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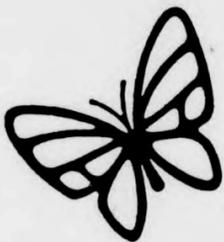
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END OF YEAR REPORT: YORK CAMPUS FOOD SERVICE OMBUDSMAN

"The office of the Ombudsman provides an open, impartial and easily accessible channel for communication between the UFSBC, and the York community. Through this office, information is passed on, opinions are expressed and recommendations and suggestions are forwarded on to the appropriate committee, caterer or administrator to act upon."

INTRODUCTORY COMMENTS

As my term as Ombudsman comes to an end, I cannot say that I am sorry to be finished, although it certainly has been an 'educational' experience. In September I did not realize that people could discuss food 24 hours a day and in all situations, even at the Cock & Bull. I had great hopes for the catering situation at York this year and although most of the food service areas have been satisfactory, the situations in Osgoode and the Complexes have been disappointing and disturbing. I can only hope that the new caterers have better success at fulfilling all needs, next year and if all goes well, in years to come.

ATKINSON

The cafeteria at Atkinson seems to be a favourite of most students and staff on campus I hear nothing but good comments in terms of both service and quality of the food served. The only conversation I have had this semester concerning Atkinson took place over the phone on February 25, 1988. Prof. David Wood called with regards to the effect of the proposed change in the residence meal plan on the quality of menu and service, if the residence meal system became exclusive to the Complexes. After discussing his concerns and offering what information I could, I referred Prof. Wood to both Mr. Norman Crandles and to Ms. Esther Sadavoy as appropriate persons to air his concerns with. I sincerely hope that Atkinson remains the fine outlet that it has become.

CENTRAL SQUARE

My major concern with Central Square cafeteria remains space, or lack of it. Especially with York's new smoking policy, there never seems to be a place to sit down and have your lunch. The cafeteria area appears to be filling up with people who have been moved from the hallways and who just want to have a cigarette between classes. It is also now a place to lounge and smoke if you have an hour or two to kill and you want to read or study. My concern is for those who have bought lunch and who cannot find a place to sit, but I am also concerned that the cafeteria not become a refuge for displaced smokers. My sympathy also lies with those who feel that they have nowhere to go for a cigarette and a coffee on break and I would urge the administration to reconsider the ramifications of the new policy, on the space in Central Square especially. When I mentioned this problem at a UFBC meeting, I received the suggestion that the entire cafeteria be made smoke-free, but I do not consider this to be an appropriate solution. I would encourage all patrons of Central Square to be considerate and careful when dealing with this issue. As with Atkinson, the effects of an exclusive residence meal plan on the quality and service in Central Square remains to be seen.

MARKY'S

On February 15, 1988, I received a telephone call from a representative of the Jewish Student's Federation. Mr. Norman was inquiring as to the reasons for the dismissal of the contract with Marky's and as to whether or not a Kosher caterer would be sought to fill the space. He also inquired as to whether the university administration would make a different outlet Kosher if a change in theme was the decision for Marky's. I referred Mr. Norman to both Mr. Norman Crandles and to Mr. Darryl Wiggers as the representative to the UFBC for that particular space. Since that time, the committee which was struck to investigate the possible uses for that space has recommended to the UFBC that, "... a proposal call for an exclusive kosher facility for the Marky's premises be undertaken..." It is my understanding that the sub-committee is in the process of seeking such a caterer. It is also my understanding that this facility is to be operational for the fall of 1988.

OSGOODE

On February 1, 1988 the contract between York and Harvest Catering was taken over by Cosmos Catering which is owned and run by Mr. Frank Heutschi.

Negotiations concerning the disposition of the contract took place between the administrations of both York and Osgoode along with Mr. Heutschi. According to my understanding, the contract was assumed by Cosmos as is. The issue of working conditions, wages and York's responsibility to the workers already in positions at the time of a change in management has been thoroughly discussed and critiqued by various members of the community. It is a highly emotional issue and has been a dividing factor in the Osgoode community. With good management and some give and take on both sides, I hope that this will cease to be an issue. As I was not personally involved in the negotiations, I cannot provide any more detail.

COMPLEX I & II

On Friday March 25, Beaver Foods announced their intention of giving up the contract to cater in the residence serveries. According to top level management, the cost of staying at York does not justify them remaining involved. Due to such things as high labour costs, theft, a necessity of hiring more management staff than they originally thought necessary, the owners have decided that it is not profitable to remain at York. As a result of this decision, they have exercised the thirty-day cancellation clause but have agreed to remain until a new caterer can be found. Because of time constraints and the necessity of having a caterer in place for the summer conference season, the UFBC has set up a committee to reconsider the bids received during last year's tendering process. Hopefully a new caterer will be chosen through this process within the next two weeks, and the changeover take place approximately a month from now. The conversations which I have had with members of community now appear irrelevant to the discussion. The new meal plan has been a much discussed and bewailed subject and besides the numerous conversations, I have received one letter, from James Gurowka, an assistant Don in Stong College. In the letter he expressed concerns about the limitations of the proposed meal plan, as well as suggesting some things which could be done to alleviate the difficulties. After discussing the letter with Ms. Debra Butts and with Ms. Marianne Kelly, I did not reply as I was assured that the subject had been dealt with extensively, both at a food users' meeting and at a meeting between the residence tutor and the Dons and assistant Dons for Stong residence.

The effect that the change in caterer will have on the meal plan and the renovations proposed for the Complexes, has yet to be determined positively. It appears as if the scrip system will remain in place although there has been some discussion about making scrip exclusive to the residence serveries. It appears a definite decision on this subject will be made when a new caterer has been chosen. It also appears a certainty that the kitchens will not get the overhaul which they desperately need. This, in my opinion is the most unfortunate aspect of the whole situation. I encourage residence students to be sympathetic to a few realities:

- It takes time for a caterer to become aware of the needs and preferences of a business as large as this. It takes time to prepare and implement menus and services which accurately reflect the needs of the customer.
- With the restrictions which are placed on the caterer in terms of operating hours, services required and the extensive nature of the necessary renovations, it is necessary to guarantee a certain amount of income. This is what makes an exclusive meal plan necessary.
- For the first year, a new caterer is required to operate on an 'as is' basis. The fact that the existing equipment is obsolete makes it difficult for the caterer to do his best work.
- It takes time!

CLOSING COMMENTS

Over the course of my term as Ombudsman, I have had many discussions with people who, although very well intentioned, have sometimes been confused by a lack of facts or a misrepresentation of the realities. There are two sides to every discussion and the proper forum for receiving information and expressing opinions is within the Food Users committees of whichever food service you are concerned about. Another source of information is of course, the Ombudsman and they are readily available either by telephone or mail. I cannot overemphasize the necessity of communication in something as important as what one eats, all day, every day. I have enjoyed my term and I encourage everyone to speak up in committee and to make an effort to hear both sides of a discussion.

LAURA CHAPMAN

Food Service Ombudsman, York Campus, April 3, 1988