

Concordia student faces complaint for alleged discrimination

Arab students claim security measures were excessive

By Sara Collin
The Link

Two Concordia University students say they were singled out and searched during a recent speech by former Israeli prime minister Ehud Barak because they are Arab.

Nidal Alul and Hashem Fassif, both members of a Concordia group called Solidarity for Palestinian Human Rights,

allege Hillel members from the university pointed them out to security personnel during Barak's address in Côte St. Luc on Oct. 18.

The two men claim they were then taken aside by security and asked to remove their jackets, shoes and belts. Alul said the security guards confiscated a piece of his identification before allowing them to watch Barak's speech in a separate room on a television screen.

Although security was tight, Alul and Fassif claim the measures taken against them were excessive and fueled by racial discrimination.

"I felt as if I was passing through an Israeli checkpoint," said Alul at a press conference on Thursday.

Fassif said he has filed a complaint with the Canadian Human Rights Commission against the event's organizers.

Rabbi Reuben Poupko, one of the organizers of the event, confirmed that security was stringent outside the synagogue where Barak was speaking. He said members of the RCMR, the Montreal Urban Community police, a private security company and two Israeli security guards who always accompany Barak were all present at the event. Many people,

Poupko said, were subjected to security checks, which included metal detectors and bag searches.

Despite the heavy security, Poupko denied Alul and Fassif were singled out because they are Arab.

"It's a lie," Poupko said. "The reason [Alul] was singled out is because he goes around [Concordia] saying [people] should support Hamas and give them money."

Poupko confirmed that someone did go up to one of the security guards and pointed Alul and Fassif out, after which they were taken aside and searched.

Poupko denies a human rights violation took place.

He also said the synagogue reserves the right to determine who it will permit to enter the facility.

"We are a private synagogue. By law, we are allowed to include anyone and we are allowed to exclude anyone. Especially in times of tension like these."

Poupko said the two Concordia students were indeed asked to sit in a separate room to watch Barak's speech. But he said that 400 other people were also asked to sit there because of a lack of space.

Organic farmers to launch class-action suit against GMO

Saskatchewan farmers take on genetic modification

By Jeremy Nelson
Environment Bureau Chief
Environment Bureau

Genetically engineered (GE) crops are a dangerous "superweed" that contaminate neighbouring fields, according to a group of Saskatchewan farmers planning to sue the makers and promoters of the crops.

In the proposed class-action lawsuit, the Saskatchewan Organic Directorate (SOD) will demand an injunction against the introduction of genetically engineered wheat and compensation for other GE crops like canola that are now widely in use.

The farmers say these products could wipe out the gene-pool of crops whose genetic structure has not been tampered with, ruining their livelihood and making it even more difficult for consumers to buy products that haven't been genetically engineered.

"Owner-developers of genetically engineered crops have demonstrated irresponsibility and lack of accountability in promotion of bioengineering technology," said SOD researcher Marc Loiselle at a press conference.

Makers of genetically modified crops say their products do not contaminate organic fields, and insist the modification of genes in crops allow for higher yields. However the crops have been found to drift into neighbouring fields, and a field with even one per cent genetically engineered content is no longer eligible for organic certification.

Organic farmers also point out that most GE crops are designed to work in tandem with pesticides, meaning they not only threaten organic farms but also indirectly lead to more questionable chemicals being introduced into the soil, food and water.

In recent years, an increasing number of studies have shown correlation between exposure to pesticides and certain forms

of cancer. Amid these concerns, and the government's refusal to label products containing genetically engineered material, more and more consumers have been purchasing organic foods.

"Demand for organic food has been linked to consumers' concerns about the health and the environmental risks associated with the ways food is now conventionally produced and processed," said Debbie Miller, president of the Organic Certification International Association, the world's largest organic certification organization.

The group sees a lawsuit as the only means of resolution. The government is not likely to take action, the group says, because it acts as both the regulator of farming and an aggressive promoter of genetically engineered crops.

"As ties between public institutions and transnational agribusiness have steadily strengthened, we have seen a repositioning of federal and provincial institutions from serving the common good of consumers, farmers and the environment, to predominantly serving the corporate agenda," said Loiselle.

