

SPECTRUM

Reclaiming your body

When I was fourteen, I was raped. When I was twenty-three, I told someone about it. At twenty-nine, I am fighting back.

The recent focus on date rape has had a tremendous impact on me. Everytime I hear an interview, read an article, or overhear a conversation about the topic I am instantly fourteen again, reliving that horrible night.

My story may be unique, but I doubt it! At fourteen, I was forbidden to date for two more years, so I told my parents I was sleeping at my friend's house and while she covered for me, I went to a party with my new boyfriend.

I has a couple of drinks of punch and when he danced me into the quiet living room I was suffering from romantic delusions. The kissing felt nice but he pushed further and my suggestions that we head back into the other room were ignored. He pushed me down to the floor, pinned my body with his much larger one and raped me. I don't know how long it took until someone finally heard my screams and pulled him off me but it was too late, I had lost my cherished virginity.

His friend drove me home. I made some excuse to my mom and went to bed (I didn't sleep at night for weeks. I couldn't close my eyes). I couldn't tell anyone, especially my mom. It was her

birthday and I thought she would blame me. She had warned me about older boys but she never told me what exactly could happen.

That single event led to years of self-hatred and blame and the healing process has been very painful; but, since last Sunday, for the first time since that night, I know that no one will ever be able to do it to me again.

Because, on Sunday night, I broke a one-inch board with my hand.

For years I have known that my anger would give me strength in the event of another attack, but I realized my body might fail me - I didn't even know how to throw a punch. but this weekend I took a self-defence course for women - WEN-DO. I learned how to use my hands, my

The Wimmin's Room

elbows, and my legs, among other body weapons, to defend myself. I learned that my body - my very own not-so-fit body - is a weapon that I can depend on in a struggle.

Taking this course was more empowering than all the years of therapy I have endured or the self-help books I have studied. The self-awareness and self-acceptance I reached through

mental healing is crucial, but when you are raped it is your body that fails you. Learning self-defence has given me back the power that my rapist took from me fifteen years ago.

My healing is nearly complete - I wrote this article without crying and that is a great feeling. I just hope that writing about my experience will help someone else who is still in pain to fight back and reclaim their body!

Fredericton has a lot to offer

Say, I was looking at an issue of "Sound Check". This is the program listing for the on campus FM station, CHSR. This particular issue had a skeleton with fire hair on it. It wasn't the program listing that caught my attention as much as it was the editorial section, entitled sound Off. A person by the name of - Jim Peers, who claimed to be from a place known as "World Within a City" (I'm not sure where that is, except it is in a place which is in CANADA further West than here and it has a larger population, probably in terms of people) wrote about Fredericton (which is here) and his/her thoughts about local's reactions to he/her moving here. Where the "World Within a City" is, is not the point. However, what -Jim said is, and I agree. I arrived here, here being UNB, last year. So I have a year on -Jim. I too, was asked, "How did you get here?" or "Why

would you move 'Here' from 'There'?" Well, I'm with -Jim, I like it here too! I really got tired of, "Wait 'til you see what our winters are like!!!" or the even more idiotic, "... have you ever driven in snow, or seen snow?" I can see their problem with the driving part. Fredericton has, collectively, some of the very worst drivers I've ever seen. This makes Fredericton, the "Boston" of CANADA. The driving problem is not a function of the weather, it's a function of limited repertoire of the local drivers. When in doubt - STOP! On the other hand, I've lived where the traffic was so bad at five o'clock PM, I swore the forty-five miles (what ever that is in clicks) I had to drive to work or back home was so congested that I could leave work at the five o'clock hour OR at seven o'clock and arrive home at the same time!

This is a pretty town

Well this is what I think... by D.J. Eckenrode

(Fredericton). This town has tradition (even if some of it's in terms of the numbskulls who picked the losing side and had to get outta town) and there's stuff to do. There's the arts and the university functions, and there's lots of folksy crafts and such. I like the fact that most people are friendly and thoughtful, particularly if they're from just outside of Fredericton proper. Frederictonites tend to think they defecate chocolate ice cream, while the rest of the whole world does the normal stuff.

