

The Dalhousie Gazette

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The Dalhousie Gazette

NORTH AMERICA'S OLDEST CAMPUS NEWSPAPER, EST. 1868

Eleanor Davidson, editor-in-chief
editor@dalgazette.com

Sabina Wex, engagement manager
sabina.wex@dalgazette.com

Erin Brown, news editor
news@dalgazette.com

Jennifer Lee, opinions editor
opinions@dalgazette.com

Kaila Jefferd-Moore, arts editor
arts@dalgazette.com

Alex Rose, sports editor
sports@dalgazette.com

Jayne Spinks, art director
design@dalgazette.com

Patrick Fulgencio, visual editor
photo@dalgazette.com

Elyse Creamer, business and advertising manager
business@dalgazette.com

Contributing to this issue:
Erin Brown, Eleanor Davidson,
Patrick Fulgencio, Kaila Jefferd-Moore,
Jennifer Lee, Alex Rose,
Sabina Wex, Josh Young

ADVERTISING

Elyse Creamer
Advertising Manager
647 261 6692
advertising@dalgazette.com

CONTACT US

www.dalgazette.com
The SUB, Room 345
6136 University Avenue
Halifax NS, B3H 4J2

THE FINE PRINT

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Contact Labi:


Constituency Office
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Halifax NS B3H 1Y6

labi@labimla.ca
www.labimla.ca

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Welcome to the *Dalhousie Gazette's* last issue of the 2016–17 school year. This year marked a huge change to our paper — one of the biggest in its 149-year history.

Over the course of the past eight months we halved our number of issues to focus on quality instead of quantity. We created a brand new website. We engaged with students across social media, in person and in print. We made you laugh, made you think, and sometimes we pissed you off. We're proud of that.

This last issue is a reflection of what we've learned over the past year, and a commitment to quality. We gave each of our editors the chance to delve into a topic, and to write about issues that really matter to them. This passion shines through in the pages you're about to read.

With the last issue always comes a lot of self-reflection and melancholy. Oh, the melancholy of writers and journalists — that stuff is potent. After four years of writing for, working with and wallowing about the *Gazette*, our Engagement Manager, Sabina Wex, and our Editor-in-Chief, Eleanor Davidson, will both be leaving.

The lessons we have learned over the past four years are both intensely personal and profoundly clichéd. Nonetheless, they've taught us a lot about how to work as journalists, as managers, and as people. Oh God, back at it again with the melancholy.

Condensed into these next few paragraphs is our attempt to summarize what you learn working at a campus paper:

1. JOURNALISM IS RELATABLE

Eleanor: In these days of doom and gloom about the future of journalism, we found some hope this year. We published stories that brought people together, and that really pissed them off. This roller coaster of emotions proved one thing: people are paying attention to what we do.

Sabina: The *Gazette* continues to stick to the basic principles and ethics of journalism while still engaging a good chunk of the Dal population. It's not like we spent huge amounts of money to make high quality videos or have celebrity columns to increase engagement — we did what we're trained to do: tell stories. What changed this year? We did it in our own voices instead of trying to be the New York Times. We related to our audience instead of condescending to them.

2. SOMETIMES PEOPLE JUST DON'T GIVE A FUCK

Eleanor: Time for a direct contradiction! Sometimes a story that we'll plan for weeks will be quietly received, while a simple article will ignite the rage of the Twittersphere. If the *Gazette* has taught me anything, it's to get used to things being unpredictable, and to never be too confident in your work.

Sabina: You can't please everyone. It sucks if you've planned a big story or if people are taking your words out of context, but not everyone cares. As a journalist, editor or manager, it's your job to figure out what people care about.

3. PLAY TO YOUR STRENGTHS

Eleanor: I am extremely proud to be a self-professed grandma. Except in terms of social media, where many Nannys and Grammys have much more active Facebook profiles than I do. Joking aside, this was one of the most important things I took away from my time at the *Gazette*: figure out what you're best at, and give it everything you've got. Sabina's enthusiasm with our social media pages proved her to be a force to be reckoned with. My obsession with organization and overseeing the big picture made working with the staff and producing our print issues a natural fit. These options are always available at the *Gazette*: take what you enjoy, and make it yours.

Sabina: Eleanor and I decided that we needed to amp up our online presence this year. I had more experience with online, so I took that side over and she focused on print. This was an amazing set-up because it alleviated both our workloads and led to a significantly less stressful year for both of us.

But this year, I have turned into a slightly more mature 16-year-old because I'm on my phone A LOT, something I wasn't used to after having a flip phone until early 2016. It's been funny talking to Eleanor about different Insta happenings and her be like, what? Whereas she'll chat to me about print ones, and I'm like, hold up, Kylie Jenner just created a new lip injection.

We could fill this paper with life lessons — both good and bad — that we've taken from our time here. But that would be boring. So let us just share one last thing:

We wouldn't have learned all this stuff if we never stood in a corner of a contributor meeting early on in our first years, clutching slices of pizza for moral support. You don't have to be a writer or a journalist to work for the paper. You don't have to have prior experience.

Reach out to us, come to a contributor meeting, send us a DM — there are so many opportunities at the *Gazette*, and we want to share your voice.

Thank you always for bearing with us as we shared ours.

XOXO



“This is a Canada problem.”

Muslim community faces discrimination in Halifax and across country as global politics shift.

ERIN BROWN, NEWS EDITOR

On January 29th, on a cold night in a small neighbourhood within Quebec City, a man known for white supremacist views took the lives of six men after their evening prayers at the Islamic Cultural Centre of Quebec City.

Prime Minister Justin Trudeau and Premier of Quebec Philippe Couillard stated that the crime was an act of terrorism. The crime was also a wake-up call for Canadians who believed the country was blissfully immune to the far-right extremists rising to the South and East of the country.

Since the attack, Canadians have become more aware of the countless acts of hatred through vandalism of synagogues and mosques alike, and people looking to capitalize on some Canadians’ fears of Muslims have lead campaigns against them.

A far-right wing propaganda outlet has produced slanderous and divisive material online that is often lacking in any factual

content, while some Conservative Party leadership candidates have used the fear towards and discrimination of a religion to try and advance their candidacies.

“Hate is everywhere,” says Eman Aziz, a Liaison Officer for the Islamic Association of Nova Scotia.

Aziz immigrated from Pakistan to North America in 1998, and says his only experiences with Western culture came from what was on television in 1990s. Television shows such as Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles and Friends, and bands like NSYNC and Backstreet Boys, were the media that he associated with Americans and Canadians.

He moved to St. Louis, Missouri, where he first saw and experienced snow, and also dealt with the rising threat of the Taliban.

“Then, life took me to Canada and I ended up in Toronto at York [University], and the year after two planes flew into the World Trade Center. I found myself to be part of the ongoing

challenge in response to this event,” says Aziz.

Aziz has spent many of his years living in Canada volunteering with organizations, and bringing together the Muslim community with other organizations and communities. He has been awarded by both the RCMP and the Halifax Regional Police for his volunteerism, and has served on volunteer associations at both York University and Dalhousie University.

He believes that one of the ways he, and other Muslims, can best address Islamophobia is by reaching out to those around, as he thinks it is fear and unawareness are the root cause.

“Fear is part of our psyche, and when people are afraid they will go into a protective mode. That can translate into all sorts of actions like vandalism and hate mail, and I’m not saying that’s the cause for all of it, but fear can drive our opinions and actions.”

“The opinions that we form out of fear and unawareness will have ramifications for everything that comes after,” says Aziz,

speaking on how the fear people in North American have felt towards Muslims had in turn been the root of President Donald Trump’s travel ban and the Quebec Mosque shooting.

To Aziz, “language is all that we’ve got” in challenging the misconceptions that people have about Muslim culture and feelings towards the community. “The words that we say, the message we convey and the manner in which we deliver the message, all play into either supporting the solution or aggravating the problem.”

Aziz believes that a lot of the problems we have today have been caused by the language we are using, and has in some cases, made things much worse. Such as the term “Islam vs. the West.”

“When you say Islam versus the West, it’s a very misleading term. We have Muslims who were born here, raised here, have jobs here... they’re following Western law, Western values in how to work and how to study, following Western government legislation, they are contributing to the society... this is proof that Islam being against the West doesn’t hold.”

The idea that followers of the Islamic faith does not fit into Canadian values, is one that Kellie Leitch, a Conservative Party leadership candidate, has brought into mainstream Canadian media through her proposed “Canadian values testing” policy for immigrants.

