

Letters to the Editor

Panthers Shafted?

I am writing in response to the recent shafting of the UPEI Panthers basketball team.

Last weekend, the AUAA championships were in Halifax. The Panthers advanced to the finals defeating St Mary's and Acadia. In a very tough game the Panthers lost to Dal, in double overtime.

In the CIAU championships there are two wild card positions. Dal, because of their record, probably would have been given one of those positions even if they had not won. This fact irrelevant, one of the wild card positions was given to Acadia. Not to be bitter, but we beat Acadia at home and in the playoffs. Therefore, one would think that we should get consideration. On top of that we were in the final, and lost by a matter of inches.

This scenario is vaguely familiar to me. My first year, 1993-94, almost the exact same thing happened. We, if I remember correctly, lost the final, and St Mary's got the wild card, after we had defeated them before.

The rumour is, and I am beginning to believe it, is that the NS and often Halifax teams are chosen because they will bring more fans out to the games. For the sake of ethics I hope this is not true. If a team deserves to be there, which I believe the Panthers do, it should be there. It is unfair for us to be excluded because we are from the Island. I am sure that we could get a good number of fans to go to the games, so the fan argument means nothing to me.

I want to say that this is my opinion and if there is a valid reason for Acadia being chosen, then I will respect that, but in the mean time, I believe that we have been wronged again. I just want to also add a congratulations to the basketball team, it was still a great season. . . and best of luck to the graduates.

-- Yvonne MacKean

More About Smoking

Please allow me to add yet another view to the recent war of letters over the smoking policy at UPEI. The objection to the enforcement of the policy that has been repeatedly given by smokers is that smoke-free rules are an infringement on their rights. Since it has been established by the medical community that the activity in question IS a health risk, the person who chooses to practice such an activity forfeits some of his/her rights. That is not to say that smokers do not have the right to do what they wish with their own bodies. However, the right to health must take priority over the right to freedom. Buildings on the University campus, including the entrance ways at Main, are areas that must be shared by smokers and non-smokers. It is only logical that the right of non-smokers to healthy air take precedence over the right of smokers to a warm, convenient place to exercise their freedom.

It was suggested by Alice Gallan in her submission to the *Panther Prints* that the University ought to allocate a

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few rooms on campus for smokers to use. I cannot be sure of this, but I suspect that this would be impossible because of the air circulation systems in place in most buildings. Herb Mahar's idea about dividing the Pit with plexiglass does not seem any more plausible. While he states that other businesses are using this solution, I believe that the trend in establishments that serve food, as does the Pit, is to go totally smoke-free (for example, McDonald's, Tim Hortons, Wendy's).

No one is asking smokers at UPEI to quit their habit. They have every right to treat their bodies in whatever way they choose. But they have absolutely no right to subject others to the effects of their activity against their will. There is no denying the fact that cigarettes are dangerous. Even if this information is not enough to make smokers quit their habit, it should be enough to make them realize that their activity harms others and that they must act responsibly and respectfully.

-- Jeanne Cormier

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