

The Cadre: "Our" Paper or Toilet Paper?

Dear Cadre:

Over the past few months I have been consistently reassessing my opinion of that which I used to consider to be a well produced student newspaper; The Cadre. Since the start of the semester, I have watched The Cadre degrade from a funny and informative little read, to the often episodic, bitch-whine-and-complain compilation it has become.

Now this is not to say that the entire paper is a piece of garbage. Some regular articles such as Fact & Opinion never fail to make me truly laugh right out loud, occasionally inconveniently so in the middle of a "quiet room" lecture. Food Facts and Fiction and Brandon's "foreign country" articles are informative yet light-hearted, making them enjoyable to digest.

This said, The Cadre has gotten to the point that I don't know if I'll ever bother to pick up another. Why would I? To read something with so many spelling and grammar errors that

is cements my belief in the stupefying effects of word processor spell checkers. Or, perhaps to witness the lack of the grasp of the English language held by some of the regular contributors; to the point that their own personal dictionary of descriptors is limited to profanity and other such derogatory language.

Failing these, perhaps to watch certain writers use The Cadre as a personal sounding board for them to air personal complaints about inner-office workings/politics/organization/professionalism or lack thereof, personal attacks, or self-serving, pompous declarations of power and absoluteness. Or, alternatively to read articles about uni-sex bathrooms or anti-plagiarism strategies at other higher learning institutions, but be informed of very few "goings-on" at our own "great, small university." I mean, which makes more sense; sto-

ries about UPEI, social announcements and/or Island based reporting, or the stimulating details of excrement disposal centres at... well wherever it was. (Not to say that I don't care about other institutions of higher learning but last I checked I enrolled at UPEI.

I love the way the paper used to be and I still love pieces of it now. But, if things don't improve...

Not McGill. Not Acadia. Not Dalhousie. I wonder if we're such prominent news in their papers.) As a small sidebar, an article outlining

suggestions of how to remove the ever-present putrid smell from the Men's room in Cass might inspire decision makers to have the problem fixed.

Finally, perhaps to stare at the vast and numerous advertisements contained within. How much money do these U of M, overseas english teaching, Humber, Health Canada, and Telus ads contribute towards production costs anyhow? Personally, I would much rather see fewer issues published, focussing of content than have my (and your) student newspaper double as a weekend flyer. I'd even be willing to pay a few extra dollars to lighten the advertisement dependance. Even with the state of the paper being what it is, it would surely be a better and more long-term investment than the (annual) roofing of certain campus buildings.

Why or how the paper has managed to slide this far I don't know; nor do I pretend to. (I recognize some points but don't know the entire answer) But, I ask the writers, how does general mud slinging help? Is defending your position or proving yourself right truly worthwhile if it comes at the expense of your readership numbers?

Initial solutions are simple:

- *Can the vulgarity* - I understand conversational habits as I can safely proclaim myself as the most prolific and frequent swearer I know

(A point uncontested by my wife so I know I'm right); but, I restrict it to general private conversation as opposed to a wide public forum. And the odd word would be quite tolerable but "... before God can tell him to shut the fuck up because he needs to take a goddamn nap, you sick asshole" goes far beyond the point of reason.

- *Keep it local(ish)* - I'm more interested in why certain roofs always end up leaking, no matter how many times they get replaced. Or, why campus littering is a problem but butt-stops can't be erected where smokers congregate.

- *Content* - Focus on well written articles as opposed to advertising. The ratio of articles to ads is starting to swing in the wrong direction. And, if advertising is a must, try to keep them as small and as local as possible. Do I really need another cell phone ad shoved in my face? NO! I mean come on people. The centre spread in the Nov. 17 issue is three-quarters ads. I know I can think of better things to display there. Inform me. Humour me. Inspire me. Just quit it with the hard sell. For another aspect: I'm poor enough. I don't need you reminding me of what I can't afford.

- *Professionalism* - While the Cadre is no Globe and Mail, I as a reader and financier expect a certain level of quality and consistently. I surely don't expect things to be perfect but the errors and lack of any type of consistent organizational design is getting excessive. Also, I don't particularly care which staff member has a problem with who and why. The paper isn't a place where writers should be settling personal issues of that context.

I love the way the paper used to be and I still love pieces of it now. But, if things don't improve before the end of the academic year, next year I'll be strongly requesting that The Cadre portion of my student fees not be charged to me and I'll never pick up another one again.

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