

CYSF Scrutinized: Inside the protest

column

by Daniel Wolgelerenter

As everyone who has walked through Central Square knows, the theme of the week at CYSF has been PROTEST. Some interesting things have been going on in addition to Wednesday's rally and the defiant placing of club tables in Central Square, violating a 1987 North York Fire Department regulation prohibiting tables in Central Square except in and around the bearpits. WINSHIP: HEALTH PLAN NOT IN JEOPARDY:

CYSF vice-president (internal) Caroline Winship said Monday that she is confident the protest against the administration will not affect the turnout for CYSF's health plan referendum taking place this week.

In order for the referendum to be considered valid, the board of referendum has said that at least 2,500 people must vote. This would be the highest turnout for a referendum or election in York's history.

According to chief returning officer Garry Choo, 373 ballots were cast last week at Glendon, about 700 were cast on the main campus on Monday and about 800 on Tuesday. To encourage people to vote, CYSF and club volunteers were handing out protest flyers with referendum notices on the back telling people to vote.

CYSF president Peter Donato was confident CYSF would make the 2,500 quota. The health plan is one of the best things CYSF has done for students in a long time. Let's hope it doesn't end up shooting itself in the foot.

POPCORN RAISES CRANDLES' IRE:

Donato said that as of last Monday, he had not talked to director of housing and food services Norman Crandles about the administration's decision to rid Central Square corridors of club tables. In CYSF's first protest flyer on Monday and in a meeting with

clubs, Donato said he strongly suspected, based on information from student affairs director Cora Dusk, that someone from housing and food services had called the North York fire department in a conspiratorial manner in retaliation for Marriott's hot dog stand not being allowed in front of the Scott Library entrance.

He said he had, however, been called by Crandles who told him CYSF needed Crandles' permission to sell popcorn in Central Square. As part of this week's protest, CYSF staff and volunteers were selling popcorn (made by CYSF's brand new popcorn machine purchased for the Reel and Screen) for 50 cents outside its office, with protest flyers on them.

FRATERNITY TABLES IN CENTRAL SQUARE:

CYSF was getting help from wherever it could this week, including the fraternities that were recently supported by council. On Monday, the Sigma Alpha Mu fraternity sat at a Central Square table under a banner identifying themselves, while Sigma Delta Chi and Alpha Epsilon Pi were in Central Square Tuesday promoting themselves and the protest. The Sigma Alpha Mu's were simply handing out protest material while Sigma Delta Chi was giving out protest literature and giving information about an upcoming party at its North York house. Meanwhile, Alpha Epsilon Pi was selling coupon books along with handing out protest material.

Alpha Epsilon Pi member and CYSF Vanier rep Rob Morais said the profit from the book's sale would be used to fund the fraternities' activities and help subsidize a bowl-a-thon to be held later this year to raise money for the Sick Children's Hospital.

It should be noted that fraternities are currently not allowed to set up tables in Central Square because they are not recognized

as clubs by student affairs. They are required to pay for space to rent a table and have a lower priority than the clubs (similar to vendors who are only allowed in Central Square when there is space).

CYSF, however, in its quest for protestors, decided to magically allow fraternities to function like clubs. This is against university policy and has absolutely nothing to do with the North York fire marshal ordering everyone out of Central Square Thursday (without ever visiting the campus, by the way) after Crandles called looking for a place for Marriott's hot dog stand.

CYSF, which two weeks ago hastily debated and passed its motion supporting fraternities and sororities, should not have let fraternities participate in the protests as groups.

Letting fraternity members participate as individuals would have been fine, but the fraternities clearly wanted to give themselves some publicity by participating in the protest as concerned students. CYSF, which contains many fraternity members and sympathizers, should not have let fraternities take advantage of the situation.

LEXICON EDITOR AGITATES: John Montesano, editor of the *Lexicon*, attended (along with news editor Phil Sewell and reporter Joyce Sculnick) the Sunday night club meeting called by CYSF to organize Monday's protest. Sewell and Sculnick were taking notes on the meeting while Montesano, without a notebook, was actively participating in discussion.

Donato actively solicited his opinions, as well as those of Bethune council president Chia-Yi Chua, and the two managed to corner the debate rather effectively. Montesano, whose paper was scheduled to appear on newsstands by Tuesday (but wasn't out until Wednesday), was recommending CYSF blockade

access to Tim Horton's with club tables and that they call in the outside media. His recommendations were taken as those of an expert on media hype and manipulation by those in attendance (not surprising given his position) and Chua vocally backed up his fellow Bethune member's position.

Between the two of them, they effectively manipulated debate on the issue. When an Asian Student Federation member tried to point out (twice during the meeting) that students were being caught in the middle of a powerplay between student affairs and housing and food services, Montesano browbeat him and simplified the issue.

He argues that the bottom line was that clubs had no access to Central Square while Tim Horton's did. CYSF and the clubs at this point, because they had not contacted all the parties involved by Sunday and had not done so until Tuesday, did not know the full scope of what had happened, thinking Crandles had maliciously called the North York fire marshal to get back at student affairs for trying to move Marriott's hot dog stand. (Crandles vehemently denied these accusations.)

CYSF was prepared to adopt these recommendations as courses of action but later chose a less radical approach, one that would not have left them so obviously open to a clash with security. (A clash with security would have made a great story. I can just picture the headline: CYSF PRESIDENT ARRESTED IN PROTEST.)

