

Editorial

Irregardless (sic) of what you folks might think . . .

Yes, we know: "irregardless" is not a word—at least not yet (see editorial, November 6). We realized it on the way to the printers, and although we had our faithful typesetter in tow, we had neglected to bring the typesetting machine. All that evening, *Excalibur* editors prayed that this slip of the pen would not detract from the urgency of our editorial.

Alas, our prayers were ignored. The very next day, the phone rang incessantly. Guardians of the English language called to rectify our oversight, and a torrential flood of unsigned letters (three) soon followed. Seemingly mocking us, two of the three letters contained glaring errors. One termed York a "university," and the other accused the "editoris" of being illiterate. A more entertaining comment was: "My 20lb. bird is going to love to shit on this one."

Curiosity about the etymology of "irregardless" quickly escalated into panic among our writers in residence. Why all the fuss over a blatant double negative? Many of our callers confessed to hearing the irreverent word countless times. One *Excal* staffer conducted an informal survey in class: four out of five students regarded "irregardless" as proper English.

Finally, we turned to our resident linguists: dictionaries. Random House accepts the word, but qualifies it as "non-standard." The Oxford American dictionary denies it validity, labelling it "incorrect."

Exasperated, we consulted our brand new guidebook, Fowler's *Dictionary of Modern English Usage*. According to this source, not only is "irregardless" not acknowledged, but "regardless," the root of our misery, attains only "quasi-adverb" status.

Since when has grammatical correctness been a criterion for language usage, we queried indignantly. What about the insipid phrase "There's lots of . . .," or that hideous copulative distortion "aren't I . . ."? Nothing grammatical there, we decided.

And consider for a moment that volatile little lexeme "inflammable," which is flaunted on propane trucks everywhere. Given that "incompetent" means "not competent," and "indecent" means "not decent," and "incorrect" means "not correct," it would stand to reason that "inflammable" means "not flammable." However, a quick peek into our trusty dictionary confirmed the opposite: "inflammable" is a synonym for "flammable" (so much for rules).

If "inflammable" can mean "flammable" then why can't "irregardless" mean "regardless"?

Words frequently pass in and out of usage in our language. Indeed, not too long ago, such words as "emote," "author," and even "edit" did not exist as verbs. While, like any newcomer, they endured a long and hard struggle to achieve linguistic respectability, these words now form the backbone of newsroom vocabulary.

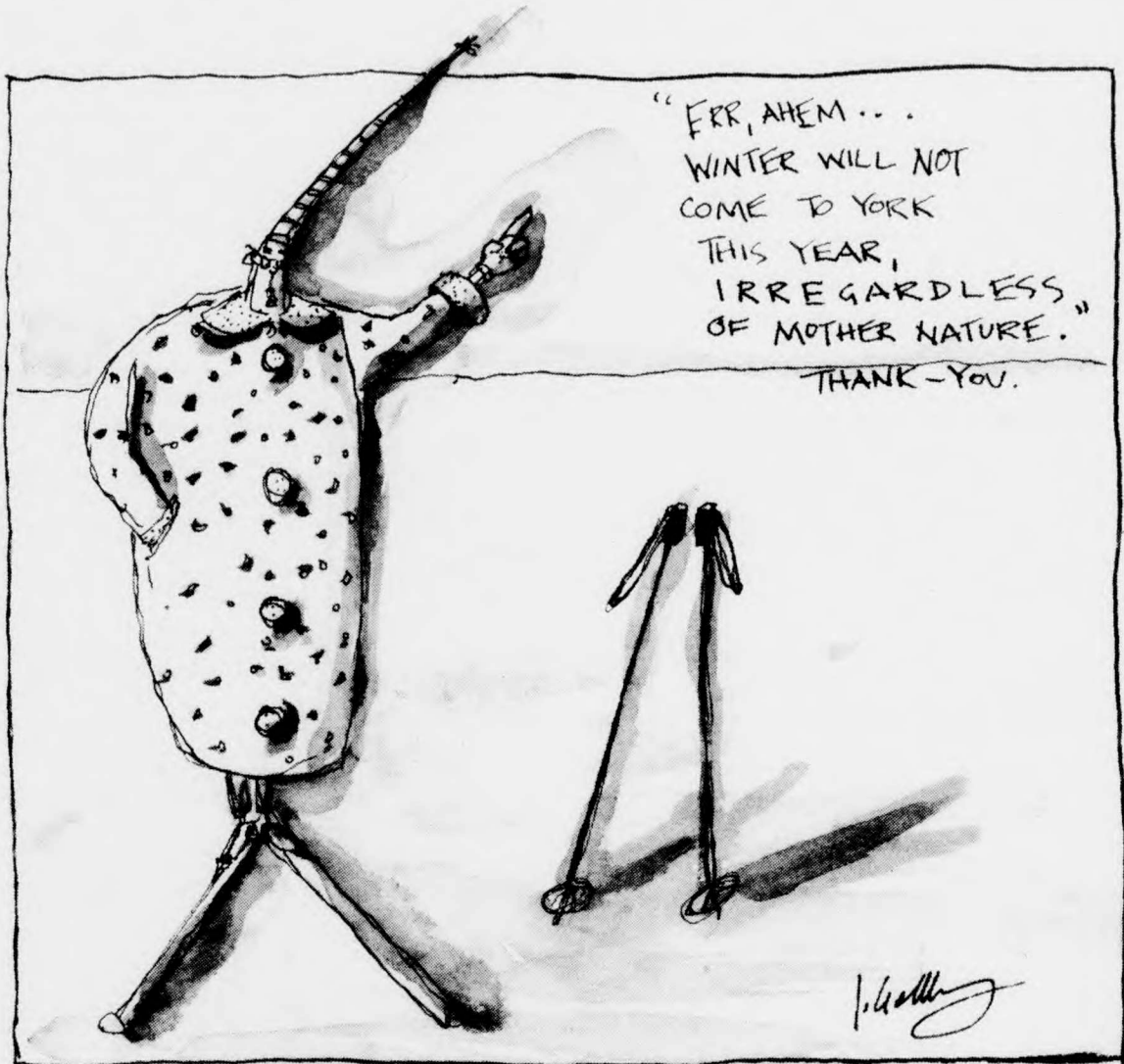
With all the brouhaha about one word, however, the larger issue has been obscured: Why does one grammatical error draw more letters and comment than the urgent subject of the editorial itself?

