

...SO WAS THE ART GALLERY

Last Monday night at the Council meeting, Wally May, chairman of the Student Art Gallery Committee, present a report to Students' Council in hopes of staving off Council's proposed dropping of the gallery from the budget.

A written report accompanied his presentation, but most councillors probably didn't read it. Part of this report follows this story.

In the discussion which followed, education rep, Wendy Yurchuk, although she favoured keeping the gallery, damaged its position by complaining about what she felt was an uncooperative attitude demonstrated by Myra Davies, the Art Gallery's director, towards the Arts Resource Board.

Davies did not see that the ARB was accomplishing anything that was not already being done by the Art Gallery committee, while the people on the Board felt greatly hampered by Davies' apparently unfavourable attitude towards them.

This, along with the fact that the budget needed trimming, probably decided the vote of most of the councillors.

Davies has expanded the Art Gallery since the inception of the Student Art Gallery Committee, to a permanent organization with a fulltime director and two assistants, as

well as part time assistants. The Art Gallery Committee is a body of students who work with the gallery staff to decide fund raising activities and special events such as display case shows and exhibitions. They have tried to deal with Students' Council, protecting the gallery from the ravages of Finance Board, since fall but have been generally ignored by Students' Council.

Currently scheduled in the gallery from April 7 to June are six student shows. If the gallery is closed, the Council will be responsible, morally at least, for a breach of trust, says the gallery's staff.

It appears that the Council cares little for anything but saving money, claims the Art Gallery Committee. Students' Council, they say, has not even investigated thoroughly alternatives to the drastic action they took. The art gallery staff, for instance, has offered to take a cut in salaries if the gallery can be allowed to survive.

Exerpts from May's report to Council

The SUB Art Gallery is the best Students' Union Art Gallery in Canada and the only gallery of its kind to achieve national recognition. In the last year the gallery program has contained twenty-two shows (eight of which were student shows) and a

series of special events including poetry readings, musical concerts, and films.

During 1970 - 71, there were 58,000 people who visited the Art Gallery and this year the figure will approach 60,000. This count is of people who enter the Art Gallery area and not the Music Listening Area. A rough breakdown of the visitors would show that approximately two-thirds are students and one-third are people involved in other areas (either university staff and professors, or members of the general public).

The Gallery is trying to serve as a facility where people who would otherwise have no chance to become familiar with local artists, Alberta artists or Fine Arts in general, can take the opportunity to explore this area. The program is varied, with exhibits that are generally informational (DaVinci, Engineer - Poetry Must Be Made By All - People of Eight Seasons) to exhibits on a more specifically art-oriented level (Two Young Montreal Artists, Four From London). The Gallery is concerned with bringing the work of Canadian artists to Canadian people. This is shown by the fact that out of twenty-two shows, only two are of non-Canadian substance, and these are both international exhibits. The Gallery functions as a meeting place, where communication between artists

and the general community can be initiated. Not only is there a need for a facility where creative people in different areas can co-operate and exchange ideas, but also, a vehicle is necessary where the barrier between artists and the general public is broken down.

The Art Gallery, therefore, is not only an institution that benefits artists and students in the University, but it is also a method of communication between people who would otherwise have no method by which they could contact each other. It is possibly the most relevant of educational and cultural functions, because it is in the Gallery that statements are made that must be recognized by the people who view them. If you think that it is not important for artists, poets, musicians, designers, and all manners of creative people to communicate to the society in which they live, then the Art Gallery should not be a Students' Union priority!

If the Students' Council finds that the Art Gallery is no longer a priority, the following points should be kept in mind:

1. The original investment in the SUB Gallery is substantial. The original designers of the Gallery spent a great deal of time, effort and money in providing special facilities

that could not effectively be used for other purposes. Special tracking and spotlight systems, diffuse lighting effects, moveable wall panels, high ceiling storage vault, and many other lesser features were all investments that have been made in the past, and these investments would be entirely lost if the Gallery were closed.

2. Severance pay for existing permanent staff would amount to \$7,780 (Gallery Director and Attendant).

3. It is most probable that the people who made the original decision to include a Gallery in the Students' Union Building realized that a Gallery is not a money-making venture and assumed that costs would have to be covered by other means. To liquidate the Gallery would eliminate all their efforts and the efforts of people throughout the past several years who have helped the Gallery achieve its present status. To undo this work and to deprive all the people who will use the Gallery in the future because of current financial problems is a very near-sighted policy.

AND RADIO TOO

Student radio, CKSR, was virtually destroyed by Students' Council Monday night. A finance board recommendation to council slashed the student radio's budget from the \$8,000 needed to operate to \$2,240, a sum that makes it nearly impossible for CKSR to continue operating.

The sum of \$2,240, according to Dick McLeish, CKSR director, covers only the barest necessities of the radio's operation. It does not pay for the director's salary, new equipment, new records, or the low sum of fifty dollars needed to continue the computerized record catalogue.

Originally CKSR proposed a budget of \$10,000. This would have enabled the station to upgrade the existing equipment in order to start broadcasting in Edmonton by cable in an arrangement with Capital Cable Ltd. However, when it appeared that they would not be able to obtain this amount, the budget was pared to \$8,000 which would have covered the salary of the director and allow the radio to operate on a limited but practical basis.

