

# Hey, didn't this happen before?

An Analysis  
by Fred C. Smith

Controversy over the SRC's budget allotment to the Aquinian is not a new issue. As recently as the 1983-84 academic year the SRC and the Aquinian were at odds over the finances of the student newspaper. In September 1983 the SRC reduced the paper's proposed budget for that year by \$2000.

In 1985 the SRC has basically done the same thing, citing a mounting deficit and an effort to cut back expenses, the same reasons for cutting back the Aquinian in 1983-84.

But the financial wranglings between the student council and the student newspaper escalated. In February 1984 the SRC altered the nature of the Aquinian's support to a "pay as you go" policy.

The Aquinian at the time had a account deficit of \$1800 although over \$2500 in advertising revenues were outstanding. The Aquinian was ordered by the SRC to suspend publication until the \$1800 was cleared up.

The paper complied with this order, but through a hastily organized Friends of the Aquinian group made up of then current and former staffers, faculty members and other supporters of the paper, raised funds to publish an

underground publication called The Akwinyan — so called because the ownership of the trademark name Aquinian was unclear.

The Akwinyan was published March 14, 1984 because then editor in chief Peter Boisseau said that due to an upcoming SRC election, he and his staff felt students should have an opportunity to review the candidates in that election. And under special circumstances they allowed the candidates to check their interviews prior to publication.

The night before the Akwinyan was to hit the streets, the SRC reacted. On March 13, 1984 the SRC voted overwhelmingly to suspend the constitution of the Aquinian and dismissed the paper's entire editorial board.

In a general meeting of the Aquinian staff on March 19 it was reported in their minutes that "the SRC thought this was going to be a biased edition (of the newspaper), slanting the election material contained for the benefit of one candidate."

The SRC, in an official statement after their meeting, said they "have the responsibility to insist that the Aquinian editorial board manage a financially responsible operation ... and deal frankly and honestly with the student body at all times. Unfortunately the editorial board of 1983-84 failed in both these respects."

Editor Boisseau refuted these

charges and SRC members refused to elaborate on their official statement.

After months of meetings and heated debates, the SRC in its summer session 1984 reinstated the editor and his board, refunding his 1983-84 SRC fees — a long standing traditional SRC vote of approval — and passed a motion to set up a publishing board for the newspaper composed of SRC, Aquinian, student, faculty, media and legal representatives to oversee an independent (from the SRC) operation of the student newspaper.

Setting up a publishing board without a mandate didn't work. This year council set up a committee to investigate the feasibility of autonomous publication of the Aquinian. This committee's work is ongoing.

In 1984-85 the SRC granted the Aquinian its full budget request.

This year, as in 1983-84, they cut back. The events after the cutbacks in 83-84 that escalated to the dismissal, then the embarrassing re-instatement need not occur again. Steps must be taken on behalf of both the SRC and the Aquinian to deal rationally with each other.

This is not to say the Aquinian deserves everything for which they ask. If times are tough then organizations must

realize the "horn of plenty" can run out and budgets may be cut back. But dialogue between both parties has to take

place in order for them to come to an amicable agreement within the confines of the SRC's total operating budget.

## SRC versus CUP

By LOIS CORBETT

A big part of the budget dispute between the St. Thomas SRC and the Aquinian is the paper's involvement in Canadian University Press and a contract with its national advertising agency, Campus Plus.

Richard Roach, the SRC lawyer, has been involved in the CUP debate since the Aquinian was first approached to join the national student newspaper organization.

Earlier this year, Roach advised the SRC not to sign the Campus Plus contract "unless they were willing to accept it for the whole year," he says.

Roach says that since the Aquinian and the SRC are considering incorporation for the paper after Christmas, he thought it was better the council wait before they jumped into a year's agreement with Campus Plus.

But since then, Roach has been contacted by Brian Iler, CUP's lawyer. Roach says Iler told him Campus Plus was willing to reconsider the length of the contract and would allow the SRC to opt out if the Aquinian incorporates and the SRC no longer has publishing responsibilities.

Roach said he was going to the SRC executive yesterday with the new information.

But even without a contract signed, Roach says there is some question about the SRC's responsibility to CUP and whether or not it is liable to pay this year's \$2394 fee.

"The bottom line is if they've been receiving the services in good faith, then do they not owe CUP for them? And then they've got a problem," said Roach.

Iler said CUP would consider its legal options, but suing the St. Thomas SRC would be a last resort.

Roach agrees. "Our defense would be that we didn't authorize anything, but is that going to be a good defense? I'm sure we'll work something out," he says.

Roach says Iler had "indicated they might sue. 'I hope it doesn't get to that,'" says Roach.

The Aquinian joined CUP in 1984 when that year's SRC passed a motion at its January 17 meeting approving the affiliation.

But later in the same SRC term, council voted to rescind the motion. At a March 13, 1984 meeting, the SRC pulled the paper out of CUP, suspended its constitution, and fired its editorial board.

## Faculty continued from page 1

Cody, who is also President of FAUST, the faculty association at St. Thomas, is not sure how the association will react to the shortened publishing year. "It's conceivable that if the newspaper brings it to the association FAUST could jump on it," he says.

Professor Roger Moore, who teaches Spanish at St. Thomas, says the controversy comes down to two issues.

"The main issues are money and freedom of the press," says Moore. "I think the SRC

should be supporting you on a regular basis. If they're not, then I think the Aquinian should get out there and support themselves. How the Aquinian is going to do this is another matter. There might be enough faculty members willing to float the money needed to keep the Aquinian going until advertising comes in."

But at least one member of the St. Thomas faculty sides with the SRC.

Jon Rahn, another SRC faculty advisor, says the SRC

never agreed to join Canadian University Press in the first place.

"As usual, the Aquinian objected to its budget," says Rahn. "There was never any agreement signed by the SRC to join CUP. I'm not outraged because this has been a battle that has been going on for years. There's only so much money at it has to be divided among so many people. I have reservations about the financial commitment as far as the SRC is concerned."

### TO THE ST. THOMAS SRC MEMBERS

I think a student newspaper at St. Thomas University is important, and I feel the Aquinian has not received enough funding. As a St. Thomas student, I ask you to reconsider the Aquinian budget proposal.

Signature \_\_\_\_\_

Student Number \_\_\_\_\_

Clip and deposit in box in A.D. Lobby.

**To all faculty, administration, staff, and students of STU and UNB:**

**We need your help.**

**The St. Thomas SRC will not support us.**

**Will you?**

**This special supplement is funded by private donations from staff, friends and supporters of the Aquinian.**

**We think we have something worth fighting for. Please contribute to the "Save the Aquinian Fund"**

**c/o Room 32, Student Union Building**

**Thank you.**