Under the Stephen Harper Conservative government in 2015, her and former-Member of Parliament Chris Alexander, made an announcement on a “Barbaric Cultural Practices tipline” which they said would a hotline for Canadians to call in suspicions they had of people not following Canadian values or laws. It was widely regarded as a tool that would be used for Canadians to try and persecute others based on feelings of racism or fear.

Aziz joked about the idea of a Canadian values test, saying, “what are Canadian values? Do I need to be a Maple Leafs fan to be a Canadian? Do I need to drink Molson to show my patriotism? Do I need to have maple syrup on everything I eat?”

Adding a point on the book by Maritime cartoonist, Michael DeAdder, “There’s a special book from a cartoonist “You might be from Nova Scotia if...”, and certainly I can relate to a lot of it, but is that the book that will be the test? If you fit into 50% of these quirks, then you can be Canadian?”

But Canada already has this, Aziz believes, as he stated “I think what they’re looking for is a common denominator for what we all believe in, and I think we have that, we call it the Canadian Charters of Rights and Freedoms.”

“Every Canadian, as long as they believe in respect for each other, safety and security for each other, and a roof over their head and food on their table, that is Canadian. Be well, do well, and do good for the person next to you, that is what defines Canada on an international level and that is what defines Canadians as a people. “

These values align with Muslims, and Aziz states that the belief that Muslims cannot be a part of the West or Canada, doesn’t support Canadian values as Canada is supposed to be

an inclusive nation.

“We include the French, we include the English, we include First Nations, and now as we celebrate our 150th we are including other people who were not a part of this process at the beginning but they are 150 years later. Who know who we’ll be in the next 150 years?” says Aziz.

Despite these beliefs, Syrian refugees and Muslims across the world are suffering and being denied entry into Canada and the United States due to fears of possible terrorists entering the country.

“We have people who are suffering, for no fault of their own, their governments have failed them and there are all kinds of political and ethnic violence. They are trying to get away from it, because they are trying to find safety for their families and their kids,” says Aziz.

Aziz has worked with the Islamic Association of Nova Scotia and is trying to provide support to refugees and those affected by the travel ban signed by President Trump.

“We have Syrian refugees who are refusing to apply as refugees with the United Nations, because it kills their chances of becoming a citizen, because of this travel ban. If you don’t register as a refugee, then you don’t get any support. But they are risking everything that they have, simply for a chance for maybe becoming a citizen.”

Muslims in the countries affected by the travel ban are victims of the fear perpetuated by mainstream outlets in the Western world, and Aziz believes that one of the ways Muslims can change this is by reaching out to the people in their lives.

“If we are not part of community, then we are not creating those relationships. It could be at school, work, or on the bus or at the mall,” says Aziz.

But Muslims in the West do have a struggle, in deciding how to balance their values in the Muslim faith and also the practices in the Western world.

“At what point do my personal Muslim beliefs hold, and at what point do my community’s beliefs hold?”

Aziz used the example of Saint Patrick’s Day as a way to explain how he balances between what he follows in his Muslim faith, and the practices of Canadian culture.

“As a Muslim, I don’t drink. But [on Saint Patrick’s Day] everyone is going to have beer instead of Tim Hortons, or whatever the case is. They have a right to drink, as much as I have a right not to drink. But we share a common value, and that is safety.”

He added, “Safety for self, safety for our neighbour, and safety for our community. That is how I’m a part of Saint Patrick’s Day, even though there is no Muslim connection to it, because I value your safety. “

One of the values of the Prophet Muhammad, Aziz says, is that Muslims care for their neighbours. “Not just Muslim neighbours,” he says, but “just neighbours.” Adding that “we need to be in-touch with our neighbours because if we don’t

communicate with them, fear and ignorance will fill that gap every time something happens.”

When Syrian refugees came to Canada, Prime Minister Justin Trudeau met the first planeload at Toronto’s Pearson airport. Local communities often greeted refugees with hockey jerseys and Tim Hortons treats.

While many viewed such gestures as positive, some questioned whether or not it was offensive to impose Canadian culture on the refugees as soon as they landed, and whether or not it was appropriate to do so.

“You are not being offensive, you are being proud of who you are and you are expressing that pride to immigrants. When you share your hockey jerseys, your Tim Hortons coffee, you are sharing your values because they are how you express yourself,” says Aziz.

In sharing Canadian culture with immigrants, Aziz says that there lacks a balance between the Canadian culture and celebrating ethnic cultures. “Canadians are so sensitive to other ethnic cultures, they start apologizing. But if you don’t ask, then how will you know? We do the same with allergies, asking who has food allergies, and it’s the same. To know, you need to have that interaction,” says Aziz.

Muslim Canadians have been the victim of acts of hatred since before mainstream media began covering these crimes, but with awareness comes the need to address these issues. From 9/11 to the Quebec Mosque shooting, being Muslim in Canada has been a challenge of breaking down the barriers of fear and the unknown, and the responsibility to do so does not solely rest on the shoulders of the Muslim community.

The issue at hand will not be fixed by any government or legislation, as Aziz states that “It is not the government’s problem... it is my problem, it is your problem. We have to find a way to move forward together. Because if we can’t do that, then there is nothing anybody can do to fill the gap between us.”

As Aziz says, “this is not just a Muslim problem, or a community problem, or a government problem, this is a Canada problem.”

The hatred and fear that politicians, far-right propaganda websites, and mainstream media has fed to Canadians has not made the country any more immune or safer from acts of terrorism or crime, and has not lead to any success or prosperity for the nation. Instead, the messaging has caused families to be separated by bans, and left others to suffer in war-torn countries while desperately trying to search for a safer life.

Hatred has divided humankind since history has recorded, and in the 21st century, the hatred and fear between the Western world and the Islamic faith has defined it.

Hate is everywhere, says Aziz, but he says that “the purpose of hate to exist is to show that we are different from it.” Aziz believes “the purpose of hate is not to further itself to cause suffering, it is to learn from it and know that we cannot be that way.”



Faces of mental health

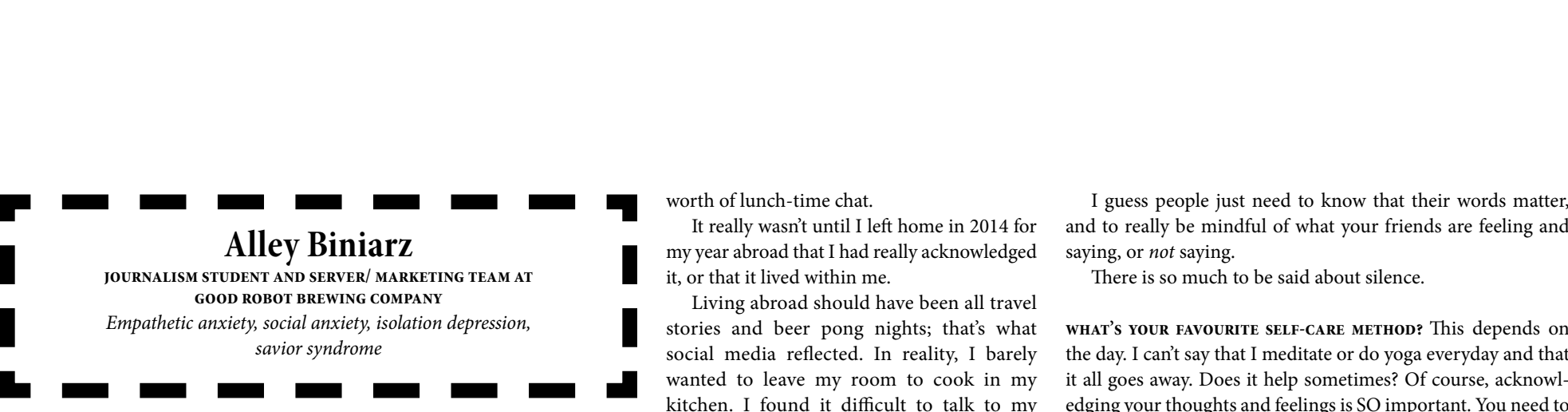
Six individuals speak openly about their mental health

JENNIFER LEE, OPINIONS EDITOR
&
Portraits by Patrick Fulgencio

EDITOR’S NOTE: *For our last issue, each editor was tasked to fill their section with pieces on a theme or topic they feel strongly about. I was torn between doing something on rape culture or racism but after doing a takeover on the Gazette’s Instagram, I decided I wasn’t done talking about mental health.*

The Instagram takeover, namely the response to it, showed me the necessity to have people talk openly and honestly about shit mental health. This is a collection of just a few individuals who have struggled with their own mental health and their stories.

