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Meet Dal's Dutch Tiger, pg. 17



The Dalhousie Gazette

North America's Oldest Campus Newspaper, Est. 1868

International Issues

WHY DAL CANNOT KEEP ITS FOREIGN STUDENTS, PG. 7

Cover by Chris Parent

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the fine print

The Gazette is the official written record of Dalhousie University since 1868. 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 letters to the editor, the Street, 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 Street feature are solely those of the person being quoted, and not The Gazette's writers or staff.

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DalGazette.com Website Top 5

- 1) DSU's non-student president letting council decide his fate—Ian Froese, News
- 2) DSU president Sagar Jha may face recall vote—Ian Froese, News
- 3) You're too apathetic to read this—John Hillman, Opinions
- 4) LETTER: Law school rep disillusioned with DSU after advocacy vote—Anthony Rosborough
- 5) DSU presidential recall could mean catastrophe for union—Kristie Smith, News



DSU election candidates should brush up the constitution: letter writer. • • • Photo by Chris Parent

Jha disrespects DSU constitution

Dear Editor,

Why would DSU president Sagar Jha withdraw from his class? Wasn't he aware of the DSU's constitution? And why did the university take a month to inform him of the consequence? Were his colleagues aware of his actions?

Those are a few important questions that came to my mind when I saw the email from the DSU on Thursday, Mar. 6. The first job of any candidate for an elected position is to know the enshrined constitution thoroughly—and it looks like Jha forgot to do that.

I don't usually follow what's going with DSU politics, because I'm too busy with world politics. I'm very surprised and shocked at the same time to hear of the president's negligence of the DSU constitution. As an elected leader of

the DSU, he is fully responsible for his actions and their "consequences."

I put quotation marks on consequences because his vote in favour of the motion to leave SNS should be nullified, on the grounds that he was not actually president according to the DSU's constitution on Feb. 26, 2014—because he quit his class on Feb. 3. I voted for him because I believed in him, but his disrespect to the DSU's constitution let me and other students down.

I urge all upcoming candidates to read the constitution word by word before they run for election.

Sincerely,

Rinzin Ngodup
Master's student in economics

No more CASA good for on-campus advocacy

(Re: Letters to the Editor: Positive changes, Mar. 6)

Although I was unable to attend the council vote, I was thrilled to hear that we successfully got out of CASA. While Dal has some incredible outreach through NSPIRG, the South House and other groups, they could reach so many more students with stronger funding. Meanwhile, we have been paying roughly \$136,000 to belong to CASA and Students NS, which has done relatively little on the ground outreach here at Dal.

Thank you, senate representative Eldridge, for summing this

up so succinctly. You represent this constituent well.

Benjamin Howells,
via.dalgazette.com

On the cover:

Photo editor Chris Parent snapped five Dalhousie international students in front of the Henry Hicks. From left: Mahbubur Rahman (from Bangladesh), Pengpeng Jiang (from China), Hidaya Ahmad (from Malaysia), Giovana Celli (from Brazil) and Jomel Varghese (from India).

Gazette apologizes for plagiarism

Last week, the *Dalhousie Gazette* was alerted to an act of plagiarism in a comic which was run in the Feb. 28 issue.

Upon investigation, the 146-19 edition of *Jocular Impulse* was found to have featured a joke which was previously told by Seth Meyers in Saturday Night Live's popular Weekend Update segment.

The artist told the *Gazette* he accidentally submitted a practice illustration which was not meant for publication.

Plagiarism is a serious offence and, as such, the comic in question has been pulled from our website and the artist has been barred from contributing for the foreseeable future.

On behalf of the *Gazette*, I would like to sincerely apologize for the severe error that ran in our pages. We remain committed to showcasing the great original work of students and will carefully monitor future submissions for ethical breaches.

Ian Froese,
Editor-in-chief



DSU's non-student president lets council decide his fate
Fallout of Jha's class withdrawal still not known



Sagar Jha says that ultimately he has let students down. • • • Photo by Ian Froese

Ian Froese
Editor-in-Chief

Sagar Jha is still the president of the Dalhousie Student Union (DSU) after last Thursday's surprising revelation that he violated the union's constitution by withdrawing from his only class.

DSU council will ultimately decide his fate later this month, but until then, Jha believes it's in the union's best interest for him to stay put rather than resigning.

"I think that if I were to leave tomorrow, I would put the union

in a very challenging position, and that's simply because of my active involvement in some mission critical projects that are all converging at the same time," said Jha.

"I'm putting the union's interests ahead of my own because I care about the people who work here. I care about the executives, I care about the projects, but more importantly I care about the students and the union that serves them."

By leaving his only class on Feb. 3, Jha is no longer a registered Dalhousie student, which makes him ineligible to hold a seat on

the DSU executive. The union's constitution reads that all student executives must enrol in at least one class per semester.

The consequences of Jha's mistake could be disastrous.

Council will hold a recall vote on Wednesday, Mar. 26. A two-thirds majority is required for dismissal.

Independent of that decision, Jha's presidential duties are valid, except potentially where they concern the annual general meeting held on Feb. 12. The only requirement of the president at the AGM is to call the meeting to order. Jha,

however, moved a majority of the motions, a privilege granted only to students.

Most AGM decisions were procedural and would not make a major difference to the union's day-to-day operations if they were cancelled, but an amendment concerning how the DSU can leave its external advocacy groups (a majority vote on council instead of a referendum) might create a chain reaction.

If that motion is void, it may invalidate the student union's controversial ruling to abandon the Canadian Alliance of Stu-

dent Associations (CASA) and Students Nova Scotia (SNS). Jha abstained from the vote on CASA and voted in favour of leaving SNS. Both motions passed 17-15 and 16-15, respectively.

Jha said he and the DSU's legal council are evaluating the legality of the AGM.

"What those ripple effects may be or will look like, I'm not sure," he said. "We're going to require legal council every step of the way."

A motion to rejoin SNS was brought forward at the Mar. 12 council meeting.

Union dues not enough

Jha and the DSU have been scrambling since Mar. 4 to determine their course of action after Jha learned he was no longer a Dalhousie student.

The DSU president was "100 per cent confident" he was not violating the constitution when he dropped his sole class, The Census of Marine Life, in early February. He thought he was still a union member because he had already paid DSU membership dues.

As he found out the hard way, he needed to be in class.

"I overlooked the portion of the constitution that says that members of the union shall be a registered student at Dalhousie and pay union dues," Jha confesses.

Jha attempted to rejoin his class or any other, but the university was not so accommodating.

Jha declined to explain why he left his class, but said part of the reason was the extensive time commitment required of a student union executive.

Either way, he wishes he had a do-over. He would have stayed in the class but stopped attending.

"If I had known what I know now, I would have taken the F," said Jha.

Jha has been dismissed by the university from his seat on the senate and board of governors. Council chose his replacement on Wednesday.

Despite the sullen subject matter, Jha was his usual affable self in a sit-down interview with the *Gazette* less than 24 hours after the student body was informed of the news last Thursday. He laughed a few times, like when he said he did not receive the mass email sent to all DSU members, because he isn't one.

To Jha, there's no reason to grieve.

"I WOULD HAVE TAKEN THE F"

"Right now, as it stands, I'm the president of the DSU and I have the duty to act as such, so I decided I may as well fill that duty with a little bit of joy," he said.

When asked if he feels he has let down his constituents, it took Jha 13 seconds to reply.

"I would say yes and no. Yes, in the sense that I'm no longer a member or constituent of the people that I represent and I think that's disappointing for students," he said. "The reason that I say no is because, and I don't want to sound egotistical when I say this, but I don't want to discredit all of the work that I have done which has helped students."

"Ultimately, yes, I have let students down," he added.

Jha said he is proud of his presidency, from his involvement in the Student Union Building renovations to providing voting booths during the provincial election and starting a weekly farmer's market.

