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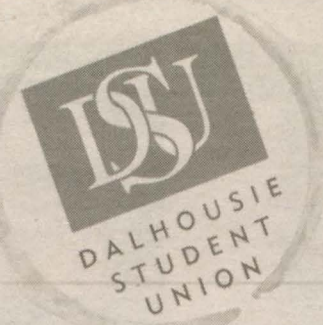


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P. 3



WEEKLY DISPATCH

Hello, Dalhousie students!

Teaching Awards

Have you had an excellent professor this term? We want to hear about it! The DSU teaching awards are some of the university's most prestigious honors, as they are decided entirely by students!

To nominate a professor or instructor for a teaching award, please fill out the nomination form available online or at the DSU information centre in the Student Union Building. Please remember to attach a cover letter supporting the nomination. Applications must be submitted by February 13th 2009. Forms can be addressed to Amy Florian and may be dropped off at room 222 in the Student Union Building or emailed to am476210@dal.ca.

Winter Society Fair

On January 21 from 10:30am - 2:30 pm, the DSU will be hosting the Winter term Society Fair in the McInnes room of the SUB. This event will showcase about 70 of the DSU's societies, and is a great way to find out how to get involved with groups that share your interests.

Advocacy Service

The Dalhousie Student Advocacy Service is available to help students receive fair and reasonable decisions on issues dealing with academic appeals and disciplinary matters. The DSAS strives to provide supportive advocacy services to students involved in all such situations and all inquiries are confidential. For more information, visit [services/studentadvocacy at www.dsu.ca](http://services/studentadvocacy.dal.ca) or contact the DSAS at dsas@dal.ca.

Grawood

As always, the Grawood is a great place to stop for lunch throughout the week, and both the Grawood and T-Room provide fantastic programming for your evenings. Check out this week's details online at www.dsu.ca.

Legal Assistance

Just a reminder: the Dalhousie Student Union (DSU) has retained the services of Hill Law to provide legal assistance to Dalhousie students. The DSU Legal Assistance Program is available for any legal problem, regardless of whether or not it is University related. Consultations are provided to students free of charge. A lawyer will be available most Friday afternoons after 2:00 pm. All consultations are confidential and made by appointment only. Appointments must be made before noon on Thursdays. Visit www.dsu.ca for more information or call: 494-1106 to make an appointment.

Check back next week for more news, and as always, contact us with any questions or concerns you may have.

Sincerely,

Your DSU Executive



COVER:
One guess at whose lips adorn the cover of this week's issue? Stay tuned for next week when you will have already forgotten.

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CORRECTIONS POLICY

The Gazette is steadfastly committed to accuracy and always strives to provide correct information to students. We are human, though, and we do make mistakes. We promise to correct them as promptly as possible. If you spot an error in The Gazette in print or online, please report it to copy@dalgazette.ca.

THE FINE PRINT

The Gazette is the official written record of Dalhousie University since 1868 and is open to participation from all students. It is published weekly during the academic year by the Dalhousie Gazette Publishing Society. The Gazette is a student-run publication. Its primary purpose is to report fairly and objectively on issues of importance and interest to the students of Dalhousie University, to provide an open forum for the free expression and exchange of ideas, and to stimulate meaningful debate on issues that affect or would otherwise be of interest to the student body and/or society in general. A "staff contributor" is a member of the paper defined as a person who has had three volunteer articles, or photographs of reasonable length, and/or substance published in three different issues within the current publishing year. Views expressed in the Hot or Not feature, The Word at Dal, and opinions section are solely those of the contributing writers, and do not necessarily represent the views of The Gazette or its staff. Views expressed in the Streeter feature are solely those of the person being quoted, and not The Gazette's writers or staff. This publication is intended for readers 18 years of age or older. The views of our writers are not the explicit views of Dalhousie University. All students of Dalhousie University, as well as any interested parties on or off-campus, are invited to contribute to any section of the newspaper. Please contact the appropriate editor for submission guidelines, or drop by for our weekly volunteer meetings every Monday at 5:30 p.m. in room 312 of the Dal SUB. The Gazette reserves the right to edit and reprint all submissions, and will not publish material deemed by its editorial board to be discriminatory, racist, sexist, homophobic or libellous. Opinions expressed in submitted letters are solely those of the authors. Editorials in The Gazette are signed and represent the opinions of the writer(s), not necessarily those of The Gazette staff, Editorial Board, publisher, or Dalhousie University.

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Halifax's pesky drinking problem

Politicians again push to ban dollar drinks over the holidays

JULIE SOBOWALE
EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

The menace of cheap drinks befell Halifax again in December with another uproar about student drinking. Dollar drinks are now history in Nova Scotia, as the province joins Calgary, Vancouver, Regina and Winnipeg in setting minimum drink prices.

A few bars in the city had \$1 drink specials before the break, anticipating thousands of students letting loose after final exams. The same old arguments sprang up: irresponsible drinking leads to students in the hospital, drunken kids create a dangerous environment downtown and other businesses suffer since people don't want to come to a downtown filled with drunken students. The provincial government offered only one solution: a mandatory minimum drinking price of \$2.50, which Labour Minister Mark Parent announced on Friday Dec. 19.

Here we have politicians supposedly speaking for students. That's

what bugs me. Leonard Preyra, MLA for Halifax Citadel-Sable Island, was in favour of banning \$1 drinks as quickly as possible, saying bars that sell those cheap drinks give students the opportunity to excessively drink.

Actually, selling cheap drinks makes it easier for students to drink, whether it's drinking in moderation or in excess. Students who are determined to drink unhealthy levels of alcohol will do so with or without cheap drinks.

In an interview with the *Chronicle Herald* last month, Preyra acknowledged students wouldn't like the new law but, "there are just as many students who don't like their roommates — don't like their residences — filled with the kinds of things that happen when people drink in excess."

I wonder if he spoke to students on or off campus about where they get their booze and how much they drink. I don't like politicians speaking on behalf of students without doing any research to back up their claims. I bet more students get most of their al-

cohol supplies from local liquor stores than from downtown bars.

Our student government officials didn't exactly speak on both sides of the issue. In a recent interview with the CBC, Dalhousie Student Union (DSU) President Courtney Larkin said she expected students wouldn't be happy with a minimum price for drinks because "every dollar counts", but she was not quoted as specifically opposing a cheap drink legislation. While she made a valid point, I wish the DSU and other student leaders would work toward squashing the ugly stereotype of students as drunkards. The majority of students drink responsibly and do not end up at the emergency room on Saturday nights.

The major perspective that was missing in this debate is that of the responsible student. There is a sizable group of students who occasionally drink or don't drink at all. Who is speaking for them? Why shouldn't students who drink responsibly be allowed to buy cheap drinks? What about those

emergency room frequenters and alcohol poisoning sufferers who aren't students? Students should not solely shoulder the cheap drink dilemma.

But alcohol abuse is a legitimate concern. Last month, 10 local doctors signed a petition to pressure the government to create minimum drink prices due to spikes in physical injuries, sexual assaults, unplanned pregnancies, sexually transmitted diseases and alcohol poisoning among students.

An informal audit done last year by Dr. John Ross, chief of emergency room medicine at the Queen Elizabeth II Health Sciences Centre revealed that 50 per cent of all alcohol-related visits occurred on Friday and Saturday nights and 25 per cent occurred on Sunday and Wednesday nights. Ross and his colleagues expected the weekend rate, but they concluded the high occurrence of visits on Sundays and Wednesdays were results of cheap drink specials offered on those days.

Most of the uproar against cheap drinks is a carryover from the 2007

Christmas Eve brawl at The Dome. More than 35 people were arrested when a brawl broke out at the nightclub. The police, politicians and other community leaders concluded the Dome's heavy advertising of \$1 drinks created the perfect scenario for excessive drinking, which they believed led to the brawl. As a result, The Dome had its liquor license temporarily taken away and the bar stopped serving \$1 drinks. Even though dollar drinks are banned, cash-strapped students will always look for some cheap booze.

Banning the dollar drink might reduce binge drinking among students but it won't eliminate the problem. Alcohol poisoning, unwanted pregnancy and STIs are problems that go beyond cheap drinks. The reality is some students are going to drink too much and suffer the consequences. Should the majority of responsible drinkers be punished based on the abusive few? If our politicians and student leaders want to tackle excessive drinking, they should include students in creating alternative solutions.

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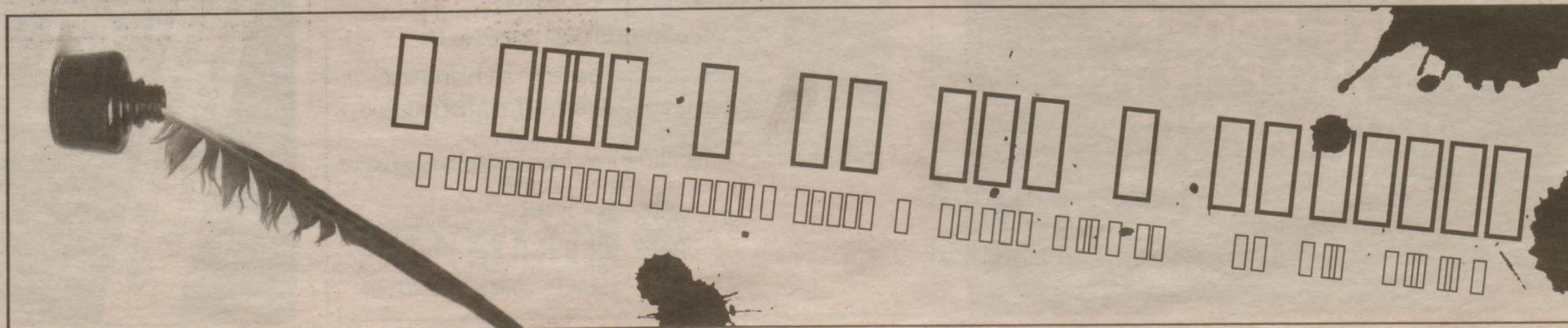
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DSU Top stories of 2008

RUTH MESTECKIN | MELISSA DI COSTANZO
NEWS EDITORS

Week to week, students will read about issues in *The Gazette* that may impact their academic, social and political decisions. The stories we deliver strive to examine and evaluate the issues most crucial to our readers. Here are four major stories we covered in 2008.



