

editorial

Election boycott by YSF a cop-out

In elementary school, if a student was criticized by a peer for his/her running of the class, he/she would simply turn the tables and suggest that perhaps the critic should have tried to do better.

We can apply the same strategy to a new, relatively unknown and unaccountable group of students who call themselves the York Student Front.

They have taken it upon themselves to call for a boycott of this year's CYSF elections. They seem to feel students should not be voting in these elections because, they've decided, CYSF is powerless to accomplish anything and it doesn't represent students' interests.

Apparently this wasn't the case one short year ago when Alex Riha, a YSF member, ran for the position of CYSF president and lost.

Riha and his group claims that it would have been wrong for them to run in this year's CYSF elections because CYSF has problems.

If the YSF really feels this way and truly believes changes should be made, we agree with CYSF Chief Returning Officer Jim Crossland: they should have run for CYSF positions and articulated their views during the election campaign. The way to really change CYSF is to gain control over it.

Perhaps the YSF didn't run because they don't have students' support. By not running, the YSF can make accusations against CYSF from a safe, protective position, attacking and then retreating, offering nothing in the way of constructive suggestions. They do not have to back up any of their statements.

They lack the courage even to offer students a chance to respond to the YSF with the power of the vote.

By neglecting to run any candidates, the YSF does not run the risk of finding out that most students disagree with them.

Surely the YSF's campaign urging students to boycott CYSF elections would have been better put towards a presidential campaign. At least then students would be able to see more than the ghosts that YSF is presently offering up.



letters

York politics just ego trip

Editor:

As the latest electoral sideshow limps along to its dull and predictable finish, I'd like to pass on a few thoughts for the benefit of those who actually take such games seriously.

There is a saying that "If voting could change things, they'd make it illegal," and this holds doubly true for student government. In normal (that is, federal, provincial, or municipal) election, the usual practice is for the candidates concerned to pour big bucks into an advertising blitz in the mindless mass media while spewing forth an unrelenting stream of meaningless rhetoric, with a few false promises thrown in for those few who actually listen to it.

And he (or occasionally she) who learns his lines best, has the best make up job, and looks best on TV (B-movie experience obviously helps) ends up with a ridiculous amount of power to use and abuse as he (and the multinational corporations backing him) see fit.

However, if the CYSF (Council of the Young Suckers Federation), they've gone one better by foregoing the false promises routine and sticking to meaningless babble, or, better yet, saying *nothing whatsoever*, but simply plastering the campus with posters which say nothing more than the candidate's name, or occasionally some dumb slogan which makes TV advertising look creative by comparison: "Don't hit a sour note—remember Nick when you vote," for example. Get serious! A tree died for that!!! But in the next few days, like good little sheep, the student body will flock to the polls to elect the candidate with the prettiest posters.

Not to mention, of course, the fact that student governments have *no real power whatsoever!* Not only can they not threaten our lives with nuclear weapons, destroy our environment, censor everything we write or film, or any of the other fun things that the big boys do, they are powerless to even affect significantly the power structure of the university they supposedly "govern."

Imagine what would happen if a CYSF president proposed any truly radical measure, such as giving the students power to hire and fire profs, or abolishing marks. You'd see the end of CYSF pretty quickly.

The fact is this university is run by a motley crew of pampered bureaucrats (the Administration) and corporate powerbrokers (the Board of Governors—which includes the president of *McDonald's*, for Christ's sake!). And it doesn't require too much perception to see that they aren't elected! Neither are profs

TAs, or anyone with a vestige of power, however small. Student government is nothing but an ego-trip for those involved and a ploy on the part of the administration to fool the students into thinking we have some kind of control over our lives.

I know this letter won't be printed until after the elections, but for the next one, I would encourage students to simply write "None of the above" or something similar across their ballots, which is what I intend to do this time. It won't alter our powerless situation—that would take considerably more militant action—but at least it will give them some indication that some of us are tired of playing games and want to move on to reality.

—Lynna Landstreet

Prof. Ryan no 'fat cat'

Editor:

Much has been written of late concerning "old fat cat" professors who are well established and complacent. I know of one prof in particular who is not of this tradition. Recently I played in the French Department's production of *Marius* and had the opportunity to have accent coaching from Professor Robert Ryan. Even though he is not one of my profs he took much time out of a very hectic schedule to coach me, all the while involving himself in many aspects of the production. I would like to thank him kindly for his whole hearted contribution; he made the play a pleasurable experience for me and for the other actors as well.

Few are the chances for students and faculty to come together in extracurricular projects and, if my experience is any indication, both parties should seize the opportunity when it presents itself.

—Simon Lerner

CYSF President
There are three vital characteristics which a President must command if this office is to be filled effectively; LEADERSHIP, INGENUITY and EXPERIENCE. These are three qualities that I have. Most importantly however, these qualities must be used to serve YOU the student in the fairest way possible. My commitment to you is to be accessible and accountable for the actions of council. I invite and encourage any student to make his/her views known—and I can promise YOU that under my administration there will always be someone there to hear and listen to your concerns. SO today make your vote count—VOTE for BOB WALMAN and the WALMAN COALITION.

—Bob Walman

Be a star!

Submissions are still being accepted for *Excalibur's* 'Just For Kicks Photo Contest'! Bring yours in now and you could win fabulous prizes! Instant recognition! Your photo published in York University's very own community newspaper—us!

It could lead to a whole new direction in your life. John Derek just takes photos of beautiful women, and they *all fall in love with him!* Diane Arbus took pictures of depressed people and *look where that got her!*

This probably won't happen to you, but you could at least win the \$100 in soiled, crumpled banknotes we found under the feta cheese in the *Excalibur* fridge. \$100! Gee!

This contest is open to all York students except for *Excalibur* staff members who we feel are lucky just to be associated with us.

All submissions *must* be handed in to *Excalibur*, 111 Central Square, by Thursday, March 21, and the winners will be announced the following week.

\$100! Gee!

Services and Communications

As a past Import Director at Radio York, I speak from experience. In the last few years, CYSF has consistently conflicted with the major media accessible to the students: CJRY (Radio York) and *Excalibur*. Potentially both these two vehicles of communication could have benefited the student body to a much larger extent, had a harmonious and civil working relationship been achieved. Through alleviating the problems of communication which have plagued the CYSF reps over the last few years a much healthier relationship can most certainly be attained. In striving to achieve a collective spirit amongst the York community, the power of these two means of communications cannot be underestimated.

—Jim Gresham

Excalibur apologizes for inadvertently misplacing Jim Gresham's entry meant for last week's issue.

excalibur

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