

Frat boys come to their own defense

Dear Editor,

In response to your editorial "Dunderhead Democraphiles" appearing in the March 11 issue of *Excalibur*, I would like to call attention to the egregious ignorance maliciously displayed by the editor with regard to the section on fraternities and sororities.

It would have been acceptable if the editor in question would formulate an opinion based on a firm understanding of fraternities and sororities, but instead it appears quite clear that the editors' opinion is founded on an unmistakable misrepresentation. Two questions come to mind: is this responsible journalism? and is it any wonder that negative stereotypes exist?

Since there is a strong probability that York Journalists will never redress their penchant for pestiferous sentiments on this subject, I feel it necessary to enlighten both the editor and the understandably disillusioned public myself on behalf of the Greek system.

Firstly, I would like to countermand the view that fraternities and sororities are "anachronistic relics" clinging to "ivy encrusted walls of older universities." The implication that fraternities are vestiges of antiquity could not be further from reality. In fact, over the last 40 years in North America, fraternities have grown more than 100% with over 100 universities opening their doors for the first time. Locally, York has witnessed the formation of three fraternities and three sororities over the last four years. All of which are enjoying progressive annual growth rates amassing more than 170 active members (alumni not included).

It is somewhat questionable that a community of this magnitude (considerably larger than most clubs at York), is consistently slandered, not to mention denied a voice. Maybe *Excalibur* feels that anachronistic organizations should not have a voice in a newspaper whose obligation is to express the views of its students democratically? Is this another example of how political correctness can harmfully silence ideas that are harmless?

Secondly, I would like to address the humorous content made by the editor that "(fraternities) are a means for more privileged students to buy their way into an exclusive elite." There are a couple of problems with this comment: firstly, fraternities and sororities

are open to anyone interested. There are no restrictions based on wealth or status; secondly, one does not "buy" his/her way into any "exclusive elite". In case one hasn't noticed, York is not exactly a bastion of snoot-nosed children of the rich and powerful. It is common knowledge that the student body of York consists of, to an unidentifiable degree, students whom represent the first persons in their respective families to attend university. Our ethnic diversity attests to this fact, in that many students are second and third generation Canadians. It is undisputable that York is a working-middle class university. Thus I could hardly accept the notions of "privileged students" and "exclusive elites".

Thirdly, the unwarranted charge that "(a) most notable feature is segregation" surely deserves a rebuttal. I'll just simply state that your perception of our society in this day and age is insulting. This is not only an indictment against fraternities it is an indictment against the society we live in. In our fraternity we can boast members whose origins are as diverse as York's. Without providing anything short of a list, I'd like to state that we have no less than 10 ethnic origins (of no particular preference). A blunt rejoinder to your equally blunt charge of segregation - yes, we do have visible minorities in our fraternity.

Fourthly, and equally insulting is your accusation that the "boys only rule" has inspired acts of misogyny, violence and rape on other campuses. Contrary to popular belief, there actually exists co-ed fraternities, and anyone is welcome to establish one here at York. As for your pernicious association of misogyny, rape and violence with fraternities, I could only interpret this as shortsightedness. Once again, the editor seems to believe that misogyny, rape and violence have disappeared from the face of the earth, remaining only in fraternities. These are social problems, not fraternity problems. Thus one cannot rightfully express disapprobation towards fraternities on this subject. To do so would imply that any act of misogyny, rape or violence perpetrated by any individual permits society to censor his affiliations. It would logically follow therefore that an engineering student guilty of rape makes all engineers rapists.

Now that your editorial has been neutralized of its vitriolic content, I

would like to proffer a few facts that most are unaware of.

It is probably unbeknownst to the general public that fraternities and sororities are very philanthropic (certainly more so than any club on campus). Notable charities whom we've been affiliated with and contribute to regularly include: Variety Club of Toronto, The Lou Gehrig Foundation, The Canadian Heart and Stroke Foundation, The Centre for Abused Children, Salvation Army, local Food Banks and Scott Mission to name but a few. Also, unlike our athletic program at York and the highly unsuccessful college system, fraternities and sororities promote school spirit and unity. It gives a student a real sense of belonging entrenched in tradition and values of brotherhood and sisterhood. They provide the opportunity for individuals to meet other people with diverse backgrounds so as to foster an environment conducive to open mindedness. Furthermore, it cultivates young, immature students into responsible adults with respect to leadership skills and social etiquette.