And, I threw my story in there too, because I’m a narcissist.



Alley Biniarz

JOURNALISM STUDENT AND SERVER/ MARKETING TEAM AT
GOOD ROBOT BREWING COMPANY
*Empathetic anxiety, social anxiety, isolation depression,
savior syndrome*

TELL US ABOUT YOUR MENTAL HEALTH: It’s unusual to talk about my mental health because I feel like it has always been put on the backburner. I have always hidden behind helping other people, whether that was my mom, my sister, or one of my best friends. For some reason their happiness

and well-being meant more to me than my own. I guess this comes from my fear of being alone. I’ve started tainting these childhood memories of mine, and thinking back to them, realizing that I have always needed to be doing something or else people would stop liking me. I went to school with the flu so I wouldn’t miss out on an inside joke, I invited everyone to my birthday parties because I couldn’t stand the idea of someone being mad at me; I said yes to everything. I even succumbed to my childhood bully and let her dictate my every move.

I sacrificed myself so that nobody would gossip about me, but it also stems from this paranoia that the people I love are going to die before their time, well, before I’m ready to let them go. Every time I hear my mom gasp, or a loud crash in the house, or if my dad doesn’t answer his phone, my mind jumps to the worst-case scenario. This panic has worsened and reversed itself to actually prevent me from wanting to leave the house. Either I’m overwhelmed by the guilt of leaving my parents or I think maybe, just maybe, this is the day that something bad will happen and I won’t be there to stop it.

HOW DID YOU FIRST REALIZE SOMETHING WASN’T RIGHT, MENTALLY? Again, a lot of my memories are tainted now. I should have guessed it a while ago, like when I *had* to get drunk in high school because I couldn’t identify with my group of friends. I just thought it was the normal thing to do. But I was pondering back bottles of vodka just to attend a lame basement party. Maybe I just picked the wrong group of friends but I couldn’t not go or else I’d show up on Monday having missed a week’s

worth of lunch-time chat. It really wasn’t until I left home in 2014 for my year abroad that I had really acknowledged it, or that it lived within me.

Living abroad should have been all travel stories and beer pong nights; that’s what social media reflected. In reality, I barely wanted to leave my room to cook in my kitchen. I found it difficult to talk to my roommate, and we’d been friends since the fifth grade. I let my bank account fall into overdraft. Twice. And my credit card was maxed out. I let my situation sink further and I didn’t have the energy to fix it.

When my roommate left for a weekend trip, I thought I would relish in the alone time. This is when I had my first panic attack. Midway through watching “Riding in Cars with Boys,” I felt my chest start to tighten, and my breathing became shallow. I tried burping and drinking water but there was a lump in my throat that just wouldn’t go away. I called the few friends I had and asked them to keep me company. I’m still not really sure what exactly triggered it, if it was letting everything pile up, or not having an outlet. All I know is that since that moment, I haven’t been the same.

“There’s a lot that people don’t know about mental health. One thing is that it disguises itself really well. It hides behind ‘laziness’ or masks itself as being ‘overly happy.’”

WHAT DON’T PEOPLE KNOW ABOUT MENTAL HEALTH? There’s a lot that people don’t know about mental health. One thing is that it disguises itself really well. It hides behind “laziness” or masks itself as being “overly happy.” I’ve been told this so many times: that I’m *too* excited or *too* peppy. Little do they know that in order to be *this*, I had to tell myself 20× over that I was going to be okay if I went to this party. That, even though I had been working this job for seven months, I still had restless nights because I was anxious for my nine-hour shift.

What people don’t know is that I’ll give the best advice, because I’ve been there, but I’ll get overwhelmed if you’re constantly negative. This negativity is draining because I will soak it in as my own. I will literally think your problem is happening to me.

I guess people just need to know that their words matter, and to really be mindful of what your friends are feeling and saying, or *not* saying. There is so much to be said about silence.

WHAT’S YOUR FAVOURITE SELF-CARE METHOD? This depends on the day. I can’t say that I meditate or do yoga everyday and that it all goes away. Does it help sometimes? Of course, acknowledging your thoughts and feelings is SO important. You need to control your thoughts before they control you.

But there are days where I break down in the middle of my downward dog, and feel like I can’t breathe again. On these days where I feel the most isolated, I call friends that understand. I go out of my comfort zone and just cry it out with them. This is still acknowledging those thoughts but also letting others in. People can only help you if you allow them to. I don’t expect them to fix me, but I get a little bit happier knowing that I have a support system.

Most often, I call my mom. She is the best person to talk to because we are exactly the same. It’s nice to be able to identify with someone who lives under similar conditions, and has made it to have a family, a successful business, and is surrounded by so much love. She reminds me that I’m strong, and most times I believe her.

WHAT ADVICE WOULD YOU TELL SOMEONE WHO IS STRUGGLING WITH MENTAL HEALTH? 1) I’d tell them to find a partner that is compassionate towards their mental health. This goes hand-in-hand with the emphasis on having a support system. This isn’t me saying that you *need* a partner; I’m saying that it is so damn hard to date when you’re anxious or depressed. I have had one too many partners who just didn’t get it. It never ended well.

2) Get the fuck off of social media. I work in a field that depends on social media and it is exhausting. If you don’t need it, get out. There’s something scrolling through people’s lives and feeling excluded. It’s disgusting how crippling it can be to feel like you’re missing out but you need to remember that it’s fabricated. It’s all an act — no one is that happy or exciting all the time.

3) I repeat, NO ONE IS HAPPY ALL THE TIME. Sadness is so real. It’s a feeling that shouldn’t be suppressed. You’re human and have feelings — so feel them! Cry when you need to, and laugh when you want to. Remember that nothing is permanent and it will pass. Also, don’t believe all of these happiness gurus. They don’t know you. You know you, and you are stronger than you think.

Matt Stickland
NAVAL OFFICER, CURRENT STUDENT
Adjustment disorder, which turned into PTSD/moral injury
with major depressive episodes



TELL US ABOUT YOUR MENTAL HEALTH: It sucked. I don't really remember how it started, but sometime in early 2012 I realized that I was not okay with some of the things that I had done during my deployment to Libya. I started being afraid of retribution and being attacked in my own house. I got scared at night and so I stood watch at my kitchen window all night if a car drove by that was unfamiliar. If I did manage to get to sleep without being scared of the outside I would have a nightmare. They were vivid and terrifying. Generally, for a couple of years I spent my nights petrified. It escalated pretty slowly and it all felt very normal, so it didn't seem like anything was wrong. The mind has an amazing ability to rationalize unusual behavior to itself.

It was also too embarrassing to talk about it because I thought that my trauma was 'too soft.' War movies and documentaries spin the narrative that trauma needs to be up close and personal. It needs to be bloody and filled with adrenaline. Since my trauma didn't fit that narrative I just assumed that a genetic defect or something was to blame.

In retrospect that's a pretty ridiculous since there is research now that indicates drone pilots have a higher rate of PTSD than other trades in the military. So there were a lot of nights spent afraid, alert and getting ready to fight. It was also very isolating and most of my friends fell by the wayside for a couple of years. It also halted my career in the Navy. I spoke about it at great length on Sickboy Podcast, the 9th of November 2015 episode titled PTSD.

HOW DID YOU FIRST REALIZE SOMETHING WASN'T RIGHT? I didn't really, I went in for help because I was drinking all the time and thought I may have been on the road to becoming an alcoholic. The doctor asked a mental health questionnaire I'm pretty sure I failed spectacularly based on the speed at which I got into treatment.

There was also a moment one evening when I was browsing a photo essay by a journalist who was in Libya at the same time I was.

It really brought home the impact airstrikes have on the people on the receiving end. That's when the downward spiral really kicked off.

WHAT DON'T PEOPLE KNOW ABOUT MENTAL ILLNESS? For the ones that affect sleep, it really just wrecks your life.

Not getting sleep just compounds everything else you are going through. It's hard to describe to someone who has never been chronically short of sleep just how hard it is to function day to day. Never mind actually doing things that are productive. Not sleeping all night really puts in jeopardy the ability to preform basic life functions like eating.

WHAT'S YOUR FAVOURITE SELF-CARE METHOD? Sleep hygiene: Google it, live it.

I use a couple of items to ground myself if I'm ever in the process having a flashback or anxiety attack: My wedding ring, my travel mug or a D20 I carry in my pocket.

Less immediate: I play a lot of goalie in either hockey or soccer. I find being in net very calming mentally and tiring physically. It's perfect. Failing at that I'll do some other form physical activity. I make sure I take some time for myself every day to do something I enjoy. As well as mindfulness and mediation.

