

FEATURE

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 5

aboriginal students' commissioner. Sure enough, the right moves an emergency motion to impeach the treasurer, and the left proposes an amendment to include the chair and deputy chair as well.

John-Paul Boyd, representing the Guelph undergrads, steps to the mike to support the amendment.

"This motion doesn't go far enough, in fact, seeing as how we are all responsible for their election, I think CFS should dissolve," he says.

Now there's a thought. But the amendment is defeated 34-30 and soon afterward, the right tries to withdraw its motion, which is simply too much for Lyndon Surjik.

"Point of personal privilege: This is absurd, if you want a response to the charges, you will let the motion stand so I can speak to it," says Surjik. "This is cowardice. I am not a coward."

The soap opera goes on. At one point the chair, who by this time was handling things with greater aplomb, has his head in his hands.

"Oh god, why do you people do this?" asks Marc Molgat.

The impeachment motion is defeated handily 35 to 15 after Surjik brings the mike to the front of the room and gives his side of the story.

"Debate should be based on fact

and there has been little fact circulating at this meeting. This is not a game, we have a huge responsibility and I don't think we realize it sometimes."

Surjik later says he was targeted because he is gay and some delegates wanted a scapegoat for the budget shortfall.

Dom Perignon Cuvee for a stellar \$179.60

To finish the afternoon off with a healthy dose of acrimony, the left calls for a roll call vote on the ratification of Kelly Lamrock's reelection as CFS chair. Traditionally a rubber-stamp procedure, 14 schools use the procedural move to register their disapproval of the right's candidate in the minutes.

The clock effectively used up, controversial motions to abolish constituency groups and narrowly define "student issues" never make it to the plenary floor.

6:30 P.M., Ottawa Congress Centre. The 10th anniversary banquet is in full death knell. There is a tuxedo-clad wait staff, a cash bar charging \$3.75 for a glass of Molson swill and...no one here yet.

7:00. My dinner companions hail from Manitoba, Nova Scotia and British Columbia. Jim Hiebert, from the University of Winnipeg, doesn't know the agenda of the evening's entertainment — and doesn't care.

"I'm eating and leaving. I've spent an entire week with these people and I'm sick of them. Not these people," he says, gesturing at our group. "That table over there," he arches his finger and is characteristically blunt. "They're racist homophobic pigs."

7:30. Our dinner is served. There aren't many takers from the wine list, which starts at \$23.95 a bottle and moonlaunches to Dom Perignon Cuvee for a stellar \$179.60. I attack my \$30 meal, methodically devouring my one piece of withered chicken, my small roast potato, my three mushroom slivers in foul brown gravy and all 33 of my green beans.

Our tummies tamed, the speeches begin. Lamrock is greeted with "Kel-ly, Kel-ly, Kel-ly" from the right-wing side of the room and silence from the left, still smarting that its candidate (Manitoba executive rep Kevin Dearing) had lost.

Speeches and more speeches, topped off with an earsplitting rendition of — will wonders never cease — Solidarity Forever. The organizers send the D.J. home, and

this 10th anniversary shindig is clinically dead by 11:30 p.m.

Nov. 10., 8:30 p.m. Back at the post-mortem. PEI rep Bruce Davison is on his hands and knees under the meeting table, retrieving his giant paper airplane. Ken Wood and Robin Major, the Newfoundland rep, are gleefully covering a dry-erase board with happy faces.

Richard Bruce, the Saskatchewan rep, and Alberta rep Sandeep Dhir have finally shown up. They aren't keen on staying.

"I want to have some fun, I haven't had any fun all week," says Bruce.

The two get up to leave, but Lamrock asks them to stay and they reluctantly comply. Minutes later, Ontario rep Nicole Seguin reads out a long petition signed by 40 delegates at the conference. It accuses Sandeep Dhir of circulating material in secret and spearheading the movement against the treasurer, and asks the national

executive to censure Dhir.

"I have no intention of resigning from the national executive, I have no intention of giving these people that kind of satisfaction," responds Dhir. "I'm going to continue doing the things I have done because that's what my delegation wants."

The round table discussion of the conference goes on, until Dhir announces he is leaving.

"I have the feeling this meeting is just going to be the same people raising the same points. I'm not going to stay any longer, I'll see you all in January," he says.

Lamrock cuts short an exchange between Surjik and Dhir, who walks out. Richard Bruce follows him out wordlessly.

The round table continues, and Robin Major, who has looked distinctly unwell — almost reptilian all day — has the last word.

"Everywhere in the air — hate, hate, hate. That bothered me a lot," he says with a spurt of coherence.

"So much division, so much polarization. So much hate."

LETTERS

The power of genitals

To the editor:

I write this in response to Jonathon Lax's letter in the Gazette (Nov. 21) which likened the Week of Reflection to "male bashing and sweeping generalizations." Mr. Lax has commented "that as humans we should have loftier goals than just concentrating on one part of society," this "part" being the female population. I think: inherent in the understanding of violence against women (and people of colour, and people of different ethnic backgrounds, and individuals who are physically challenged and children as well) is an understanding of a power structure in our society. This power structure is not an imaginary construct but a reality apparent in the existence of sexism and "all other 'isms' for that matter." To imply that the women's movement is about "petty differences" is an insult and comes from an individual who wields most of his power by virtue of his genitals.

"Feminist consciousness is consciousness of victimization" (Sandra Lee Bartkey, *Femininity and Domination*). The victim is innocent. One who is innocent suffers at the power and force of another; a powerful and forceful Other. It is not individual men that I fight against, but a masculine concept of society that

marginalizes any people and judges them on a scale created by men with a male yardstick of success. History is male-defined, politics are male-controlled, and institutionalized religions are male-centred and male-dominated.

One of the greatest criticisms of contemporary feminism is that it often ignores the oppression of all oppressed peoples. I agree that this is its greatest fault. The encouragement comes with the recognition that an integral facet of the feminist movement has been ignored. Unlike Mr. Lax, I refuse to be placated solely with the knowledge that such "isms" exist. Acknowledgement alone does NOT equate with a fight against oppression. If acknowledgement were all it took, an egalitarian society would be a given. In order for our society to be free of bias and preju-

dice it is necessary that those who wield power relinquish it. I'm glad you've acknowledged the existence of these "isms" Mr. Lax. That's a step in the right direction. But have you yet denied the power your gender allocates you? And what are YOU doing to change the "isms" that we "self-interest groups" attempt to fight against?

Gayle Heinrich

P.S. Pandora received death threats because of a space claimed by women for women alone. Such action on the part of women denies access to those who have the power. It is an act of empowering women on our own terms. This is not the same thing as taking sides. Taking sides was part of our childhood games. Death threats can hardly be equated with "hide and go seek."

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