With assistance from the registrar, Jha is moving forward to prevent future executive members from withdrawing from their academic commitments. Potential options include a directed reading class for student union executives and developing a course where the final project is the transition report outgoing executives give their successors.

"I know we're in a poor situation, I know that I made a big mistake and I understand that students are concerned about it, but we're going to deal with it in a very constructive manner," said Jha.

Jha has been flattered by the support he has received from the university community, friends and even councillors he has disagreed with.

HOW TO BE DSU PRESIDENT WITHOUT EVER ATTENDING A CLASS

Jesse Ward
Assistant News Editor

To be eligible for a DSU executive position, you must be a member of the union. The DSU constitution says "Members of the Union" means "all registered students at Dalhousie University who have paid the prescribed fee."

It says a "student" is a full-time or part-time student as defined by the university calendar. You only need to be registered in a minimum of one full-credit course to be considered a part-time student.

Audit students, who are registered in classes but do not receive grades or need to work on assignments, are considered part-time or full-time students depending on how many classes they are auditing.

So if you are admitted to Dalhousie and you audit one class, you can be a DSU member without ever attending a single class.

Auditing a class is half the price of being a regular student, so you could consider that initial \$500-or-so registration fee an investment in the \$30,000+ salary you'll have as DSU president – provided you win the election. ☹

In spite of this, Jha said he has no sense of whether council wants to recall him. He doesn't want to know. He believes removing himself from the conversation is the right thing to do.

"I'm trying to make the decision that's best for the union, maybe not the decision that's best for me, professionally or personally," he said.

"I care so much about this student union that I'm letting the student union itself decide."

Jha was elected DSU president last March with 68 per cent of the vote in a three-person race. ☹



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Former refugee and child soldier speaks at Dal

Leah Shangrow
News Contributor

In 1993, five-year-old Michel Chikwanine was playing soccer in the Congo when army trucks arrived at the field. Amidst gunshots and screaming, he and his friends were abducted. Militants slashed Michel's wrist and rubbed brown-brown—a mixture of cocaine and gunpowder—into the wound. He was blindfolded, handed a semi-automatic and ordered to shoot or be killed.

When the blindfold was removed, Chikwanine saw he had shot his best friend Kevin. "You've killed somebody now, your family will never take you back," they told him.

Two weeks later, during another ambush, Chikwanine escaped and was eventually reunited with his family.

In December 1998, he, his parents and only one of his three sisters escaped to a refugee camp in Uganda. For one year they lived in a plastic tent, in absolute poverty. "You never saw anyone from the UN," he says. "I got so angry. When I asked, 'What can I do to end some of this?' people said, 'That's just the way it is.'"

On Feb. 19, 2001, Chikwanine's father was poisoned while waiting outside the UN office for a refugee number. After years of struggle, Chikwanine, his mother, and his sister finally landed in Ottawa on Jan. 21, 2004.

"I will never forget that day ... there were no bullets flying by, no people screaming," he says.

But being a refugee isn't free: Chikwanine owed \$25,000 to the Canadian government, and worked three jobs while attending high school. Since then he has

become a highly accomplished children's rights activist and inspirational speaker. He's shared the stage with the Dalai Lama, Jane Goodall and former Prime Minister Paul Martin, and he's now pursuing a degree in African Studies at the University of Toronto.

"There are a lot of parts of that story that I still can't say," says Chikwanine, but he tells his story because "there are still 250,000 child soldiers in the world today." The first step towards change is education and awareness. Chikwanine's talk opened the "Children, Youth, and Security: Intersections of Research and Practice" graduate symposium at Dal on Mar. 6.

David Morgan, the symposium's co-chair, is a PhD student in political science involved with the Roméo Dallaire Child Soldiers Initiative.

"We need to start looking beyond our everyday, fairly minor problems and start addressing these bigger global development issues," says Morgan.

Dr. Shelly Whitman, executive director of the Child Soldiers Initiative, insists we are empowered to make change through our thoughts and conversations.



Michel Chikwanine says 250,000 child soldiers still exist today.

• • • Photo by Alice Hebb

"Make people uncomfortable. We need to be uncomfortable," she urges. "We need to hold our government accountable for what it does and doesn't do."

Chikwanine lives by the words

his late father taught him:

"Great men and great women are not described by their money and their success, but by what they do for other people." ☺

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International students looking for more at Dalhousie

Four students weigh in on tuition, housing and classes

Kashmala Fida

Feature Writer

When Mahbubur Rahman came to Dalhousie from Bangladesh, he didn't know anything about other universities in Canada.

After completing his bachelor's degree in civil engineering in his home country, he got a research scholarship from a professor at Dal. Rahman arrived in August 2013 with a lot of expectations. Unfortunately for him, not all of them were met.

Rahman is one of many international students at Dal who came here for higher education, expecting a certain quality but ultimately ending up disappointed. Although Rahman will be finishing his master's at Dal, he plans on applying to other universities for his PhD.

"I had a strong goal of completing both my master's and PhD when I first came to Dal, but now I don't think it's a good idea," he says.

According to a number of international students, the main reason they leave is tuition. They pay more compared not only to other Canadian students, but other universities in Canada as well.

Rahman pays \$15,000 in tuition fees, which are covered by his \$19,000 scholarship—but this leaves him with very little money for living expenses. According to Rahman, his friends go to schools in Alberta, British Columbia and Newfoundland and Labrador. They all received similar scholarships, but pay much less in tuition—some as low as \$7,000. This leaves enough money for living expenses, food and travel.

"When I first got the letter about the scholarship, I thought this was a huge amount," says Rahman. "I had no idea about the tuition."

Although Rahman was fortunate to receive a scholarship, many students had to take out loans before coming to Canada.

Jomel Varghese came from India in December 2012 to obtain his master's in internetworking. To facilitate his education, he took

out a bank loan in India. But due to recent tuition fee hikes, this won't be enough.

The only way these students can support themselves is by working odd jobs on campus for their first six months, after which they are permitted to apply for a work visa to work outside the university. But as engineering students, it's difficult to concentrate on school as well as dedicate too many hours to work. For graduate students working on their thesis and research, it's especially difficult to spare the time to work. Even though their studies require them to be completely dedicated, there are students who work 30 hours a week to help with their tuition and pay the bills.

"It's a money-making business," says Varghese, explaining his degree.

Students in his program take 10 courses over a period of a year and a half. Each course is taught over the span of a month, and the next month is given off so a second cycle of students can complete the course, and so on. Overall, there are four cycles of around 55 students each. Varghese doesn't find one month to be enough time to learn what he needs to know

"IT'S A MONEY-MAKING BUSINESS"

"Even the profs agree that one month is not enough time. If they had less students and more time to give for these courses it would be far more effective," says Varghese.

What Varghese is currently learning isn't exactly what he finds useful for his degree either.

"There are a lot of useless courses," he says. "So many of them are not even related to my degree."

Rahman also had the same issue with his degree when he arrived at Dal and started applying for courses that would help



Fewer and fewer international students are applying to Dalhousie. ••• Photo by Kit Moran

with his research. Unfortunately for him, Dal didn't offer a number of the courses he needed.

For civil engineering, Rahman needs four courses that are relevant to his research in transportation. He checked other universities and found some that offer diverse courses on the subject—but Dal doesn't.

"On paper these courses are there," says Rahman. The Dalhousie course calendar that he checked, both online and the hard copy, listed many courses which weren't offered when he tried to register.

Lack of diversified courses is a problem for students in other departments as well. Giovana Celli is a PhD student researching drug delivery systems. She came to Dal in May 2013 on a research scholarship from Brazil's 'Science without Borders.' She was offered the opportunity to conduct research with four departments from four universities that are part of a consortium of Canada's leading research universities called CALDO. Dalhousie University is one of the nine universities that make up CALDO.

Celli chose Dal because she found the project interesting.

When it came to signing up for courses, however, she realized she didn't have many options.