WHAT ADVICE WOULD YOU TELL SOMEONE WHO IS STRUGGLING WITH MENTAL HEALTH? You don't have to be alone. Reach out. There is no shame for going through what you're going through. It's not your fault. There is no shame in asking for help.

Jessica Briand
OCCUPATION: STUDENT/RETAIL WORKER/WRITER
OCD, Depression, Anxiety



TELL US ABOUT YOUR MENTAL HEALTH: I have been struggling with my mental health since I was 12 years old but the worst of it came the year I begun university. I was diagnosed with OCD around this time.

OCD is a difficult mental illness, because it likes to

team up with depression. Essentially what happens is a person has an obsession, something that weighs on their mind and makes them anxious (in my case germs) and in order to forget about that obsession and put the mind at ease, you have to submit to a compulsion, which for me is cleaning myself, washing hands, showering, laundry, etc. But it becomes debilitating and you end up getting really depressed because there's no rationality to it, you just feel crazy.

“Don't be afraid to tell the truth, don't be afraid of anything, because you'll be surprised by how many people you'll have in your corner when you stop being afraid.”

HOW DID YOU FIRST REALIZE SOMETHING WASN'T RIGHT, MENTALLY? I realized something was wrong when I could no longer function in my everyday life like a “normal” teenager would. Things like going to a bar, or sharing food, or riding the bus to university, or even using the public washroom, would make me so anxious that I felt like I was going to explode until I could wash away the germs.

WHAT DON'T PEOPLE KNOW ABOUT MENTAL HEALTH? People don't realize a lot of the time, that the person struggling isn't the mental illness. They're two separate things. One of the things I pride myself on is the ability to be myself even when I'm struggling, because

sometimes the person I am when I am struggling is not the person who I feel defines me, and I won't let it be the person people define me as.

WHAT'S YOUR FAVOURITE SELF-CARE METHOD? My favourite self-care method is writing poetry. I find it very difficult to discuss with people in plain language how my mental health is, and what I'm feeling everyday of my life. When I'm having a moment of anxiety, a moment where my OCD wants to take over, I'll writing the feelings out.

Using analogies and symbolism in poetry, allows me to find a way to express myself and free myself from the feeling of exploding that I normally have when dealing with OCD. In some cases, it can even take over the need for a compulsion to follow after an obsessive moment.

WHAT ADVICE WOULD YOU TELL SOMEONE WHO IS STRUGGLING WITH MENTAL HEALTH? My advice for someone who is struggling with mental health is that you aren't alone. I know that sounds so cliché but when I first started dealing with my own mental health, I began the journey on my own.

I was silent—I was alone, because I wouldn't let anyone help me. Getting the words out into the open and having someone hear them, a friend, a coworker, a sibling, a parent, etc. makes a whole world of difference.

For me, it might have saved me from exploding. Don't be afraid to be stigmatized, don't be afraid to tell the truth, don't be afraid of anything, because you'll be surprised by how many people you'll have in your corner when you stop being afraid. The people who love you will just want to help, and anyone who responds to you negatively isn't worth the time or the worry. Once you free yourself of that burden then you can really start to take care of yourself.

Ally Geist
I AM A THIRD-YEAR HONOURS THEATRE STUDIES MAJOR/FRENCH MINOR
AND RESIDENCE ASSISTANT AT DAL
Generalized Anxiety Disorder, Panic Disorder, Body Dysmorphia



TELL US ABOUT YOUR MENTAL HEALTH: My mental illnesses don't define me. They are a part of me, but they will never be who I am.

People tend to think that anxiety is the same thing as stress, and I never realized before I started struggling how physical its effects can be on your body. There are

some days where I don't remember what happened that day, because panic takes over, or where I have to leave class to get sick after a presentation, because my anxiety makes me so nauseous.

It's even harder when you have to explain to others what is going on, especially when they can't see it or begin to understand it for themselves. But, I have learned that people are

“Having a mental illness is like fighting a war in which the opponent's strategy is to convince you that the war isn't happening”

often kinder and more understanding than I think, and they usually want to help me.

The most powerful quotation I've ever heard to describe my struggles is “Having a mental illness is like fighting a war in which the opponent's strategy is to convince you that the war isn't happening”. For years, I told myself that my war wasn't happening. My struggle with mental illness has caused me more self-doubt and hurt than I thought possible. But it has also made me unbelievably strong.

HOW DID YOU FIRST REALIZE SOMETHING WASN'T RIGHT, MENTALLY? Honestly, I didn't. I was fortunate enough to have had friends who recognized my struggles for what they were before I did.

I was sitting in my friend's room one day, crying my eyes out. I didn't know why; all I knew was that I was unbelievably sad and overwhelmed. She told me that I couldn't pretend that everything was fine anymore—that I had to reach out, and she would do anything it took to get me to talk to a psychologist.

Later that week, I remember getting back from a bar at midnight, because my friend needed to go home early. As she was going to bed, I broke down on her living room floor. I don't think I have ever cried that hard in my life. That was the first panic attack I ever had. I remember being on the floor, not being able to breathe. I remember sitting there screaming at my friend not to touch me because I was so afraid of hurting her. I remember asking her to call my friend, the one who pushed me to get the help I needed. This friend came to me, and talked me down.

It was this moment I realized everything was so much bigger than I had thought before. I realized that I needed to let people in so that I could feel better, and become “me” again.

WHAT DON'T PEOPLE KNOW ABOUT MENTAL HEALTH? People don't realize that you can live with a mental illness and be mentally

healthy! It doesn't prevent you from living a happy, healthy life. It is something that can be managed. People also don't realize that I can tell them what I need. So much of the time, people try to speak for those living with a mental illness, but when I am having a panic attack, for example, I am so capable of telling people what I need if they are patient, and just ask and give me time to respond.

WHAT'S YOUR FAVOURITE SELF-CARE METHOD? My favourite self-care is sitting in Coburg Coffee with my headphones in, writing. That, or taking a cold bath (weird, I know...) with a Soap in Your Mouth bath bomb. Also solo dance parties.

WHAT ADVICE WOULD YOU TELL SOMEONE WHO IS STRUGGLING WITH MENTAL HEALTH? If you are broken, you don't have to stay broken. Things may be tough right now, but you can and will find a way out of it. Never be afraid to reach out for help when you need it, and for every person who doesn't “get it”, there will be someone who does.

Laura Lowe
4TH YEAR PSYCHOLOGY AND HEALTH STUDIES STUDENT
Panic Disorder, Generalized Anxiety Disorder, Depression



TELL US ABOUT YOUR MENTAL HEALTH: My panic attacks and depression come in random spurts: I can be fine for a few months, and then have a few weeks of feeling like I have absolutely no control over my body or feelings.

When I'm feeling “good”, I tend to make myself believe I don't actually have a problem, and that I don't need help. Sometimes, I tell myself I don't need to go to my counseling appointment, or take my medication. I think

that's one of the hardest aspects of my mental illnesses: they try to make me believe they don't exist.

“Sometimes, I tell myself I don’t need to go to my counseling appointment, or take my medication. I think that’s one of the hardest aspects of my mental illnesses: they try to make me believe they don’t exist”

HOW DID YOU FIRST REALIZE SOMETHING WASN’T RIGHT, MENTALLY? I first started experiencing panic attacks in high school; around the same time my family was going through some major challenges. Therefore, I just assumed my panic attacks were situational, and would subside when other aspects of my life got better. It wasn’t until a couple of years later that I realized they weren’t getting any better. It’s extremely difficult to accept the fact that your diagnoses are part of you. They do not define you, but they undoubtedly influence who you are.

WHAT DON’T PEOPLE KNOW ABOUT MENTAL ILLNESS? A lot! I was first diagnosed with mental illness nearly 5 years ago, and my entire bachelors degree has been spent learning about various mental illnesses- yet I still feel like I can’t even begin to grasp the concept. While it’s great to speak openly about mental health struggles to increase awareness of the topic, it’s important to recognize that mental illnesses are unique for everyone.

WHAT’S YOUR FAVOURITE SELF-CARE METHOD? Board games! For as long as I can remember, my family and friends have been getting together to play all kinds of games: everything from Scrabble to Dutch Blitz. Games are a great way to forget about whatever is causing you stress, and focus on your strategy instead.

