

# Journalists should check their facts

By MICHAEL MOURITSEN  
President of The York Student Federation

It was interesting to discover (in last week's Excalibur) how much Michael Lawrence and Dale Ritch have in common: neither of them really knows what he is writing about.

Because most students rely on Excalibur as their only regular source of information about the university, and because both Lawrence and Ritch write about their subjects with apparent familiarity, it becomes necessary to respond to some of their comments. Mr. Ritch's article on the university senate will be the subject of next week's column.

In an almost hysterical tirade against the budgetary policy of the current Council of the York Student Federation, Mr. Lawrence comments on my opposition to the recent CYSF decision to allocate \$300 towards the legal expenses of those York students who were involved in the Artistic Woodwork picket line.

He writes: "The griping, led by Mouritsen himself, on the allocation of a measly \$300 to loan (in emphasis) students needing bail money, and his now familiar stunt of vetoing the decision for lack of quorum only confirms the incompetency and irresponsibility..." of CYSF.

I will not dwell on Mr. Lawrence's other remarks about myself or the council, because as usual he merely asserts or insinuates his opinions; he makes no attempt to demonstrate them. I wish to discuss the above quote, however, because it contains a few errors of fact.

First, the \$300 allocation to the Artistic student pickets (which I certainly do oppose) is not intended as a loan, but as a grant to be distributed with no request for repayment.

Second, during the debate over the allocation, the subject of bail money was never raised. The \$300 is intended, by the sponsors of the resolution, to pay for the fines of those pickets who are found guilty of the various charges that have been laid (such as assault,

obstruction and public mischief). All of the pickets qualified for either legal aid or the services of CLASP.

Third, the decision was not vetoed by me, but by the lack of a quorum at the Dec. 10 meeting. It was discovered the next day that over half the members of council were absent on the previous evening, thus making the decision invalid. At the Jan. 14 council meeting, however, a quorum was present, and the decisions of the December meeting (including the \$300 Artistic allocation) were confirmed.

I don't understand why Mr. Lawrence labels my discovery of the lack of a quorum as a "now familiar stunt of vetoing". It was neither a veto nor was it familiar: this was the first time a CYSF meeting has been conducted in the absence of a quorum.

Mr. Lawrence's use of the word "stunt" implies that it was irresponsible of me to have pointed out the lack of a quorum. The original decision on the allocation was made by an 8-5 vote, with two abstentions, and

with seventeen councillors absent.

Finally, Mr. Lawrence's use of the word "measly" to describe the \$300 implies that the opponents of the grant were opposing the amount of money involved. I cannot believe he is serious. I would have voted against the grant whether it was \$3 or \$3,000, because I am opposed in principle to the payment of students' legal expenses by the council.

An individual must assume responsibility for his or her own actions. The students involved made their own decision to participate in the Artistic strike, and did so in the full knowledge of the possible consequences. The council did not even ask anyone to picket the Artistic plant.

Students who come whining to the council asking other students to pay their fines deserve no more sympathy than would be accorded someone who asked for payment of a parking or library fine.

Mr. Lawrence's recent column only confirms his own incompetence and irresponsibility as a journalist.

## Letters To The Editor

All letters should be addressed to the Editor, c/o Excalibur, room 111 central square. They must be double-spaced, typed and limited to 250 words. Excalibur reserves the right to edit for length and grammar. Name and address must be included for legal purposes but the name will be withheld upon request. Deadline: Mon. 5 p.m.

### Taking your life in your hands

Have you ever taken a ride up to York Main or to Glendon on the inter-campus bus? If you haven't, those of us who are forced to take this bus regularly advise you against it. It is like taking your life in your hands, or at the very least, like a lesson on how to withstand prolonged exposure to freezing temperatures.

To be more specific — the red Volkswagen van hardly ever has any heat. (The heater has been fixed almost as many times as it snows in Toronto, and is continually breaking down.)

As a result, the windows steam up and it is impossible to see through the back or side windows, not to mention the front windshield. The driver is forced to open his side window whenever he is about to turn at an intersection, which causes the already freezing temperature in the bus to drop another ten degrees.

Sometimes the heater does work, but a faulty exhaust pipe forces us to go without heat again, for fear of carbon monoxide poisoning!

Also, at various times, the windshield wipers do not operate, and the doors often refuse to close or lock properly. It may be funny to climb awkwardly over the front seat to the passenger seats because the side door

refuses to open, but having the driver hold his door shut all the way up to York is just plain dangerous.

What makes the trip on this bus (better known as the Polar Express) even more irritating and outrageous is that we "passengers" pay 25¢ for each painful trip in a bus which even the driver says should be "driven to the junk heap"!

The blame for the uncomfortable trip may be put partly on the York administration, and partly on the inferior quality of the York administration, and partly on the inferior quality of the buses themselves. We, the regular passengers on the Polar Express would like something done.

Those of you who are sceptical about the truth of our complaints — are inviting at your own risk, to take a ride on the Polar Express.

