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(Overheard Thursday, November 16, 6:45p.m., 5th floor, Stong Residence)

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Men for women's rights

opinion

by Tim Fishleigh

Some men step through the doors of a women's centre and experience the contradictions first hand of our presence in a place which has been created for women by women. We become aware of our own awkwardness. We feel alienated and rightfully so. Our feelings of alienation arise from the reality that we have no clear place in the Women's Movement. There exists a very real contradiction of our presence in the movement which was created to empower women and not to give us men further opportunities to voice our opinions.

The male reactions to the contradiction of "men in feminism" (Jordin and Smith 1987) have been diverse and largely unorganized. We have become conservatives resisting any change to the status quo. We have become right wing reactionaries striking out against feminism. As well, some of us have become alienated supporters of feminism without a real strategy of our own for dealing with the dismantling of patriarchy. It is to this last group of men that I wish to communicate.

I had the pleasure of participating in a successful mens' group which I would like to use as a model for mens' strategy in fighting sexism. OPIRG (The Ontario Public Interest Group, which is trying to set up our

campus) is a group of students involved in the struggle for social justice and environmental protection. The women of this organization decided they needed time for themselves to deal with the realities of sexism in their lives, and of course in the organization. So they decided to withdraw from a portion of the organization's meeting time.

In response, the men suffered from the expected feelings of rejection, loss of control and abandonment.

After discussing their situation, the men managed to turn these negative feelings into a positive experience. The men decided to hold a parallel meeting for men to discuss the realities of sexism in the organization and society. Needless to say the meetings became very rewarding for the men. The men grew to appreciate the experience of men meeting as men to discuss the realities of sexism in their lives.

I found this men's group to be a very healthy approach for any organization to take in order to deal with the patriarchy that exists in all organizations of the left or the right. I found the experience incredibly enlightening. I had always considered myself to be a person aware of, and sensitive to the realities of sexism. I could intellectualize about it at all levels, I had all the correct vocabulary. But I found the subjective experience of actually talking with other men about ourselves in a sexist society to be incredibly valuable.

As a result of this experience I

believe that the strategy of men meeting together as part of an organization to deal with the realities of sexism is a very effective way of reaching large groups of men and fighting the inherent sexism within all our organizations. I would never have thought of going out of my way to join a mens' group to deal with my own sexism.

Men experience patriarchy from an entirely different position than women. Men are not coming from an experience of being oppressed as men. Certain qualities we have, such as sensitivity and communication, have been oppressed, but our person has not been belittled and devalued the way women's identity has been. So the institutions of the mens' movements against patriarchy will have to answer to our needs as men. And to recognize that patriarchy is not an elusive third party enemy but actually deeply imbedded in all of us.

The male organizations for the fight against patriarchy, I believe, will be strongest and most effective when founded in the existing structures of related political struggles. Men can find a voice for fighting patriarchy outside of the contradictions of trying to infiltrate the women's institutions. Men can have a role in deconstructing patriarchy in an organized way by using the existing political organizations. We may organize ourselves in solidarity with women in non-patriarchal ways while we continue the struggle in other organizations to change the foundations of our exploitive society.

Marriott addresses student concerns

About 25 students met with Marriott managers and Complex 1 food service committee chair Russell Hersen last Thursday night in Winters Dining Hall to discuss concerns regarding food service in the complex.

Director of Marriott food services Eric Cameron, manager of Complex 1 Susanne Cullen and Eila Kenyon, assistant manager of Complex 1, addressed student questions and complaints about prices, food quality, portion sizes, operating hours and quality of service.

Cameron said price increases are determined annually "on a global scale," by predicting profits of catering operations and the Marriott-operated Tim Horton's stand.

Cameron added that Marriott

has lost about \$100,000 so far in this fiscal year.

He further said that Marriott was not responsible for this year's increase in minimum scrip purchase, but that a lot of students had been running out of scrip, and the minimum purchase had not been increased in "years."

Suggestions were raised by students about displaying ingredient information in a visible place, and the fact that it is law to provide this information was noted by the students. The Marriott representatives said a bulletin board worth \$225 with this information had been positioned outside the cafeteria, but it had been stolen. Cameron said it was not possible to display what is in the food, but Cullen made the suggestion that a file cabinet library of ingredients be established, thus

saving Marriott "hours" of time to make daily lists.

Cullen said vegan meals (made without any animal products) can't be delivered every day, but rather two or three times a week.

Cameron suggested that if students are unhappy with food quality, they should approach the chef, but Hersen said this would be "chaos."

The discussion also had an environmental theme. Concerns about possible recycling programmes and styrofoam containers for take out meals were expressed. Cameron said the containers are chlorofluorocarbon (CFC) free. Also, he said a blue box programme would have to be coordinated with the university and the city of North York, and that "North York is slow about these things."

Construction Update

- The remainder of the Centre for Fine Arts Phase III is nearing completion and should be ready for occupancy in the new year.
- Concrete continues to be poured, as the Student Centre reaches the third floor level. Much of the work now is concentrated in the basement level, where floor slabs are being poured, and underground services are being installed. The food court is expected to be ready for occupancy by April '90, with the rest of the building to be occupied over the summer.
- The frames of all nine York Student Apartment buildings are now complete. The apartments are scheduled for occupancy in May '90. Passy Crescent is the new road around the complex which was recently completed.
- Foundations for Calumet College are complete and the building's shell will soon become visible. The project are slated for occupancy in the late summer of 1990.
- Construction of the New Academic Building and Entry Pavilion is expected to begin in early December.