Loiselle is particularly worried about the introduction of GE wheat. Wheat is not only one of the most used crops world-wide, but it is also naturally drought and pest resistant, and used heavily in crop rotations.

"The forced elimination of wheat from organic rotations in Saskatchewan due to contamination by GE wheat would have profound negative impacts on the agronomic and economic viability of organic farming," said Miller.

If the suit succeeds, compensation will be paid to all organic farmers in Saskatchewan as well as any other organic farmers in Canada who decide to opt-in to the class action. The lawsuit will not be filed until at least January when a change to Saskatchewan law goes into effect that provides for such class-action suits.

Until that time, SOD is pursuing an aggressive fundraising campaign to raise the thousands of dollars for research and legal fees that the case will necessitate.

Special guests praise UNB Student Engineering Chapter

By Ryan Fletcher
The Brunswickan

The Canadian Society for Civil Engineering President Dr. Ron Townsend and Executive Director Michel Langelier were at UNB to address the Civil Engineering student body.

A crowd of close to one hundred packed into room C-122 to receive them.

Mr. Langelier spoke about the rejuvenation of the CSCE and praised the UNB Student Chapter and the UNB Civil Engineering students for their efforts and participation. He announced to the crowd that UNB-CSCE will be profiled in Canadian Civil Engineer Magazine this month and possibly next. He also hinted that UNB CSCE would

be a great candidate for the CSCE Best Student Chapter Award.

After their talks UNB CSCE President Trevor Hanson presented Dr. Townsend and Mr. Langelier with their own Civil Engineering tie-dyed t-shirt. The UNB CSCE Student Chapter was presented with a book containing the history of the CSCE in which Dr. Townsend and Mr. Langelier signed personal dedications. Towards the end of the event Dr. Townsend shared his wealth of knowledge and expertise by performing a lecture for the crowd of enthusiasts.

The UNB Canadian Society for Civil Engineering would like to thank all the Civil Engineering Students, Faculty, and Staff who showed their support during the presidential visit.

Same-sex marriage trial underway

By Rob Salerno
The McGill Daily

A Quebec Supreme Court case that could drastically change the definition of marriage in Canada began last Thursday before a courtroom packed with activists and media.

Court proceedings began with opening statements by plaintiffs Michael Hendricks and René LeBoeuf, a same-sex couple who have for the past three years unsuccessfully sought the right to marry.

Hendricks and LeBoeuf, who have lived together for more than 28 years, are challenging the Quebec Civil Code. The code stipulates that a marriage license can be granted only to a man and a woman.

The plaintiffs say the code violates the province's Charter of Rights and Freedoms, which has, since 1967, forbidden discrimination against homosexuals.

Hendricks and LeBoeuf filed suit after they were denied a marriage license on their 25th anniversary, Sept. 14, 1998.

On June 10, 1999, the Quebec National Assembly passed Bill 32, which "modified all laws and regulations containing a definition of common-law spouses... to explicitly include the notion of same-sex common-law spouses," including those laws pertaining to social benefits, tax deductions and pension benefits.

The couples' attorney, Anne France-Goldwater, argued, however, that this excludes same-sex couples from enjoying the rights that come along with marriage, including the power



Kevin Forneris/The Brunswickan

A lovely stroll between Bailey Hall and IUC Physics and Administration ...

to authorize medical treatment, to stipulate child custody and the right to claim alimony and child support.

"Quebec is the single most important province where this has to be resolved because right now, Michael and René have absolutely no rights," said France-Goldwater. "At least in the other common-law provinces, if you're living together and you're gay or you're lesbian you can still at least claim alimony from each other."

The trial will end this Thursday, after the Crown concludes its argument. The judge will likely render a verdict between a few months and a year from now.

France-Goldwater said that whatever the outcome, it will likely then be taken to the Federal Court of Appeals, and then finally to the Supreme Court. She also noted any change to the Quebec Charter of Rights and Freedoms, if it is to come, could take up to four years.

The case is opposed by both the

federal and provincial governments, and is running almost simultaneously with similar cases in Ontario and British Columbia.

Two McGill professors, Margaret Somerville, a professor of medical ethics, and Katherine Young, a religious studies professor, will testify against same-sex marriage as expert witnesses when the government makes its case this week.

