

St. FX Tradition Gone Wrong

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From *The Xavierian*

Victoria Latchmore woke up Monday morning to a condom filled with a milky substance taped to her residence room door.

Tuna and sardines had been dumped into the residence laundry machines and a bag of human feces was in the stairwell. Walls were covered in graffiti and derogatory flyers were strewn on the floor.

The early morning vandalism was part of the lead up to the Burmac Cup, a charity hockey game between rival residences Burke and MacIssac. The game began 27 years ago to help X Project, a community tutoring program.

The game has not been connected to the university for two years due to past behavioural problems. BurMac Cup was cancelled Tuesday night by financial promoters.

Campus is divided over whether this incident should be connected to the game itself.

"I think that it started out as a prank and it went too far," stated 1st year student and Burke resident Erin Laberge. "I think there are underlying issues that should be dealt with separately."

"There's absolutely no doubt that there's a connection with BurMac. Let's not be naïve," commented University President Dr. Sean Riley

"One thing written on the wall might have been related to the hockey game, the rest were homophobic or sexist comments," described Latchmore, a Residence Advisor to a floor of 30 females.

Latchmore was disturbed by a flyer depicting a woman's legs and vagina painted on a wall with a paper maché penis suspended above it. Beneath read "Burke we fucked your mom."

The explicit flyers immediately gained the attention of the campus

community. After students expressed concern, faculty and community groups began lobbying the administration to respond to the event.

"This goes well beyond a so-called prank because it is making fun of sexual violence," History professor Dr. Nancy Forestall commented. "It is a reference to sexual assault and incites sexual assault."

Tuesday night Riley addressed the campus community stating the acts "appear to be part of a pattern of an increasingly violent rivalry between two residence houses on campus which has no role in life at StFX."

"A lot of people feel that it's a pretty heavy blow to anyone who wears an X ring," he later commented.

"We just need to let this blow over, this is a big deal, this is over the top, it's the wrong thing at the wrong time," Curtis Strickland, President of MacIssac Hall addressed residents Tuesday night.

"The saddest part is that people don't see that this is wrong and view this as just a prank" Latchmore concluded.

Wednesday night a candlelight vigil protesting sexism and violence towards women was held in a field across from Burke house; signs declaring "Burmac lives" were visible on campus.

The matter is currently under investigation.

"We have some leads to go on and at the end of the day if charges are merited than we'll see," Sgt. Jay MacInnis of the Antigonish RCMP commented.

"Perhaps this incident will allow us to rediscover and reinvigorate old roots in social justice which were some of the reasons this university was founded," Maureen Shebib, Coordinator Equity and Community Issues stated.

GMOs: Stay or Go?



Julie Bull
Reporter

Debates are heating up again as PEI is faced with the seemingly inevitable next step for farmers. Genetically Modified Organisms (GMOs) offer new opportunities for success, while posing a threat to Islanders at the same time. There are so many issues on both sides of the debate, that it seems almost impossible to make complete sense of everything. According to *The Guardian*, Bert Christie from Genetic Engineering Alert has said that of ten studies done on the issue, five seem to be fairly good; while four showed that there were some serious problems. He goes on to say that we would generally not be willing to eat things that have a 40% chance of being harmful. This is the beginning of the issue for many people.

Dr. Kevin Teather, professor of Biology at UPEI, admitted that he was not completely knowledgeable in the area, but did say that "it seems clear...that more research is warranted concerning both their ecological effects and potential impacts on human health." He went on to say he is "more concerned with the former, although both of these are of obvious importance to people. It may be that GMOs will provide the answers to many of our problems; on the other hand, they might end up creating a whole new set of problems that are more serious. We simply don't know at this point." He ended on an interesting note, saying, "the odd thing about it is that humans are really being used in a giant experiment, one which we won't know the results of for a number of years. I find this a bit strange since, at the university, we need to go through an extensive review process before using humans for any kind of research, even if it only involves filling out surveys!"

The research compiled for the

purposes of this article pointed in many directions, all of which ended by saying that there are many issues to be considered and that many people want to have a voice in the matter. At press time there were no definite or absolute answers to questions surrounding the use of GMOs; what remains are issues, and the need to try to come to some partial agreement that will be beneficial to the people of Prince Edward Island.

Dr. Pamela Courtenay-Hall, professor of Philosophy and environmental studies at UPEI, voices concerns regarding the issues surrounding the use of GMOs: she is adamant in saying that there are two very different sides that need to be considered and that many questions will remain. "Biotech advocates argue that GMOs in agriculture can help address environmental problems like fuel consumption and pesticide use." She says, while "Biotech critics argue that these problems can only be solved in the realm of political action and education, not in the realm of manipulating plant genes. They argue that the benefits GMOs promise aren't worth the harms they risk."

Courtenay-Hall asks some important questions to be considered. "Is it possible to work out a GMO policy that accommodates all interests and all approaches to farming? If not, which approach to farming should be given primary consideration in the policy the Island adopts? Are GM foods as safe as their advocates claim, or as risky as opponents argue? Are GMOs as much of a threat to the environment as critics claim? Are they as beneficial to farmers and to the environment as advocates argue? Even more complex: how do we weigh all the competing rights involved?"

Generally speaking we live in a utilitarian society where we do things for the benefit of the greatest number of people. This will inevitably be the approach taken when decisions are made in regard to GMOs.