JOSH BOYTER/GAZETTE FILE PHOTO

DAL STILL WITHOUT 24-HOUR STUDY SPACE

Students accustomed to studying in the early hours of the morning have to keep searching for a place to cram.

As of last summer, Dalhousie's Computer Science building is no longer open for 24 hours. Dal Student Services and campus security decided to shut the building's doors after midnight and open at 7 a.m. due to security concerns, a lack of funding and health factors. Only computer science students with swipe cards to the building are able to access the space overnight.

Sharon Johnson-Legere, director of student resources at Dal, said safety was also a crucial concern.

"What we had was student security officers monitoring the building around the clock, and there were concerns about their safety, being there alone in that role," she said.

After hearing student concern about the lack of 24-hour space, the Dalhousie Student Union (DSU) implemented a policy aiming to persuade the university to re-think its decision. DSU vice-president Mark Coffin crafted the document and council approved it Nov. 19.

The policy voices the DSU's disagreement with the university's new

measures and suggests Dal offer 24-hour spaces on all three campuses. It also pushes for extended access to laboratories, meeting rooms and workshops.

President of the Dal Computer Science Society, John Doucette, said council's decision to encourage a 24-hour space has been a long time coming and it's often necessary for many students.

"Students who don't have a large amount of income are likely living with a large number of roommates. I know people who live with as many as four or five or six people," Doucette said. "That sort of environment is not always going to be conducive to studying."

Since students have been voicing their concern about the lack of 24-hour space, the DSU has engaged in discussions with Dal's administration. Coffin said he thinks negotiations may come easier with the unanimous support from council.

Although not a precedent-setting move, the DSU extended hours of the Student Union Building during December's examination period.

Reporter: Andrew Robinson
Appeared: Oct. 23, 2008 and Nov. 27, 2008



ASIELAL-AAS/GAZETTE FILE PHOTO

DSU BIDS GOODBYE TO PEPSI FUNDING

While Pepsi advertisements and products continue to smatter the walls and meal halls of Dalhousie, Pepsi will no longer be providing funding to the university or the Dalhousie Student Union (DSU).

Ten years ago, Dal signed a 12-year contract with Pepsi, a contract Matthew Golding, DSU vice-president (finance and operations) called "lucrative."

"This is, by far, the largest contract we have," said Golding. "It's the largest of the DSU."

The contract stated Pepsi would supply funding to the university. The DSU would profit based on sales only if the university advertised and sold a certain amount of Pepsi products. Dal hasn't been selling the target amount of Pepsi products, causing Pepsi to sever funding to the university as of Aug. 31, 2008.

But the contract still hasn't ended, which means students will con-

tinue to see Pepsi products and ads scattered around campus.

Golding didn't discuss Pepsi's target range or the amount of funding Pepsi provided to the DSU because Dal signed a confidentiality agreement with the beverage company. He did say a 12-year contract was too large for the university, and the amount of sold products was "unreachable."

Golding said the ideal contract with the university would be within a three- to five-year period.

"Obviously, when the contract was signed 10 years ago, the people who did sign it did believe that the volume could be met," he said.

Golding also said Dal students shouldn't worry about the loss of income because the DSU has budgeted to compensate for the loss of funding for the next two years.

"From a financial side ... there's no change within the DSU. The only

thing is we're not receiving any fresh money," he said.

After the contract expires two years from now, Golding said the university and the DSU will have to sign a new contract, potentially with another company.

Shannon Zimmerman, Board of Governors representative, said Dal should look to other companies for funding and the next contract should encompass a smaller time frame.

"It has to happen together. I think that you need the contracts with larger corporations, but I still think that more time and more money should be spent on bringing in local and organic food," she said.

Golding said he's working with members of Dal administration to figure out what to look for in a new contract.

Reporter: Lucy Scholey
Appeared: Nov. 8, 2008

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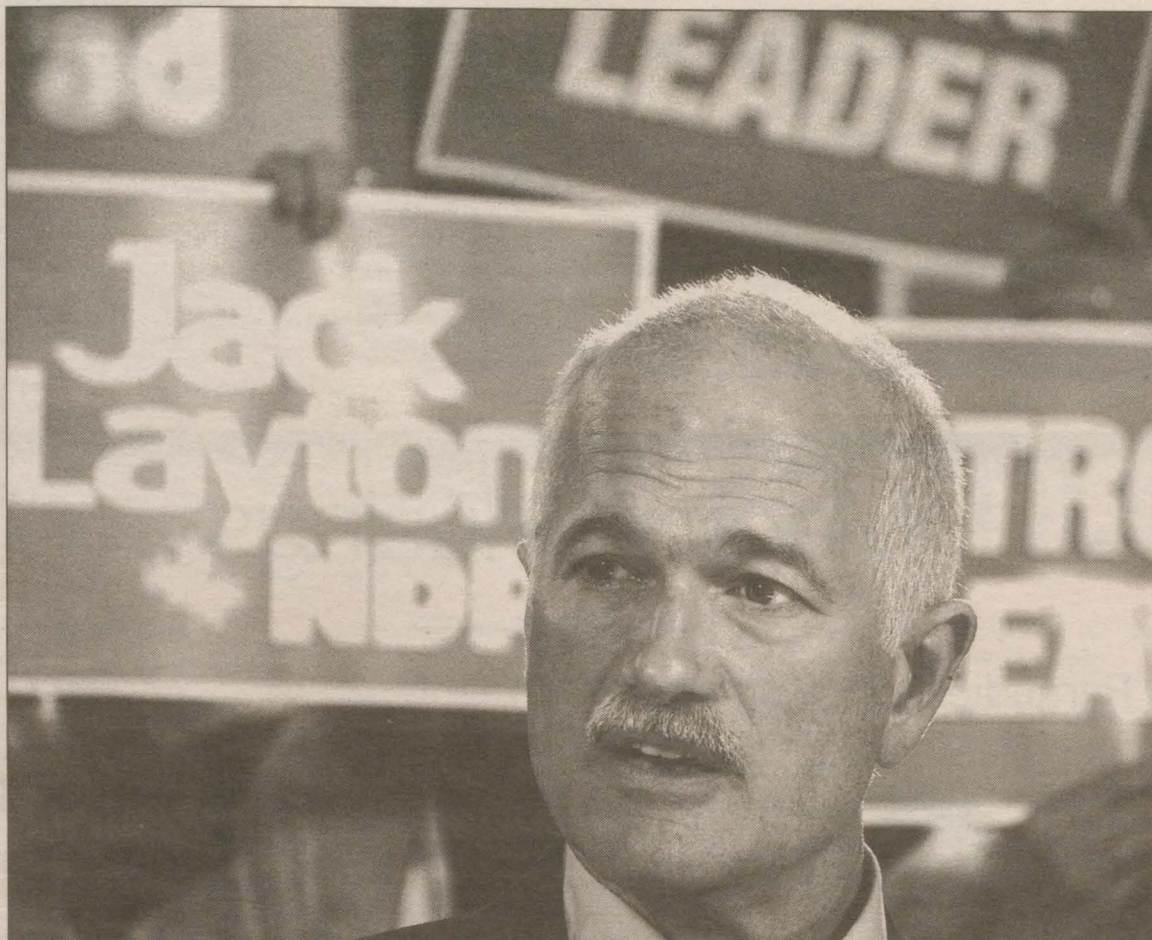
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BLAKE MACEWAN/GAZETTE FILE PHOTO

FEDERAL CANDIDATES SPEAK AT DAL

In their bids to be voted the next prime minister, both Stéphane Dion and Jack Layton spoke at Dalhousie's Sir Charles Tupper Medical Building in September. Both candidates revealed new policy platforms in their announcements.

Former Liberal leader Dion declared Sept. 16 that all Canadians would have access to medication with his proposed \$900 million drug plan. This plan would cover Canadians with chronic illnesses unable to pay their medical bills.

Dion pledged to work with other provinces to settle on the level of drug coverage to be granted as a national standard.

"Our plan will make a huge difference in the lives of Canadians, especially for those in Atlantic Canada," he said. "Our plan is about

people and our drug plan will help Canadians and their families facing the hardship of a catastrophic illness and expensive medication."

This issue is severe in the Atlantic region, said Dion, as one-quarter of the population doesn't have drug coverage at all.

"Sick people are forced to ration pain medication because they just cannot afford their pills," said Dion. "When the drug cost of an illness becomes too much for a family to manage, the federal government should be there to help."

One day earlier, NDP leader Jack Layton made his plea for prime minister, targeting the health care system and allocating \$1 billion to repair it, reported CTV.

Of this sum, \$200 million would go toward increasing training spac-

es and expanding medical schools. This would increase the number of doctors and nurses by 50 per cent to alleviate the current shortage.

The NDP party also promised to allocate \$125 million to forgive student loans for medical school graduates who would be family doctors for at least a decade.

