

Image offends

Dear Editor,

As a supporter of racial equality and a believer in the fact that no racially-hateful messages be forwarded in the *Excalibur*, I must say that I am disgusted by the blatantly anti-francophone drawing that accompanied Josh Rubin's article: "OUAA Boots Quebec Squads."

Understandably, the article did deal with the issue of possible jealousy on Ontario's part of Quebec's strength in hockey, but to publish a symbol such as this one diverts one's attention from the contents of the article towards a racist feeling against those of Quebecois, or for that matter, French extraction.

I am surprised that this sort of racist diagram would be published in a newspaper which supposedly fosters the notion of racial equality. The timing of such a diagram is also terrible in light of the possibility of Quebec separating. Perhaps you will publish a large Ku Klux Klan symbol the next time you publish an article concerning anti-black sentiment in South Africa.

Sacha Sevigny

Reformers react

Dear Editor,

In the may 29th edition of *Excalibur*, an article by David Camfield makes allegations about the Reform Party of Canada which assault his own credibility as a budding reporter. Did he refer to any Reform Party literature, or ask Party spokesperson any questions, before penning his highly subjective attack? It is clear that he did not.

Mr. Camfield asserts that the Reform Party is "a racist pro-business party." The Reform Party opposes any immigration policy based in racial or cultural considerations, and supports the development of policies which are based solely on Canada's labour force requirements. This means that if, in a given year, what Canada requires are doctors, ditch-diggers, short-order cooks, and accounting clerks, then people with those abilities will be permitted to come to Canada, regardless of their race or country of origin. This is racist? Is there any good

We will publish, space permitting, any letters up to 500 words. They must be typed, double spaced, and accompanied by the writer's name and telephone number. Material deemed libelous or discriminatory by the staff of *Excalibur* will be rejected. Letters may be mailed or delivered to *Excalibur* • 111 Central Square • York University • 4700 Keele Street • North York • Ontario • M3J 1P3

reason for allowing people (excepting genuine political refugees) to come to come Canada who cannot be employed here.

The Reform Party does, as Mr. Camfield charges, support enterprise and initiative. His implication that the Party would support the objectives of business over all others is, however, false. He did not report on our policies in the areas of sustainable development in environment, family law, pollution control, elimination of grants to business, labour, medicare and others. How come? Could it be because they might have balanced his article, and made the Reform Party seem more credible and reasonable than many of his groundless assertions do?

Mr. Camfield equates the Party's insistence on equality of opportunity for all Canadians, and equal treatment for all provinces, with racism. The Reform Party does reject the view that racially-specific federal policies and promotion of "reverse racism" by our governments is enlightened or required in order to prevent racism.

Mr. Camfield's article is fraught with further misconceptions and falsehoods. The Reform Party would not spend health care or education dollars on debt reduction. Reformers do not "talk endlessly about the need to reduce the deficit at any expense," as even a cursory examination of our policies would prove. The Party is not "trying hard to mask its real face," but is the *only* political party which freely publishes a detailed description of its principles and policies. This is the "blue Book" which Mr. Camfield has obviously not read.

I hope Mr. Camfield will now take time to find out what the Reform Party is *really* about.

Sincerely,
Bob Pieroway Jr.
Director-Youth Development York
North Constituency Association,
Reform Party of Canada

Parking increases

An open letter to Bill Farr

Dear Mr. Farr,

It has come to my attention that you will be recommending to the Board of Governors that they

approve an increase in the fees charged for parking on campus, and in so doing you have chosen to disregard or ignore the recommendations of the Presidential Advisory Committee on Parking. Furthermore, given that students will be the hardest hit by the increases, I would like to take this opportunity to go on the record, on behalf of the Graduate Students' Association, to protest the increases and the process by which the decision was made.

