

Council edits student newspaper

by Ian Johnston

The censoring of a university newspaper by a member of its student union marks the most recent incident in a growing controversy over student newspaper autonomy.

Two news stories were removed from the second page of the September 24 issue of the Argus, a student newspaper at Lakehead University in Thunder Bay, Ontario, without the knowledge of the newspaper's staff. VP Internal Affairs Charlotte Caron says she removed the stories, which dealt with a member of the Lakehead University Student Union, after a LUSU lawyer said the stories were libelous.

"Since the Argus is a club, it falls under my jurisdiction. Anyway, it was stuff to do with the summer and wasn't that pressing," she says.

"With a few changes, they could have run it the next week."

Caron says she had attended provincial court earlier that day because of libel charges stemming from an Argus article published last year.

"We're financially responsible. We just couldn't take that kind of risk again," she says.

Jamie Wallace, former VP

Communications at Lakehead, says Caron had no right to censor the paper on her own.

Wallace says he heard of Caron's actions at a board of directors meeting on the day she pulled the stories. Wallace says Argus editor-in-chief Terry Caddo was also in attendance but was forced to leave when the meeting moved *in camera*.

"He didn't hear what happened to the paper," Wallace says. "They're abusing their positions. It's just petty politics."

Wallace resigned his position on the board after the announcement.

George Strong, news editor of the Argus and one of the writers of the stories that were pulled, says he can understand why LUSU may have been worried about the articles, but he says the overstepped their authority.

"I think the editor-in-chief should be the one to edit the paper," he says.

The first issue of the Argus following the incident featured a picture of a large swastika with the words "Censored" written across it. Articles in this issue attack the LUSU and recount similar incidents at other universities' newspapers.

In a similar incident, copies of the McGill Daily were report-

edly removed from the school in September under the order of the director of physical resources. The administration at the university had deemed a photo in the paper depicting a sexual act "offensive". The photo was part of an exhibition on pregnancy and sexuality by a Montreal artist.

In another incident, the editor-in-chief for the University of Guelph paper, the Ontario, was removed from his position by the newspaper's publishing board. The editor was fired after he reportedly tried to publish a supplement containing racist and sexist material.

The Dalhousie Gazette set up a publishing board seven years ago after the newspaper was shut down by the student council. Tim Hill, a member of the board and a former student union president at Dalhousie, says the actions taken by Charlotte Caron are dangerous.

"It's exactly like a government-controlled press," he says.

Hill says the Gazette publishing board provides an "unbiased" view of the newspaper. The board features student representatives, a legal advisor, faculty members and representatives from the newspaper.

"The board forms an opinion



based on the facts only," he says. Hill says the incident at Lakehead may not have occurred if the Argus had a publishing board.

"The best defense against such action is educating the people,"

he says.

George Strong says LUSU and members of the ARGUS staff are looking into setting up a publishing board to create a "buffer" between council and the newspaper.

It's Criminal

OTTAWA (CUP) — "The content of criminal law is incredibly stacked against women," says Queen's University law professor Kathleen Lahey.

Lahey and Dalhousie University law professor Christine Boyle gave an address on feminist perspectives on criminal law reform to mark the beginning of a three-day workshop at the University of Ottawa on women and criminal justice issues. The workshop was sponsored by the National Association of Women and the Law, a group "dedicated to improving the legal status of women in Canada," and the U of O's Women's Law Caucus.

Boyle reminded her predominantly female audience that the "criminal justice system is not a thing of our (women's) creation." Consequently, she said, women should not be satisfied with merely tinkering with or updating the system.

She expressed wonder at a criminal justice system that often questions the credibility of women and children who recount experiences of sexual abuse.

She warned that "knowledge of reality is influenced by male perspectives," in a society where a crime such as rape is not "gender neutral", and premenstrual syndrome (PMS) is some-

times treated as a personality disorder.

equality enshrined recently in the constitution, Lahey said that "inequalities mark us as Despite the guarantee of

Lahey reminded her audience about a past before the 1982 guarantee of equality when "women were harnessed to male-owned economic apparatus" and men "appropriated women's production capacities".

She said that during the three-year period between the passage and adoption of the 1982 constitution, it was expected that the courts would be flooded with women to contest cases on the new equality provision, and that male lawyers feared being overwhelmed by a group of 'rad fems',

but this didn't happen to the extent feminists wished.

Lahey suggested there be a new set of crimes that people could be tried for: domestic terrorism; enslavement of women; and use of women as reproductive chattel.

She called for a repeal of abortion laws, lawful access to artificial insemination and legalization of prostitution. She lauded women lawyers as a voice for women in the courtroom and said she was not surprised that only women seem to need to use "defense of necessity" as a course of defence.

Lahey also said there are times when civil disobedience is necessary in obtaining justice for women.

Bishop's flunks

LENNOXVILLE (CUP) — Almost a third of first-year students at Bishop's University failed a mandatory writing test this fall.

The writing test was taken this year by 526 students. Twenty-seven per cent failed.

"A lot of students don't write very much in classes," said Margaret Redding, director of the Writing Proficiency Program. "They accumulate marks on quizzes and mid-terms which only require short answers. The

test catches most of them."

Some students who took the test attributed the results to drunkenness.

"It was a bad time in Frosh Week," said Anthony Milonas. "Everyone was half drunk."

"I failed. I was impaired," said Jeff Sprecker.

According to a recent survey by Southam News, 8 per cent of Canadian university graduates are functionally illiterate.

Gov't indifference

VANCOUVER (CUP) — The Social Credit government's decision to sell the Expo '86 site to the highest bidder will likely shelve previous plans to build low-income housing in the area, according to a community spokesperson.

Stephen Learey, of the Downtown Eastside Residents' Association (DERA), said it is unlikely a developer will want to build 30 per cent low-income housing on the Expo site, as was originally planned by the provincial and Vancouver city government.

"The odds are pretty slim social housing will be built," said Learey. "There is money talking and I can't see [a developer] wanting to build social housing when the return is so small."

But Vancouver Mayor Gordon Campbell said non-market housing will go ahead.

"It won't be quite 30 per cent, but it will be the same per cent as the North Park development (around 20 per cent)," said Campbell.

When asked what the developers will say, Campbell said, "They don't have a choice."

Expo has been shrouded in housing controversy since the planning stages. According to DERA estimates, roughly 800 people — mostly poor, older residents of downtown rooming hotels — were evicted by landlords boosting their rents to meet the rush of Expo tourists before, during, and after the fair opened.

Media coverage peaked in 1986, when at least six downtown Vancouver residents who were being forced out of their

rooms committed suicide, including one who jumped from his hotel window.

Learey feels the situation will repeat itself if new development on the site does not include low-income housing.

"With such a large development next to the east side, it's an opportunity for hotel owners to flip their land into restaurants," he said.

Learey said there is a desperate need for low-income housing in Vancouver. He said DERA has built three social housing projects in the same number of years. The most recent one, in May, had 153 suites available and over 1800 applications.

"And that's with no advertising — only by word of mouth," he said.

City councillor Bruce Eriksen said the city could use its zoning laws to force a developer to provide low-income housing.

"The city sets the floor space allowed" in a development, said Eriksen. "The city will give extra floor space to gain other amenities; these amenities sometimes include (low-cost) housing."

A representative of the B.C. Enterprise Corporation, a provincial development agency, said the government will sell the title to land, giving final authority to the city council.

"What kind of activity goes on is a matter between the developer and the city of Vancouver," said vice-president Rod Cameron. "Even if we have a financial interest in place, the government won't be involved."