

EDITORIAL

The last straw for "floundering" York

The University's sweeping decision to close the pubs last Thursday was heavy-handed but justified, in light of chronic Pub Night vandalism.

Since the early '80s, vandalism has been an expensive problem for York. Damage in the last five years alone is estimated at over one million dollars. Although vandalism has somewhat levelled, Pub Night continues to be a serious problem — it has become so serious that the Canadian Union of Public Employees (CUPE) recently asked for a labour-management meeting as university workers felt threatened by students whom they felt were intoxicated.

Two weeks ago Thursday, vandals — believed to be pub patrons — went on what Director of Food and Housing Norman Crandles described as a "systematic, wanton, rampage of destruction."

Windows were smashed. Doors were kicked in. Signs were destroyed. Seats were torn from toilets.

The University would take no more. In an effort to convince the York community that a problem exists, a joint decision of Meininger and liquor licence holder Crandles closed all college pubs.

Pub managers, staff, and patrons were understandably outraged: College councils were not consulted about the action; Managers and staff worried about lost income and wages; dons were concerned about possible excessive drinking in residence; and weekly Pub Night patrons lamented the loss of their favourite night to socialize.

The administration understood the implications of the decision, but felt the sanction was a necessary evil it hopes not to repeat. It had run out of alternatives. When serious Pub Night incidents occurred last year at the Orange Snail and the Cock and Bull, the university shut them down to deter further problems. A policy has also been implemented by the administration to ensure that all vandals are prosecuted to the full extent of the law.

Obviously, these measures have been unsuccessful.

It will be difficult to judge the effectiveness of the University's latest action. No incidents were reported during the pub closures, and although dons and tutors said that many students had left campus for the weekend, they did not see a drastic increase in the amount of drinking in residence.

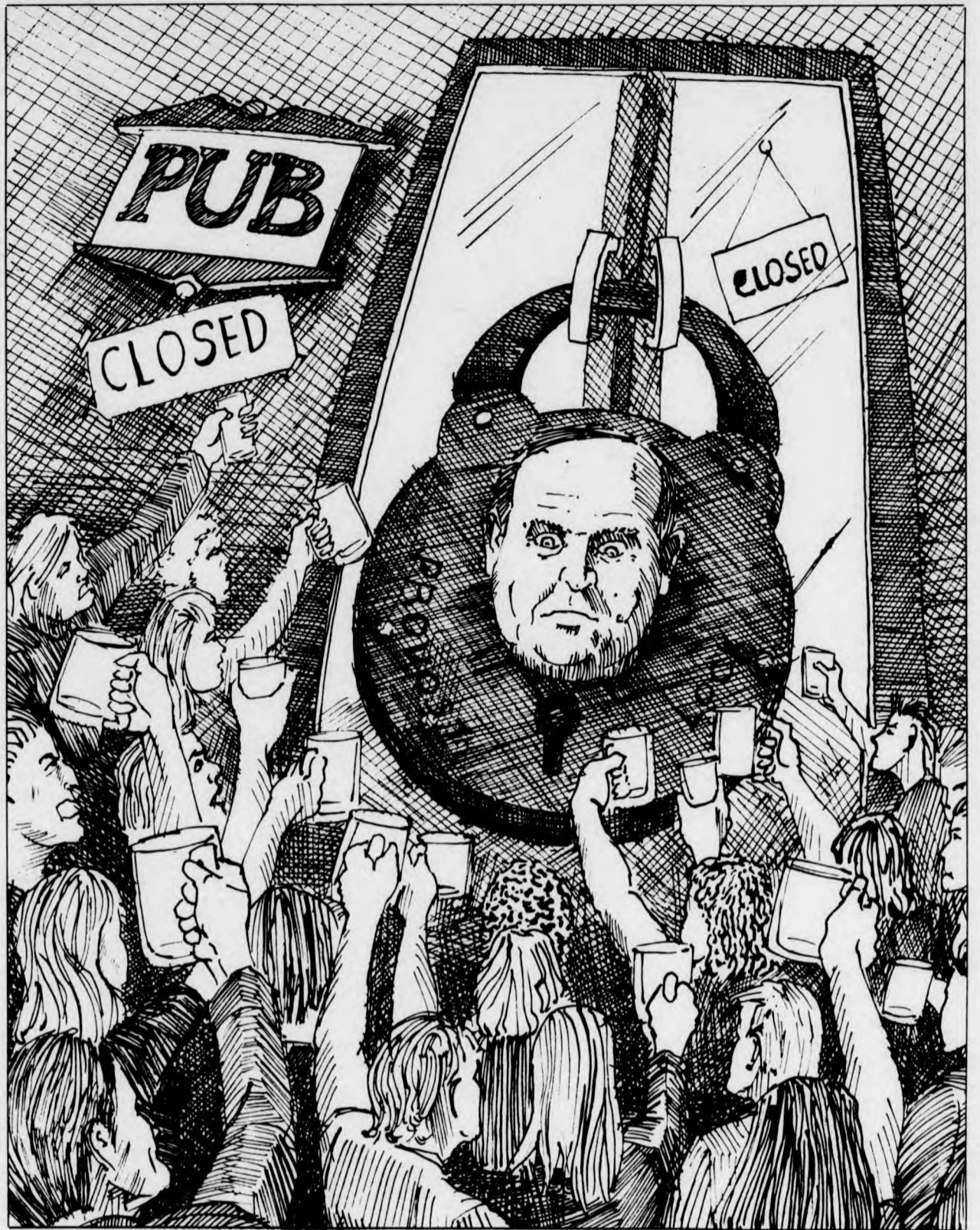
The long-term effects are even more difficult to determine. The University hopes that its actions will involve more members of the York community in solving the vandalism.