WHAT ADVICE WOULD YOU TELL SOMEONE WHO IS STRUGGLING WITH MENTAL HEALTH? Short and simple: utilize the resources available to you. Whether that includes friends, family, the mental health mobile crisis team, co-workers, psychologists, counselors, phone apps, etc. There are so many resources at your fingertips for your benefit and well-being. It took me far too long to take advantage of these resources.

Jennifer Lee

4TH YEAR JOURNALISM STUDENT, SECTION EDITOR FOR DAL GAZETTE

Panic and anxiety disorder, depression



TELL US ABOUT YOUR MENTAL HEALTH: I never thought about my mental health until the summer of 2010 — when I experienced my first panic attack. After that my life was a flurry of self-doubt, anxiety and stomachaches. The anxiety and depression can exist at varying degrees. I can go about my day with only a little bit of fear and

worry then the next day the dial is cranked up to 100. The unpredictability of coping with poor mental health is the real challenge.

HOW DID YOU FIRST REALIZE SOMETHING WASN’T RIGHT, MENTALLY? There was a period in my life when I would wake up and the first thing I would mutter is “I hate myself”. A couple months of this mindset, some mild-self harming, and complete avoidance of social situations eventually led me to the foot of my mother’s bed, crying as I unpacked what was going on in my brain. I’d like to take this moment to give a huge shout-out to my mother — I love you forever.

WHAT DON’T PEOPLE KNOW ABOUT MENTAL HEALTH? You can be happy when you talk about mental illness. Just because I’m anxious and depressed doesn’t mean I can’t have a smile on my face when I tell you about it. Also, I’m tired of the idea that we can’t talk about mental health openly in every-day discussion. I’m done hiding my mental health the way women hide their tampons in their sleeves on the way to the bathroom.

WHAT’S YOUR FAVOURITE SELF-CARE METHOD? When people walk into my house they often say: “It smells like LUSH in here.” That’s because I have a arsenal of bath bombs and bubble bars stowed away in my bedroom. Yes, relaxing in a bath is great and is definitely on of my most *favourite* self-care methods. The most *important* method for me is something I’ve been somewhat neglecting lately, regularly

WHAT ADVICE WOULD YOU TELL SOMEONE WHO IS STRUGGLING WITH MENTAL HEALTH? Just be kinder to yourself. Take the morning, afternoon or the whole day off if you need it. Go for a walk, or run or swim. Take a nap or sleep all day. Smoke that joint. Rub one out. Take a bath. Do something that makes you understand that you are worthy of joy.

Something my therapist told me to do is to take that shitty voice in your head and treat it as if it is its own person. When they call you a piece of shit, or suggest that you die, look at them and tell them to shut the fuck up. It helps if you give them a name, too. I call mine Stacy.

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ISLAND OFF PEI SWALLOWED BY SEA SHOWS CANADA'S COASTAL STRUGGLE

Photos & text by
KAILA JEFFERD-MOORE, ARTS & LIFESTYLE EDITOR

Perched precariously on the North-eastern shore of mainland Prince Edward Island sits a small island shaped like a crab claw. For now, Lennox Island has undergone multiple unwanted facelifts courtesy of the infamous nor'easters known to seasoned Maritimers. This Canadian First Nations Reserve is facing the effects of climate change alarmingly fast. These islands have been home to the Mi'kmaq First Nations for over 10,000 years, and within the past 10 years, 4.3 hectares of this homeland has disappeared — and it's not showing any signs of stopping. Lennox Island First Nation reveals a

shocking in-depth memoir of a much broader issue facing the world's largest coastline. Canada is a nation mother to three coasts, boasting over 24,000 kilometres of coastline. The stretches of shore give ample evidence to observe the effects of climate change that have already begun to show — and to predict what is yet to come. Canada's coasts experience the effects rapidly as sea levels rise, shorelines erode, and severe weather surges — producing high winds, powerful waves and drastic temperatures — become all the more frequent. Extremely warm winters recorded in the Arctic matched with record amounts of

snow — 70cms in some regions — and rain in the Maritimes. Although some coastal areas are protected from the weather, such as Lennox Island and the northern coast of mainland PEI, they still face slow and inevitable change. Other areas are sometimes left little to fight with, but everything to fight for. Much like the Aboriginal Canadians spread across Canada, the people of Lennox Island are resilient, respectful, and share their stories of loss and determination as proof that throwing in the towel is something we don't do. Loss of this land is the loss of a home and identity for the people of Lennox Island. If

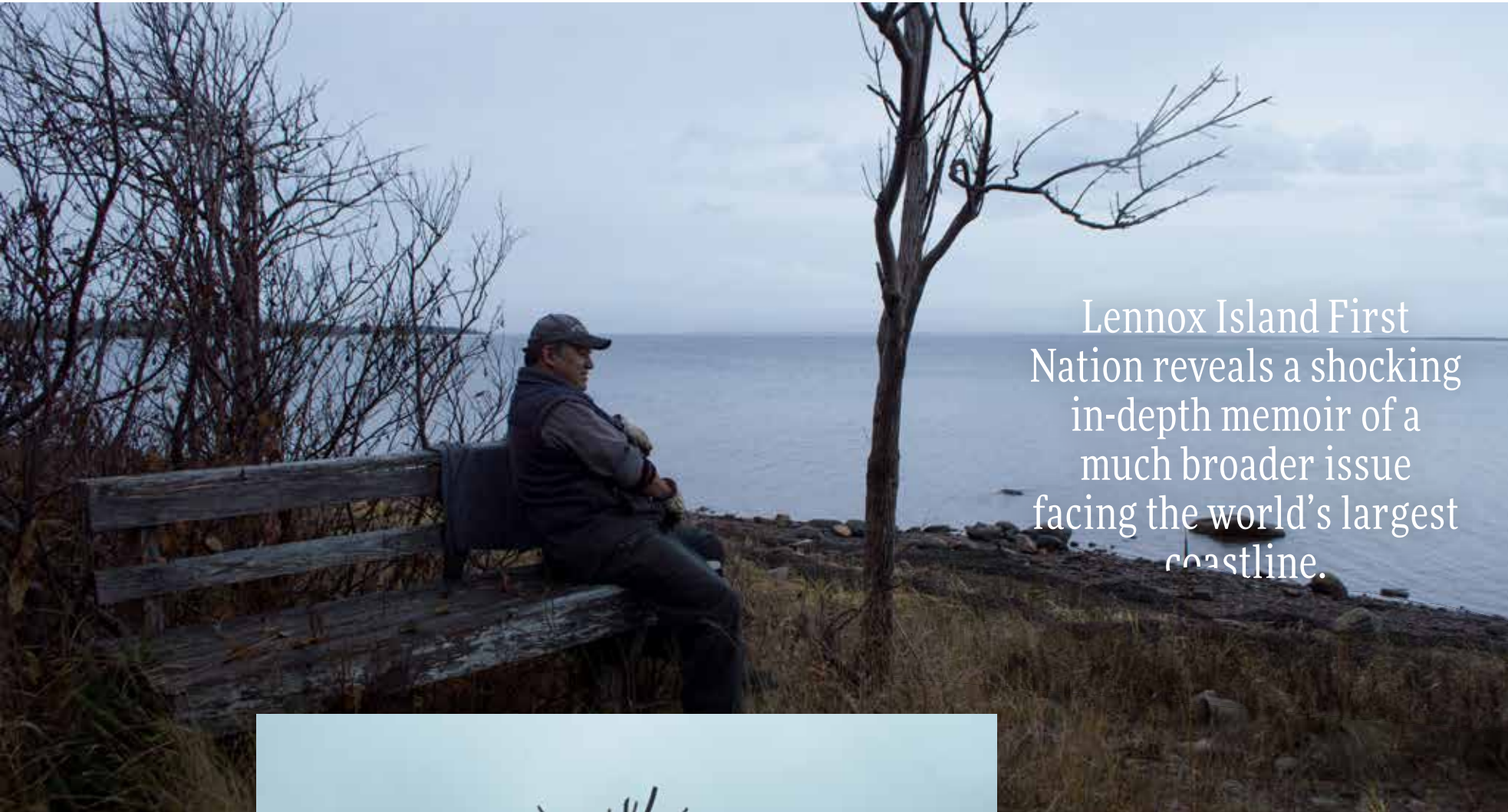
forced to leave, they lose centuries of their history, of a way of life, and pieces of their culture to wash away with the shorelines. Most residents I spoke with during my two weekends on Lennox Island told me stories of connecting to their heritage on Lennox, and their intent to stay at home. The knowledge of the land, their burial grounds, the sacred grounds that carry history and a way of life will be lost, says Lennox Elder and drum-keeper, Gilbert Sark. The First Nations, Inuit and Métis of Canada have been subject to years of oppression since the colonization of Canada 150 years ago. This history of Canada is polluted by the attempted