Don McKenzie, Students' Union president, said that the reason for the cutback in CKSR's budget was "to keep them operating at last year's level." Yet CKSR did not operate last year with the low sum of \$2,240.

McLeish, who was to have served again next year as the station director at a salary of \$2,400, said at Monday's council meeting that if the new budget did not have provision for his salary, he would be forced to leave the radio station because of economic pressure or go on welfare. McKenzie's answer to this was "let the government

look after him."

Pete Sutherland of CKSR said that if there is no salary for the director, no-one would be able to afford the time to run the station and that even if the director's salary had remained in the budget, the reduced amount awarded for operating costs would still mean the end of radio.

Vera Radio, Students' Union secretary, says that the role of the union has been changing from one of providing tangible services such as radio and the art gallery to one of intangible services in areas that will help the student in his academic life and give the students a greater voice in the administration of the university. Because of the reorientation, money is no longer available to support the existing services such as radio and others.

McKenzie says, "essentially we want to keep them operating... but we can't find the money." McKenzie explained that the revenue for the union is fixed or even on a slight decline, but the salaries and operating costs of the union are increasing at an eight to ten per cent rate per year. This means that the money for services is decreasing and since there is only so much money, something has to go.

McLeish said later that he took the reduced budget "as a personal insult.... there is no way we can continue." When asked what plans he might have for continuing the radio station in a limited way, he said that the only way they could possibly remain an entity within the union, was to start doing programming for the commercial radio stations in the city, but this would mean that the students on campus would be deprived of the existing daily

programming. "But," as one CKSR staffer said, "it's going to come down to that anyway, we're just going to have to go off the air next year."

McLeish also said that if CKSR is forced to shut down next year, "all the time and money we have spent trying to get an FM licence will go down the drain."

He said that capital expenditure for an FM station has already been allocated under SUB expansion. Two years ago, U of A students approved a three dollar increase in Students' Union fees to provide for SUB expansion. CKSR expansion was included in the SUB expansion program.

However, SUB expansion has never begun and, with the existing financial problems, it is unlikely that it will begin in the near future. The money from the increase in fees has been, for the past two years, placed in a special reserve which has not been used at all. McLeish feels that since SUB expansion is not feasible, but radio expansion is, some of this reserve money should now be allocated to CKSR for new equipment.

If CKSR does not obtain enough money to keep them operating even at a minimal level, McLeish claims it will be a long time before the opportunity for an FM licence occurs again. "One of the major things the CRTC looks at in granting a licence is the solvency of the station. If we are forced to curtail broadcasting, we will not have a case at all for the licence." McLeish was upset, as well, by the manner in which CKSR was axed. "They never talked to us about the budget and most of the councillors have never even come around to see the station."

EDITORIAL

The Students' Union, like the university administration, seems to be faced with increased costs and decreased or static revenues for next year.

There are several factors which must be taken into account in a discussion of the budget which was passed Monday.

1. *The areas which experienced a substantial decrease in revenue - CKSR, Photo Directorate, and the Art Gallery - are areas directly involved in providing service to the students and providing a means for student involvement in Students' Union activities. They are all a means of communication and creativity among students.*

2. *The areas which experienced substantial increases from last year are areas directly under the control of S U Executive members and are areas which provide little means of involving the ordinary student. These areas are, mainly: the proposal for hiring two full-time professional executive assistants for Students' Council at a cost of \$17,000, the administration board (a combination of the old Personnel and Finance Boards) which increased its grant from \$1,250 to \$3,000, and the Forums Committee which, although it did not experience an increase over last year, should have taken, in view of the budget situation, a much more substantial cut than it did. Forums is budgeted to bring in high-priced prestigious speakers and yet Campus Co-op has just put on an excellent forum for relatively nothing.*

3. *The Students' Union does have money problems due to decreasing or static enrolment and rising costs. S U priorities must be closely examined because some activities will have to be cut. However, we think it much wiser to cut administrative and bureaucratic costs rather than services.*

4. *There are at least two ways of obtaining the money for the axed services rather than by taking it from other areas of the budget. The S U could go to referendum to release SUB expansion reserves (which are substantial and will probably not be used) or it could deficit budget and go to referendum for a fee increase for 1973 - 74.*

5. *The two executives who drew up the budget which was passed made no attempt to consult with the Students' Union organizations concerned. Many organizations, including The Gateway, would have been prepared to assist the executives in cutting costs if we had been let in on the seriousness of the situation.*

This is the first time in recent history that there has not been thorough consultation with the organizations before the budget was brought down.

It is up to the students to demonstrate to Students' Council the priorities that should be set within this Students' Union.

We can not do it with anything as simple as a petition. CKSR, in one day, collected 2,000 signatures in support of their request for additional money but Students' Council refused to take this into account. The Gateway, two weeks ago, presented a petition of over 3,000 students asking them to re-consider their decision in the matter of next year's editor but council wouldn't even consider reconsideration.

We do have the power, through a general meeting of the Students' Union, to repeal any motion passed in Students' Council including the budget.