

Dal prof

"Stag and Stein exploits women"

by Paul Clark

Allowing exotic dancers into the McInnes Room to perform for the Engineer's Stag and Stein night this March 7 means more to a lot of people on campus than simply a bunch of engineers having a good time.

"It exploits the women doing it and is a slap in the face of all women", says Toni Laidlaw, a professor of education who teaches a course in women's studies.

Events like this do not treat women as people but as "bodies", says Laidlaw, contributing to a misconception of women as being merely ob-

jects of sexuality for men.

"It perpetuates an old image about women, the idea that this is the only thing they are good for".

A woman's consent to perform a striptease does not sanction the event, according to Laidlaw, neither did she accept the engineer's right to bring in the dancers.

Because in many instances people have been socialized to the point where they don't see that events like this misrepresent women.

"Do sado-masochists have the right to beat people if they are prepared to be beaten? People have more than rights,

they also have responsibilities."

Laidlaw says she is disappointed this event is occurring at a university where people are supposed to be more enlightened and educated.

"These are people who could potentially go out and become politicians. They have a responsibility to society. Where have they been the last ten years?"

The lack of women students and an all male faculty in Engineering probably means engineering students are not being exposed to the fact that women are no longer tolerating these kinds of attitudes, Laidlaw said.

Laidlaw said she is not a sexual puritan, but accepted a distinction like the one made between eroticism and pornography by Canadian journalist Myrna Kostash.

For Kostash eroticism displays an "erotic connection of equally willing, self-determining partners" while

pornography contributes to the image of the "social and sexual superiority of the male."

James Robert Brown, a philosophy professor, also objected to the event. He said activities like the Stag and Stein promote a harmful image of women similar to the one oppressing blacks in the past. He cited the "step n' fetch it" movies of the '30s which portrayed blacks as ignorant servants and degraded all of their race.

Christine Ball-MacKean, president of the Dalhousie Women's Faculty Organization, indicated the Engineering Society's desire to bring in the strippers reflects a larger problem of sexism at Dalhousie.

She cited administrators who habitually referred to women faculty members as "girls" and mentioned a recent meeting with a senior administrator who summarily concluded discussion with the

statement "it's time to dismiss these young ladies!"

Language and behaviour like this indicates old fashioned attitudes toward women, she said.

As a more definitive indicator of sexism at Dalhousie, Ball-MacKean referred to the Committee on the Status of Women at Dalhousie report which was completed in January last year.

The report says that in 77-78 only 16% of full time faculty members at Dalhousie were female, with these being concentrated in traditionally female fields like nursing and education.

Women were found to be concentrated in the lower ranks of Assistant Professor and Lecturer.

The report further discovered that even when factors like age, qualifications and rank were accounted for, women's salaries were significantly lower than men's.

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Strippers speak out

by Marlene Peinsznski

Earlier this week, the Dalhousie **Gazette** went to Cousin Brucie's, the well known Halifax Burlesque parlor, to interview some of the exotic dancers who may be starring in the proposed Engineers Stag and Stein night.

The **Gazette** was initially met with replies that "the boss" didn't want the women to talk, but eventually succeeded in interviewing three people: two dancers, who also do massages, and one male employee. All requested that their names be withheld.

When asked her age, the first dancer seemed unsure. Her first reply was twenty, but then she said, "No, I lied. I'm nineteen, at least I will be this March." This dancer had a grade eight education and was previously employed as a waitress. She had been doing burlesque for three years and said that although she doesn't really enjoy the job, she does it for the money.

When asked whether her parents know, she said, "Yes. They don't like it, but it's better than being on the streets." She lives on her own, and in her spare time goes bowling, watches movies and smokes dope.

When asked how her boyfriend felt about her occupation, she replied, "He's not crazy over it, but he doesn't see anything wrong with it. If I had a job that paid well, I'd leave right away." When asked if she has plans for the future, the dancer said that she'd like to go back to school and go into hairdressing.

In closing, she said that she feels that burlesque is good for old men, but that she can't understand why a young man would want to see it.

"...they can just look. If they want a girl, why don't they go out and try to get one?"

The second dancer interviewed said that she hated her job because she didn't like "stripping in front of a bunch of men." When asked why she did it, she said that she needed the money. Another major complaint was that "some people want more than you can give them."

She was twenty-two years old and had been employed at Cousin Brucie's since November. When asked

of her future plans, she said they didn't include burlesque work. Her boyfriend had given her a one week ultimatum to either leave the work or leave him.

The male employee interviewed had been at Brucie's for three years and said, "That's long enough, let me tell you." He was very reluctant to answer questions so the **Gazette** was soon back out in the cold looking at the club sign which advertised "Lots of Beautiful Girls" in black and gold.



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