

Roasting students over hot Cole's

A chance to resuscitate the English tongue

By FRANKLIN SIFTON

It must be obvious by now that the English language is a dying force on campus.

Reading the majority of essays handed in by York students is comparable to picking the winner in a "mangle your mother tongue" contest. People speak the King's English as though the king were George I.

A friend who passed through high school a couple of years ago commented that his was the last generation to learn the rules of grammar. The school board has replaced spelling with social science, grammar with humanities and composition with interdisciplinary studies and video-tape instruction.

Kids can wield super-8 cameras as though they were born looking through a viewfinder, but at the expense of a basic command of the spoken and written language.

But while the problem is serious, it is not without solution. Excalibur presents, for general consumption, a rundown of general grammatical rules.

And remember, it it weren't for three-syllable words, the Encyclopedia Britannica would be coming out in comic-book form.

"Never use a preposition at the end of a

sentence." What nonsense is this? Some writers at York spend hours twisting their sentences to get the preposition at the end. Others take out all the commas, leave out vowels, forget about capitals and run their sentences together.

These are modern poets, and will be discussed in a future column.

The next item is the split infinitive. A split infinitive is a messy job, but it has to be done. Use a clean piece of paper.

Dangling participles are fairly easy to manage, and should not be avoided by the timid beginner. Run two sentences together, toss in an "ing", and hang it on the end of another sentence. Hours of enjoyment for your professor. Toss in a preposition at the end and fool him completely.

Some fool once decided there was an "i" before "e" except after "c". It is authoritarian rules like that which are destroying the English language.

Sit around with your friends inventing words that begin with "cie". Invent words with "mngn" in them. Or "phd". Or "zzz". Stuff them in the middle of split infinitives. Bake over low heat. Serves four.

You'll be the life of the party if you can remember that singular subjects always go with singular verbs. The only problem is

deciding which subjects are singular.

You might think "chair" is singular, but how many legs does a chair have? Aha.

Remember that grammatical rules are made only to sell books on grammar. Hold a barbecue and burn Coles' notes. Scorch the "s" off the plural verbs. Hand them into your professor and tell him you are flaunting literary convention. Hand it into Free Grove press and they will probably publish it.

From time to time you will come across articles, which are little words like "a", "an" and "the". These are used to separate the bigger words. They are unnecessary and retard the flow of the sentences. Eliminate them all.

Chop out nouns and adjectives too, and you will be hired as the editor of your local newspaper.

Never worry about a paragraph that looks too long. Go through it carefully and chop out every second word. This will give it a polished appearance and add to its subtlety. If a word is too long, take out three letters in the middle.

Practice cutting out long words from your newspaper and pasting them on the wall above your desk. If you're stuck for a word,

glance at this list and pick out a word you like. The professor will appreciate your ingenuity, and you'll save money on wallpaper.

You may hear your professor talk about typing your page within certain margins. This is merely a device to scare you. If you give in to this, you will probably give in to such things as deadlines and exams.

Be firm. Write your essay in crayon on the back of a Play-time doodler pad. Toss it nonchalantly onto his desk, wrapped in a Baggie with a red bow. He will appreciate the thought.

Don't dismiss typing out of hand, though. It is not hard to master, and it helps you to avoid the niceties of spelling.

When in doubt, simply type an "x". "I would love to acxomxodate you, but my predexexxr is incxapitated." Explain that you just learned to type, and that these are txpxgraxicxl exors.

Say you dictated it to a monkey as part of your anthropology course. Bring the monkey along with you to class.

But don't let him get near a piece of paper, because if it's a typical York class, the monkey will probably wind up getting an A.

Magnetic levitation - the key to mass transit?

By ROSS BOBAK

Premier William Davis outlined a plan by which Canadian businessmen can reap the benefits of a 5.8 billion dollar transit system market Oct. 23.

Hundreds of industry and government representatives were in attendance, the first Canadian Transit Industrial Conference in the Ontario Science Centre.

Davis stated that the provincial magnetic levitation (mag. lev.) system is an "intermediate capacity transit system about which you'll hear some debate, some controversy," but the final decision was based on the extensive research of the ministry. He also said that since there were few women present in the audience "transit by and large is controlled by men."

Claude Bennett, minister of industry and tourism, repeated the theme that Canadian industry was being presented with a unique opportunity to capitalize on the development of new urban transportation systems. This golden opportunity was to be grasped now. He predicted that by 1987 the world transit system market demand could be worth at least \$5.8 billion.

Before leaving, Davis toured a simulated magnetic levitation vehicle. He was forced to

