

Editorial

Raising the age of majority not the answer to problem

In the midst of a sweeping review of our archaic Ontario Liquor Act, one issue has gained a much higher profile than any other. Raising the drinking age to 21 is seen by a very vocal segment of the population as the cure to the evils of alcohol, namely drunken driving.

Liberal MPP Steven Offer is heading the parliamentary advisory commission set up to look at changes in the law. The commission's terms of reference include licensing regulations, lifestyle advertising, and legalizing beer and wine in corner stores. These are all important issues but it seems the focus has been placed on the drinking age question.

In response to this spotlight many university student governments and the Ontario Federation of Students have prepared persuasive briefs arguing for the status quo. Their arguments are as old as the issue itself, but worth reiterating so as not to compromise ourselves with a short-term solution to a long-term problem.

Raising the drinking age to 21 will visibly effect all Ontario universities and colleges, as a large number of students would be unable to drink legally. It is naive to think that drinking would be drastically reduced after such a move; consumption will simply move to unsupervised locations such as residences.

Statistics at American universities, in states where the age of majority is 21, show this to be the case. In fact, vandalism and drunken driving have increased with the raising of the drinking age there.

Students, who in every other regard are treated as adults, are seen by those who want to raise the drinking age as immature children. It may be a cliché but if one can drive at 16 and vote at 18, it's inconsistent to restrict drinking to only those 21 and over. It is a paternalistic attitude which should be avoided. Stop-gap measures will not alleviate the problem.

What would constitute a long-term solution to the age old problem of alcoholism is education. Recent programs such as the Reduce Impaired Driving Everywhere (RIDE) and the Don't Drink and Drive posters publicly displayed are an effective supplement to academic teaching.

The York administration's brief on liquor regulations to the Advisory commission stressed how crucial a role pubs play in educating students about the responsibilities of drinking. This new 'classroom' approach illustrates the latest efforts of pubs to monitor drinking. In addition, there are active organizations cropping up around Ontario campuses dedicated to educating students about alcohol such as Campus Alcohol Policies and Education (CAPE) and Students Against Driving Drunk (SADD).

These are the proper steps that should be taken to combat the problems stemming from alcoholism that face society. Raising the drinking age is not.



Letters

Women's Centre policies 'breed resentment'

Editor:

In glancing through *Excalibur* last week I was interested, though not surprised, to find the following passage in Meiyin Yap's piece entitled "York Women's Centre volunteers persevere despite lack of support from administration":

The informal, male-restricted atmosphere allows women to discuss issues which [sic] they might feel inhibited to discuss elsewhere. The no-male policy at the drop-in centre was implemented in order to create a safe environment from harassment and sexism for [sic] women.

Well, what was I supposed to "get" from this passage? On reflection, I'm still confused. Is it the case that the environment at York University prevents women—or any other group—from speaking their minds? A quick survey of the walls at York demonstrates that this is clearly not the case. York provides an environment where freedom of expression is not constrained, but encouraged. One would be hard-pressed to find an issue that women might want to discuss in the Women's Centre that could not be discussed freely virtually anywhere on campus.

The second sentence from the passage above is even more perplexing than the first. Am I to understand that the "environment" at York harbours a large number of males who systematically engage in "harassment and sexism against

women" to the extent that women require a safe haven to interact? If this is in fact what Ms. Yap is contending I would like to see some evidence that supports her position. I expect that her view is one based more on the lore of the committed than empirical data.

Ms. Yap and the Women's Centre do a great disservice to the York community by articulating policies that serve to separate the sexes and breed misunderstanding and resentment. If Ms. Yap and the Women's Centre genuinely desire positive change for women on campus I suggest that their efforts would better directed at educating the York community as a whole—women and men.

—Cal Bricker

Provost responds to Centre article

Editor:

Meiyin Yap's opinion piece on the Women's Centre (September 25) represents a useful review of some of the history and aspects of this important service. As I understand the situation, the Women's Centre deals with students, staff and faculty—one of the factors that call for some creative approach to its placement, sponsorship and support within the structure of the University. In both 1984 and 1985 representatives of the collective raised with me the quest for larger and more secure funding. The two options most frequently cited have been: 1) a levy on student fees; and 2) a direct support from the University's operating budget. As Ms. Yap correctly points out, the first alternative would presumably require those interested to take a ref-

erendum to the student body. As to the second option, to my knowledge there was no follow-up to a suggestion I made in the early fall of 1985 that the collective pursue with the Director of Student Affairs some kind of formal relationship with that office. The issue is admittedly not an easy one; for example, the collective may be concerned with its independence and autonomy (which is certainly a defensible consideration).

These questions were very much in the air when I met with members of the collective last fall. At the same time, the collective was intensely engaged with CYSF in negotiating from that source (as well as the nature of the relationship to that student government). As best I can recall, the collective did not at that point or subsequently ask for financial support from my office. It still hasn't. To this extent at least, Ms. Yap's article conveys—in my opinion—some misleading impressions about the alleged lack of support from the "administration." The "administration" has also tried to show its support for the Women's Centre through the provision of space in a central location, an effort at liaison, and other indirect ways.

—T.A. Meininger

Study missed real cause of stress

Editor:

Re: Article "York Psychologist's study finds stress is higher among Hong Kong students," Sept. 25/86. So Hong Kong visa students have now become a psychological problem! Once again, foreign students are presented as a burden to the sys-

cont'd on p. 7

EXCALIBUR

Editor	Lorne Manly
Managing Editor	Paulette Peirol
Acting News Editors	Kevin Bray, James Flagal, Laura Lush
Acting Arts Editor	Kevin Pasquino
Acting Sports Editor	David Bundas, James Hoggett
Acting Art Director	Janice Goldberg
Darkroom Manager	Alex Foord
Staff	Reya Ali, Babak Amirfeiz, Sujata Berry, Gary Blakeley, Kevin Bray, Mel Broitman, Marty Buber, Steve Castellano, Rob Castle, Humberto da Silva, Roberta di Maio, David Dollard, Billy "The Kid" Emerson, Elroy Face, Greg Gagne, Cathy Graham, Theresa Grech, Karim Hajej, Ricky Henderson, Susan Hilton, Jay Howell, Dixie Hummingbirds, Dave Keon, Angela Lawrence, Jay Leno, Nick Lapicciarella, Nick Loruso, Ryan McBride, Zena McBride, Bonnie Mitten, Randall Newman, Jimmy Olsen, Lisa Olsen, Alex Patterson, Dan Plesac, Domingo Ramos, Jackie Robinson, Julie Robinson, Joel Scoler, Jeff Shinder, Cathy Sturm, Andrew Vance, Edo Van Belkom, John Wen, Stephen Wise, Wyndham Wise, Lisa Wood
Board of Publications Chairperson	Kevin Connolly
Advertising Assistant	Patty Milton-Feasby
Typesetting Guy	Stuart Ross
Alchemist	Greg Gaudet
Advertising Manager	Merle Menzies

EDITORIAL: 736-5239
ADVERTISING: 736-5238
TYPESETTING: 736-5240

MAILING ADDRESS:
Room 111, Central Square
York University
4700 Keele Street
Downsview M3J 1P3

