

Guelph editor sacked, plans comeback

WATERLOO (CUP) — The editor-in-chief of the University of Guelph student newspaper was fired after attempting to publish a supplement deemed sexist, racist and "in really bad taste" by the newspaper's publishing board.

The Orientation Week issue of the *Ontarion* that editor Larry Till prepared included cartoons of football players engaged in anal sex and repeated use of the word "fuck".

The issue, which was to be a special supplement for first-year students, was cancelled before publication by the newspaper's board of directors. The 12-member board voted five to one to fire Till after a ninety-minute meeting on August 31. Six members of the board were present at the meeting.

Till intends to sue the board for wrongful dismissal. He said his firing came as a "complete surprise".

"When faced with these types of accusations, you need some time to think about what's being said and the underlying assumptions," said Till. "They expected me to respond immediately."

He denies allegations of racism and contends he did nothing wrong.

"... objectionable and in really bad taste

"I'm not suing to get my job back. I'm suing for justice. The situation was not handled fairly but we'll let the judge decide that," said Till.

"The supplement was offensive to female students, to gays, to male students, to many races, to new students, to everyone," said *Ontarion* business manager Karen Black, who brought the issue to the board's attention. "Five stories were objectionable and in really bad taste."

Ontarion staff produced another 16-page supplement to replace the scrapped issue.

Till was hired in May and has produced six editions of the *Ontarion*.

"I took the paper in a direction

it had never gone before," said Till. "Student newspapers reflect the student point of view, including students' speech patterns," he said.

Student newspapers are "a whole different affair" compared to mainstream newspapers," he said.

"People with a sense of humour would have understood. If I thought (the content of the supplement) was in bad taste, I wouldn't have done it."

Features editor Doug Powell was named interim editor-in-

and the board members and *Ontarion* staffers were displeased with Till's work for some time.

A board statement regarding Till's removal as editor states in part that Till demonstrated "unacceptable leadership ability and attitude, (and a) disregard for the *Ontarion's* policies on discrimination and sexism".

Till said he thought he was "getting along fine" with fellow staffers and had been generally complimented for his previous issues.

"With the obvious exception of Doug (Powell), 99 per cent of (the editorial staff) were one hundred per cent behind me," he said.

Greg Smith, news editor, resigned in support of Till.

Ontarion lawyer Janet Ellis said Till's solicitors had not as yet contacted her about the intended suit. She said her clients assume they did not breach any sort of agreement with Till.

Till said he signed a one-year contract with the *Ontarion*.

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chief of the *Ontarion*, which has a staff of 14 and weekly circulation of 12,000.

Black said Till's work on the supplement "was the last straw"

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