Moreover, fraternities and sororities offer financial assistance for those in need in the form of scholarships and awards. Remaining on a financial note, fraternities and sororities provide a more affordable form of housing in comparison to residence rates. With these economic advantages the student has much less on his or her mind. It is fairly obvious then that fraternities and sororities promote academic excellence in their membership.

To close this letter I hope that any misconception about fraternities and sororities have been dispersed and that the editor would kindly get his/her facts straight before he/she makes comments that are asinine and imbecilic on a subject he/she knows nothing about (except for what he/she has been told by equally ignorant colleagues of his/hers). Also, I would hope that the editor would print a formal apology in this or the next editorial.

Lou Fortini,

President Elect of Phi Delta Theta Fraternity at York.

Ron Studt,

Founding Member of the Phi Delta Theta Fraternity at York.

Scott A. Mayer,

Current President of Phi Delta Theta Fraternity at York.



Falling under the weight of criticism? Frat house in Alberta crumbles

Photo by Lisa Hall

But then again... Frat boys should quit whining

Dear Editor,

I just read the letters section and just about fell off my stool over that frat letter! The frats are still coming out with the tired old line that they are 'charitable organizations.' So what! Sasakawa donated a million bucks to York and all sorts of other universities - that doesn't mean he's not a war criminal and the 'world's biggest fascist!'

Now they've got this new angle: people at York discriminate against frats and sororities, who are a poor, helpless minority. They set themselves up as victims to gain public sympathy with claims of charity and false accusations that their letters 'never get published.' As a former college paper editor with no love of frats, I would have loved to have received letters from them! As for Finklestein's remark about 'made-up allegations,' is he referring to the 'game' pledges play in his frat and sister sorority which involves the 'grabbing' of

women's breasts and male genitalia? Or perhaps the charges of hazing against Alpha Epsilon Pi made in *Excalibur* two years ago? Doesn't he know his own history?

Fraternities are not a 'minority' and they are not groups with 'no power or influence.' They put on events in bars like the Jolly Miller, their poster campaigns smother the campus - they have power. It costs money to join a 'Greek' organization and not just any poor old shmuck can join. People are opposed to fraternities because they are elitist, power organizations (elitist? That's why you hazy the undesirables out!).

David Finklestein and the rest of his 'brothers' and 'sisters' should quit whining and come to grips with what 'Greek' organizations actually stand for. Hell, he'd make a horrible editor.

Sincerely,

Brett Lamb,

Vandoo Editor, 1989-90.

YORK ELITE COMPUTER HACKERS

We're looking for a few good programmers, graphic artists, operating system gurus, network specialists, and competent computer hobbyists. For more information send e-mail to yech@ariel. Come to our meeting on April 1 at 4:30pm at S104 Ross.

THE THREE PENNY OPERA, BY BERTOLT BRECH

A production from Theatre At York. April 2 to 8, at 7:30pm, matinees at 1:30pm. Adults \$10, students and seniors \$7. Preview April 1, at 7:30pm, \$4. For more information contact Stacy Dimitropoulos at 856-3427. Box office for tickets is 736-5157.

ENVISION YORK

Final meeting of the year April 6, at 5pm, in Lumbers 3rd floor lounge. This will be the last meeting for the school year. We will be voting for the next year's executive. All those who have been active in the group are encouraged to come out, plus anyone interested in working on issues over the summer. Contact Colette Boileau, 467-8592

NATIVE AND NON-NATIVE PEOPLE

Working together for understanding and justice. For people interested in joining a York student division of Canadian Alliance in Solidarity with the Native Peoples. Tuesday April 7, at 4pm, in room 307 Student Centre.

