

Why can't women hang out on campus?

criticism • condemnation • diatribes • manifestoes • rants • discoveries • speeches • ideas • dialogues • polemics • dissertations • epistles • monologues • proclamations • accusations • declamations • declarations • defences • defenestrations • blatherings

Say it in the Bearpit!

All student submissions considered. Please keep length under 600 words.

by Gwen Jacob
The Ontarion

I was walking home on campus last Friday in the 118 degrees Fahrenheit heat when a friendly police officer pulled me over and started asking me questions.

He wanted to know if I was a "radical" and whether I participated in protests. He of course asked my name and address which I refused to supply since he refused to charge me.

Why all this attention? Oh, did I forget to mention that I wasn't wearing a shirt? Sorry. I also forgot to mention that I'm a woman.

There are people alive today who can remember when women couldn't vote. Or smoke, wear pants, own property or hold down a 'man's job.' A couple of years ago, a woman couldn't charge her husband with rape. I'm sure you could add your own items to the list of things women weren't able to do. Well, women it's time to break down another wall!

I spent a total of maybe four hours over two days walking around Guelph without my shirt on before an entirely obnoxious woman and her arrogant, sexist husband complained to the police.

I refused to put my shirt back on and was arrested and charged with committing an indecent act. Sorry, I didn't realize my breasts were indecent.

Furthermore, I cannot understand why male chests are socially acceptable and female chests are obscene. According to section 15.1 of the Charter, it's illegal to discriminate against people based on gender. Yet everywhere I look there are men walking around *sans chemise* and women walking around melting. No one bothers the men, of course. But one woman decides it's just too bloody hot to wear a shirt, and wham! gets charged for it.

I know, I know. Women have breasts. Startling anatomy lesson: so

"My breasts are for everyone else's pleasure and my own oppression. Whose breasts are they anyway?"

do men. When we're kids, we all look pretty much the same as far as breasts are concerned. Still, boys are allowed to run wild with no shirts while girls, learning early that the penis has more privileges than the penis-less,

remain caged in their shirts.

Then we do the puberty thing. This is where boys start to suffer cracking voices and haywire dual-system plumbing complete with miscellaneous erections. Presto: men!

Girls, on the other hand, anxiously await their first periods, and start developing illegal, immoral, shameful, breasts. Many people pity women for having to undergo this fate-sealing metamorphosis and try to make us forget our burden by continuing to refer to us as "girls" until we are a hundred and two.

And of course we aren't allowed to reveal our breasts in public. It's another one of those terrible, painful secrets women have to bear silently.

"But women's breasts are *sexual*" people cry. News bulletin: they are also functional. They're there so we might feed any offspring we choose to bear. As long as the children don't get hungry in public. That would be a disgrace.

You see, the problem is that women are considered sexual objects. As such we may be dismembered by predominantly male industries and media and our "parts" used to promote things that have nothing to do with the "parts" in question.

Women and their disembodied bodies, entirely or almost naked, can be used to sell alcohol, cars, movies, soap, newspapers, whatever. Meanwhile one hot, sticky, real, whole, female adult cannot choose to remove

bearpit

her shirt and experience the simple pleasures of sunshine and breeze on her skin without being charged under laws written and enforced largely by men.

I see. My breasts are for everyone else's pleasure and my own oppression. Whose breasts are they anyway?

Breasts are inherently sexual. Granted, they can be extremely sensual regardless of gender. But so can earlobes, necks, stomachs, thighs, feet and anything else when kissed and caressed. No one complains when I wear my usual t-shirt, shorts, ponytail and bare feet to the park. (Now that I think of it, could the disproportionate amount of time spent fondling genitals and breasts during sex be indicative of the fact that people haven't yet discovered belly buttons and toes?)

Why doesn't anyone try to grab your foot when they brush past you in the elevator?)

A four year old girl wanted to know why I was arrested. We had quite a conversation about why women (who she referred to as "women") and men (who she called "big boys") had to live by different rules.

"I know why," she said seriously, "because women have something to hide." Then it was my turn to ask why. After pondering the question, she shrugged with all the wisdom of a child, "I don't know. . ."

Well kiddo, neither do I.

Gwen Jacob is a student at the University of Guelph.

Strange sexual messages in orientation week

by Ian I. Kelso

Scene 1:

We are in a crowded pub. It is orientation week (a.k.a. Frosh Week) at York. An attractive young woman is sitting and talking to her friend by the bar. She is wearing her new Orientation T-shirt from her new college featuring the new safe sex logo sponsored by the York Federation of Students (YFS). From behind her, a man approaches. He is tall, dark and handsome, sporting his own college shirt, featuring the same logo.

WOMAN: Huh? Oh...yeah...
MAN: So...is it true??
WOMAN: What?
MAN: Have you come safely yet?...or are ya still looking?
WOMAN: Excuse me?
MAN: Y'know...your shirt...?
WOMAN: Oh. Well...
MAN: Well...?
WOMAN: Well...live far from here?
MAN: Upstairs...single room.
WOMAN: What are we waiting for.

Have you seen this film? I have. Several times over. In fact, I don't think I've not seen a film involving a university frosh week which wasn't



our minds? What is it about beer that requires sex be numero uno in our minds? We've all seen the commercials, and a beer ad without sex is like a Canadian university without tuition: it just doesn't happen.

Then what about an orientation without sex? It happened to me. The problem was that I didn't think it would. I mean, hey, I was a normal(?) healthy male, and there seemed to be a lot of normal(?) healthy females, and there were enough condoms on campus to stretch from Jupiter to the sun and back. With an equation like that, I thought the math would be simple.

It wasn't that I really wanted to have sex with anyone in particular. I kinda knew the colour of hair, the style of clothing, the type of body... I didn't necessarily need a name. It was something I was supposed to do, a rite of passage, part of being a man. Naturally, I figured that for women, it was the same. I mean, if orientation was just about getting to know the buildings and meeting a few "nice" people, what would be the fun in that?

So, my first two months was spent trying to figure out why I didn't know where anything was and why I didn't really know anyone. And as I think back on it, I blame it all on sex.

Okay! Okay! I'm not trying to pin this rap on normal bodily functions (a.k.a. hormones) or try to say there is anything wrong with sex. I actually kinda think sex is pretty neat, and not really that overrated when done properly.

And so, if you do choose to have sex during this year's orientation, please play it safe. And if you don't, hey, I didn't turn out to be such a bad person...

general meetings

Excalibur's general meetings are open to the York community and we encourage readers to come and express any concerns they have about the paper. Meetings are held every Wednesday at 5:30 PM. If you cannot attend at this time please drop by our new offices at 420 Student Centre and speak to the editors, Jeannine Amber and Doug Saunders, or phone us at 736-5239.

We value your input.

totally about the racing hormones of the male adolescent.

Which brings me around to my point. The York Federation of Students (our central student government) has produced a logo for this year's orientation featuring a semen-filled condom covering an erect penis. The caption reads: "I came safely through orientation."

Now my gripe isn't with the bad pun (although I think those student government types really ought to get out a little more). I also don't begrudge them for attempting to mount a campus-wide safe sex campaign. In fact, if they didn't have such a campaign, I would have much harsher

words for them. And I've got nothing at all against two (or twenty) consenting adults having sex together. So what is it that irks me?

The logo leaves out the essential "if...". That is, "if you choose to have sex..." It simply anticipates it. Expects it. With problems like date rape, we just don't need to fan the fire by giving potential rapists the idea that sex is somehow being advocated as an important part of orientation. With people already screwed up enough by stereotypical expectations in the media, they just don't need the extra pressure.

So, what is it about orientation that requires sex be numero uno in