"We met with students last year, a great many of whom would have liked to have been family doctors, and (who) told me very simply that they had to go on and become specialists because by staying as family doctors, they would be unable to pay their student loans," said Layton.

Reporters: Melissa Di Costanzo and Ruth Mestechkin
Appeared: Sept. 18, 2008



FOWLER, BAULD AND MITCHELL ARCHITECTURE

NEW \$33M BUILDING SET TO OPEN IN 2010

The end of summer also brought with it the end of Dalhousie's old Faculty of Management building, located at Coburg Road and Seymour Street.

Instead, the university has planned for a new building to take its place: a \$33 million academic building for both student and office space, slated to open June 2010.

The building, designed by Fowler Bauld & Mitchell Architecture, boasts "green" features such as solar wall panelling and bike storage.

It's expected to be four storeys high and 104,000 square feet.

And students won't have to pay a cent for it.

Ken Burt, Dal's vice-president (finance and administration), explained money to fund the building is coming from three main sources: \$12 million from the provincial government and the rest from a series of clients going into the building and from grants the university received from research projects.

"All of the money for the building is in the budget currently, so there is no incremental spending," explained Burt. "We're not going to ask students to pay any more money for this building."

And with a growing student body and a need for more updated facili-

ties, Dal spokesperson Charles Crosby said the building is more than necessary.

"There are space issues that have to be accommodated, especially closer to campus. We're quite spread out with the number of our faculties. For example, the School of Continuing Education is downtown," he said. "This building is an ideal opportunity to bring these folks closer to campus and to also address a lot of the needs we have."

Some students, like Natasha Zatezalo, a first-year science student, also think improvements in other Dal buildings are necessary.

"There are some buildings that are really gorgeous and other ones that just kind of look like crap. So there are definitely things they can improve, too. That's a lot of money to spend on one building," she said.

Dal administration expects construction to be complete in June 2010, but plans to hold a grand opening for students the following September.

"We want students involved and to share in the celebration," said Burt. "It's a good thing to hold a party when your primary clients are there."

Reporter: Melissa Di Costanzo
Appeared: Nov. 9, 2008

In case you missed it

Some interesting things happened concerning Nova Scotia students while you were on break

RUTH MESTECKKIN
MELISSA DI COSTANZO
NEWS EDITORS

The end of dollar drinks

MLA for Halifax Citadel-Sable Island, Leonard Preyra, pushed the province to set a minimum drink price. As of Dec. 19, the cheapest drinks at bars will now cost \$2.50.

The *Chronicle Herald* reported 10 physicians at Dalhousie University Health Services wrote Preyra a letter stating cheap drinks are detrimental to the students who show up at their clinic.

The doctors wrote that they often see the results of excessive drinking, including sexual assaults, unplanned pregnancy, physical injury, alcohol poisoning and sexually transmitted diseases.

The letter also added cheap drinks are meant to target students on a budget, and research has shown students will take this into account, take advantage of dollar drinks and may suffer the ill effects.

Source: *Chronicle Herald*

Nova Scotia universities receive federal funding

Four universities in Nova Scotia, including Dalhousie University, have received \$1 million in funding from the federal government for environment, health, energy and agriculture projects.

Dal, Mount Saint Vincent University, Saint Mary's University and Nova Scotia Agricultural College (NSAC) have all received research money from the Canada Foundation for Innovation. The money was given for labs and equipment for 10 projects in the province.

Dal received \$632,000 for ear and auditory imaging equipment, research on intestinal inflammation as well as other projects. Mount Saint Vincent got \$100,000 for molecular research and \$30,000 for language and reading research. Saint Mary's received about \$140,000 for molecular research.

NSAC, located in Truro, also got \$100,000 for research on how to reduce the environmental impacts of farms and how to make them more profitable.

Source: *Metro News*

Recession could benefit loan-laden students

Experts say the current economic recession may be beneficial for students paying loans because the Bank of Canada cut its interest rate early

December to the lowest it has been in half a century.

Dan Harrison, of Nova Scotia's Department of Education, told *Metro News* any decline in a prime rate is good for students trying to pay back loans, and that students could gain long-term benefits from the recession.

Marina Adshade, an economist at Dalhousie, said student loan holders are in a good position, as loan interest payments have dropped by 2.75 per cent.

Source: *Metro News*

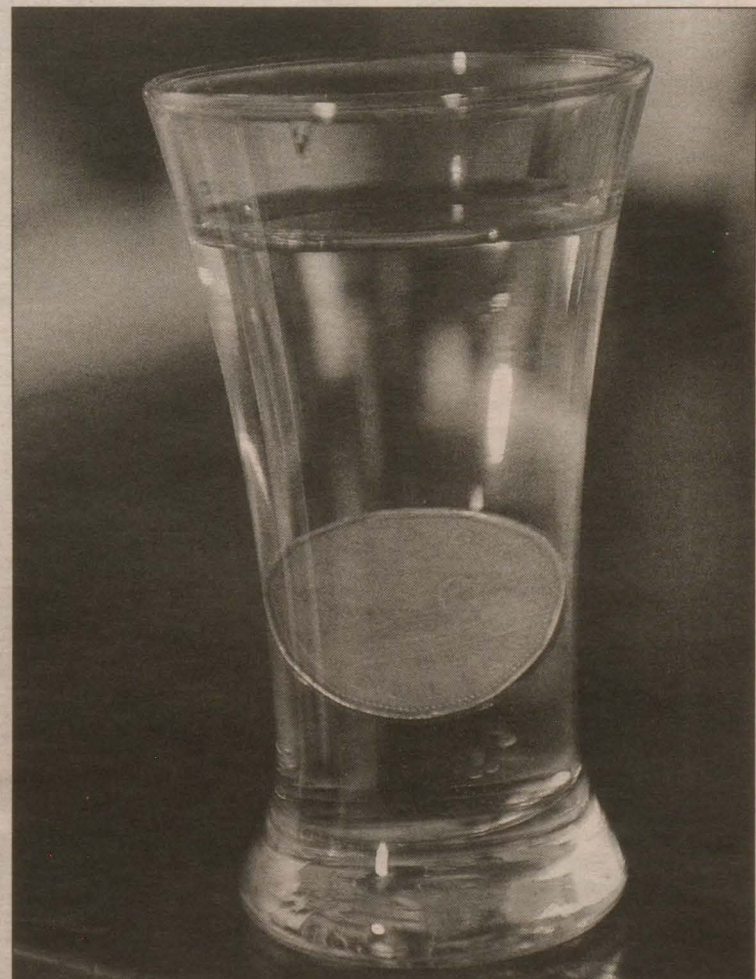
Nova Scotia life science sector gains more money

The province of Nova Scotia will be giving \$1.6 million each year for 20 years to a new BioScience Enterprise Centre, which will be located at Dalhousie University, reported the *Chronicle Herald*.

Premier Rodney MacDonald, who announced the funding Dec. 9, said the financial support will be made through InNOVAcorp, an organization which helps companies commercialize their technologies.

The new building will replace the current centre on Lower Water Street and will transfer to Dal in spring 2011 next to the Sir Charles Tupper Medical Building. It will be built next to the new Life Sciences Research Institute, which is also scheduled to open around the same time.

Source: *the Chronicle Herald*



JOSH BOYTER/ DALHOUSIE GAZETTE

As of Dec. 19, the cheapest drinks at bars will now cost \$2.50.

NEWS BITES

CANADIAN CAMPUS SHORTS:

Carleton re-instates Shinerama support

After the Carleton University Students Association (CUSA) voted to cease its yearly Shinerama fundraiser for cystic fibrosis to find a new cause, the association voted unanimously to re-instate it early December.

CUSA initially wanted to cut its involvement with the fundraiser in a motion that falsely implied cystic fibrosis primarily affected

white men and wasn't an ideal benefactor from a multicultural student population, reported the *Globe and Mail*.

Brittany Smyth, CUSA president, said the first vote regarding the issue was about "mixing it up" and the association didn't think cystic fibrosis wasn't worthwhile.

Smyth also said Donnie Northrup, the student who wrote the initial motion, resigned from council.

Source: *Globe and Mail*

York student submits fake degree

A third-year York University student is under review for academic dishonesty after she applied for admission at Osgoode Law School using a fake degree, reported *Excalibur*.

Quami Frederick has been summoned to a hearing by the associate dean of Osgoode.

Frederick bought a BA degree in business administration from St. George's University in Grenada for \$1,109 in 2004; administration from St. George's has confirmed Frederick did not attend the university.

She initially got the degree from a diploma mill called St. Regis University, which was closed in 2005.

Source: *Excalibur*

NATIONAL HEADLINES:

Liberals propose covering extra health costs for Nova Scotians

The Liberal party has proposed a plan that would cover additional costs for Nova Scotians waiting for surgeries, such as lung transplants, outside of the province.

CBC reported the Liberal government would take care of travel and living expenses for residents after three months outside of Nova

Scotia. Many patients waiting for organs at hospitals like the Toronto General Hospital sometimes have to wait up to two years.

Chris d'Entremont, the Nova Scotia health minister, isn't committing to the Liberal bill yet. He said he's still waiting for proposals for partnerships to come in from other organizations.

Source: *CBC*

School buses tapped with surveillance

School buses across the country are slowly getting surveillance cameras to prevent bullying and bad behaviour, reported *CTV*.

Pembina Trails School Division in Winnipeg was one of the latest schools to install cameras in its buses, as a result of a driver sexually assaulting a female student.

Dave Carroll, a safety and legislation consultant for the Ontario

School Bus Association, said the board would decide to install cameras not to monitor drivers, but to monitor student behaviour so children would be more inclined to act responsibly.