Montesano should definitely have shown more restraint as editor of a supposedly central student newspaper. By participating in the discussion, he overstepped the bounds of journalistic ethics by getting involved in shaping events his newspaper would later be covering.

In his own defence, Montesano said he was at the meeting to par-

ticipate, and not to report, so it was okay for him to make suggestions and comments. He claims he was there to offer advice as a concerned student who has been around York for a long time and has seen student concerns get railroaded by the university. When I questioned him he did not apologize for his actions.

"I just made suggestions and it was up to CYSF to act responsibly," he said. "I'd rather do it at a meeting out in the open than behind anybody else's back." He added that he feels there is a fine line between participating and creating the news.

"I think that if I crossed that fine line it was for the benefit of students," he said. "I'm not just an observer." He pointed out CYSF did not adopt many of his recommendations and only blockaded Tim Horton's once a *Toronto Star* photographer arrived.

"I drew the line this time because I was fed up with students getting screwed and I thought nothing was going to happen," he said. "Too often in the past, student leaders and news editors have alienated themselves from the community and they have a lot of knowledge about that community."

Montesano said his actions were consistent with the whole *Lexicon* attitude of "doing what we think is right for the benefit of students."

Not a bad or irresponsible attitude I think (at least on the surface), but it does not excuse manufacturing news stories or even moulding ones under development. Montesano kept saying all journalists shape their stories and that the *Lexicon's* attitude is different than *Excalibur's*. A newspaper, as I am sure Montesano is aware, can be a powerful manipulative tool. Montesano should realize that he cannot be a regular student if he is charged with the responsibility of editing a student newspaper.

Letters

Archdekin clarifies Women's Centre issue

Dear Editors:

A misquote in your October 5 issue has resulted in many bad feelings between the York Women's Centre and CYSF.

I never stated, or 'maintained' that "the Women's Centre's funding is not inadequate because it receives an operating grant in excess of \$3,000." This led to the response in your October 19 issue which states that I say ("The York Women's Centre) is entitled to (the \$3,000 operating grant)." The

first quote is a very raw assumption upon *Excalibur's* behalf. The second quote was instigated by the first.

The Equality Commissioner's budget is used for programming on the behalf of CYSF, sometimes in conjunction with the various groups whose interests are similar. The York Women's Centre is eligible to receive sponsorship from the CYSF equality portfolio for running events in conjunction with the CYSF.

The York Women's Centre has

not applied for funding from the Club's budget, but rather has maintained that they are an organization to VP Finance Franco Lofranco. Last year the York Women's Centre did not receive funding from the CYSF as a club, and were financially independent from CYSF.

This year I want the CYSF and the York Women's Centre to have a mutually beneficial relationship.

Sincerely,
Brian Archdekin
Equality Commissioner

Smoky Tim

Re: P. Ali's letter, October 26

Dear Editors:

This is a short note to express our gratitude that you have chosen to criticize the location of Tim Horton's Donuts. It has given us the opportunity to express our opinion.

We also consider it absolutely appalling that an establishment which sells food should locate themselves in such an unhealthy environment. Fortunately, nothing that Tim Horton's sells could be remotely construed as food.

And thus, we consider the location quite appropriate.

Michelle Mathews
Cindy French
Chris Gabe

Defending divergent opinion

Re: Reader criticizes Pro-Choice opinion piece in the October 26 issue of *Excalibur*.

Dear Editors:

Mr. Borst believes that, "after about six to eight weeks a fetus is just the same as us, a wriggling mass of flesh using its tiny brain every so often." If Mr. Borst thinks of himself as "a wriggling mass of flesh using [his] tiny brain every so often" I certainly will not argue; indeed his callous characterization of child bearing ["If abortionists feel nine months of childbearing is an inconvenience, well then a lifetime of impoverished—bearing through taxes is a real

bitch too."] would suggest that Mr. Borst has a fairly accurate picture of himself. I have no quarrel with anyone who believes that abortion is wrong, that Jesus is the Christ, that people are quivering masses of flesh or that Elvis is God; but we must not allow governments to legislate any one belief system so that merely holding a divergent opinion becomes a crime. Mr. Borst ends his piece by saying he wants us all to "make the right decision, listen inside yourself, not to your heart but to your mind." But this advice is in vain unless one presupposes that choice is legal.

Michael Byram

The Best Damn Journalism Seminar You'll Ever Attend.

Arnold Amber, executive producer of CBC news specials, will talk about information gathering, writing and editing. Amber was executive producer of *The National*, and foreign correspondent for Reuters.

Be in 111 Central Square
November 4 at 5 pm.
All welcome.

Borst-blast

Dear Editors:

On October 26, 1989, *Excalibur* stated a policy that you will publish letters up to 250 words. However, directly above this policy statement you have printed a letter which runs at least 800 words. I feel sure that Mr. Borst would have been happy to write his own "piece of political propaganda disguised as an article" for *Excalibur* to express his anti-choice viewpoint. (Yes, Karl Borst, you ARE anti-choice.)

However, his rambling and often incoherent 800 word letter has no place on a *Letters to the Editor* page. Its length goes against your own policy. Its content goes against common sense and respect for women.

Susan Snelling



We will publish, space permitting, letters up to 500 words. They must be typed, double spaced, accompanied by the writer's name and phone number. Libellous material will be rejected. Deliver to 111 Central Square during business hours.

Cows must provide 2 pieces of i.d. and are eligible for a special opinion section, if we find their letters moo-ving.