Judging by the protest last Thursday, the administration will succeed. The profile of vandalism has been raised and it is likely just a matter of time before student councils and bodies — such as the newly formed Security Advisory Council — mobilize themselves to take action.

But will this increased awareness be enough? A fundamental question is whether security is doing its job. It's known across campus that security is a problem. Does Director of Security Michael O'Neil have sufficient resources to adequately protect the campus? Meininger dipped into his budget and will supply the Department of Security with an additional \$25,000 over the year. Will this be enough?

But attributing the cause of the problem solely on security would be wrong. Even if campus security was significantly beefed up, vandalism would not disappear. Any resident student, for example, can attest to how easy it is for gratuitous destruction to occur on a rowdy pub night.

Furthermore, the argument that vandalism is only the administration's concern is wrong. It's a problem the entire York community must take responsibility for.



Toasting The Pub closures

We will publish, space permitting, letters under 250 words. They must be typed, triple-spaced, accompanied by writer's name and phone number. We may edit for length. Libellous material will be rejected. Deliver to 111 Central Square during business hours.

LETTERS

Excalibur too narrow

Dear Editor,

I was greatly disturbed to read your editorial last week with regards to CYSF. My greatest concern is that you feel it is necessary to praise one administration only by criticizing another. I'm in full agreement that this year's CYSF deserves a round of applause for its efforts and apparent effectiveness but your narrow view of previous CYSF administrations and the problems that plagued them discredits the whole column.

Perhaps one should consider why CYSF has been only marginally effective in the past and in doing so recognize the efforts made to change this for the future. You fail to mention that this year's CYSF has the benefit of a new constitution that attempts, successfully it seems, to make the whole organization more cohesive, streamlined and effective.

You also fail to mention that this new constitution was developed and implemented by last year's CYSF and, in particular, Drew McCreadie. Clearly Drew's year as CYSF president will be remembered not for its appearance on his resume but rather for the fact that he had the insight to recognize the problems and the concern to do something about them.

Surely CYSF's effectiveness this year is testimony to Drew McCreadie's success last year.

—Julie Marchant

Offended by pub closure

I am disappointed and personally offended by the University administration's latest attempt to deal with liquor-related offenses on campus. The blanket closure of pubs on Complex I and II seems to be unnecessarily heavy-handed and sadly misdirected, resembling the childish posturing usually described as a temper tantrum.

These questions come to mind:

- Is the administration admitting to so little control over drinking activities that a blanket sanction is better than prevention, identification, apprehension, etc. of those individuals whose behaviour is inappropriate?
- Is this yet another example of the administration being seen to do the right thing while accomplishing little more than aggravating patrons and upsetting pub budgets?
- Does the administration have the moral right to limit the privileges of the majority of community members whose behaviour has earned those privileges?

- Will any perceived success in this tactic lead to more of the same or permanent closure?
- Can the administration demonstrate that all the pubs involved in this closure generate, rather than limit, the number of "bad actors" that roam the campus or does a large percentage of these individuals come from residences, or from off-campus (some nearby area being renowned for poor behaviour of every kind)?
- Is the Department of Safety and Security the weak link in the university's ongoing effort to curb incidents? What do the "real" police think?
- Would the administration be well advised to look closely at the obvious hot-bed of Thursday night drinking activities, (namely the Cock and Bull) to see if significant campus-wide improvements would result from forcing compliance with existing regulations at this outlet?

I heartily agree that liquor-related incidents of vandalism and other unacceptable conduct are bad news for all community members. I will continue to do whatever I can to assist in the self-policing of this aspect of campus life. I believe that measures will always be necessary to limit such incidents, but I think it would be better to stress education,

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