

THE PAPER

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no charge

Here We Stand: 'The Paper' At The Crossroads

"The Paper," to the surprise of almost no one, has come upon hard times. In part, our hard times are of our own making, but in large measure they are the result of certain conditions in this academic community demanding of public review and criticism. It is the purpose of this emergency issue of "The Paper" to present some of these conditions and our reaction to them, and to explain to our readers and potential readers the situation of "The Paper" as it now stands.

"The Paper," as we hope is well known, is a recently-organized at-

An Editorial

tempt at a student publication of interpretative news and feature writing. It is run entirely by students, with faculty advising, and has published six issues, at weekly intervals, last term and this term. (It usually looks much better than this; eight tabloid-sized pages, looking just like a newspaper, only better.) It is now at the point either of becoming a self-supporting part of the intellectual environment

here, or of submitting to almost overwhelming difficulties.

We feel there is not only room for "The Paper," but a definite need for it here. More than ego is involved in this: any university needs a publication which is written and edited from a student viewpoint, which considers free thought vital to education, which notices relationships between current events, the arts, politics and fun. With nothing else in the field but the State News, Red Cedar Review, Zeitgeist and sometimes Logos and Organon, it is obvious "The Paper" is a publication not duplicated at MSU.

Why, then, are we having problems? It's hard to explain.

The situation is so complicated that we have had trouble understanding it ourselves, and we are sure that other parties involved have shared our confusion. Our present predicament of being under indictment by Student Judiciary is on all counts ludicrous. The LAST authoritative body we should be involved with is Student Judiciary.

The FIRST is the Board of Student Publications. Comprising three students, three faculty members and three administrators and headed by the chairman of the School of Journalism, this board claims jurisdiction over "most student publications circulating on campus, but not all." It concerns itself with only those which are financially stable, whose editors, advisors, editorial viewpoint, advertising rate structure and annual budget are acceptable to it. This board is in charge of the State News and the Wolverine, and a few other publications. Certain publications authorized by the board have been sold from time to time in classroom buildings, and it is possible (though not guaranteed) that "The Paper" as an authorized publication would be allowed to sell in as many places on campus as are necessary.

The logical thing for us to do, then, would be to seek approval from the board. This we did--twice. On both occasions certain financial data was required in writing which we did not, through a combination of misunderstanding and sheer lack of available information, bring with us. We did not know, for example, our yearly operating budget; certain board members told us, in almost in so many

Whales, Fleas And Related Subjects

All we want--God help us, ALL--is the right to sell our well-intentioned little newspaper in peace. We do not plan to subvert the System. The System, like Moby Dick, will outlast us all, no matter how many little journalistic harpoons dangle ineffectually from its side. We would like to avoid being rammed and sunk for as long as possible--that's all.

If this were a rational world, the parties concerned in the current fiasco would sit down together and discuss the most efficient and practical means to enable "The Paper" to survive. The procedures agreed upon would be immediately implemented, and our newspaper would continue to publish as long as enough people wanted it to.

Needless to say, this is not a rational world; and the indications are that Michigan State University has more than its share of the world's irrationality. Michigan State is a perfect microcosm; its students do not have to wait for graduation to find out what the Real World is like. Around here, there is, alas, no escaping it.

It is hard to see who will gain by our prosecution. Presumably the traffic will move more smoothly at the few places on campus where we might have stood and sold papers. We sometimes feel that Efficiency is the true end of MSU, and that attempts at education are only the imperfect and probably expendable means to that end. It is, to borrow a bit from Hemingway, like the Chicago stockyards if all they did with the meat was to test it and give it a diploma.

The existing rules, as far as we can see, may well not permit the existence of a publication like "The

Paper." It has existed for six issues and will continue to exist for a while, anyway, and we are proud of that. Many people did not think it would get this far. To tell the truth, we had serious doubts ourselves.

The rules will probably outlast "The Paper," no matter how long it goes on. They are, on the whole, bad rules, and a number of the people enforcing them no doubt realize that they are bad rules. "We have no choice," they all say, pointing out the necessity for Law and Order. Nobody is responsible. Everybody is responsible. Take your pick--the result is the same either way.

MSU's System, we must recall, has lived without "The Paper" for lo these hundred-odd years, and can live without it forever. (If "live" is the word.) We hope it won't have to. We wish the university would be tolerant--God knows, we have enough problems of our own without the sort of divine retribution that may be visited upon us now. Martyrdom has its rewards, to be sure, and we would not be sorry to have some free time for a change. But we would prefer to continue publishing. It must be nice to reminisce fondly upon the fleeting wisp of glory that was Camelot; it is rather nicer to be in the middle of it.

But the analogy of course will hold only partially. King Arthur had at least the satisfaction of going down in equal combat on the field of battle. Can you imagine him wielding a gleaming broadsword against an army of trained fleas? Our broadsword may be somewhat tarnished, but the fleas--oh, yes--are real.

LAURENCE TATE

continued on page 2

A NOTE TO SUBSCRIBERS, READERS, ETC.

(To All Those Who Thought We Would Publish A Regular Issue This Week)

We regret the necessity to publish this emergency bulletin instead of a regular eight-page issue this week. We would have liked to edit a regular one as much as you would have liked to read it. Unfortunately, money is short, the staff is somewhat deficient, and we had to spend more time than we would have liked preparing a defense to present to Student Judiciary (see articles

above).

We will be back on our regular publication schedule next week (that's a promise; we're working on it already). Meanwhile, we will appreciate any help which may be offered in alleviating any of our problems.

THE EDITORS

