

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Dear Mr. Editor,

One of the greatest priorities of the UPEI Student Union is to help ensure this community is safe for the students we represent. In all fairness, an article in a newspaper does not always accurately represent the views of those that it quotes from. The impression that the SU does not care about the concerns of students that was conveyed in the 9th issue of the Cadre is false. In fact, safety issues have been discussed—at length—in meetings of both the Student Council and the Student Union Safety Committee.

We are concerned about the generally accepted practice on PEI of leaving drinks unattended and the Student Union is starting a “Think, don’t leave your drink” campaign. As part of this campaign, the Student Union have been made available date rape drug testing coasters to any student who wants one Monday to Friday from 9-4 in the Student Union offices. We want the students at UPEI to be aware wherever they are: Any house party, restaurant, or bar. The most important reason for this campaign, is that these testers give both false negatives and false positives. In fact, in my research I found out that the US DEA warns that these testers always accurate and warns against putting faith in them. That being said regardless of where you are, we would encourage you first and foremost to “have a safe night, keep your drink in sight.”

I would welcome students to come speak to me directly and I can tell you exactly what measures are taken to ensure student safety by the Student Union, our Safety Committee and the Presidential Task Force on a Safe Campus are taking to do so on campus.

Clare Henderson
President, UPEISU

Dear Mr. Editor,

I was unsettled, though not surprised, by reporter Jamie McGuigan’s opinion piece regarding St. Mary’s University’s decision to ban an inappropriate calendar from campus. Though the article claims that “Censorship is alive and well at St. Mary’s”, it seems that, more accurately, ignorance of modern issues is alive and well at St. Mary’s, and that student Paul Pederson is it’s most visible proprietor.

Pederson’s offence is not a joking matter. He should indeed be held accountable for the implications of his ridiculous project. He blatantly dehumanized not only the women who were photographed for the calendar, but women in general. How original. Pederson’s seemingly clever business idea is an exhausted cliché - perhaps next time he should try to concoct something at least remotely creative.

Using images to exploit women may be common practice in our society, but I remain hopeful that such socially damaging and primitive practices will continue to be discouraged at universities.

Kudos to vice president Chuck Bridges for banning the calendar and fostering a gender-neutral environment at St. Mary’s University.

Lauren Warbeck

Dear Mr. Editor,

Most of you are likely aware that “The Wave” is not the only place where the students go on campus to “chill” on Friday nights after a long week of classes. A few of you may enjoy “Suits and Toques” or “Toga” nights located at the all boys’ dorm and enjoy “getting wasted” with your residence friends.

Throughout high school, I was thought of negatively as the “nerd” as I

was always engaged in my studies and never attended any parties. As an honours student, I entered UPEI career-focused and vowed to work towards my goal of becoming a teacher of the deaf.

NSO brought several individuals into my path, and it felt great to have people with whom I could associate. One young woman, once I knew her better, suggested that I attend the all boys’ dorm parties to “Let loose and get to meet people.”

A few times, I went up there but decided not to drink. Many of the students noticed this and said, “Inez, get drunk just once! You won’t know until you have tried it!” I felt like a junior high student falling into the victimization of peer pressure, and yet I decided to ignore the “nerdy” voice within me and drank the “screwdrivers” that underage friends poured for me. The room started spinning, so I ran to the bathroom.

I remember praying, “God, help me!” before passing out from severe intoxication. It was around 1 a.m. when, gratefully, my mother was able to pick me up and take me home.

I vowed to myself never to attend these parties again, and yet, there was a voice within me that refused to let go of the partying scene.

I returned the next weekend with a bottle of water in my hand as I dialled some people to sign me into the party. At last, someone came to the door. I was informed that I had been kicked out of the parties due to the state I had been in the previous week. Realizing that I had no way of calling home, I knocked on the door again. At last, I was given a phone to borrow so that I could get a ride back home. I was then asked to leave the building.

If only the minus 31°C weather had numbed my emotions rather than my fingers as the laughter and taunting

echoed loudly out of the windows as I waited to be picked up.

Upon meeting with the Residence Life Coordinator, I was informed that I was to refrain from visiting either of the residences indefinitely, possibly up to four years. I was furious that one incident of drinking could have me banned for such an extended period. Was she and security aware of the many other females who pass out from intoxication every weekend, many of whom are underage? What about the male residents who are drinking underage? Should there not be a code cracked down on them?

While it would appear evident that I would be upset not being allowed back to the parties at the residences, let alone visit those who reside there, I am actually happy to be banned. It was the only way I could tell myself to stay away from this group and to go back to being the “inner-nerd” that I am.

This has been a life lesson for me. Not only am I grateful for my mom for picking me up, but also I am grateful that I was not among the many women raped on University campuses across Canada each year. I am fortunate that I am able to go back to my studies.

My hope is that this letter will be a revelation for the young males, and especially the females out there, as it is evident, that it could very well happen to you!

If you have comments or opinions that you would like to share with the Editor, you can submit them to upeicadre@gmail.com or to the editor directly at ryangallant@hotmail.com. For more information, drop by ‘The Cadre’ office, Room 213, Student Union Offices, W.A. Murphy Student Centre or call 566-0629. Next deadline for submission is Friday, February 4th, 2005.