

editorial



FROM CROATIAN STUDENTS FACE HARASSMENT AT YORK FROM UNSPECIFIED GROUP(S)

Strange rumblings coming from Underground

Student Centre Programmer M. J. Kelly, who was responsible for bands, buskers, art in the gallery and multi-cultural, club-sponsored events, had been asked several times to quit her job to work for The Agency, one of the largest band booking companies in Toronto. "It was a tempting offer," she said in an interview with *Excalibur*, "but I really want to stick with things here."

Half an hour later, she was fired.

By all accounts, the split was amicable. But the laying off of five employees has left serious questions about the way the Student Centre is being run.

Student Centre programming, including bands, buskers, art in the gallery and multicultural, club-sponsored events, was losing money. It was expected to. Starting from nothing, with no reputation and no track record, it was only common sense to expect programmes to lose money. In fact, programming had not spent as much money as had been budgeted, putting it slightly ahead of where it was supposed to be.

Where the budget has expected revenue, and where it has subsequently hemorrhaged red ink, is in food revenue. Restaurant sales for the period of June to October were \$375,000 less than budgeted, while space rental was \$215,000 less, a combined loss of \$590,000. Expenses were less than budgeted for, but this still left the Student Centre with a deficit of almost \$390,000.

Cutting back staff and cutting out programming was like amputating a leg to cure a head wound. It offered a quick solution that didn't address the main problem: people aren't using the Student Centre as much as expected, particularly the Underground. Until this problem is properly addressed, the Student Centre will continue to lose money.

Even more ominous was the way in which the decision was made. The Executive Committee of the Student Centre Corporation Board made the decision without consulting those affected, giving them no opportunity to find less drastic alternatives.

Decisions at the Student Centre are made on an ad hoc basis and lines of communication are weak to nonexistent. Kelly claims the Student Centre has been operating on "crisis man-

agement," which unfortunately demands immediate decisions that allow no time to consider long-term objectives.

It shows. The Dream Warriors are a local band with an international following; they should have sold out the Underground, yet the place was barely half-full. A large part of the reason for this must fall on the decision not to advertise off campus.

The policy not to advertise bands off campus was apparently a response to escalating violence in the Underground. Its main effect was to limit awareness of, and attendance at, the concerts, diminishing a source of revenue and ending the Student Centre's secondary goal of linking students and the North York community. The policy didn't even achieve its primary objective: the worst cases of violence happen on Thursday and Friday nights, when there are djs in the Underground.

Because dj nights bring in the most revenue, they could not be changed; live acts became the scapegoats and the victims.

Another last minute policy affected local artists Meryn Cadell and Maestro Fresh Wes, who were booked to appear at the Underground in October. Without consulting anyone, the Executive Committee decided to get a television in the club and broadcast Blue Jays games. Due to her contract, Cadell had to be paid in full even though she did not appear; Maestro Fresh Wes was rescheduled, but, because there will be no more live bands, he will have to be paid without playing as well.

These potential consequences are serious. The Student Centre's contract with the university makes it clear that if there are doubts about how well it is being run (the deficit being an indicator), the university is within its rights to take over administration of the Student Centre. As bad as things currently seem, that would kill any hope of a Student Centre responsive to student needs or desires.

More immediately, the Student Centre mess has left those of us who love live music, and were looking forward to having an outlet for it on campus, out in the cold. The Underground, with one poorly considered decision, has become a place primarily for people who want to get drunk, laid or both.

I.N.

excalibur

Excalibur

420, Student Centre
York University
4700 Keele Street
North York, Ontario
M3J 1P3

Telephone:

Advertising • 736-5238
Editorial • 736-5239

Excalibur is York University's
community newspaper.

Excalibur is a volunteer organization. We will consider for publication all submissions that are not deemed libelous or discriminatory by the editors and staff. The opinions expressed are not necessarily shared by all members of the staff or board of publications. Final responsibility resides with the editor-in-chief as outlined in the constitution.

Editor-in-chief Jeannine Amber

Managing Editor Doug Saunders

Production Manager Stephen Perry

Production Assistant Pat Micelli

Archivists Maggie Borch and Aaron Dankowitz

Distribution Manager James Oscar

News Editor Christine de Leon

News Associates Sheena Jarvis, Jennifer Lim

C.U.P. Editor Marcus Parmegiani

Arts Editor Ira Nayman

Sports Editor Josh Rubin

Photo Editor Alok Sharma

Feature Supplement Editor Philip Klint

Feature Supplement Associate Editors Noah

Bunnett, Mark O'Leary, Samuel Putinja, and

Jill Skorochod

Staff Elaine Bellio, Maggie Borch, Clare Burke, Trevor Burnett, Patrick Davila, Adrian Graham, Jim Hounslow, Brett Lamb, Wayne Morrow, Cindy Reeves, Dave Rivait, Lee Romberg, Harry Rudolfs, Ricardo Sala, Tom Schneider, Jim Sheppard, Sydney St. Nicholas, Catharine Soukoreff, Kassia Mier Y Teran.

Contributors Gamal Abdel-Shahid,

Kathryn Bailey, Stephen Balsky,

Elaine Bellio, J. David Black, Maggie Borsch,

Clare Burke, Peter Clibbon, Anna Di Rezzo,

Marco Fonseca, Pedram Fouladianpour,

Matt Galloway, David Gardner, Matt Galloway,

Mike Glaister, Jennifer Hoiness, Tim Hughes,

Nina Kolunovsky, David Kuswanto, Christine de Leon,

Joseph Macchiusi, Mattia Magnatta, Peter Mallett,

David L. Mandel, Duncan Moore, Royd Morton,

David Naccarato, Michael Nachoff, Ira Nayman,

Paul Notley, Omond Obanda, Catherine O'Neil,

Anthony Pizzari, Zaffi Pousopoulos, Sam Putinja,

Lee Romberg, Alex Roslin, Ricardo Sala,

Tom Schneider, Narin Silver, Jason Swartz,

Catharine Soukoreff, Garine Torossian,

Sandra Whitworth.

Business Manager Merie Menzies

Advertising Assistant Patty Milton-Rao

Chair, Board of Publications Nancy Phillips

EXCALENDAR

Wednesday November 20

Production Meeting at 12:00 pm

and every Wednesday

Thursday November 21

Editorial Board Meeting at 2:00 pm

Black Writer's Caucus Meeting at 3:00 pm

Womens Caucus Meeting at 4:00 pm

General Meetings

Every Wednesday

4:30 pm

All Welcome