

Students prove struggle=change

Dear Editor,

The dignity, clarity and strength manifested by the 300 students negotiating with the York administration in the Senate Chamber (March 16) were most impressive. They were worthy of the important cause for which they are fighting and for which their conviction and determination gained a significant victory. This victory benefits the entire university and the world outside.

Special congratulations are due the three students who chaired the gather-



Hanging out at Vari Hall.

Photo by Alok Sharma

Letters

ing (Jeannine Amber, Heather Dryden and Omar Smith). Their insight, persistence and skill focused the student demands most effectively.

What was accomplished offers hope for York's future.

For a long time there has been urgent need to add "at least one full-time staff member for the Office of Race & Ethnic Relations" at this university which has the largest component of minority students to be found in Canada. Now, thanks to the students, this will be done.

The other demands (which I congratulate the administration for accepting) deal with the troublesome campus security issue: The racerelements training now mandated (thanks to March 16), if effectively implemented and monitored, should minimize the need to invoke Point 7. This required the dismissal of any officer "found guilty of discriminatory behaviour" following "a fair hearing with right of representation." If the officers are trained not to engage in such vile practices, then they are not threatened.

The negotiations on this point revealed the gulf separating one side of the tribunal (all White and nearly all male) from the sea opposite. At the tribunal, most spoke of Point 7 in terms of "punishment" of offending officers. At least one insisted that, accordingly, there should be a range of penalties.

But that is not the issue. *What the students (and not only the students) want and deserve is a campus atmosphere in which they feel safe, secure and welcome.* Indeed, this is what the whole university needs for the proper discharge of all its functions. Trust cannot be placed in those given to discriminatory practices, however "moderate." In the security function (and not only there) the continued presence of anyone engaged in discriminatory practices would deprive the student body and the entire community of the possibility of feeling safe, much less welcome.

The students are to be congratulated for educating us to this issue.

Lee Lorch
Professor Emeritus (Mathematics)

Nayman Not funny. Not?

Dear Editor,

I was surprised and delighted by the "analysis" of the *Wayne's World* joke (i.e. the explicit use of irony in the gainsaying negation of the preceding statement with the word "not"). Mr. Nayman's academically-sound insights into the humourless inferiority of those of us who use this completely unfunny statement made me realize the frightening social ramifications of not being professional about my sense of humour... not.

The intellectual snobbery in this article was stifling! Mr. Nayman, as

one who has "written humour professionally" as a career (and my, it sounds like a very stuffy one, doesn't it?) is worried about the standard of humour these days. And what/whose standard is that?

Mr. Nayman then carefully dissects the true meaning of "funny" so that we might appreciate the labyrinthine technical aspects of a single jibe, and thereby understand where exactly we fail to live up to those aforementioned standards of modern humour when we laugh at this joke (generated, actually, from a catchphrase Mike Myers observed in use in his youth in Scarborough, long before *SNL* aired the first *Wayne's World* skit)

Certainly, it is a given that any joke becomes stale, to say the least, upon its thousandth ill-timed repetition. Repeating and understanding the joke has nothing whatsoever to do with "hipness", but with intelligence and taste.

From what I can derive from your article, you appreciate the sublime much more than the ridiculous. Are you to judge that while Woody Allen is funny, Monty Python is not? Please. I would expect less overbearing pretentiousness from someone as outrageously funny as you obviously are.

I think, Mr. Nayman, that there are far greater evils in the world to put your professionally humorous quill to paper about than that which makes people laugh for the sake of laughter.

Laughingly yours,
Tim Conley

Fratrs being dissed!

Dear Editor,

I am a York student, and I am sick of being discriminated against on my own campus.

Sure I am a member of a fraternity, and proud of it, but how dare you insinuate (March 11/92 editorial) that I am either a misogynist, rapist, or racist? How dare you suggest that I or any supporters of fraternities and sororities have no place on campus? How can you so ignorantly assume that we are nothing but a cancer on York and its students?

