

*Doesn't anyone like this place?*

# Students take York's "ambience" to task

By DEBBIE PEKILIS

The York Task Force on the Physical and Cultural Ambience of the University, recently established by the Commission on the Goals and Objectives, held an open bearpit session on Tuesday to hear suggestions from members of the York community on ways to improve the quality of life on campus.

"Our job is to discuss and make recommendations on any aspects of this university that concern its quality of life," said task force chairman and Fine Arts dean Joseph Green at the beginning of the session. "We are here to find out what the community wants done."

"The main purpose of the force, said Green, is to examine the physical and cultural atmosphere

of the university and to make recommendations that would improve it.

The task force members present at the Bearpit included Green, Prof. Henry Best from Atkinson College, foreign languages professor Elio Costa, Jay Bell (one of the student representatives on the Board of Governors), and task force secretary Yvonne Aziz.

The session started off with a York employee's complaint about a lack of cleanliness on the part of the students.

"The first thing students have to learn is that they cannot abuse property," she said. "I think it is very slovenly of students to throw garbage on the floor when there are receptacles for it."

She also said that unless the vandalism that goes on in the university stops, there is no point in spending money to improve the physical and cultural features. "Your money is going down the drain because of some stupid people who wreck things."

In answering her second comment, Green said proper security at York is a problem for which there is no easy solution. He mentioned that all of the artwork that once hung on campus has been taken down because of vandalism.

"Slovenliness," said one residence student, "is the by-product of the attitude held by students to the physical facilities they use here. To most day students and employees, this is a place to come and learn and study, or a place where they work. They come in the morning and leave in the late afternoon."

"Residence students live here for eight months out of the year, and feel more of an attachment to the

university. For those of us who live in residence, things are different. Residence buildings tend to be cleaner than the other buildings."

A Winters College day student said she feels day students at Winters are a "non-entity". "They don't feel they belong to the college. If they stay behind at night to study or to participate in an activity, they have to worry about such things as bucking the winter weather and transportation during the evening. Buses are irregular at night."

She said a solution to this problem would be to decentralize the university and make the colleges stronger. "If the colleges were stronger and had their own identity or emphasis — such as one college emphasizing sports, another emphasizing Fine Arts, and soon — more students would be attracted to participate in activities there."

Another person commented, "I don't find the university a very comfortable place, because of its size, structure, and number of students." When asked for suggestions on how to improve this atmosphere, he answered, "I don't have any. This should have been considered long ago. Maybe it is too late now."

Students complained about the various rules and regulations concerning the use of different rooms in the colleges and other spaces on campus. CYSF vice-president for social and cultural affairs Paul Hayden said it is very hard for a group of people to hold activities in places like Burton Auditorium, the Tait Mackenzie gymnasium, or the tennis court. "They are always booked up."

Another student said he is unable this year to use the Bethune College music room without first obtaining

a special permit.

CYSF president Barry Edson said CYSF is concerned about the lack of facilities on campus for social groups to hold activities. He mentioned the case of the York Social Co-op, which has to use Minkler Auditorium (at Seneca College) and Convocation Hall (at the University of Toronto) because it was unable to obtain the use of Burton Auditorium.

Other day students said they would participate in more evening college programmes if they found ones they liked. One student said he wants to see the Bethune and Winters College movie nights spread to other colleges. But another student said, "York bus service on Friday ends at 6 p.m., so if I stayed behind to have a beer or do something, I would have to worry about transportation."

One first-year student mentioned an idea which would help students to get to know each other.

"There is not much here to help students in that direction. At the end of the first two weeks here, I only knew the name of one other person at the university. Then I went to a coffee hour on the ninth floor of the Ross Building. There were around three other students there, and we just talked and got to know each other."

He added that he really enjoyed that session, and would like to see more of them at York. "They should have little pubs where you can talk to people and make friends. Students with little else to do should be invited to these little groups where they can have coffee and talk with their fellow students."

The task force will hold more hearings in November.



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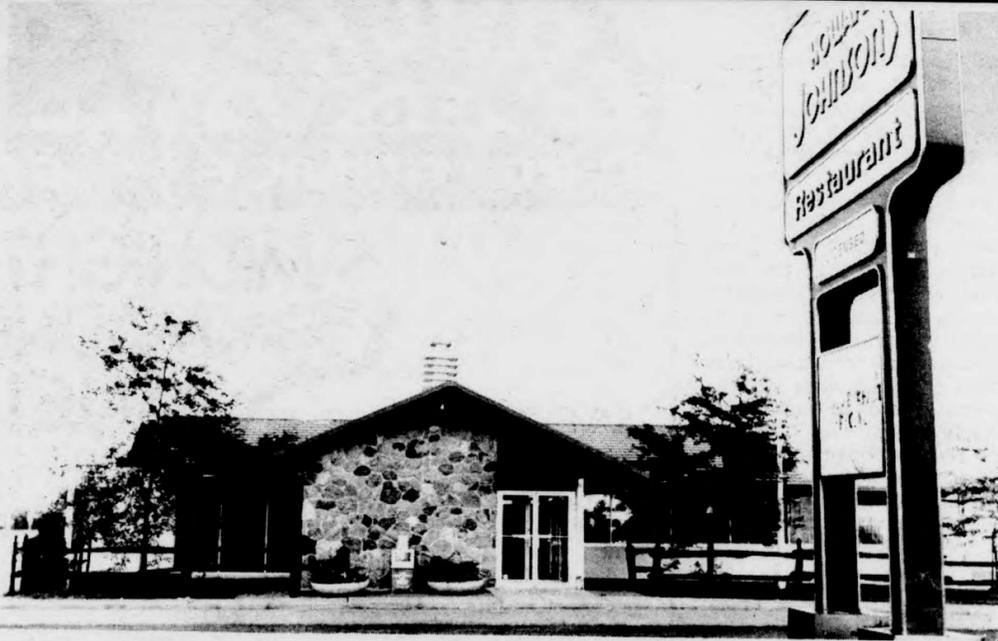
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