

## College Press Freedom Is Controversial Issue

(An article in Editor & Publisher for January 8, 1949)

By DWIGHT BENTEL

The American college undergraduate newspaper is no journalistic peewee. Its combined circulation is something more than 1,000,000, and it is read by twice that many.

It reaches and influences in their formative stages a group of young men and women who go on to positions of responsibility and leadership in American society.

It offers an advertising medium for some commodities as hot as the proverbial firecracker. Advertisers spend more than \$1,000,000 a year in the 41 college dailies alone. They spend a whole lot additional in the 500 tri-weeklies, semi-weeklies, weeklies, and in the several hundred periodicals.

It provides a training laboratory for a considerable and increasing number of future newspapermen.

### A Solid Achievement

It's a chronicler of the activities of the more than 1,000 senior colleges and a lot of junior and teachers' colleges as well and is the only paper most of their students read regularly . . . and that includes more than 2,000,000 now in attendance.

At its best, the undergraduate newspaper is a pretty smooth piece of journalism by anybody's standards, and a solid academic achievement. It's a builder of campus morale and a public relations medium of high order.

At its worst . . . wow!

It can raise more hell on a college campus than spiked punch at the Dean's reception for freshman women.

It can make more errors of fact and judgment in a single four-page issue than a professional editor ever dreamed after a midnight snack of Welsh rabbit.

It has (not once but many times) aroused the wrath of budget-controlling legislatures, raised the hackles of the post office department, stimulated cries of anguish from ministerial associations, offended the Rotary Club, the Merchants' Association, the Y. W. C. A. and the W. C. T. U., and infuriated every academic personage from chancellor emeritus to assistant professor of flycasting.

It has sent uncounted thousands of be-neckled, begowned, and bewildered undergraduates vainly looking for dances (or games, or entertainments) 24 hours after they were held because a green student reporter forgot to write "tonight" instead of "tomorrow night" in his story for next day's paper.

### Dynamite in Newsprint

It has ridden good coaches out of jobs because they couldn't win games with poor players. It has crucified thoughtful professors for classroom expressions of opinion, clubbed the administration for decisions contrary to the whims of the student editor of the moment, noisily supported irresponsibility on campus while the president's job tottered.

To the college administration, then, the undergraduate paper is dynamite wrapped in newsprint. It's an educational hot potato. It packs the same potentialities for good or harm as the professional paper, but unlike the professional it is edited by inexperienced, immature . . . and sometimes irresponsible . . . students.

Combine these three journalistic inadequacies into five, six or eight columns of 12-em measure and you have the reason why more stresses and strains, more dissatisfactions and resentment continuously whirl about the college newspaper than almost any other undertaking on campus . . .

And why freedom of the press, so staunchly supported in professional discourses, may be hastily shooshed away from the campus when it puts in an appearance outside the student newspaper office.

The undergraduate newspaper, then, can be a Dr. Jekyll or a Mr. Hyde. And great variation exists from college to college in the nature and amount of control—or lack of it—granted the student staff in its conduct.

Perhaps no undergraduate activity is involved in such difference of opinion as to administration. Even among journalism professors themselves there exists the widest disagreement.

Says one, in reply to a survey undertaken for this article: "Administrative or faculty participation in any aspect of the college publication is detrimental to the quality of that paper, the integrity of its editors, an insult to any recognizable educational ideals, and a vicious disservice to the individuals and the institution which the paper is supposed to serve."

But from another comes this: "The First Amendment has no application in spirit or fact to a learning situation for inexperienced kids who have neither the background nor maturity to make adequate judgments in the use of a tool of great potential danger to the institution, its faculty and students."

### Freedom For Half

And so, while at some institutions the editor is given a friendly slap across the withers and sent galloping into the journalistic pasture, at others he is hogtied, the staff is hobbled, and an electric fence is built around the editorial offices.

At those schools where complete freedom is granted (and that includes more than half of those with student dailies) that freedom usually operates under a running barrage from a part of the faculty group.

The same kid who missed three answers in an economics quiz interviews the learned professor for the college paper with about the same accuracy of results . . . and another recruit is added to the "faculty control" faction on the campus.

Nor does this economics professor see any discrepancy between his tolerance for student error in economics and his intolerance of error in student reporting.

The "faculty control" demand is an over-simplification. Censorship produces bad student morale, resentments, flare-ups, evasions in proportion to its severity.

### Self-Contradiction

The student paper becomes a weak and spineless thing, bulging with the minutiae of college comings and goings and dolings, but lacking in the strength and force to speak effectively for the group it represents.

As a training ground for effective participation in a democratic society, which is what a college proposes to be, censorship is an educational self-contradiction. Artificial methods don't produce realistic outcomes, as old John Dewey used to point out so impressively.

Institutions which extend their undergraduate papers freedom of the pasture stand on the "student responsibility" principle. As one faculty adviser to a student daily puts it, "Censorship is unnecessary in student publications if the students are given—and made to feel—the proper responsibilities."

"This is true even from the administration's standpoint. Our students, at least, don't very often go off half-cocked, though they do make mistakes. But who doesn't? And they learn by these mistakes and don't hurt anyone very badly in doing so."

