

# Editorial

By Carolyn Ryan

'Twas very early on Monday morning. I sat and muttered, "An editorial on *in camera* sessions of the Student Union Council? Would anyone care?"

(Note: those who really don't care can stop reading here.)

Suddenly a divine but slightly angry voice from Above muttered back, "They should care! Go for it!"

So I did.

On Sunday night, February 3, at their regular meeting, Councillors sent everyone but themselves from the room for an hour and a half while they discussed giving money to the Engineering Society and the Model United Nations.

Later they pulled another *in camera* session to reconsider the Engineers' request, thinking they had some relevant new information.

When the confusion cleared, if it did, the Model UN was awarded \$650 of the \$1000 it needed, and the Engineering Society got only \$150 of a requested \$500. The Engineers were also told to return at the next meeting if they wanted to appeal the decision.

With thanks to Nova Scotian Thomas Chandler Haliburton, "I never liked petticoat government, and this has confirmed my distaste for it."

The edition of *Robert's Rules of Order*, a procedures manual, used by the SU Council, the UPEI Senate, and the Board of Governors does not recognize the term *in camera*.

Yet traditionally, such bodies have used the device when discussing matters of great delicacy, such as those involving personal matters which could possibly be taken out of context or used against people.

In law, the term describes a private meeting in the

judge's room. That gives some idea of the seriousness of its intended usage.

*In camera* sessions should not be used to discuss budgets, especially of public bodies such as the Student Union, which every student has paid \$70 for the privilege of joining.

When Councillors who have been discussing how much money they have left to distribute decide they don't want an audience, one can be pardoned for thinking at least one of three things:

1) The most unlikely: that something is amiss in the way funds have been allocated, and a cover-up is being tried. Some people who don't know how the SU operates tend to come up with this explanation.

2) The Councillors don't want to reveal how little they know.

3) That Councillors are about to reveal opinions which they don't want the audience or their constituents to hear. Such opinions may or may not have a foundation in fact.

It has been suggested that some people feel able to speak more freely and securely under conditions of secrecy.

If that is the case, why did they bother to run for office?

When you're representing constituents, you have the obligation to speak openly for them on any issue that comes up. You don't whisper and you don't waffle ... or if you do, at least you do it publicly, so that some semblance of accountability can be preserved.

I am not saying that Councillors did not make a correct decision about donations to these two societies, although both were able to demonstrate need. Perhaps the budget could not allow

giving more.

The worst thing about a display such as Sunday night's, though, is the impression of Council it tends

to give. The words 'secrecy', 'paranoia', 'exclusivity', and 'politicking' come to mind.

Council has a duty. This

duty is to make sound decisions that have been carefully considered, and stand up to scrutiny.

Shouldn't the process of

making those decisions be just as carefully considered, and just as open to scrutiny?



## LETTERS

### Finnigan Pub

To whom it may concern:

I am writing to voice my opinion regarding the Finnigan Pub held Tuesday, January 29.

I realize that with inflation the dollar does not buy what it used to. However, I feel that a five-dollar ticket should at least entitle me to a seat at the pub.

Furthermore, I believe that I was not wishing for too much by wanting to catch a glimpse of the band more than once during the evening.

I also feel it my right to adequately hear the band's performance.

When I was informed that only a limited amount of tickets were on sale, I immediately assumed it was because there were only that number of seats available.

Obviously I was mistaken, as only about one-third of the people at the pub had seats.

I may be in the minority when I say I was disappointed with the pub, but I feel my complaint is justified.

Not only was I disappointed with the pub, but I was embarrassed when my

guests asked if we could leave.

They too were quite bored with having to stand against a wall trying to guess what was happening up front.

I suggest that in the future the Student Union or organizing committee consider the fact that people may wish to sit down during the course of a four-hour pub.

If the university does not have the facilities to house the number of expected people, then the Student Union or appropriate committee should realize the fact and plan the event in a more appropriate location.

Sincerely,  
B.A. Doyle

### Too much alcohol

Many students over-indulged in the winter carnival events last week.

Did you know that any bartender can cut you off at the bar at any event? Well they can, if you get too drunk.

The problem is, according to Kent MacKay, head bartender, that many people get

others to go to the bar for them when they are loaded, making it difficult for a bartender to see the building problem.

When someone does get cut off at the bar, he or she is then ushered out by the campus police.

The events at the Barn this past week saw many students getting so drunk they were very sick. The events Saturday featured a chugging contest which in itself made some people whoof their cookies, followed by the dreaded Delirious Game. Enough said.

I myself drank 15 beer that day and I don't drink.

I won't even mention the two Irish events, but since I have, I'll just say "woow!"

The other events were fun as well, with the Cabaret well-attended and enjoyed and the tobogganning party fun for the first half hour anyway.

After that it was, if you'll pardon the pun, downhill all the way.

The two dance bands that performed (Spice and Fast Forward both put on great shows).

All and all the carnival was a great time, although I

think we did drink a little too much, eh?

Bob Stanley

### Comments on SU

Dear Editor:

As second semester gets underway, I can't help but wonder how we are doing.

The Student Union is always busy, and I always have things to do. When I run into people and ask their opinion, I usually get a favourable response regarding the job thus far.

However, behind the skeptical person I am, I believe there are people out there with criticisms (constructive, I hope).

I would like this letter to serve as an invitation to you to air your concerns.

We are all constantly looking for feedback, and I would appreciate anyone taking the time to provide some.

Sincerely,  
Michelle Dorsey  
President, Student Union  
(on behalf of the executive)

## The Netted Gem

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