

# ...Letters to the Editor

## Computer Concerns

Editor:

We are writing in regard to a couple of issues of concern having to do with the University's computer network. We have e-mailed the supervisor at computer services several times during the preceding semester in regard to these concerns and have received no responses. We know for a fact that computer services is going through, or has gone through, a somewhat trying time this year, and so we have endeavoured and shall endeavour to be polite. However, these are issues that we feel really need to be addressed, and experience tells us that appealing directly and privately to computer services is not likely to see them addressed. Therefore, with your indulgence, we present our concerns publicly in hopes that this will get their attention.

Our first and most pressing concern is the appalling lack of privacy for one's personal E-mail and files. As things currently stand, any time you delete a file or an E-mail message, any time you receive an E-mail message, and any time WordPerfect makes a backup file, a copy of this file is retained in the temporary directories of the o: drive. Anybody who knows how - and let us assure you, there are many who do, it does not take any particular technical expertise - can salvage these files, read them, and store them permanently in their own accounts. The temporary file is retained for at least a day after you log off, and anybody who knows the location of the machine on which you have been working or who is simply trawling for salvageable files as a form of amusement can gain access to them. This means that there is an alarming chance that somebody could be reading your private E-mail, or obtaining your assignments for the purpose of plagiarism. There have already been very disturbing incidents, of which we shall say no more. The supervisor has

been E-mailed several times about this problem, but have thus far no response has been received.

Another item, albeit one of less concern, is the proliferation of games on the network. This is not what we would call a dire situation, given that we all enjoy playing these games ourselves (although we perhaps get less done because of the temptation to play games). However, the availability of games on the network, a situation that is clearly contrary to University policy, only adds to the perhaps erroneous impression that computer services has little control over what goes on the University computer network. We respectfully request that computer services state publicly what it does about games on the network, in order that our minds may be set at ease on this point.

Finally, we would also like to make a couple of comments with regard to the availability of certain applications on the computers in the K. C. Irving Chemistry Centre. Specifically, we would like to inquire as to why the only version of QuattroPro available in Windows on the computers in the Irving computer room is version 5.0. It is the general consensus that the newer versions are superior, and we can see no reason why one shouldn't be able to access them from the computers in Irving. Those of us who work here find having to go hunting across campus to do our spreadsheet work on a spreadsheet program with the newest features and interface to be somewhat annoying, given that we cannot see how it could possibly take more than three minutes of work on the part of computer services to provide us with access right in Irving. We must give them credit for finally getting around to fixing the path for the icon for QuattroPro 5.0, though - for months we had no access to any version of QuattroPro

for Windows at all here in Irving. Also, we would like to request that computer services try as soon as possible to provide us with Internet applications in the Irving computer room. A number of us are in Chemistry 282, Introduction to Research, which requires that we do assignments using the Internet. We know that it has been decided that Internet applications will not be made available in the Irving computer lab this semester, but if it is still possible to reconsider this decision, it would be a tremendous help if we could gain access to the Internet from this room while we are still taking the course.

We hope that by airing these issues publicly, we may come to a speedy and satisfactory resolution to these concerns for all parties concerned.

Sincerely,  
Stephen DeGrace, Chris Montigny  
Paul MacDonald, Doug MacLaren  
Jake Pushie, J. Dayre McNally,  
Tim McQuaid, Krista Hickey,  
Coady Campbell, Maria Gallant

## FYP: not all that?

In response to Finley Martin's column in the Jan. 28th issue of The Panther Prints, I feel that it is only fair to mention a few of the reasons for FYP's victory over Team D. Habbi.

First off, the members of Team D. Habbi simply refused to play against a collection of pedophiles.

Secondly, the members of FYP are well-knowns for their continual use of inhalants; most specifically gasoline.

It should also be noted that the members of Team D. Habbi refused to participate in FYP's traditional pre-game rituals (i.e. "the circle jerk" and "soggy cracker").

Finally, it is imperative that the medical problems of certain members of FYP are taken into consideration. Incontinence is nothing to be ashamed of, however, it does make for a rather difficult basketball game.

In closing, FYP should not boast about victories that are largely dependant on chemical stimulants and the misuse of fecal matter.

Sincerely,  
Don Kiedik

## Academic Freedom

Dear Ms. Caseley:

Academic freedom is at the very core of this and every university. Indeed, it is the protection of academic freedom which is the primary justification for awarding tenure to professors. Thus it is the position of SAFS (the Society for Academic Freedom and Scholarship) that, without academic freedom, the pursuit of true scholarship is in grave peril. Academic freedom, moreover, is not only for tenured professors, but for all members of the university community equally: tenured professors, untenured and sessional professors, and students.

Thus it was with considerable dismay that members of SAFS read in the 21 January issue of this newspaper that a department in this university had proposed "student rules of conduct" which would have restricted the right of students to seek help from professors other than their course instructor. While we are relieved that these rules were never implemented, we feel that it is incumbent on this university, through its administration, to state publicly and forcefully that it supports and defends the academic freedom of all the members of the university community.

Yours truly,  
P.G. Davis (Dept. Of Religious Studies)  
Member of the National Board  
Society for Academic Freedom and Scholarship

D.F. Buck (Dept. Of Classics)  
Co-ordinator, P.E.I. Chapter  
Society for Academic Freedom and Scholarship