Mount gives contribution to Body Politic



by Glenn Walton

The student council of Mount Saint Vincent University has voted to contribute a small sum of money to the Body Politic "Free the Press Fund." This fund was set up to aid that newspaper, Canada's leading gay publication, in its fight against an appeal by the Crown of last fall's not-guilty verdict in its widely-watched 'obscenity' trial.

This week it will be decided whether the Body Politic will be re-tried on charges of distributing obscene material through the mail in a hearing that many civil libertarians have called unnecessary, in light of last fall's verdict.

Two years ago the Ontario and Metropolitan Toronto police raided the Body Politic offices in Toronto with authorization to search for "corporate records, invoices and documents pertaining to business operations which might afford evidence relevant to charges which might be laid under Section 164 of the Criminal Code of Canada ('use of the mails for the purpose of transmitting or delivering anything that is indecent, immoral, or scurrilous')".

The raid followed media attention, often sensationalistic, to the publication in the six-year old newspaper of an article on pedophilia entitled "Men Loving Boys Loving Men", which prompted Toronto Sun columnist Clare Hoy to charges of "filthy...sick...criminal" activities. The Ontario Attorney General agreed, stating that the police raid he ordered would 'set back the cause', referring to efforts on the part of the gay

community to have the term 'sexual orientation' included in the Ontario Human Rights Code, as had been done in Quebec.

possible effects on human rights legislation, Body Politic spokesperson Edward Jackson noted that "this is only one article in a paper that has been in publication for six years, and it is about the lives of only four men. That the government sees it as an excuse to refuse recognition of the rights of hundreds of thousands of gay people is simply further evidence of how much we need legal protection. We know the government doesn't want sexual orientation in the Human Rights Code. Now it looks like they'll try to pin it on the Body Politic as the scapegoat when the motion is defeated.

When questioned about

The judge agreed, and the Body Politic was acquitted of the charges. But its troubles were only just beginning. The Crown decided to appeal the verdict, and this week it will be decided whether there will be a new trial. The newspaper, which is non-profit, has initiated extensive fund-raising projects, and views another long and expensive court

battle with trepidation.

"The Crown has vast resources and time. We don't," says Tim McCaskell.

In addition, the paper has been unable to get back the boxes of manuscripts, letters and other documents, that were seized by the Toronto and Ontario police, despite the fact that none of the material was used in the trial.

Support of the Body Politic has been forthcoming from across the country and even from outside of Canada. The Mayor of Toronto has spoken in favour of gay rights, and last year's Cabaret at the Turret in Halifax was a benefit for the paper. The decision of the Mount Saint Vincent Student Council to support the paper was sponsored by the university's student newspaper, The Picaro. A spokesperson for the paper told me that, while the staff was generally in favour of gay rights, they had to convince their council that the money was supporting "free and unoppressed press."



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DAGS general election soon

The Dalhousie Association of Graduate Students will be holding general elections on Tuesday, March 11.

A president and twenty councillors are to be elected.
The Council oversees the

operations of the Association and acts on behalf of graduate students inside and outside the University on such bodies as Faculty Council and SUNS.

Among the more important tasks facing the Association during the upcoming year will be the continued problem of inadequate research funding, the scarcity of employment opportunities for graduates, the issue of teaching assistant unionization and the ongoing cooperation with the DSU for greater graduate input into student affairs. An additional responsibility of the new council will be to act as hosts for the National Graduate Constituency which will be visiting Halifax as part of the National Union of Students Conference which is to be held at Dalhousie in May.

Positions on DAGS Council are open to all registered graduate students. Nominations open Monday, February 18 and close Wednesday, March 5. Nominations forms are available at the Graduate House.

Correction

A story on page nine of the January 17 edition of the Gazette said "NDP Finance critic Bob Rae reportedly has predicted that the Canadian dollar might fall as low as 75 cents in U.S. terms under NDP interest rate policies."

Despite several attempts, this report could not be confirmed at press time. In a subsequent phone interview with the Gazette, Mr. Rae denied ever having made such an assertion, terming it "pure baloney."

Mr. Rae said there would be no "dramatic fall" in the Canadian dollar if interest rates in Canada were reduced by two per cent. "There are steps that can be taken by the imposition of certain kinds of witholding taxes on interest rates and dividends payments out of the country; if we put those on beforehand, there would be no problem with a dramatic, speculative run on the dollar," Rae said.

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