To which another adds, "It seems to me that operating a student paper without censorship is the only realistic way in which students can learn their responsibilities."

## HAZARDS TO THE STUDENTS HOW TO MAKE A U. N. B. COED

Several voices out of the blue have complained that they are being way-laid on the way to classes and even in the classes themselves. As a solution, it was suggested that the complaints should be brought to the attention of some insurance society, but that seems impossible.

Thus looking at the situation as it now stands, from the students' point of view, we are pointing out the HAZARDS which the normal U. N. B. student undergoes in order to attend his classes.

We assume that our particular student in mind . . . Bud anybody, starts to the sanctuary up the hill about 8.45 A. M. and that if his schedule is as usual he will make his first lecture at approximately 9.00 A. M. . . . But as he begins to wind his way across Queen's Square from no where dashes a young pucker, who, according to his parents, should have been on the Maple Leafs years ago (should be the school hero).

A puck zooms over our student's head and if he had his copy of Marxist propaganda with him, it slides to the ground due to the intense nervousness of its carrier. If perhaps our hero has forgotten his morning dip, a shower from the Fredericton Rink Flooders Association gives him all that he didn't bargain for.

As our hero continues his way way, he hits a well beaten path which is usually 'slushy'. This word is a mild interpretation of the actual conditions observed.

Now the real test comes! Could Bud ever have been a soldier? Out of nowhere reels a bull dozer, driven by a madman at the wheel. Nerves . . . that is what it takes. He runs . . . ah! Safe!

But no! What is it . . . not a trolley car . . . no, not a train . . . or is it? Yes . . . beat it fellow, the clock on the Beavy tower says two minutes to nine.

What will he do? He could beat the train . . . sure he does. Relief! Then there is the bridge which reminds him of the one Robin Hood made famous when he jousting with Little John.

The ice is smooth and the guard rail is loose. One, two, three . . . he's over. Then there is a box car over which even Tarzan could spend some time before deciding which is the best way to attack the situation. One foot here, one foot there . . . oops, he slipped but he doesn't give up. He's often thought of broken legs playing football but never on the way to school (if only Mummy could see him now).

He's over and off up the incline which leads to final victory. He's off, they're off, no he's up, no he's down. He's up . . . ! Which way will he go? The Arts building lies on an angle to the West, the Mem Hall to the left and on the right the Engineering Bldgs. (excuse me . . . he might take Forestry.)

Whatever . . . there is a distinct Annapolis Speedway taking place at the top of the path. If the track

### (WITCHES BREW)

- 3 Cups of understanding
- 2 cups love
- 1 heaping cup patience
- 1 cup human kindness
- 1/2 cup sympathy
- 3 tablespoons politeness
- 2 teaspoons appreciation
- frequent bits of humor
- 1/2 cup flattery
- 1/2 cup reason
- 1 cup good cheer
- dash of criticism
- pinch of sarcasm

Blend the first three ingredients, understanding, love and patience, being sure they stand up and do not curdle when tested with temper and fatigue. Mix politeness and appreciation thoroughly and add these to the former mixture at frequent intervals.

Put criticism and sarcasm in a double boiler and cook for one hour. When all the steam has died down, add them to the other ingredients with frequent bits of humor.

Now dilute flattery with an equal amount of reason and add a drop at a time to prevent egotism. With a quiet gentle gesture pour the sympathy and human kindness over the whole.

Keep in a cool place and serve with plenty of tact and good cheer. —Sheaf.

hyde needed to cover an average male student.

Then there is always the chance that Miss Whimster will lock the door to the French class, and Bud will have to knock . . . What a horrible thought. As our hero contemplates, the Milk driver, unaware of the confused brain standing in the middle of the road, tears frantically over snow and ice to kill or wound as many as possible. What will poor Bud do if he is late again?

Moral: Leave for school in time or don't risk your neck—stay away . . . !

She was only a bootlegger's daughter, but I love her still.

## EDWARD'S TAXI

W. P. EDWARDS & SON

Operators for Lord Beaverbrook, Queen and Windsor

OPERATING 12 NEW CARS

Phone 5182 or 3421  
Day and Night Service  
5 — 7 Passenger Heated Cars



The New Improved regulation College Jackets are sold at Fleming's of course

## Trites Flower Shop

2 Shops now at your service  
Flowers by wire anywhere  
Corsages to your liking

F  
L  
O  
W  
E  
R  
S

Phone 3221 480 Union St.  
Phone 5272 417 King St.  
Phone evenings 3233

## College Students

SAVE MONEY !!!

Do your own laundry at

## Self-Service Launderette

3 Westmorland St.

5 NEW BENDIX WASHERS

Just bring your laundry, we supply machines and soap.

Up to 9 pounds  
ONLY 40c



Weisner Sp

Continued  
The president  
Society, Dr. Smith

Our Tele

SPORTING GOODS STORE



SPORTING GOODS STORE

REMEMBER

REMEMBER

Br

510 Queen

GIFT

EVERY

U

SH

GA

SA

Establish