

# letters

## Appology Demanded

Dear Editor,

To the Founders College Students Council:

Charity. Does this not bring to mind the peaceful giving of the well off to the less fortunate? For most perhaps, but not for the delightful Founders College member who advertised for the United Way "Walk Up the CN Tower" charity drive.

This ignorant, over-confident asshole had the gall to suggest that all the "Fat, Ugly and Stupid" people get off their "Fat Asses" and raise some money for charity. Meanwhile the beautiful, slim, intelligent people were given permission to sit back and relax.

I have but one question. Who exactly does this person think they are? Are they oh so superior that they have been rewarded the title of Ultimate Human Being from some higher life-form and given the authority to reign over the rest of us mortals? No matter how beautiful, in shape and intelligent you like to think you are, what gives you the right to judge other people by calling them stupid, fat and ugly? If anything, passing such a judgement makes you the lowest possible life-form on the face of the earth, does it not?

Basically your advertisements were uninspiring, offensive, and blatantly rude. A public apology is demanded for your ignorance towards other people's feelings.

An appalled Founders Student

We will publish, space permitting, any letters up to 400 words. They must be typed, double spaced, and accompanied by the writer's name and telephone number. Material deemed libelous or discriminatory by the staff of *Excalibur* will be rejected. Letters may be mailed or delivered to *Excalibur* • 426 Student Center • York University • 4700 Keele Street • North York • Ontario M3J 1P3

## Student Grateful for SHEAC support

Dear Editor,

I am writing this letter concerning the article in the November 6th issue of the *Excalibur* entitled "Centre Reaches Out to York Community" by Sheena Jarvis. This article dealt with the vital role that the Sexual Harassment Education and Complaint Centre plays in supporting and sheltering women who have been threatened or assaulted.

I am one of the 145 cases that sought both support and shelter from SHEACC in the last year. Like many women who find themselves in abusive relationships, I felt both frightened and isolated. I could not believe that this type of harassment could happen to ME.

I was directed to SHEACC by the Counselling and Development Centre at York University. The advisors at SHEACC, Sharon Chimning and

Dale Hall took their time in listening to the details of my situation, assuring me that I was not alone and providing me with literature concerning sexual harassment. Most importantly, SHEACC allowed me to stay overnight in their safehouse on campus.

The safehouse was a warm and inviting place, fully equipped with the necessities I required for my brief stay, including soap, towels and even a coffee maker. My stay in the shelter gave me the quiet time and space I needed to get in touch with my own needs and to decide what to do next.

I am grateful to SHEACC for supporting me in my time of need and in helping me break free from an abusive relationship. As SHEACC's sexual harassment case load grows annually, it is imperative that the university increase both funding and space to this essential resource for women at York University.

Name Withheld Upon Request

## Kinsella loses appeal as true colours shine through

Dear Editor:

Thank you for an enlightening article on W.P. Kinsella (*Excalibur*, October 23, 1991). As one who once naively enjoyed some of Kinsella's writing, I was already concerned by his expropriation of the Native perspective when he wrote about Hobbema, Alberta. But to find that not only he has never been to Hobbema, but that he is a pro-war, anti-culture, apparently right-wing extremist as well, taints his writing to such an extent that it loses all appeal. It also awakens the realization that the values and sentiment so prevalent in *Shoelless Joe* are little more than a

mask for Kinsella's mid-American, Bush-Reagan philosophy.

Incidentally, writer Harry Rudolfs may be interested to know that not only is there really a Hobbema, Alberta, but that it is a centre for four large and very progressive Native communities. It also has great cultural and historic significance for Native people of the area, but of course, we would never know this from reading Kinsella's Stories.

Tom Jewiss

## "Sweden strangling itself"

Dear Editor,

In response to Daniel Pargman's letter ("Student responds: Swedish social democracy not a failure," October 9):

I would like to take this opportunity to briefly outline for Mr. Pargman why I conclude Swedish socialism to be a failure.

While the recent electoral defeat of the Social Democrats in Sweden was a curiosity, I would by no means point to this as decisive evidence of Sweden's socialist-induced malady. Rather, the election results are merely the latest component of a myriad of other signals that began to appear from as far back as the 1970s. Unfortunately, lack of space prevents me from providing the data on which my conclusions are based, so bear with me.

Sweden's oppressively high tax rates (both personal and corporate), the extensive and largely incompetent government intervention in the free market, the State's daily obtrusiveness in its citizens' personal lives (including — but by no means limited to — income ceilings and enforced job placement), plus the State's guarantee of providing all the neces-

sities of life, have all but eliminated the incentive to work in Sweden. Sweden has the highest rate of industrial abstention in the world: over one fifth of Sweden's work force is absent from work on a given day.