(and almost successful) assimilation of indigenous peoples into “civilization.” The Canadian Federal Government implemented a series of actions to meet this goal; creating the Gradual Civilization Act in 1857, encouraging Aboriginals to give up their status for monetary or land gain, and establishing a residential school system to purposefully separate Aboriginal children from their culture and families for successful indoctrination followed by the 60's scoop. This treatment of Aboriginals in Canada set a devastating precedent for years to come. The impact of the unsuccessful campaign to un-indigenize Canadian Aboriginals has

trickled through generations; the confusion of growing up away from their family structure, unable to speak their language, abused and raised to believe their culture was savage. First Nations couldn't relate to this world, but could no longer relate to the one they came from. A lost generation was born. The devastation caused by the disruption of lifestyle and thrown into a world that was unknown has trickled down through generations of Canadian Aboriginals. Many reserves and land-claim territories still struggle with acquiring the right to self-determination, with Aboriginal peoples having to prove their status, and often left on the back burner of

Lyndon Hardy and Brandy Coughlin walk along the shore of Hog Island. The island is part of a chain of long strips of sandbars with rolling hills that protect Lennox Island and Malpeque Bay from the powerful St. Lawrence Gulf in the Atlantic Ocean. A deep concave in the side of what used to be the highest peak on Hog Island show the havoc of storm surges in the area. If these sandhills breach, the effects could be devastating for what is left of Lennox Island.

priorities; left with boil water advisories for years. Aboriginal youth graduating at lower rates each year. The snow melting and ice “break-ups” occurring earlier and earlier, year by year, or simply given incentive to relocate. Residents of Lennox Island First Nation Reserve are determined that the answer to pressing environmental concerns on First Nation communities are not to accept the offers of relocating to a “new” Lennox First Nation Reserve on the mainland with the shadows of colonialism lingering in the resolutions to disappearing indigenous land. The Banks family, whom I stayed with during my visits to PEI, say Lennox is their home, they don't want to move. This sentiment is shared among most Lennox Islanders. [cont'd...]



Lennox Island First Nation reveals a shocking in-depth memoir of a much broader issue facing the world’s largest coastline.

A wigwam structure stands tall among the Lennox Island pow-wow grounds. This land and the connection to the land for over 10,000 years is the beginning of the loss the Mi’kmaq of Lennox Island would experience from displacement.



Indigenous communities like Lennox sprinkle the coastal regions of Canada like the stars do the night sky — each unique, exuberant, and breathtakingly alive. They share their culture proudly; my Haida Gwaii relatives on the Pacific Northwest receive their button blankets. The graduates in my community in the Northwest Territories proudly tout their graduation stoles made of moose hide and intricate hand-beaded designs dancing down and up the V-pattern hanging off of their shoulders. I watch my Mi’kmaq friends’ communities’ form pow-wows

and invite everyone in the public to come and experience their culture; including potlucks, drumming, singing, dancing and learning of the Mi’kmaq history in Nova Scotia. 70 per cent of Canada’s population lives within its coastal regions. Along with the rich heritage and the invaluable historical ties many indigenous peoples of Canada have to the land, much of our economy is driven by coastal activities; offshore oil drilling activity, major shipping ports, fishing industries, etc. Reported in Canada’s Marine Coasts in a Changing Climate

is was reported that the “changing climate is increasingly affecting the rate and nature of change along Canada’s highly dynamic coasts, with widespread impacts on natural and human systems.”

Canada is a coast-to-coast-to-coast country, that third ‘-to-coast’ often left off the end of the phrase — and out-of-sight is out-of-mind. In December of 2015, Prime Minister Justin Trudeau addressed the Assembly of First Nations Special Chiefs Assembly and said, “...no relationship is more important to me and to Canada than the one with First Nations, the Métis Nation, and Inuit.”

His Liberal Government’s Budget 2016 promises to invest \$8.4 billion over five years, beginning last year, to improve the socio-economic conditions of Aboriginal peoples across Canada.

On March 13 of this year, Lennox Island First Nation received \$1.8 million for infrastructure and comprehensive community planning, including housing development and renovations, and supporting bridge repairs and island maintenance — like making sure it doesn’t wash away.

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(Left) Randy Angus sits on a bench that once sat embedded deep in the forest on Lennox Island. He overlooks the “back shore” of the island, which lost almost four feet of land from hurricane Matthew in October 2016. He says he can remember a time when the rocks pictured half-submerged in the water were once in the side of the bluff where he now sat.

(Middle) A stop sign written in Mi’kmaq found on Lennox Island First Nations Reserve, PEI. Despite the adversities of inevitable climate change, the people of Lennox Island First Nation Reserve continue the fight to protect and preserve Lennox Island.

(Right) Deeply involved in Mi’kmaq traditions on the island, Hey Cuzzins, a local drum-group created by Lennox youth practice in the home of drum keeper, maker and Elder, Gilbert Sark.

(Bottom) Janet Banks and her sister remember this shore as it was when they were little girls — when it was a forest and peat bog until being chopped down and years of weather eroded this section of Lennox Island’s back shore. At high-tide, calm waters submerge the graveyard of the long-ago forest.





Queens of the jungle: the best Tigers team you’ve (probably) never heard of

After losing for the first time in four years, Dal cheer has bounced back stronger than ever

ALEX ROSE

“1... 3... 5... 7! 1... 3... 5... 7!”

Thirty-plus pairs of feet hit the floor. Girls go tumbling, girls go jumping, girls go flipping and flying in all directions. And in perfect rhythm with first-year coach Jennifer Randell’s numeric chanting. Well, almost perfect. It’s just a practice, after all.

It’s eight o’clock on a Wednesday night, and some members of the Dalhousie cheer team are still trickling into the Dalplex. Practice officially starts at 7:30, but a few of the girls had to write exams. It’s one of the many obstacles to coaching a university team, explains Coach Randell as she apologizes for the sloppy stunts, but to anyone unfamiliar with the sport, even poorly executed cheerleading is an incredible sight to behold.

A cheer routine is comprised of six main disciplines: stunts, pyramid, jumps, tumbles (both standing and running),

basket tosses and dance. They are judged by the difficulty and execution of the individual components, as well as overall performance and composition.

Executing any part of the routine takes plenty of talent and practice, but the basket tosses are the most visually striking. Two cheerleaders, called the bases, make a platform with their hands. A third cheerleader, known as the backspot, helps another cheerleader, called the flyer, onto this platform. The backspot then places her hands underneath the bases’ hands as the three of them launch the flyer into the air. It’s a painful procedure for the bases as the flyer steps on the bony tops of their hands, but it’s also a necessary one to boost the flyer as possible.

Once in the air, the flyer twists and turns and lands back in the arms of the other girls with an impact. The cheerleaders are

meant to absorb the stress from the landing as much as possible, but that can be tough on the hard floors of the Dalplex, which are covered only by thin mats.

That’s another obstacle to coaching a university team — inadequate facilities. The Dalplex floors aren’t sprung like those meant for cheering, so they aggravate or exacerbate various pains when the girls practice on them. Their flips, cartwheels and other gymnastic feats, which compose the tumbling part of the routine, would be better on a proper floor. At least, that’s what Coach Randell says. The uninformed observer has to take her word for it, because even on this subpar surface the team’s tumbling is jaw dropping.

Not everyone participates equally in each portion of the routine. For example, backspots are usually taller to support

the flyers as the bases hold them up, and flyers are generally shorter and lighter so they are easier to toss and support in the air. When it comes to the sections like dancing, jumping or tumbling, the most talented are placed in at the head of the group, where they are most visible.

Sophie Beazley-Wright tumbles at the very front. She is an assistant captain in her third year on the team, and her position is base. She was a gymnast before she started cheering, hence her tumbling skill. When she retired from gymnastics she needed a new sport, but it took a lot of convincing for her to try cheerleading. Now, she can hardly imagine her life without it.

“One thing I really like about it more than gymnastics is the team aspect of it, because gymnastics is such an individual sport. I did not realize how much it meant to have people supporting your back and working to lift you higher,” she says.

Beazley-Wright’s teammates support her literally and figuratively. She and her co-captains make an effort to ensure the girls feel as much like a team off the mat as they do on it. They host team-bonding sessions, work and party together, and even volunteer together. Last year the team was named Dalhousie’s most impactful competitive sports society, and the captains work to maintain that generous spirit.

