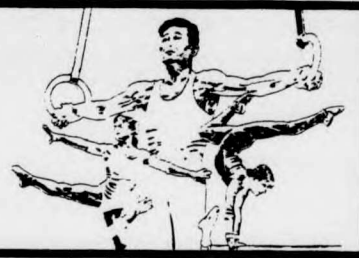


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YORK UNIVERSITY'S COMMUNITY NEWSPAPER



A. CLIVE COHEN

Students supporting the direction of the *Lexicon* this year march on to Bethune College. Its council is planning to shut down the *Lexicon* because they are unhappy with the coverage of Bethune-centred events.

Lexicon supporters march on Bethune

by Clive Thomas

On Monday, Mar. 11, York University heard cries of "freedom of the press and free the Lex" as protesters marched from Scott Library to Bethune College.

Reacting to an attempt by Bethune College council to shut down the *Lexicon* on grounds that it was not fulfilling the colleges' mandate, Lex staff members and others protested a move that they feel is unjustified.

YES President Jean Ghomeshi, VP External-elect Rob Centa, VP Equality-elect Elissa Horscroft, members of the Canadian University Press, a representative from the Carleton newspaper *The Charlatan*, and representatives from the Ontario Federation of Students and York International Socialists joined members of the *Lexicon* staff Monday to protest the move by Bethune council.

Once the shouting had stopped, the discussion boiled down to an issue of freedom of the press versus the *Lexicon*'s obligation to the Bethune college community.

The Bethune constitution states that the *Lexicon* should contain "adequate reportage on council and community events."

In a strongly-worded letter to the Bethune community, Sarah Payne, president of Bethune College council stated that "the *Lexicon* is a college newspaper and that the council, on behalf of the students, has been requesting for the past eight months that Bethune College news be reported."

Payne argues that the council is not trying to deny the *Lexicon* its editorial independence.

"The *Lexicon* has the editorial autonomy to write about the college from any angle that the editor or the staff choose," Payne said.

Payne could not understand what the concern was all about and

insisted that it is council's job to ensure "that the *Lexicon* reports about the college, the good the bad and the ugly."

Lexicon editor Cindy Reeves argued that, "the college council does not want to recognize what we (the Lex) have already built. They are willing to accept an editor on the basis that she/he will get along with the council and support the college mandate."

Reeves said that the council is "opposed to the principle of the staff running the newspaper, of a newspaper being democratic, of editorial autonomy, of staff making decisions in the internal structure of the newspaper."

These claims have been flatly denied by the Bethune council.

According to Payne, the council is not opposed to an alternative voice on campus. Payne said that the problem arises when the paper cannot make a compromise between how much of their agenda, and Bethune's agenda they are willing to incorporate into the paper.

Payne stated the paper must be held accountable to the students of Bethune and that there is overwhelming support from Bethune students for the council's stance.

According to presidential candidate Andrea Shettleworth, the *Lexicon*'s mandate is clear.

"As a Bethune student, I feel that the newspaper has a primary obligation to the Bethune community, in as much as Bethune students are the only students who support the paper monetarily," Shettleworth said.

Ghomeshi feels that "there is a difference between being accountable to the students of York and being directly controlled by a board of publications that is related to the college council."

According to Ghomeshi, in serving the York community at large, the *Lexicon* is also serving the Bethune community in dual mandates.

Club fights second-hand smoke

by Jennifer Lim

A small group of angry students have gathered together to form an organization against second-hand smoke on campus.

"I have been complaining for the past two years, but nothing has been done," said Thalia Charney, president of the Students Against Second-Hand Smoke (SASS).

SASS is now an official organization with more than 25 members. Fara Rubinoff, a second-year Psychology and Education student said, "I joined SASS because like Thalia, I feel that smoking is offensive to others. If enough people are doing something about the problem, then maybe York will take action."

According to Kim Cavoukian, director of Occupational Health and Safety, a special communication has been released from the president's office addressed to the York Community (page 2 of Mar. 6 *Excalibur*).

