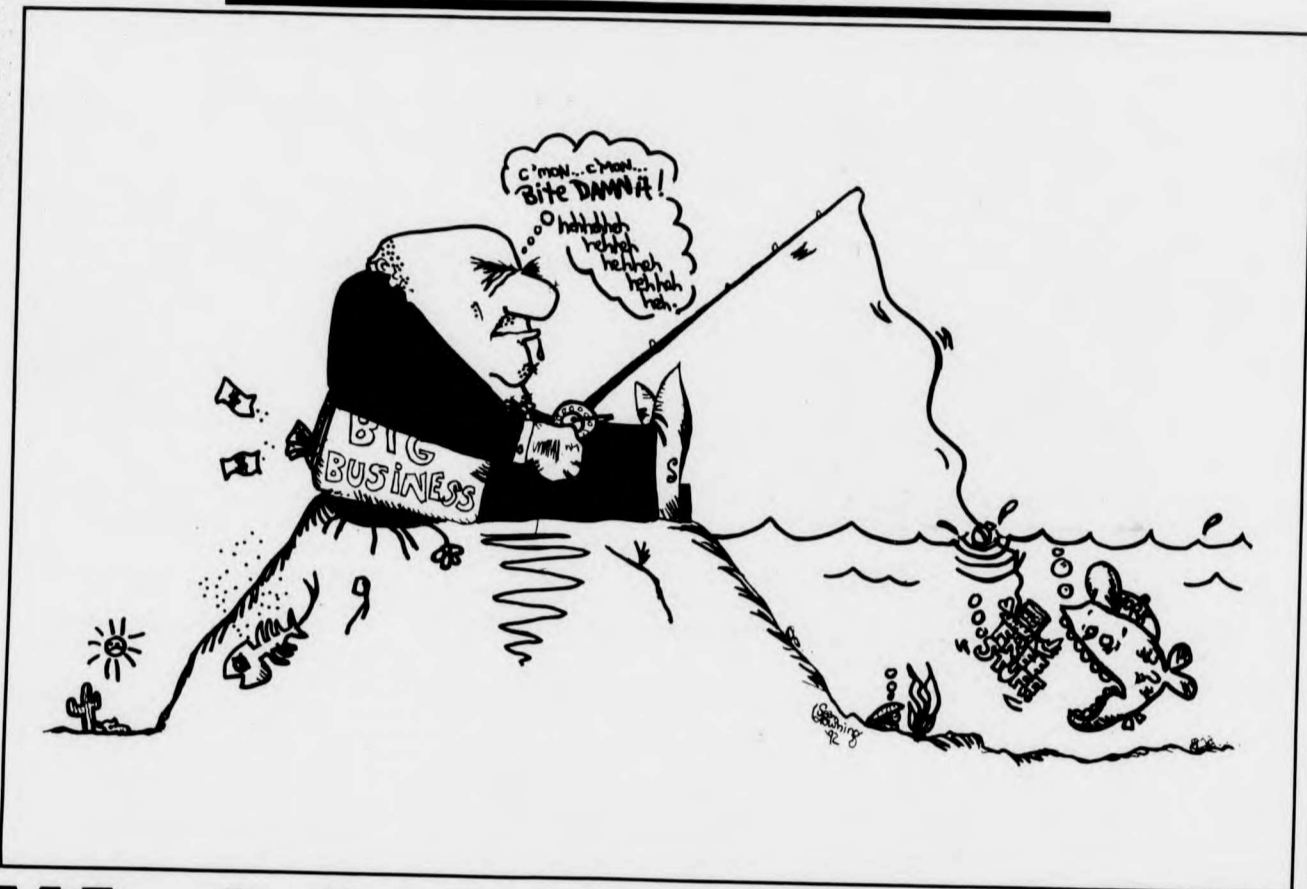


# editorial

Wednesday October 28 th, 1992 • Volume 27, Issue 12



• Imagine our surprise when we woke up one recent morning to the mellifluous voice of Susan Mann, York's president.

Mann, along with Canada's six other female university presidents, was talking to Peter Gzowski on CBC's *Morningside*. Somehow her message of Pollyannaish positivity made us choke on our coffee.

## BETWEEN THE LINES

She reiterated her favourite legend: that tuition increases won't do any damage as

long as we can count on private gifts.

"I think that building up endowments on scholarships is crucial, because... [business support] is not going to be enough, and that's where the generosity of people is going to be very important," Mann proclaimed.