Jenna Brownlow is the team captain, and also a base. She started her athletic career as a basketball player, but switched sports when she attended a March Madness basketball game in Ohio and became enamoured with the cheerleaders. It’s her fourth and final year as a part of the team, so she’s taking her role as captain seriously.

“I like to make it as comfortable as I can for the first years, too, coming to university. A lot of people are from Ontario or out of province, so it’s creating that family aspect, like a home away from home, so they are more comfortable and enjoying first year on a different level,” she says.

“We work really hard to have lots of team bonding events and make sure that everyone on the team is getting along,” says Beazley-Wright. “It can make or break a team. If you don’t get along with your teammates, it’s really hard to work with them.”

In a sport that requires harmonization down to the millisecond, chemistry is incredibly important both within the individual units of a routine and for the team as a whole. For example, a pair of bases that always work together will learn each other’s strengths and weaknesses so that one would know to compensate for, say, her partner’s weak front arm. And during sections that rely on each member performing her job exactly, such as the pyramid, being able to trust your

teammates is integral to success; one mistake can ripple across and ruin the whole routine.

This ultra-reliance on every athlete creates an overwhelming pressure to compete, even through serious injury. Brownlow, for example, got hurt last season when she caught a teammate awkwardly during a flyover stunt and her knee buckled under-



neath her. She kept cheering, but she has to wear a knee brace to do it. She has an MRI scheduled for her knee as soon as she gets home after the school year.

“I find that cheerleading people just push through injuries more than any other sport I’ve been a part of,” she says. “You’re required more. If there’s one person missing, the entire pyramid can’t go.

“It’s kind of bound to happen with all those bodies flying around and girls up in the air and stuff,” adds Beazley-Wright.

Just like in other sports, the cheer team is being forced to take injuries more seriously than in the past. Anyone who was concussed needs a doctor’s note to return to action after the team struggled with several concussions last year.

The team suffered some untimely injuries this season as well. Partially due to those injuries they lost Cheer Blast, their first competition of the year—and the team’s first loss in four seasons.

“We just had a couple of setbacks, people not staying at the school (another obstacle to coaching a university team!), a couple injuries,” says Coach Randell.

Those injuries forced the team to change up their routine two days before the competition, so they had the option to drop out altogether. But the team works too hard all season to give up in any competition.

“They didn’t want to, they weren’t going to back down. They’ll take a loss to make the win mean even more,” Randell says.

And win they did. The team came back to claim the banner at Maritime Meltdown, it’s second tournament of the year, in convincing fashion.

“This is by far one of the most talented group of athletes I’ve ever coached, and I’ve been coaching for nine years. It’s a privilege to coach them,” says Randell. “In the last month or so especially they’ve really pulled together with a common goal to redeem that title they’ve had for a couple of years now.”

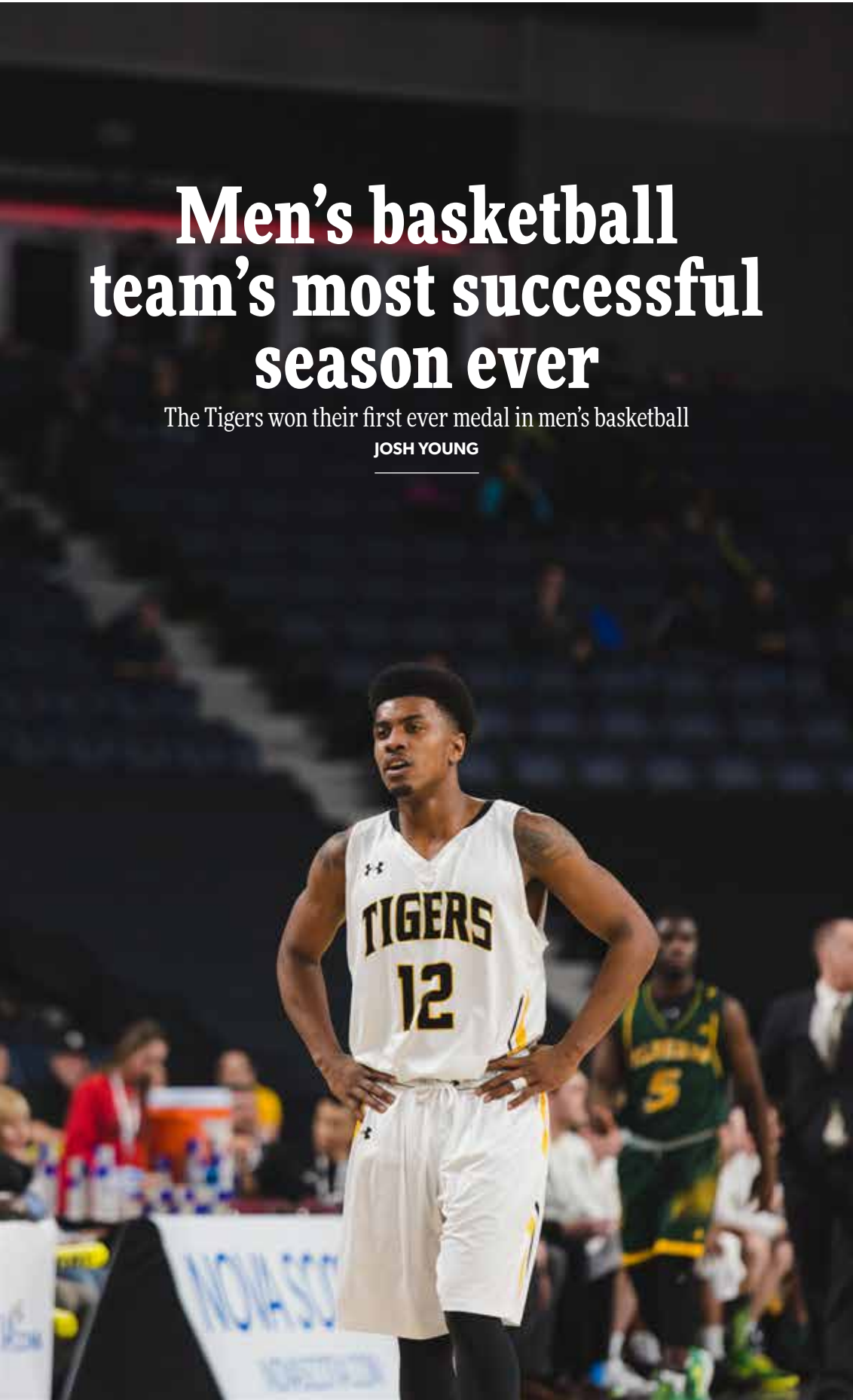
The next competition for the team is their biggest: CheerExpo Championships at the Halifax Forum. There are 120 total teams in the tournament, although only a fraction of those are in Dalhousie’s division. After their loss to start the season they have been working hard to defend their CheerExpo title. They practice twice a week from 11:00 to 1:00 on Sundays and 7:30 to 10:30 on Wednesday nights, and are expected to do their own conditioning sessions at least twice a week on top of that. After all their hard work, the Tigers are feeling confident.

“We’ll win our next one,” says Brownlow. “We’re hoping to have zero deductions,” says Beazley-Wright. That would be an astonishing achievement, but not an impossible one

for this team; they were only deducted one and a half points for their routine on the final day of their previous tournament.

Even though the team suffered some setbacks in her first year as coach, Randell couldn’t be more proud of her girls and the perseverance they’ve shown.

“They make you realize why you still do this. Why you still coach.”