But Calgary lawyer and former president of the Alberta Civil Liberties Association, Brian Edy, said cameras don't always boost security and there are privacy concerns with being filmed.

Source: *CTV*

TSX loses \$700 billion in 2008

The TSX slumped 35 per cent – a loss of about \$700 billion of its value – in 2008, a plummet experts say is just the beginning, reported *CBC*.

Because the ongoing recession is damaging the demand for oil and minerals, the energy, mining and financial services stocks – which comprised most of the TSX composite index – were hit hard.

But the last day of 2008 saw the market end 157 points higher, finishing with a composite index of 8,987.7, compared to 13,833.06 in 2007.

Economists aren't sure what 2009 has in store for the stock market because major factors, such as the future of oil prices, are still unclear.

Source: *CBC*

INTERNATIONAL NEWS BY THE NUMBERS:

50 years: marks the anniversary of the Cuban communist revolution

2 years: period of time Ethiopian troops have been in Somalia, until they started to withdraw Jan. 2.

9 people: number of Muslim passengers who were thrown off a flight from Washington D.C. to Florida on Jan. 2, after other passengers stated they heard a comment about airplane security.

1 Canadian: accused of spying for the former Iraqi government of Saddam Hussein.

3 attempts: the number of times opposition leader John Atta Mills tried to become president in Ghana, until he won Jan. 3.

5 years: length of time the NASA Mars rover mission has been running.

Sources: *BBC, CBC, CBC, CBC, CBC, CTV*

Medical Musings

Remedies for sleep starvation



RACHEL SUNTER
HEALTH COLUMNIST

Getting a good night's rest after night is one of the most luxurious and yet affordable treats your can give to yourself. Not only does it feel amazing, but it boosts brain power and balances hormones, preparing you for optimism and motivation when the alarm-clock buzzes your next wakeup call.

We know this; it's the reason parents raise us with bed-time stories, bed-time snacks and curfews. Yet studies show too many of us aren't getting enough sleep.

According to a 2005 Health Reports study based on data from the 2002 Canadian Community Health Survey, an estimated 3.3 million Canadians – one in seven – have trouble falling and staying asleep. The study links several characteristics and lifestyle habits to those with sleeping difficulties, including stress, heavy weekly drinking, smoking pot and being overweight.

A more recent Statistics Canada study in April showed while Canadian women sleep an average 11 minutes longer than men, they have a harder time falling asleep.

If you go to bed, turn off the light and are out like a light, consider yourself lucky. Not getting enough sleep tires our body and mind, weakening our immune system and causing chemical imbalances in our brain that can make us feel anxious and depressed. Under-sleeping has also been linked to weight gain, as it's been shown to increase levels of cortisol, a

stress-hormone that regulates fat-storage.

Long-term sleep deprivation ages your body faster, putting stress on your heart and immune system that could cause problems later in life. If you're suffering from sleep problems, here are some basic techniques so you can try to get on top of it now.

Set the mood. Make sure your room is quiet and dark. If you're bothered by nightmares or disturbing visions, try lighting a candle beside your bed. I use tea lights in a protective holder, because they're usually burnt out by the time I wake up.

Satisfy your senses. Some people can sleep just about anywhere—I find dimly-lit lectures particularly sedative. But having a warm, appealing bed with the right number of pillows can physically and psychologically put you in the mood for a good, long sleep. If you wake up feeling sore, check to see if there's a dip in your mattress. If there is, flip the mattress onto its other side to get better support.

Establish routine. You can actually condition yourself to feel tired if you stick to a bedtime routine that works for you. Try making a sleeping playlist with your favourite peaceful music or nature soundtracks. Damien Rice, Iron and Wine and several Beatles tracks are some of my favourite lullabies.

Clear your mind. Try keeping a notepad or journal beside your bed and make a point of writing out tomorrow's plans before you sleep. You can change it when you wake up, of course, but this way you might reduce the anxiety of telling yourself to remember these things as you fall asleep.

Fill your belly. But don't over-fill. Studies show that eating your dinner too close to bedtime can make it harder for you to fall asleep, so try to eat a good two to three hours before bed. But mama was right about milk and cookies—recent studies show ingesting a

small amount of carbs before bed can trigger chemicals that lull you to sleep. A couple cookies, some toast and jelly, a half-cup of cereal or even herbal tea with honey might do the trick.

Limit drug intake. Caffeine, alcohol and marijuana can negatively affect your sleeping patterns in the short- and long-term. Get to know your limits and try to make personal connections between what you consumed yesterday and how well-rested you feel today.

Over-the-counter drugs should be taken with extreme caution, as many can cause dependence. Valerian Root supplements smell terrible, but pop one down an hour before bedtime and you'll sleep like a baby. You can also get a minty Valerian Root tea at Planet Organic, but the pills are more potent.

Depending on your particular sleep troubles, drugs like Benadryl or prescriptive sleeping medications can help or exacerbate the problem. Although newer sleep medications boast lower chances of dependency, medications should be regarded as a last resort solution to your sleep troubles. Be clear with your doctor about your sleep troubles, whether you're having trouble falling or staying asleep, having nightmares or getting bedtime anxiety.

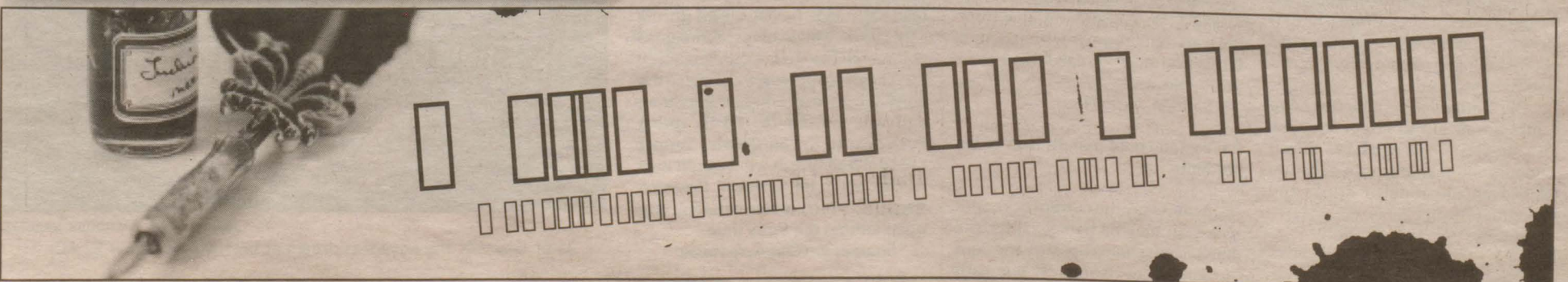
Talk to someone. A psychologist or counsellor can be effective in helping you work through anxieties and negative thinking patterns that may be keeping you awake at night.

As human beings, above and beyond a canon of vital needs we must breathe, eat and sleep. It may take some effort to ensure yourself a future of effortless sleeps, but the pay-off can affect every minute of your waking life. So go ahead and spoil yourself – and all those affected by your sleep deprivation – with a good night's rest.

E-mail Rachel your health questions at vega_of_the_lyra@hotmail.com.

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JOSH BOYTER/GAZETTE PHOTO ILLUSTRATION

This commuter concoction will soon have to compete with a citizen-run news co-op.

The tale of the missing *Metro*

RYAN BOON
STAFF CONTRIBUTOR

If anything adds an air of authenticity to the consumerism-filled, secular-religious December holidays, it's the annual alterations in everyone's established schedules. For a week or two every year you can go back home to trade in your debt-ridden independence for eggnog and presents. And you aren't the only one indulging in a vacation.

Everything from the local supermarket to Parliament was on hold for the holidays – in the latter case, forcibly – so that our society could bask in the real or imagined glow of the holiday season. In most major cities, news outlets are exceptions to this general rule. But not in Halifax.

Look no further than the free and festive daily paper, our own Halifax *Metro News*. This cheerful little Swedish-owned output, aware of how little news actually happens after Christmas, chose to publish only one paper between Dec. 26 and Jan. 1. The premature final issue of the year was a loving "best of 2008" showcase, featuring lengthy lists of the most important events from the past year. Included on the list, of course, was the folding of the Daily News in February and its phoenix-like rebirth into this current commuter concoction.

There are Scrooges out there who would protest this lack of holiday productivity. Some grassroots Grinches even banded together to create the first Halifax Media Co-operative, a project of the Dominion News Co-operative. Members hope to solicit

input next month from Haligonians unhappy with current media coverage in the city.

Although the creation of this group was not in response to *Metro's* holiday hiatus, it might very well be a response to *Metro* itself. The group's Facebook page asks whether Halifax's existing media is "providing comprehensive, accurate coverage of the city's events and issues," and states it will be holding events to "build a new, democratic kind of media."

What a fancy way to say "bah, humbug." In their quest for better journalism, these idealists appear to have forgotten the real meaning of Christmas.

The holiday season isn't an occasion for "comprehensive, accurate coverage," but a time when major city newspapers can take a break and get together to remember fond friends laid off, and dear memories of good times before media industry cutbacks. It is about sneaking downstairs early the next morning in hopes that a way to stay profitable has been tucked under the tree.

This new media co-op may prove more relevant in today's changing times, but look deep into your holiday spirit, if you have any leftover, and ask just one question: do you want another cold, heartless online co-op of citizen journalism, or should you embrace the familiar warmth of a small, old-fashioned internationally syndicated media conglomerate?

Let us not forget the staples of the season: peace on earth and goodwill toward men. Both are much easier to achieve if we just don't report anything.

