

Coming under fire

# Criticism of bookstore is often undeserved

By **SHELLEY RABINOVITCH**  
 Inflation is a sensitive bone in any student's body, and when the subject is text books the victim usually needs a body cast. York's bookstore has come under criticism from members of the university for many years, and in most cases, it is undeserved.

First in the mind of the average textbook buyer, is the cost of course books, for many times a second price is visible under the University Bookstore sticker.

This is often due to the publishers, not to the staff of the bookstore, for the cost of the book to the consumer includes many hidden additions. In many cases the price of shipping, handling, paperwork, customs

clearance and other publisher-to-store costs will be charged to the bookstore, causing the actual price to be much higher than what appears in the invoice sent to the retailer.

"The bookstore is owned by the university," said Rafael Barreto-Rivera, manager of the bookstore for three and a half years. "And we are expected to break even or better."

This year the University has set the Bookstore's profit target at \$20,000, a figure that Barreto-Rivera is hopeful of attaining. The problem is more acute than might be imagined, for the 1974-75 year text gross margin was only 24 per cent. "We have to pay everything (salaries and administrative costs) from this 24 per cent," said Barreto-Rivera.

In two separate surveys taken last year, one by Glendon College's Pro-Tem and one by Excalibur's Frank Giorno, York's Bookstore came out ahead when its prices were compared with independent downtown bookstores. The only black mark against the Bookstore was when it was found that the Student Christian Movement Bookstore (SCM) featured one book at a cheaper price.

Because the bookstore is thought of as having to supply a service to York students, it came under fire when it refused to sell TTC tickets a few weeks back.

"We have enough extra traffic in the store for York Travel Club tickets," said Barreto-Rivera justifying his stand. "The University sells these to us at 25 cents, and we in return have to sell them to students at the same price — there is no profit involved for us and the Bookstore actually incurs a loss in work-time by selling the tickets at cost.

"To sell TTC tickets would make the additional traffic unbearable." Barreto-Rivera said the York bookstore had already acquired a reputation as being one of the best text-book bookstores in town and that he planned to make it the best trade store in Toronto within the next two or three years.

He explained why certain books

are put on sale periodically.

"If an item is dead stock and our cost for returning it to the publisher is 10 cents for each 60 cent book, we will charge students 50 cents for the book," he said.

Answering some of the charges levied against the bookstore by professors and teaching assistants, who claim the bookstore deliberately understocks books, Barreto-Rivera said that in cases where a particular course has a record of inflated book requirement estimates, he will deliberately put fewer than the ordered amount.

He gave one example in which an English course with an actual enrolment of 15 students had ordered 32 books. The bookstore supplied 26 but only one of those books was ever sold.

Other books used in the same course weren't as neglected by the students, but most books ordered showed a large discrepancy between the number of books ordered and the number of books actually purchased by the students.

Gone this year in the 'new-look' bookstore are the large, red comfortable chairs students used to use to catch up on their reading before classes, or when the required text would have proven too costly to the pocketbook.

"We're in business to supply books, not study space," said Barreto-Rivera. The chairs took up too much room needed for extra merchandise, so they had to go.

Efficiency usually exacts its price, and often it's in the form of comfort.



Dave Fuller photo

York student exchanges a large portion of his savings for a few books.

## Controversial CKRY show will tackle campus issues

By **MAURIZIO BELLI**

The Bear Pit, Radio York's controversial live talk-show programme is due for a return engagement this year with a brand new host. Just when the programme will commence however, is uncertain, according to station manager John Thomson.

Thomson has already named Jay Bell, known on campus for his leadership of the York Liberal party, to replace Rick Leswick as the programme moderator.

"Rick's bigotry was a put on," said Thomson of the former moderator. An audience must like a talk-show host, he explained, but in order to like him it must hate him.

The basic format of a ten to 15 minute interview with the guest speaker, followed by a general question period will be retained this year.

Among last year's most popular programmes was the one with Xaviera Hollander, but all that's going to change this year.

"The radio programme needs to be more campus-oriented," said Thomson. "There is a great wealth of talent on campus that doesn't get enough exposure."

Nevertheless, the first programme will feature members of the United Farm Workers, currently fighting an election battle with the Teamsters union for the right to represent migrant California farm workers.

Radio York is asking for student help in trying to get the programme under way. The Bear Pit brought Radio York to the attention of many people last year, and Thomson figures it will do the same thing for this year's station.



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