

Grease is the word -but is it true?

By LINDA HALSEY

The decision to cancel the New York stage production of Grease at the Aitken Center last Thursday night was a result of what promoters called "technical stage problems." Contrary to this opinion, Aitken Center manager Gordon Lebel said the stage was "suitable for the performance" and felt there may have been other reasons for their late cancellation.

Lebel said he received a list from promoters Donald K. Donald and Concert Promotion International (CPI), about two weeks prior to the production, regarding necessary stage modifications and these were completed to their "exact specifications." The manager added that the promoters who rented the building were aware of the Aitken Center's stage capabilities and were "quite satisfied"

with their resources as they have been involved with seven previous productions this year.

According to Lebel, the basis of the problem rested with the stage production manager who "didn't like the stage because it lacked the strength needed for the large cast of Grease". Almost twice the normal amount of barrels and \$450.00 worth of plywood was used to secure and strengthen the stage; modifications which were not needed in previous performances such as The Rush concert where the stage "worked fine" despite the heavy poundage.

Thursday night's cancellation occurred only hours before the production was scheduled to begin at the Aitken Center. Radio stations were contacted at approximately 5 p.m.; however the manager was not informed about the decision until a radio

station phoned to confirm the cancellation. "It's amazing; they phoned the radio stations before even telling me," he said.

Only about 800 tickets were sold in advance for the show. Lebel felt the reason for this low attendance was due to disinterest from the majority of people who saw the 1978 release of the movie Grease. He pointed out most children and students enjoyed the movie because of the popular actors, Olivia Newton-John and John Travolta. "The play didn't offer these characters, so little interest was shown."

A week prior to the Fredericton performance, Lebel phoned Montreal to inform Donald K. Donald of the low ticket sales. He was reassured there would be no problem and the show would go on as scheduled. The manager stated: that had the show been

cancelled at this point, we (the Aitken Center) would have saved a lot of money and time with manpower and concession food preparation costs among others."

Lebel said he did not know the real reason for the cancellation; "whether it was poor ticket sales, or a predetermined decision." He added his own view that if they (the promoters) had sold 2,000 or 3,000 tickets, "there's no way the show would have been cancelled."

An employee of the Aitken Center who was working on Thursday's production set-up said he felt the decision to cancel was apparent in the morning. According to the staff member, the stage crew for Grease arrived at the Aitken center at 11:00 a.m. They proceeded to, "sit around and do basically nothing," until about 1:30 p.m. "Then they started mentioning their dislike of the

stage."

The University has drawn up a financial statement charging the promoters of Grease for the cost of the building rental (a standard \$2,000), and expenses such as stage modifications, and food services (an estimated \$1,600.00). If this bill is paid, the Aitken Center will suffer no financial loss, if it is not paid, the Aitken Center manager said he is certain UNB will take legal action.

"We may not lose money," said Lebel, "but how can you measure what we've lost in credibility to the general public?"

Montreal based Donald K. Donald promoters were "unavailable" to answer any questions concerning their abrupt cancellation of Thursday night's performance.

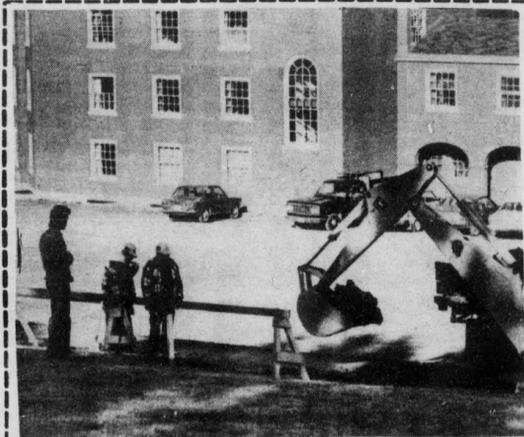


photo by Brewer

Physical Plant employees working on putting in new lights between Lady Dunn and the Library (Let there be light!).

English exams for all

By SHEENAGH MURPHY

A proposed compulsory examination for University of New Brunswick students was discussed at last Tuesday's senate meeting. Senate had passed a resolution, March 14, which dealt with what

was termed as "increasing concern with illiteracy among university students, and the implementation of a proficiency test. University Director for Competence in English Kent Thompson was placed in charge of ascertaining what the test would entail and what rules and regulations would be applicable.

Mr. Thompson sent a memo to University Secretary Dugold Blue to be read at last week's senate

meeting which asked for clarification of the March 14th resolution. He asked whether each and every undergraduate should pass an exam in English competence before receiving a bachelors degree and whether it was the senate's intention to authorize him to construct and administer the said exam.

Senators agreed that a clear cut and detailed outline of what the test would entail was necessary before Thompson's queries could be answered and before regulations could be passed by the Senate.

Members said that it was important the co-ordinator decide and advise senate on when the test should be taken, and who should take it.

A similar English proficiency exam was instigated 3 years ago

at the University of Waterloo, Waterloo, Ontario. According to student press Chevrar the failure rate for students writing the exam has dropped from a 44 per cent failure rate last year to 28 per cent failure rate this year. Twenty one per cent of the students scored 75 per cent or higher compared to 12 per cent last year. The report stated that Head of the Proficiency test, Ken Ledbetter, attributed the higher marks to improved high school teaching.

Ledbetter was the designer of the test, which became mandatory this year. The Chevrar attributed the decrease to its printing of the test in its September 5 issue.

Students who fail the test must take writing clinics until their proficiency in grammar and writing skills.

UIC alters policy

Changes to Unemployment Insurance Policy announced September 1st by Unemployment and Immigration minister Bud Collin are disadvantageous to students according to SRC president Steve Berube. In light of this Berube contacted local MP Bob Howie and expressed his dissatisfaction with the new policy.

As it stands, students will have to work at least 40 weeks in the previous two years (to apply for UIC) and 10-14 weeks in the previous year to be eligible. Currently the stipulation is 10-14 weeks in the previous year. Berube said that most students can work, at the maximum, 16 weeks during the summer and it is conceivable that they will be cut off from UIC benefits as it is a possibility they can work up to three summers and still not meet the law.

In addition, UIC benefits have been cut from 66 2/3 per cent of wages to 60 per cent, another disadvantage to students according to Berube.

Berube said he contacted Howie about two weeks ago to discuss

the issue and the MP agreed with many of the views expressed. The bill is the proposed changed in UIC policy introduced in the House for first reading last Thursday. The bill should now have gone to a committee according to Berube.

He said that Howie is in total opposition to the bill.

Vice president external Claire Fripp sent a telegram to MP Cullen also, telling of students' dissatisfaction with the proposed UIC changes.

Reminder to people doing SOCIOLOGY 1000 (9) the Exam Timetable was in error. Exam will take place in TILLEY HALL 325 FRIDAY, DECEMBER 8th 7 p.m.

UNB bomb scare: hoax



photo by Brewer

An anonymous caller Saturday informed members of the University of New Brunswick's Student Union Building that a bomb was within the building. SUB staff member David Cahill said that the caller phoned the information desk in the SUB with the message

then hung up.

Subsequent investigation of the premises by Fredericton city police failed to reveal any threat and a spokesperson for the department said it was a hoax call.

The Student Union Building was closed for the remainder of the

day on Saturday but opened as usual on Sunday. City police spokesperson said the department did not advise the staff to close the building as that was not in their power to do so.

Campus security members also aided in the investigation.