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Dear Bunny Rabbit,  
 The shadows of the night before swim before me as I remember Bev, Claire, Wendy, and Kook madly laying out 12 pages in one night. A RECORD Mary H. and Nancy A. will be welcomed soon, while Sheila and Gale do intellectual handstands on the copydesk. **THE LAYOUT DEPT. IS THE CENTER OF THE NEWSPAPER!** I agree, says Claire meekly. Hello to Tony, Glen, and Bobbo the robot. (Don't hit me.) Love, Reenee

# MAUD'S

The student as pastie  
**Why sex on the front page of Excalibur?**

Maud's Column is an occasional column of comment and fun (Oh?)

by Richard Levine

R: (finally noticing Maud at one end of Founders Coffee Shop): Maud, adorable girl in the mauve mini-dress, what are you doing in here?

MAUD: Waiting, you charming fool. You were supposed to be here 15 minutes ago.

R: (Not quite listening): I don't understand it. People keep bugging me about the photograph on the front cover of last week's Excalibur.



MAUD?

MAUD: (coolly): So?

R: The comments I've heard, have been very stupid once you stop to think them over. One girl from Founders said she felt ashamed and embarrassed when she saw other boys staring at the picture. In her mind, she said, she felt them undressing her. She also felt that the picture was cheap and assumed, in addition, that the girl in question must have been paid.

MAUD: Was she?

R: Of course not. Another girl believed that the picture had been placed on the page mainly to attract attention. But it was very strange. She also believed that there was an additional purpose. Was it to make a comment about sex? Was it to be ironic? Sarcastic? Who knows?

MAUD (losing interest): What about the boys?

R: The boys' reactions were more varied. A friend of mine thought the picture was in bad taste. Nothing complex, just in bad taste. As evidence, he mentioned that he had seen several other male students leering and snickering.

MAUD: Oh, what did they sound like?

R: How should I know? Something like 'Hey Joe, look at that broad onna front page,' I guess.

MAUD (demurely): Sorry I interrupted.

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R: Anyway, another friend said the picture was sensational. He didn't even see the fun in it, although he did say he didn't mean anything moral.

MAUD: Well, the concensus seems to be anti-Excalibur.

R: Maybe. What do you think?

MAUD: The girls are right, and that's unbiased.

R: Now that's ridiculous. You'll have to think more clearly than that, if you want to speak to me. I'll only agree with you about the reactions of the first girl. Maybe there were some people whose sense of modesty was offended by the photographs.

If so, then the photograph was at fault. But surely it doesn't follow that the girl was cheap. Why the moral judgements?

MAUD: I still say the picture was a bad thing. And you, R... you're acting like Excalibur's Official Apologist.

R: (a bit put off): That, Maud, is beside the point. The newspaper certainly wasn't out to entice young innocents to the temptations of destructive sexual play. (Warming to the subject). Moreover, the photograph doesn't include leering eyes, partly open

lips anxious to please, or any other of the paraphernalia of the dime store sex rag. The team responsible for producing the photograph decided, in fact, to focus solely on a very natural and innocent part of the human body, in the Greek tradition.

MAUD: Oh, come off it, R. Those pasties don't say Pi Delta Gamma, you know.

R: Wait a minute, wait a minute, I'll get to that. As I was about to say, the leering boys proved nothing. Whatever you do, you're always sure to get a boorish reaction from somebody.

Now for my conclusion. The boy and girl who mentioned sensationalism were quite right, in a way. It really was a deliberate attempt to attract attention to the York Festival. But why not? It was a clear expression of college humour, a visceral statement that we all know means amusing times and relief from academic pursuits. Perhaps a bit old-fashioned, but certainly not immoral.

MAUD: (slightly sarcastic): Oh, yes, the photograph was just a fun thing.

R: Well, why not? Why search for deeper meanings? Now for my key conclusion. If you persist in claiming immorality, I'll tell you what really is immoral and an obscenity.

MAUD: Don't look at me! You were the one who started this whole argument.

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R: Be quiet. Of all the comments, no one mentioned the appalling back cover of the Seer (Winters rag). It pictured boys and girls almost nude, along with several dozen advertisements for people desiring "unusual sexual relationships." It was called "Degenerate Hippies" but it wasn't an objective new story. The deliberately ragged and disjointed layout clearly forced us to be Peeping Toms, to snigger and be condescending to people who deserve our sympathy (or respect, depending on who you are).

And it's even more offensive than that. The back cover meant to make us ashamed of our natural curiosity about people we know little about. And it was deliberately juxtaposed with the front cover which was one large blowup of Lois Marshall subtitled "One Nation Under God" that clearly made the entire conception a poor exercise in sarcasm.

MAUD: Amen. R... you sound like you're making a speech!

R: Well, the whole thing makes me upset. The Excalibur photo clearly did no harm to anybody. The photographer chose a pretty girl, not one with a less well-formed body, so that we would laugh at her. Nor, at any time, did Excalibur ridicule us for our natural responses. You know, we must be all a bunch of Puritans to make such a fuss about one stupid picture of a girl's body.

MAUD: That's all very well, but you'd feel different if it was a naked boy on the cover.

R: Be serious, Maud, who the hell wants to look at a bare-chested boy? Anyway, what did you think of the picture?

MAUD: What picture? I hardly ever read Excalibur. R, you've babbled on and on. I'll see you later.

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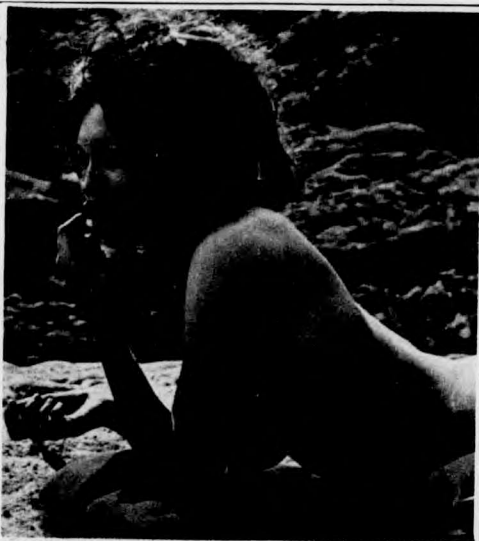
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