

## Space Moose comic labelled "hate literature"



Source: **The Carillon**  
(University of Regina)  
By **Hannah Scissons**

REGINA (CUP) - The controversial cartoon Space Moose has reared its head at yet another western campus - this time at the University of Regina.

Space Moose, drawn by University of Alberta graduate

Adam Thrasher, has been labelled in the past of being hate literature. When the Carillon, the campus paper at the U of R, began publishing the comic at the end of September a number of students on campus raised concerns about the cartoon. Some were also concerned that the Carillon was publishing the address of the Space Moose website.

Two U of R student

groups, the Political Science Students Course Union (PSSCU) and the Feminist Action Committee (FAC), approached Carillon editors with their objections. These objections resulted in a decision by the Carillon editorial staff to stop publishing the cartoon. "We felt the cartoons were promoting hate," said one member of the PSSCU, speaking on condition of

anonymity. The student had been told that disgruntled students at the University of Alberta had received threats after complaining about the appearance of Space Moose in the Gateway, the campus paper at the U of A. "Adam Thrasher's cartoons are homophobic, racist, sexist," the student continued. "None of those topics should be taken lightly." Initially, the Carillon staff and the complaining students were hostile towards each other, as issues of censorship and free speech came to the fore. "Everybody went into that meeting on the defensive," said Emmet Matheson, the editor-in-chief of the Carillon. "My main concern at that point was maintaining our editorial autonomy." Matheson was

concerned with threats that some individuals were going to start approaching Carillon advertisers unless the cartoon was pulled and not mentioned in the paper again. Winter Fedyk, PSSCU president, said they appreciated the Carillon's concerns about free speech, but that Space Moose went beyond reasonable limits and even came close to violating the Carillon's constitution and the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms. "This is not really about censorship," said Fedyk. "The cartoon creates a hostile environment for homosexuals, females." Space Moose has caused problems at other campuses in the past. At the University of Alberta in 1997, complaints were filed against Adam Thrasher

with the University Discipline Officer and Thrasher was found guilty of discrimination. He later won an appeal on the grounds his right to free speech was violated. During the same year at the University of Manitoba, editors of the Manitoban made the decision to pull Space Moose. A number of engineering students who enjoyed reading the cartoon packed a student union meeting. The students, who numbered almost 200 and disliked the paper for several reasons, forced the student council to cut the Manitoban's student levy. The cut, however, was never implemented. The cartoon, which is famous among student circles for its heavy sexual content, first appeared in the Gateway on Oct. 3, 1989.

## Student Union

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not to disclose the amount of money it may have to borrow in order to complete the construction of the future Student Centre. Johnson, who thinks

the facility would better serve the campus if built in the quadrangle near the residences and Roberstson library, thinks this interfered with the democratic process.

"I was shocked

to hear that it had been suggested that SU [Student Union] executive had suggested suppression of the disclosure of the amount, allegedly \$750,000.00, that the SU [Student Union] plans to borrow in order to finance this building.

Contrary to the flawed logic that this may be in the students body's best interest, I feel that any interference with the democratic process [in this case censorship of the press] is probably damaging to the university as a whole."

Johnson is unlikely to be the only student concerned with such matters, and hopes that exposure will force the Student Union to rethink their policies, making their membership more aware of their operations.

"I would love to be corrected on all or any of these issues," say Johnson. "In fact nothing would please me more than to feel that my and other students's hard earned bucks are being spent wisely and with accountability." END