

# editorial

A fraternity, according to Webster, is a group of men joined together by common interests for fellowship or a group of people with the same beliefs. A fraternity is brotherliness.

Traditionally, fraternities consisted of the good old boys: wealthy young men from upper class families who went to the right schools and formed their own association ensuring they would not have to keep company with other more common classes.

Spawned from fraternities, sororities included the high society girlfriends, and would-be girlfriends, of the frat members and were organized in a similar way.

Both fraternities and sororities have traditionally aimed to maintain a certain level of student spirit, camaraderie and a sense of home for their members. As well, they encouraged their members to do well in classes and contribute to the community through charity work.

Today's fraternities and sororities, while not as restrictive as in the past, have kept both these goals as well as some more unfavourable characteristics. They remain expensive, elitist, sexist and, potentially, physically dangerous.

On June 22, York's Senate rescinded a ruling which stated that no York student could belong to a fraternity or sorority. Although they are not officially recognized on campus, York students now have the opportunity to become members. Within the following year college masters and the new provost will decide whether or not these groups will become officially recognized clubs on campus.

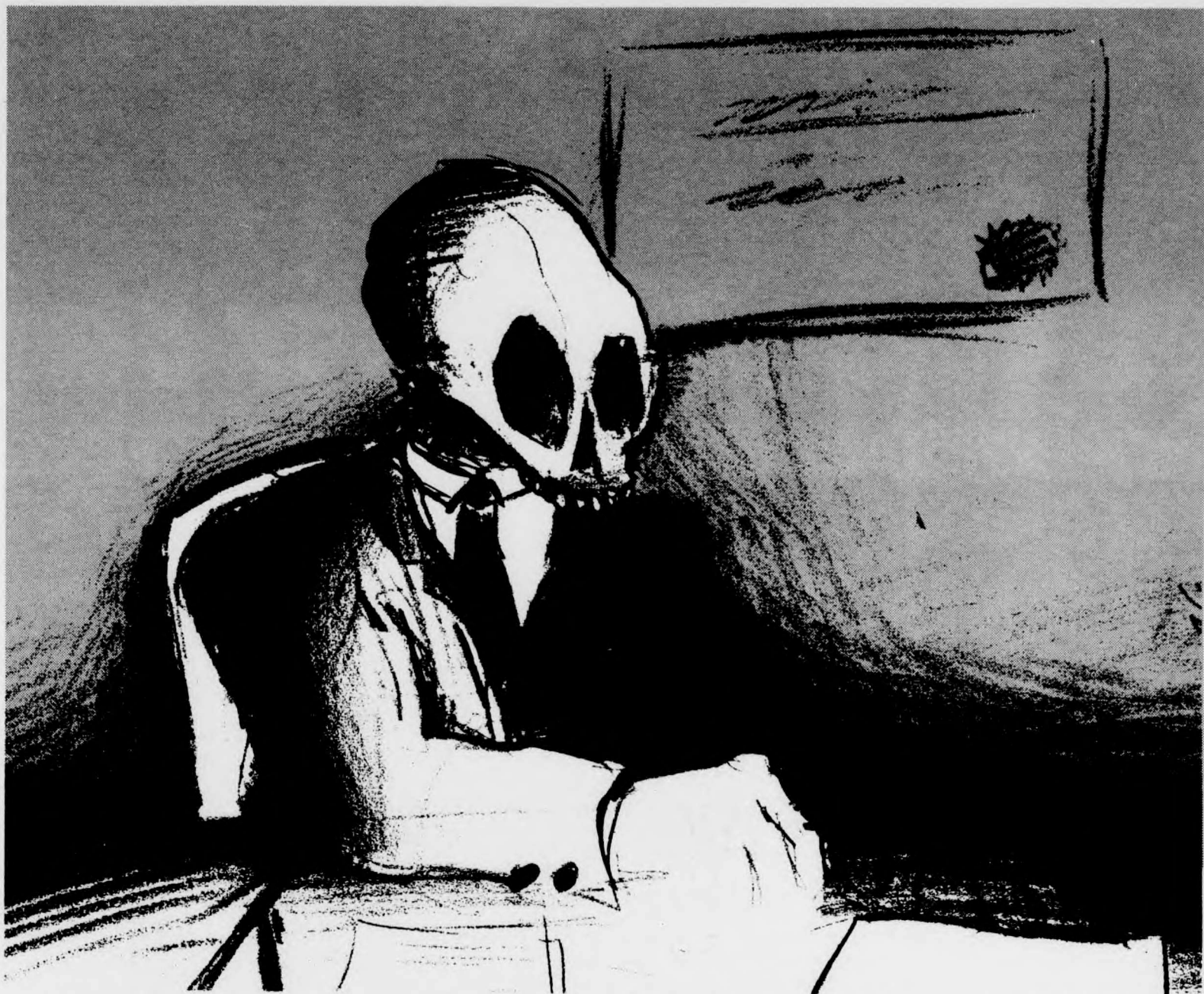
Despite the university's previous policy, frats and sororities have existed on campus since 1984 and have displayed many of the unfavourable characteristics of other frats and sororities.

A typical York pledge for Alpha Epsilon Pi (the main fraternity operating at York) could expect to pay \$390 for membership plus a \$190 initiation fee plus a \$50 pledge fee in the 1988-89 school year. There were also additional costs throughout the year such as entertainment fees. (It cost approximately \$350 to join the sorority, Alpha Epsilon Phi). For that year, it seems the price of camaraderie was approximately \$630.

