

# Custodians respond to Green Room concerns

by Patricia Sfalagakos

The closing of the Green Room on January 16 enraged many Green Roomites who considered it their second home.

While working at the Enquiry Desk during the two weeks the room was closed, students would approach me with a "they can't do this" attitude and demand answers.

I, too, wanted answers and thus I approached the custodial staff in the Student Union Building to get some. The custodians to whom I refer as Harold and Frank [not their real names] and who, to most, remain anonymous and silent had plenty to say about the matter:

**1. Considering the events that occurred recently with respect to the closing of the Green Room, when do you think this problem arose?**

**Frank:** Last year (first term) they never did anything because of exams. It was thought to be too stressful for students around this time.

**2. To what do you attribute the ill-treatment of this particular room by students?**

**Harold:** Lack of respect!

**Frank:** Great lack of respect!!

**3. Has such an occurrence happened in the past that measures such as the ones taken recently have been enforced?**

**Frank:** Three years ago they closed the Green Room for one week for the same reasons — destruction of furniture and the total mess of the room.

**4. To your knowledge have any other rooms of the Student Union Building been vandalized as the Green Room has in the past?**

**Harold:** Not to the extent of the Green Room.

**Frank:** Not really, but the second floor (by the plants) is getting messy because the students in the Green Room are now moving up to the second level.

**5. How do you respond to a statement like: "Let the cleaners deal with it; it's their job!"**

**Harold:** Fine, I agree it is my job but do you totally disrespect a person for the job that they perform? It is totally disgusting! Students on campus should realize the extent of this when they protest for the same reason... even animals have rights.

**Frank:** It is our job to clean the building but it isn't our job to go behind every student and clean up

their individual mess.

**6. Describe a normal day or night at work including the duties you are to perform on a daily basis.**

**Harold:** We're responsible for the five floors of the SUB with the exception of some offices that are done in the daytime. On a normal night, it would take us a full eight hours to do the building and that isn't doing it properly, if the Green Room was a normal room with the amount of garbage expected to be picked up.

**Frank:** The first of the year it took 15-20 minutes for the two of us to clean the room.

**Harold:** It has now reached up to an hour and a half for the two of us to clean the room.

**7. How does a situation like the mess in the Green Room affect your job and the carrying out of your other duties?**

**Harold:** It went from forty minutes to three hours. We lose two hours and twenty minutes that we could be putting into the rest of the building.

**Frank:** With the lack of respect that the students show, the cleaners lose respect for the students and the job that we are doing. Why waste an hour cleaning a room when in fifteen minutes it will be the same as before?

**Harold:** It's not all students that are disrespectful but a select few that ruin it for everyone else. That's been said over and over again.

**8. How long have you worked in the Student Union Building? Compare your prior experiences in other buildings on campus with that of the SUB.**

**Harold:** A total of a year. I've worked in practically every building on campus: lower, middle, and upper, and I've never cleaned any room like the Green Room.

**Frank:** I've been here for three years. I agree with Harold.

**9. How do you rate the treatment of the Green Room and the SUB in general by the students of Dalhousie?**

**Harold:** Myself, I'd say the first and second floors and the basement are poorly treated. The upper floor offices are treated pretty well.

**Frank:** It's because the students are mostly on the first and second levels and the basement... Students blame the cleaners for locking the Green Room and closing the room when there is a booked function. I find the next day, in my opinion, the

room is worse because it is a form of protest against the room being closed the night before. The cleaners do not make a decision as to whether or not the room will be closed.

**10. If you have the opportunity to speak directly to students about the maintenance of the Green**

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**Room, the SUB, and other buildings on campus in general, what would you say?**

**Frank:** Take an extra five seconds and throw your garbage in the bins. Students ask: "How many times do you vacuum the carpet?" If we didn't have to continuously pick up the mess, we would vacuum it more often!

## Food service survey

by Eugenia Bayada and Mark Anderson

Food services on campus are potentially on the verge of a major overhaul.

The contracts with Major and Beaver have almost expired and, in a joint venture between the Dalhousie Student Union (DSU) and the University, a research company has been hired to look into the food services available on campus.

The company, Corporate Research Associates Inc., is one of the largest in the Maritimes. An independent researcher, Sandra Matheson, was also hired at the end of last summer. Amongst other things, Matheson recommended that more research would be necessary before starting any project.

A joint committee was formed at the end of April last year, consisting of Tiffany Jay (Executive Vice-President of the DSU), Bret Leech (Treasurer of the DSU), Steve Gaetz (General Manager of the DSU), Eric McKee (Vice-President of Student Services) and Tony Martin (Director of Athletics and Ancillaries). It

**11. What do you encourage students to do to ensure that your job is done efficiently and at the same time, ensuring that a high level of maintenance is achieved with respect to the SUB?**

**Harold:** I would tell them to tell everyone else that we are on the same team whether it be Dalhousie or not; we all work together for the same time. We have no problem in supporting students, as a matter of fact, our union has given us signs to put on our T-shirts in support of students. All we ask is that the students *support* and *respect* us.

**12. Do you foresee any changes or improvements being made on an Executive level and or on a student level to prevent the reoccurrence of another Green Room fiasco? If so, what are they? If not, do you have any suggestions to rectify the problem?**

**Harold:** Student Council has taken steps, for instance closing the Green Room, and they seem firm about taking further steps if necessary. As far as we're concerned, we don't have a leg to stand on with respect to the closing of the Green

Room. As far as our supervisor is concerned, he doesn't have authority to close it either. So it falls on Student Council and the management of the SUB.

When I initially started my investigation into the matter I did not know what I would come up against. I was appalled when guided through an unrecognizable Green Room. There was garbage, cigarette butts and rotting food all over the carpet and the place was disgusting. Chairs are being used as firewood, gymnasium equipment, and burned as a pastime. From the start of the school year in 1993 there were 120 chairs, 40 of which are left in 1995. There is a definite problem here both in terms of the mess made on a daily basis, and the lack of respect for property and people around the SUB. We protest for our rights as students yet we neglect, disrespect and shun the silent members of our campus community. I strongly encourage the students of Dalhousie to take care of what we have, and work together to ensure that our Dalhousie years are void of embarrassing memories like the fiasco in the Green Room.

was up to this committee to decide on the approach that would be taken after the contract with Beaver would be expired, hence why they decided to hire the researchers.

"We are conducting a market survey in order to see that the food services are serving the campus as best as possible," said Martin of the venture. "We have initiated an open bid process for the [University's portion of the] contract, in which possible providers must share in the cost of the survey in order to be considered."

On the same subject, McKee said, "It will be done as a series of intercept interviews, designed to gather quite a bit of information. It is a true market survey, and it will ask the interviewees things like what they are willing to spend, where they usually eat, if they are satisfied with the current services, and what new services they would like."

The survey begins this week and will continue into next week. One thousand students will be surveyed, as well as hundreds of members of faculty and staff. The results of the survey should be available by the

third week of February and the final draft by the end of the same month. However, the University wants an answer from the DSU (regarding whether or not they will put their share of the business into the contract) before January 29, otherwise they are threatening to tender out by on their own rather than jointly with the DSU.

"We haven't provided them with an answer because they are rushing. How are we supposed to make this decision before all the information is available to us?" said Leech.

Quite a valid point, especially considering that Leech is getting information from the research company considerably later than the University's representatives, although the DSU is paying for half the research.

Beaver has offered to improve the services that are currently available in order to get a renewal on their contract, but the University still wants to open up the contract to

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