

Correspondence

Time to talk

Your Nov. 22 editorial "A time to talk" expresses the need to know about university financial information, including the bases for allegations of mishandling by the administration of BIU funding. On Oct. 29 York professors could read in the York University Faculty Association Newsletter an article entitled "The BIU Story", that hopefully will shed some light on the issue for your readers too. More importantly, it asked the administration for some answers which we all have the right and the need to know. To date YUFA has no reply. Excerpts from my article appear below.

"For the past three years York University has had an agreement with the Ministry to weigh each student according to a fixed ratio (each York student equals 1.289 BIU's independent of students' status). This agreement arose because of difficulties the Administration has had in ascertaining the numbers of students in each category (not only honours or ordinary but Science, Humanities, Arts, etc.). It has recently become known that this fixed ratio puts York third lowest in Ontario in terms of average BIU per student.

"We find it impossible that our relative position vis-a-vis the other Ontario Universities truly reflects the nature of the academic program at York.

"In view of the above, we believe that the Administration should answer the following questions:

- "1. Why are we only now making some attempts to increase our standing in the BIU formulation?"
- "2. Surely the administration has been aware of our low position for a number of years and has not made the university community aware of it. Why not?"
- "3. Why haven't we instituted a scheme similar to Western's? Their publicized policy is to classify every student with a B average as an honours student irrespective of the program he or she is enrolled in.

Mel Zimmerman
YUFA Information Officer

Poetic licence

In the November 22 issue of *Excalibur*, Robyn Butt expresses "anger and disappointment" at the multilingual poetry reading given on Friday evening, October 26, as part of the Stong College Symposium on "Cultural Pluralism and the Canadian Unity." I appreciate the fact that Ms. Butt wishes to discuss the matter further, and we have indeed tried to contact her by leaving a message, but without success. I would therefore like to take this opportunity to answer her questions in writing in order to explain the purpose of the Conference as a whole, and the poetry reading in particular, in the event that other members of the York Community may share Ms. Butt's misconceptions.

Ms. Butt indeed needs enlightenment as to the purpose and scope of the Conference, sponsored jointly by Stong and the Ontario Advisory Council on Multiculturalism. Both the conference and the poetry reading were advertised widely, internally through the *York Bulletin* and *Excalibur*, and externally in the ethnic press in and around Toronto. Both the conference and the reading were open to all interested parties. We invited submissions of papers and asked for contributions to



the poetry recital. In fact, we accepted all the papers submitted coming both from the York and outside academic community, and from members of different ethnic organizations, government officials, and all others concerned.

The aim of the poetry recital was to let the audience hear the sounds of as many different foreign languages as possible, together with translations making the poems accessible. Some of the readers are themselves poets; others are not. There are Canadian poets of diverse ethnic backgrounds, such as Pier Giorgio Di Cicco, but they write in English. There are not many Canadian poets writing in languages other than English and French: we would have been delighted to have them if we missed anyone. Our readers chose their own selections. Miriam Waddington, for instance, chose a Montreal poet who writes in Yiddish and translated it herself. I read a poem by Jean-Guy Pilon, a Quebecois poet, and Hollis Rinehart read the translation. Most of the translations were done expressly by local talent for the poetry reading.

When we noticed the absence of German, we went out and looked, and Walter Mayer appeared with his own translations. We would have been delighted if a Chinese or Japanese poet or reader had come forward. If Ms. Butt knows of any poets among the native people who would be available for future readings, we would welcome them. Unfortunately, no one is paid to read, and we have to use whoever is available.

For Ms. Butt's information -- and for other members of the community -- we are planning twice-monthly poetry readings starting January 15, in Sylvester's at Stong.

Hedi Bouraoui
Professor of French Studies
Graduate English
Master, Stong College

Big Mac attacked

I could not help being struck by the stinginess of the offers being made to your teaching staff at York University, and I commend the students who have come out in support of YUFA. York is an incredibly cheap institution and one really begins to wonder what self-respecting "professor" would stay there under the prevailing conditions.

