

ATHENAEUM PRINTER KILLS PENIS GRAPHIC

(Source: The Athenaeum)

Wolfville, N.S. (CUP) -- Acadia University's student newspaper was denuded of some copy last week by its printer.

The Mar. 12 edition of the Athenaeum included a graphic of an erect penis with a caption that read, "Sexism rears its unprotected head. Men; Use Condoms or Beat it. AIDS kills women." The graphic accompanied an article on safer sex.

Athenaeum business manager Dave Matthews said a Kentville Publishing employee told him the company removed the graphic because it contradicted their corporate standards and ethics.

Matthews said the paper couldn't use another printer. "The option of going to another printer didn't really exist because it would have meant going to Halifax, which neither time nor money would have allowed," he said.

The graphic had been widely distributed by the AIDS Coalition to Unleash Power, and has been reprinted in other student newspapers, such as the McGill Daily. Matthews said the paper substituted another graphic, although he said the decision was unfair and reduced the impact of the safer sex message.

Acadia University sociology professor Gary Kinsman agreed.

"It is my sense that heterosexual men on campus are poorly educated (about AIDS) and don't see that they could be putting women at risk," he said.

"The graphic had a clear context, and, by removing it, Kentville Publishing diluted the message of safer sex."

Kinsman said sometimes it is necessary to offend in order to communicate a message effectively.

Roll Daniels, lawyer for Acadia University, said the publisher was within rights to yank the graphic in order to avoid an obscenity charge by police.

"Free speech is not absolute," she said.

But Brian Iler, an attorney for Canadian University Press, said charges were unlikely because the graphic was not "an undue exploitation of sex" as defines by the Canadian Criminal Code. Controversy swept university campuses last spring after student newspapers reprinted a guide for safer sex for gay men, originally run in the paper at Memorial University in Newfoundland. The Muse was threatened with criminal charges, and papers across the country published the article in a show of solidarity.

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