Tuition in Ontario increased about four times more than the cost of living this year. Mann's call for private donations is cold comfort to students who are struggling under this burden. Was this the same Susan Mann who marched up the middle of Yonge Street last week carrying a banner reading "Universities are cut to the bone"?

The prez was equally sanguine about big corporations on campus. Gzowski noted — wisely enough — that corporate-funded research might be becoming a threat to academic independence and integrity.

Her answer was stultifying: "It is going to be ok, Peter... because [businesses] know that kind of research done in a university is subject to all sorts of university regulations... All universities have ethics commissions, requirements.

"It's not quite as serious as you might think. It's not an issue."

Oh yeah? Lots of researchers are telling us corporate control of research is an issue. Some people say it is *the* issue at York. We recommend Mann read the "Hijacking of higher education" forum we printed a few weeks ago.

And maybe she shouldn't brush off Peter Gzowski so glibly.

## Why do they force-feed us pop tarts on our own turf?

It's a typical morning on campus. The early crush of students and faculty emptying cafeterias and filling lecture halls has given way to a welcome lull. Stragglers jog off to slip unnoticed into the back of their overcrowded classrooms.

As you make your way through the maze of activity, you bump into a booth selling discount coupon books specifically geared to students.

The flashy magazine pile alongside the booth doesn't escape your eye either. A free national *student* magazine right on campus!

People file past you, clamoring for more free things. This time it's cans of pop, pop tarts, tampons, and a stream of prizes pouring out of a tent recently set up outside one of your lecture halls.

Most of us are too busy rushing to class or enjoying the deals to question how all the freebies made their way onto campus. Well, we looked into it and here's what we found out.

Activities on campus generally fall into one of two categories: student-owned or corporate-owned. The university administration tends to help support and monitor both kinds of events.

Student groups like Stong College Council, the Chinese Students Association, or the *Vandoo* newspaper run food outlets, coordinate cultural festivals or publish newspapers.

Private companies also run food outlets, coordinate festivals and distribute publications at York.

In both cases, the groups are serving a specific, lucrative and easily identifiable market — students.

At first glance it would only make sense that companies are popping up all around campus. But when more and more companies find their way onto school grounds, that's called privatization.

It means that the student-owned and student-controlled events are being edged out by similar events run for profit by national companies.

The arguments against privatization are long. But let's be clear about some of them. Private companies are not evil. They employ people. Some provide excellent services to students and others are run by good, hard-working people.

But when we let them onto campus we change the nature of our community. Student groups are forced to compete with profit-oriented companies. This means they have to spend more time worrying about their bottom line and less time training and serving students.

And it's distressing to find out the number of private companies making their way onto our campus with little or no compensation to students. They're usually given free access to the campus because they claim to be providing us a service.

These include glossy 'student' magazines — which have little to do with students, yet claim to represent us.

None of them are run by the same democratic standards campus newspapers follow, nor are they subject to the standards set by this community. If *excaltbur* writes an article that pisses you off, there are things you can do about it. They include walking over to the Student Centre to yell at us, writing a letter to the editor, or joining the staff yourself and working to change the paper.

This is how students at York can influence student-run

publications and companies. Not only can you tear into them, you have access to their resources if you wish to join them.

As we allow more and more private companies onto campus, we lose this direct control over the resources on our campus. If a glossy mag pisses you off, you can't do much about it.

Students should be asking for a better deal. The only reason these companies want to be on campus is to have access to the student market. It only makes sense that students should benefit financially from it.

Just how serious is the problem? The York bookstore, in conjunction with administration officials, not only allowed a private company to set up tents on campus to advertise their products last month — they even paid them to do it.

Administrators will tell you the free gifts constituted a service to students. We couldn't disagree more. As far as we can tell, the administration shelled out cash to allow a private company to make a mint selling tent space to other companies. Students — the objects of all this hucksterism — had no part in the transaction.

The issue is straightforward. Students need to be more aware of who is using their campus resources.

We suggest a committee be set up which includes student club, government, and publication representatives alongside administration officials to better monitor who is gaining commercial access to our campus.

It will help protect student-run operations already in place, establish regulations to ensure student needs are being addressed, and help cut a better business deal for students. JM

# excaltbur

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## excaltendar

Wednesday, Oct. 28

Women's Caucus at 5 pm

Thursday, Oct. 29

Investigative research seminar at 1 pm

Production meeting at 1:30 pm

Staff meeting at 5 pm

All events in the *excaltbur* office

### Piece of mind:

"Come on! Sometimes I think Canadians need a real furor."  
— Canadian artist Atilla Richard  
Lucacs explains why he didn't vote in referendum.