One does not have to go too far to see and interact with regular people. The countryside is beautiful and the air is clean and clear. I don't have to worry about getting mugged. If we direct our attention quickly to this sexual assault crap that's raring its ugly head we can make (keep) the place safe for women as well. Frankly, I don't have a lot of trouble buying what I need,

for the most part, right here in Freddy Beach. The restaurants run a bit shy in variety and quality, but this is in part due to the uneducated palates of NBers. Living accommodations are, relative to the rest of North America, reasonable, whether you choose to buy or rent. As for the weather, the Falls are beautiful, the Summers are balmy, and dammit, if I'm going to have Winter, then "Let it snow, let it snow, let it snow!" I can't stand this rainy crap. Rainy winters make me depressed. Note, Spring was left out, not by me, but my Mother Nature (or is that parent nature?).

Face it, Fredericton (and NB, as well as Atlantic CANADA) has a lot to offer. I intend to enjoy it. I suspect -Jim does as well. Please if you're going to knock this University, this Town, this Province, or Atlantic CANADA, stuff it! I'm not interested.

What lesbians need - continued from page 11

Many men believe that if they could get fifteen minutes alone with a lesbian she would be converted. Whether this attitude comes out of a firm belief that they are better than any man walking the planet, or that they intend in those fifteen minutes to perform a frontal lobotomy on the woman, they are never quite clear.

The fact is that many lesbians have been with men. Many are mothers. Some have had rocking good times with their male lovers. But they are lesbians. There's just no way around that. We choose to be with other women for a wide variety of reasons. Some have nothing at all to do with sexual acts, others have every possible connection to them.

I have talked with several women in the last few days who said that they consider themselves straight or bi because they enjoy sex with men, but they have these wonderful, strong relationships with women. One was a bit concerned about that, almost like she didn't know what that implied. It doesn't imply anything, of course. Other than

that she is fortunate to have caring, touching relationships with people who understand and accept her. Somewhere in our dim (or not so very dim) past, women were allowed to share such close bonds without having to worry about what that meant. If it does seem like a touch (or more) of lesbianism to them I, for one, am not going to deny their feelings. If it doesn't then we have a few more sensitive straights in the world.

If, like me, you find yourself drawn sexually as well as emotionally to women, then you feel a bit annoyance (just a twinge) when a man tells you all you need is a good stiff dick. I know what I need, and what I like. Because of the difficulties associated with coming out, I did a great deal of soul-searching into what I need. Having done that, I feel it is a bit much for some stranger to offer up a cliché, ten second solution to what he perceives is some kind of problem for me. In short I don't want his dick. And there are a few more important good stiff things that I do need.

First of all a good stiff back-

bone to stand up to the rednecks. People like them should not be able to ruin my good time.

A good stiff (as in strong) arm for self-defence. After all, I am a woman, and yahoos the world over consider my smaller frame fair game for assault.

A good stiff drink (of red crush, or whatever) to cool myself down after a long day of this muck.

A good stiff walking stick for mountain hikes with my lover to find the peace needed for that backbone strength.

A good stiff (as in steady) job to earn a decent living. One where I don't have to pretend I'm straight for everyone else's comfort.

Good stiff (as in steadfast) friends who will offer support, and laughs.

Good stiff placards for all of us to hold up at marches as we try to get this government to act on rights issues.

Good stiff (as in firm) arguments about what I know is right, but sometimes only find the words to defend hours after the debate is over.

Good stiff (as in solid) educa-

tion in anything from car repair to Chaucer. I haven't yet managed that middle English thing.

A good stiff (as in continuous) community. Come on you knew I'd say that. Community is

strength, folks.

There was to be a second list in this article, but some of my male friends got a little queasy when I started contemplating what uses a lesbian could find for a good stiff dick.

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