

Club information tables ordered out of Student Centre

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by Corey Goldman

Student clubs will no longer be allowed to use the popular Student Centre lobby to stage events after an Israel Week event was shut down by city fire inspectors.

The changes occurred after a surprise inspection by a North York fire

marshall last week, which deemed the table displays in the lobby space unsafe. Until last week many student groups have used the lobby for displays and demonstrations.

In the January, 1990 'ironing board protests,' hundreds of students protested the banning of club informa-

tion tables from Central Square by the university administration.

Menachem Neuer, president of the Jewish Student Federation, which organizes Israel week, said he was angered by the sudden closing of the Student Centre space.

"I mean, why did they design the

place this way if there are so many fire regulations? If these regulations have been there all along, then the Student Centre has put York students at risk from previous displays and demonstrations," Neuer said.

"Let's just say that the actions of the Student Centre Corporation do not instill a tremendous amount of confidence with us," Neuer added. "Rather than diffusing the situation, all they ended up doing was aggravating it."

"It would have been nice if the JSF had been notified of the problem in a more appropriate way, and allowed Israel week to continue without the hassles."

According to Rob Castle, general manager of the Student Centre, the fire department is sending the Student Centre an informal letter about the regulations, and the policies will be made known to all the clubs.

Castle said he found the policy change "disappointing."

"It's really too bad that we can't

use the lobby space to its advantage."

Clubs will have to set up information tables in the colonnade walkway outside the Centre, Castle said.

"It just means the nature of 'club weeks' will be changed. We'll still be able to use the foyer for signs and banners, and the colonnade can have tables," said Castle.

Neuer said this was a poor substitute for organizing inside the Centre.

"If clubs can't have their demos here then all you have is a corporate fast-food centre, not a Student Centre."

Even though student groups will have to move outside, Castle insisted that the Centre is still the best venue for disseminating information.

"I don't think Vari Hall would be the most appropriate solution for passive Student demonstrations," Castle said. "Harry Arthurs [York President] is pretty firm on not allowing the space for clubs."



Central Square has been a labyrinth of lineups since financial aid cheques started arriving in January

photo by Alok Sharma

Lineups turn ugly after staff cut

by Eva Cohen and Avi Benlolo

Students angry with long line ups for government cheques and enrolment notices are venting their frustrations on the Financial Aid office staff.

According to Elizabeth Rudyck, director of Financial Aid, student hostility towards the office staff is caused by an understaffed office and an increase in Ontario Student Assistance Program (OSAP) applications.

Students have to wait a minimum of 45 minutes and some up to two

hours for enrolment notices, or only to discover their cheques unavailable.

"Due to severe budget cuts we are understaffed, resulting in cheques not being completed for students," said Rudyck.

Students complained that the centre is highly inefficient.

"I have to wait in line a long time and this inconveniences me since it's difficult to fit this into my hectic work and academic schedule," said York student Maurice Anzallag.

According to Rudyck, they have been subjected to verbal abuse, obscenities and physical threats.

She said, "If I'm called a fucking bitch one more time..."

According to Jim Drennan, Director for York Security, "there have been two cases where we sent officers over, but no charges have been laid and the problems have been settled."

"Lineups are ridiculous and I had to wait in line twice for at least 45 minutes each time just for a notice of enrolment," said another student, Diane, who asked her surname be withheld.

Rudyck said tempers are justifiably short, but the staff is doing everything they can under the circumstances.

Gun poem defended by Queen's paper editors

by Krishna Rau

TORONTO (CUP) — A Queen's University paper, whose female editors received death and rape threats in October, is being criticized for their December all-women's issue.

Surface, a bi-monthly newspaper published by the arts and science faculty, put out an issue on Dec. 5, the eve of the second anniversary of the killing of 14 women at the University of Montreal.

The issue contained a poem about women using violence against their attackers. The poem said rapists and assaulters "deserve death" and the writer called for a "sweet vengeance."

The page also contained a graphic of a .38-calibre handgun. Above the gun, it says "You can't rape a .38." Below, it says "We Will Defend Ourselves."

