

EDITORIAL

ON CP'S AND THEIR PAINFUL JOB

I don't envy the CP's of UNB. Their's is a difficult task.

Instance: I am walking through the SUB on a Saturday night. I hear big band music coming from the cafeteria. Voices, loud and pleasant challenge the dominance of the multiple horns and militant snare drums. This must be a big party. I enter the lobby leading into the Cafeteria and I note that there is a problem. Two older gentlemen are lingering on the stairs looking down into the lobby where a man (obviously over 40 years) is arguing with a couple of CP's. Beside the men is a young student dressed in strange elf-like attire, all Green and German. The young elf is quite upset. As one of the organizers of this event, he is disturbed that the CP's will not give these older gentlemen a "wet-stamp" (that elusive licence to drink at UNB) because the men do not have NBLCC cards. I gather that one of the CP's present is in fact a top brass in the CP hierarchy and he is sticking by his subordinate's decision. "Those are the rules, sire," they say repeatedly.

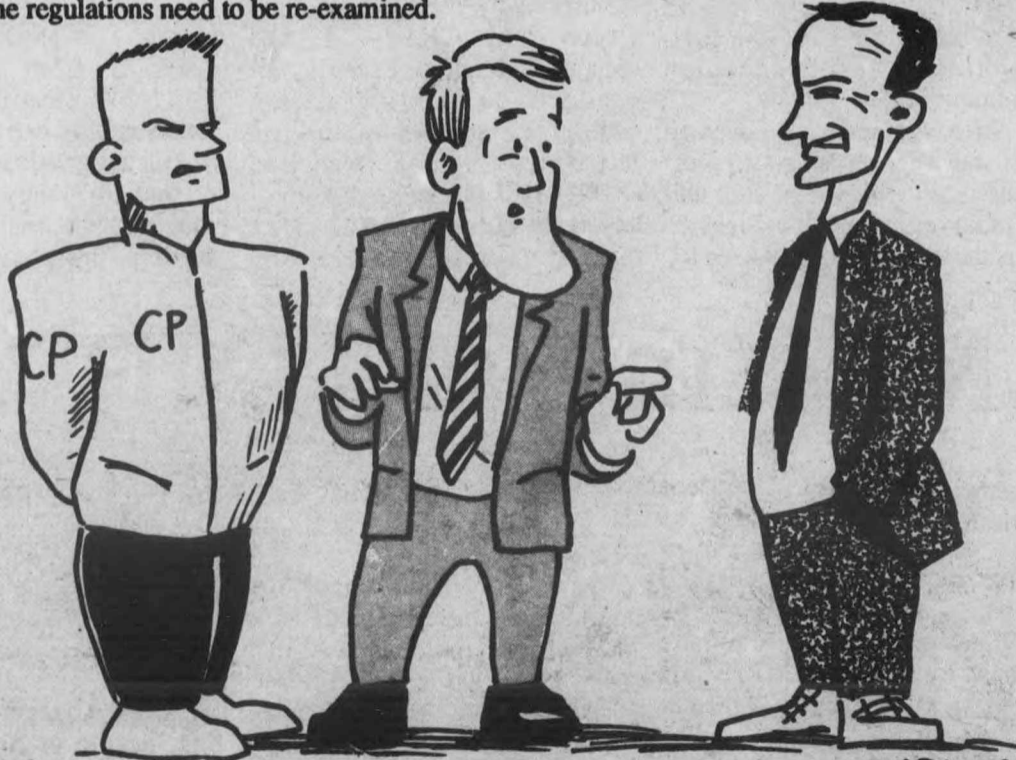
Naturally, the whole thing sounds ridiculous and understandably, the patrons are quite upset at the entire thing. Their argument is quite reasonable: these liquor cards are granted so as to ensure that people below the drinking age are not allowed to drink in public establishments. The regulation is aimed at young drinkers - underage offender of the Liquor Act. Therefore, a man or woman who is obviously over the age limit should be in no danger of breaking the law by drinking. Why then, should a youth, obviously young enough to be the child of any of these gentlemen, be allowed to bar them entrance because they cannot prove that they are over nineteen years of age?

On the other hand, the CP's have their instructions. They are told that all student events on the campus must abide by the regulation of patrons showing sufficient identification before being allowed to drink. Bar services have a by-law which calls for student groups who intend to invite non-campus people to events, to have a list of names prepared and submitted to their (Bar Services) offices before the event. If this is done, they argue, situations like the above will not happen. The CP's are merely doing their job. They do not have the power to act against the instructions they are given.

However, the problems arise when CP's fail to be consistent in the carrying out of their task. Once they are given the freedom of discretion by their superiors, it would seem to me that their task is made more complex. During this long debate in the lobby of the SUB Cafeteria, it became clear that CP discretion was backfiring. The same CP apparently allowed someone in who did not have the proper identification (or the extent of identification being demanded from the gentlemen outside). This person joined the debate and pointed this out. The CP's were not impressed, nor did they look good. It hurts when you have done a favour and it is thrown back in your face. Questions naturally arise out of these circumstances. What is the nature of this discretion? Does the CP put their job in jeopardy when they show someone leniency? Is it possible for CP's to remain hard and fast in the carrying out of their responsibilities?

I have seen this situation repeated at several events manned by CP's and I have admired the willingness of these fellow students to stand up to obviously irate and impatient fellow students who are convince that they look as old as they say they are. I know CP's are not very well-paid and sometimes I am sure they approach a weekend with some trepidation because students are less likely to respect and obey a fellow student than they would some external security officer. The inevitable tensions created by these problems have also led to the creation of an ultra-sensitive CP who seems to have allowed power to go to his or her head. What has really happened is natural. CP's decide to toe the line - not to give an inch, go by the book, and that makes them look unreasonable in their actions. It is the nature of war. Admittedly, there are some CP's who don't have the temperament for the job. Short fuses, violent tendencies and a love of power are traits that could be damaging to good relations between CP's and students. Sadly, they exist in a few CP's, but this is inevitable.

What must happen, though, is a re-evaluation of the regulations for alcohol consumption on campus. If the university is very concerned about liability suits as a result of alcohol-related accidents, it should reconsider the use of students to police the behavior of other students. Democratically, it all sounds good, but perhaps the job is too involved for CP's to handle. The present regulations with regard to drinking events should be made clear through the publishing of brochures or some such communication vehicle. At all events, a portable sign must be placed in a visible position outlining what the regulations in operation are. This will demand consistency from the CP's while freeing them from the hassle of having to explain repeatedly what the regulations are. Somehow, the regulations concerning obviously mature individuals must be reconsidered. There is something unreasonable and damaging about what happened at that event mentioned above. True, everybody was correct - they all had a good argument; but the principle was wrong. CP's should not be given the mammoth task of using their discretion on issues like those. The regulations need to be re-examined.



"SORRY, GEORGE. THE NICE CP WANTS NBLCC CARD ONLY! HAVING THE STEALTH BOMBER BUZZ THE SUB ISN'T ENOUGH!"

The Brunswickan

Canada's oldest official student publication

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