

LETTERS

cont'd from p. 4

view of the majority of *Excalibur's* content at present? In our opinion, our article would be the balance.

Despite *Excalibur's* initial interest in feminist content, it appears that the editor is not interested in what feminists have to say about race, class, gender and sexual orientation in the classroom. We challenge *Excalibur* to reconcile their public stand on these issues with their actual practices.

Tina Horley, Samantha Webbi, Howie Chodos, Kathie Moules, Sabyntje Jones-Caldwell,

Markita Fleming, Nadia Habib, Gail Brown, Carolyn Morris-Walker, Anna Ricciuti, Flavia Isetta, Catherine Kellogg, Lynn Daly, Lori Vasserman, Penney Kirby, Michele Glemaud

**Ed Note:** At no time did we refuse to accept the feature. We merely refused to waive our editorial rights over it as *Lexicon* had done in its agreement to print it. As we are ultimately responsible for the content of the paper, we had to maintain final authority over the editing and layout of the article.

Strict procedures necessary

To the editor,

As medical director of the regional Canadian Red Cross Blood Centre, I would like to respond to Steve Cooney's letter charging the Red Cross with discriminatory blood donor screening practices. (Jan. 28)

It must be emphasized that the strict screening procedures employed by the Red Cross are necessary to make receiving a blood transfusion as safe as possible. Internationally recognized standards do not allow blood collection agencies to accept a donation from any man who has had sex with another man since 1977.

As part of the government licensing arrangement that enables the Red Cross to collect, process and distribute blood, no exceptions can be made to this screening process.

This is a necessary general precaution because of the large number of gay men who have been infected and because of the period of time between infection with HIV and the formation of detectable antibody in the blood. This period varies from individual to individual.

Currently, the only test suitable for screening blood donations detects antibody. If antibody is not there it cannot be detected. Although antibody is usually present less than six months after infection, recent studies indicate that in men who have acquired the virus from another man, the period may be significantly longer. Until more definitive studies provide a clearer understanding of this process, we must continue to employ strict donor

screening methods to protect the blood supply.

Moreover, contrary to what Mr. Cooney suggests, the rigid screening is not confined to homosexuals. The Red Cross asks *all* individuals who engage in high risk activities, both homosexual and heterosexual, not to donate.

The Red Cross is a neutral and impartial organization. No slight is intended against any gay men by our donor criteria. Indeed, we are most grateful for the excellent cooperation we have received from the gay community and individual gay men since possible HIV transmission by blood was recognized. Their continued support and understanding is necessary to assist the Red Cross to maximize the safety of the blood supply.

Yours sincerely,  
Roslyn Herst, MD

Rejection of Gulf war

To the editor

In response to Benjamin Frydenberg (*Excalibur*, Feb. 11), pardon me in advance if you and those who hold your position should take offense to the likewise condescending tone which I feel compelled to use in response to your abasement of the peace movement.

Quite frankly, we "the apostles of peace and love" can be "so unswerving in our faith" in opposing the Gulf war because, quite contrary to

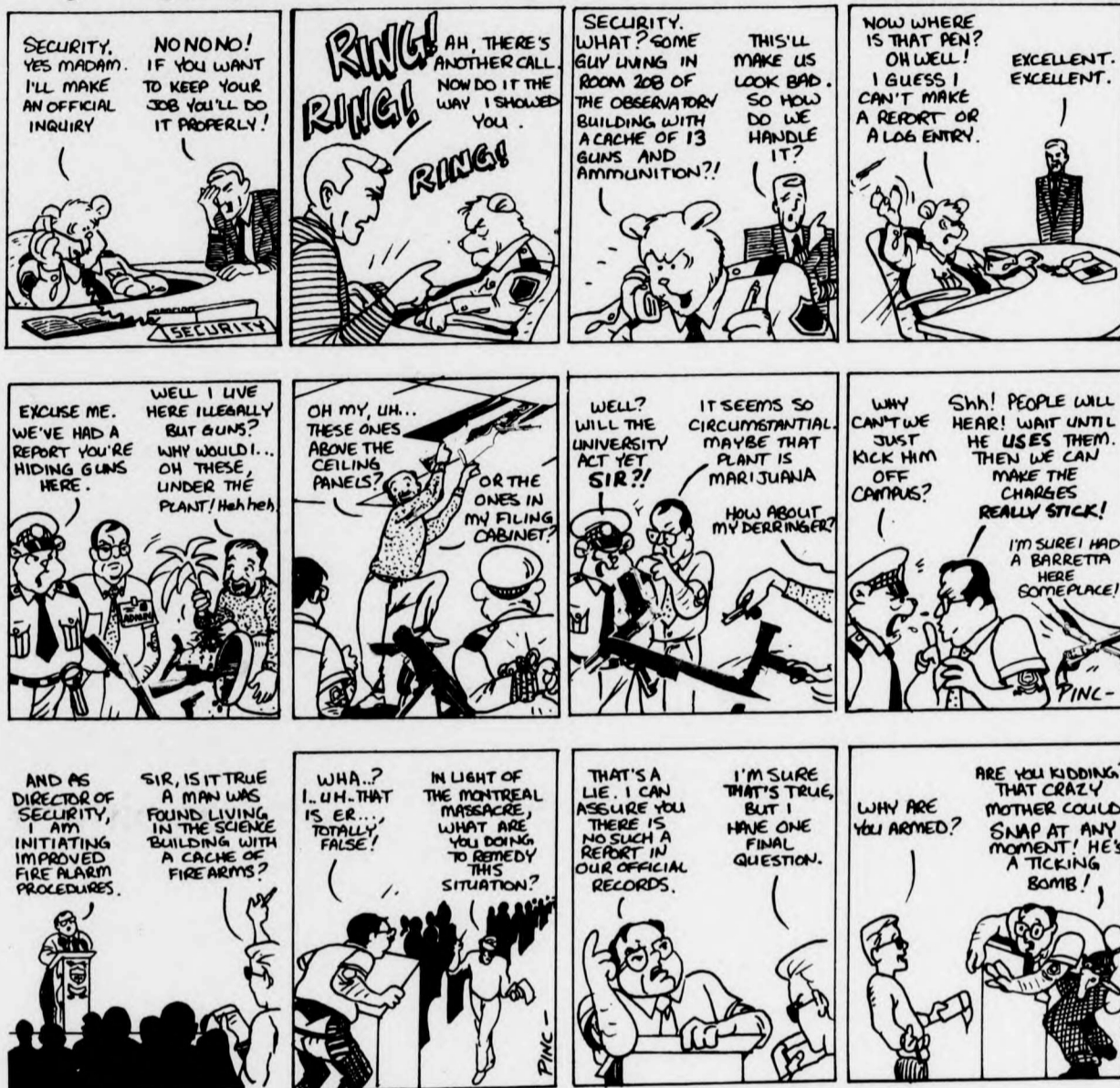
cont'd on p. 6

LAUGH O' RAMA

For Pete's Sake . . . by Roe



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