"If you see the whole manual there are a bunch of interesting courses they never offer," says Celli. "I had a lot of problem deciding on courses because I didn't have options, so I had to take the ones that were available." Course selection wasn't the only problem Celli had to face. She encountered many problems dealing with living arrangements at Dal, ultimately giving up and finding an apartment.

"I would start here as a PhD student a week later than my arrival so they wouldn't allow me in residence until then," Celli says. "I had to stay a whole week at the Lord Nelson and it was very expensive." When Celli did get a room in Eliza Ritchie Hall, the condition of the room was not up to par with what she was told.

"It was terrible," she says. "I hated my room but I thought, 'It's ok, I'll think about it.' I brought all my cases but I found out my door didn't lock. I complained two or three times but the only answer I got was, 'Go back and play with the key.' That is not an answer."

Celli ended up going back to the

Lord Nelson to protect her stuff when she was later told her room's lock could not be fixed because it was the weekend.

Varghese believes Dal will soon begin to lose its international students.

Over a period of five years, the enrolment of students from every part of the world—except Asia—has decreased significantly. The number of undergraduate students from Asia has increased in enrolment by 29 per cent, and by 11.6 per cent for graduate studies. Enrolment from the Middle East increased by 5.5 per cent for graduate studies, but decreased for undergrad by 5.4 per cent.

After getting all the facts about Dalhousie and comparing Dal to other universities, some students choose to move on.

"Dal gets international students, but it's hard to retain them," says Rahman. "Once they come here, they learn about all the facts about other universities in New Brunswick, Alberta and B.C., so after all the information it is hard for them to remain here." ☹

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Sam Elmsley Opinions Editor



Should u worry about ur personal brand?

If ur friends look like
slackers, u could be at risk



Behold, ur personal office. • • • Image by Jesse Ward

Jesse Ward
Assistant News Editor

• • • • •
For students wondering how to make themselves seem like decent people worthy of employment, Dalhousie recommends you visit *Jobs4GradsNow.com*, a website featuring a Flash game where watching videos about social networking earns you points to put towards items like a yacht or a briefcase full of money in your virtual workspace.

The site offers a 10-step system for “taking the guesswork out of finding a job.” The first step, “Assessing Who U R,” features a video of your virtual career counselor with advice on how to manage your online image:

“Next, reconsider your online circle of friends. You may have a soft spot for the good-hearted slacker who can’t seem to keep a job, or dress neatly,” she says. “But an employer or prospective employer may not like the fact that you hang with someone like this.”

“Is this fair? Probably not. Is it reality? You betcha. So reevaluate your online circle of friends.”

You are not provided with criteria as to what someone who “can’t seem to get a job” looks like. Because no consideration is given to the possibility that you’re one of these people, this advice could only convince students they are more entitled to positions of higher status than the people they’re now unfriending.

Are students actually watching this video and falling for it? That’s beside the point. Rather, it’s concerning that a page on Dal’s web-

site recommends Jobs4GradsNow as a resource on personal branding. On its recently created page, Dal poses the question: “Are you ‘digitally dirty?’”

Dal specifically recommends a few sections of the website, including “Your 30-second elevator pitch.”

• • • • •
**“IS THIS FAIR?
PROBABLY
NOT. IS IT
REALITY? YOU
BETCHA.”**
• • • • •

Their example of a 30-second introduction you could make to an employer goes like this:

“I have 2 years of experience with X corporation, which have exposed me to different approaches. In that time I saved the company over \$200,000 in audits.”

If you’ve already saved a company \$200,000, why are you not working for them any longer? Did they decide you were a liability after they realized you’re Facebook friends with someone who wears basketball jerseys?

It’s easy to pass on taking a site like this seriously. But what happens when, through silence, we accept our school citing Jobs4GradsNow as a moral authority? Dal’s “digital dirt” page tells you “a digital footprint can last a lifetime” and can cost you admis-

sion to graduate schools or job opportunities unless you “effectively manage your online reputation.”

Another page on Dal’s website says you must assume everything about you online will remain there forever. It does not, for example, say what your options are if someone has spread explicit images of you online against your will, but it does end with the message: “So ask yourself: how do you want others to perceive you?”

Is constant self-surveillance from the perspective of a prospective employer actually something people are saying will lead to a healthy future? A survey by Dal Health Services found a third of students interviewed expressed feeling “too depressed to function” within the last year. Should students struggling with mental illness try to brand themselves as calm and confident online because an employer who knows the truth could decide to hire someone who seems more reliable?

Well, intimidating, unrealistic demands are easy to make. Jobs4GradsNow suggests you should follow and become followed by 20 new people on Twitter every day, but as of writing this, they haven’t tweeted in nearly three years.

While Dalhousie has the site as a trial now, it otherwise costs about \$100 to register an account. Is it fair that this resource is being offered to us as a guide for our futures? Probably not. Is it reality? You betcha. But binary questions don’t lead to insight – in any unfair situation, the next thing to ask is, *why* is this a reality? ☹

St. Paddy’s Day is coming And I can’t listen to Great Big Sea anymore



St. Paddy’s Day: when all songs Irish-sounding are unleashed.

• • • Photo by Chris Parent

Jackson Haime
Staff Contributor

• • • • •
St. Paddy’s Day is somewhat of a conundrum to me. I feel like I’m supposed to be into it because I’m one-eighth Irish, but in the past year it’s really fallen off with me.

I always spent St. Paddy’s day with my grandmother, who was the only person in my family to really identify with our slightly Irish roots. It was a day off of Lent, so we would go out to lunch at a restaurant that served the things that we gave up (consistently food based), and make a day of it.

In university it’s different, and I have one question: who died and made Pat Murphy the be-all and end-all of ‘Irish sounding’ songs?

My last St. Paddy’s day was spent dorm-hopping, which was a blast, save for the fact that, without fail, each room we entered would open its door to the sound

of the Great Big Sea telling me how much people drank when Paddy (Patrick? Patricia?) Murphy kicked the bucket. The song is fun once or twice, but around the 18th time someone called Pat Murphy dies, you’d think they would stop naming people that.

I could say the same thing about other holiday songs, Rudolf, Jingle Bells, whatever song people play on Halloween, but none of them hold a candle to the throne of “The Night Pat Murphy Died.” This is because the song is played year-round, and St. Patrick’s Day is simply the catalyst that unleashes everyone’s love of ‘Irish sounding’ things.

I’m sorry for the passing of the collective Paddy Murphy’s, and for the hangovers of their wives, but at this point I really need Great Big Sea to come out with another drinking song, just to get this one off my back. ☹



Should we disappear under the deluge of information, or risk the implications of personalized results on the internet?
••• Photo by Josh Fraser

THE FUTURE IS NOW

Why we should be cautious of technology

Josh Fraser
Staff Contributor

Have you tried hunting for information about Ukraine lately? As with any hot topic, the internet has positively exploded on the subject, with dozens of news sites publishing page after page of reactions, analyses and predictions. While I browsed, I wondered how difficult it is to see the big picture amid the endless clicks and scrolling.

More than ever, I consider the internet problematic. Not only has its temporary status as the ‘information superhighway’ been debunked, but it has begun to contribute to the unease and confusion infecting the world. Basically, I’m fed up with the inundation. I open my browser and feel buried under the sheer number of words I’ll have to process, even if I’m just scanning.

Companies like Google and Facebook have caught on to this overwhelming feeling among customers, and have come up with several manoeuvres to wrap a warm, fuzzy blanket around users.

One key feature of so-called ‘personalisation’ is the tailoring of search results based on user activity. For instance, you get slightly different search results on Google if you’re signed in to your own account, where your search history (stored at Google, not on your browser) is used to help you find what the engine thinks you are looking for. Facebook news feeds present ads using similar principles, and the feed itself is mediated by the people you interact with the most.

There’s probably some really clever code in there, and some sound logic on customer service. But as Eli Pariser explained in a 2011 TED talk, what is happening as the internet is mined for consumer activity is the development of what he calls ‘Filter Bubbles.’ In a nutshell, consumerism has turned the net into a feedback loop for many users.

