

## EDITORIAL

Now that the referendum is over and York "belongs" to OFS and CFS, you're either thrilled at the final result or you're bitter about the whole process.

This referendum has raised some ethical problems about our voting practices. Although the 75 per cent margin of victory for the YES side is indisputable, many students would argue for changes in future referenda to avoid repeating the chaos of October 1990.

First and not as important, York students should have photo ID cards. Otherwise, there is nothing to stop us from voting as many times as we like by borrowing friends' ID cards and walking to different polling stations on the sly.

Second but more important, those nasty campaigners (on both sides) should be removed (through friendly persuasion or York security if necessary) if they harass voters on voting day. (Let's have some peace and quiet for a change.)

During the three-day referendum, there were dozens of reported infractions where pamphleteers invaded the 20-metre "safety radius" of each polling station to promote their views. Hell, there was politicking right at the stations from the poll clerks themselves as they provided "helpful advice" to undecided voters.

Just because the Board of Referenda's constitution does not necessarily prohibit campaigning during ballot days, this does not make it an ethical practice. Perhaps, it's time these guidelines were changed.

Assailing voters on their way to balloting stations only serves to aggravate them. It's common decency to allow people a 24-hour grace period before they have to cast their ballots, the kind of courtesy and fairness that was lacking during this referendum.

The Don't Vote side (a.k.a. Students for True Representation) claim they had to campaign on voting days to balance out the barrage of propaganda from the YES-Coalition. Fair enough, I like a good argument too, but a sabotage of the democratic apparatus is something else.

Even a disorganized NO side had three weeks in which to speak out against OFS/CFS membership. It wasn't that difficult to make some clever photocopies and parody the "official" YES literature. Or were these people waiting for some imaginary anti-OFS and anti-CFS groups to provide them with funding.

The strategy on the Don't Vote side was to nullify the referendum on lack of quorum by turning potential voters away.

So, if the YES-Coalition was guilty of unethical practice, so too was the NO-Don't-Vote-Choose-Apathy League.

Even with all this controversy, when the results came in Friday morning, York had experienced its highest voter turnout ever (with the exception of last year's CYSF elections): almost three thousand ballots cast.

Normally, this might not seem exceptional, but considering the amount of disinterest generated by the Apathy League, it's downright surprising.

For those of you who voted — cheers. Next time you try it, hopefully you won't be tripped up, seized, and brow-beaten by overzealous pamphleteers on the way to the station.

"Let go, I got him. No, you let go, I got him first . . . No. Yes . . . No! YES!"

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Excalibur is York University's community newspaper. We publish twice-weekly, and distribute across York and Glendon campuses and various locations within the North York community.

Excalibur is an autonomous corporation with a mandate to inform, educate and provoke thought among York University's diverse population.

The distinct opinions and articles appearing in Excalibur constitute our collective voice. However, they belong first and foremost to the individual writers and are not necessarily shared by any other Excalibur staff or board member.

Final editorial responsibility is retained by the Editor-in-chief.

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### Correction:

In our October 24 issue, Excalibur printed a letter that was not for public consumption. It had originally been addressed to a university committee. Excalibur apologizes for any confusion that may have resulted.



## LETTERS

Excalibur welcomes letters to the editor on all topics. We will publish, space permitting, letters up to 500 words in length. They must be typed, double spaced, and accompanied by the writer's name, signature, and telephone number. The opinions expressed belong to the writers and do not necessarily reflect those of Excalibur staff or directors. However, we will refuse letters that are libellous or attempt to incite hatred toward individuals or an identifiable group. All material is subject to editing. All submissions must be addressed to the Editor-in-chief, Room 111, Central Square.

### Referendum undemocratic

To the editor,

The recent student referendum to decide membership for York in the OFS (Ontario Federation of Students) and CFS (Canadian Federation of Students) was inherently undemocratic.

The YFS (York Federation of Students) had the money and resources to give themselves an unfair advantage over any "NO" forces that might have wanted to organize.

In a democracy full debate on both sides of an issue must take place. How else can an informed decision be made. Therefore in the future, YFS should grant equal funds (with presentation of receipts) to a group wishing to advertise the "NO" side. Anything less is undemocratic and unacceptable.

Sincerely,  
Michael Sullivan

### Political harassment not welcome

This letter is directed to Mr. Ghomeshi,

There is political lobbying and there is political harassment. Unless you were unaware that this difference does in fact exist, please allow me to show you the fine line between the two. Political lobbying is an act of

persuasion that is directly related to political issues. This is done in strictly confined areas so as not to impose upon people who are disinterested or not participating. This means students who are going to point B cannot be followed around campus if they choose not to vote or to disclose their political status at the university.

Just because point B happens to be close to a polling station does not give any political lobbyist the right to follow someone to inquire about such information.

Political harassment means to continuously trouble and/or annoy. This can result in repeated attacks or questions that I feel are an invasion of one's privacy. If someone gives a reason for non-participation even if it isn't acceptable on your terms, it is nevertheless a reason.

I hope that this is understood by you and your associates. The pursuit of political awareness is admirable and this was achieved quite readily with the posters and through the school newspaper, but political harassment only impedes the issue. It doesn't help it

Nicola Inwood

### No time to waste, just wasted time

To the editor,

No Time to Waste is a real waste of time. Perhaps people should find out more about nuclear generating plants before they target them. Greenpeace and the

Toronto Disarmament Network are opposed to the existence of nuclear reactors and their expansion. At the same time, however, they want to reduce the amount of carbon dioxide being emitted. This is simply impossible.

In Toronto, we barely gave enough electrical power to supply our needs. In fact, we get occasional blackouts here at York.

We get our power from one of three ways: coal, nuclear or hydroelectric. If we were to build another station it would have to be nuclear or coal. All other present methods such as wind and solar are impractical given our climatic conditions.

Coal-fired generators are more expensive than nuclear and are extremely harmful to the environment, contributing to global warming. The only other source is our CANDU reactor. The reaction takes place around heavy water instead of the graphite used at Three Mile Island and Chernobyl. The result is the safest and most efficient system in the world.

A nuclear generating station is not a bomb which needs to be disarmed but a safe, controlled reaction.

I suggest that these groups take another look at electrical generation. You can not have both the absence of nuclear stations and carbon dioxide created by coal-fired generators and still turn your house lights on at night.

Perhaps the real topic should be conservation of electricity which the government and Ontario Hydro are already advocating.

Sincerely,  
Mark Rose