

YES-Coalition comes under attack

By Jeannine Amber

Last week's OFS/CFS membership referendum began amid an outburst of controversy.

On Tuesday, the first day of the referendum posters appeared on campus urging students to "Vote No." Flyers telling students not to vote were also distributed around campus.

Hand written posters warned students that if they voted yes "York's money would go to promote: abortion, homosexuality, socialist principles and tribalistic ideals." The posters were hung anonymously.

"A broad-based coalition that runs an effective campaign runs the risk of a backlash," said Jean Ghomeshi, YFS president and member of the YES-Coalition. "But slanderous information on the day of the

vote is uncalled for, unfair and sleazy."

Up until the day of the referendum, there appeared to be only one side campaigning. The YES-Coalition spearheaded by student representatives Ghomeshi, Kate Collins and Rob Centa had launched a massive appeal for votes.

Peter Merrick, former VP external for the CYSF, said the sudden opposition to the YES-Coalition was inevitable because of the one-sided nature of the campaign.

"Students were not presented with the facts," Merrick said.

Ghomeshi, who lobbied extensively for the YES side, said that "our intention has never been to not put information out there."

Ghomeshi stressed that 12,000 pamphlets, 23,000 leaflets and 21,000 Up York handbooks, all explaining the role of

the OFS and CFS had been distributed to students on campus and mailed to their homes.

"If people have not received information, I feel terrible. I wish we could do it all again and do it better," said Ghomeshi.

Anger was also generated over the council's endorsement of the YES-Coalition.

"The YFS should have represented a more neutral side," said John Fisher, a second year arts student. "They are supposed to be representing students, but if they don't know what the students feel then how can they be representing us?"

"We are the people who have the most exposure to the OFS and the CFS. Why should we be neutral?" responded Ghomeshi, "If we take the position of neutrality then we could take no position on any issue. We represent the students and it is our responsibility to say we support the OFS/CFS."

dent population."

Bethune student Brian Archdekin expressed his opposition to the YES side by ripping posters off the walls of the school.

Archdekin said he found the YES posters to be misleading.

"Tuition increases, overcrowded classrooms and long line ups are not going to stop overnight if we join the OFS," Archdekin said.

Much of the criticism was levied directly at Jean Ghomeshi.

De Matteis accused Ghomeshi of opportunism, citing Ghomeshi's involvement with the CFS.

"It's no secret that he wants to become chair," said De Matteis.

Ghomeshi calls these allegations ridiculous.

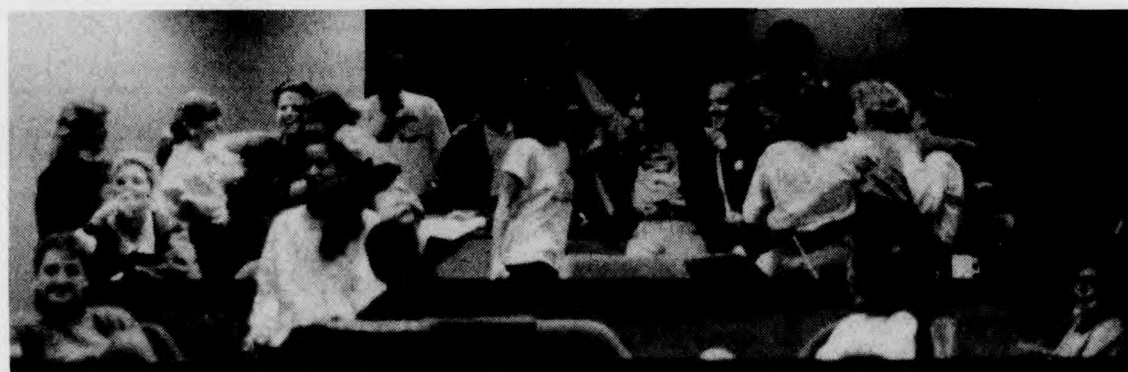
"I believe in a strong federal and provincial student movement," Ghomeshi said, "I was promoting the OFS and CFS long before I ran for YFS."

Members of the YES-Coalition also blamed campus press for not doing their job in helping to inform students about issues of the referendum.

"It was very unfortunate that *Excalibur* didn't run articles before the week of the referendum," said Centa.

Excalibur ran a two page pro-con feature on OFS/CFS in its Oct. 22 issue.

Jubilant YES partisans



The YES-Coalition celebrates announcement of OFS/CFS referendum results.

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According to Rhys Bowman, president of Winters college, York students will be able to see the results of their participation in the OFS and CFS, in the November 21 national day of action against racism on campus.

Many students complained

during the referendum that they did not feel adequately informed about the issues.

"We were, in a lot of ways, fighting against apathy," said Martha Kanya-Forstner, a member of the York International Socialists. "So a logical extension of that is that we will continue to try and inform the

students."

"This wasn't just about the referendum, it was about building a student movement at York," Ghomeshi said. "I think that we cannot stop here, a vote for OFS and CFS means nothing. The only way that it means something is if we carry on the avenue that we took."

Hedgerow marked for termination

by Suzanne Crnic

A hedgerow at the south end of the York campus will be destroyed to make room for a new co-op building.

"The trees are dying anyway," said the president of the co-op board, Mike Copeland. "The level of the land has to be raised five to six feet, this will hasten the death of the trees and the roots will be damaged during the construction."

The hedgerow, which consists of trees ranging in age from 20 to 80 years, is also the site of York's oldest oak tree.

One hundred and twenty apartment units, including a day-care centre and 38 townhomes are to be built on the approved site.

The Harry Sherman Co-operative Board decided in September that the hedgerow would be removed to provide space for the co-op.

"There are enough open areas to build where development can happen while still protecting natural features such as hedgerows, wetlands and wildlife," said Jean-Marc Daigle of the Green Campus Project (GCP).

Donna Havinga, another GCP member, does not see the hedgerow as a development versus environment issue. The GCP's goal is to cooperate with the developers.

"I am in favor of the co-op but want to see them (the co-op board) incorporate the trees into their plan," Havinga said.

The two objectives of the GCP are to create an educational arboretum and to present proposals to the York administration.

Their requests to attend a meeting concerning the hedgerow was not granted.

A couple of proposals were suggested in order to save the hedgerow.

One proposed by Mary Lynn Reimer, the campus master planner, was to invert the co-op building and the south side townhouses, thus leaving the hedgerow intact.

On Sept. 13, the York administration, president Harry Arthurs and the Harry-Sherman Co-operative Board met to discuss Reimer's optimal proposal, but it was declined because it was too late for changes.

The Co-op Board estimates that approximately \$200,000 would be needed for redesigns and that they might lose funding if they were to accept Reimer's proposal.

"As far as the administration was concerned it supported the Co-op development and wanted to promote the project but also wanted to save the hedgerow," Reimer said. "We were alarmed to learn at the end of August that none of the hedgerow was to be saved."

The university administration believes nothing more can be done to save the hedgerow.

The GCP acknowledged that construction does damage to the landscape, however, they believe that the trees are healthy enough to re-generate themselves.

According to Copeland, the area was once wetland but due to rapid construction over the last decade water tanks underground have been disturbed and drainage patterns have changed.

The GCP hopes for "sensitive development" on campus in the future. "I have not seen evidence that there has been any improvement yet in the sensitivity to the landscape," Havinga said.

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