The internet, like every major communication technology, is owned by advertising dollars. When we go online (assuming one is ever ‘offline’), the goal of every site turned up in a search engine is to attract and entertain.

Journalism has been made to conform, and has suffered for it. The internet is simply not designed to provide accurate information. Its nature as an instantaneous medium can pressure journalists to publish unedited drafts for the public because exclusivity is extremely important in the industry. The editing process happens invisibly. Changes are not recorded, most of the traffic has long since moved on and there are few options for retraction once something is set loose online. Furthermore, the aura of the internet gives an impression of global reach, and the biases of culture and geography are distorted instead of noted.

The internet has no privilege; it is a new technology we are grappling with as a species, and we should be asking ourselves how much control we have as free agents if we depend too much on it. If we rely on typing, servers and electricity to relate, something as simple as power outages turn quickly from inconveniences to crises. It’s not certain—but the potential hangs above us like an anvil. ☹

THE LIBRARY PROBLEM

And why the DSU should fix it



The DSU should focus on fighting library budget cuts next year.
••• Photo by Pau Balite

Samantha Elmsley
Opinions Editor

I felt really uncomfortable when I read the proposed budget cuts to the library acquisitions budget for the Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences (FASS). It was kind of like going on a date with Dalhousie and thinking it went really well, until you’re getting a latte at JustUS and spot them cozying up to the Faculty of Medicine. Ouch.

In 2008-09, FASS received \$600,000 for acquisitions; this budget will see that figure reduced by about nearly two-thirds, at \$210,000. This means reduced spending on resources students need to learn about their subject, and which faculty need to keep up-to-date on developments in their field.

This is a huge problem. And the DSU should do something about it.

Having just pulled out of the Canadian Alliance of Student Associations (CASA) and Students Nova Scotia (SNS), I figure the DSU probably has some newfound time and money on their hands. (Or at least they will once elections are over.) And when they are—when that new team of fresh-faced executives emerges victorious from the ballot-boxes—they should deal with this.

The Library Problem, as I think it should be called, is the perfect example of the kind of in-house activism the DSU should turn its attention toward in upcoming years. Reduced funding will

directly affect the ability of FASS students to do their work. We literally sit around and talk about books. The journals we read? Filled with articles talking about books. So Dal’s decision to cut our library funding so drastically is like stabbing us in a main artery. If we survive, it’s going to take some time for us to recover.

A DSU campaign to reinstate the library budget will, I predict, have support on the ground. This issue is immediately relevant to the everyday FASS student. They don’t need to be told that these cuts will hurt their education—they know. Groups like the Dalhousie Arts and Social Sciences Society (DASSS) would be an invaluable ally in such a campaign, and the DSU would do well to coordinate with them. In addition to students, the DSU will likely have a lot of staff on board. We have an important resource and ally in the many, many professors who a) know a lot about this issue and how it will affect our programs and b) are, probably, just as pissed off as I am.

With all this predicted support, a DSU campaign to restore the library budget would enjoy a lot of forward momentum. As a broke English student paying my way through my degree, I can attest that the library has been a crucial means of keeping my costs down. That’s just one reason to think about this campaign, DSU—I’m sure any Dal student could give you another. Go ask them about it. ☹

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They sang through the night

Oxfam hosts International Women's Day event at the Grad House

Sindi Skenderi
Arts Contributor

.....
The lighting was dim thanks to a few unbroken bulbs from the chandeliers hanging overhead. It was enough to light up the stage and the faces on it, just enough to create an inviting and warm atmosphere that instantly made you comfortable.

But the mood wasn't sluggish. It was sharp and clever and empowering to anyone in its presence.

I was at the Women's Day Open Mic at Dalhousie's Grad House. The room had the essence of a woman.

The company was interesting, the jokes were generous and quick and the people who attended were open and appreciative of each other.

Students at Dal and all over the peninsula took part in the Women's Day Open Mic that took place a few days before International Women's Day in order to shine light on gender inequality.

Canadians are fortunate to live in a country where gender equality is farther along than in other places around the world, but signs of injustice toward women are still evident in everyday life.

Anyone who wanted to participate in the Open Mic could express their thoughts on the matter, whether by song, poem, or a short play—or they could simply

enjoy the company (and the brownies).

Ali Calladine, president of Oxfam at Dal and the host for the Open Mic, put on by Oxfam at Dal, says that Oxfam is "trying to combine the local perspectives on human justice and the global perspectives on human justice."

.....
**"IT'S A
REALLY NICE
OPPORTUNITY
TO THINK
ABOUT
SOLIDARITY"**
.....

Oxfam Canada specifically focuses on building a world free from poverty created by gender inequality. By empowering women and girls they help make sure their rights are promoted and respected.

Their website states that about 70 per cent of the 1.3 billion people living in poverty worldwide are women and girls.

Ali says their goal with the event was to, "create a really accessible way to join that conversation."

And people of all genders were joining in on the conversation and

voicing their thoughts.

Ali says it has definitely gotten louder since last year, when they had a similar Open Mic with only a few contributors to the night.

The *Gazette's* own Daniel Bergman sang "What a Good Boy" by the Barenaked Ladies, a choice that he thought fitting with the night's theme.

Laura Burke, the peer support coordinator for the DSU, voiced her opinion on the matter by reading a poem that referred to the metaphorical "chains" a woman carries with her, after being labeled with words like pretty or nice or cute from a young age.

She got involved because she was curious about what was going on with the Oxfam group on campus, and just wanted to celebrate International Women's Day.

"There's still marginalization of groups of women in the west," she says. "It's a really nice opportunity to think about solidarity and think about what it means to be a woman."

The theme of the event was evident—to empower all women and to support the ongoing awareness that poverty is largely created by gender inequality. But the undercurrents of the night suggested we recognize the organic beauty in women and girls, before the world's rules, stereotypes and presumptions are pushed on them. ☹



Oxfam pres Ali Calladine came out strings swingin'. • • • Photo by Robyn Moore

 +  = <3

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SEEING THE INVISIBLE

Liz Marshall gives screen time to animals of industry

Emma Skagen

Arts Contributor

••••• Award-winning Canadian filmmaker Liz Marshall spoke at a screening of her latest film, *The Ghosts of Our Machine*, last weekend in the McCain building. The World Society for the Protection of Animals's (WSPA) Dalhousie branch organized the free event and facilitated an hour-long Q-and-A session with Marshall.

Toronto-based Marshall has made 11 documentaries about various social justice issues, but *The Ghosts of Our Machine* is her first film about animal rights. *Ghosts* follows photographer Jo-anne McArthur in her quest to make visible the "animals [...] hidden in the shadows of our highly mechanized world." Marshall shows McArthur's difficulties in sharing her photographs with a mainstream media reluctant to discuss animal cruelty.

According to Marshall, our society groups animals into three cat-

egories: companions, wildlife and all the others. People have a habit of loving their pets, and loving to watch wildlife documentaries on TV, but they do not acknowledge the billions of animals suffering for the benefit of humans—the 10 billion animals (not including sea creatures) killed for food each year, for example. For Marshall and McArthur, it is this blindness that makes showing the world the horrible conditions of unseen animals so important.

Throughout the film, the audience is introduced to animals that suffer for the sake of humans: for the fur industry (which is *huge* in Nova Scotia—did you know?), testing and research, food and entertainment. Shots intentionally linger on individual animals, creating significant discomfort; Marshall won't let you brush these images off and return to the comfort of ignorance.