It looks as though York University has once again decided to make up for shortfalls in government funding on the backs of students and raising parking fees is an easy way to accomplish this. The price for a parking spot on an unreserved lot will increase by 52% from \$105 to \$160 and students living in graduate residences who wish to park their cars on campus will have to bear a whopping increase of 109%. This fee will go from \$105 to \$220 a year. In contrast, the fee for reserved parking, that used most often by faculty and staff is scheduled to increase by only 18%. Thus, those who can least afford the increase and are the least politically powerful will pay for York's budgetary difficulties as well as subsidize members of the administration and faculty so that they can have a reserved parking spot.

What is even more onerous about these increases is the process by which the decision was arrived at. The existence of the Advisory Committee appears to be for cosmetic purposes only since their advice was ignored, despite the fact that it proposed an increase of nearly 20%. Moreover, students were promised last year, after parking fees increased dramatically by 31%, that the increase was, in your words, "a one time only" occurrence. Now, only one year later, students are once again being confronted with increases in parking fees that make the hikes of 1990-91 appear pale in comparison. Apparently the university is seeking to make up for decades of government under-funding through the use of parking fees. If this is indeed the case the day is not all that far off when we can expect to pay the same for parking as we do in tuition.

The question remains; what are we to make of these increases coming on the heels of last year's pledge of a one time only increase?

From a student perspective one is forced to conclude either that the university is only interested in paying lip service to our concerns regarding this issue or that it was less than truthful last year when the promise of no further increases was made. In either instance the result is the same, students are expected to pay while not questioning the wisdom or honesty of those who ultimately decide such matters.

Alan Jones
President,

Graduate Students' Association

Bill Farr betrays

Another open letter to Bill Farr,
Vice President of Finance and
Administration for York University
Dear Mr. Farr,

On behalf of the Constituency Committee, I am writing to express our dismay over parking fee increases for the 1991/92 academic year.

It has come to my attention that you have chosen to dismiss the recommendations, concerning next year's rates, of the President's Advisory Committee On Parking (PACOP).

PACOP recommended that the fee for an unreserved yearly parking decal be increased from 105.00 to 125.00. This still represents a 15.7% increase, more than twice the rate of inflation. And it is completely unsatisfactory when one recalls that last year's embarrassing 31% parking increase was supposed to be a "one-time only" occurrence.

Of course, all of this occurred prior to your unilateral decision to ignore PACOP's already high proposal and to instead hike rates by 52%. This raises the cost of an unreserved yearly parking decal by \$55.00 to an outrageous \$160.00!

There are five reasons why we find this proposal completely unacceptable:

(1) These rates further reduce accessibility to post-secondary education. Next year students are facing an 8% tuition increase, a 3% tax on our student loans, 7% GST on books, 6.5-10% residence increases, and a 6% (at best) inflation rate.

As a commuter campus without satisfactory public transportation, many York students have no choice but to drive to class. For them, this parking hike is unavoidable, and therefore tantamount to an extra tuition increase.

(2) This hike is in conflict with your previous assurance that parking rates would never again be subject to such drastic increases. Have things changed so dramatically in a year that you are now forced to go back on your word? Mr. Farr, with this decision you have completely undermined what was left of your credibility after last year's parking episode.

(3) Your move to raise the unreserved yearly decal rate to \$160.00 ignores the advice of PACOP. The administration insists that it is more productive for students to work within their structure, rather than outside of it. To this end, students are invited to sit on committees like PACOP, which we do.

Is it any wonder that students feel frustrated and betrayed when this so-called process of consultation is dismissed at your convenience? It is laughable to think that we are actually considered to have any substantial input in to the decision-making process when our presence at the committee level goes for naught.

(4) This increase places a disproportionate economic burden upon students, those who purchase the unreserved decals. Faculty and staff have access to reserved parking decals. Yet the cost of a yearly reserved decal is being increased by only 18%, compared to the 52% hike that we face. May we suggest, Mr. Farr, that you polish up on the art of subtlety?

When setting parking fees rates, you have the power to ensure that the right to accessible education is secured, at least on one level. Instead, you have blatantly chosen to place the financial onus on those who can afford it least.

