

letters



Security "breaks and enters" says writer who questions tagging and towing practices

Re: Tagging and Towing Practices at York University.

The owner of the car that was illegally parked in front of the Ross Building, where the York buses take on and discharge passengers, will be quite unhappy to learn that his car was broken into in order for it to be towed away. Between 11.20 am and 11.30 am on Tuesday September 13, two York Security people and the tow truck operator, poked a piece of wire between the weatherstripping and the window to unlock the car.

From a phone call made to parking control last spring about a similar occurrence, I learned that dolly wheels were to be employed in such case. In fact, two trucks were not hired unless they were equipped

with dolly wheels. This particular truck was indeed so equipped.

Even though the car was illegally parked, it should not have been broken into. Illegal parking should not provide the ticketing officer with carte blanche to remove an offending vehicle in any manner that suits him.

Parking rules and regulations are obviously important; but respect for other people's property should be given equal consideration.

The car in question was pale green, was probably made in the early part of this decade, and bears licence plate AWN 588.

If the owner of this vehicle wished to contact me, I may be found in N432 Ross.

R. P. Ryan.

This advice - giver is not our very own Dear Ann Landers

Dear Giver of Advice:

As a boy, my son was a paragon of virtue. He sung in the church choir, delivered papers every evening, had many friends and achieved wonderful marks in school. As a teenager, he was exemplary. He was captain of the school football team, won many awards and scholarships and was Class Valedictorian.

Then he went away to college. He became a changed man. He began to drink. He smoked illicit narcotics. He was constantly being treated for venereal disease and he grew his hair down to his waist.

Then, one day last month, while playing pool with one of his degenerate friends, he missed a difficult shot and flew into a fury, beating his friend to death with his bare hands. Now he is serving a twenty-year prison sentence. Tell me, what went wrong?

Distraught Mother.

Dear Distraught:

It is difficult to tell from your letter, but in all likelihood your son misused. It happens to the best of players. Try not to take it so hard.

Dear Ann Landers:

I have just swallowed an entire bottle of sleeping pills. I am writing this from the Post Office in the Central Square. I have made a terrible mistake! I don't want to die! Help me, please help me!

Dying.

Dear Dying:
I am not Ann Landers

Tracy Teeple

Smelly smoke's billowy clouds

There seems to be a modicum of confusion regarding the places where smoking is permitted on this campus.

In last week's edition of Excalibur, there was a large notice on page eight, placed by the university which said quite clearly: no smoking allowed in any "classrooms, lecture rooms, teaching laboratories, theatres or areas used as theatres, storage areas, library reading and stack rooms, gymnasiums, shop and service areas" where woodworking and painting are carried out, elevators, and any other areas where "No Smoking" signs are displayed.

In an effort to advertise the new regulations the university has placed at least two — frequently three — "No Smoking" signs in conspicuous areas of all the rooms where smoking is prohibited (a rather bright idea especially coming from the York bureaucracy).

Now here's where the problem arises; smokers are still puffing billowy clouds of pernicious smoke into the otherwise sterile classroom atmosphere. Am I to believe that smokers can't read?

Nonsense, they can read as well as anyone else — unless, of course, they've been at York for three years or more, in which case their reading

will be slightly deficient but not so rusty that they can't puzzle out the two words NO SMOKING.

The fault lies not entirely with those rude and inconsiderate smokers. Some of the blame has to be put on the forces that still leave ashtrays neatly placed on every fourth desk seat in the classrooms etc.

Herein lies the paradox: The "NO SMOKING" signs suggest that the university has a regulation prohibiting smoking in the particular area where the sign is posted, whereas the ashtrays suggest that the signs don't have to be taken seriously. The ashtrays were designed to collect cigarette ash and to stop people from butting them out on the floor.

But by putting them in the 'no smoking' areas they are having the opposite effect; instead of being a useful device whereby students can put out their cigarettes, they are the inciting people to smoke in restricted areas.

So away with the ashtrays! — They serve no positive purpose other than to collect stale goo, which usually ends up stuck to the bottom of seats, ashtrays or not. The emphasis should not be on student awareness of both the fact that NO SMOKING signs require people not to smoke, and that non-smokers — who are bothered by smoke — have a right to demand clean air.

C.R. Brogue, Grad. Res.

Your name in print

Excalibur's letters page is an open forum for members of the York community to comment about anything, and everything.

