The Tigers also played the Manitoba Bisons and the Saskatchewan Huskies. The team didn't beat either of the western opponents, but took Manitoba to five sets and put in a solid effort against Saskatchewan when many of the Tigers were out of the line-up due to injury.

Mighton says the Tigers learned a lot from playing the Bisons and Huskies and says he anticipates playing one of those teams in the first round.

The CIs are a one-shot deal — if a team loses its first match, it has no

chance of winning the gold medal. In order to be successful, Hotchkiss says the team has to play to its full potential and to stick to its game plan.

"What we have to do is realize that this whole season, everything we've done, is geared towards this one match," he says. "There's nothing really radical we have to change. We just need to keep going and we need to execute like we know we can."

Mighton says the nationals are like a pressure cooker because there are great teams at the tournament and the CIs are in another team's gym, which is packed with energetic fans.

He says he likes the Tigers' chances.

"Good teams play well in big games and we want to be that kind of team," he says. "We definitely have what it takes. It's a matter of not thinking about it too much, but thinking about it enough to know what's coming."

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Contribute!

# Women's basketball team gains momentum heading into playoffs

MIKE TWEEDALE  
Staff contributor

On Saturday, Feb. 25, the Dalhousie Tigers women's basketball team finished regular season play with a convincing 75-42 win over the UPEI Panthers at Dalplex. The team clinched fourth place with the victory — good enough for a spot in the AUS playoff quarterfinal.

The Tigers will travel to Charlottetown, P.E.I. on March 2, where the Panthers will host the AUS playoff tournament.

Although the Tigers haven't played as well on the road as the team has played at Dalplex, head coach Dr. Carolyn Savoy says she thinks the trip to the island will afford the team the preparation time that it's accustomed to having at home.

"We will arrive in Charlottetown a day before play begins, so the players will follow a more structured preparation that's like the one we follow at home," Savoy says.

Carolyn Peppin, a fifth-year guard, says she's optimistic about playing for the championship on the Panthers' home court.

"We're looking forward to playing at UPEI," says Peppin. "We've got great skill and we're now putting together all the pieces that are necessary for us to win."

Kelly Donald, who shares guard responsibilities with Peppin, says the team is starting to play better and its plan to start peaking as the playoffs approach is on schedule. She says Saturday's win was the result of each player contributing.

"We're at the spot where we



The Tigers aim to avenge last year's quarterfinal loss at AUs. / Photo: Nick Pearce

want to be," Donald says. "Everyone had a hand in [Saturday's] win. The bench poured in the points in the second half."

Donald also says winning isn't the team's only reward as the players start to gel.

"Tonight was fun, and being successful the rest of the way is going to be like that," she says of Saturday's win.

After the game, Leslie Duncan left the court with a smile that reflected the satisfaction of a convincing win. The fifth-year post, along with Peppin and Ryan McKay, may have also been feeling the nostalgia of playing the final home game of their career. McKay, Peppin and Duncan graduate this year.

Duncan says the team's experience will help the Tigers in the playoffs.

"We've been there before and know how it feels to come up short," Duncan says. "If you don't bring your game, it ends really quickly."

Duncan, who averaged 13.5 points per game and is the Tiger's second leading scorer, says the team's struggle down the stretch this year has helped the players to understand what is needed to win games.

"We definitely had some tough games this year," she says. "We understand that what doesn't work really doesn't work, so we have to concentrate on things that we've done to win."

## ATHLETES OF THE WEEK

### FEMALE ATHLETE



KIERE AITKEN  
SWIMMING

Kiera Aitken led the women's swim team to a sixth-place finish at the Canadian Interuniversity Sport championship with a silver medal in the 50-m backstroke. Her medal was the only one won by a Tigers female at the national championship this year. The Tigers collected 195.5 points for the team's sixth-place overall finish. Aitken is a fifth-year computer science student from Devonshire, Bermuda.