An AE Pi pledge also would have learned and sung with his brothers the following songs:

There's one thing true from NYU (New York University — the frat's central office)  
Tradition is no fable  
Brothers in arms in gold and blue  
They are so very able  
Just like you we at York U  
Are here for just one reason  
To ball the sisters every day  
No matter what the season  
.....  
Back that girl into the corner  
Turn the lights down low  
When she starts to whine and whimper  
Tell her that's the secret entrance of AE Pi

The "sisters" referred to in the first song are a group of women that affiliate themselves with the frat for the purpose of socializing. According to the song, it seems that a \$630 frat fee buys the brothers a sister.



*"The administration is as concerned about asbestos as the next man, your health is our number 1 priority."*

Although these are not "official" songs in the AE Pi pledge book, they can be heard at parties and meetings. They openly sanction date rape, and convey the message that a frat brother does not need permission from a woman to have sex with her. The woman should consider it an honor to be with an AE Pi man.

Sexism within frats is also visual. Last year, Sigma Delta Chi, a forming fraternity at York, used sex to lure new members into the frat. A poster in Central Square displayed a woman dressed in a mini-skirt striking a provocative pose with the words "Go where no man has gone before" written on it along with information about joining.

Incoming master of AE Pi Steve Offenheim explained that "Sometimes you get a bunch of guys together and there will be a problem." When prodded, he said, "There will probably be an effort this year to tone down some of that."

Initiation can also be a degrading aspect of being in a frat. At York last year, pledges had to strip to the waist, cover themselves in corn syrup and blow into a vat of flour until they found a buried nickel.

The sorority Alpha Epsilon Phi requires the accumulation of 27 pearl points as part of its initiation process. Potential sisters must earn their points by attending cultural events like the opera, socializing on two or

three occasions with a big sister and doing charity work.

Initiation can also be potentially dangerous. Although no one has yet to physically suffer from hazing, AE Pi has had problems at other universities. Two years ago at Western, four AE Pi brothers were in a car accident in which two were killed. They were involved in a scavenger hunt at night during hell weekend (initiation weekend). Direct links with the fraternity, however, were never proven.

But what can you get out of all this? You get a feeling of belonging to the "in" group, a sense of superiority in the knowledge that you belong to an elite. You have the security of being with a large group of people who will stand by you no matter what — like at McGill. A woman was raped at a frat party, and the brothers stuck together. The police were unable to fully investigate the incident because the brothers would not implicate any of their own.

President Arthurs has called frats and sororities "inconsistent with the democratic nature of this university. I am not accusing any particular fraternity or sorority but they've been historically identified as discriminating on the basis of sex, race and religion. They've tended to be elite organizations."

York is based on a liberal, egalitarian phi-

losophy and frats and sororities conflict with this ideal. The positive aspects of frats and sororities can be gained through the college system that currently exists at York. Colleges can offer even more because they have greater resources. Each college has extensive facilities for academics, sports and socializing such as tutors, weight rooms, intramural sports, dances and pubs. As well, colleges organize their own charity work.

And, colleges are virtually free. The fee (approximately \$27.50) to join a college is included in your tuition. You are allowed to choose your own college and change your membership if you want and there are no initiation procedures. Perhaps the most important feature of belonging to a college is that you can have a sense of security and belonging to a group but you are not restricted because of your membership. You can be an individual within the group.

The Senate was right to lift its ban on fraternity and sorority membership as it contravened the Charter of Human Rights. People must have the right to belong to whatever group they choose. But the college master and the new provost must seriously consider if they want to give these groups official recognition as they could be detrimental to the values and goals of the university.

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EDITORIAL: 736-5239  
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MAILING ADDRESS:  
Room 111, Central Square  
York University  
4700 Keele Street  
Downsview M3J 1P3



## Chedington opponents defeated Million dollar condos to be built next to Glendon

It's done. Over. Finished with. The Chedington Condominium development is going up next to Glendon campus. The project will see two highrise towers consisting of 69 units, estimated at \$1.5 million each, blemish York University's picturesque campus.

Does York's body of students and staff agree with this proposal? No, but they have no choice.

The application was not opposed by York's administration.

Despite repeated requests, the administration refused to take a position either for or against the development.

Also, the York University Faculty Association (YUFA) was upset that President Harry Arthurs did not intervene and make a motion against this development. And so, the Bayview-Lawrence Environmental Protection Association (BLEPA) was formed; made up of Glendon students, faculty and local residents.

After many days of cross-examination at the Onta-

rio Municipal Board (OMB) hearings early in March, a decision was still not reached. The final appeal was heard by the OMB on March 28. Both BLEPA and YUFA urged Arthurs to take a stand against the project — but their attempts were in vain. Speaking through his lawyer, M. Bull, Arthurs again stated that the York administration is not taking a position against, or in support of, the Chedington development.

So what does this say about our "great" university? It leaves everyone with the message that the administration is more concerned with keeping Chedington Holdings Ltd. happy instead of its students and staff. It says that it would rather see the university surrounded by multi-million dollar condos than provide more and better student housing. This can also be seen by the large sales of land around York's main campus to Bramalea for more condominiums.

Well, we're getting the message loud and clear — like the old proverb says "actions speak louder than words."