

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Dear Editor,

Re: Ian's response to my opinion on Saint Mary's University's decision to ban an exploitative calendar from campus

I will happily explain my rationale, Ian. To begin with, allow me to clarify some things: At no point have I claimed that the individual women who were photographed for the calendar were *personally* "exploited" (although many scholars could and would argue that), or that their "free will" should be "taken away". I argued that the women were *dehumanized*, and that *exploitative* images (those which exploited the female body as strictly a sex object, and thus exploited all females) should be disallowed at universities, which are supposed to be institutions of higher learning. "Exploitation" and "dehumanization" as you may or may not know, are not interchangeable words. Dehumanization is the act of which Pederson is guilty. He stripped the women of their human qualities, and presented them specifically as sexual objects. Ian MacDonald (someone you know?) unintentionally illustrated the impropriety of Pederson's actions when he attempted to defend the calendar, saying, "the female body is a beautiful thing, let it be partially exposed". Ian MacDonald doesn't seem to grasp that there is a great deal more to a female than her physical form, and when females are reduced strictly to their appearance, they are unarguably being dehumanized.

I agree with you that what individuals do with their bodies is their own business. Contrary to your impression, I am in full support of free speech, free will, and free expression of the individual - that is, until one person's "freedom" infringes on the freedom of others and jeopardizes their health, safety, or well-being. I think it is also integral to question the very

concept of "freedom" and what cultural constructs and ideas dictate the expressions individuals make "freely". An example, as it pertains to this case, might be that many esteemed sociologists and psychologists have speculated that the high rate of male sexual violence against women is due in part to the common-place sexual objectification of women in our culture: When youth are constantly exposed to images of sexualized women and the message that women are primarily sex objects is reinforced, it is not surprising that the rates of rape, sexual violence, and sexual domination by men are as high as they are in this country. Thus, widespread sexual objectification plays a role in perpetuating sexual violence against women. Perhaps those women who chose to "express themselves" as sexual objects should have first considered the implications of their involvement in the calendar, just as Pederson should. In any case, I have minimal interest in the "free will" or "expression" of the women who participated in the calendar. My interest lies in the prohibition of exploitative images of women *specifically on a university campus*. I maintain that there is no place for gender inequality at a modern institution of learning, and that "showcasing some of the beautiful girls Saint Mary's has to offer" is an offensive act which promotes gender inequality. To whom and for what is Saint Mary's "offering" these beautiful girls that it supposedly possesses?

For your information, there has been plenty said about calendars of male firefighters and the like. In fact, there are loads of books, articles, and essays all about sex and gender politics, and sexual exploitation concerning both women *and* men. Check out your local library. Authors such as Michael Kimmel, Michel Foucault, Kate Bornstein, Anne Fausto-Sterling, Natalie Angier, Wendy Chapkis,

Dorothy Smith, Eleanor MacDonald, and many others would be a good starting point for your research into the issue.

When will "this whole topic of dehumanizing women end" you ask? It will end when the dehumanization of women ends. Makes sense, doesn't it?
Sincerely,
Lauren Warbeck

Dear Editor,

This letter is a response to the allegations printed in a February 1st "letter to the editor" concerning weekend drinking at Marian Hall. We, the residents of that house, must state that we feel somewhat slighted by both the stance and manner Student Council has taken in dealing with those complaints. However, before we address this issue, we must articulate and clarify the problem at hand.

To begin, the February 1st issue of the Cadre carried a "letter to the editor" portraying the residents of Marian Hall as a pack of wild dogs, void of any civility. As a guest of this residence, that letter's author was entitled to express herself, however, her views did not accurately portray the events of that evening. To respect the anonymity of that letter's author, we will refer to her as either "the author" or "the guest."

Firstly, no one is punished for responsible drinking. The fact that the author of the letter was banned from residence was a reflection of her lack of respect for these university facilities, this residence and the people who live here. The question is, Why was this student barred from residence? The answer is not complicated. Her excessive drinking and subsequent vomiting made an entire section of this residence inaccessible (for 72 hours), a fact she neglected to mention in her letter. To appreciate the severity of such an act, one must consider the fact that

it took two hours for the custodians to clean her mess.

Secondly, the author of the February 1st letter portrayed her time at the male residence as a harrowing experience. Why, then, did she return the following weekend? In her letter she explains, "a voice within [her] refused to let go of the partying scene." We wonder, Why would she not go to the Wave or any other establishment in the city?

Lastly, we have learned much from this guest's experience. Her behaviour in our place of residence was met with understanding and responsibility. Had the actions of the residence advisors, security staff, and our fellow house-mates been anything less than sympathetic, the author of the February 1st letter would likely have been arrested or sent to the hospital. Instead, we pooled our efforts and contacted her guardians, who in turn came and picked her up. Furthermore, by cleaning her vomit off of her and ensuring she was somewhat re-hydrated, residents of this house mitigated the embarrassment her parents would have undoubtedly faced had she been presented to them in the state in which she presented herself to us.

This brings us to our main issue, that after reading the February 1st "letter to the editor," the UPEI Student Union Executive is refusing to "make available" Security Staff to residence events. Perhaps the simplest way to illustrate our annoyance over the Executive's decision is in a series of rhetorical questions:

- 1) Why did the Executive base their decision on one, seemingly flawed, perspective?
- 1a) If the Executive understands the complexity and severity of the allegations made in the

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