GRADUATE STUDENT SYMPOSIUM ON VIOLENCE & CONFLICT RESOLUTION

Tuesday, April 14, York Lanes Suite 305B. Sponsored by the La Mars Research Programme in Violence and Conflict Resolution.

drop EVERYTHING

RECOVERY NOT DISCOVERY: 500 YEARS OF INJUSTICE AND RESISTANCE

Student Christian Movement National Conference '92, May 3-10, Scarborough. For more details contact the York Student Christian Movement, room 214, Scott Religious Centre, 736-2100 ext. 77275.

UNITED INDIAN STUDENTS SEMI-FORMAL

At the Paradise Banquet Hall, on May 15 at 8pm. Also, the Indian Cultural Show and Dance, Saturday June 6, at 6pm in the Metro Convention Centre. For more information or tickets call 392-0681.

YORK FENCING CLUB

Holds practices on Mondays at 6pm in Tait McKenzie Upper Gym, and Wednesday at 6pm in the Double Squash Court in Tait McKenzie.

THE WRITERS READ SERIES

A student run workshop designed for poets, prose writers, musicians, drama students and anyone else interested in giving readings of their work outside the classroom. Held Mondays from 4-6pm and the first Wednesday of each month at the same time in Vanier College Senior Fellow Common Room. For more information contact Zaf or Fil in the Vanier Student Council Office.

THE YORK DEBATING SOCIETY

Weekly meetings on Mondays from 4pm to 7pm, in room 115 Winters College. For more information contact Royal at 667-1872, or 736-5969 ext. 31303, after 8pm. We practice impromptu parliamentary debate and public speaking. For those who are more serious there are numerous tournaments throughout the year.

STUDENT CHRISTIAN MOVEMENT

Weekly Meeting: Mondays at 3pm in 214 Scott Religious Centre. Ecumenical Worship Tuesdays at 1pm in Scott Religious Centre Chapel. Anglican, United, Catholic, Presbyterian, Lutheran, Baptist, Quaker...Join us for ecumenical worship.

LESBIAN AND BISEXUAL WOMEN AT YORK

General meetings every second Wednesday at 5pm in the Women's Centre, 328 Student Centre. For more information contact Lucy at 736-2100, ext. 20494.

VANIER GAMES ROOM

Wargames, RPG's, TAG General meetings Thursdays at 4:30pm in Vanier College Junior Common Room. For more information call 748-6772.

WOMEN'S WEN-DO

Organizing a six-week Women's self defense course. Thursday afternoons and evenings. Free. If interested call Heidi, 736-7902 or Karen 253-2085.

INTERESTED IN LAW?

The York Volunteer Centre is looking for people to volunteer as court workers and probation officers at a correctional institute. Gain experience working with offenders and learn about the criminal justice system. A letter of reference will be provided. For more information visit the Volunteer Centre at B449 Student Centre, 736-2100, ext. 33576.

FIRST NATIONS STUDENTS

We want to get to know each other to share information on education and social events. We are the First Nations Law Students. Please leave your name and phone number at the Environmental Studies/Native-Canadian Relations Theme Area, 736-2100 ext. 33281.

RIDE BOARD

Located outside the YFS Office. Need a lift? Going somewhere? Announce it and save money.

VOLUNTEERS NEEDED

A few hours a week can make a difference to someone with a developmental handicap. For more information call Joanne Fine at Metro Association for Community Living, 225-7166.

LE CERCLE FRANÇAIS

Is a club designed to promote the French, Québécois and French-Canadian cultures. Future activities are: Improv night, Poetry night, French Restaurant dinner, and weekly Wednesday movie night. Any interested parties can call Louise Chaput at 736-5086, or leave message on the door at 410 Student Centre.

YORK BY CYCLE

We're in hibernation, but there is progress. New ring posts are in the University Common, so use them and the planners will give us more. There is now also an indoor location for locking bikes. Those on our phone list will be contacted when the snow thaws for good. For information call Mel or Ed at 322-9440, or Dave at 423-0587.

Drop Everything for your campus announcements. Leave submissions in the Drop Everything envelope in the Excal Newsroom. 420 Student Centre, c/o Catharine Soukoreff. Deadlines are Thursdays before Wednesday Publications.