

crazy & not being oppressed for it ♀lovin' ♀wearing pink ♀wearing black ♀not being hovered over ♀n

# BRAVO

To the Editors:

Bravo to The Muse for printing "A gay man's guide to safer sex"!

While the focus of the article was health education, I would like to address the broader issue of the importance of such articles in educating society as to the fact that homosexuality does exist and is just as acceptable as heterosexuality.

Ten to 20% of the people of Canada (arguably more on university campuses) are predominantly homosexual in orientation. This does not include those people who are open-minded enough to recognize that even if they are predominantly heterosexual in orientation, the possibility of being intimate with a person of the same sex is an acceptable option.

Through information and education those people who do not fit into the aforementioned categories will hopefully learn to get over their sexual hang-ups and realize that loving a person, no matter what their gender, is okay and socially acceptable. The Muse is a step in the right direction!

As for the explicitness of the article, welcome to reality people! These things happen. While eating shit and drinking pee may not be your cup of tea, you cannot deny that these things do happen. Educating sexually active and supposedly mature people (ie University students through campus newspapers) as to the potential health consequences of various sexual acts should be promoted.

Finally, I would like to pose some questions to various players in this aMusing affair:

To you anal retentive homophobes who are offended by articles containing explicit homosexual content: how do you think lesbians and gays feel about not only the mass media but all aspects of our society being inundated with heterosexual explicitness and bias?!

To the police and RCMP who are investigating The Muse (and possibly the Gazette): If you are concerned with immoral activities in our society, why are you wasting your time investigating the publishing of educational materials when you could be spending the time investigating the numerous gay-bashing incidences which occur daily.

To various (gratefully not all) members of the Dalhousie student counsel who take such offence to the Gazette's reprinting of "A gay man's guide to safer sex": You should be concerned with addressing the interests of all members of the Dalhousie community, not just white male anglo-saxon protestant heterosexuals. In other words, What have you done for me lately?

Sincerely yours,  
Beth Beattie

I walk home alone at night with my keys between my fingers. Sometimes I'm holding on so tightly that there are marks on my skin. Although I walk in the lighted areas and I have a heightened awareness of my surroundings, I am still tense.

## EDITORIAL

I walk home with an acquaintance, a friend of a friend who I have met once before. We talk and laugh and I feel safe.

The myth that rape happens while walking alone in the dark and being stalked still stays with me, even though the majority of victims are raped by someone they know. An acquaintance can be more dangerous than a stranger.

Date rape is a reality. It is difficult for anyone to prove, and for the ignorant, difficult to identify.

How do you press charges against someone you thought was attractive, someone you flirted with, and someone who you asked to walk you home? How do you press charges against someone that all your friends know and like and admire? How do you press charges against the brother of one of your friends?

No one has the right to violate another human being. No one has the right to have sex with you against your consent. No one has the right to make you feel invaded, disrespected, humiliated.

If you don't give your consent, they have no right.

We don't hear about rape here at Dalhousie. We never see posters for date rape seminars or awareness talks. Dal security was asked about rapes on campus at the beginning of the year and they said that there had been two in the last two years. Unbelievable statistics that make one assume that we have an extremely safe campus. I think not.

Date Rape

In the United States, rapes on campus are a common occurrence. Their newspapers have stories on fraternity gang rapes. There is even a name for them, "pulling train". Men stand in line like boxcars waiting their turn to violate their victim.

In her book *Fraternity Gang Rape*, Peggy Reeves Sandy says, "This little party game has been played in fraternity houses across the country for decades."

Two years ago, at McGill University in Montreal, there was an 'alleged' gang rape in a fraternity. People were shocked and outraged. Unfortunately this doesn't seem to be so unique.

I asked the fraternities here at Dal if they had ever had any complaints of sexual harassment or rape. All of them said "No".

I was at a fraternity where one woman had been held in a room, but thankfully she escaped without harm. One fraternity told me they had information sessions about preventing date rape. I am not suggesting that fraternities are a playground for rapists. I am

saying that rape is a reality and that women and men should both be aware.

If you are in a situation that you find uncomfortable and you think you might be in danger of being raped, say "NO!" loudly, to clear up any misunderstandings. Also, ask "Are you going to rape me?", to make sure he knows what he is about to do.

Being aware of the realities and the dangers are ways that you can help yourself.

Men I know don't walk home with keys tightly clenched between their fingers and have no fear in their gut. I hate not feeling safe on the streets. More than that, I hate not feeling safe in society.

Allison Johnston

## Women's engineering co-op proposed

by Marie-France LeBlanc

"In the last 20 years Women's participation statistics have been changing in all areas except in engineering", says Dr. Kathryn Bindon. Bindon, the Academic Vice-President of Mount St-Vincent University wants to change those statistics, since she feels that the lack of female engineers is not due to women's inability to cope with the profession; but rather a result of traditional education and stereotypes.

Mount St.-Vincent University and the Technical University of Nova Scotia have put together a proposal which envisages the formation of a two year co-operative engineering program which will cater exclusively to women. This program would be designed to attract women candidates, and to foster an educational atmosphere that would allow women to build up their self-confidence in the field, before they go on into the mainstream at TUNS to finish their degree.

This new initiative is just one in many throughout Canada since the December 6, 1989 massacre at the Universite de Montréal's Ecole

Polytechnique. The incident raised awareness, within the Engineering and University community, of the lack of female engineering candidates. Several reasons have been cited as the cause of such poor female interest in the profession. Much has been attributed to the traditional perception that although math and sciences are very important, they are more or less a man's area of expertise. Although much has been done in the high schools to dispel this myth, "it appears that little has changed in terms of female enthusiasm and participation in the subjects". The division, it is believed, is being perpetuated by old standards and the lack of role models.

The Mount hopes to do away with most of these problems, by having an education team which will be trained to deal with them. The program "which has been approved in principle by the senate", says Dr. Bindon, "will hire a counsellor to work with faculty to devise new teaching approaches for women and a recruitment officer which will work to change women's attitudes towards the profession".

The Mount also hopes that this

new program will avoid women, wishing to study engineering, from being exposed to their male colleagues "sexist and boorish" attitudes. It is believed that if the women can become strong on their own, they will be able to change the men's attitudes and command their respect when they are later streamed into the TUNS program.

"This program", a female first year Dalhousie Engineering student says, "sounds like a good idea, but I would not have chosen it even if it had been available to me". She believes that she would still have chosen the more established Dalhousie program and, based on her experiences so far, she does not believe she would have been disappointed in her choice. She believes in the long run, her involvement in a coed program from the very start will be to her advantage.

Samantha Phillips, the Dalhousie Engineering societies Vice-President, holds similar beliefs. Although she believes that the program is a good idea, she does not think she would have chosen the Mount program had it been available. "Within the Dalhousie engineering society I do not find

that there is much gender racism, and I find that the coeducational situation is a benefit".

"It would be nice to solicit more women into the engineering profession, and if this program can generate this it will be valuable", says Phillips, but she is very pleased with her male colleagues behavior within the Dalhousie and TUNS engineering faculty.

This new program has not been given a definite start date due to financial and administrative considerations, but its mere inception, all agree, is a positive step towards female integration within a traditionally male dominated profession.

### Our North American FOREMOTHERS

