

Rent for York apartments up 12.3%

By PAUL PIVATO

York's apartment residents, outraged over a massive 25% rent increase in the past two years and a further increase last May have revitalized the York University Tenants Association (YUTA).

Many residents are graduate students hampered by provincial wage restraints of 5 and 6%. YUTA considers the last increase of 12.3% as intolerable and are demanding a roll back and investigating the possibility of legal action.

"We just won't stand for it. Not in these times," claims Anna Esposito, the acting chairperson on a steering committee of YUTA. The committee has scheduled a meeting for Tuesday, Sept. 20, to call for an executive and arrange a meeting with the Board of Governors. YUTA hopes

YUTA, which represents the residents of York has been non-existent for the past two years. Last year, resident Wendy Bird sat on the Residence Budget Committee as a representative of York Apartments, which has five of 18 seats on council. The other four seats were left vacant. But Bird was not an elected member of YUTA, and YUTA claims the residents of York Apartments were not properly consulted.

Norm Crandles, Manager of Housing and Food Services, admits that "one person can hardly be considered adequate representation." However, Crandles does not feel it is the administration's responsibility to organize tenants.

"We have not been properly consulted," says Alvaro Nore, a member of the YUTA steering committee. Much of the controversy revolves around the issue of "consultation." The university is exempt from rent review legislation provided it consults with a "council or association representing the residents..." (Residence Tenancies Act Section 134.F).

The absence of YUTA during the past two years is the fault of student apathy, said Crandles. "It seems to take a perceived crisis to galvanize students into action," he noted.

"It think an active and vigorous YUTA is essential to the committee," said Crandles.

The present steering committee, however, is bitter and skeptical. "The two years that YUTA has been inactive have seen the greatest increases (12.9% and 12.3%). Tenants can't help but feel they've been taken advantage of," says Esposito.

YUTA points out that York Apartments have consistently made a profit, yet the profit never translates into rent reduction because the apartments are lumped in with the undergraduate residences, which perennially run at a loss. "The tenants of York Apartments are being penalized rather than subsidized for living on campus," says Esposito.

While Crandles believes the rents are eminently acceptable, and points to a waiting list of 600 people, YUTA claims that York Apartment tenants pay more rent per square foot than tenants in University City, a privately-owned apartment complex.

Also, YUTA finds it unconscionable that a government institution does not abide by its own 5 and 6% wage and price restraints. Crandles claims that the administration "must absorb considerably higher costs than 6%. We cannot budget for a loss—we budget to break even."

Crandles adds that the administration is "very sensitive" to the fact that a large number of graduate students in York Apartments are restricted by 6% wage increases while facing a 12.3% rent increase.

In addition, YUTA notes that the inflation from May 1982 to May 1983 was only 5.4%, and hence claims that a 12% increase is unjustified. However, Crandles does not believe that rent increases be guided by the inflation rate.

"In 1980/81, when inflation was running at 14%, the rent increase was only 6%," explains Crandles. "No one demanded that we raise the rent 14%."

YUTA's formal protest began at the Canadian Open Tennis Tournament held at York in August. YUTA conducted a peaceful assembly outside the gates carrying placards in an attempt to make people aware of their cause. Supporting YUTA are the Atkinson Student's Association, the OFS, and Mike Foster, an NDP alderman.

At the Sept. 20 meeting, YUTA will claim that there was not proper consultation since there was not a proper tenant's association, so the rent increase should be invalidated. Failing that, it will attempt to halt any further increases.

Crandles, though, is not worried about a conflict: "I don't see YUTA as a confrontational group, but as a cooperative one."