When asked why he wants to marry LeBoeuf, Hendricks, who was visibly emotional in the courtroom, stated simply, "Because I love him."

France-Goldwater appeared confident about the case.

"In my perspective," she said, "society is ready, the Charter is there, the Supreme Court has spoken. It has already said that gay and lesbian relationships merit respect and dignity, and so now we're just putting the icing on the cake and saying 'okay, let's do it.'"

UNB alumni recognized with awards

By Daniel Hill

Two University of New Brunswick alumni were recently recognized with awards. Dr. Richard J. Currie, president of George-Weston Ltd. was named Canada's CEO of the year, and UNB business administrator Paulette Kaley received a

\$5000 Futures Fund scholarship for outstanding leadership.

Dr. Currie began his academic career in 1955 at UNB as a Beaverbrook scholar and president of his first year class. Following completion of his chemical engineering degree at the Technical University of Nova Scotia, he worked for Lantic sugar and finally earned an MBA from Harvard.



Photo courtesy of Trevor Hanson/Organization

Mr. Langelier and Dr. Townsend were both presented with UNB Civil Engineering tie-dyed T-shirts

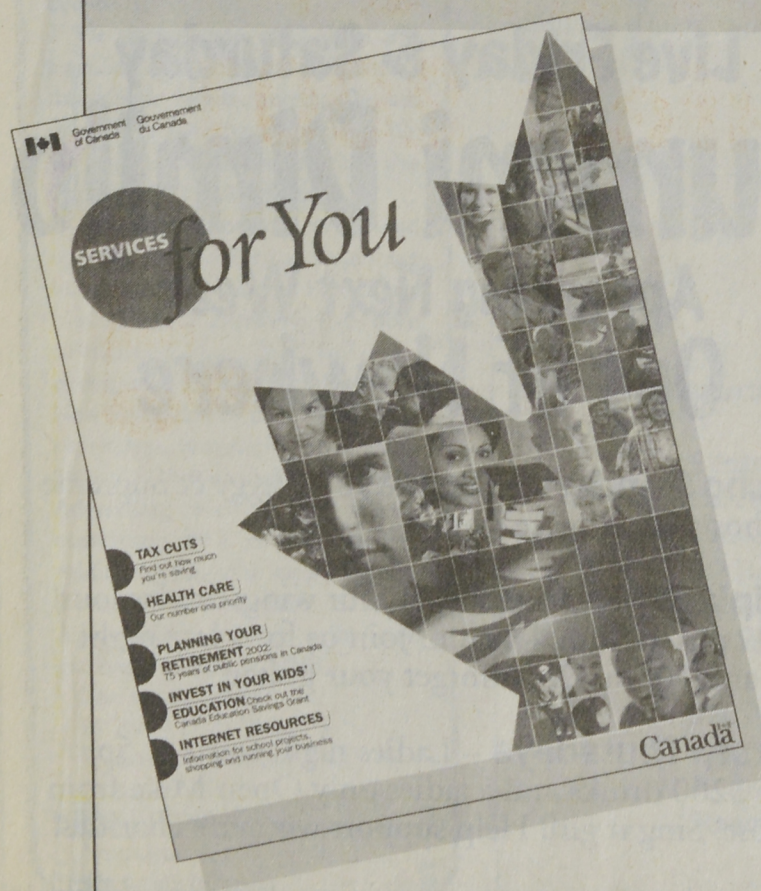
Within four years of employment as vice-president of the supermarket division of Loblaw's, Dr. Currie was posted as president in 1976. Over the next 25 years, he oversaw several business innovations such as the advent of "no-name" products, and through his leadership, the company's market value soared. Today, he is the president of Loblaw's parent company, George-Weston Ltd.

His list of awards and accomplishments runs long. He was awarded an honorary degree at UNB in 1987, distinguished retailer of the year in 1997 and has been repeatedly lauded by Canadian and American food industries.

Paulette Kaley, currently enrolled in the faculty of business administration here at UNB may follow the same path.

An active volunteer in her home community of Temperance Vale, New Brunswick, Kaley's high academic standing and involvement with the Business Society have earned her several scholarships and prizes. The Futures Fund scholarship is awarded for demonstration of exemplary leadership throughout the students' extra-curricular and academic activities.

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