Proud to be an arts student

REBECCA HSU
OPINIONS CONTRIBUTOR

If you are a history, English or philosophy major, you hear jokes about the uselessness of arts degrees all the time.

For example: "Engineers ask 'how does it work?', scientists ask 'why does it work?', and arts grads ask 'would you like fries with that?'"

I could share more, but you've probably heard them all at least twice and they are hard to distinguish from each other. It takes a while for fresh jokes to be invented because the engineers have to make them up before the scientists can test them, and the commerce students have to sell them.

But this isn't about bashing non-arts faculties. Most students are at university because we have inquisitive, curious minds. Even though I'm an English major, I would not mind sitting in on a conversation about the thermodynamics of steel alloy.

The problem isn't that one faculty is better than any other. The problem is arts students have internalized negative perceptions about their work.

There seems to be an epidemic of arts deprecation syndrome around campus and we arts students are largely to blame for this plague.

When students are getting to know one another, it is customary to ask others what they are studying. Recently I have noticed a variation of the following scene:

"I'm in engineering," the student says with a toothy smile.

"Architecture," says another, with another toothy smile.

"Life sciences." Toothy smile.

"Arts...." This time the speaker has downcast eyes and shuffling feet.

Alternately, the more confident personalities answer "arts," followed by a cheeky comment about cardboard-box real estate.

Where has our pride gone? Have we forgotten that art-inclined people created the masterpieces that put the complexity of the human condition into words and pictures?

Instead of lowering our eyes in shame because our majors teach us the history of the Haitian revolution instead of differential equations, we should be proud that we are learning to critically examine the most

complex, contradictory, and magical thing in existence: life.

Of course, there is a fine line between pride and arrogance. I'm by no means initiating a "who has the best major" debate.

There seems to be two common responses to the question of what defines us as human. Some say imagination, while others say reason. All faculties are doing a good job encouraging both. We are all asking the questions essential to our humanity in different ways.

Arts students: next time you find yourself sandwiched between a scientist and an engineer, stand tall. If you're adventurous, join in on the conversation. Trust me, you have all the equipment.

"I want to go into medicine because prolonging or creating life through science sounds cool to me," your science friend may say.

"Creating life, eh?" you can respond. "Mary Shelley's monster Frankenstein may beg to differ on how cool that is."

Arts students can think about the issues of life in terms of a larger story – a skill that will always be in high demand.

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

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

Nominations should include a written description of the student nominee's contribution to the University and up to three letters of support. Nominations should be submitted to:

The Office of the Vice-President
Student Services
Room G28, Main Level
Killam Memorial Library
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The deadline for nominations is Friday, January 23, 2009.

STREETER

What was the worst gift you've ever received?



“A toothbrush.”

Michelle Salah, second-year microbiology



“Strangely, a *Men in Black II* DVD.”

Ahmed Swedan, second-year microbiology



“A purple pen from Claire's.”

Thomas Baker, first-year French



“A bad gray sweater.”

Mike Smith, first-year journalism



“The self-help book *He's Just Not That Into You* from my mom, after I had just started seeing someone.”

Julie Matheson, second-year health promotion



“*How to Find Your Soulmate* from my aunt. It didn't work.”

Stephanie Higgins, third-year IDS and theatre



“A plastic Jasmine princess book bag from my great aunt.”

Nicole O'Connor, second-year theatre

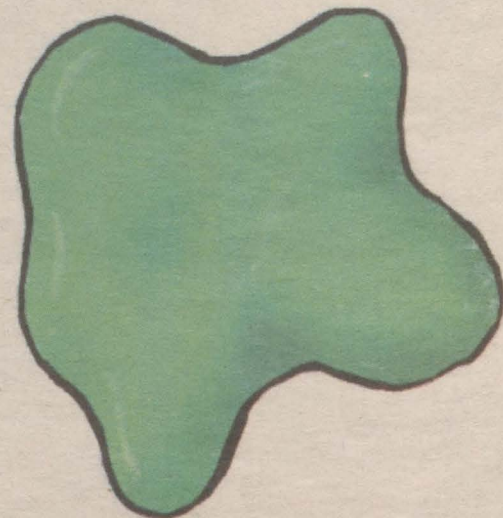


“A training bra.”

Nick Khattar, 25th-year rolling stone

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WE TRY TO REPLACE THEM WITH OTHER PEOPLE. BUT OTHER PEOPLE ARE FILLED WITH THE SAME SELFISH GOO AS WE ARE. WITH NO ROOM LEFT TO STORE SOMEONE ELSE'S INSECURITY. EVEN FOR A LITTLE WHILE.

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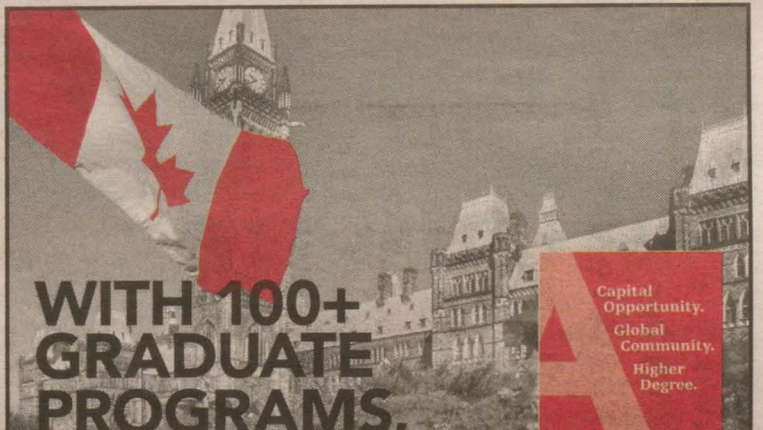
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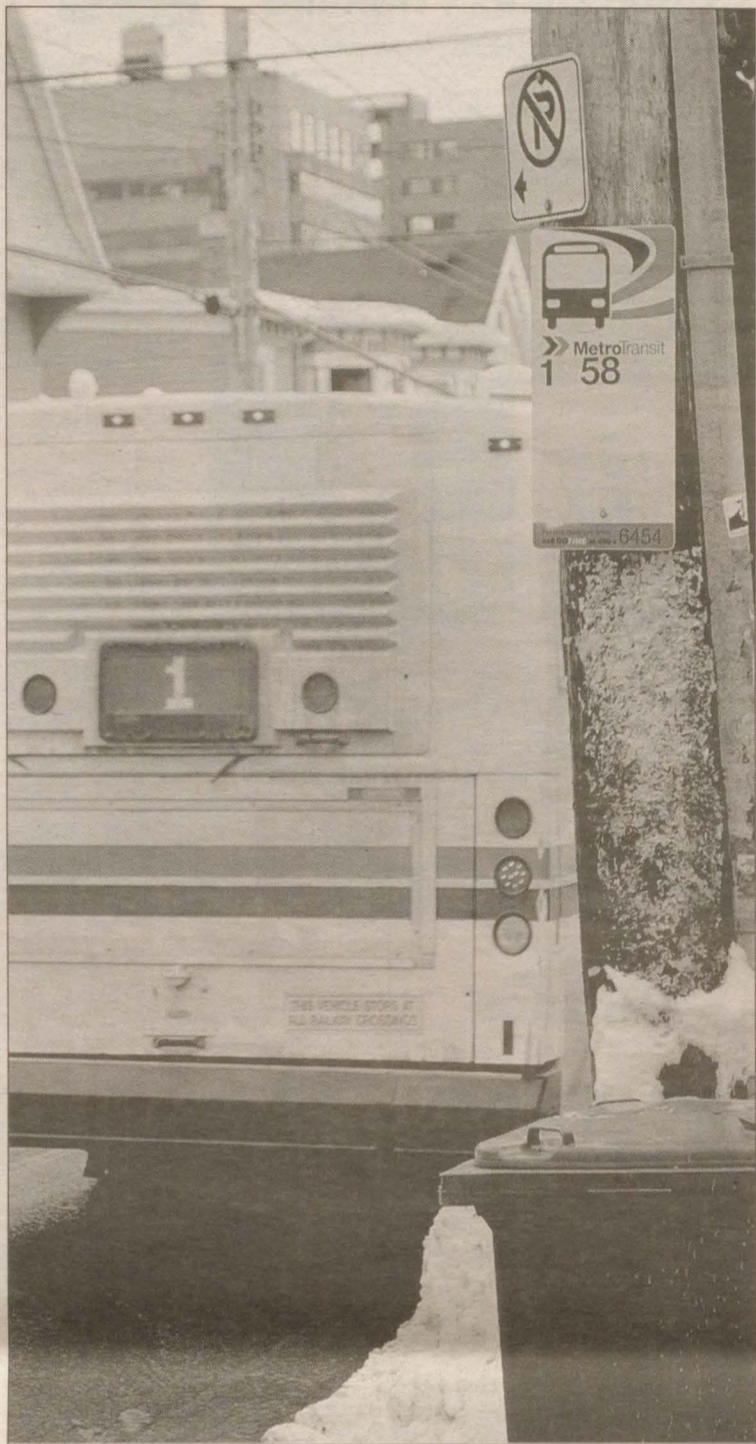
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JOSH BOYTER/DALHOUSIE GAZETTE

Metro Transit should improve service on bus routes to Dalhousie.

No time for GoTime

HILARY STAMPER
OPINIONS CONTRIBUTOR

I am a patient person. There aren't too many things out there that can rattle my cage. But when December comes, bringing with it the onset of essays, rain, assignments, more rain, exams, snow, bills, and a crazy ex-boyfriend, I find my patience somewhat strained. It's always the little things, like fruit flies or your neighbours' German techno, that get to you when you're already stressed beyond all rationality.