(5) One of the reasons in particular that you have given for this increase is not legitimate. You maintain that using the revenue generated from parking fees for campus security is justifiable. Yet it is the University, not the students who drive, which has the responsibility to fund its community's security. Students have the right to accessible transit to York and to a safe campus environment.

Based on the reasons briefly outlined above, the Constituency Committee asks you at this time to reevaluate your decision to increase the yearly unreserved parking decal to \$160.00. We ask that you do this to the immediate view of establishing an equitable parking rate structure at York.

I would look forward to a further discussion of this issue.

Thanking you in advance,

Nikki Gershbain
Chair, YFS Constituency Committee

White male voice silenced

Dear Editor,

As a student who is concerned about the protection of our freedom to think and our freedom of speech, I found the editorial that appeared in *Excalibur's* May 29, 1991 issue disturbing. I unquestionably support the enhancement of the "curricula by including writers and ideas from cultures that are often overlooked," but I cannot defend the censorship of the "white, male-oriented cultural tradition." Although I do not believe that "no means harder," I would strive to sustain anyone's right to maintain and express such a notion. The bottom line is this: students were punished, in the name of "political correctness," simply because they expressed an idea. The fact that this action occurred in an allegedly liberated university is unacceptable and appalling,

and does, contrary to what *Excalibur* might believe, threaten my freedom to think.

To begin with, punishing these students for expressing their opinions presupposes that their views were wrong. Who made this moral judgement? To my knowledge there is no definitive authority that dictates the ideals that humans should adhere to. I fear (and I do mean fear) that those who decided that these men should be punished, because of their beliefs, are part of the infamous royal "we" that has constantly tainted civilization: the same "we" that hung Mary Webster for being a "witch" (i.e. an independent woman who thought for herself), imprisoned Oscar Wilde for being a homosexual, and condemned Galileo for realizing that the Earth was not the centre of the universe. The mistakes that "we"

have made in the past about moral decisions unquestionably lead me to the conclusion that we are morally no better than our peers, and consequently have no right to enforce our views on others. Furthermore, *Excalibur's* willingness to accept the silencing of someone's voice clearly clashes with its desire to study "cultures that are often overlooked."

What is perhaps more appalling than the actual punishment that these students received is the fact that a precedent has been established: men, at least at Waterloo (or is it Berlin?), are not allowed to express and think that "no means harder." When someone decides what is and isn't good for me, supposedly for my benefit, my freedom to think is being threatened. I, for one, do not need some big brother (or sister) figure peering over my shoulder telling me what I should and should not think. The same big sister (or brother) figure has tried to protect me from the corruption that can be found lurking in the pages of

The Diviners, *Lord of the Flies*, and *Huckleberry Finn*. Thankfully, in these cases big brother (or sister) did not succeed, but unfortunately this time at Waterloo it did. Furthermore, the fact that someone else has made the decision to permit signs like the one that was displayed at Waterloo deprives me of my freedom to make up my own mind. Yes *Excalibur*, censorship such as this threatens my freedom to think.

Excalibur argues that the critics of political correctness are struggling to "allow a dominant group's right) to impinge on the rights of others in a university setting." This is simply not true. I am a critic of political correctness not because I wish to dominate anyone, but because I do not want the white male voice silenced. I, as a male, am often alienated from fragments of male culture in university. For example, during two of my three final English exams I was asked questions that pertained exclusively to women's issues, while none of the questions

referred exclusively to men's issues. Why not? The bottom line is this: my professors seemed to be hyper-concerned about the female voice, and, consequently, neglected the male voice. Moreover, since the students at Waterloo were censored for being insulting to women, why were my exams not revised because they were clearly insulting and offensive to men? In the simplest of terms, the supporters of political correctness only guard the minority victims of oppression, while they ignore members of the majority who fall prey to the same restrictions.

Excalibur's editorial addressed many issues that concern me and my education. I support the studying of cultures that are often overlooked, like *Excalibur*, but I cannot defend political correctness. Sometimes Political Correctness advocates censorship and oppression, which are unacceptable because they threaten our freedom to think.

Sincerely,
Steve Cooney