

Vendors give their side of Central Square issue

by Paul Gazzola

For the table vendors, their ejection from Central Square by the North York fire marshal could not have come at a worse time. Unable to do business for almost two weeks, what traditionally is a time of brisk Christmas sales has instead become a time of uncertainty.

"I don't know what to do, about orders, about next year," admits Steven Stearn who along with his wife and daughter, run A.S. Bagg Boutique, selling purses, wallets and briefcases. "We have to prepare. The time we lost we can't get back."

Although none of the merchants spoken to could put an actual value to their losses, they all said they were substantial. Most had already stocked up on merchandise, anticipating the Christmas rush. Whether they can sell this merchandise, which has

already been paid for and can't be returned, remains to be seen.

The vendors are back in Central Square, situated in the bear pit — but only when the bear pit isn't booked by student groups. This, of course means more lost days, more lost business.

"If I'm not here," says Stearn, "I'm not anywhere. This is my only. Other vendors have a store or flea markets."

Table space is rented to the vendors by the Office of Student Affairs for a daily fee of \$25. An application must be filled out and there are a number of requirements and restrictions: what's being sold must be something the students want and need, cannot be something already sold in the stores, such as sportswear, and if any complaints are received about a vendor, then that vendor's permit is revoked. Student Affairs also provides space for non-profit and fundraising groups such as the Canadian

Cancer Society.

What many students do not realize is where the money made from the vendors goes. According to Cora Dusk, director of Student Affairs, the rental fees fund various programmes including AIDS Awareness Week, Race and Ethnic Relations Week, the York Women's Centre and Cult Awareness Week. Therefore it is not just the vendors losing money but these programmes as well.

Ari Prugger, who sells rock music paraphernalia, scarves and t-shirts, believes that the vendors serve another, more aesthetic purpose. "We contribute to the culture of the university. We're not as commercial as Wendy's." Also, she adds, "the students want us here."

Caught between the administration and the students, both of whom they depend on to stay in business, it is not surprising that the vendors have been vocal with their complaints about the cur-

rent situation. One vendor was glad that someone was finally asking their opinions but still wouldn't let her name be used.

Over all though, they support the students. "The students have a place," agrees Prugger, who is both a student and a vendor. Stearn is even more direct with his praise. During the six years he has been at York, "no one has said a bad word to us. The students are nice, very nice. I do what I can for them."

The vendors are not quite as supportive of Student Affairs. Although Prugger admits that it is "trying to do its best," one gets the feeling that to the merchants that best could be better. Lack of communication, lack of visibility and unfair treatment were some of the complaints voiced by various merchants. The fact that Tim Horton's continued to do business while the merchants couldn't gives some strength to the unfair charge.

However, most of the vendors are just happy to be back and hope to salvage lost time. When asked about her new location, Fran, a vendor at York for 15 years, selling everything from clocks to coffee pots, simply replied, "I'm established. My customers know I'm here; they'll come and look for me."

Last week, Dusk was to tell the table vendors that they would be gone for the rest of the year after December 21. Dusk said the decision was hers and that it was likely that once the Student Centre opened they would be back. This will be very small comfort to the vendors like Steven and Hannah Stearn who depend on their table for their livelihood.

On the other side is Ari Prugger's comment on the whole situation, "I feel as a student I have more right than anyone else, but I don't want more than anyone else. I just want an equal share."

English dept. \$ threatened

by Sasha Aleksandar Bajajilovic

Dean of arts Tom Traves has proposed a \$150,000 budget cut to the English department.

Traves said the cuts are necessary due to underfunding from the provincial government. He said the English department is using more than its share of funds, and as a result, the students to faculty ratio is too low. Traves added that the university's limited resources must be allocated in "the fairest way possible."

Traves also said that class sizes will likely increase. Tutorials for English courses would increase by 10 to 15 students if the cuts are implemented.

According to Doug Saunders and Joanne Dud, co-chairs of the Association of English Students (AES), this would be detrimental to the English department. Saunders said the changes would also include a reduction of the number of new faculty members. With the increased demands for English courses, new faculty are needed to maintain a level of quality of education. As a result, the cuts to the department will lead to a diminished reputation for York, said Saunders.

In an open letter to Traves, the AES made its concerns known. The letter states that it is imperative for classes to remain small so "an interactive relationship between professor and student allows an open dialogue in the classroom."

Reorganizing the English department would not permit this, said Saunders. Small classes are not a luxury in the study of English, they are necessary, he added.

According to Traves, it costs more to educate an English student than others in comparable subjects. However, Saunders said Traves has not shown him and others concerned any proof that this is the case.

Protest tables cleared away

by Mark Wright

The CYSF has lost its fight to keep tables in the Central Square corridor.

