

The Kids are Alright (The Grown-ups Aren't)

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Arts & Entertainment Editor

Scenario: 16-year old Joey is a good kid. He does well in school, likes listening to music, and plays guitar in a young local band. Joey loves his town, but he knows there's not much to do there. One can only take part in black light bowling for so long before it leaves a dirty, dirty taste in one's mouth. The town is Charlottetown and Joey is bored.

What's a kid to do?

Tired of staying home and playing Zelda, Joey decides to put his thinking cap on. After a little while, he comes up with the idea of putting on an all-ages show. It'll give kids his age a place for to hang out and listen to local music, people will be expressing

themselves, and best of all, Joey's band will get their first chance to play. To Joey, this all sounds gas.

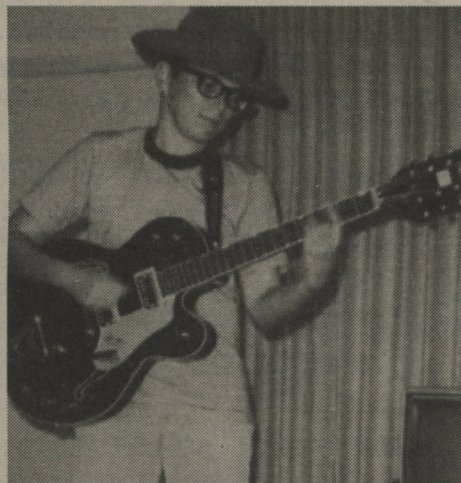
After hearing from a kid at school that there are youth music shows at the Arts Guild sometimes, Joey rushes home and calls the PEI Council of the Arts (the proprietors of the Arts Guild). Joey asks, "How much would it cost to rent the Arts Guild for an all-ages show?" The man on the other end of the phone curtly explains that with deposits, Joey will have to come up with upwards of \$500 before the show can be put on. Joey is stunned. He doesn't even know what \$500 looks like. Discouraged, Joey mumbles his thanks and despondently hangs up the phone.

What is wrong with these people? Is the arts council so hard up for cash that they reward a teenager's initiative

with a proverbial kick in the junk? Perhaps they have to pay a lot in taxes for the Arts Guild. No, actually, their GST payment amounts to \$50 a month. Well, maybe they don't get much support from the government. Oh, that's funny – both the Provincial and the Municipal governments are responsible for providing a combined annual operating subsidy of \$80,000 for the

building. Well then, if it's not any of those things, it must cost a lot for the Council to keep the deed to the building. Oh snap! The PEI Council of the Arts has to pay a whopping five dollars a year to retain ownership of the Arts Guild.

Show-organizing kids in the Charlottetown area have been running into the problem of adult apathy for years and regularly have to deal with retorts like "We don't put on those kind of shows here" when searching for a venue. The Arts Guild does permit all-ages shows, but the rental price for the room is ridiculous.



Dear Municipal Government / PEI Council of the Arts: quit being pompous shmucks and support these kids when they want to put on a show. The city should provide security for shows, while the Arts Council should work with people putting on shows instead of just renting out the venue. While other kids his age are investing in smack and calling in bomb threats, our Joey has come up with a wonderfully creative idea that gives kids something to do and a chance to express themselves, and is shat on for the effort. Well done, people.

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