

LETTERS

continued from page 4

round us to the best of our ability.

Negative participation on the other hand is the attitude of opposing other people's actions or ideas, without making an effort to present or implement alternatives.

It is this profound difference which the editor seems to completely overlook when he says referring to Andrea Shettleworth, "she is lobbying the lobbyist. She is more active than the activist."

The problem with his statement is that it fails to say that most of the people who are signing this petition do not understand its purpose, if they did we would not find the kind of comments that have been written on this famous banner.

They range from "don't waste any more of my money," to "socialism equals slavery," which might well be very valid comments in a different context, but have little to do with the object of this campaign.

In summary, I strongly disagree with the use of the term lobbyist or activist to categorize the people who are signing this petition.

They have not shown either the interest to actively participate on our university's political process, nor have they presented concrete alternatives.

It seems obvious to me that the people who are signing the petition because they do not want their money to be wasted, would not be thrilled with the prospect of financing a new referendum, which would be a waste of everyone's money and an insult to those of us who bothered to vote in the first one.

Finally, I would like to ask the editor to think twice at least before he sits down to write an editorial. Otherwise, he takes the risk of writing another biased and misleading piece of journalism.

Marcela Rios
Panamericanists Students
Organization

Shettleworth monopolizes

To the editor,

Last Wednesday, Andrea Shettleworth unjustifiably tore down the anti-racism posters in central square.

I am a member of the coalition that organized the National Action Day Against Racism on Campus at York.

I am disappointed with Andrea Shettleworth. I will not even bother to address the obvious -- that is, the merit of Ms. Shettleworth's cause when it is compared to the validity of fighting institutional racism.

One student does not and should not have a monopoly on the available space in central square; Ms. Shettleworth's actions constitute vandalism.

The day against racism was a legitimate event in that arrangements to procure the space were made months in advance via the appropriate channels.

Four students, (Mr. Ghomeshi was not one of them), brought together by our belief in fighting racism, worked until 5:00 am the morning before hanging up the posters only to have them torn down and apart in a matter of minutes. Furthermore the walls of central square were bare at the time that the posters were hung.

I believe that the previous points are valid, yet there is an issue here that is even more profound.

There are many controversial issues that York students are divided on. A belief in student unity means that students must put aside their political differences in order to mobilize around an issue that is *not* contentious.

All students must exercise their freedom of expression in order to effectively confront institutional racism.

Any form of racism must be met with our protest-- students and faculty must be taught that certain practices are unacceptable.

The National Action Day Against Racism on Campus was meant to create awareness and to educate the York community. The members of the coalition believe that if we want our university to embody an egalitarian ethos, we must work to create that ethos with our activism.

When Ms. Shettleworth tore down the anti-racism posters she accomplished two things. She delegitimized the concerns of those students who believe in fighting institutional racism and she limited our freedom of expression in order to secure her own.

Nikki Gershbain
Anti-Racism Coalition

Racists need educating

To the editor,

re: National Day of Action against Racism on Campus:

On Wednesday, November 21 at about noon, I was walking by the east bear pit in central square when I heard the beginnings of a speech. I moved closer and listened to the oration in its entirety, and I was moved by the strength of the delivery.

The speech was about racism. During the course of the speech, I heard mutterings of "move back to Africa" or "nigger bitch," from both males and females within my vicinity. It was then that I realized how widespread racism really was. I thought that racist attitudes were things that you learn to leave behind you in post-secondary education, but I was wrong.

It would have been very easy for me to walk away from this incident, but I knew I couldn't. When you see racism, you have to confront it, and in writing this letter, I am telling you, fellow students, that you should be doing the same thing, whether the racist is somebody you know or if it is yourself.

Mike Rawding

Reader angered by our journalistic style

To the editor,

The campaign on behalf of Andrea Shettleworth to nullify the OFS/CFS referendum is quite moot.

I believe that a campaign which premises itself upon eliciting support for a series of haphazard grudges whose objective is to undermine a popularly-elected decision is neither serious nor legitimate.

Nevertheless, it has been used as a breeding ground for creating superficial, and energy-wasting, controversy.

What is more disappointing, however, is that this "controversy" has layed premise for ridicule in media sensationalism and in caricature which has flouted itself in some of the most explicitly racist depictions I have encountered on campus in a while.

It is quite obvious that a newspaper which "will refuse letters that are racist, sexist, libellous or those which attempt to incite hatred toward an individual or an identifiable group" (i.e. *Excalibur*) is not serious about its own practice in effecting this policy.

The sensationalism with which the editorial taunts the reader does not present a serious appraisal of a situation affecting the student body. The structure of

the piece itself creates a false competition and levels simplistic and mythical sentiments between two non-"contending" people. As such, it invites the reader to "choose a victor" and "vanquish an enemy" on a completely insubstantial basis.

I believe this to be an incitement towards developing contempt against Andrea or Jean and/or the groups they supposedly represent.

The cartoon depictions need no explanation for any person who understands how cultures and peoples are stereotyped by a domineering culture in order to invalidate, ridicule and perpetuate myths.

For those not fully aware of the effects and manifestations of white supremacy in our society, this is precisely why the YFS/FEY holds forums to address concerns of institutionalized racism.

The depiction of Andrea in all her animal and simple, savage glory is the classical Western attempt at demoralizing, reducing and trivializing as trite and comic the vastly complex and dignified African history and experience.

I might be able to go beyond criticizing the portrayal of Jean as just plain ridiculous if only I knew what on this earth the "artist" was trying to imply in

his/her characterization.

These depictions conform to fallacy and thwart the reality and truth of the circumstance at hand and of the sheer being of the two people targetted.

It is ironic that they arise in the wake of a contentious incident on campus: the shredding of posters which addressed the need to illuminate and confront the endless manifestations of racism on our campus.

As a student at this university I am absolutely angered and ashamed that this "style" of journalism is revered in the campus' most prominent and influential paper. It is irresponsible.

However, I am pleased that I am represented by a student government which does not see itself divorced from society, but attempts to play a critical role in creating a conscious campus.

There may arise serious criticism with respect to procedure. Granted. Let them be heard and discussed to effect a constructive, responsible and challenging model of student government.

I believe those responsible at *Excalibur* for such intellectual aberrations as displayed on the editorial page could benefit from such thoughtful models.

Sincerely,
Kelly Rico

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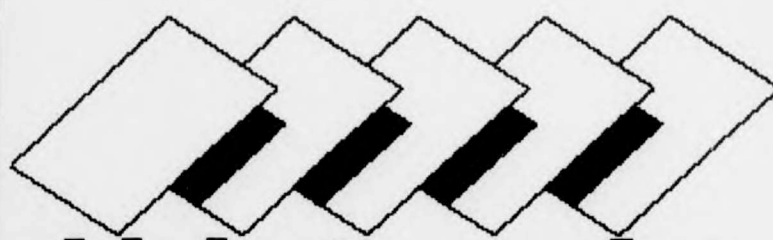
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