Suzanne Kim, the editor of Surface, said the paper had asked any woman on campus to

contribute prose, poetry or art to the issue.

"She (the poet) does express a lot of the sentiments that a lot of women feel. The gun and the poem are a woman's feeling on the subject. We have to respect that."

But Queen's administrators and some students feel the poem and graphic are simply advocating mindless violence.

Queen's director of public relations said the university didn't condone publication of the poem or graphic, and did not support any use of violence.

Many students have complained to the paper's publisher, the Queen's Arts and Science Undergraduate Society.

But Kim said the paper was not suggesting any particular response. She said it was merely recognizing the realities of life for many women.

"It's a solution for some women. Even the courts recognize that some women act in self-defence against abusers.

"We have women who are living in prison who'd rather do that than live with an abusive spouse."

In October, Surface received a letter addressed to the female editors threatening to "rape u dykes" and "kill any and all feminists slowly."

The letter came after the paper published an article that dealt with racial differences by comparing white and brown bread. The piece said white bread was stale, boring and "essentially useless."

The issue also contained a poem with lines such as "We think all strate (sic) men are rapists (and dead men don't rape again" and "Jesus was a flaming queer who sucked the cocks of all his disciples (except for Judas)."

Kim said, at the time, that the threat was an attack on women, not a criticism of the paper.

"It's really a symptom of violence against women. This letter is another attempt to silence women."

Chinese-Canadians demand 'head tax' reparations

by Martin Chester

Canadian University Press

VANCOUVER — It has been 45 years since restrictions to Chinese immigration were lifted, but Canada has yet to make amends for its racist policies.

From 1885 to 1923, Canada charged a 'head tax' on Chinese immigrants. The original fee was \$10, but it was raised to \$500 in 1904, and remained in effect until 1923 when immigration from China was outlawed by the federal Chinese Exclusion Act.

The Chinese-Canadian National Council wants the government to pay each person who paid the head tax or their surviving spouse \$10,000, which would total \$23 million — the total collected in head tax. In 1992 dollars, the total is \$41 billion. The council also wants the government to admit the head tax, and other discriminatory restrictions against Chinese immigrants were unjust.

Gary Lee, chair of the CCNC's redress committee, said the council has been pressuring the federal government to deliver on its 1984 promise to make amends.

Lee said the Conservatives promised a parliamentary resolution acknowledging the injustice to Chinese-Canadians and discussion of the situation. The CCNC has met with multiculturalism minister Gerry Weiner three times, he said.

"We hope that he will bring our case to [the federal] cabinet forcefully because we don't have access to cabinet at that level," Lee said.

Weiner has been given a mandate to research redress claims and to report to the prime minister.

A multiculturalism ministry official said people are still being consulted, and he refused to specify when any action will be taken by the government.

Lee compared the issue to the compensation demanded by people born with disabilities after their mothers used thalido-

mid during pregnancy. The Canadian government was slow to remove thalidomide from the market despite evidence linking it to birth defects.

Lee said the thalidomide case was one of negligence, while the head tax was a case of "deliberate, racist legislation by our parliament."

He said the Chinese Exclusion Act was far worse than the head tax because it forced families to split up.

The CCNC picked up the issue when it was flooded with requests from elderly Chinese Canadians who had paid the head tax, Lee said. Since then, the CCNC has found considerable support within the Chinese-Canadian community.

"I think it has picked up in the last few years," he said. "The head tax payers are elderly and there are only a few thousand left, so they don't have a lot of [political] force."

"However, when people in the general community find out the details of the immigration restrictions they tend to be sympathetic," he said.

In Sept. 1988, a six-year process for redress for Japanese-Canadians stripped of their property and interned by the federal government in World War II came to an end. The government paid \$20,000 to former internees, according to the Japanese Canadian Citizens Association in Vancouver.

With this precedent, the CCNC is hopeful the government will do the same for people who paid the head tax in the near future.

"We have done the research and presented our arguments," Lee said. "The government has no excuse anymore not to respond to the details. We're hoping to get some sort of green light in the near future."

Ukrainian-Canadians and Italian-Canadians are also claiming redress because they were interned during World War I and II respectively.