Men’s basketball team’s most successful season ever

The Tigers won their first ever medal in men’s basketball

JOSH YOUNG

The Dalhousie Tigers men’s basketball team had a successful 2016–2017 season that ended with them finishing at the top of the AUS standings. The Tigers won their third straight AUS championship, as well as the men’s basketball program’s first national championship medal of any kind. “It’s been a huge success,” said Tigers’ coach Rick Plato. The Tigers had a successful regular season and finished as the top team in the standings for the second straight year. They won 16 games and lost four, which improved upon their 13–7 record from last season. The Tigers separated themselves as the best team in the league when they ended the season by winning eight games in a row. The Tigers were a tough team to play against, grinding out slow-pace games that they could control. They allowed the fewest points per game in the league with 71.8, which was still 11.8 points higher than Plato’s original goal for his team of 60. They were the second-lowest scoring team at 81.8 points per game, but their 46.6 shooting percentage on field goals was the best in the league. The Tigers also committed the fewest turnovers but had the most steals. This great season earned the team many honours. Plato was awarded AUS Coach of the Year. Senior point guard Ritchie Kanza Mata won Defensive Player of the Year, leading the AUS with 47 steals. Senior forward Kashrell Lawrence won the U-SPORTS Student-Athlete Community Service Award. Kanza Mata and Lawrence were also named to the AUS first all-star team. Kanza Mata had the biggest individual accomplishment this season — in a game against Saint Mary’s on January 15, he recorded his 536th career assist, which broke the AUS record. He is now the only AUS player in history to have over 600 assists — he finished with 605. The Tigers were in a unique position heading into the playoffs. They were the hosts of the Final 8, which meant they were guaranteed to be in the tournament. But they didn’t use this as an excuse to take it easy through the AUS playoffs. They wanted to be the first team to win three straight AUS championships since the 2003–2006 StFX X-men, and they also didn’t want to get stuck with the lowest seed in the tournament. “I knew [being the host] was going to be on the guys minds, but we did a great job at not being complacent,” said Plato. “The guys knew they wanted to go into that tournament as the AUS champions.” Even though the Tigers dominated the regular season, they had a tougher road in the AUS playoffs. In their first game, they found themselves down 65–59 to Acadia with two and a half minutes left in the game. The Tigers ended up scoring 9 consecutive points to win the game 68–65. In the AUS championship game, the Tigers were down 10 points at half time to the Saint Mary’s Huskies but managed to come back and win the game 63-60 to capture their third straight AUS championship. Tigers guard Ritchie Kanza Mata won the AUS Championships MVP. Kanza Mata was able to shut down opponents and execute offensive plays late in both games to help the Tigers win. Kashrell Lawrence and Sven Stammberger were just as important in the Tiger’s AUS championship victory and were named to the AUS championship first all-star team along with Kanza Mata. Plato is satisfied that his team won three straight championships. When he took over the team in the 2013-2014 season, they had six wins and 14 losses, which was the second worst record in the league. He is proud that Ritchie Kanza Mata, Kashrell Lawrence, Jarred Reid and Sven Stammberger, who were on that team, have bought into his system and worked hard to become three time AUS



champions. Plato has admitted in the past that he is a hard coach and had to force his now veteran players to park their egos for the betterment of the team. Their three-straight AUS championships are a testament to their ability to do so.

“I may have been the driving force to get on their case, but they did the work,” said Plato. “They responded on the court and they have become men, leaders, all round great student athletes and I think they have won the admiration of not just Halifax and Dal, but a lot of people across the country. And to me, that’s what it’s all about.”

The Tigers went into the Final 8 with heavy hearts. Tigers guard Ryan Harnett had to leave the team because his father was dying of cancer. He passed away the day after the Tiger’s opening game of the Final 8. The Tigers wanted to win the national title not only for the fans of Halifax, but also for Harnett.

The Tigers’ experience in close games came in handy in their first game of the Final 8. The Tigers and the University of Alberta were tied at 65 with five seconds remaining in the game. With 1.4 seconds left Lawrence hit a layup, which won them the game.

Dalhousie played their semi-final game against the top ranked Ryerson Rams. The Tigers again found themselves in a nail biting game and were down by one point with three seconds left. Lawrence took a forced three point shot to try to win the game but the Tigers’ 4th quarter magic ran out and Lawrence missed, sending Ryerson to the championship game.

The loss was heart-breaking for the Tigers but they were forced to rebound in order to win the bronze medal. Dalhousie found themselves down 32–25 at the end of the first half of their bronze medal game against McGill. The Tigers awoke in the second half and outscored McGill 27–13 in the final quarter to win the game 69–63 and capture bronze. This was the Tigers men’s basketball program’s first national championship medal in the school’s history. Even though the Tigers did not accomplish their ultimate goal of winning the national championship, they are proud that the won the school’s first medal in front of their home fans and for Ryan Harnett.



Plato was impressed with the support the Tigers received in the Final 8.

“We had tremendous support,” said Plato about the fans in the Final 8. “I told the guys if we got to the final I would guarantee that place would have been jammed packed. The enthusiasm of the student body and the entire city, it was breath taking and I think the guys played off that a little bit.”

Plato credits his senior players with being able to find a way for the Tigers to win tight games during the playoffs. He believes if Kanza Mata didn’t foul out of their Final 8 semi-final game, they probably would have won it.

“Ritchie (Kanza Mata) has been there and done that and if he had not fouled out I think the ending might have been a little bit different,” says Plato.

This year was the last season for seniors Ryall Stroud, Ritchie Kanza Mata, Jarred Reid and Kashrell Lawrence. They were all starters for the Tigers this year. Kanza Mata, Lawrence and Reid were important parts of the Tigers three-straight AUS championships. Stroud transferred to Dal from Queen’s this year.

“They meant a great deal,” said Plato of his graduating seniors. “They provided leadership, stability, they drew on the experiences that they had and they did whatever I asked them to do. They’re fine young men. They’re motivated, they’re respectable, I look at those guys especially those three (Kanza Mata, Lawrence, Reid) they’re a part of my family. Andrea (team manager and Plato’s wife) and I look at Ritchie, Kash and Jarred as sons. I care so much about them.”

The Tigers are going to have to move on



from their seniors. Guard Jordan Aquino-Serjue has been groomed to take over as starting point guard on the team next year. Sascha Kappos looks like he will take over Ryall Stroud’s place as the starting center, as he started over Stroud in the Bronze Medal game. Sven Stammberger will once again be the starting power forward. Injured players Alex Carson and Cedric Sanogo are expected to be fully healthy at the start of next season and in the starting line-up, but new recruits Keevan Veinot, Tyler Williams and Jordan Brathwaite will push them for those starting jobs.

“I know we’ve got work to do. We have some huge shoes to fill,” says Plato. “Our goal is to improve on what we did this year, which is going to mean we will have to get to the national final.”

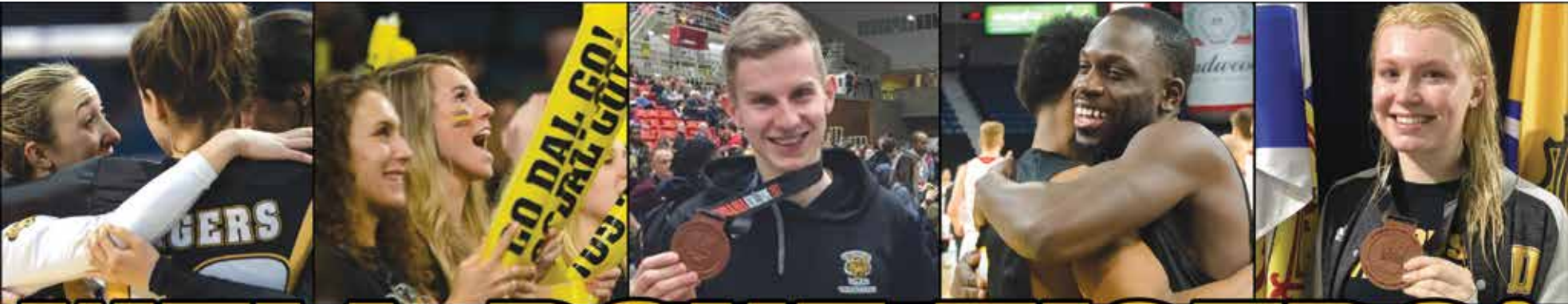


On behalf of the Dalhousie Tigers’ men’s basketball team, I would like to send a heartfelt thank you to the entire Dalhousie community faculty, students and alumni for your tremendous support at the Scotiabank Centre.

In front of thousands of rabid fans, during both the AUS playoffs and the USPORTS national tournament, I want you to know that we sincerely appreciate your support, involvement, and mostly your maniacal enthusiasm as we brought home our third consecutive AUS Championship and Dalhousie’s first ever medal, a well-deserved bronze.

Each player is not only proud to represent Dalhousie but was overwhelmed by the support. So thank you everyone. Please know you all share in our success and we could not have done without you. A special shout out goes to Dr. Florizone, who was beside our bench through the National Tournament.

A sincere thanks from your Dalhousie Tigers men’s basketball team’s Coach Rick Plato



WELL DONE TIGERS!



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The Dalhousie Tigers brought home seven AUS championship banners this year including women’s cross country, men’s basketball, women’s volleyball and men’s and women’s swimming and track and field.

The men’s basketball team won a bronze medal at the U SPORTS Final 8 and individual student-athletes won 48 AUS gold medals, two U SPORTS medals and captured 22 U SPORTS top 10 finishes.

Thank you to all the fans who cheered us on and we’ll see you in the stands next year!



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