A notice of violation was issued to Bill Farr, vice-president (finance and administration) last Wednesday for "failure to maintain corridors free of obstructions in the Ross Building." As of last Thursday, all the tables had been cleared. Failure to comply with the requirements of the fire code could have led to heavy fines. The university, if convicted, would have been subject to a maximum \$10,000 fine as well as a \$2,000 fine for "every person who contravened any provision of the code."

York University's fire marshal, John Colpitts, said the North York fire department had been reluctant to pursue any charges and had hoped the situation would have been cleared up by now. "They had been lenient up to this point, but they wanted the problem cleaned up. This was their last warning," Colpitts said.

Farr said that the Office of Student Affairs has attempted to make the best of the situation by maximizing the use of the space in the bear pits. Also, student groups and club tables now have top priority for use of the available space. Vendors are no longer allowed to set up in Central

Square.

Farr made it clear that as far as the university is concerned, the matter has come to a close. "We are saying quite explicitly 'No more tables in Central Square.'"

"I'm glad it's been resolved. We're here to help, but everybody has to co-operate to make things safe," Colpitts said.

CYSF president Peter Donato said the council was going to hold a meeting to decide what might be its next step.

"I'm disappointed. For students at York it's just like another nail in the coffin. This didn't have to happen and probably could have been avoided," he said.

Vendors not allowed in Central Square

by Nicole Lalsingh

Vending operations in Central Square will end December 21 and will not be allowed at all during the winter term (January 2 — April 30, 1990). The decision was made by Student Affairs in order to facilitate student clubs and groups after it was deemed a fire hazard to have tables set up in the corridors of Central Square.

Cathy Clarke, assistant director of operations for Student Affairs, said it was a philosophical decision. "We have limited space, so who do we give preference to? The student groups have first preference."

"The fire marshal said if we didn't remove the tables immediately, we would be fined and this wasn't negotiable. We couldn't accommodate both the student groups and the vendors in the bear pits."

Clarke said she doesn't know if there is a provision for student vendors in the new Student Centre. "After the Centre opens, the bear pits will be used for events for which there isn't any available space in the Centre, and for special events such as the Day Care Centre's bazaar."

George Dipede, CYSF vice-president (programmes) thinks student vending is good. "It provides a service, it's cultural, and many times less expensive

[than retail stores]"

We want to get together with the administration so that we can resolve the Central Square problem. There is room for modification and compromise. We have been effective in being heard and making students aware of what has been going on," said Dipede.

Shérif Kaldas, a student vendor for three years, was not pleased with the way the situation was handled. "I was surprised when I received the letter. We didn't even have a chance to discuss the issue," he said. "Instead of giving us a letter informing us that our operation is coming to an end, they could have had a meeting with the vendors and representatives from CYSF and try to work something out. I will understand if nothing can be done, but at least make an attempt."

Kaldas said that he would like to see a schedule of how the east and west bear pits are being used. "I doubt that the space is going to be occupied every day and I know top priority goes to student activities but there will be days when nothing is taking place."

Bill Farr, vice-president (finance and administration) said there is space available in front of the post office for either clubs or vendors, but that no one has been interested in using it.

Table removed for hate literature

by Nancy Phillips

An Arab student association had its table removed from Central Square on Monday for distributing hate literature. The group had "articles and books that we don't approve of at the university," said Debbie Bromley, information York assistant at Student Affairs.

The York Arab Students Association (YASA) also had not booked the table through Student Affairs. Bromley said, "I would not have removed them just for not having a table."

The YASA was not available for comment.

Lazar Kleim, chair of the Israel Public Affairs Committee of the Jewish Students Federation (JSF), said the literature handed out by the YASA called for the destruction of the Jews. "We don't want them to bring Mid East fanaticism here," he said.

Student Affairs, which recognizes the YASA as a club, would not release the charter of the group, which describes its mandate. Klein said, "They can't be a political or religious group. Their charter says they're a cultural group."

Lazar said there was no cultural literature at the table. "Everything they had dealt with the Israel-Palestinian conflict."

NDP supports candidate asbestos removal

by Ken Turriff

NDP leadership candidate Dave Barrett made a strong gesture of support for Osgoode Hall law students last Wednesday, when he put on a surgical mask that was given to him by student protesters. Barrett was on campus to talk about his leadership bid.

"We're trying to raise public consciousness; we need to tell people about it," said a representative of the Student Committee for Asbestos Removal (SCAR). "Our lives are worth more than \$4.5 million," she added, referring to the estimated cost for removing the asbestos from the law school building.

Asbestos was used as a fire retardant when Osgoode was built in 1967. It was sprayed on all of the structural beams. It is now known that the substance causes several fatal diseases, such as lung cancer.

Since the beginning of the school term, there have been several asbestos scares, when high levels of asbestos were detected in the air. On June 2, asbestos dust was found on the inside of a shelving unit in the law library, and on October 2 law professor Kent McNeil found a chunk of it on the floor of his office.

SCAR is continuing to pressure the university administration to take action on the Osgoode environmental health risk, but to date has seen little progress.