The film juxtaposes hard-to-watch footage of animal suffering in industrial farming with paradisi-

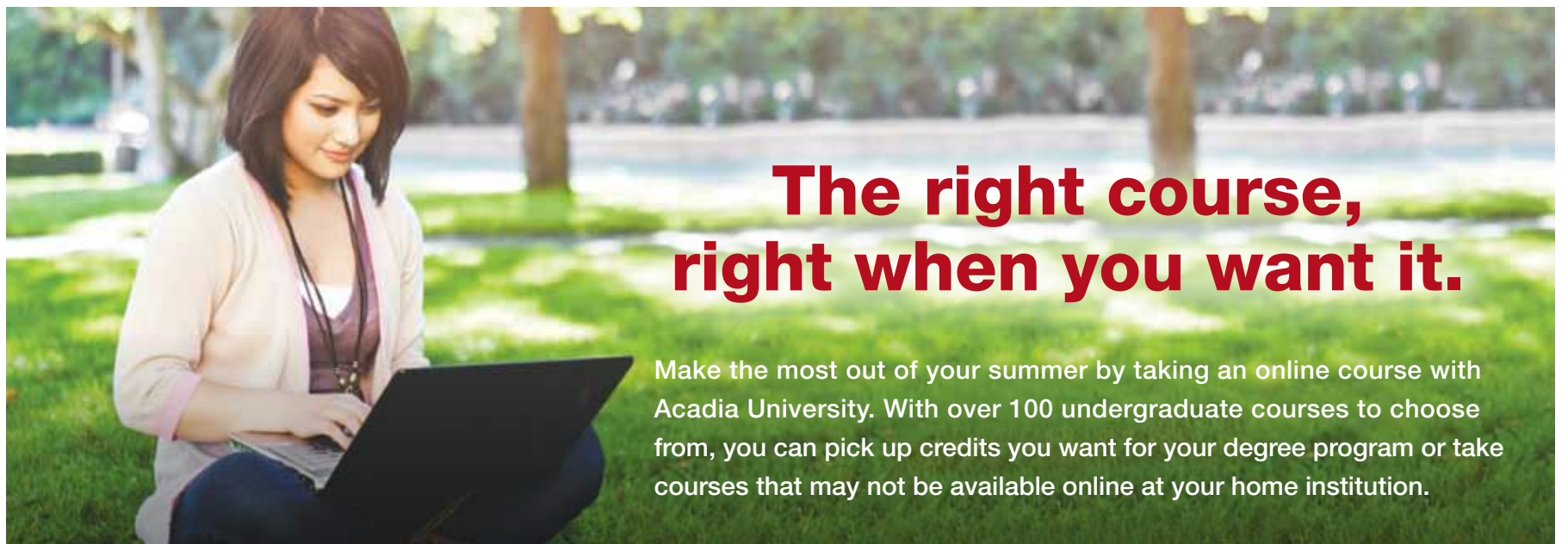
ac scenes of rescued animals frolicking at Farm Sanctuary in New York. Marshall discussed this contrast during the Q-and-A session. She aimed to draw attention to the storybook way in which we are socialized to think of farm animals. There is a huge discrepancy between what we want to believe farms are like and what they are in actuality. Marshall and McArthur want to change this fact, and to raise awareness about what actually goes on in these places.

While all this looks pretty grim, there might be hope. As a WSPA Dalhousie member pointed out during last Saturday's Q-and-A session, controversial gestation crates have just been banned in Canada.

Marshall and McArthur do what many people are unwilling to do—they take upon themselves the painful task of bringing attention to animals who otherwise spend their lives as mere ghosts in our machine. ☹



Liz Marshall: Canadian activist and filmmaker. ••• Press photo



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Hormonal haze:
the pros and cons of
birth control

Joelline Girouard
Sex Columnist

By the time she was 21, my grandmother had had three kids, and then she didn't have another one for another 11 years. What changed? She gained access to the Pill.

For many people, hormonal birth control is something of a saviour. Whether it's preventing unwanted pregnancies, assuaging acne and painful cramps or making erratic periods predictable, the list of pros is long. For some people, however, the list of cons can be even longer.

Readers who've had them, think about some of the worst period cramps you've experienced. Now, imagine having those cramps almost all day, almost every day, for months on end. For me, this was the majority of my second year. I couldn't focus on school, and I definitely couldn't have much sex.

Eventually, I brought my concerns to my doctor. He didn't seem too worried, and simply pre-

scribed me a different combination of hormones.

Four months later, the pain hadn't subsided. As an added bonus, my skin became extremely sensitive to everything, especially the sun. I was having mood swings the likes of which I hope none of you ever witness. My monthly withdrawal bleeding was now accompanied by migraines.

So, mid-pack, I went off the Pill.

Every single one of my symptoms vanished. My sex drive skyrocketed, and I was suddenly an all-around more pleasant version of myself.

Over the next few years, I hopped on and off hormonal birth control a few more times, after finding a low-dose combination of hormones that mostly agreed with me.

And then I noticed a pattern.

Whenever I wasn't on the Pill, I experienced a lull in attraction towards whoever I was seeing—even though my sex drive, in general, increased. Naturally, I turned to Google, and found this was

quite common.

Yup—the Pill can actually affect who you're attracted to. (This isn't brand new information—*Scientific American* published an article about it in 2008!) Many women in heterosexual marriages who go off the Pill in order to have children report lower levels of sexual satisfaction; sometimes, it even leads to divorce.

Apparently, being on hormonal birth control steers women towards more "feminine" men—men who look like they would be more nurturing, more stable parents. This had held true for me—and it made me uncomfortable, especially seeing as I've never been too keen on the idea of parenthood.

The thought of a little white pill somehow dictating who I chose to be with was unacceptable to me, so a month or two after I met my current partner, I stopped taking the Pill for probably the last time. To both his and my great relief, my attraction to him only increased.

While my partner hasn't noticed many other marked differences, I

ON HORMONAL BIRTH CONTROL		WITHOUT HORMONAL BIRTH CONTROL	
PROS	CONS	PROS	CONS
Condomless sex at all times if I'm with a consistent partner.	Needs to be taken at the same time every day—I wasn't great at that.	Higher sex drive.	Need to use condoms most days out of the month.
Predictable, shorter periods.	Side effects: mood swings, lower sex drive, extreme sensitivity to caffeine (we're talking 7/10 level of pain—and I love coffee).	Much less frequent instances of hormonal mood swings.	I'm more sensitive to the hormone levels of those around me—if one of my roommates is having a teary day, I'll probably be right behind.
Peace of mind, especially if I'm also using condoms.	Affects who I'm attracted to.	One fewer period a year, because my natural cycle is a few days longer than what's typical.	That's it. I can actually only find two cons.
	Weirdly makes me want to have kids.	I remember why I'm not exactly sold on very young humans.	

can't imagine going back on the Pill. Before writing this column, I sat down and made two pros/cons lists—one for being on hormonal birth control, and for not.

While hormonal birth control isn't a good method for me, for many people it's the best thing since the Backstreet Boys. Still, it's important to keep in mind that it's not fail-proof. For it to be as effective as possible, the Pill needs to be taken at approximately the same time every day. Certain medications, most commonly antibiotics, can also reduce the effectiveness of hormonal birth control. If you have any doubts, questions or concerns, it's always best to speak with a health care professional. ☹

Catching air

REVEIW: Studio Ghibli's *The Wind Rises* is a politically complex manifesto for dreamers and survivors

Zoe Doucette
Assistant Arts Editor

Spirited Away, *Ponyo* and other kid-friendly releases from the beloved Studio Ghibli must have lured me into a comfortable, safe world of fantasy and family foibles, because the latest film from animation icon Hayao Miyazaki is a harshly real sting of cold water in the face of such pleasures.

A highly fictionalized biography of engineer and aircraft designer Jiro Horikoshi—responsible for a model of

plane used in WWII kamikaze attacks—*The Wind Rises* chronicles Japanese resilience through years of historical and cultural turbulence.

Jiro is a classic Miyazaki hero. He is quiet and restrained, kind and dedicated, and highly moral without being moralistic. While it would be easy to root for Jiro along his beautifully rendered path through childhood in the countryside and his studies as an engineer in developing 1920s Tokyo, the dark future of Jiro's work, and his dedication to a craft that leads directly to use in

war, make him a difficult figure. In this Ghibli film, there is no transcendent escapism offered by lush landscapes or cheery folk figures. We stay firmly implicated in our own world and its problems, caught by conflict and conscience.