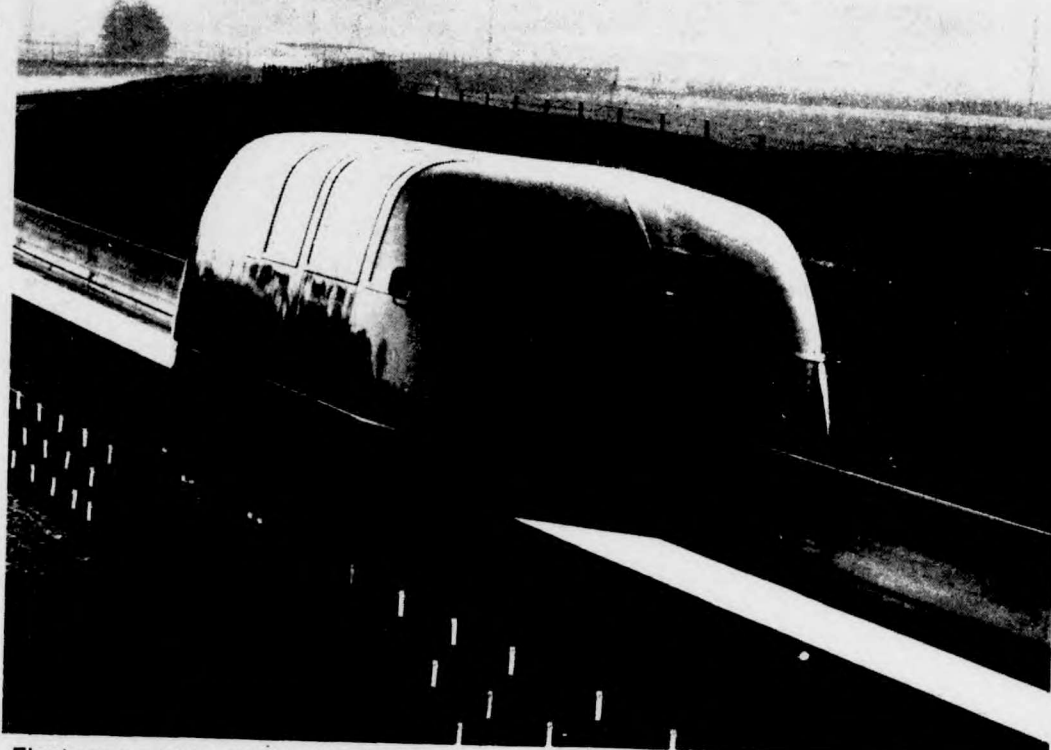
wait four minutes for a movie inside the vehicle to end and the doors to open. The premier called it a "democratic system."

Afternoon film and slide shows presented the audience with many dubious or undocumented assertions designed to put the Krauss Maffei magnetic levitation system in the best light, and dwell on the success of Dial a Bus. With such promotion, 119 firms decided to see how they could participate in the forecast transit boom.

The desire to gloss over faults has blemished the whole GO Urban transit programme. Publicity material, official documents, and officials over-publicized, at public expense, while others are ignored.

Descriptive material fails to indicate all transit alternatives. The reluctance to clearly answer valid questions raised in the daily press further discredits the provincial scheme. For a fair decision the public certainly must have all the facts on all the alternatives.

But why all the unexplained emphasis on a mag. lev. as the transit system panacea of the future. Premier Davis could have found the root of the problem in his speech. "He (a provincial official) doesn't know anything about it (mag. lev.), but he is already committed to it."



Electromagnetic vehicle developed by a German consortium is operated on a test track. The vehicle runs about one centimetre above the guideway, employing the form of magnetic levitation termed

attractive levitation. It is propelled by a linear induction motor that straddles the vertical aluminum reaction rail. Car shown is a test vehicle carrying passengers and instruments.

Letters To The Editor

All letters should be addressed to the Editor, c/o Excalibur, room 111 central Square. They must be double-spaced, typed and limited to 250 words. Excalibur reserves the right to edit for length and grammar. Name and address must be included for legal purposes but the name will be withheld upon request.

Revise CYSF organization to help students

Let us all raise our glasses to Michael Mouritsen, who has finally iterated that student bureaucracies can be as "redundant" as administration organizations.

However, let's not choke on our toast when we realise that the "redundancy" should be extrapolated down to CYFS.

One doubts Mouritsen's statement to concentrate on internal matters, when CYSF has elevated itself to the brink of corporate status.

CYFS should be dissolved. It is not serving the needs of the colleges or the students. (I wonder if M. M. realises that there are students at York.)

Instead, there should be college councils of eight members, the top four vote getters being members of a York Student Federation Council. These 28 members would appoint their own executive, as is done for schoolboard trustees, and the federal cabinet (sometimes). Then, all seven colleges would be equally represented without an unnecessary large "administrative cost"

fund.

As for the NSU or NUS or CUS or whatever, the federal government has very little to do with education; and there are so many discrepancies from province to province that a national union of students is indeed an extra burden.

But Michale, let's keep our head out of those same clouds when we are discussing the perils of students at York.

Kevin Gordon
McLaughlin

Best to produce fewer graduates than at present

There is another side to your editorial concerning "Elitist education policy discriminates" (October 25). Whilst society is clearly in a dilemma concerning the expected role of the first degree, it is still clear that graduate education is a specialized process suited only to a minority of the population.

True, this type of education could be changed such that it would be suited to all members of

the community, but then an alternative system would be needed to satisfy the demand for the current process. Thus a change would be somewhat superfluous.

It is clearly pointless for society to give a specialized education to more people than those who can benefit most and subsequently use those acquired skills. To recent graduates from most graduate programmes the world over, it is clear that we are currently producing too many graduates for the requirements of society.

Thus it is logical to produce fewer graduates, which means becoming increasingly selective. The choice is then to select on the basis of money (i.e. to accept those who can afford to go to graduate school at the expense of the less affluent), or to select, on the basis of suitability those most likely to benefit from a graduate education and supply adequate funds to those selected, thus removing the financial burden entirely.

Whilst grades are not the perfect selection basis, they have been found by long experience to be very good indicators of suitability for graduate work. Thus the new provincial policy of funding more fully, fewer, academically better students seems to be far more desirable

than spreading limited funds more thinly, thus basing selection on financial background and encouraging mediocrity.

I. B. Heath,
Assistant Professor.

Student actions unsupported by Jewish Student Federation

On Wednesday, October 24 and Thursday, October 25 some unpleasant incidents took place in Central Square between some Jewish students and members of the S.D.S. These students' actions were in no way condoned or supported by the Jewish Student Federation.

The position of the Jewish Student Federation is to support free speech on campus, a right which must be granted to every group, regardless of their political persuasion.

Menachem E. Maierovitz
Coordinator
Jewish Student Federation