

## Was Gilligan's Island to blame

# Marijuana smoker downed by heart attack



A hundred calls a day flow into the hub of York Emergency Services Centre, an equipment-packed room in 003 Fraquharson. Shown on the phone is Ann Lamb, Operator Supervisor.

By MICHAEL BARRIS

Consider this hypothetical situation. In a York University undergraduate residence, students stoned on marijuana roared with laughter at an episode of Gilligan's Island.

Emmanuel, 44, slumped to the end of his chair and collapsed on the ground in a heap.

Instantly, people scrambled, overturned chairs, cleared the room to help stricken Emmanuel. Someone stretched Emmanuel out flat on the ground, and began applying mouth-to-mouth resuscitation.

Someone else bolted out of the room and sprinted to the telephone at the end of the hall.

As he lifted the receiver, he spied "York Emergency 3333" printed on the dial, and called the number.

The operator was quickly told the story, and called ambulance dispatch. Then she radioed a message to York Security.

Minutes later, the ambulance raced into the campus. It was met at the gate by a squad of Security officers who guided it to the undergraduate residence.

Emmanuel had suffered a heart attack. A resuscitator was transported to his room, and put into operation. The minutes ticked by slowly before he was revived.

Meanwhile, in a basement room of Farquharson Life Sciences building, where a clutch of women huddled over a bank of pulsing orange lights, the Emergency switchboard wondered how the man who had collapsed was getting along.

But it was unlikely she would ever learn the outcome of the drama in which she had played an important part.

For an Emergency Service operator is a bizarre trooper who works within a vacuum, is isolated within banks of electronic paraphernalia, and is yet immersed in drama, in an air of tension and urgency.

"Sometimes we find out what happens the next day from a security man," said Ann Lamb, operator supervisor at York's Emergency Services Centre, "but usually we never find out what happens."

The York centre gets about a hundred calls a day, Lamb said. Around the clock, at least two operators channel emergency calls the security, fire, police, ambulance, elevator repair, university medical, or psychological services.

Last October, York mail sorter Al Simms detected a strange noise emanating from one of his packages. The York Emergency Service Centre was informed, and got in touch by

radio with Security immediately. York's safety and security department cleared the area near the sorting room as well as the corresponding area on the floors above and below, then called in the Metro police.

Two hours later, the package was found to contain two malfunctioning communication devices mailed by two cleaners to their superintendent for repair.

Mel Reader, York communications director and a former communications engineer for Northern Electric, conceived the idea for reworking existing equipment to accommodate an internal-external phone hookup and a campus-wide alarm and signal system in 1970.

As a fire or burglar alarm on campus is sounded, a coded tape in the Centre indicates the location. The North York fire department or police are called. At York, 73 false fire alarms have sounded in 1973.

According to Reader, \$18,000 from the university — not from student fees — covers the cost of maintaining the ESC for a year. The direct hookup between Security, Information York, and University Services saves Security the cost of hiring an additional switchboard operator and extra equipment.

At U of T for example, the emergency number is a direct line to the security police force on campus, not a channeling device for either on-campus or off-campus calls to various services.

The gross cost of the Centre is \$35,000, including \$3,500 per year in equipment rentals, and \$30,000 in salaries.

Reader said the no-questions-asked situation ensured by the direct, internal-external hookup constitutes the Centre's strength, since it tends to instill confidence in the caller.

"Before the system was installed, there was an answering service taking incoming calls to Counselling Services after five o'clock," Reader illustrated. "If the student wanted to talk, he'd get someone who'd ask for his name

and number so he could be called back.

"But the idea behind the counselling service is that what goes on between the counsellor and the student is strictly personal. A student might be scared away by the answering service."

Plans are underway to use the Centre as a check-in office for visitors to the graduate residences. Grad residents have complained bitterly of personal visitors' cars being towed away from reserved parking spaces

when the visitor parking lot is full.

The communications network might somehow receive the description of an "illegally" parked car, which could be conveyed to Security just before a parking check. The owner could visit safely without having the car towed away.

Reader said the Centre strives to select "warm, calm, confident, but not coolly efficient," switchboard operators.

For University Services dial 667-3333.

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For more information, come to Rm. 145 Behavioural Sciences Bldg.

## NOTICE TO STUDENT CLUBS

The Finance Committee of the York Student Federation has established Monday, 22 October as the final date for receiving requests for financial assistance from student clubs and associations on campus. Information on criteria and procedures should be obtained from the C.Y.S.F. Office, N111 Ross (667-2515).

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