There are roughly 30,000 Ontario students living in university residences, yet these students have no legal rights or privileges under the terms of the Landlord and Tenant Act. Because of their exclusion from the Act, university residences have certain rights as landlords which would be considered shocking and unacceptable in the open market. Some of these rights include:

- the requirement of post-dated cheques.
- security deposits
- eviction within six days or less
- the right to enter a student's room without notice

Also, because universities are exempt from the rent review legislation of Bill 163 (Resident Tenancies Act), administrations have the right to:

- terminate leases at any time
- raise rent more than once yearly
- raise rent more than once yearly

- raise rent above 6%

These rights, however, are dependent upon "consultation with the council or association" representing the residents. The Canadian Federation of Students-Ontario and the Ontario Federation of Students (CFS-O/OFS) made a joint brief to the "Commission of Inquiry Into Residential Tenancies" in April, 1983, which outlined student housing concerns. In their report, the CFS-O/OFS stated: "Disputes over residence fee increases and adequate consultation..." favours "... the university, not the residence council," since "... universities maintain the privilege or right to settle disputes internally rather than through the Residential Tenancy Commission..." The CFS-O/OFS concludes by noting that "consultation" has "tended to be subject to the good will, or lack thereof, of the university administrations."

TTC changes express route, improvements questionable

By KEVIN CONNOLLY

You may have noticed that as of this week the TTC has made changes in the 106 express bus routes. Although labeled "improvements" by TTC advertising officials, some of the moves are questionable.

The buses are no longer strictly "express" at certain hours of the day, making more stops along the route. The frequency of service has been increased and TTC officials say they've extended bus service early into the morning.

According to Roy Williams, from the TTC's advertising department, the added stops on the express routes were designed to serve the residences south of York and the schedule change has been instituted in an effort to "provide a more convenient service to York students."

Al Peczeniuk, TTC Community Relations officer, said the changes in the system were "part of a large scale shuffle involving as many as 10 other local routes." He said that the changes "were not specifically designed for York. The whole shuffle was primarily the result of the addition of a reserve bus lane on the Allen expressway."

The changes mean that "express" passengers will have to endure regular stops between York and the Keele-Finch intersection on southbound trips in the morning, and northbound trips in the afternoon.

The added stops are intended to service students living in residences south of York who wish to go downtown. The changes do not make any exceptions for night school students.

The new route will have buses running, on the average, every seven minutes from 7 to 10 a.m. and from 2 to 5:30 p.m., and about every 10 minutes during the midday hours.

The new system will run northbound buses from Wilson station at 7:23 a.m. to 5:11 p.m. Southbound buses will begin earlier, from 6:50 a.m. as opposed to last year's 8 a.m., and run regularly until 5:36 p.m. with an additional trip at 6:52 p.m.

As if bus schedule changes weren't enough, equally inscrutable is the TTC's sudden interest in bus stop renovations. TTC workers seem to be painting over the word "Stop" on all bus stop signs.

According to TTC advertising manager Roy Williams, the word "stop" has become the focus of most of the system's graffiti and vandalism. The customer complaints concerning the stops centre on the transformation of the word into all sorts of anagrams.