What does it take for this harassment to end? My fraternity is an active supporter of such charitable organizations as the Daily Bread Food Bank, Alzheimer's Society and Sick Children's Hospital. There is no proof whatsoever that the fraternities on this campus, in any way, demonstrate such heinous characteristics as the ones described in your editorial.

Since September there has not been one positive article regarding fraternities or sororities in your paper. You have belittled Diamond Tobin-West's campaign because it supports fraternities and sororities on campus, and you have belittled my role as a student in good standing at this university solely because of the group I choose to belong to.

The only reason you can get away with this is because we are an unrecognized minority group here at York. We have no power or influence, save

writing letters (which never get published), to defend ourselves against made up allegations.

One wonders, if a Greek system was recognized at York, what sort of fraternity story could you fill your papers with... Certainly not: "York fraternity conducts toy drive for charity". No, you would probably go and fabricate some bad press towards some other minority at York—

I know, that wasn't very fair of me. How could I have written such a statement. I have no reason, no right to accuse you of such wrong doings, it was slanderous wrong, I don't even have proof...

Hell I'd probably make a great editor.

David Finkelstein
Alpha Epsilon Pi Fraternity

Masturbatory Waste?

Dear Editor,

I am a fourth-year film student at York, and I've always regarded film theory (and art theory in general) as being largely irrational, anti-intellectual masturbatory waste. That is, I thought this until I read Yvonne Vera-Jose's

brilliantly insightful article on "the manipulation of images" (March 4) which pointed out the insidious racism in such popular movies as *Silence of the Lambs* and *Green Card*. I was immediately compelled to apply the same incontestable criteria to my own recently finished 10-minute film about a computer virus. For instance, there is not one Black performer in the cast. This could not possibly be due to the fact that I know no Black actors. I—"the imagemaker"—have obviously excluded all persons of African heritage from participating in the technology of this "civilized" society. In fact, by not even mentioning "Africa", I have denied its existence in the same spatial-temporal order as the explicitly North American setting of my film. Come to think of it, in one scene I staged a female performer on the left of the frame and a male on the right, thus relegating her liberal "left" feminist stance to subjugation under the fascist "right"-wing male. And since there are no redhaired people in the film—good God, what could I have been saying? Anti-Celticism? Of course. It's obvious. What else could it mean? What else, I ask you?

Thank you, author. My life is better now.

Kent Tessman

Education is a Commodity

Dear Editor,

Re: Photograph, "Radical Chic" (*Excalibur*, March 2/92)

One would hope that by the time one gets to be a university student one would

be articulate enough to avoid phrases like "Fuck the (insert object of vehemence)."


The main point of this letter is: what makes the individuals in the photograph think education should be free (or even cheap)? Education is a commodity like automobiles, ice cream cones, and pork bellies. As such, it can be sold to the highest bidder. Why isn't it? Because society believes that better educated individuals across a spectrum of diversities create a better society for all to live in. Make no mistake though, the majority of the benefit of an education accrues to the individual who receives it, both in financial and self-fulfilment terms. Therefore, if you receive most of the benefit, why shouldn't you bear most of the costs? In Canada, we bear a minority of the benefit. If your Dad bought you a car, made the insurance payments, covered the maintenance costs, and all he asked was that you pay for your own gas would this be unfair? I wish I had a Dad like this!

Next point, if we tax the corporate "swine" hard enough, they will leave—with low inflation and low interest rates, there are better deals abroad. Thus if the corporate "swine" leave, who will you tax for your education? The corporations are gone, therefore no one has jobs to generate income or payroll taxes and no one will have any money to spend to generate goods and services taxes.

Finally, if education was free and you think York is crowded now it would become even more so. People would start showing up to take advantage of the free commodity, education. Imagine if G. M. started giving cars away to whoever asked. The demand would be incredible and G. M. would collapse. Same with education.

Michael L. Crawford

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