The announcement calls for an increase in enforcements in accordance to the current university smoking policy and the North York by-law.

In the past, "the university depended on peer pressure and self-compliance, but it didn't work," said Cavoukian.

"People are becoming desensitized to the smoking signs," said Debbie Falls, an Environmental Studies masters student. "Smoking in non-designated areas have become so common that it's turning the campus into a pigsty."

"We must realize there are ways to get things done in civilized, acceptable ways, and more voices banded together work better than one alone," Cavoukian said, in regards to enforcing the smoking policy.

According to Charney, SASS has received approximately 700 names supporting her petition which is posted up in the Office of Student Affairs.

The group has also submitted letters to President Harry Arthurs,

University Secretariat Malcolm Ransom, Chair of BOG Bruce Bryden and Dean of Arts Tom Traves.

Neither Ransom nor Bryden were available for comment.

SASS requested the university take immediate action against illegal smoking or face possible legal charges.

"The only way the University is going to listen is if it's going to cost them money," Charney said.

According to Charney, the Dean's Office is not responsible for non-academic affairs and a letter from the President's Office attributed the inactive state of the smoking committee to the absence of a chair.

In response to student resentment about the lack of enforcement procedures by the University, the special communication was drawn up as a reminder to persistent violators that continuous non-compliance will result in convictions and fines up to \$1,000.

UofT teachers' assistants strike

by Kate Zernike

The Newspaper

The striking teaching assistants at UofT have gone to the province to accuse the university administration of unfair bargaining.

In the charge filed with the Ontario Labor Relations Board on Feb. 18, the TA's union, Canadian Union of Educational Workers, local 2, says the university violated the Labour Relations Act by misrepresenting the TA's in a letter from UofT labor relations to university department heads.

The letter detailed the issues surrounding the current contract negotiations. For each issue, the letter indicated the university's final position, the union's final position, and the reason the union's position was unacceptable to the university.

CUEW local 2 President, Vanessa Kelly, said that the letter was wrong in characterizing the union's "proposals" as a "final position." In fact, she said, the unions have never stated a final position.

In addition, she said, the letter "explained the university's proposals in such a way to suggest that they were giving us what we asked for, and they weren't."

David Cook, Vice Provost for Staff Relations, disputed the charge, saying the university has the right to inform its employees of its position and that the letter was intended for this purpose.

He disagreed that the letter was intended to make the union appear inflexible. While he acknowledged that CUEW had not presented the university with a final offer, he added, "The letter was merely to say,

"This is the area where we think the solution lies."

Cook also contended that the charge would not have an effect on negotiations.

"The story is taken away by the fact that the union is continuing to negotiate," he said. "The charge is a bit strange if you look at the dates; it's not as if the union thought the university was acting in such bad faith that they couldn't continue to negotiate."

The labor board will appoint an investigator to deal with the charge. Kelly suggested that if the board agrees with the union, the university will be asked to stop misrepresenting the union.

CUEW media spokesperson Uppier Mehan commented that the charge is largely symbolic because the legal ramifications of the charge are insignificant.

"It's more to let the university know that we are serious about the whole negotiation process and that there are certain tactics we won't put up with," he said.

Kelly agreed with Mehan, but said, "I wouldn't go so far as to say it's symbolic. The fact is, they violated the labor relations act and we've charged them." She agreed with Cook, however, that the charge would not impede further negotiations. "We're always willing to go back to the table," she said.

But further negotiations appear to have been mired in misunderstandings since the talks were suspended on Tuesday.

While both Kelly and Cook said that their respective bargaining unit was waiting for the other side to agree to return to the table, both also said their side had indicated to the other that it was willing to negotiate.

Excalibur ERRATA

Excalibur wishes to apologize to Caroline Winship for printing a letter to the editor by Michael Sullivan in Mar.11 issue. *Excalibur* did not, at press time, realize that Sullivan was a candidate running against Winship for a position on Senate and that the letter may have given Sullivan an unfair advantage during the campaign period.