

# King's Watch-Students' newspaper or administration mouthpiece?

by Gretchen Pohlkamp

"Voice of the students', my ass!" says George Bain, director of the school of journalism at the University of King's College, in reference to the reborn King's Watch.

The King's Watch which folded last year amid controversy, will be revived on Oct. 17, 1980. And the controversy threatens to be reborn with it.

The newspaper has had financial difficulties since its birth. It has depended on the approximately 400 member student union for most of its funds. Last spring the union refused to allocate more money and the paper folded.

Since then Bain has been lobbying for enough money from the administration of King's to ensure the survival of the newspaper. He has succeeded, he says, at least for the time being.

Bain has acquired typesetting equipment, two new rooms, a free printing service and some money for supplies with a seeming effortlessness which belies the trouble he has gone to.

But now that the newspaper is financed by the administration, will the students at King's be able to maintain the newspaper as a student forum?

Bain gives a qualified yes. He intends to use the King's Watch as a teaching implement, offering students an opportunity to publish stories, edit copy, work on layout and re-hash mistakes.

King's isn't large enough for the newspaper to concentrate solely on university happenings, he says. "Since this is a school of journalism, we should adopt a thoroughly professional attitude and address general reader subjects," says Bain.

Bain hopes to create a south-end community newspaper which focuses on issues of interest to both students and the general public.

Why shouldn't students who are going out into the real world next year do stories which relate to the real world?" asks Bain. "In the school of journalism there is an unwillingness to leave the womb. Are students so narrow that they are only interested in things which relate to the university?"

If they are, Bain does not think they should be. He says that they should have broader interests and hopes that his plans for the Watch will help in this broadening.

Bain says a newspaper at a university the size of Dalhousie or U of T can find enough student issues to cover and they have an important function there. But in general he does not like interest group organs, and would like to make sure that the King's Watch avoids that fate.

## Dissension is already mounting at King's.

"The thing that bugs me sometimes is when the lobby aspect pervades the news pages," says Bain. "It's fine if you keep it to the editorial page but too often the news stories are slanted to support the views expressed on the editorial page."

And as for editorial independence, Bain says the editors the King's Watch will put what stories they want in the paper and "they can express any damn opinion they like on the editorial page, so

long as it isn't libelous."

"I have no axe to grind", says Bain, "no opinions to express through the newspaper."

"I would hope to see that a certain amount of the material of school of journalism quality gets in the paper," he says. "If there is a definite effort to pervert the production of the newspaper as I see it, I may do something."

Eleanor Austin, co-editor of the King's Watch, says students have been enthusiastic about working for the newspaper. She sees Bain's role as that of advisor to the Watch, not as publisher or dictator.

"According to the Davie Report, it is the duty of the press to prepare readers for social change," says Austin. "The King's Watch should appeal not only to King's students but also to the outside community and it should cover stories that affect not only the students but the public at large."

Austin says that about 30 students attended the last staff meeting of the Watch.

She says there is only one thing disappointing about the turn-out, and that is that only two of those students are not in the school of journalism.

"I'd like to see a lot more students from outside journalism joining the staff of the King's Watch," she said. "There seems to be a split developing at the university. We are always down in the basement at the school of journalism and other students seem reluctant to come down and join us."



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With the administration take over of the finances and direction of the newspaper, it seems even less likely that other students will be getting involved.

Part of the problem, according to one journalism student, is that senior students are required to work on the Watch to earn 20 per cent of their writing and reporting mark. This could have a detrimental effect on the general attitude, with regular students considering the newspaper to be a school of journalism mouthpiece.

"There is already mounting dissension between the student body and the journalism school," says Austin. "But I think the fears are unfounded. King's is small enough that we can't afford to have a rift. The things that are happening here on campus will be covered and students will be able to read interesting and well researched material."

One journalism student says that the 20 per cent requirement has already changed things. "It puts a different feeling in my head. I don't think it's going to help the King's Watch get people involved."

## Course evaluations revitalized...again

by Paul Creelman

The pilot project of the course evaluation was doomed to failure last year. However, Student Council plans to revitalize the project this year, according to Jeff Champion, Vice President of Dalhousie Student Council.

"Last year's project ran into some major problems with organization. The sheer mass of data that we would have to compile was the start of the trouble. Then many professors refused to co-operate with the evaluation. Of course, to be fair, we started the evaluation at a bad time last year, right before exams. Many professors didn't have the class time to spare for the questionnaire. However, I'm sure that the professors who most need to be evaluated would be the ones least likely to agree to cooperate."

The report of the coordinator of the pilot project, Fay Pickrem, graphically described the resulting chaos:

"...because of confusion about when all the questionnaires would be printed, the starting date was moved ahead...which brought us up to about the middle of March. A further detail delay occurred... (since)...roughly two-thirds (of the volunteers) had changed their minds about participating, so I had to find a completely new group of people, many of whom also did not come through in the end. Thus at the end of March, I

was faced with almost no available volunteers... However, it was now the last week of classes, attendance was poor, and many professors were giving in-class exams. In the end, only nine out of twenty-six sections were successfully evaluated. Another three were completed, turned in at the Inquiry Desk, and never heard of again..."

Despite the logistical problems of last year's pilot, the Student Council has already appointed a Course Evaluation Committee, chaired by Champion. Although the committee has not yet met to consider the implications of last year's report, work will be definitely done to consider prospects for this year's course evaluation.

"Actually, last year's pilot was completed with the report of the Co-ordinator", says council president Gord Owen.

"The compilation of data and the publication of the sample course evaluations would have been nice, but they weren't essential. The computer program to analyze the questionnaires was completed over the summer, so I think that we're in as good a position as any to get started on a full scale project this year. The data collection for an upcoming evaluation wouldn't have to start until November, so again, there's plenty of time to look at the results of last year's project and make our decision."



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George Bain, director of King's School of Journalism and the driving force behind the new King's Watch