

editorial

Get out your wallets

Last week *Excalibur* reported that 95.5 per cent of Vanier residents, as reported in the Vanier Residence Improvement Committee, are not in favour of a meal card system.

This week *Excalibur* reports that the University Food Services Committee has accepted a recommendation to abolish all scrip and replace it with a universal 19 meals-a-week card.

The plan, if approved by the Board of Governors and vice-president (finance and administration) Bill Farr, will be implemented this coming September. It will cost students \$2,100 instead of this year's fee of \$1,875 for 14 meals-a-week or \$1,625 for 10 meals-a-week or scrip.

At first glance, it appears that students will be getting a better deal, as it will cost about \$111 a week for the new plan instead of \$134 a week for the current 14 meal-a-week plan. But we doubt that most residence students will actually eat 19 meals-a-week in Marriott's cafeterias. Director of housing and food services Norm Crandles has decided, upon consulting two residence students and two residence tutors, that York is "a full-time residence situation," and so missed meals will not be a problem. His unscientific survey has let him overlook that many students do leave residence for weekends on a regular basis. Many people will miss meals and will lose money.

The fact that some students never eat breakfast, some go home weekends and almost all go off-campus for dinner now and then is built into the system for Marriott's benefit. With scrip, there is always the opportunity to spend your money at a later date, but with this plan Marriott will be making money on a lot of missed meals.

Another feature of this plan is that the cards will only be valid in Marriott outlets. With scrip, students can buy food at Tim Horton's, Osgoode Hall Law School, Marky's or the Atkinson cafeteria, which some students call their "saving grace." Now, if residence students want to eat at these outlets they will have to pay cash and forfeit the money already paid to Marriott.

And these food outlets will suffer when they lose all of their scrip income.

Crandles says this plan is necessary for food services to be able to break even. "To continue with the present meal plan system would have meant a \$235,000 loss for the university," he says. But this plan will bring in significantly more than \$235,000. It will bring in hundreds of thousands of dollars more than the old meal plans.

For the 1988-1989 school year, residents were required to pay \$1,300 for scrip. If the proposed increase is approved, residents will see an \$800 increase in two years. That's a 62 per cent increase. This would be coupled with a close to fifteen per cent tuition increase and the proposed 6.45 per cent residence rent increase. Where are students supposed to get all this money?

Toronto has a lucrative job market, but in towns and cities outside Metro, where most residence students live, it's not easy to find a job that pays more than minimum wage. It appears that we are getting closer and closer to the elitism that will make university accessible only to the financially well-off.

Ultimately, it all comes down to underfunding. York needs money, and so students who want to live in residence while going to school have no choice but to pay. The federal and provincial governments, however, are exercising their freedom to not pay if they don't want to. Leaving students trapped.

HEY DANIEL!
HAPPY BIRTHDAY (EVEN THOUGH
IT WAS YESTERDAY)
FROM YOUR EXCAL PALS

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letters

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Vanier resident clarifies questionnaire results

Dear Editor:

re: "Vanier residents dissatisfied with quality of life" by Robert Walsh (*Excalibur*, March 13, 1990).

I would like to thank *Excalibur* for its interest in the results of the 1990 Vanier Residence Improvement Questionnaire. However, there are a couple of points made in Mr. Walsh's article which I feel to be in need of some clarification.

Firstly, it should be understood that Hospitality York does pay a portion of operating costs into the Housing Operations budget. As a residence student, my concern is that the amount of this "recovery" in the Housing budget is not nearly equal to the total cost of operating the four undergraduate residences over which Hospitality York assumes control for the summer months.

I would also like to make clear that I did not mean to imply that Vanier residents are a "cash-cow" to the York administration, but rather that all residence students (both undergraduate and graduate) make a disproportionate contribution to the central operating fund of the university. This is a function of such things as residence student subsidization of Hospitality York and the administration's handling of the Site Development Loan and the Atkinson Second Mortgage.

While these may seem to some to be minor points, I feel that the

process of change currently being affected by enhanced student awareness relies heavily upon a thorough and accurate understanding of the facts and issues at hand.

Thank you again for your interest.

Sincerely
Marshall Beier
Chair, Vanier Residence Improvement Committee

"Disabled people don't need your pity"

Dear Editor:

Re: George Rappos' letter, March 15, 1990
"Student inspired by man in a wheelchair."

Mr. Rappos, when I read your letter I had a very violent reaction. Never before had a letter to the editor made me so angry. I realize that you were trying to be poetic and profound in your description of that 'poor' man in a wheelchair, but all you succeeded in doing was to wax pathetic. You also had some important errors in your letter. I would like to set a few things straight.

You said, "He was definitely a paraplegic with limited use of his arms." This is the description of a quadriplegic. It is a common misconception that a "quad" can not move his/her arms. Actually, most quadriplegics have "gross motor control" of their upper body, which means that they can hold a book, put up their hand in class and other large body movements, but most quadriplegics have very little "fine motor control" which means that they may have difficulty picking up a penny or a pin.

Even so, I wonder how you knew at once that this man had a spinal trauma (either accident or virus)? I have worked with physically disabled adults for four years, and still cannot look at a person and 'diagnose' their disability. How can you, sir? What you described could have been Multiple Sclerosis (which has many different forms), or even Muscular Dystrophy.

As for the rest of your letter, you say, "He is unable to do battle if called upon by his country." So are flat footed blokes. Shall I cry in my beer for them? Why not? They also suffer a disability, do they not?

You say he is "unable to jump hurdles." This is true, but the point of jumping hurdles is to enjoy the thrill of competition, and if any physically challenged person wishes to compete, there are plenty of opportunities for that. And if you dare ask how competitive disabled people can be, call the Toronto Spitfires organization and ask to play one on one basketball with any of their players. You wouldn't stand a chance!

This poor man is "unable to walk along the shores of the most beautiful beaches." Bull. If that's a priority, then there are power chairs that will go up stairs, never mind wimpy beaches. And it isn't that hard for an ambulatory person to push a manual chair on sand, which seems like a good idea. After all, beauty is much more enjoyable when shared with a friend. Besides, is that the only place that one can appreciate beauty? No sir, it is not, and a person who happens to be in a wheelchair knows it.

Mr. Rappos, the most offensive statement in your letter (which is something else) is that you think that this man is "unable to experience the joys of sex." Well sir, I'll be honest. As far as I know (remember, I have four years experience), there is but one disability which makes a person unable to appreciate sex.

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