On one of the last mornings of the fall term, as I waited for the arrival of the number 41 bus that would take me to school, something far worse than German techno happened. It was 11:42 am, and the bus was scheduled to arrive in seven minutes. I sat in the shelter alone, calmly listening to my music.

Fourteen minutes later, still no bus. Worrying, but not completely unexpected. We are all human and we can expect the occasional bus to be late. So I continued to wait.

Soon, I heard the unmistakable rumble of an approaching bus. My heart rate picked up. It was about time! I looked up, but there was nothing coming on my side of the road. Instead, I saw two number 41 buses going in the opposite direction. They loomed by me, and I'm sure if they could speak they'd be uttering Nelson Muntz's infamous line from *The Simpsons*: "Ha-ha!"

I decided to give the friendly female voice at Metro Transit's automated GoTime system another call.

"The next bus on route 41," the voice said, "is scheduled to depart in," it paused, "twenty-five minutes." I closed my cell phone, took two steps backwards, and let out a loud profanity. At this point I considered walking, but that would mean the bus would win, so I waited.

Does this story sound familiar? Has Halifax's Metro Transit system ever pissed you off, made you late or cheated on you with your best friend? I am fed up with the system, but at least I can walk or bike to school from where I live.

A friend of mine out in Bedford, however, relies on these buses to get her to school every morning. If they're late, she's late. And if she's late, you can bet the bus won't be waiting for her. Though the bus system fails her constantly, she has no choice but to rely on it, because she doesn't have a car.

As students, we don't have a choice about which bus company we use, making it difficult to demand quality service. But it is time that Metro Transit realizes a lot of students depend on its service to get to school, to work, and back home again.

We all have a lot of craziness going on in our lives and things don't always work out the way we want them to, but bus trouble shouldn't have to be one more thing to add to the list.



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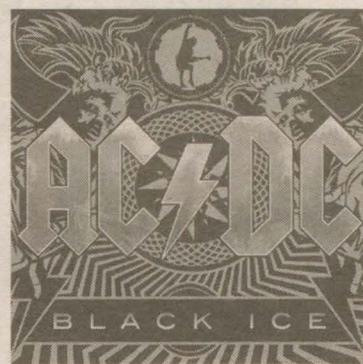
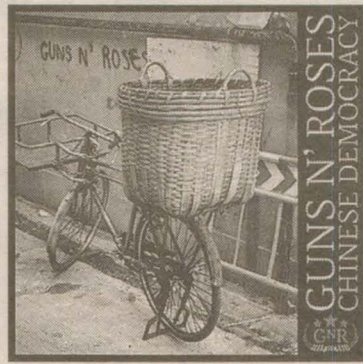
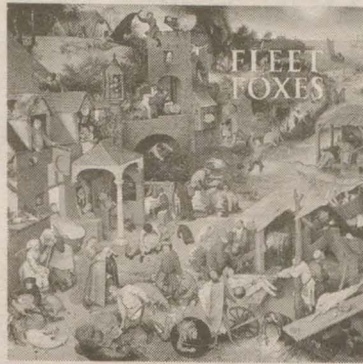
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That year in music: 2008

MATT RITCHIE
STAFF CONTRIBUTOR

If one were to examine music publications that came out in December it would be obvious to assume that 2008 was the year of agreement.

Early last year, Australian band **Cut Copy** released one of the finest albums you don't own. *In Ghost Colours* is a rich pop record that combines the styles of electronic hot spots such as Detroit and New York with hooks reminiscent of their country's chief pop export Kylie Minogue. This is an album filled with guilty pleasure hooks that you don't feel guilty for liking. This is the pop record of 2008.

No one can get away from **Fleet Foxes**, or the band's two releases last year: EP *Sun Giant* and the self-titled

full length album. Animal Collective may be the champions of chaotic harmonization, but Fleet Foxes dominate in the field of vocal harmonies mostly inhabited by bands like The Beach Boys and The Beatles. Their full-length recording is one of the most vocally rich and musically dense records to come out in 40 years.

Hercules and Love Affair delivered the strongest electronic record of the year.

Combining elements of homosexual dance culture of the last three decades, but being so much more, Hercules and Love Affair's self titled effort is a disc that is both politically charged and easy to dance to. This is gay music with no gimmicks. Shame on you, Katy Perry.

With a last minute release date, **The Killers' Day and Age** is also a

fine choice. Musical elitists tend to pan The Killers because it simply seems un-cool to like them. Day and Age is probably the best record they've made. It doesn't carry the same excitement of *Hot Fuss* but it's the closest thing to a record from 1987 you can buy today without dipping into Depeche Mode's back catalogue. People tend to hate or love The Killers, and those who hate do so because they think the band's love of 1980s dance rock is insincere in some way. Well, rock band TV on the Radio is praised for its pretentious indie rock clichés. The Killers wear their record collection on their sleeves and that's more sincere than a bunch of indie rockers who record with Scarlett Johansson.

Bradford Cox was the most important musician of 2008. His bands, Atlas Sound, and more importantly,

Deerhunter, had a phenomenal year. *Microcastle/Weird Era Cont'd* is the best double disc on the market. This small indie rock band is the new Pavement. Death Cab for Cutie may have opened a lot of people's eyes into the world of independent rock music by appearing on *The OC*, but if Deerhunter doesn't gain mainstream status for going on the new *90210*, I'll be shocked. Critics love this band, and the reason is simple: it's like nobody else right now.

Many old favourites climbed the Billboard charts in 2008. **AC/DC's** new album *Black Ice* sold out across Wal-Marts for rocking. Most of the tracks had the word "rock" in the title. So it basically has to rock, right?

The best and worst thing to happen to music this year was the release of **Guns N' Roses' Chinese Democracy**. With an early Sunday morning release date – because the members of

Guns N' Roses are rebels, if you didn't know – the album climbed the charts across North America. The release even defeated the juggernaut that is **Kanye West**. Is the album good? I have no idea. I refuse to listen to it. By purchasing Guns N' Roses you are actually buying the Axl Rose solo CD. Isn't that a horrible revelation? This record has been in the works since *Use Your Illusion* came out, when this writer was five.

Sixteen years later I can't really give a shit if this album rocks. I know it doesn't. Slash is gone. Duff is gone. Izzy is gone.

Now 2008 is gone as well. Although it was a great year for music, it makes me think: when the most hyped album of the year is from a guy who has a bigger ego than Kanye, maybe this past year really wasn't that amazing.

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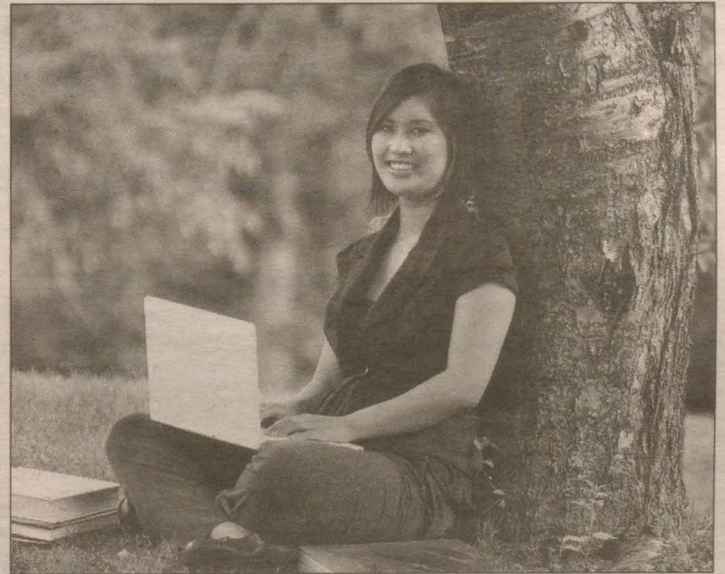


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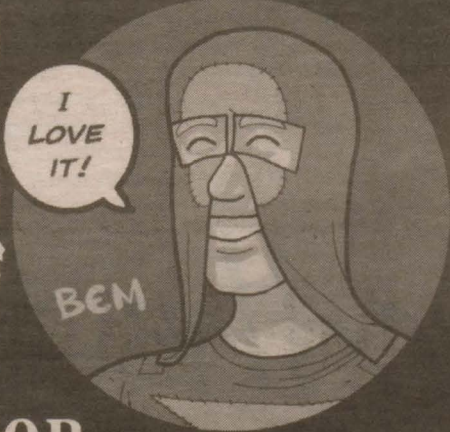
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Nominations should be signed by at least three students or staff members, and should include evidence of teaching excellence. This will vary, but might include letters from sponsors summarizing the evidence justifying the nomination, results of student evaluation questionnaires, pedagogical publications of the candidate, confidential letters of support from colleagues and/or former students, evidence of innovative pedagogy and of service to the Faculty or the outside community. Nomination forms are available at the office of the Dean of Arts and Social Sciences. Please contact 494-1439 for more information.

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Nominations and all supporting documents should reach the Committee no later than **MARCH 31, 2009.**



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MARC Z. GRUB
ARTS CONTRIBUTOR

I'm a pretty shitty drummer, but when I hop on those video game Rock Band drums and start pounding out Boston's "Foreplay/Long Time", I'm pretty much the shit. That's the beauty of Rock Band: it allows you to go from being "shit" to "the shit" very quickly. Don't get me wrong; it's good to actually be capable of playing real instruments, but often it's not as fun. If you really want to do this rock thing, you need a band. Bands require musicians. And, as anyone who's been in a band will tell you, musicians are bitches. Likely they're also pothead bitches.