The Wind Rises is a mature work, and not simply because Miyazaki has claimed to enter retirement from his studio. There is a depth and cynicism here that differs from darker works like *Nausicaa* or *Princess Mononoke*. War and the relationship of innocence to atroc-



Jiro dreams of airplanes. • • • Press image

ity have been subjects lurking through much of the Ghibli filmography, but in Jiro's story there

is an implication of personal accountability and morality that is painful and adult. ☹



Local innovators took the stage for this year's TEDxNovaScotia event, run by the DSU, to speak about Chances Worth Taking. Clockwise from top left: folk artist Willie Stratton; education advocate Ian Kent; the Xara Choral Theatre Ensemble performs; Dalhousie's manager of student dispute resolution Lyndsay Anderson. Next page, from left, singer, songwriter Jennah Barry performs and Robert Wright speaks about his experience as a social worker. ••• Photos by Bryn Karcha, DSU





FROM THE DIRECTOR OF *PRISONERS*

"AN EPIC MIND-SCREW."
- TRAVIS HOPSON, EXAMINER.COM

JAKE GYLLENHAAL

MÉLANIE LAURENT

ENEMY

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International Student Profile: Desirée Nouwen

Hamzeh Hadad
Sports Contributor

Every team has stories of rookies emerging when it matters most to make an impact. In another successful year for the Dalhousie Tigers women's volleyball team, this player was transatlantic transfer student Desirée Nouwen. Nouwen, originally from Weert, a city of about 50,000 in the southeast Netherlands, came to Halifax to study abroad. "My expectations for myself was to study in an English environment as it is not my first language," she says. "It was interesting and a new experience."

Adjustments occurred for the 25-year-old both off and on the court, where Nouwen also had to adapt to playing left side hitter, a new position for her.

"Playing on this team in a new position was like a challenge for me, something personal, a new experience for me," says the eight-year veteran of semiprofessional volleyball.

Although this was Nouwen's first year playing for the Tigers, it is not her first university experience. "I've already been to university. I graduated already, so I've been through being in a big school," she says. "Now I'm starting all over again in the first year."

"I had already wanted to go abroad for three years and they came up with an idea to come to Canada," reflects Nouwen on her desire to go abroad. "I thought it is a beautiful country and a really amazing opportunity and I took it."

Not only did Nouwen take the opportunity to come to Dalhousie University and play for the Tigers, she excelled in the Tigers' successful Atlantic University

Sport (AUS) title defense. She was named an AUS first team all-star for her performance throughout the season and earned AUS championship MVP honours.

"I'm not really used to individual awards, because we don't do anything like that [back home]," says Nouwen. "I feel a little bit guilty, because I know everybody is there in practice everyday and everybody puts in the same hours and not everybody gets to show it. I guess it's extra effort for some people but for me awards don't say that much."

Taking little away from her individual awards and more from the team's strong performance, the humble Nouwen looks back on her first year in Halifax fondly, even if it ended without a national championship.

"After analyzing everything, thinking about the whole year and everything we did and all the things we achieved, we are really proud and really happy," she says. "But obviously at the moment and at the time, you are disappointed because you know you are so close."

Outside school and sports, Nouwen stayed with a host family near campus. Having already had the residence experience, she feels living with a family was the best thing for her.

"I'm a little older, I probably wouldn't have been happy staying in residence. I've been through that already and know what it is like," she says. "For me it was a good decision but maybe for somebody else it isn't."

Nouwen believes that not only did living with a family suit her better, it helped her cope with being far away from home and the time difference between Canada



As a newcomer to Canada, Desirée Nouwen is eager to embrace local culture—beginning with her choice of beverage.

• • • Photo by Chris Parent

and the Netherlands.

"In the first few weeks you miss your friends and family obviously, in your evenings when you are done everything you don't have anybody to contact," Nouwen says. "But staying with a family it was much easier to adapt."

Focusing on volleyball and her studies, Nouwen says she was still able to experience parts of Nova

Scotia. "We were busy with volleyball and didn't get to see many things but I did go to Peggy's Cove, Digby, Bay of Fundy and do whale watching, which was incredible," she says.

Nouwen has also made a list with her host family of things to do when they can. "We made a list of to do things and to eat things and every week we are checking

things off."

Now that the volleyball season is over and the academic year nears its end, Nouwen plans to have her mother visit and discover more of Nova Scotia and the rest of the country.

"I will explore Canada for sure and will travel around this summer." ☺

BEN'S 10

Talkin' Trades

Benjamin Blum

Worth at least a second round pick (and cash)

When Nomar Garciaparra was shipped out of Boston for Orlando Cabrera and Doug Mientkiewicz in 2004, 11-year-old me was introduced to the harsh reality of trades in pro sports. No matter how beloved, talented and awesome a player is, even someone like Nomar could be moved.

This deal helped my Red Sox win their first World Series in 86 years, so it all worked out in the end—for me at least. But trades happened before that fateful day and still transpire today.

Whether well-advised, ill-advised or advised by Mephistopheles himself, the next 10 trades showcase transactions of all types and prove that the age-old Faustian axiom of "no givesies-backsies" is more serious when millions of dollars are on the line.



Honourable mention: George Costanza to Tyler Chicken

Mr. Steinbrenner was wise to swap Georgie Boy for poultry-themed concessions at Yankee Stadium. What can I say? Big Stein likes his chicken!



10. Wes Welker (Miami to New England)

Clearly the Dolphins didn't pay attention during the movie "Rudy." Everyone knows that any five-foot-nothin', hundred and nothin' white guy can make a massive impact on the gridiron! Well played, Belichick.



9. Gasol for Gasol

To appease all the fact-checking lemmings out there, the Grizzlies actually swapped Pau for the draft rights to Marc. But other than a few extra gym shoes, water bottles and Kwame Brown, it was a straight-up sibling switch.



8. Carousel of Coaches

Did you know that you could trade coaches? Ozzie Guillen, Stan van Gundy and Jon Gruden will tell you it's true. Gruden even beat his old team in the Super Bowl a few years after the fact. That's gotta hurt in Oakland, or as San Franciscans like to call it, "California's Cleveland."

7. Quade Cooper

Technically the Kiwi-born fly-half traded himself to Australia, but the All Blacks don't mind too much. The reigning world champs have done alright for themselves at the number 10 position.



6. John Elway (Baltimore to Denver)

Just like that one annoying kid on the playground, Elway threatened to run away and play a different sport rather than join the team that picked him. Baseball's loss was the Broncos' gain, and a year later the Colts left Maryland for Indianapolis. Coincidence? Probably. Or was it?



5. David Beckham

Don't ask me how soccer transfers work, I honestly don't know. But I do know that Becks crossing the pond was the footy equivalent of Columbus reaching the New World, with fewer diseases, someone named Pelé arriving first and actual landings on American soil notwithstanding.



4. Toronto sports teams

With the noted exception of the deal that brought Roberto Alomar and Joe Carter to the Jays, Toronto GMs and owners are notorious for trading prospects and stars for card-carrying members of the AARP and people who didn't know that we played basketball in this country. It seems like every person in power in that city is on some kind of controlled substance.



3. Wayne Gretzky (Edmonton to LA)

When someone is nicknamed "The Great One" you don't trade him no matter how bankrupt you are. Poor Gretz even teared up before realizing that winter in Los Angeles is warmer than Edmonton during a heat wave.



2. Babe Ruth (Boston to New York)

A trade so heinous it cursed the Sox for nearly a century. And what did their owner get in return for selling the Bambino? Money to finance a Broadway musical. Damn Yankees.



1. Any athlete who has ever demanded a trade for selfish reasons

I'm looking at you, innumerable athletes across a wide variety of leagues and sports. For shame. Just wait it out until free agency, hire Jerry Maguire, and teams will show you the monaaaay!