Surely questions must be asked. Where Does Ontario's money, earmarked for education, go? I notice that your President, H. Ian Macdonald, Ph.D. *Honoris Causa* was here recently on a flying visit of something called The Ontario Committee for Confederation (???), whoever they are. HE seems to have plenty of bucks to junket around on political nose-poking expeditions of questionable efficacy. (I say that since the French media, the French universities, and above all, the

Societe de la Saint-Jean-Baptiste (not pequiste and very influential), boycotted him, and "Ontario's continued paternalistic interference in Quebec's affairs" was the reason they gave.

Perhaps Ian Macdonald should stay home and set his own house in order before he comes advocating "federalist" ways (read "Ontario's ways") in a Quebec where people are better treated than in Toronto. He may do more harm than good. We do not need a Scrooge around telling us how wonderful his ideas on Canada are. When you have limitless private "perks" and bagfuls of expense account money to throw away for political boondoggles, life may seem more enjoyable than it does if you are a poor teacher caught up in the York U struggle for survival.

York U is still the Augean Stable it was in 1974 and is sorely in need of cleansing -- from the top down.

Vive la YUFA libre!

David Alexander Mitchell

Kudos

I am a York alumnus, graduated in 1978, and was recently on campus after more than a year's absence.

I was pleasantly surprised when I picked up an issue of *Excalibur* (Vol. 14, No. 13). The quality of the newspaper has risen in a number of respects. Better reporting, wider coverage of events, more in-depth coverage and, primarily, better writing. In fact many of your authors are quite good. Even the graphics and layout are improving. Super! Keep up the good work.

John Pivori

Uh huh

In his letter to *Excalibur* in the December 6/79 issue, the Chairperson of YUFA comments on remarks attributed to me in the previous week's story concerning the appointment of Professor Colin Steel. I can understand Professor Stauffer's reaction, but wish to point out that it is based on an error in that previous story. I told your reporter (Mr. Monfette, I believe), that (a) YUFA had suggested informally, through Professor Paul Craven, that the administration should think about seeking YUFA approval for Steel's faculty appointment as part of this year's contract negotiations; (b) that YUFA Negotiating Committee had never raised the matter at all at the bargaining table until after the appointment was made and YUFA had filed for an injunction regarding Steel's appointment.

What got into the story was some of (b) and none of (a). I didn't talk to *Excalibur* at all about requests "to include the appointment in the settlement of a group of grievances on appointments. If asked, I would certainly not deny that YUFA had made such overtures.

I trust that this will clear up any misunderstandings that your story will have created.

W.D. Farr
Vice-President
Employee & Student Relations

All letters should be addressed to the editor, *Excalibur*, Room 111 Central Square. Letters must be typed, triple-spaced, on a 66 stroke line. Letters are limited to 300 words (seven column inches). Name, address, or phone number must be included or the letter will not be published. *Excalibur* reserves the right to edit for grammar and length. Deadline Monday 5 pm.

Some "elevating" ideas from.. THE DEPARTMENT OF PHYSICAL PLANT

Welcome to the first of a series of articles which we hope will help you to get the best service out of our elevators at York University.

Elevator Safety

Contrary to what you may have seen on television or at the theatre, elevators cannot fall uncontrollably down the hoistway, and since there is an air vent behind the fan, it is virtually impossible to suffocate. As a matter of fact, elevators have the best safety record of all modes of public transportation.

If you become trapped in an elevator, pick up the elevator phone and speak directly to the Emergency Services Centre. The operator will contact an elevator mechanic immediately. Now that help has been summoned, relax and make yourself comfortable.

Don't try to get out of the elevator by forcing your way out. While you are inside the elevator you are safe. Stay where you are and wait for help to arrive.

See you next week with some tips on Elevator courtesy.

Your friendly elevator mechanic,
TED WALDRON

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