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# Editorial

The opinions expressed in this column do not necessarily reflect the opinions of the staff of this publication, or of the Student Union.

Autonomy is defined by my trusty Webster dictionary as "having self-government, operating independently of other parts..." This is a lovely situation for a newspaper to find itself in, for obvious reasons. The purpose of this, and most periodical publications is to provide accurate information to their readers. Any infringement on autonomy, such as threats from outside influences, has the potential to distort any messages the publication is trying to convey. Publishing distorted information is a great way to lose the trust of readers. It then follows that if there are no readers, there is little reason for a publication to exist.

An illustration of such a situation was suggested by a spokesperson at CUP (Canadian University Press, an organization of campus newspapers, of which this publication is a member). How many people would read a newspaper that was published by Joe Ghiz or Brian Mulroney? How many people would trust the information in that publication to be accurate and true? Despite the fact that both Ghiz and Mulroney were elected by the people, these men do not have the right to say what should be published in the press, and what people should be reading. If anything, the press should be allowed to act as "watchdogs", to ensure that these elected officials do their job. The press does not exist for the politicians, it exists for the general population. That's why autonomy is so important to newspapers.

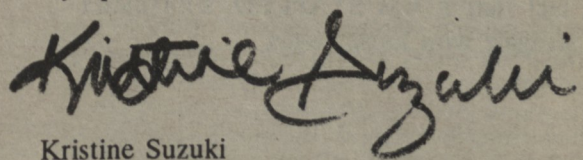
Unfortunately, in reality, this state of being is accomplished by very few newspapers, at least in the campus newspaper corner. According to CUP, there are only about 15 campus newspapers in Canada that are really autonomous, and those are the really big newspapers of the really big universities in the really big cities with really big

corporations to financially support the paper with advertising dollars.

Most university publications, including the one you're holding in your hand, are subsidized by the university student union. Putting together a paper is expensive business. There are only so many doors in P.E.I. for our advertising manager to knock on, and so this publication could not get by without the support of the student union.

But this is where things get a little fuzzy. Politicians and press don't get along very well, partly because of the nature of their jobs. There are countless examples of clashes between campus newspapers and their subsidizing student unions, from impeachment of entire newspaper staffs to complete elimination of newspapers. This is very disturbing to me. Referring back to the Ghiz/Mulroney analogy, would there not be public outcry if a politician wiped out a newspaper because of something it printed?

I think the most important point that must be kept in both the minds of the staff of campus newspapers and of their respective student unions, is that campus newspapers are NOT student union publications, they are STUDENT publications. The money that supports the publication does not belong to the student union, or to any elected member of the union. The money certainly doesn't belong to me, as editor or to any staff member of this publication. A portion of the \$99 mandatory student union fee you paid when you registered for this institution, goes straight to this paper. This point must not be forgotten, especially by you, Joe Student. This is YOUR publication; you deserve accurate, undistorted info. and you should have your say in what is or isn't printed. That's just my opinion.



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