

## Executive Secretary/Treasurer's Report - 2005

Five written complaints were received during 2005

### **Complaint #05-1 Brandon Sun, February 2005**

A Brandon City Councillor filed a complaint that the Brandon Sun had launched a smear campaign to discredit him, and that the campaign centered on personal attacks rather than issue-focused debate on matters of public interest. After due consideration, the Manitoba Press Council, on April 14, 2005, issued an adjudication dismissing the complaint, on the grounds that newspapers should be given a wide latitude in expressing their opinions in editorials, no matter how controversial or unpopular their opinions may be.

The council pointed out that the 11 newspaper items sent as evidence by the complainant did, in fact, contain substantial amounts of issue-related debate and did centre on issues of public interest. In addition, the newspaper had published a strong critique of the paper by the complainant. The Manitoba Press Council believes that newspapers have a responsibility to provide a forum for expression of counter opinion and that was provided by the Brandon Sun.

The Council voiced a concern that at times the paper and the complainant used what could be considered extreme suggestions in their opinion and suggested that any further debate would be better if it took on a more reasoned tone.

### **Complaint #05-2 Winnipeg Free Press, February 2005**

The complainant alleged that a columnist at the Winnipeg Free Press had defamed Donald Trump and his fiancée and that he intended to pursue the means to get the matter into court. The Council decided not to adjudicate the complaint and dismissed the matter because, as is indicated in its procedures, complaints involving civil or criminal proceedings, either in progress, pending or in prospect, would not be handled.

### **Complaint #05-3 Brandon Sun, April 2005**

This complaint alleged that the Brandon Sun "overstepped journalistic ethics, by instructing the police to investigate our private function, and then wrote an article insinuating possible criminal activities, thus causing undo suspicions upon the social organizers and patrons". The Publisher of the Brandon Sun responded, rejecting the premise of the complaint, and enclosing copies of three articles that clearly showed they had no malice towards the group in question. This letter was sent to the complainant in April 2005 and no further correspondence was received.

### **Complaint #05-4 Brandon Sun, May 2005**

The complaint was received in an email, as a "cc" to the Press Council sent to the Brandon Sun and alleged that an article in the Brandon Sun contained errors and caused her trauma as a victim. In July, 2005, we inquired whether or not the complainant had heard from the Brandon Sun, and if she wished to pursue a formal complaint. We heard nothing further.

### **Complaint #05-5 Brandon Sun, September 2005**

The complaint was about several editorial pieces that had appeared in the Brandon Sun, alleging that the Sun had "initiated a hate document towards the Christian Community at large". The complaint has not yet been resolved.

*Respectfully submitted,*  
**Diane Cullen, Executive Secretary/Treasurer**  
Manitoba Press Council