

# Gazette discusses difficulties with other student newspapers

by Cathy McDonald

The weekend of November 13 saw five Gazette staffers trot off to St. John's, Newfoundland, for the second of three annual conferences of the Atlantic Region Canadian University Press.

Canadian University Press is a democratic organization of 48 student newspapers which operates to promote members' effectiveness through an exchange of news, resources and ideas.

Delegates from six of the seven Atlantic member papers discussed issues and problems common to student newspapers.

A main focus was the frustrated attempts of papers to attract enough volunteer staff to cover the range of activity and news happening on campuses. Delegates discussed ways and means of organizing successful recruitment campaigns.

Campus Plus, the national advertising company owned by Canadian University Press, which solicits ads on a national basis, was a topic of concern. The Atlantic region receives less advertising than other parts of

Canada because companies have a bias against promoting their wares in seemingly 'have-not' provinces, according to John Parsons, CUP President. Atlantic papers will not be hurt financially, however, as their contract with Campus Plus ensures a subsidy when advertising revenue does not make up one quarter of a paper's operating budget. Suggestions for encouraging advertising in the Atlantic are now being explored, Parsons said.

Advertising boycotts, or the refusal of a paper to accept ads for certain products, or from certain companies whose corporate activities counter the principles under which a paper is trying to operate, were also debated.

Some delegates recognized that advertising copy is as visible and as much a message to the readers as the editorial copy, and should be regarded as such. A paper which expresses concern for the subversion of human rights would be inconsistent if it promoted companies that are documented

as subverting those rights, for example in labour policies, or with investments that support infamous governments such as South Africa and its apartheid laws.

The discussion of ad boycotts will be brought to the Gazette staff.

Tom Fitzpatrick, the ARCUP staff person, will be relieved of his duties as of December 31, it was decided at the closing plenary.

Serious concern for the level of service needed from a regional staff person, namely periodic visits to different papers to help with difficulties, and the equally important exchange of news of concern to all Atlantic students, resulted in the move to find a new person for the job.

Fitzpatrick will remain to aid papers in their preparation for the national conference of Canadian University Press, held on the outskirts of Toronto over the Christmas holidays, where the organization will be evaluated and given direction for the next year.

# Journalists risk their lives to report on Latin America

MONTREAL (CUP) — Journalists in Latin America are suffering persecution and death in their attempts to get stories, says journalist and producer Brian McKenna.

"Most journalists risk their lives to get the news out", he said.

McKenna spoke at Concordia University recently about his experiences in El Salvador last January, while filming a segment for the CBC television news program, The Fifth Estate.

The real problem concerns native journalists "who have to make their daily bread", said McKenna.

They have to stay in their country after writing their stories and so are open to backlash; and their publications cannot go underground, because of their financial structures which rely on advertising.

McKenna gave several examples of Latin American countries where it is difficult for newscasters to work, such as El Salvador, Paraguay, Uruguay, and Guatemala, where he said it is illegal to study journalism.

McKenna also screened the Fifth Estate episode on El Salvador, "Shooting the Messenger" which centers on the shooting of Newsweek photojournalist Olivier Rebbot and features an interview with him several days before he died.

Segments of the video jolted the audience as they viewed film clips of journalist and students being murdered by soldiers.

McKenna discussed the situation in Argentina where he said the word 'disappeared' has

become an active verb. "They've disappeared one hundred journalists in Argentina", he said.

According to McKenna, the Argentinian government has developed "the Naval Solution" for dealing with journalists who, when their mutilated and broken bodies are discovered after their deaths, in effect speak from the grave about the horrible situation. "The Naval Solution" involves flying out over the ocean and dropping journalists into ocean currents where their bodies will not wash up on shore and the world will never know what happened.

"Most sides see journalists as propagandists with the other side", said McKenna. They are therefore viewed as a threat. The unwritten rule that you don't shoot a journalist is no longer being followed, he said. As a result, the journalists take risks.

Photographers are in greater peril because they go to the scene of the conflict and can always be interviewed by journalists when they get back, he said.

"The (reporters) on short assignments also need protection because they are the ones who can ... tell it like it is", said McKenna in reference to foreign journalists who go to conflict areas briefly to cover a story.

McKenna affirmed there is an ideological bias in North American newscasts due to the self-censorship on the part of journalists. He said also that too often they accept what government sources tell them at face value, while Latin American governments often orchestrate

press conferences with the knowledge that journalists have deadlines to meet and cannot take the time to properly cover a story.

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