

Is Central Square bad for your health?

By Maxine Kopel
and Hugh Westrup

Overcrowding in the halls and warnings from the fire department have prompted student council to explore plans for enclosing the open air patio in Central Square.

Both York Fire Marshall, Bob Richards, and North York fire department platoon chief, Thomas Adair, feel there are too many people in Central Square.

"We've utilized Central Square to the hilt," says Richards. "It's become a safety hazard."

The North York Fire Marshall has declared Central Square's Bearpit a fire hazard and temporarily closed it to all public

assemblies.

Platoon Chief Adair says a decision will be reached "hopefully within one month" as to whether the pit will be available for large university gatherings.

Adair told *Excalibur* that Central Square originally had "five or six minor occupancies," and was used primarily as an artery carrying the flow of student traffic from one campus building to another.

"The pit was ok then. It was designed for discussions and talks. Since then, it has developed into a central area.

"This is a mall. There are no sprinklers or fire detection. If 200-300 people are gathering there, then exit facilities are

blocked and there can be injury to students and whoever is there."

Adair notes that the maximum occupancy allowed to congregate inside the Bearpit due to public safety regulations is 35. "The problem is the people around the pit. The passers-by are blocking free access to other areas."

The platoon chief also says a minimum of 12 feet must accompany every store front to ensure quick and easy exiting in case of a fire. Due to the swelled crowds, "this 12 feet is gone."

Adair says that no construction can modify the current safety hazard.

"We're not objecting to assemblies, only

in that area." He suggests that public forums be scheduled for halls equipped with sufficient fire exits and precautions for large audiences.

Food & Beverage Manager Norman Crandles reports that two bookings scheduled prior to the pre-Christmas ruling will be honored but further bookings are being rerouted to university lecture halls.

Crandles says the handicraft and political exhibit tables are safe for the moment but may also face extinction if they are considered a hazard.

"I'm not terribly happy. I want

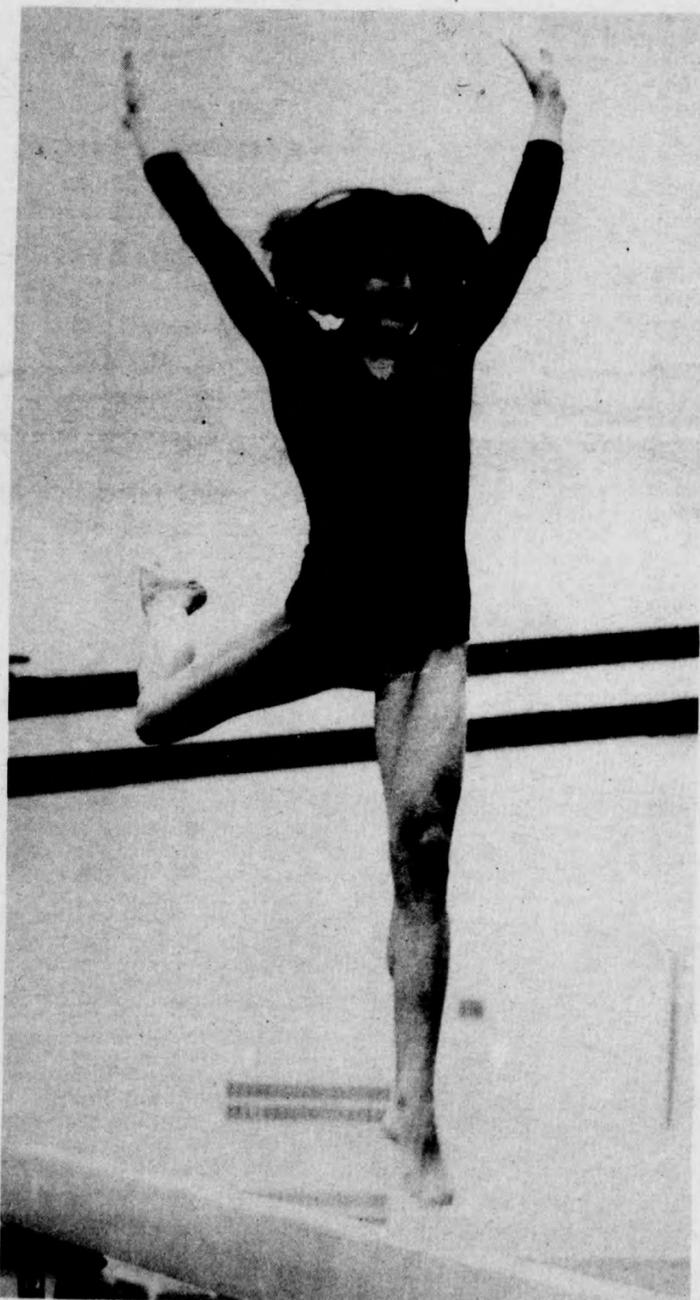
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York's Nancy McDonald captured firsts in both balance beam and floor routine at the first women's invitational gymnastics meet of the season Saturday. More on page 15,16. Bryon Johnson photo

