

Erskine slams referendum

by Ken Burke

CKDU Sttion Manager Neil Erskine doesn't beat around the bush when he feels strongly about something. And Erskine has some strong feelings about the wording approved by Dalhousie student council on Sunday for next week's referendum on the continued existence of CKDU.

"I think it sucks," he said. "It sets out to shut down the station."

Erskine was equally blunt about naming who he thought was responsible. "(Student Union Treasurer) Kevin Feindel's intent was to close the station down," he said. Feindel was the mover of the motion which introduced the referendum's current wording.

The approved wording, which passed with a 13-1-3 vote, reads:

Are you in favor of continuing to operate CKDU next year, given that it will require a one dollar increase per student to refurbish the station to an acceptable level of operation? Yes or No.

The question differs greatly from the proposal which CKDU drew up for council consideration, which was moved by Student Union President John Logan. The original proposed referendum consisted of a two-part 'yes' ballot plus an explanation of what a 'no' vote would entail.

Erskine's original question asked "Are you in favour of continuing to operate CKDU next year?" A 'yes' vote would have given the students a further choice of a) receiving increased AM service for a one dollar fee increase, or b) receiving what is called for in (a) plus the immediate initiation of CKDU conversion to an FM station, for a combined two dollar and fifty cent fee increase. In addition, the question stated that a 'no' majority would ensure the shutting down of CKDU's AM facilities for one year and allocating the money currently spent on CKDU to the initiation of FM conversion.

The current referendum says nothing of what a 'no' vote would mean.

According to Erskine, "I think the original proposal was fair. The approved question's just a waste of time for all involved. It'll settle no more than a plebiscite would."

The first wording was rejected by council chair Bert McCann, as it did not follow the constitution specifying any referendum must have a clear 'yes' or 'no' choice.

Aside from the wording, which he thinks is biased in favour of a 'no' vote, Erskine does not believe that question represents the current state of affairs at CKDU. The staff were mainly interested in ensuring that an FM proposal be voted on by Dalhousie students

"On the basis of this question, it's going to be council that decides the fate of CKDU, not the students," Erskine said. He stated that as no specific explanation is given of the consequences arising from the referendum, the council is free to make interpretation they feel appropriate from the results. "They can decide what a 'no' means and what a 'yes' means."

Kevin Feindel admitted that a 'no' vote is "a little less clear." It would definitely mean shutting down the station for one year and selling the equipment. "I think once we get student opinion from the referendum, that'll be enough to help council decide."

CKDU sports editor, Larry Nelson later said, "We should have called for a five minute recess and attempted to get the motion changed."

Meanwhile, CKDU, caught off guard by the changing of the referendum question, is attempting to get its "yes" campaign off the ground. "I really think a one dollar increase isn't too much to ask for," said program director, Steven Turner. In an attempt to raise awareness of CKDU they will be holding a radiothon from ten o'clock Thursday the 11th to noon Friday the 12th, machinery permitting.

The station may have supporters they don't even suspect. "I'm going to vote 'yes' on the CKDU referendum," said Feindel.

Strippers in the SUB, yes or no?

by M.L. Hendry

"Should we allow strippers to perform in the Student Union Building?" is one of the referendum questions students will be asked to vote on next week.

On several occasions in the last few years the Engineering Society has found themselves the centre of a controversy concerning this subject. This year was typical, with the October Engineers' beer bash in the SUB at which the major entertainment was provided by two "exotic dancers".

In the weeks following the bash criticism of the Engineers for having the dancers in the SUB dominated the Letters section of the Gazette. The women's committee and the Newman Society in particular voiced their outrage at the Engineers' "neglecting to treat half the human race with respect and dignity" and "contributing to the objectification of women as sex objects."

The Engineers responded by saying the event was responsibly controlled and that there was no illegal activity involved.

When Council discovered the Engineers' plan to have strippers at their beer bash, a phone vote on whether or not this should

be permitted was held. Twenty-one councilors came out in favour of endorsing the engineers' right to include strippers at their event, and six were opposed.

After the bash took place Council passed a notice expressing their displeasure with the Engineers' actions.

Now the question of the appropriateness of strippers entertaining in the SUB is being taken to the students.

Carolyn Zayid, a member of Council and of the Dalhousie women's committee, said the question is "partly a women's issue", in that the way stripping presents women is negative, but that having this form of entertainment in the SUB also reflects badly on Dalhousie students in general. "I don't see any positive reason for having strippers in here," she said. The major support for having strippers in the building is the "free speech" argument, Zayid said.

This kind of entertainment obviously caters to men at a time when Societies are trying to encourage women's involvement, Zayid added.

Bernard Petolas, president of the Engineering Society, said

the society is not taking any stand on the referendum. The question should be considered individually by students, he said, and it's a good idea to have the referendum so there is a clear cut policy. Personally he would not be disappointed if students voted 'no' on the referendum, Petolas said.

Father Joe Hattie of the Campus Ministry said in a letter to the Gazette that "a vote in favour of this question is a vote in favour of exploitation of human beings", and he encourages all students to vote 'no'. Father Hattie ends his letter with a challenge to students with ability to begin to try and do something to correct the economic situation which pressures young people into this kind of employment.

An eighteen-year old dancer from Cousin Brucie's in Halifax was quoted in last year's Gazette as saying "I don't really enjoy the job, and if I had a job that paid well, I'd leave right away."

A second dancer interviewed said she hated her job because she didn't like "stripping in front of a bunch of men". When asked why she did it, she said that she needed the money.

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