

Exotic dancing is no credit to women

by Cathy McDonald

It was a tame affair. The dancers were not exotic, the crowd was not unruly. Just a couple hundred engineers and their friends having a good time, and two naked women wiggling for the gawking onlookers. But I felt very sick.

Why is this such a good time? The engineers worked hard to put on an event that was exciting, better than you average drunk. They worked hard to keep publicity low, knowing that opposition would arise and perhaps cancel the strippers. So what is the great attraction?

Standing at the back of the room, a few guys told me this didn't turn them on much, just "a couple of pigs onstage". I'm

sure many have girlfriends and are not unfamiliar with the female body. The guys crowded around the stage were much more interested, a few throwing pennies.

Then I realized that in the eyes of everyone in the McInnes room that night, those women were worthless. Girlfriends were left at home. These women were definitely not in the same league with the "true" wome of society that engineers interact with and eventually marry. What was on stage represented the scum in this world, objects to laugh at, to observe in detail and express all the base vulgarities that remain unspoken except perhaps out of a car window to some anonymous female.

What was going through the minds of the two strippers I don't know. They walked around on the platform bored, removed, silent to the groveling hoard, eyes half-closed and small smiles put on as 250 men perused their bodies. They didn't dance much; they took their clothes off in a matter of fact way without style or embellishment. They had obviously swallowed their pride and personality a long time ago, and have chosen to live for, or put up with, the male consumer in order to make a living.

Perhaps in a classier joint a stripper would command some respect, would entertain with professionalism, an artist in her field who is appreciated for it.

The female body is beautiful, the subject of many paintings, and dance and rhythm are a talent that is developed the world over.

But the little "innocent" entertainment at the engineers' beer garden was something I cannot accept. I cry and rage inside to think that I must live in a society where women are abused to vent male needs of sexual superiority by hiring nameless strippers, or looking at Playboy centrespreads to dream, giggle and masterbate.

The engineer's bash was not innocent; was not mindless fun.

I can't ignore it. I didn't have to go to the engineer's bash and I wish I hadn't. But I can't ignore cars honking when I walk at

night, men exposing their genitals on park benches, being pressed against in grocery stores and buses, obscene invitations from behind buildings and the threat of rape; experiences that all women are subjected to in everyday life.

This sick attitude has no place in our society and has no place in our university. Whether or not the engineer's events are closed is irrelevant. They cannot use a building that students pay to operate in an institution that strives for justice and human liberty in society. They can look for some other building and hopefully will be unable to find a sponser for their cheap thrills.

I wish men in society would treat women as people, or else leave us alone.

Edgar the anarchist again: last of the exotic dancers

It is a rare thing for me to be uneasy about a particular belief I hold. Usually, it is easy to denounce everyone but myself, who is the sole repository of political wisdom, virtue and purity. However, the reappearance of "exotic" dancers in the McInnes room forced me to re-examine the whole issue of strippers on a university campus.

Let us be clear about one thing. Such an event, and particularly one stage for the benefit of engineers is degrading to women. If we wish to look for the reasons why women are still regarded as second class citizens, and as sexual objects, here is one of the causes. I do not take anyone seriously when they say such a performance is "Art". Anyone who watched Thursday's debacle, would need to have had their aesthetic tastes developed during the fire bombing of Dresden to believe this. Neither do I accept we have no right to restrict people's freedom of choice and action. Do we not imprison thieves, rapists and murderers. The only standard by which to judge anything like this, is what social harm can it do, in comparison to the pleasure it may give particular individuals? There remains only one real objection to banning such events. Have we the right to remove one of the few high paying jobs from women who desperately need economic independence? Ultimately, and regretfully, I think

we must in the interests of all women.

The Newman Society has very different reasons for opposing this event; however, I was disappointed when they failed to mount any significant protest. There was a time when Christians were prepared to defy the assembled might of the Roman Empire. They even courted lions for the sake of a principle. Now they cannot even stand up to a few hundred engineers.

Believing all this, I entered the McInnes room, unobtrusively, on Thursday night; just to see how the engineers would comport themselves, and to see if I could penetrate their security. As a master of disguise this presented me with no major difficulty. There was a great deal of pathos in the event I observed. The two women, who I judged to be in their early to mid-twenties, half-heartedly wiggled out of their clothes, and taunted the hands reaching up to the stage as they passed by. Amongst the crowd I noticed one leering student council senator who looked like he had achieved nirvana. I hope it was the alcohol or drugs, because such lack of control over a couple of naked women is undignified for one in his position.