### MALE ATHLETE



ANDY WHITE  
SWIMMING

Andy White led the men's swim team to a sixth-place finish at the Canadian Interuniversity Sport championship with a bronze medal in the 400-m individual medley. His medal was the only one won by a Tigers male this year at the national championship. The Tigers collected 191 points for the team's sixth-place overall finish. White is a fifth-year history student from Windsor, N.S.

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# TOP 10

- 1 **PAMELA ANDERSON IN HALIFAX TO HOST JUNO AWARDS!**  
This is going to seriously hurt her *V.I.P.* credentials.
- 2 **THE AUTHOR OF *THE DA VINCI CODE* PUT UNDER INVESTIGATION FOR PLAGIARISM** Damn you, Turnitin.com!
- 3 **THE ROLLING STONES GO TO CHINA**  
And they thought the Superbowl censors were bad.
- 4 **ON TERRIBLE PREMIER DALTON McQUINTY CALLING HIS PROVINCE "MORE EQUAL" THAN THE OTHERS** Take that, Yukon Territories!
- 5 **MASTER P ORDERED TO COURT ON GUN CHARGES**  
Master P pleads: 'Uhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhh!'!
- 6 **AMERICAN BEER** Sucks.
- 7 **THE INEVITABILITY OF FREEZING WEATHER FINALLY COMING HERE**  
It's like global warming isn't even really happening at all!
- 8 **COMING BACK WITH A TAN FROM SPRING BREAK**  
Will attract hatred from even the nicest of grannies.
- 9 **BOB MARLEY'S SON ADMITS TO MARIJUANA USE**  
It must've been the influence of all that gansta rap music, right?
- 10 **GOING TO PANAMA FOR VACATION/LETTING THE SPORTS EDITOR WRITE YOUR WEEKLY COLUMN FOR YOU** Costly.

# STREETER

## Do you think Jon Stewart will make a good host at the Oscars?



“Of course he will. He's good at everything.”  
Corey Oickel, first-year science



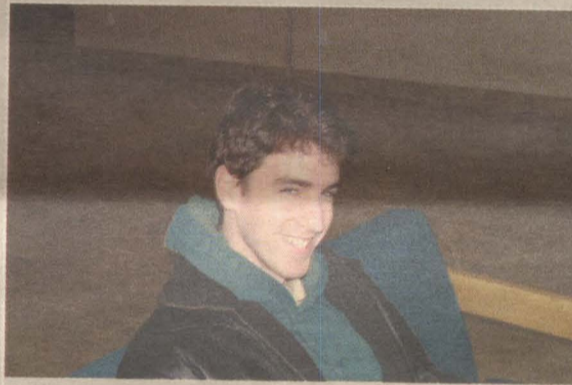
“Who's Jon Stewart?”  
Ashley Shea, first-year science



“He has some interesting political views. He'll make the Oscars more about global issues.”  
Corey Webster, second-year environmental science



“Yeah, he's a damn funny guy. And sexy.”  
Jennifer Smith, fourth-year sociology



“I don't care because I don't watch the Oscars.”  
Steve Sabourin, second-year political science



“I think Colbert should be his co-host.”  
Brandon Burke, second-year English



“I don't know anything about Jon Stewart, really.”  
Alison McEvoy, third-year English



“Beyond poopypje.com, I just find most other comedians to be a little too low brow for my tastes. Frankly.”  
Joey Ryba, ninth-year fart humourist



## HOT



## NOT

South for the winter

Pam Anderson's videos

That midterm

"A Modest Proposal"

Olympics in BC

Ontario's faux superiority complex

Personal attacks during DSU election campaigns

The Muchmusic VJ Search

Paris vs. Misha

Rap group Three-Six-Mafia to perform at the Oscars!

Winter Games

David Hasselhoff's "Hooked on a Feeling"

The one the day after

Essay proposals

Vancouver representing Canada

Maritimes' faux inferiority complex

Basing your vote on actual merit

American Idol

Ashlee vs. Lindsay

Bewildered cameraman not knowing who to cut to during performance

Suggestions? hotornot@dalgazette.ca

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