Retaining — after taxes — almost no disposable income from their labour, with consumer selection of goods limited for what little they do retain, and since the State already guarantees their standard of living through massive subsidies, why indeed should Swedes work? Just because it's "good" for their society? Let's stay in the real world... (i.e., the world socialists can never seem to find). The age-old quality of human laziness has flourished in Sweden under socialism's influence.

And while most Swedes have jobs, many are not productive or necessary jobs — i.e., jobs that would exist in a free market. Many are phantom jobs subsidised by the State that would serve no purpose other than to keep unemployment figures artificially low. Such jobs do not contribute to the overall welfare of Swedish society, but rather are a drain on its potential prosperity.

This old socialist ploy fills industries with up to twice as many workers as they truly need. A joke familiar to socialist factory workers rings true for Sweden: "How many work in this factory? About half." Sweden's 'official' unemployment rate of 3.5 per cent that Mr. Pargman quotes is therefore open to question.

Sweden is strangling itself with its own State Bureaucracy and the economic incompetence endemic to socialism. To be fair, there was a time when Sweden probably had just about the right mix of socialism and capitalism. Opinions vary, but generally it is agreed that this time was in the 1960s. But, like all other socialists, Sweden's socialist legislators did not know when to stop. Through the recent elections, it appears the Swedish people have just told them.

Chris Honke

## Board of Referendum accuses excal of inaccuracy and sets the record straight

Dear Editor,

The Board Of Referendum Commissioner (BORC) would like to draw the attention of both *Excalibur* staff and the student body at large to the significant factual inaccuracies plaguing Micheal Horowitz's October 23 effort. It is unfortunate that these errors were repeated on the Editorial page, where the underlying problem remains the same: ignorance of the facts, coupled with a transparent disinterest in researching and reviewing information of the subject at hand.

While the article's "Teaser" correctly identifies a relationship between BORC and the Board of Governors, the shallow analysis offered does not inform students of the nature of that link. BORC is in fact a subcommittee of the Board of Governors, reporting to the Board's Student Relations Committee. However, none of the

Governors are members of the BORC. BORC's membership consists of five students appointed by student governments at the University, one student member at large selected on the basis of open applications, and one representative of the Vice-President, Student Affairs. Ms. Hopkins is not herself a member of BORC, contrary to Mr. Horowitz's statement.

Mr. Horowitz also asserts that, "(U)ntil now, a referendum held by a student group was considered invalid unless at least 10 per cent of full-time students cast ballots". In fact, there was no minimum quorum established in the BORC guidelines prior to the Task Force report to which Mr. Horowitz referred. The article goes on to state that the new guidelines impose a minimum quorum of twenty per cent. This too is false. The new guidelines actually set a minimum

quorum of ten per cent, subject to increase at the discretion of BORC where the surrounding circumstances favour a higher level. A decision to raise the quorum above ten per cent would be based on matters relating to a specific proposal, such as the amount of the levy to be assessed, and the size of the affected constituency. The new guidelines were also introduced last April, not this month as stated by Mr. Horowitz.

Presumably, much of the discussion which follows in the article has been informed by this inaccurate perception of the guidelines. However, it is this flawed perception which Mr. Horowitz' endeavour will only serve to perpetuate. BORC cannot logically be viewed as having paralyzed the referendum process as a result of these changes, since referenda with a set quorum of 10 per cent of eligible

voters (which has routinely been achieved in the past) are still possible. In fact, referenda proposing insubstantial levies, such as those presently enjoyed by Community Legal Aid Services Program and *Excalibur*, would likely be subject to only the nominal 10 per cent quorum. Again, the 20 per cent figure to which Mr. Horowitz and others repeatedly refer is not a general requirement. It is a specific measure designed to respond to the circumstances surrounding a particular question.

The quorum which have been criticized, albeit on the basis of incorrect information and assumption, were established by students. Whether York ever witnesses another referendum with quorum set above 10 per cent will depend on future amendments to the referendum guidelines, and the priorities of student govern-

ment leaders. It is significant in this regard that the Graduate Students' Association requested quorum of 20 per cent and 30 per cent respectively for their fall referenda on Ontario Federation of Students membership and a Blue Cross Plan. All interested parties should remember that the referendum process is essentially for students: it exists to provide students and student organizations with access to financial resources sufficient to finance their activities. However, the majority of students have been disenfranchised by the process for too long. The policy underlying the changes to this quorum is thus inherently democratic, as it is designed to improve the representative nature of student decision-making at York.

Sincerely,  
The Board of Referendum Commissioners

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