Macdonald calls end to Forest suspension

By Laura Brown

After two months of suspension from the university, lecturer Jeffrey Forest was reinstated on Monday by President H. Ian Macdonald.

Forest received a letter from Macdonald which stated "your suspension and ban from campus is now lifted and you may return to your employment in the university."

Macdonald's letter justified the university's position for suspending Forest but did not state why the decision was made to reinstate him.

Forest was suspended from campus November 21 following his arrest for assault on November 18. Fighting broke out that day in Central Square between the York Student Movement and their opponents. The Metropolitan Toronto police were called in by York Security and Forest and three other people were arrested.

Macdonald stated in the letter that having considered the circumstances leading to the suspension, and the reports made by Assistant Vice-President Becker on November 30, 1977 and Deans Eisen and Knittl and Vice-President Farr on January 10, he was satisfied that the November 18 incident "created a real danger of further violence and possible physical injury unless immediate action was taken."

The suspension was warranted, Macdonald stated, due to the "attendant danger of the November 18 incident" combined with the circumstances of the November 4 incident in Bethune College. Macdonald said it was relatively clear that Forest did strike a student when ejecting him from a meeting organized by the York Student Movement on the earlier date.

The letter further stated that

Forest was to keep the peace and maintain good conduct at the university. Macdonald said, "failure to observe such practices

could only be interpreted as unwillingness on your part to continue as a member of this community."

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No "student" fares without subsidy

By B.J.R. Silberman

Sooner or later every York student who is dependant on the TTC is struck by a fundamental question: Why aren't student fares extended to college and university students?

In response to this question, Bill Hayward, spokesman for the TTC, indicated that there are some 70,000 post secondary students living in Toronto.

"In order to reduce their fares," he said, "millions of dollars would be required. Unless the TTC received this money through a direct subsidy, their revenue would be reduced and their deficit up."

Hayward stated that the Toronto Transit Commission received 70 per cent of its operating costs from fares. The other 30 per cent is divided roughly in half and shared by Metro and the city.

Senior citizen fares are subsidized by Metro taxes. Deficits incurred by reduced children fares are paid for by Metro and the province at the end of each year.

Hayward said the Toronto post-secondary schools have lobbied for reduced TTC fares each of the last 15 years.

"At the moment, money is tight," he said, "and the budget must be kept in check. The TTC does not want to increase their deficit." He adds, "the TTC would be willing to co-operate provided someone pays the shot — be it the provincial or university officials."

Hayward cited that the commission has done studies in the US where reduced fares for post secondary students are offered. "In every case," Hayward pointed out, "the balance was subsidized by the university".

"In Kingston, Ontario," he said, "students get an activity card for transportation. They pay 60 per cent of their fare and the university pays 40 per cent. It's the same in BC."

When asked what the solution for Toronto was, Hayward replied, "all that is needed is organization. The post secondary institutions need to get together to appoint someone to speak for their entire student population."

"A committee is needed to negotiate with the campus officials in order to receive a reasonable subsidiary," he added.



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