MARNEY GATTINGER  
JOHN SIMPSON  
ANNE WILES  
SALLY TRUSLER  
DAVE COOMBS  
MARY EGEMENARI  
PAUL REINHARDT  
STEPHEN GODFREY  
HENRY WOOD  
GREG MARTIN

### Radio York is form of a subtle tyranny

The Radio York project must be stopped. Here is a new form of tyranny, one that we evidently haven't yet recognized. More grotesquely subtle in effect than in intention, Radio York threatens our freedom and sanity.

Yet, snugly wrapped in a "blanket" of (compellingly inane) sound, how many of us will feel robbed?

ALAN LESSEM  
Assistant Professor,  
Dept. of Music

### Why won't we watch women wonders when Western willingly will?

Last Saturday night York's women's ice hockey team played Western in London. The fact that York lost was discouraging enough but to add to the horrors of failure, York's women had to cope with an arena full of Western fans. Isn't it amazing how the Western team can get so many fans out on a Saturday night to an arena that isn't even near their campus? Isn't it amazing too, that whenever York has a home game — on a week night and at an arena right on campus — that we only attract a few supporters? How encouraging it is for players to practice 2 to 3 times a week for a home-game to which your opponents bring more fans than you could round up in the Tait locker room to support York at home?

Come on York, these varsity teams are out there representing you! They could have a good chance against any other university with a little

more support from you. Watch for sports advertising on walls all around the campus. Above all, come out and give our varsity teams the recognition they deserve.

As for the women's ice hockey team, hang in there babes.

WENDY STRINGER  
Ice Hockey Convenor

### Russell elated that elevators evacuated of smelly smoke

I am delighted to see that, in common with normal civilized practice, smoking has now been banned in the elevators in the university. At last it may be possible to ride the elevators without the danger of getting ourselves or our clothes burned, or having to suffer the stench of a pipe three inches from our face.

Perhaps you could draw this new piece of progressive environmental legislation to the attention of your readers, since smokers, while they may read Excalibur, are usually too busy coughing or lighting up to see (through the haze surrounding them) the No Smoking signs above their heads.

This observation extends, by the way, to the buses which the university runs, in which, in common with the TTC, smoking is prohibited. The reply last week, when I pointed this out to a smoker, was that "everyone does it" (I couldn't see any other offender at the time). This would be laughable if it were not so naive — that is just how some of Nixon's cronies excused themselves over White House corruption.

DENNIS RUSSELL  
Professor of Mathematics.

### YUSA exec. has their support

We, the undersigned, take exception to your editorial of Jan. 24, regarding YUSA. We are not in the dark about any of the YUSA Executive's dealings with Administration. It is our opinion that they are endeavouring to do what the majority of the membership wants. There are, of course, a few members on campus who make a great deal of ineffective noise about unions, but they are the minority.

The YUSA Executive have our full support and we wish to thank them for their efforts on our behalf. We say to them, "hang in there, baby!"

SYLVIA RUDDY  
LELEITH SMITH

LOWELLA NANOIYMEN  
FLORENCE MAYBEE  
JO-ANNE DEGABRIELE  
DORIS BRILLINGER  
SHEILAH BANKIN  
MARY DAVIDSON  
RUTH MARVIN  
MARJORIE FRYER  
HELEN ARON  
JANE SCHNEIKER  
LAURA McPHAIL  
PAT HUMENYK  
SONIA PAIKOWSKY  
PENNY McDONALD  
ANNETTE SOTTO  
PAT POOLER

IRENE McCAIG  
GLEN LAMBERT  
BRIGITTE MARI

### The struggle against business unionism not destroying unions

I would like to call attention to a misleading headline in last week's Excalibur. Your page 7 story about an Ontario Waffle meeting in Ottawa is headlined "Destroy Business Unions." In fact, the Waffle spokesman is later quoted as saying that workers must destroy business unionism. This doesn't mean that workers should destroy their unions, but that they should struggle to overcome the business unionist outlook of the current trade union leadership.

Business unionism takes the position that there is no fundamental conflict of interest between workers and employers. For an example of such a "business" outlook, take the actions of I.W. Abel, President of the United Steelworkers

of America. Abel recently gave the steel companies a "no strike pledge" to protect what he called "our steel industry." This was done at a time when capitalists' profits are up dramatically and workers' real income is falling. Clearly, such a policy of class-collaboration by trade union leaders benefits only employers.

In opposition to business unionism, the Ontario Waffle labour policy calls on trade unionists to struggle for a fully independent class-conscious trade union movement; for \$4 per hour minimum wage to benefit the lowest paid workers; and for a 30 hour week with no cut in pay, to create jobs and eliminate unemployment.

I would like to conclude by pointing out that to struggle against business unionism doesn't mean to destroy unions. Far from destroying them, the Waffle programme for a militant and independent Canadian trade union movement would strengthen unions.

TREAT HULL,  
York Waffle

ROSENWURST★ N265



A BRAINSTORM....