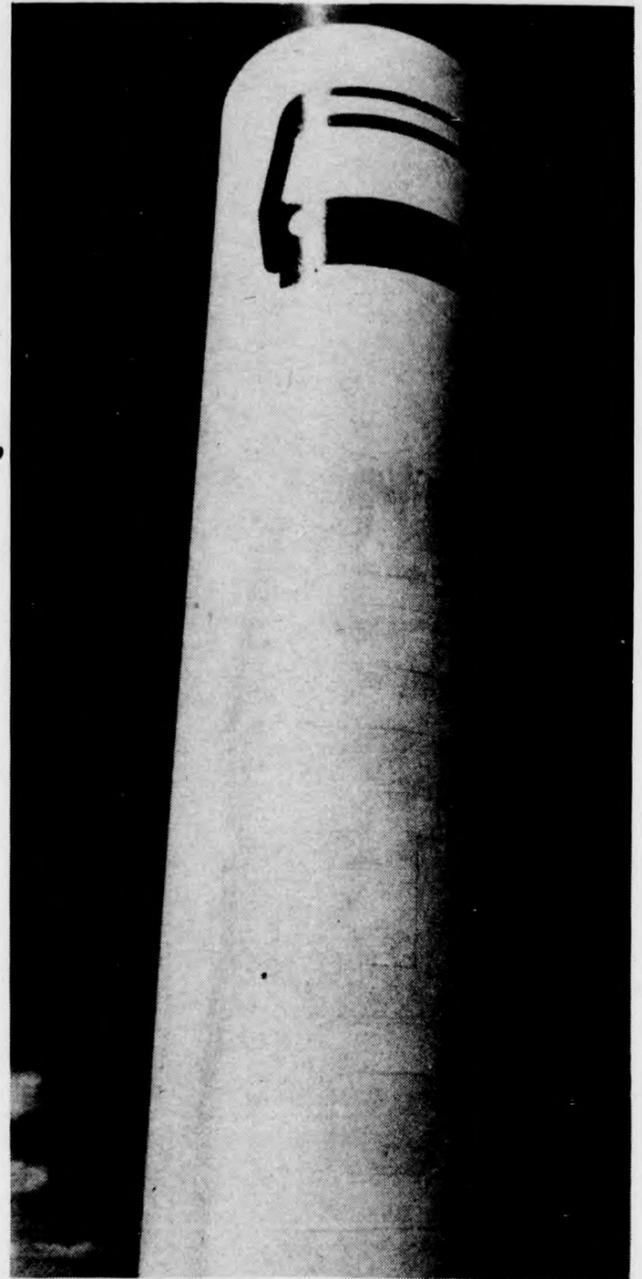


PHOTO: GARY BLAKELY

Who's the culprit? Do you know anyone who enjoys defacing the word "stop" on TTC property?

Barry Watson, the TTC's Research Co-ordinator, said that the metamorphoses were even more shocking in certain cases. Watson, however, was hesitant to give examples. "Use your imagination," he exhorted.

In the end, the TTC decided that the word was "extraneous" and it would be better to paint over the culprit "stop" rather than opening it up to Pandora's Box of verbal abuse. Watson was quick to point out that surveys indicated that omitting the

word has not resulted in an increase in the number of confused passengers. He said the omission is part of a program of "stop conversion" which will ultimately produce wordless stops endowed only with a "pictograph" of a bus.

In the future, if you come across a bus stop with the word "stop" splashed over, remember that it is not our place to argue with progress, and that the TTC, as always, works in mysterious ways.

CYSF elections finalized late

By GREG GAUDET

Surrounded by controversy, the annual elections for positions on the Council of the York Student Federation (CYSF) were held last April 5, 6 and 7. It was not until July 20, however, that all election results were finalized.

Chief Returning Officer Larry Till submitted his final election report to the Council on April 27, having had several meetings with the CYSF Election Tribunal in the 20-day interim. In addition to making several recommendations regarding the CYSF By-Laws governing elections, he argued that Council should declare any election that had not been won by acclamation, null and void. This recommendation was based on what he saw as "improprieties and irregularities" in voting.

Aside from cancelling the results of several referenda, and university-wide and faculty-wide elections, the positions of CYSF President, and

Director, External Affairs would have been left open.

Two candidates ran for President. Chris Summerhayes went up against incumbent Maurice Bevilacqua. Results could not be considered close, as Summerhayes won by a 861 to 359 margin.

There was also a two-way race for Director, External Affairs. In this contest, Paul Isenberg defeated Marcello Defrancesco by a count of 559 to 472.

Till's final report was presented to Council on May 12. At that time, CYSF members decided that all improprieties alleged in the Chief Returning Officer's Report, save two, were irrelevant to the election results. Council refused to accept Till's recommendation that the elections be declared null and void, and ratified all results except for two referenda and the position of Director, External Affairs. These three rulings Council left to the

Election Tribunal to decide upon at its final meeting.

Taking Council's lead, the Tribunal decided that the two referenda and the Director's position were not affected by the alleged irregularities.

This decision was not posted until July 20—roughly three-and-a-half months after the final day of voting.

The finalized results, as determined by the auditing firm of Touche Ross are as follows: Summerhayes was ratified as President with the number of votes noted above; Isenberg, it was decided, had defeated Defrancesco, again by the margin noted above; Marty Zarnett was ratified as the Board of Governors representative (1,069 to 413); The question asking for a \$4.50 levy for an Ombudsperson's office was defeated (795 to 632); *Excal*