

OPINIONS

Canadian democracy is nothing but a farce

by Chris Honke

Every five years or so, we are given the "privilege" of signing a blank cheque and sending it to Ottawa for yet another five years; in other words, voting.

Often, these "cheques" disappear for months in the twilight zone of partisan politics and a myriad of committees. No doubt the purpose of some of these committees is simply to relocate our MPs in this abyss—assuming our MPs actually want to be found.

Ever watch the parliamentary station? Apparently a lot of constituencies voted for empty seats to represent them in Ottawa. And even if they do show up, big deal. Those MPs who make up the government are mainly concerned with "towing the party line," first-class ass-smoothing.

Now take Mulroney, current monarch of his own little world, the one we call Can-

ada. Up he sits on his mighty throne, handing down his edicts to the demi-god cronies that we "voted" there. Those MPs who never leave their knees in his presence, say "Yes Sir" enough, and trim the most hedges at 24 Sussex, are blessed with either a cabinet position or, ultimately a seat in the federal retirement-home known as the Senate (one of the world's largest collections of quasi-intelligent parasites). Just consider Mulroney's blatantly undemocratic patronage appointments to the Senate.

However, those cabinet MPs foolish enough to live under the delusion that there is democracy in Ottawa, and who actually vote in accordance with their constituents' wishes, are cursed to the relatively unrewarding drudgery of sitting in the House and actually trying to fulfill their intended function.

But Mulroney can't touch everyone. For those who hold their own heads high

enough, the current Canadian monarchy simply exiles them from the party. Case in point: the two PC MPs who actually voted against the Faceman's beloved "revenue neutral" GST were thrown out of the party. What a manly display of power! But, typically, the Canadian public outcry was minimal.

Conversely, even if U.S. president Bush had the power to personally boot out congressmen who do not tow the Republican party line (which he does not), American public outcry at this flagrantly undemocratic act would be tremendous. Although the GST is economically good for Canada (so far as any tax can be), we shouldn't have it shoved down our throats unwillingly.

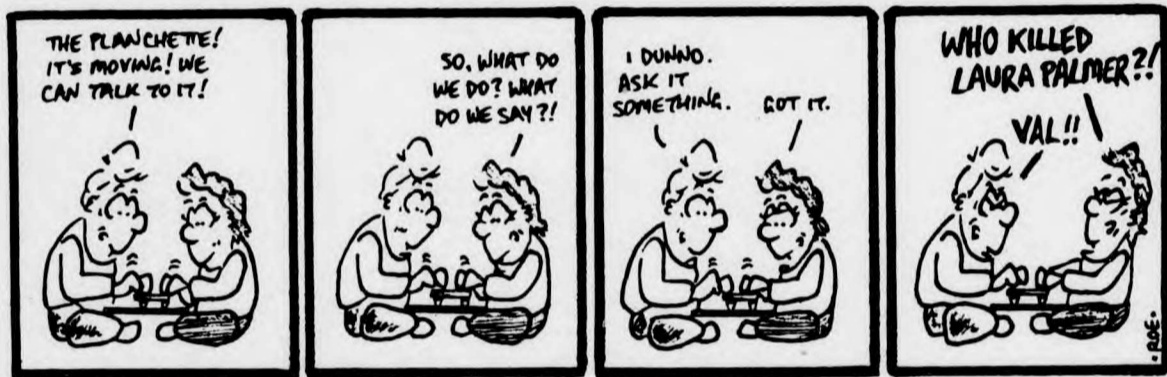
But that's okay, we at least have the opposition parties (i.e., losers) to play watchdog, right? "Oh dear Mr. Mulroney... excuse me..."

Dear lord, the hypocrisy that cascades

from the other side, "You are selling-out Canada with Free-Trade." Sound familiar? How righteous the Liberals and NDPers were (when they had their own dreams of empire) about the wickedness of moving economically closer to the Americans. But how many Liberals voted against the deal after the '88 election dust had settled? I'll give you a hint: my three year-old sister can count them. By the way, Free-Trade is necessary to create a North American (soon to include Mexico) trading block to help offset the dominance of the trading block forming in Europe.

The gist of all this? Parliamentary government has got to go. "Restructuring" the Senate is nowhere near sufficient if we are to have a more democratic and responsive federal government. Now, far be it for me to risk exhausting my reservoir of sarcasm in this critique of Canadian government without providing an alternative. But that will have to wait for another time.

For Pete's Sake by Roe



LETTERS

Reader wants more space for recreation

To the editor,

I am responding to the article, "A Room of Our Own" Volume 25, Issue 10. The feature describing our new Student Centre, certainly gets you excited about the new facility. The skylights, fast food court, childcare, offices, peer support centre, accessibility for the handicapped, glass walkways, a fabulous new pub, a restaurant (with "real" food), more dance space (yeah!), really does sound incredible.

The article asks if we're satisfied. My answer to this is *NO!*

We have a Student Centre with everything? Well almost everything. The only thing missing is recreational space.

This is a centre for students, right? So why don't we have a place to recreate? You know, a squash court maybe? Aerobic space or weight rooms? Get the idea?!

I am quite aware that Tait McKenzie has recreational facilities, but I am also aware that Tait McKenzie cannot handle the traffic through its doors now.

