

# Letters to the Editor

## UPEI'S Smoking Policy

I whole hardly [sic] agree with Ms. Gallant's perspective on the TOTALLY UNFAIR SMOKING POLICY presently being administered by the governing body of our university. It seems in their infinite wisdom that this policy will somehow decrease or ultimately eliminate smoking on or about the UPEI campus. I find this type of Gestapo tactic unwarranted and unbecoming of the university and its members.

Yes, it is true that people still do participate in the ungodly habit of smoking. Yes, to some individuals, they find the habit both intrusive and in bad taste. Yes, some individuals feel that the product should be banned and abolished, and all those that do smoke should be placed in some type of concentration camp or other such suitable environment. Yes, we all know that smoking can lead to lung cancer, emphysema and other such fatal diseases. One can't but help from knowing the consequences from viewing the anti-smoking advertisements found on television, the Heart and Lung Association's massive anti-smoking literature and found upon our own cigarette packages. This is not considering all the other sources of media that are there to inform the public at large of this heinous, so called, crime against society. We as adults have the right to choose whether to smoke or not to smoke, and not to be dictated to in regards to this decision.

To the dismay and disbelief of a great number of individuals within society. Smoking and the sale and consumption of tobacco and other similar products are legal within this country and province of ours. As you are probably aware of, and if your [sic] not, both the Federal and Provincial Governments make enormous amounts of tax revenue from the sale and consumption of these so called heinous killers. Think about it for a second, if for example everyone in the county stopped smoking today. Where would the governments find the money to replace the added tax revenue lost through the legal sale of tobacco prod-

ucts? You guessed it, HIGHER PERSONAL TAXES, or some other source of tax revenue would be thought up to replace this lost revenue. One would just have to examine the past and present Federal and Provincial budgets to see how Tobacco products and alcohol are taxed. This added taxation is often referred to by the politicians, as the "SIN TAX". The user pays the extra cost for the benefit of indulging in this product. If one doesn't wish to pay the extra taxes, don't purchase the product. Ultimately, the consumer makes a conscious choice. No one forces, to my knowledge, him or her to purchase and consume this legal product. Many arguments can be put forth about peer pressure and other forms of conformity; but, the ultimate choice still lies with the consumer, no matter which label or outside factor is added to the equation.

As a citizen of our country. I have the right to indulge in any legal activity whether it is socially acceptable or not. As not paying my fair share of taxes to the government; well, I probably pay more than my share and those of my opponents when it comes to this issue. I am very sorry that some individuals find this addictive habit to be in bad taste and unpleasant in nature. But, I enjoy my cigarettes and will defend my right to indulge in this legal activity. The same as I would defend someone else's right to indulge in their legal activity.

As to the campus policy of "No Smoking" within the university buildings, I have only one question to ask. If we the students who do smoke have to indulge our habit outside in all weather conditions, then why does the University allow its faculty to indulge in their habit within the offices of such buildings? One just has to walk through some of the buildings on campus to see this unfair and prejudicial practice. It could be said "If it's good enough for the goose, it's good enough for the gander." So, if we the students have to suffer with our habit outside the buildings on campus, so too should the faculty and staff that smoke suffer along side of us.

I would just like to bring forth one

more item before I close. This has to do with the Student Union Pit within the confines of the Robinson Library. A simple solution could be invoked to eliminate the problem of smoking within the Pit and other areas on campus. The Student Union, from my understanding agreed that the Pit should become a no smoking area. This I was informed, was in the attempt to enhance and bring students back to the Student Union building on campus. This statement could be wrong, and if so, I stand corrected. This was a gallant idea, but it is just too far to go between classes to have a cigarette and what would happen if all the smokers went to the Student Union Building to smoke? Would the non-smoking students then complain that it too was too smoky and that it too should be off limits to smokers? Your guess is as good as mine. It gives a reasonable person something to think about doesn't it! The simplest solution in my opinion and those that I have discussed this problem with, as it relates to smoking on campus is, to divide the Pit into two equal parts with a plexiglass partition down the middle, in the same mannerism that certain other business establishments have done to accommodate that segment of society that do enjoy and indulge in tobacco products. I and others, whether you like it or not, have the right to smoke and will continue to smoke until we alone decide to give the product up. I try not to infringe on your rights as a non-smoker. So, in fairness and respect of our rights, don't infringe on our rights as smokers.

-- Herb Mahar, 4th year Arts

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## And the Smoking Debate Continues

I am writing in response to Alice Gallant's article entitled "A Smoker's View", printed in the March 5, 1996 edition of the *Panther Prints*. In your article, you expressed bitterness at not being able to continue your habit inside at UPEI. You state that you were not given the chance to decide whether you wanted to attend UPEI based on the enforcement of the smoking policy which was already in place. I would consider it a privilege, not a right for you to smoke in the buildings of UPEI (which was against UPEI regulations from the beginning of the term) without at least being made aware of the regulations. The fact that you would allow your addiction to dictate which educational institution you choose suggests that smoking is quite important to you. However, complaining that enforcement of the regulations was increased without notice being given to you, does not change the fact that the policy was in place at the beginning of the semester. A policy is a policy, no matter how much enforcement (or lack thereof) is exercised. Whether you adhere to it or not is left up to you, and it appears that you chose to ignore it until the threat of a fine was present.

As a non-smoker, I found it quite irritating to have to breathe the smoke of the people huddled in the entryways of Main building every time I went to class. I have heard (although I cannot say from personal experience) that smoking is an addiction which is hard to overcome, but so is alcoholism, and addictions to illicit drugs. UPEI is not obliged to cater to any of those addictions. Your complaint about not being given a place to go is questionable because the Barn is not a smoke free environment and it is open all day. Yes, the Barn is located at the far end of the campus, but I don't think it

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