

COLUMBIA SPECTATOR ARCHIVE

Columbia Daily Spectator, Volume CXVII, Number 53, 15 April 1993 — SGB hosts discussion of CR barbecue [ARTICLE]

SGB hosts discussion of CR barbecue

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In an attempt to discuss and clarify the barbecue the College Republicans held last Monday on Furnald Lawn, the Student Governing Board (SGB) of Earl Hall held an emergency meeting last night in Earl Hall.

Members of the College Republicans who organized the barbecue requested the meeting in order to explain their actions, which have prompted sharp criticism from several campus groups.

“A lot of people didn’t under-

stand our purpose when holding the barbecue. We apologize for that. We didn't intend to mock any group," said Ben Sacks, CC '93, who is chair of the College Republicans. "We apologize for not handing out flyers to let people know the intentions behind the barbecue."

The College Republicans held the barbecue on Apr. 5 across the lawn from "Camp Clinton," the tent structure intended to represent the detainment camp at the U. S. military base in Guantanamo Bay, Cuba, where more than 250 Haitian refugees who want to immigrate to the United States are being detained because they may be infected with HIV, the virus that causes AIDS.

Approximately 90 Columbia students were fasting last week to show solidarity with the Haitians refugees, who are also fasting.

The College Republicans held the barbecue without a permit from the University. During the opening statements at last night's meeting, Sacks acknowledged that his organization had violated University rules by occupying an area already reserved

by another group.

Many present at the meeting charged the College Republicans with organizing the barbecue with the sole intention of aggravating those fasting.

"I don't really think the College Republicans know what they want and what they're doing. They made no point being out there," said Carmelle Elie, CC '95, the president of the Haitian Students Association.

Members of the College Republicans criticized the members of the International Socialist Organization (ISO) for their behavior on Apr. 5, calling it childish and immature.

After the barbecue began, several ISO members approached the College Republicans' tables and spat on the food.

While Sacks made an effort to make amends with several offended student groups, he would not apologize to the ISO, because, he said, the barbecue was a statement directed at that organization.

“They are insincere in their support of this cause as they are insincere in their support of other causes,” Sacks said after the meeting.

Some members of the groups that organized the fast would not accept Sacks’ apology. ISO member Todd Chretien, GS ’94, said Sacks was “lying through his teeth.”

“Your barbecue was a direct action against those who are in solidarity with people with the HIV virus,” Chretien told Sacks.

Others present at the meeting said they felt that the barbecue was disrespectful of different political ideologies and was a blatant mockery of the students participating in the fast.

Vice President of SGB Negar Nabauinjad, CC ’93, said she felt positive about the outcome and she intended “to have more and more open forums in which there is only discussion and no voting, to have a forum in which conflict between groups can be voiced.”