First you've got the egotistical, dictatorial guitarist/singer guy who wrote the songs and wants to play

them well. Then you've got the drummer who just wants to jerk around. Meanwhile the bassist doesn't care what the hell is going on.

Additional guitarists, keyboardists, or other instrumentalists complicate the situation exponentially. Eventually they all just want to kill each other.

Rock Band allows you to forgo the seriousness and just rock out.

If you're playing with people who aren't as good, you can just set their difficulty level to "easy", so it isn't such a big deal that they can barely hit any notes. Without years of practice, heavy gear and various acts of violence among band members, Rock Band means you can actually experience the joy of rocking the hell out of a kick ass song.

Of course the joy of playing a

great show in real life is incomparable to playing a Rock Band song. And the groupies are better. Rock Band's groupies are sold separately.

Still, Rock Band instills in the youth of the nation the desire to rock out for real. Maybe some 10-year-old who really loves playing Rock Band might decide to ask Santa for a real guitar. Soon he might be the next Tom Verlaine or John Cippollina.

I don't understand how anyone can hate Rock Band. If it diverts your hatred from a visible minority, then by all means, hate away. Otherwise, the game allows you rock out with your friends, without sounding like shit or attempting to murder anyone. Last time I checked, murder sucks. Therefore, it is beyond question that Rock Band rocks.

Cock Band:

Humouring talentless douchebags since 2007

MATT RITCHIE
STAFF CONTRIBUTOR

I propose a ban on Rock Band.

If you have ever wandered into the Grawood during the summer, you have most likely seen groups of assholes situated around the TV watching their best friends perform songs that they could never play in real life to the cheering of those in attendance. I should know. I was one of those assholes.

The premise of Rock Band is genius. Take a plethora of nostalgic rock songs and put them into a video game that gives the feel of playing a real live concert. If there's one thing video game nerds like, it's the ability

to master a game. That, and progressive rock.

The game-makers have also taken steps forward by actually throwing in good songs. With tunes by artists such as Bikini Kill, Mastodon, Steely Dan, Dinosaur Jr. and The Replacements, they are specifically targeting people who actually have taste in music. If they could get some Animal Collective tracks I'm pretty sure they would nail the Pitchfork Media demographic.

But hardcore Rock Band fans don't play these songs. Fans of the game generally enjoy one quality about it: how fast they can play. The songs that are the most fun are also generally the most complex. From a

musical standpoint this is the downfall of the game. Rock Band unfortunately promotes musical virtuosity as opposed to song structure. An artist such as Zakk Wylde will probably get played repeatedly in the game based on his guitar virtuosity, but does Wylde create well-crafted pop songs? Not really.

Rock Band is a game made for people who don't enjoy music. It's made for a culture of people who like fast things and crave virtual virtuoso music skill almost as much as getting the most kills in Halo 3.

Rock Band is the game for people too incompetent to become musicians. Call me when they release Beatles Hero.

Early Oscar predictions

NOAH MITTON
STAFF CONTRIBUTOR

Oscar season has arrived and I'm getting all warm and fuzzy inside. Movies I once had no shot at seeing are finally getting a wide release.

One of my favourite times of the year, this season is a time to make predictions and big money in bets. I love Oscar pools. It makes watching the awards more tense and I like seeing my predictions come true.

I haven't seen any of these movies, but that hasn't stopped me from winning in the past. I make my predictions using reviews and festival nominations. And most importantly: using my gut.

The Curious Case of Benjamin Button

Each year, at least one movie I deem to be an "epic chick flick" gets nominated for best picture. By "epic chick flick", I mean a romance movie on a pretty grand scale. Think *Titanic*, *Atonement*, *The English Patient*. They're usually front runners and safe picks. I predict *The Curious Case of Benjamin Button* will grab nominations for best actor, actress, picture, director and adapted screenplay nominations. But, I think its only major win will be best screenplay.

Frost/Nixon

Director Ron Howard loves overwrought, emotional movies. I don't think he's ever met a heartstring he hasn't pulled. Even if it becomes predictable, it's something he does well. But

this movie doesn't seem to fit his usual method and it's getting great reviews. This will get nominated for best picture, director, actor and adapted screenplay. It'll also get a nomination for best supporting actor, but that's Heath Ledger's award for *The Dark Knight*.

Milk

The buzz here is all about Sean Penn. He's a lock for a best actor nomination. I mean, a tragic biography about the first openly gay elected official in American history? Easy pick. He won't win, though. Not because he doesn't do a good job, but because this just isn't his year. Gus van Sant won't be getting a best director nomination, and I don't think Milk will get nominated for best picture.

The Reader

I read this book a few years ago, and I'm actually surprised it took so long to make the movie. It's pretty much a clusterfuck of Oscar stereotypes: a Holocaust movie about forbidden love and redemption. I'm betting it gets a best picture nomination and Kate Winslet gets a best actress nomination.

Slumdog Millionaire

I love the director, Danny Boyle. In the past the Academy has ignored his types of films, but last year was different. They nominated films that weren't typical Oscar winners. I'm hoping that becomes a trend instead of an anomaly and that this movie picks up nominations for best picture, best director and best screenplay.

Doubt

At first glance, I was sure this would be a candidate for best picture. We have leads Philip Seymour Hoffman and Meryl Streep duking it out over allegations of molestation. How can it not get nominated? But from the buzz I've heard, *Doubt* doesn't live up to the hype. It won't be recognized for best picture. But it will receive a bonanza of acting nominations, including actress, supporting actress and best actor. Meryl Streep is a safe bet for a best actress award, but she'll probably lose out to Kristen Scott Thomas in *I've Loved You So Long*.

Revolutionary Road

I'll be honest: I haven't heard much about this movie. And I'm not really interested. I just feel like this movie has been made before. But it got a Golden Globe nomination, so I figure I've got to talk about it. Sam Mendes will probably get a best director nomination, but I think that's it



for the major categories. Maybe some acting nominations if they're lucky.

The Wrestler

There hasn't been a movie so universally loved in a long time. If this movie doesn't win best picture and best actor, you can have my left nut.

Musical haikus

MATT RITCHIE
STAFF CONTRIBUTOR

80s and Heartbreak

I get excited
For some sick jams, but instead
I get bad singing

Fleet Foxes

If moustaches and
beards make good songs then please throw
away my shaver

At Mount Zoomer

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like to take acid? Well just
look at the cover

Black Kids

Perez Hilton is
not a music critic by
any fucking means

Cut Copy

When a blogger writes
of this band, I discover
no one cares at all

Chinese Democracy

If you bought this shit
I am really surprised that
you can even read

Hercules and Love Affair

If this is what gay
dance clubs are like all the time
Singapore Sling me

Deerhunter

Velvet Underground
Was okay, but these guys make
Them sound like garbage.

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A new year's resolution for Dal sports fans

TYLER BROWN
ASSISTANT SPORTS EDITOR

Over the years Dal sports teams have had numerous successes. Take this year's Atlantic University Sport (AUS) soccer champs, for example. Or the 22 straight AUS championships of the men's volleyball program, the 10 consecutive men's swimming titles or the 18 straight women's track and field championships.

Yet a reputation for underachievement seems to follow Dal teams with dogged determination, despite any facts to the contrary.

Of this year's crop of varsity sports teams, there is only one glaring disappointment. The Dal men's hockey program currently sits in last place in the AUS, but luckily for the team, it is still only a good second half away a playoff shot, and a far cry from being eliminated entirely. The rest of the men's varsity sports seem to be on track. The men's soccer team won AUS gold in November, and we saw the storybook success of the men's rugby club, which became the unofficial national champion after a rain-drenched win over McGill University in Montreal.

Dal basketball currently sits in a very respectable third, a position that will lead to playoff opportunities and maybe the chance to make some noise at the national level. The men's swimming team is ranked third in the country, directly in line with the early season predictions for the team, and should be able to coast to AUS gold.

On the women's side, there are no resounding success stories, but a lot of solid positions that will lead to playoff chances. The women's hockey team sits in third place, in a good spot for a late season run. Women's basketball is in the same position, ready to make waves come playoff time. Women's soccer enjoyed a great season, gaining entry to the AUS finals, only to fall to Cape Breton. Second place in the AUS is nothing to scoff at, and the team should be proud of its efforts.

So why is it that Dal has a reputation as a bad sports school? Our cross town rivals, the Saint Mary's University Huskies, have a strong athletic



SAGAR JHA/GAZETTE FILE PHOTO

Why is it that Dal has a reputation as a bad sports school?

reputation, spurred on mostly by men's football and hockey success. They have a reputation for winning big games and putting together good teams – a reputation that is in some ways undeserved, when the sports records of both schools are put on trial.

Dal has put together an enviable sports program, just not in the so-called prestige sports. Dalhousie varsity athletes are among the best funded and equipped in Canada, with massive amounts of your tuition cash going to varsity sports. The university actively pursues, and for the most part obtains, some of the best talent available in all sports. Dal teams are well-funded, well-coached and well-equipped, yet they still have acquired this reputation for falling short.

Perhaps it has something to do

with the dismal amount of support that Dal sports receive from the student population. School spirit is severely lacking here, and it shows at athletic events. Varsity sports games are lucky to get 100 fans at any one event, even for the most popular sports.

Going to games is, for some reason, a social stigma, something that no one does. This needs to change if Dal is going to change its image.

Many students shell out \$15 to see a Halifax Mooseheads hockey game, not realizing that the hockey played at Dal's Alumni Arena is far superior. Not to mention much cheaper. It's sad to see the amount of time and effort that Dal athletes put into their sports, for little or no recognition from the student populace. So let's make a new year's resolution – this year go watch some games!



