

## LETTERS

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East. Injustices are being committed by various parties and numerous people are living in humiliation and destitution. However, the West applies a selective standard, choosing to condemn Iraq's invasion of Kuwait, while ignoring, or even condoning Israel's illegal occupation of Arab territories and its brutal suppression of the Palestinian popular uprising, the intifadah.

Only through the universal application of the principles of international law and human rights will there ever be hope for peace in the Middle East. The West has to acknowledge that stability in the region requires achieving Palestinian self-determination and an end to all occupations.

In the meantime, blood continues to be spilled in the vicious cycle of violence and counter-violence.

Sincerely,  
Mazen Bouri

## University is to blame

Dear President Arthurs

I have received copies of a complaint made to the Ontario Human Rights Commission by Joanne Doucette, a York undergraduate student, regarding access to the Fine Arts Phase II Building. I am sure you are aware that because of this problem, she is unable to attend classes—the freight elevator she has been told to use is illegal for regular use.

Frankly, this situation is deplorable, and the fact that the University has failed to act on the numerous complaints made by disabled students regarding this specific problem is remarkable given the professed desire to make York accessible to all students. The University has brought this situation on itself. One only has to wonder how many students have been discouraged by this problem and have chosen either to continue their studies elsewhere, or not at all.

We profess to be the most accessible University, but how can we continue to argue this when we deny those who have a physical disability from pursuing a Visual Arts degree—or risk injury, or their life to do so. Ms. Doucette has a right to equal treatment, she has paid for her

courses and the University is responsible for providing her with easy, safe and legal access to the courses she has chosen.

The York Federation of Students backs her complaint wholeheartedly, and I would urge you to do your best to assist this student (perhaps by moving classes to areas of the University that are accessible to her, etc.) until the situation has been resolved. It would be unfortunate for her to lose her year because of a problem the University has consistently failed to resolve.

I look forward to your cooperation in this matter.

Sincerely,  
Jean Ghomeshi

## Getting the story straight

To the editor,

Re: Clubs not happy with space in Student Centre

I am writing this response for two reasons:

1. Without a doubt, students have a right to complete and accurate information regarding the Student Centre.
2. Having received such information, if Clubs (or any student) have concerns, these should be addressed in a satisfactory manner.

I regret to say that neither of the above were accomplished in your article of October 24, 1990.

For starters, the three leased offices have a combined area that is ten times less than the amount of square footage than you reported. Where you got the figure \$164,333, which is capital contributions for the three organizations, also totally bedevils me.

What has led up to the present arrangement where the JSF, YCC and CSA will occupy leased spaces is a history that you might find helpful.

When we were in the designing phase of the project, we invited all interested Clubs to join in on our building project and gave them the opportunity to add on to the existing programme of the Student Centre.

The President of the Caribbean Students Association is right when she says that the purpose was to have "the Student Centre accessible to all students." What that means, quite literally, is that the lounge areas, the Club space, the meeting rooms, the food court and the pub are all for stu-

dent use.

However, one must realize that the leased space (of the CSA /YCC/JSF) is *extra* and an *addition* to the project that all of us have contributed towards.

You reported that I stated it would not be in the interest of the SCC to exclude any interested Club. The important reason (which I provided in our interview, but which was curiously missing), was that if we had more Clubs responding, that would have provided additional initial capital for the building.

Some of you are aware of our financial situation and additional capital is something we could really use now.

You also neglected to mention that this matter was extensively discussed in the then Clubs' Commission meetings, minutes of which were provided to you in our meeting.

In the wake of student activism among Clubs in recent times, I have no doubt that more Clubs could have raised funds for leased spaces had they been in the shoes of their predecessors three years ago.

Having been a Club person myself, I would attribute this miscommunication to the transient nature of Clubs and also the growing pangs of the then fledgling Student Centre which was not even incorporated yet. I agree with the President of YFS/FEY (whom you incorrectly reported as being on the SCC Executive) that more should be done to notify Clubs of issues that directly affect them. Is it interesting, then, for people to know that there is no dearth of free Club space in the Student Centre? Despite our best efforts in informing Clubs through advertisements, meetings etc., to date we have only received 32 applications for the 42 Club offices.

Chia-Yi Chua  
Chair of Student Centre  
Corporation

## Religious prejudice

To the editor,

Innocent! Naive! I don't know which I am. Maybe I am just plain rational and like to see consistency in intellectual endeavour rather than selectivity as people pick and choose the issues they support and oppose.

At York we are not supposed to

say or do anything that is racist, sexist or homophobic (I would like to know who has reserved the absolute, authoritative right to define those terms), but it seems that we are allowed to express our opposition to religion (specific religions).

Maybe we should consider the reasons for opposing racism, sexism and homophobia. There are probably many reasons around, but the best one I have heard is the one found in the student handbook, *Up York*. Here we were told that the elimination of such attitudes will make like more pleasant at York and will make the atmosphere more conducive to education. My point is that the elimination of religious prejudice would serve the same purpose.

People who are committed to a certain faith feel just as uncomfortable when being ridiculed as lesbians do, or as Jamaicans do when ridiculed and mocked for the colour of their skin.

Therefore, religious prejudice ought to be confronted with the same vigour by people who want to be rational and consistent (which is something I would expect to see in a university atmosphere) rather than irrational rather than irrational and selective.

The specific concern I am pointing to is a cartoon, *Odyssey*, which appeared in the October 10th issue of the *Excalibur*. This cartoon derided Christianity by the way the "Christian" was portrayed and ridiculed Christian values by having the "Christian" say things contrary to the Christian faith.

Sincerely  
Tim Bloedow

## Outraged with Excal cartoon

To the editor,

I would like to express my outrage and disgust at the cartoon, "For Pete's Sake," in the Oct. 17 issue of *Excalibur*.

The cartoon depicts a woman vocally protesting the Andrew Dice Clay garb of her friend. After expressing her disdain for his emulation of "a pig, a pervert, and a racist scumbag," she throws herself at him and claims she "loves it."

This cartoon is incredibly offensive and absurd. It reduces the genuine grievances of the victims

of Dice Clay's "humour" to a mere rhetoric that serves only as a necessary disclaimer to justify some secret mythical appreciation of his humour.

It also goes so far as to suggest that women are seduced by victimization and are attracted to abusive misogyny.

In light of the alarming rates of sexual assault in Canada, and especially this campus, I am surprised and appalled that a self-proclaimed socially sensitive newspaper would include such a hateful cartoon in its repertoire.

Cassandra Doulis  
member of the  
York women's collective

## Do we need pesticides?

To the editor,

As I walk around the campus this fall, I notice a number of signs on grassed areas warning that the area in question has been treated with pesticides.

As a student of language it occurs to me that a more accurate term might be biocide, i.e., an agent that kills one or more forms of life.

Given the rapidly-increasing public concern with the environment and given that a university should be a leader in ethical and scientific issues, I wonder whether Physical Plant would be kind enough to answer the questions which the use of these agents raise in my mind.

Why are these agents being used? Second, who decides that they are necessary? Third, what criteria are used to decide when and where biocides are required? Fourth, is attention paid to the fact that these agents enter the food chain and will consequently help to diminish the rapidly-declining bird population? Fifth, has it been considered that children who are too young to read, play on several of these grassy areas and may be harmed by contact with these biocides? Sixth, is attention paid to the fact that these agents may contaminate ground water?

I look forward to your reply and thank you in advance for your co-operation.

Yours truly,  
Kenneth J. Golby  
Assistant Professor  
Department of Languages  
Literatures and  
Linguistics

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**JSF**

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