Dalhousie residences face off for charity

Bighorns and Trojans hit the ice in support of the IWK



Last year's Bighorns (left) and Trojans put aside their differences in support of the IWK. • • • Photo by Chris Parent

Shelby Rutledge
Sports Contributor

As spring beckons outside, Dal-

housie residences will gather indoors for a hockey game as a fundraiser for the IWK Health Centre, which specializes in treatment for women and children.

The big game, contested annually between the Bighorns and the Trojans, will occur on Saturday, Mar. 22, with excitement already starting to build.

"The game brings the community together," says Jessica MacDonald, a residence assistant in Shirreff Hall and enthusiastic supporter of the Charity Face-Off. "We have players from Shirreff, Mini-Residence and Risley that come out together."

The Bighorns, who pulled out a lucky win last year, will include the above-mentioned residences, along with members of Eliza Ritchie Hall. The Trojans will look to avenge last year's loss with a team that includes students from the Gerard, O'Brien and Howe Hall residences.

The hockey game is one of the biggest intra-residence events of the academic year. Joshua Poole, another Shirreff Hall RA, says it's something to look forward to. In past years, the stands have been wildly energetic with residents cheering for their respective squad.

Recognizing this potential, Charity Face-Off organizers hope this year's edition offers another opportunity to unite the campus community while supporting the IWK. Residence assistant Olive Swinski notes that the game tends to "really [bring] friends

together."

All proceeds from the game will go straight to the hospital, where they will be used to buy new equipment and to fund ongoing as well as new research. Even students who no longer live in residence can buy tickets to support the cause.

"It feels really good to know that the money is going to the IWK. It's something that makes the Charity Face-Off really exciting; the money is not going back to residence, it is going to a great cause," says MacDonald.

In the run-up to the hockey game, students in residence have raised additional money for the IWK through a pie-in-the-face fundraiser, a murder mystery party and a player auction.

The pie-in-the-face event proved particularly popular, allowing students to shove cream-filled pastry into the faces of anyone in residence—including friends, residence assistants and the residence life managers—in exchange for a donation to the IWK. ☺

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Have fun on St. Paddy's Day but be respectful to your neighbours. Whether they're families with young children, elderly couples, or people who do shift work, they deserve not to be unreasonably disturbed. Don't be that student who takes away from all the great work we've done to make Dalhousie such a great place in our community.



dal.ca/think

STREET

By Kristie Smith and Chris Parent

What's one big difference between Halifax and home?



"People love their dogs more than their friends."
Mahbubur Rahman (from Bangladesh)
1st-year civil engineering



"Mealtimes, and saying good night at 4 p.m."
Hidaya Ahmad (from Malaysia)
3rd-year neuroscience



"Guys eat more junk food here than back at home."
Jomel Varghese (from India)
1st-year engineering



"Public transportation."
Giovana Celli (from Brazil)
1st-year PhD biological engineering



"Student life here is more colourful."
Pengpeng Jiang (from China)
1st-year commerce



"More connected there. Everyone knows each other."
Sally Atwi (from Lebanon)
1st-year nursing

DALHOUSIE ANGLICAN SOCIETY

WINE before BREAKFAST

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A quiet contemporary Eucharist, followed by a simple breakfast to enjoy fellowship together.

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EVENTS@DAL

for more listings, visit dalgazette.com

FRIDAY, MAR. 14

Talk: Lynn Coady, 8 p.m. in McCain Building, Scotiabank Auditorium

SATURDAY, MAR. 15

DISA International Night, 6-10 p.m. in SUB, McInnes Room (\$20)

MONDAY, MAR. 17

Guitar recital, 12:15 p.m. in Arts Centre, Room 406
Happy St. Patrick's Day

TUESDAY, MAR. 18

Faculty of Agriculture IMPACT Awards Banquet, 6-8 p.m. in Jenkins Hall, Riverview Room
ESL Workshop: Written Communication for the Workplace, 4-6 p.m. in Mona Campbell Building

WEDNESDAY, MAR. 19

Community Meeting: "Is the income gap growing in Halifax?" 7-9 p.m. in McCain 1116

THURSDAY, MAR. 20

Skin Deep screening & panel discussion, 6-8:30 p.m. in SUB, Room 307
Spanish guest lecture, 4-5:30 p.m. in McCain 1102

FRIDAY, MAR. 21

Earth Hour panel, starts at 12 p.m. in Weldon Building, Room 105

SOCIETIES!
List your year-end events right here.



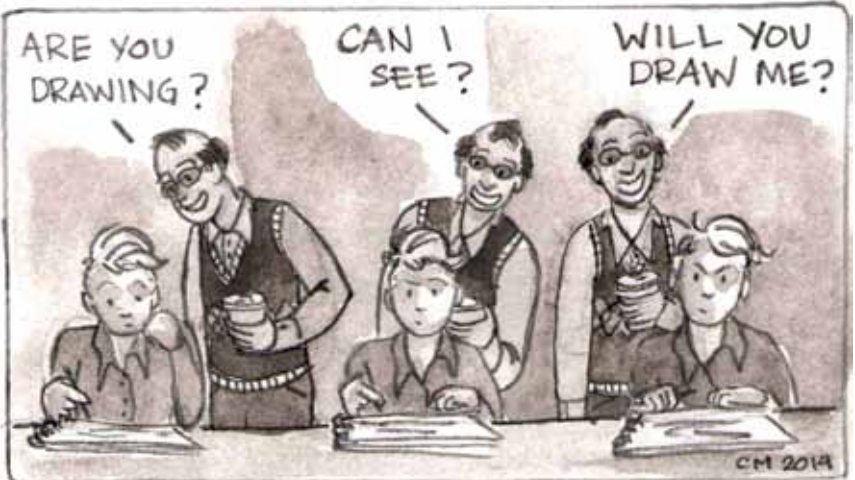
.....submit listings to events@dalgazette.com



