

Editorial

Student groups mobilize to give Bata the boot

Sonja Bata's decision not to seek re-election to the University's Board of Governors has diffused a confrontational situation while at the same time illustrating that the democratic process is alive and well at York.

Too often the York University community has been accused of apathy. The recent efforts of the York Student Movement Against Apartheid and the York Student Front demonstrate there are concerned and responsible students within the University.

Details concerning Bata's decision to "retire" from the Board are still sketchy but the fact remains that her connections with the South African government placed the University in a difficult position. It would be hard to justify Bata's presence on the Board with the injustice of the Bata Shoe Company's policy in South Africa.

Whether Bata resigned, retired, or was removed from the Board, the result is what counts—she is no longer a representative of York University.

The heartening part of this issue is the combined effort of the YSMAA and the YSF. These groups organized an effective and, most importantly, peaceful campaign, culminating with the presentation to President Arthurs of a petition containing the signatures of over 1,000 York students and staff.

Social awareness and activism are essential elements of a university. And these elements, as demonstrated by the Bata protesters, can bring about positive results.



"SAYS TO INSTALL HIM BETWEEN THE FRIDGE N COLUMN"

ANALYSIS

Arthurs has opportunity to fulfill dream

By DAVID BYRNES

"Do we dare to dream again?" This was the challenge that Harry Arthurs put to York University in his formal Presidential installation address on May 9. With academic guests from across Canada and the United States in attendance, Arthurs made public his assessment of York's successes and failures since its creation 25 years ago, and said that York's worst affliction is that "we have lost our ability to dream."

Arthurs spoke of excellence and social justice as themes which York's 40,000 full-time students can hold in common. These are unifying themes for any university and predictable enough for a presidential inaugural address.

What was more impressive was his citing of a third aim that is endemic to

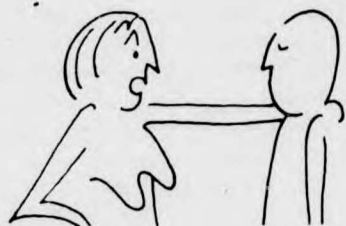
York—the need to improve the quality of communal life. By recognizing that the neglect of York's social needs and physical environment in the past years of government embargo has put York "at a risk as a community," Arthurs shows that he is in touch with a fundamental problem at York.

York suffered in its adolescence from the Ontario Conservative government's decision to reverse its education policies. First subscribing to the philosophy that money spent on the universities would ultimately upgrade the quality of the province, the PCs poured money into universities. Then, in 1972, with York only half built, a moratorium was imposed on university building. Half-complete ever since, and waiting for the moratorium to end, York has understandably become a frustrated university.

Arthurs is idealistic and clearly enthusiastic about leading York into its 25th anniversary year—hopefully into an era of intellectual excitement and excellence. He has demonstrated more than admirable ideas and made some decisive changes. Most significantly, he has started to implement the recommendations of the Lapp Report, making York less dependent on the provincial government and largely self-reliant through the selective leasing of its land.

Arthur's keynote—that York must "dare to dream again" makes the question of the University's future a challenge to the community. If he is able to make progressive changes and can stimulate the enthusiasm that he feels has been lacking, the years ahead may be marked with a difference.

excalibur



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"Who can refute a sneer?"
 Rev. William Paley
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LETTERS

existere in need of major reorganization

Editor:

It seems to me that the purpose of organizing a university literary magazine is to:

- 1) stimulate writing by providing a forum and audience for the writer
- 2) stimulate readers by providing interesting, challenging, insightful work or at least a representation of what is actively occurring in the writing on campus

- 3) provide an active, vocal, flexible venue around which readers and writers can gather to create an atmosphere of interest, action, involvement, relevance, and overall, a climate of creativity

As the only independent creative writing magazine regularly appearing on campus from year to year, *existere* has, by virtue of this position, an authority in its voice. It is important, therefore, for *existere* to fulfill the functions mentioned above.

I think that in the years since I have been at York (since '82), *existere* has not succeeded in these goals. Many people have felt alienated, disinterested and unstimulated. Writers in particular have not felt that they have the active audience participation that such a magazine thrives on. People have not banded together over it, or conversely, against it, in a creative fruitful manner (although we have seen the beginning of this in the appearance of the *Thalia Bullwinkle Review* pages of *Excalibur*).

If regular issues of *existere* appeared frequently, writers would be provided

with frequent goals toward which they could direct their work. Both writers and readers would be constantly reminded and stimulated. The magazine would not be forgotten as it awaits re-emergence.

As it now stands, *existere's* expensive look limits the nature of material that can be published. It leads editorial decisions away from diverse interesting experiments in writing and works-in-progress, and it denies a forum for less experienced writers who would gain valuable experience in print—presently writing of this kind seems out of place. This is because the expensive look seems to say: 'these are unalterable fixed products.' This is not to say that much of the writing will not be just that, but it is important to realize that we are all students studying our craft and our work is in transition. Instead of the anthology approach, I think *existere* should adopt the format of a magazine of on-going creative work, critiques, reviews, manifestoes, suggestions, letters to the editors, and editorials. As one professor put it, the years at university are for 'exploring, expostulating and experimenting.' This is especially true in the creative arts.

I suggest a radical change in design for *existere*. Instead of being produced expensively on high quality paper, production cost could be lowered by using either a tabloid format (e.g.: the second issue of *existere*, '83-'84) or 8½x7 (i.e. folded legal size paper). These formats can be very attractive and would allow many more issues and many more copies of each of those issues to be produced. In addition, it would be possible to print an issue with less material that would oth-

erwise have been appropriate, as it sometimes happens that editors are unable to gather enough writing for a specific deadline. This new format can ensure *existere's* regular and frequent appearance.

If a rotating editorship was created for each of these frequent issues, this would allow more people the experience of editing, and create more variety in material chosen (through both the editors' taste and their ability to attract and have connections with a variety of writers). Additionally, if every editor worked as an assistant for the other editors knowledge and expertise could be shared along with the necessary chores. If there were a different editor for each issue, the interference of academic commitments would be minimized. Each editor could be responsible for one or two issues during the year.

It is also possible for *existere* to use the poster form as a medium for distribution. Writing and/or artwork could be posted on bulletin boards over campus, reaching a wide audience. Also, distribution of *existere* could be linked with various poetry reading series currently occurring on campus (especially the fortnightly Winters College Reading Series).

I believe that *existere* can be a moving force on campus. It can encourage writers and readers by promoting an atmosphere of interactive creativity, provide a forum for creative writing and thinking about that writing, as well as providing an opportunity for students to become actively involved in all aspects of the publication of a literary magazine.

—Gary Barwin
existere editor 1983-84