All letters should be addressed to the Editor, Excalibur, room 111 Central Square.

Please triple or double space the letters, and keep them to around 250

words. Lots of people have things to say.

Excalibur reserves the right to edit for length and grammar, but we'll try to keep it pretty much as is.

Name and address must be included for legal purposes, but the name will be withheld upon request. Deadline: Monday at 4 pm. Sorry, no exceptions.

opinion

Board recommends a "benevolent dictatorship"

By Harvey Pinder

My election to the Board of Governors (BOG) was a pleasant end to the last academic year. The two meetings held since that time have been distinctly unpleasant.

While expecting disagreeable things I have been astounded by some of the suggestions made. One governor suggested President Macdonald govern York without consulting either Senate or BOG, which, to my mind, amounts to recommending a benevolent dictatorship.

Several agreed that it had been a mistake to allow discussion of the President's Commission Report. The Senate response to this report, compiled over two full days of meetings, was ridiculed and rejected, by BOG, without discussion.

The underlying assumption, the axiom from which most governors work is that a university cannot govern itself, that academics (let alone student and staff) can never reach agreement. As one governor said, "the more discussion, the fewer the decisions". It is a throwback to the 1800's when the ruling classes of Europe thought democracy was inherently and self-evidently impossible. The idea that working people could be citizens was preposterous.

Within the BOG it is considered equally as preposterous that students staff and faculty (constituted as a "university") could govern themselves. This contempt for the university is rooted in the businessmen's background of the overwhelming majority of the BOG.

They want a secure, business-like measurement of education. As the president of one of Canada's largest manufacturing industries said, "surely a measurement of York's success would be how many graduates get jobs in their fields of training". The ideas of liberal education, of developing the critical faculties of student which cannot be measured easily are foreign to these men.

The implications of these attitudes will be transformed into dangerous threats to the current standard of education by the coming fiscal squeeze. As the Presidents Commission said, "we will have limited finances and have to make choices". This will mean an emphasis on science and professional parts of the university; and within the Arts faculty the probable termination of weak programmes. The size of undergraduate classes will probably be increased. Over-all, the critical and humanistic parts of York will be starved.

If, as the administration is predicting, the increase in provincial funding next year is 6% and assuming the current enrolment and inflation rate; there will be less than 1.8 million extra spending dollars in 78/79. This will mean cuts in faculty and staff because even using the whole amount for salary increases will mean less than a 4% raise.

Currently there is a freeze on hiring, which MacDonald has said will cause a reduction of faculty numbers (which haven't increased since 72/73). The combination of declining numbers of professors with the same number of students gives us a declining quality of education.

While the sixties were rich, and money was available for continual expansion, the seventies will force hard decisions everywhere due to the global economic crisis. So far the provincial and federal governments have attacked social service spending while increasing tax exemptions and grants to corporations. While this suits businessmen who believe that what is good for business is good for society, it is not suitable for the majority of society, those who work for a wage, and who cannot afford private doctors, high transit fares and impoverishing tuition fees. BOG accepts the provincial cutbacks (and that is what they are when the increase is less than the inflation rate) as unalterable.

If the full force of the fiscal crisis hits York, there will be attacks on tenure. Businessmen cannot understand why someone should be guaranteed a job (unless they are not grossly incompetent), and at least one governor suggested that no more tenure be granted. The concept of academic freedom does not enter their calculations of efficiency and productivity.

The platform on which I ran and won consisted of 1) the end of secret BOG meetings, 2) the end of business domination of the BOG and 3) a student, staff, faculty self-governing university.

While the BOG ended their secret meeting immediately after my election, they have circumvented it by increasing their executive (which is still held in camera) to fifty per cent of the BOG membership itself, and leaving both students off.

They have bureaucratically thwarted the intent of public BOG meetings. I will continue to work to open up the BOG. The domination by businessmen is the next plank up for solution. Currently fifty per cent of the BOG are chairmen, president, or directors of corporations.

There are four vacant seats; as an immediate opportunity to open up the board, I would enjoy hearing nominations from the York community for these empty seats. The only restriction is that they not be businessmen since the BOG will nominate enough of them. Getting a few non-businessmen on the BOG won't solve our problems, but it can be the start to fundamental restructuring of the university.

In conclusion the picture looks gloomy, but it is precisely at this point that people have to step forward and take an active part in the university (not to mention society). It is no longer possible to be an armchair critic or an apathetic object.