HAPPY NEW YEAR!

TIGERS' ACTION THIS WEEKEND...

FRIDAY, JANUARY 9

METRO INVITATIONAL SWIM MEET, 5PM (PRELIMS)

SATURDAY, JANUARY 10

METRO INVITATIONAL SWIM MEET, 9AM (FINALS) 4PM (PRELIMS)

BASKETBALL vs. UNB, W/1PM, M/3PM

SUNDAY, JANUARY 11

METRO INVITATIONAL SWIM MEET, 9AM (FINALS)

WOMEN'S VOLLEYBALL vs. UPEI, 1PM



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NICK KHATTAR
SPORTS EDITOR

Another year down, and despite all odds, I'm still a Toronto Maple Leafs fan. With the Leafs' 3-1 victory over the Ottawa Senators on Jan. 3 as well as Team Canada's thriller win against Russia, hockey season is back in full swing.

I bring up the success of other hockey teams as I find it increasingly necessary to distract myself from the gloomy past of our Dalhousie Tigers men's hockey club. The team is currently last in its conference, posting a lousy 3-11 record with a 0-7 record on the road. Not much to brag about. But the new year is a time for new beginnings and turn around performances. Dal is coming off a successful 2008 sporting season, with numerous teams earning national and Atlantic University Sport (AUS) titles. Judging by the numbers in the crowds at some of the games and meets, you'd never think so. Regardless,

2009 is a good year for change. The global economy is going through a face-lift, the U.S. has some new blood in the oval office, and Halifax Regional Municipality mayor Peter Kelly's snow removal budget is still in the green.

So what exactly can we look forward to from our athletic department here at Dal this year? Keep an eye on our under-funded, over-achieving club teams, as they have traditionally been known to impress.

Dal's water polo club has a few new faces this year and is looking to get to a few new tournaments and turn some heads in co-ed play. From the varsity side, the women's basketball team is currently fourth place in the AUS league, but it has been known to wake up late in the season and make an exciting playoff run. This year, with the combined efforts of veteran all-star captain Kelly Donald and new recruit Jenna Kaye, formerly one of UPEI's backbone players, the women's Tigers have the skill and experience to find Canadian Interuniversity Sport (CIS) recognition.

On the men's side the Tigers are currently ranked ninth in the country. With Simon Farine's steady play and highlight performances from Josh Beattie, the men could also find themselves on a course to CIS glory.

Spiking the serves, Dalhousie's volleyball teams deserve close

attention as well. Last year Dal's men's team succeeded in winning a big upset at the CIS MVP championships when it beat the country's third-ranked University of British Columbia Thunderbirds in the quarterfinals. Dal men's volleyball teams have won the AUS title for the last 22 years, but they have failed to ever win gold at the CIS level. The men's current 7-1 record puts them first in the AUS, so we can expect to see them heading to CIS championships again this year.

The women's volleyball team is third in the AUS. The women haven't won an AUS title since 02-03, and haven't won a CIS title since 1982, but the team has had 12 appearances at the CIS championships. The women have age and experience on their side this year, as well as a few rookies turning heads, such as Courtney Giesbrecht, a first-year player from Manitoba, who leads the team in points. Watch out for her come playoff time.

In all reality, despite the snow, or the economic woes, Dal students have a few good reasons to cheer this semester, literally. If you're going to fail accounting again, you might as well be able to say you were present for those epic games sure to be played this winter. I, for one, have given up on accounting, but, like a dedicated masochistic Leafs fan, I'll never give on my team.

Used sporting goods
Sports in brief

It's Rain season again

The Halifax Rainmen kicked off their debut in the Premier Basketball League on Jan. 2, marking the occasion with a tight 110-108 barn-burner win over the Quebec Kebs.

Both the Kebs and the Rainmen are new to the Premier League this season after leaving the American Basketball Association in the off-season.

The Rainmen also marked the occasion by adding a new point guard, 27-year-old Zachary Ramey, formerly of the Chicago Throwbacks. Ramey played for the team unsigned in the Halifax Holiday Classic tournament on Dec. 29 and 30. The Illinois native averaged 14 points a game last year for the Rockford Fury.

On Jan. 4, the Rainmen downed the Montreal Sasquatch 127-125 in overtime, making an early positive output to the beginning of the Premier Basketball League season. Forward Cordell Jeanty had 29 points in the Rainmen's second straight two-point victory.

Source: Chronicle Herald, www.rainmenbasketball.ca

UNB Reds take down Boston College

On Friday, Jan. 2, the Boston College Eagles played the University of New Brunswick Reds in front of a sold out crowd of 3,500 in Fredericton. It was the first time a National Collegiate Athletic Association champion has played a Canadian Interuniversity Sport (CIS) team in Canada. The Reds took the victory in the first of a two game series, beating Boston College 5-2. For Boston College's final goal, Cam Atkinson beat UNB's Derek Yeomans glove side. UNB finished the game beating the Eagles 34-24 in shots and both teams netting a power play goal each. Boston College won game two 4-2, leading to a shootout to determine the final winner. UNB prevailed, and won the series with a 3-2 shootout win.

Sources: Chronicle Herald, www.universitysport.ca

X-Men over Axe-Men in Keating Cup

The St. Francis Xavier X-Men won the third annual Keating Cup on Friday, Jan. 2, beating the Acadia Axemen 4-2 in the second game of the series. Acadia won game one on Tuesday night, so the tournament victor was decided in a 10-minute extra period, played at the end of game two. St. F.X. came out victorious at the end of the four-on-four extra period with a 3-2 win. Brett Robertson, Brett Liscomb, Bryce Swan and Brett Morrison had the goals for the X-Men and Nathan Welton and Christopher Bruton had the goals for Acadia. Chris Hult opened the scoring in the extra period for the X-Men. Liscomb and Ryan Desrosiers had the other two goals for St. F.X. Jonathan Laberge scored on a power play for Acadia and Ryan Graham had the other for Acadia. St. F.X. has won the tournament all three years it has been played.

Sources: Dal Athletics, Chronicle Herald, www.atlanticuniversitysport.com

Antigonish to host CIS hockey tourney

In early December, the town of Antigonish, home of St. Francis Xavier University, announced it will host the 2009 Canadian Interuniversity Sport (CIS) women's hockey championship. The tournament will take place March 19-22 and all the games will be web-cast live. The championship game is set to broadcast live on national television on TSN2. Dal's women's team is currently third in the Atlantic University Sport conference.

Sources: Chronicle Herald, www.atlanticuniversitysport.com

Ravens beat St. F.X. in basketball tourney

The 18th annual Rod Shoveller Memorial men's basketball tournament wrapped up soon after the new year. On Sunday, Jan. 4, the Carleton Ravens took the title, beating St. F.X. 83-61 in the tournament final.

This year the tournament involved four Atlantic University Sport (AUS) teams: Dalhousie (Canadian Interuniversity Sport ranked 9th), Acadia (AUS 4th), St. Francis Xavier (AUS 1st), and Saint Mary's (AUS 3rd).

On Jan. 2, Dal beat Bishop's University 84-43. The Tigers' Josh Beattie played for 28 minutes and racked up 22 points while Simon Farine had 15 points. Bishop's Emmanuel Nicolas went 4-14 from the field and totalled for 12 points.

The Saint Mary's Huskies took a tight one off Quebec's first ranked Universite de Laval, edging the Rouge et D'Or 82-78. Laval's Francois Hebert and Xavier Baribeau both logged 47 minutes each of court time. Hebert finished with 26 points and shot 73 per cent from the field, going 11-15. The Huskies' Mark McLaughlin went 7-11 in three point attempts and finished with 35 points, also logging 47 minutes of court time.

On Saturday, Jan. 3, the Carleton Ravens beat Dal 69-57 at the Dalplex. Elliot Thompson had 20 points in the Ravens' victory while Dal's Yannick Walcott had 18. The Tigers' Farine went 2-9 from the field and finished with four points over 39 minutes of play.

Also on Saturday, St. F.X. played Saint Mary's, with the X-Men beating the Huskies 98-81 and Acadia beating Bishop's 96-91.

Sources: Dal Athletics, Chronicle Herald, www.atlanticuniversitysport.com

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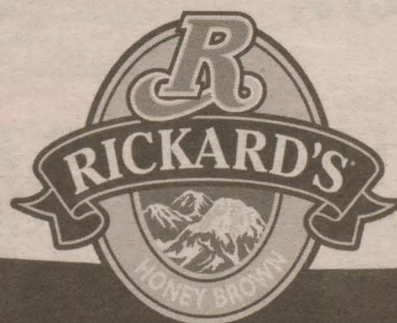
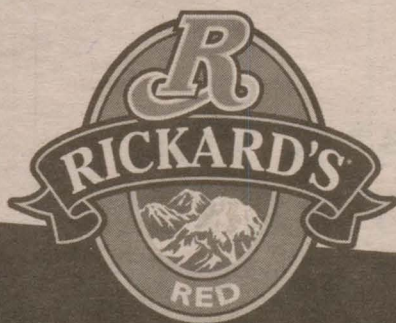
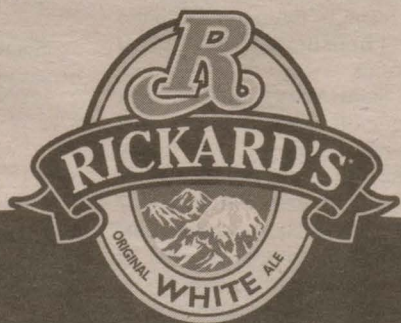
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