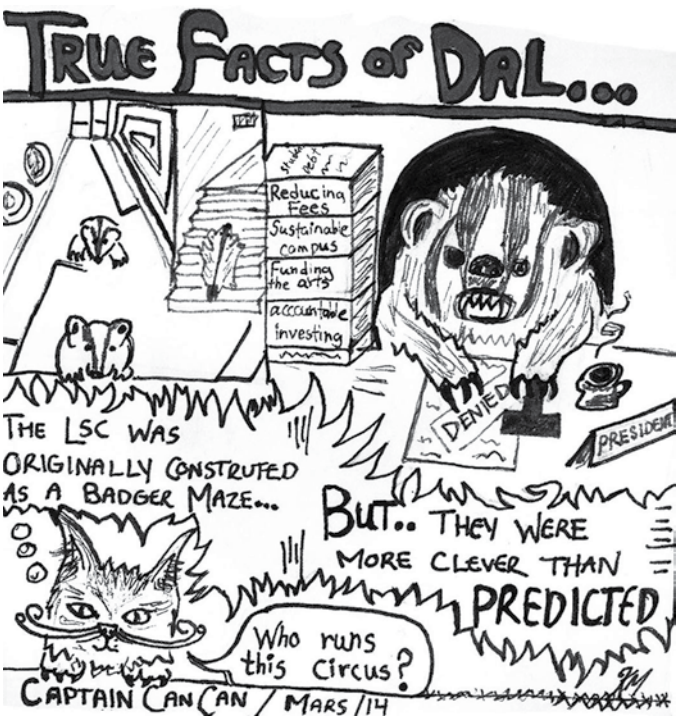
Old Heart by Amber Solberg



Adventures in Servitude by Caitlin McGuire



Captain Can Can of the Horse Marines by Kat Moore



Seasons of Cats by Emily Davidson



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on Pizza Corner
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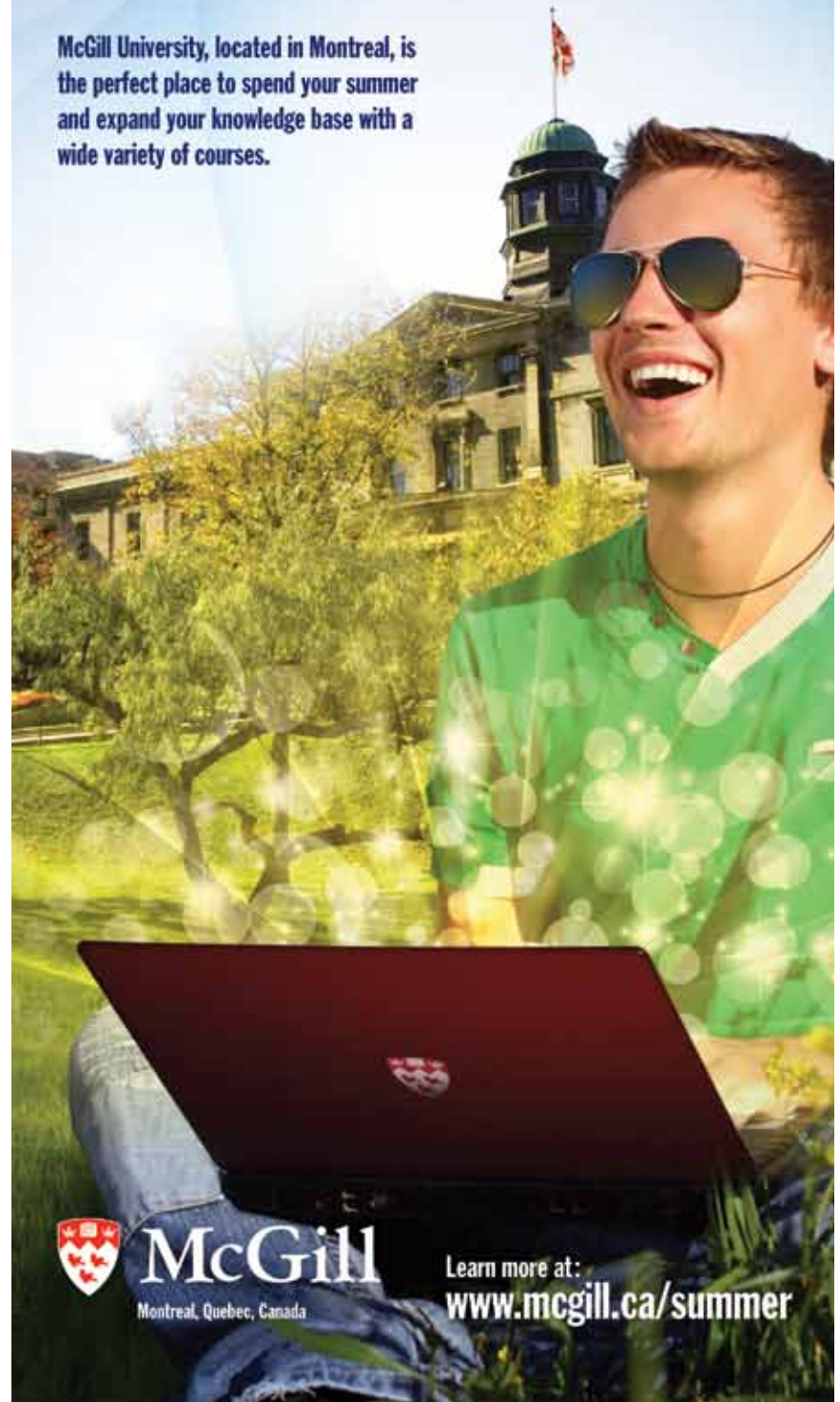
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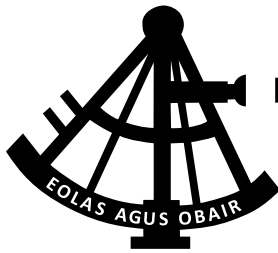
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THE SEXTANT

THE OFFICIAL PAPER OF DALHOUSIE SEXTON CAMPUS

Jill Withers

5th Year Industrial

Math and popcorn

Making snacks like an industrial engineer

Have you ever tried to microwave a bag of popcorn according to the instructions on the bag, only to find yourself with either the bag half-popped or the popcorn burnt? Surprisingly enough, there is a technique to it right. Orville Redenbacher's website says the optimal way to pop a bag is to cook by "sound". Apparently, this rule is fairly prevalent throughout the internet and other cooking websites, generally stating that if you wait until there is no popping for 1-3 seconds it is time to stop the microwave. This method is fairly effective, but what if we wanted to attribute some science to an unscientific process? We would talk to an industrial engineer.

Industrial engineering teaches many things, one of which is quantifying the qualitative. Some would say it's as simple as solving everyday problems by applying methodologies and critical thinking. So, what should I do if I don't want to spend my time listening to my bag of popcorn? I should dig into my toolbox of industrial engineering skills, normally reserved for problems like worker-machine wait times. The principles are the same; uncertain wait times

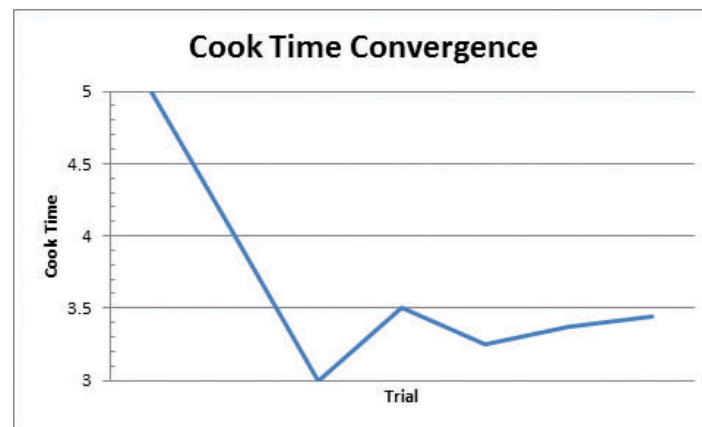
place extra stress on workers, just like me waiting for my popcorn. Time is money, or in the case of popcorn, time is value. The time waiting could easily be used for doing other value-added tasks.

In order to tackle this problem, an applicable algorithm should be determined to solve

there is a decidedly small time interval in which will optimal can be found. However, as this isn't a high risk problem, we only need to get reasonably close to an answer. Although it is possible, searching for a near optimal point experimentally would take a long time, so applying a more efficient

(1 minute). We know that the 5 minutes will burn the popcorn and that 1 minute will leave it mostly uncooked, so doing this experimentally is not necessary. Therefore, knowing that 5 is too high and 1 is too low, we split the difference and try the middle time of 3 minutes. Now, let's say this leaves 20 kernels with no burns. We now know the time can be longer than 3 minutes but it must be less than 5, so we half that difference and try again at 4 minutes. At 4 minutes we have some burns, so now we've gone too far on the high end. Thus, we half between 3 and 4, and our next run will be 3:30. The repetition this cycle will eventually converge at a single time which will be optimal for your microwave.

I ran this algorithm on mine, and I got 2 minutes and 22 seconds as my optimal. It gave me the lowest kernel count at 4 without any burning. That means I've just earned myself back roughly two and a half minutes every time I cook a bag of popcorn with which I can complete value added tasks instead of waiting. Again, this analogy should come back to a worker waiting at a machine. And that is how an Industrial Engineer cooks popcorn. ☘



Example of convergence of optimal times for popping popcorn

for the ideal cooking time for a bag of popcorn for any given microwave. As the first step in solving a problem of this type is identifying a baseline, we could start with Orville Redenbacher's trick of cooking by sound; run one bag through and stop when 2 seconds have passed since the last pop. Now let's define the problem.

As per the 2 second baseline,

methodology is best option. One method would be applying a halving algorithm called the bisection method. This method is an excellent way of quickly reaching an answer, though it may or may not be optimal. For this problem it will approximate the answer well enough.

Basically, we run the microwave at a high time (say 5 minutes) then at a low time



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