

Correspondence

Twinned cities seek cement

The City of North York has twinned with the City of Wroclaw in Poland and last October York University was kind enough to host the visiting delegates from Wroclaw when they visited here to cement the twinning process.

The Education Sub-committee of the World City Committee of North York have now recommended that we initiate correspondence between students at the post-secondary level in North York with students in Wroclaw.

To help us further this objective, we would greatly appreciate your cooperation in putting us in contact with persons at York University who might assist us directly in getting interested students to commence as quickly as possible to send correspondence to students in Wroclaw.

We have several members on the World City Committee who are in the educational field and they would be most happy to work with your designates in getting this project moving forward as soon as possible.

Professor Yvonne Grabowski, Dept. of Languages, Literature

and Linguistics has undertaken to coordinate the program at York. Any interested persons should contact her.

Peter J. Nissel
Chairman
World City Committee

Canadian culture? What culture?

The following is a letter addressed to Food and Beverage Manager, Norman Crandles.

On February 13, as I was passing through main square, my attention was drawn to a program being shown in the bear pit. The segment I saw dealt with early American music — how the song Yankee Doodle had originally been sung by the British to ridicule Americans. This little known facet of American musical history aroused my sympathy and I thought what a wonderful tool this program is to create understanding and respect for Americans. Then I remembered the deplorable situation of Canadian music and culture.

We all know how little Canadians as a whole know about our own heritage, but as a parent I have frequently been amazed at the lack of knowledge in this area of Canadian teachers (perhaps

trained at York). The music teacher at our school chose the song of the H.S. Marines "From the Halls of Montezuma" to teach grade 8 children the marching rhythm. Asked why she insisted on using this song, even when the children had suggested they should be singing a Canadian song, she replied, "It is a song the children can relate to and it has a good marching beat." She insisted there was nothing to it really — the children just sang the song as they marched around the room. Curiously, a Ministry of Education official hesitantly agreed on the merits of the song and asked what song could substitute. When the Maple Leaf Forever was suggested his response was that there was a problem with some of the words. Stunned, I could only ask "Have you listened to the words of 'From the Halls of Montezuma'?"

Another teacher when asked why some Canadian songs were not included in the choir's program replied, "It is hard to ignore the marvellous American musical heritage" as the primary/elementary choir sang "Alley Cat". Our children learn Yankee Doodle in the primary grades and it is one of the first songs school

orchestras learn to play. "The Night they Drove Ol' Dixie Down" was taught to grade 4s for its "historical content".

The grade 8 music teacher professed a long family musical background in addition to her formal training, yet when asked what song she would choose if asked to sing a Canadian song (in an international singsong) she said "O Canada". Asked the same question, the Ministry official chose "The official chose 'This Land is Your Land — Canadian version.'"

Since coming to York this fall, I have been aware of many partisan activities on campus. Also, I have been told that "Canada is just a carbuncle on the backside of the United States." All of these are excused on the principle of academic freedom.

All countries vest great amounts of money in the education and training of their future leaders — not frivolously or even generously — but as an investment in the development of their culture and society. In Canada, however, research indicates that the longer a student remains in the educational system the more negative towards Canada his

attitude tends to become. Perhaps the so-called "academic freedom" practiced on our university campuses is more properly described "abdication of responsibility".

M. Miller

P.S. Could I recommend to you and to D.I.A.R. a program shown recently on CBC-TV on the Feux Follet.

Simple English? No kapish!

I find it incredible that CYSF chose to appoint Jenny Gonsalves as Vice-President of Women's affairs when her letter to *Excalibur* quite clearly indicates her inability to read a simple sentence. If you will read my letter of the 20th, I did in no way state that I thought the 3-D films were pornographic.

Ms. Gonsalves states that it is her firm conviction that students want to see "quality" entertainment and not "garbage". May I discreetly suggest that she withhold comment on subjects she is ignorant of? The fact remains that more York students chose these films as acceptable entertainment than any other film screened on campus this year.

Bob Wales

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