

feature

It may already be too late. If you haven't read this by 4:30 Thursday October 21, Mount St. Vincent students may have already been denied their right to see that their Student Union fees are spent fairly. Then again, if the MSVU student government decides that principles of democracy are worth the inconvenience of holding a referendum, then there still may be time for you to have your say in...

For 28 years the *Picaro* had been the student paper on campus. However on March 26, 1993 the Student Union reduced the *Picaro's* funding from \$13,000 to 0 by granting the paper complete autonomy (ie.

no longer a society of the University). And on August 6 1993, student council ratified a new society called the Student's Newspaper of Mount Saint Vincent University Society which will receive approximately \$7,000 as well as the office space and equipment that had previously been at the *Picaro's* disposal. Both papers have published one issue so far this fall.

According to editors Bob LeDrew and Joe Strolz, their exile to study carrel 129 in the campus library began with their decision to print a controversial story involving Student Council members. "It went to press and a week later they try to change our editorial policy. Coincidence?" asked Strolz. "I think not."

The story reported student councilors getting drunk during a public fund raising event while they were representing the university. One of the council members was current Student Union president Cathy Thorpe, then Executive Vice-President and Alcohol Awareness Committee Chairperson.

"The time factor there is just a bit odd," agreed LeDrew. Thorpe said that she's fed up with accusations that the whole business with the *Picaro* is the result of the story they did on her getting drunk at a public function. "That's ridiculous. The supposed article that they're alleging of me to have caused all this was not an issue, so I don't care." She stated her proof as a record voter turnout when she was elected president for this school year.

"It seemed to me that it was very important for them [students] to have a paper," said Cathy, "but whether it was the *Picaro* or a new publication didn't seem to matter as much."

Prior to council's decision that the *Picaro* editor be hired by one representative from the *Picaro*, Student Union, print media professional and two students at large, the editor had always been elected by staff members of the paper. In Thorpe's article in the *Student's Paper of MSVU*, this motion was made to improve accessibility to the position of editor.

"They [council] are not really considering the wishes of the students," countered LeDrew. "I think they're considering their own image and their own goals as opposed to what's best for the students."

LeDrew and Strolz say their lack of financial support is

While working on this piece, I managed to survey eleven students about their opinions on the two papers. Although opinion was divided as to which paper should get financial support, ten out of eleven wanted the question to go to referendum. The questions asked were: 1. Which student paper do you read? 2. If you could only have one paper on campus, which would you choose? 3. Do you think a referendum should be held for students to decide which paper should be funded by council?



Derek Riedle, Public Relations:
1. I've always read the *Picaro* but have looked through the new paper.

2. I'd choose the *Picaro*. It is the traditional paper of the Mount and doesn't seem to be affiliated with one group or society.

3. I think a referendum is a great idea. It's time this issue was cleared up.

Annette Chiasson, 5th year Honours Psych:

1. I used to read the *Picaro* - now I doubt if I'll bother. The *Student Paper* is much better - more coverage of issues.

2. I'd choose the *Student Paper*. It's more accessible, more representation of the students, and more information.

3. Yes. I think that after one academic year, the students should vote (referendum) on whether to keep both papers (diversity is good!) or keep just one, and which one.



Rhonda, 4th year BBA:

1. Students Paper and *Picaro*.

2. I would choose the *Student's Newspaper* because the quality and content are better and there isn't continuous (weekly) bashing at people's ethics and personalities. In other words, the *Picaro* appears to be written by a columnist, not a journalist.

3. No, because a) chances of percent required turnout are slim, b) *Picaro* wanted to be completely on its own and now it is, c) student negative reaction has been nil about no *Picaro* -exception- *Picaro* staff.

Annette Tanner, 3rd year BBA:

1. *Picaro* - I read this paper to find out what kinds of things are happening on campus that I don't hear about.

2. I'd choose the *Picaro* if only one paper could be published.

3. Yes. If there's going to be a lot of conflict about the funds then the students should have a say in what they want to see the student union funds go towards. It is some of our money they're spending.



Story and photos by Judy Reid

their punishment for not conceding to the Student Union's wishes. "Students have been robbed of a paper that will act as a watchdog of their govern-

ment that has all their student fees," said Strolz.

Ian Cowan, editor of the *Student's Paper of MSVU*, disagrees. "Time will prove that I can do a good job with the *Student's Paper*."

Hired by the paper's publishing board, Cowan has the dubious honour of being the only applicant. The board hired the news editor, the advertising editor, the entertainment/sports editor and the distribution editor. Cowan then hired a production editor.

It is also the existence of this board that has prompted allegations of the *Student Paper* being a mouthpiece for society presidents and council. Cowan admitted that there is no way to ensure that the board can't conspire against an individual but added, "If it's done, then that person's got a hell of an organizational skill."

Todd Jackson is the Board of Governors representative on council as well as the council rep for the paper's publishing board. Jackson is also the councilor who introduced the referendum question at the last Student Council meeting. "I want to see this go to a referendum, I want to see students decide," he said. "I want to get this over and done with so we can have one paper."

Jackson explained that his decision to move for a referendum was based on talking to students who felt they should have been consulted. Jackson also received a letter from a student who expressed her shock and disappointment that council formed a new paper before the dispute with the *Picaro* was settled. The reason she gave for having a referendum was, "After all, it's the students that are paying for all this mess."

"I know it's only one letter," said Jackson, "but if that's the way students feel then I think we should have a referendum." According to Jackson there is too much bad feeling and personality conflicts surrounding the plight of the *Picaro* for council to make a decision. "We can sit here and pretend, 'Okay, well we're gonna resolve it with the *Picaro*,'" said Jackson, "but I don't think there will be anyway that we're going to resolve anything until we go the students."

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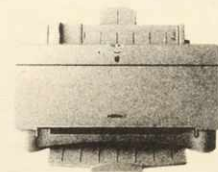
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