

Former mayor Sewell demands new policy to solve housing crisis

By LIZ REYES

"The housing problem in Metro Toronto is the worst it has ever been," said John Sewell, former mayor of Toronto, at a speech organized by the Urban Studies Association, last Wednesday.

Unless there is a new policy towards public housing there will continue to be an exorbitant waiting list of homeless people and those who cannot afford rent or homes on the public market, Sewell concluded.

Metro Toronto public housing, which provides homes for low-income tenants, has 110,000 housing projects in North York of which 33,000 are apartment units. Sewell, appointed chairman of the Metro Toronto Housing Authority (MTHA) in November of 1986, believes that there are two important issues that should be brought to the board's attention:

1. The homes built at the onset of public housing in the 1950s are not practical homes.
2. Public Housing should be viewed as a permanent home-base and not as ad-hoc dwellings.

The homes built on a massive scale in the '50s were seen as the housing solution for the masses of impoverished families and individuals in the downtown sector. The building of these projects marked the start of the government's involvement in providing homes for the public, as well as the construction of housing on such a large scale.

"The modern architecture rejected past designs that made no relationship to what came before them. (Yet) it is clear that the designs put together have failed," Sewell said. "The architectural designs which won the prizes are horrendous places where most of us would not want to live."

Sewell gave the examples of Regent Park (a project in downtown Toronto) where the apartments were built on an angle, and of Driftwood Avenue (Jane/Finch) where there are no reasonable road systems, large spaces in the middle of the apartments and doors that do not face the streets. He also added that it is extremely difficult to find the homes located in a given project area.

Another major problem deals with the government's perception of public housing. Across Ontario, low income homes are viewed as temporary homes for tenants on their way to a higher income bracket. Sewell, however, believes that these notions are incorrect, especially since there is a very low turnover in public housing.

"In fact the situation has not gotten better but worse. We used to believe it would all finally get better, but the people at the back of the train continue to be left at the back of the train, while the rest get ahead," Sewell commented. The fact is that not many people can afford to purchase a home today. Most people

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BABAK AMIRFEIZ

THE BEAR PIT SHUFFLE: The Shuffle Demons with their hit *Spadina Bus* performed live last Monday as part of the Fine Arts Festival.

Fighting plagiarism at York

By PAULETTE PEIROL

In a move to recognize and promote writing as a "vehicle of critical thinking," the Faculty of Arts is offering a total of \$1,000 in prizes for outstanding essays written in the 1986-87 academic year.

All undergraduate students are eligible for the awards, funded by an anonymous donation to the Faculty of Arts, plus the York Fund. Prizes of \$250 will be given to winning essays in each course level (1000, 2000, 3000, and 4000) taught by the faculty.

Professors can submit one piece from each year level to their individual "unit" (department, division, or college course program). The unit directors may, in turn, nominate only one essay from each level the unit offers. Final judging will be by an ad hoc committee of at least three members appointed by the Dean of the Faculty of Arts. Winners will be announced this fall.

"The primary focus of a liberal undergraduate education," according to Mark Webber, Associate Dean of the Faculty of Arts, "is to teach students to analyze, organize, and express themselves. Writing is an excellent medium to do this."

Webber, the primary organizer of the contest, notes that emphasis is now being placed on the *process* of essay writing, focusing more on the structure of arguments rather than strictly grammatical considerations.

This mandate is echoed in the judging criteria for the Faculty of Arts Essay Prizes, which makes no mention of spelling, for example. Essays (which include research papers, exposés, and reports), will be judged on the basis of "clarity of presentation, coherence and cogency of argument, appropriateness of organization, felicity of expression and 'brilliance,' which may manifest itself as wit, originality, persuasive power, or insight," Webber wrote.

The only stipulations for eligibility of essays are that they must be at least 1,000 words long (approximately five pages), written in English, and submitted as a course requirement in a Faculty of Arts course.

Webber hopes that in future years, the contest will be expanded to

include essays written in other languages, and/or to offer more prize money. It is possible, he said, that awards may be also given to students who improve their expository writing through York's Writing Workshop. "The awards are an effort to promote what we're teaching," Webber stressed.

Two years ago, Harold Kaplan, former Dean of the Faculty of Arts, set up a working group to examine the faculty's role in teaching critical thinking. A report was issued, and according to Webber, the study grew into an ongoing project dedicated to "the instruction of critical thinking and basic skills." Some college courses have since been modified as a result of the report, and summer workshops for faculty development have also been initiated, Webber added.