Even the engineers sensed in some inner recess, commonly known as a brain, that they "were not getting their money's worth". The women were so clearly listless and lored by just another gig, they paid little

attention to the audience's incessant crudity. One individual tried to liven things up by dancing on the stage, but when other engineers tried to join in they were swiftly removed. Sadly, the only thing exotic about the evening was the money I spent. What the women felt like up on the stage I can only speculate; the only other woman in the room, Ms Cathy McDonald, looked like she had been swallowing frogs all evening. A solitary protest, but one done no doubt, in the interests of journalism and feminist conviction.

There were no staggering lessons to be learned from the evening. The only thing good about it was the band. If we must persist in having such overt displays of drunken male bravado, and disguised misogyny, let us at least recognize it for what it is. My final suggestion is one that will at least relieve the Student Council of the nagging doubt of their own culpability. Why not have a referendum on this issue and decide, democratically, whether there should ever be a repeat performance. This would have the virtue of giving the newly formed Women's committee something to work towards in the Spring - a widespread education of the whole campus on this issue.

Yours Fraternally
(The Dancer At The End Of Time)
Edgar the Anarchist

To the Editor,

I am writing to deny rumours floating around to the effect that I, as Station Manager of CKDU radio, have been engaged in any sort of purge of station members, bloody or otherwise. Although those programmers here interested in popular music certainly deserve to be shot (I never trusted anyone who liked music written after 1900), I do believe that such people can be reformed. I invited ex-station Manager Michael Wile over for a lecture on the evils associated with the pop religion, and several programmers present were so stricken with remorse that they leapt from the fourth story of the SUB in a search for atonement. In an effort to stop this attrition of our staff, I have circulated a letter to those surviving members of the "pop music" set, informing them of the unfortunate fate of their comrades, and recommending the fascinating world of obscure classical music as soothing to the souls of the sinful who stray from the true path.

Enough fake, light-hearted satire. I am bloody incensed by a letter you published in last week's issue from a Danny Walsh. The letter was representative of a foul, hypocritical and pestilential presence in our free society. I see CFNS as nothing more than a front for those under the buttocks of big business radio. Their leader, he who refers to CFNS as HIS company, cannot even write a literate letter. Media professionals indeed! The object of the letter was to further the cause of an outfit operating out of an Arm-dale post office box, that cause being to make bucks off of the students of Halifax, by providing a "product" widely considered stultifying, contentless and trashy; attractive to advertisers because it makes the most disgusting ads imaginable sound good in comparison with the intervening "product."

Since Walsh will no doubt be reading this letter, allow me to give him his first lesson in Journalism. Rule one: Know what you're talking about and research the facts. CKDU was never voted against by the students. An unsatisfactory proposal from council to FUND an FM station under the auspices of CKDU was rejected by a vote of students last year. In fact, at the best attended General Meet-

ing of the last three years, students voted three to one to chastise council for reducing our budget.

Rule two: Don't contradict yourself. If one must have advertising, don't refer to one limited in this respect as blessed. If News and Public Affairs don't make a University Radio station, what the hell is the Canadian Freelance News Service doing trying to take it over?

Rule three (applies only to business men): Watch your political ass. You don't make any friends by calling a disgrace what has been supported by such entities as the Mayor of Halifax, the U.S. Department of Health and Welfare, the Department of Adult Education at St. F.X., and the King's School of Journalism. CKDU has been for the past three years, and will continue to be, the finest university station east of Carlton University.

To conclude this letter, I must remind all readers that our Board of Directors is researching superior ways of broadcasting, that the management is endeavouring to widen the range of programming possibilities at CKDU, and that no adequate alternative currently exists to the students of Halifax that approaches that of CKDU. As far as commercialism is concerned, I have no interest in pimping. As Lorenzo Milan said, "Broadcasting as it exists now is a pitiful, unmitigated whore. At some stage in its history, there was a chance to turn it into a creative, artful, caring medium; but then all the toads came along, realizing the power of radio to hawk their awful wares. The art of radio can be used for artistic means; the radio-soul does not have to be made into a strumpet for soap and politicians."

Death to Toads,
Neil Erskine,
Station Manager, CKDU

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not too attentive to this type of talent, while awaiting the much hyped "added attraction" noted on their entry tickets. A somewhat disgruntled Master of Ceremonies tried to redirect their exuberance in a subtle fashion, including such references as calling his fellow society members "shitheads". He, unlike the band, was not the recipient of many empty plastic beer glasses.

I wonder if this group of engineers is at all interested in

attracting the opposite sex to a possibly more conventional type of social interaction, or is the night of strippers and the local



porn flicks (on this I make reference to the recent article in the Gazette) to be considered their norm? Is it our norm?

This is but one of many thoughts which come to mind when one considers the entertainment "standards" of the Engineers and those factions in the Student Union who have condoned this event (the "shadow vote" of Student Council last week).

Sincerely,
The Dalhousie Newman Society

