

Editor,

I want to respond to Chris Baxter's article "All Work No Pay?", in the February 10 issue of the SUN. Having been quoted in the article in two places, and given the sensitivity of the issue, I want to clarify my statements and place them in context.

First, when questioned by Chris, I made it clear that my official position was "no comment," since the matter is before the court. I gave my personal opinions on the following conditions 1) that they be noted as my personal opinions (as a private member of the union), 2) that they only be printed if other council members were speaking out publicly on the issue (an idea that I disapproved of) and 3) that I have a chance to see a copy of the manuscript before it was sent to press. These conditions were mostly met; there was some indication that I was speaking unofficially and certainly other counsellors were speaking out publicly and, apparently, officially.

There were a number of "facts" presented in the article that I question but I do not intend to address them all here.

Contrary to what the article indicated, there was no "arranged" interview with me and I am not a "key figure" in the "dispute", being a neutral (but concerned) member of council. Chris asked me a few questions one night at the Barn and my official response was "no comment". I only consented to discuss the issue publicly (as personal opinion) when I found out that other members were planning to speak publicly out of court.

I realize that my comments were condensed and that the quotations made of them were somewhat disjointed but they fairly represent my opinion, although I do not recall saying that the contract was "built on a gentleman's agreement". (Cynthia - a gentleman?!) Chris took up a difficult task when he edited the comments he gathered in order to present the story. For

example, was it possible for him to separate fact from opinion?

I do not know whether Chris has an opinion on the issue or not, but I'm sure many people will presume that the article represents his opinion. I can see that much of what he wrote came from the opinions of others, but regardless of where it originated there are some criticisms I'd like to make (without blaming anyone) about the article.

#### (1) SLANDER?

The article should not have singled out Mike Trainor and Howard Beatie as members of the committee to review the yearbook settlement. Furthermore, it should have shown that Mike was particularly negligent in his committee deliberations before criticizing his participation on it. If his qualifications for membership on the committee were in question it should have been brought up in Council, before or after the committee was struck, for rectification. This does not mean that I think there is a question of Mike's qualifications or competence for the committee. In fact,

I think that the article bordered on slander regarding Mike's character, when it addressed this topic.

As a member of council, I was never told of any prior connection between Mike and Cynthia, before I read last week's article. However, it is not surprising that anyone on such a small campus and involved in student affairs would have a prior association with the yearbook editor. I think that most people commenting in the article had a previous association with Cynthia. If we followed the logic of the story, shouldn't this mean that their opinions be taken "with a grain of salt"? Surely we wouldn't suggest that they would have made more competent committee members than the ones we had!

#### (2) COUNTERSUIT?

The article said that Student Council has responded with a countersuit. That's news to me! (I should, at this point, make it clear that I only missed one council meeting since

I was elected. This meeting was scheduled for 7:30 p.m., Sunday, February 6, 1983. When I arrived I was told that the meeting was held at 4:00 p.m. and that I had missed it - "pre-poned?!"

The article quoted a member of Council saying, "We feel we have solid ground to stand on." (Obviously not referring to U.P.E.I. landscaping.) "We" was explained to mean "The Student Union". However, my personal opinion is not one of such confidence. I'm not sure Council has come to that consensus, but I cannot speak for Council.

#### (3) MOTIVES?

A counsellor was quoted as saying, "Student Union is mainly concerned with the principle of the thing...". He goes on to say "Maybe you will set a precedent." But what principles are we concerned about? I'm not sure council is mainly concerned about precedents.

If "we" are successful in "our" suit against Cynthia, what will we have done? Let us accept the theory that Council is poor. It is still quite possible that we could pay damages if we lose the case, but what if Cynthia loses? I do not wish to defend Cynthia, but I ask: "Can we morally say that she deserves WHAT-EVER she gets?" As a member of Council, I don't like being sued but I think that more could have been done to achieve a just solution without going to court or provoking Cynthia into filing suit.

If there is a precedent being set, could it be that we are establishing ourselves as being so petty, technical and ill-willed that we got ourselves into a legal mess? Will we be forced in future to make all agreements so legally watertight that we can never be allowed to trust each other and cooperate? Will we be forced to legislate "good attitudes and communications" between council and its "employees" thereby setting the two in opposition to one another? It seems to me that the more formal Council tries to become, the less professional it gets and certainly it becomes less humane.

Could we not take this opportunity to set a good precedent? I think we should try to settle this issue in a more humane and forgiving fashion (on both sides) and we should try to communicate much more openly with the people we work with. (Not to be confused with "our employees", although we should cooperate with them, also.)

#### (4) HONORARIA

We should realize that yearbook editor's fees are not salaries or wages (i.e. as in "minimum wage"). They are honoraria which should not need to be conditional in a contract. A yearbook editor is not a wage laborer. We couldn't afford to pay what that is worth, anyway. Unlike wage payments the giving of an honorarium should not be conditional on the quality of work, amount of work done, nor the deadlines. These responsibilities should be shared by council (unless we contract the job out or hire a salaried editor). An honorarium is a token payment or gift from a community to an individual who has donated a service, and this is how "payment" should be determined. If there were problems in preparing the yearbook, council should have known and would have known if it was functioning properly.

Wages are used as work incentives (sometimes this requires imagination) but honoraria usually do not cover the value of services and they are not expected to.

If we decide that the whole responsibility of producing a yearbook should be placed on the editor then we should hire an editor for a legal wage, make a much tighter contract and prepare for the usual management-labour problems. This would suggest that we rewrite the Student Union Constitution in order to provide us with a much more solid basis with which to "manage" the students. If we make this our course of action I would suggest that we establish a core program in Business Management as a prerequisite for those aspiring to sit on council.

#### (5) THE CONTRACT

Finally, there seems to

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