While the Faculty of Arts is promoting exemplary essay writing, it is also addressing the most pertinent threat to critical thinking—plagiarism. The faculty's focus on plagiarism is twofold, Webber said, incorporating both the "educational aspect," (teaching students what plagiarism is, and why it is wrong) and the punitive aspect.

Webber outlines three primary explanations for (and degrees of) plagiarism: through ignorance; as a panic reaction, or through laziness; and as "a premeditated, vicious act." Surprisingly, plagiarists "tend to be good students who are perfectionists and worry that their marks won't be good enough," Webber said.

In its efforts to curb plagiarism, the Faculty of Arts has advised professors to request multiple drafts of essays from students, in order to familiarize instructors with the students' writing style. Instructors may convict students of plagiarism only by proving—beyond a reasonable doubt—that stylistic differences (between first drafts or previous works, and the essay in question) are transparent or by finding the original source of the plagiarised information.

If the student disputes the instructor's claim, then the instructor must demonstrate why he or she is convinced that the piece is plagiarised. Often, a student will confess to pla-

giarism when confronted, Webber said.

The Faculty has been also exposing essay-writing services. These services, or "sting operations," are not in themselves illegal. The University's only option against such operations is to prosecute them if caught trespassing on York property.

Although essay-writing services are legal, the use of them by York students is severely penalized. The offense "will be on (the student's) record forever, and the consequences can be dire," Webber said.

Both the crackdown on plagiarism and the essay-writing awards are being implemented in the name of critical and imaginative thought, as fostered by the Faculty of Arts. "We're training students how to train themselves," Webber concluded.

INSIDE NEWS FEATURE

CYSF AT THE CROSSROADS: Student government at York is entering its third decade. In the first of a series detailing the role of York's student government, CYSF beat reporter David Dollard examines the CYSF and the university political system. Page 5

OPINION

PLANNING YORK'S LAND: Is the new housing site at the southwest corner of York campus a feasible proposal? Greg Spearn, Vice President of YUOC, explains in detail why he fully supports the prospect, and offers an open invitation to the community for feedback. Page 7

FEATURE

RIDING THE AIRWAVES: CTV News anchorperson Lloyd Robertson discusses the ebb and flow of broadcast journalism. Excal editor Lorne Manly spoke with Robertson about his beginnings in broadcasting, the state of the media, and his unique position as anchorperson of one of Canada's most popular, fast-paced news programs. Pages 10-11

TTC extends night service to York area

By JAMES FLAGAL

Starting this Monday, both the Jane 35 and Finch 36 bus routes will be extended to 24 hour service, as part of a new Toronto Transit Commission (TTC) Program announced during a TTC forum at York last Monday.

The forum, sponsored by the Office of Internal Affairs for the Council of the York Student Federation (CYSF) and the Office of the Provost, gave students a chance to voice their complaints concerning public transit service to and from York. Speaking on behalf of the TTC was Gerry Brolley, Manager of Service Planning, who explained how the TTC decides when to add or withdraw routes, and how the Commission operates financially.

Brolley first explained to students that fares must pay for at least 68 percent of the cost of running the route. 32 percent of the costs of the TTC "are paid for through the public purse," said Brolley, adding that if a bus does not meet this 68 percent minimum cost level, then the TTC will consider withdrawing the service. "We simply then eliminate a poor performing route and consider adding a new route depending on how many people will benefit," Brolley said.

Jill Rabjohn, last year's Bethune College Council Chairperson followed Brolley's presentation by describing her attempts to get a late night route added to York's transit service. Rabjohn wrote a letter to the TTC on October 25th, 1985, request-

ing bus service for route 106 to Wilson Station to run until 1:15 a.m. instead of 12:45 a.m.

Rabjohn explained that with the last bus presently departing for Wilson Station at 12:45 a.m., many students leaving the pubs at the 1:00 a.m. closing time are forced to take cars instead of public transportation. After attempting to appeal to the TTC through a campaign to reduce drunk driving, the TTC told Rabjohn that commencing the service was not feasible and that the Commission does not get involved in campaigns against drunk driving.

Brolley elaborated on the TTC stance by explaining that the Commission is "reluctant (to add another bus at 1:15 a.m.), because ridership on surrounding services is low at this time of night." According to Brolley, the cost of testing the added service for six months would exceed \$15,000, and the TTC is unable to absorb that kind of cost.

Brolley also added that testing a service for York would force the TTC into testing services in areas demanded by other patrons, starting a precedent which "the TTC cannot afford. People must trust our interpretation of public transport need," said Brolley.

Tom Meininger, Provost of York University, questioned Brolley's logic, saying that York may be a special case, in this particular situation.

Another student agreed with Meininger, asking Brolley if the TTC takes into consideration, "the fact

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