

# See No Evil

## Locking the content closet

**T**O PARAPHRASE SOME SPIN doctor or other, you can't please all of the people all of the time. Patently obvious, you say? Perhaps, but that doesn't seem to deter some folks from anxiously scrutinizing broadcasts and publications for anything that might offend the sensibilities of particular persons or groups. The media is always prey to self-appointed censors, and the insular, conservative climate of P.E.I. is certainly no exception.

This is nowhere more apparent than within the university media, where student writers often probe the boundaries of what is or isn't acceptable content. Among the most consistently controversial subjects of university journalism is sexuality--the dreaded "s" word. Many readers may remember last semester's sex supplement, and the controversy it generated. Some who read it found it to be offensive. More disturbingly, some who did not read it found it to be offensive, and refused to even look at the material.

An eerily similar situation has played itself

out in the wake of preparations for this issue's GLBQ (Gay/Lesbian/Bisexual/Queer) Supplement. For the past two issues we have printed a survey designed to determine the university community's awareness of and attitudes towards the Island's GLBQ community and issues pertaining to them. We have received complaints about "wasting space" (which, strangely, provokes much less ire when we devote a page to innocuous fare like filler artwork or cartoons to round out our page count) and questions about what the "point" of the survey was. More disturbing were reports that disgusted students were throwing copies of the paper away unread after seeing the GLB questionnaire on the back cover. This is a thoughtless waste of student labour, funds and

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materials, as well as an unfair dismissal of the paper as a whole on the basis of one of its parts. What are these people so afraid of? Are things that are strange to people or that they disagree with so frightening that they prefer blissful ignorance of the facts? Or, are they so shallow and apathetic that they just don't care about any subject that isn't comfortable, pre-chewed, mass-media spoon-feeding?

Censorship isn't restricted to sexual taboos, either. This writer can barely suppress a sardonic chuckle when school boards and their ilk deep-six classics like *Huckleberry Finn* and *The Merchant of Venice* because of their historical, racist underpinnings. Heaven forbid we should acknowledge and learn from the mistakes of our past, including ugly realities like racism. Far better to simply sweep it all under the rug and hope that the old saw about those who ignore history being doomed to repeat it is wrong; of course, the artistic value of the works in question pales before the moral turpitude they could unleash.

Admittedly, not everything merits publication. In the past the X-Press has rejected many offensive, tasteless, or simply deficient works if they were lacking in significant informational or entertainment value; however, if a work is of significant value, especially informational value, its didactic benefits for the readership as a whole outweigh the potential aggravation of more sensitive readers, so long as the presentation is handled with taste and professionalism.

For the cowardly and closed-minded, ignorance and denunciation are suitable ways to cope with subjects that are strange or unpleasant to them. This cannot and must not be the case with the press, or the arts or the schools for that matter. The media has a responsibility to inform and entertain its audience, and cannot betray that audience out of deference to dissenting minorities within it. The only thing people should really be afraid of is fear. Those who act out of it are victimizing themselves when they close their minds to the facts; if the media allows others' fears to dictate its actions, that's when people should start throwing papers in the trash. As it is, they may only be fooling themselves, but in their attempts to perpetuate ignorance they injure everyone.

Sean McQuaid  
Accountable Editor

# What really matters

BY FAITH HUNTER

LAST WEEK, I TOLD YOU HOW TO translate your teachers. I hope you found it useful (I'm sure you've tried it out). This week, I want to talk about a problem that I know many students, myself not excluded, are presently experiencing. In its mildest form, it's called "student burnout"; in its common form, it's called "I hate the world" syndrome. There is approximately a month left before classes are over and exams are overwhelming. If your schedule is anything like mine, you not only dread exams, but you dread just getting up in the morning.

It is term paper time, so you are probably spending a lot of time writing essays in the totally objective, proper (boring!) format that many professors demand, but that doesn't mean you can just ignore those five tests and three oral presentations that you vaguely remember writing down yesterday. But that's just the tip of the iceberg: You are living on coffee and chocolate, you are two thousand dollars in debt, you have no idea what to major in (or are in fourth year but are beginning to wonder if, just maybe, you've made the wrong choice), and, on top of all that, you cannot, for all you're worth, remember your middle name (You laugh--but ask a friend sometime and see how long it takes him or her to answer you).

Oh, the stress of it all, right? Yeah, I know. Believe me, I really do know. But regardless of my enduring sympathy, I cannot change the

entire school system for you (though sometimes I wish I had the chance). Instead, I can only do what I hope will encourage you enough to at least make it through the rest of the day without crying. I have compiled a list of questions for you to answer. Don't panic; this is only a test. In case of a real emergency, I would have to give you a formal briefing.

Without further procrastination (And "no"--marks will not be deducted from your I.Q. for stupid answers), sit down and ask

yourself these 7 questions, and keep a mental note (or a real one, depending on your short term memory ability--which, for the record, usually lasts about 12 seconds) of your answers:

In The Last Week, Have You...

1. taken off your "woes-coloured" glasses even for an hour?
2. gone to sleep at night before it was the next morning?
3. gotten any exercise besides dragging your feet?
4. done nothing without immediately feeling guilty?
5. hit a pillow or ripped a piece of paper into

confetti?

6. stopped worrying long enough to do the work you're worried about?

7. gone anywhere besides school, the store, and insane?

If you've answered "yes" to 3 or more of these questions, then take comfort. You're doing alright. And, if you haven't, perhaps you should consider a few of them. School can drown out that little hobby called living-- but it doesn't have to. (By the way, if any of you have better other ideas, let me know. Strange columnist writers get burnt out, too!)

Take Care and Dream Big  
Faith Hunter



## Letter

### Be kind to your radio station

X-Press,

This letter concerns last week's copy of the X-Press. I have a problem with the size of the column from CIMN. The print is so small, it looks like it is an advertisement. When I went looking for the column the first time, I couldn't find it. A lot of people are interested in charts, shows, and upcoming events. If it was a space problem, I would understand; however, in the same issue, there was a whole page dedicated to some odd artwork in the paper. I just wish that CIMN's article would get equal space. Please take this into consideration.