Tait is a building waiting to explode. The Physical Education department, Recreation York and Sport York are magicians when it comes to the scheduling of varsity team practices, phys. ed. courses, aerobics at lunch time and intercollegiate athletics. If you don't believe me, ask a field hockey player what time of the morning she practices (earlier

than some Yorkies would care to digest).

Or ask a wrestler where he practices. Yes, last year's stories were true, on a squash court. Now ask your average student how easy it is to book a squash court at a reasonable hour of the evening. Don't stop now, find a phys. ed. student and ask him or her what it is like to fit practicum activities into their schedules.

Go ahead, ask anybody who makes the dreaded walk to Tait to recreate.

I find it difficult, as a varsity athlete, to keep fit and healthy when the facilities I use are sick. Don't get me wrong, I like Tait. Tait is a good facility but it is *not* a great facility.

My point to this long, but simplistic, story is: why didn't the planners, developers and York president Harry Arthurs take advantage of the building of a new Student Centre and add a place to recreate?

New recreational facilities, i.e. squash and badminton courts, weight room, sauna etc., would have had a positive effect on everyone who needs to blow off a little steam or relieve a little stress.

Okay, I am a little biased, I'm an athlete. I like to think I look after my body, after all a healthy body builds a strong mind. But you don't have to be competitive to want a little exercise.

Running for the 106 just isn't enough sometimes.

The Student Centre would have been an excellent choice for recreational facilities. It offers a centralized and convenient place for staff and students alike.

Let's face it, it is an obvious solution to those of us who are caught up in schedule snags at Tait.

The absence of recreational facilities in the Student Centre

was the result of poor planning. Those of you who agree with me, speak up and be heard.

Amy Ware

Arthurs misses point

To the editor,

I enjoyed your Oct. 29 feature article about Harry Arthurs, the president of York. He's a fellow with whom few students ever have direct contact.

Your article gives us a closer glimpse at a person who is just a name to most of us. I would enjoy seeing more articles on major administrators who govern the policy and create the atmosphere of this small city that is York university. How about a series on Board of Governors' Representatives.

However, one question does arise from the interview. In the question about the mandate of a student newspaper, Harry refers to good professional journalism.

In short, if the writers for *Excalibur* were professional journalists, they would be elsewhere. Harry should not forget that they are students just beginning to learn about journalism. As such, they are often more honest than "professional" journalists because their values are still idealistic and they have yet to find out about the B.S. present in most media.

So Harry, have patience when they learn from their mistakes.

Sincerely
Katherine Schmidt

by Brett Gellert

The other day, I was reading an ad in the paper that said, "Buddy Holly, Roy Orbison, and Elvis: The Show They Never Gave."

I was wondering exactly how three of the most, say, lethargic singers in rock history would get together to do one last show. My assistant, Clem, was wondering if Buddy Holly was going to take the train — you can't be too careful.

What really bothers me is the fact that we don't have any decent music to listen to. I think good music died out with the invention of Stevie Nicks. Now I know what you're saying. "If Stevie Nicks was a little less uptight she would sound just like Bob Dylan."

My answer to that, smart ass, is that you're probably one of those people that owns all of Anne Murray's albums. I'm getting sick of people who make fun of Bob... I mean Stevie.

Anyway, what I'm trying to get at is that the music industry needs a change. Maybe some guys dressed in Turtle outfits who know martial arts and can rap. If that isn't possible, Clem really can't see any choice but to get rid of The New Kids On The Block. Otherwise, with them in the music industry, rock will be dead in a matter of months.

We, the people who listened to music sung by people old enough to have driver's licenses, who were too stoned to drive, but nonetheless were old enough, never even saw the New Kids coming.

I never noticed them until I saw a crowd of young girls standing in front of Maple Leaf Gardens screaming at a decibel level high enough to break glass in the Yukon. I remember the Beatle's tapes where girls screamed as if Ed Asner had

just walked by them naked, and then passed out.

By the way, have any of you guys out there ever felt the urge to scream like that at a concert? I can't honestly imagine (and I can imagine some pretty good things, like Trudeau coming back and cleaning the floor with Mulroney), a bunch of men watching Madonna walk onto stage and letting out a 15 minute "Squeee" noise. I bet the ones that weren't drunk wouldn't even wet their pants.

Anyway, these "Kids" have gotten up and sung their cute little songs and the world has immediately belched forth a ton of "New Kids" merchandise. The occasional T-shirt wouldn't be bad, but my editor swears there are going to be "New Kid" condoms. I can see the ad now: Don't have a new kid; use a New Kids condom.

We might all be lucky and this could be a short-lived fad like pet rocks and Ronald Reagan. Years from now when the New Kids are getting out of drug rehabilitation and are being featured in "The Show They Never Gave," we can smile and say, "Yeah, and remember those other jerks Milli Vanilli?"

The Stones, the Blues Brothers, Led Zeppelin and many others relied on talent after the girls stopped screaming. The Kids will be sent back to high school where they can tell their little friends what true rock and roll is all about: high fashion and preaching against the evils of the world while assuming ludicrous poses. (I heard their choreography is done by the California Raisins.)

Maybe for show and tell, the youngest Kid can bring in some New Kids condoms, fill them with water and drop them from the roof. He can do that until he's old enough to know what they're really used for.



QUOTE OF THE WEEK

I'm surprised you can even stand this morning

David Bell