

Excalibur

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"The milk train doesn't stop here anymore," muses President Yolton as he mans the Information York booth.

President at hard labour, man's information booth

The next time you want to know what time that bus leaves York for the subway, just ask the president of the university.

Dr. John Yolton, York's president, is manning the Information York booth in Central Square from 3 to 4 p.m. every Monday (except when there are board meetings).

"My office isn't nearly as exciting as this," said Yolton.

He answered questions about bus routes, about York's flag (flying at half-mast after the death of Ruth Hill in biology) and about student housing, and chatted with students and professors who were surprised to find the president in the booth.

"I don't know if we're doing as much as we can to get information across to the community," he said. "This is one way I can help."

"I think the president should be visible," he added, "and nobody ever comes up to the ninth floor."

Denys Brown, co-ordinator of Information York, is looking for more volunteers (call 3764 or 6666). Several other administrative and staff members have offered their services.

Yolton said he enjoyed the volunteer work and looked forward to his next stint as information officer. "We all do our bit," he said.

Student council retains NUS membership after lengthy debate

Following a lengthy debate Monday night, York's central student council decided to retain its membership in the National Union of Students.

An amendment by CYSF president Michael Mouritsen proposing "that the council withdraw from the NUS" was ruled out of order by the speaker, and Mouritsen's subsequent challenge of the ruling was defeated by the council at large.

An executive motion "that the council not pay any fees to the National Union of Students" was defeated. It was followed by a council directive to the next meeting of the budget council (composed of CYSF and college members) to pay its NUS fees "with the greatest possible rapidity."

The National Union of Students, although a fledgling body, is designed to represent student interests on a federal level. The association has members in all provinces except Newfoundland, PEI and Manitoba, and boasts 27 post-secondary institutions — both universities and community colleges — in its organization. Six members are from Ontario.

A general referendum presented to the students last spring gathered 599 votes in favour of staying in the NUS and 295 opposed.

Mouritsen said Monday he considered the referendum "an opinion poll."

"There was no mention of fees on the ballot," he explained. "The council is not bound by the results."

Each student at York pays 30 cents toward the alliance with the NUS, for a total of \$2,300.

John Theobald, CYSF external affairs commissioner, said he found Mouritsen's opinion poll point "frivolous", adding that the NUS constitution had been presented to last year's council and approved.

"That means absolutely nothing,"

Mouritsen replied. "Council can change its mind."

Theobald countered that the intent of last year's council — of which Theobald himself was president — was to make the referendum binding, and that Mouritsen should accept the majority vote as a mandate.

Mouritsen's reasons for opposing the NUS were that CYSF's membership in the Ontario Federation of Students — \$3,068 a year — looked after the students' interests on a provincial level, and that federal machinations would be mere duplication.

The subject of NUS fees touched on a point of honour, since to date York has not paid its membership dues, and since NUS general secretary Bob Buckingham, present at Monday's meeting, suggested the association "may be lenient" even if CYSF continued not to pay.

"York has never paid its fees, but the national assembly still considers York a member," he explained.

The council decided not to press its luck, and recommended payment.

Organizer finds pattern

Job evaluation is the major YUSA issue

By ROBIN ENDRES

Judith Steed is a Toronto film-maker who has been hired by the investigating committee of the York University Staff Association to organize its members.

The investigating committee is an ad hoc sub-committee of the YUSA executive. The committee received a mandate from the membership to investigate various possibilities for unionization and make recommendations on its findings.

The recommendation decided on was an independent, accredited union for YUSA, and Steed was hired to hold discussions on the proposal before it was put to a vote by the entire membership.

Although Steed's salary is paid by the Company of Young Canadians, she never worked for CYC before, and can be fired only at the discretion of her employers.

About two months ago Steed began conducting meetings in all campus buildings where YUSA members work. A general pattern emerged from these meetings, she said in an interview Tuesday.

Job evaluation an issue

The first issue discussed was always money, "but that's the tip of the iceberg," said Steed.

It soon became clear the issue which most concerns YUSA members is that of a job evaluation programme based on the actual work done rather than a rigid classification imposed from above.

According to Steed, the vital issue of job evaluation is integrally related to the fact that over 90 per cent of YUSA members are women.

As more and more women related their experiences at York, it became obvious to Steed that for many of them the actual job performed is more demanding and involves more responsibility than the job for which they are classified. Pay scales are related to classification rather than to actual work done.

A case study

Steed related the following story, which she claims is typical.

A woman classified as an "accounting secretary" for the last fifteen years realized the need for a new type of accounting system in one area of her department. She explained the idea to her male supervisor and was encouraged to initiate the new system.

On the basis of this work, she asked for a promotion, but was refused. Instead, the supervisor hired a young chartered accountant. The woman taught him the new system and together they worked out some of the details. The accountant was promoted and became her immediate superior.

When pay increases came up for review the new accountant refused to recommend the woman for a raise because she had only been working for him for seven weeks.

"She wasn't bitter about it," Steed said, "but everyone could identify with her experience.

Then we began to discuss the eternal apprenticeship of women on the job."

Support for unionization grows

Steed believes if job classifications were based on actual skills and work performed, and if promotions were made accordingly, there would be greatly increased initiative and improved morale among the York staff.

Steed claims that although there was initially some anti-union sentiment among the YUSA members, there is now strong feeling in favour of unionization.

On the issue of a voluntary association, instead of an accredited union, voted on at the YUSA membership meeting, Oct. 25, Steed expressed what appear to be conflicting views.

On the one hand, she said the voluntary association is a good idea. "I had doubts but they've been cleared up. It now appears to be what we thought is was."

If the university agrees to recognize the association as an official bargaining agent, YUSA will have legal rights to conciliation and mediation from the Labour Relations Board.

On the other hand, however, Steed did reveal some doubts about the voluntary association, stressing that these were her personal opinions and not representative of the investigating committee. Steed feels that the simplest and most obvious course of action would be to go straight to the Labour Relations Board and seek accreditation.

Admin. has pleasant situation

She fears the possibility of the association becoming a company union. "We're giving the administration a very pleasant situation to deal with. We're still in the same dependant position."

A major point stressed at the YUSA meeting Warren Holder, chairman of the investigating committee, was that an accredited union could potentially exclude YUSA members who are considered supervisory staff. The same regulations apply to the voluntary association.

Steed said the proceedings of the membership meeting were "personally quite confusing." The option of a voluntary association had only come up the week before the meeting and she had not had time to conduct discussions about it.

"My organizing work had been done on a different basis," she said.

She assumed she would report the results of her work to the membership at the Oct. 25 meeting.

This included her impression that the majority of YUSA members were in favour of a union. However, the executive decided that only its members would be on the platform.

After the meeting, Glendon staff members approached Steed to express dissatisfaction with the way the meeting had been run and with the fact a few men seemed to be running the show for a couple of hundred women.

The women from Glendon subsequently voted unanimously in favour of an accredited union.