

Technicality holds up referendum

Paper wars unresolved

by Judy Reid

Due to a technicality, the Mount Saint Vincent University Student Union did not accept a referendum proposal for students to decide which of two campus papers will be funded.

The two papers are the *Picaro* and *Nexus* (formerly the *Student's Paper of MSVU*), and some students have expressed displeasure with Council's handling of the situation.

The *Picaro* was given complete autonomy by the Student Union on March 26, 1993 with the understanding that a fair and equitable agreement be reached by both parties. The move came shortly after the *Picaro* published controversial news articles involving several Council members. On October 7 Council ratified a new student paper (*Nexus*) as a society and passed a motion that the *Picaro* receive no funding whatsoever. It was also at this meeting that councillor Todd Jackson introduced a referendum motion which stated "that Council donate money to the *Picaro* or fund the *Student's Paper of MSVU*."

The technicality was pointed out by *Nexus* advertising and distribution

manager Jamie Robb during Council's last meeting on October 21. According to the Student Union constitution, before students can even consider which paper gets funding, there first must be a referendum to decide if the *Picaro* should be associated with Council.

"Their position is one of self-preservation."
~ LeDrew

"What have we been for the past 28 years?" retorted Bob LeDrew, co-editor of the *Picaro*, during an interview.

According to LeDrew, the decision on October 21 was just another example of Council's desire to give the *Picaro* as difficult time as possible. "If there was any will at all there to resolve things," said LeDrew, "then there wouldn't need to be a referendum." Student Union President Cathy

Thorpe said the accusation was ridiculous and explained that the point of order didn't come from a council member.

LeDrew said he isn't surprised that *Nexus* staff members would be against a referendum. "Their position is one of self-preservation," said LeDrew, "because I don't think they'd be supported by the student body."

Jamie Robb could not be reached for comment.

Jackson introduced a second referendum proposal during the last meeting to address the *Picaro's* association with Council. Although Jackson has stated his preference for *Nexus* to be funded by the Mount St. Vincent University Student Union, he is pushing the referendum because he said it is a decision that should be made by students. Council will vote on the new referendum proposal on Thursday, November 7.

LeDrew is dubious of Council members' ability to put their personal preferences aside in this matter. "If they felt they truly represented students," he said, "they would have no fear of a referendum."

Barlow slams free trade

by Meg Murphy

The North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) is guaranteed to redefine Canadian society if it is adopted, which is why the lack of attention it is receiving is so disturbing. Maude Barlow, the National Chairperson of the Council of Canadians, was in the Green Room of the SUB on Friday, October 22 to address concerned students about the negative repercussions of NAFTA.

The Council of Canadians was established in 1985 as an independent, non-partisan organization. Today it has over 25,000 members and chapters from coast to coast. One of its main objectives is to halt NAFTA.

Barlow spoke about the new world order NAFTA will inevitably produce, emphasizing the direct results it will have on education. At best, thirty students showed up for this informal discussion.

Politicians did not feel pressured into debating their stands on NAFTA, because they caught on to the lack of

public interest in the issue. The only party who paid it the attention it deserves, the NDP, was later accused of "wasting its time on a dead issue" by a so-called NDP supporter in the *Globe and Mail*. NAFTA has the ability to effect our unemployment rates, environmental standards, educational system, social programs, energy savings,

It has been labelled a direct attack on democracy

women's struggle for higher work standards; the list goes on and on. It weakens the law of all governments involved by placing massive amounts of power in the hands of transnational corporations. It has been labelled by many as a direct attack on democracy. So why the lack of interest?

Many Canadians are unaware of the extreme manner in which NAFTA

will effect them. Barlow compares it to a familiar simile: "We are like the frog in the water that scientists talk about. If you put a frog in very hot water it will try to get out. But, if you put a frog in cold water and turn the heat up a bit at a time the frog adjusts and adjusts and dies. I think we are in the water and I think it's getting warm now."

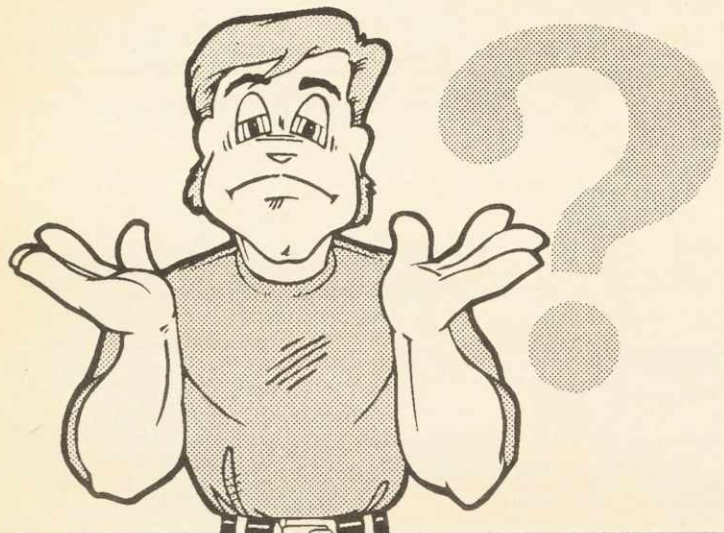
In an attempt to inform students about NAFTA, Barlow spoke for about 45 minutes, and then opened a discussion for those who had questions. She explained the global economy in which we may soon be competing and emphasized the lowered standards we may be petitioning against. For example, under NAFTA Canadian industries are competing directly with Mexican-based, foreign-owned assembly plants, called *maquiladoras*. The wages in *maquiladoras* dropped from \$1.38 (US) per hour in 1982 to 51¢ (US) in 1991. These Mexican workers have almost no rights, yet their production rate is extremely high. Will it be possible for

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