e x c a l i b u r

Editor	Lorne Manly
Managing Editor	Paulette Peirrol
News Editors	Kevin Bray, James Flagal
Arts Editors	Angela "Deadline" Lawrence, Kevin Pasquino
Features Editor	Laura Lush
Sports Editors	David Bundas, James Hoggett
Exchanges Editor	Zena McBride
Art Director	Janice Goldberg
Darkroom Manager	Alex Foord
Quasi-Official Mascot	Ryan "Stud" McBride
Staff	Luis Aguila, Reya Ali, Babak Amirfeiz, Loren Arduini, Doug Bennett, Sujata Berry, Gary Blakeley, Mel Broitman, Joe Carter, Rob Castle, Humberto da Silva, Roberta di Maio, David Dollard, Juan Escobar, Greg Gagne, Romy Gold, Christine Gomes, Cathy Graham, Theresa Grech, Karim Hajee, Susan Hilton, Jay Howell, Steve Isenberg, Adam Kardash, Stan Klich, David Kyne, Nick Lapicciarella, Nick Lorusso, Zena McBride, George Mathewson, Bonnie Mitten, Gail Morgenstern, Lisa Olsen, Jennifer Parsons, Alex Patterson, Wendy Quinton, Ben Rafael, Tootsie Rosen, Minto Roy, Joel Scoler, Jeff Shinder, Lesley "Farmer's Daughter" Sipsos, Richard Speck, Cathy "CSQ" Sturm, Paula Torneck, Edo Van Belkom, Andrew Vance, John Wen, Mookie Wilson, Stephen Wise, Wyndham Wise, Lisa Wood, Meiyin Yap, Paula Zarnett (Spot the mass murderer—win valuable prizes!) (Next week: '60s TV characters!)
Board of Publications Chairperson	Kevin Connolly
Advertising Assistant	Patty "Coroner's Daughter" Milton-Feasby
Typesetting Gentleman	Stuart Ross
Advertising Manager	Merle Menzies

EDITORIAL: 736-5239
ADVERTISING: 736-5238
TYPESETTING: 736-5240

MAILING ADDRESS:
Room 111, Central Square
York University
4700 Keele Street
Downsview M3J 1P3



THIS WEEK'S LUCKY WINNER OF EXCAL'S "IRREGARDLESS" CONTEST!

Letters

YDC once again urges Pension Trustees to divest

Editor:

Many of your readers responded to the York Divestment Committee's request for letters calling for divestment of the York University Pension Fund. They will be interested to know that the Committee has followed up on these letters by sending a draft motion to the Fund's Trustees in the hope that it will be passed at their next meeting. The text of the motion reads:

WHEREAS:

- 1) The governments of major western countries have endorsed sanctions against new investments in South Africa, and other sanctions which further increase the already serious risks of existing foreign investment in that country;
- 2) Sixty-five major multinational companies have in the past twenty-two months announced their withdrawal in preference to continued involvement in South Africa;
- 3) There is no persuasive evidence that corporate activity in South Africa helps the dismantling of apartheid, and much evidence to the contrary;
- 4) The York Pension Fund Trustees have no reasonable expectation of implementing their resolution that South African involved corporations in which they invest withdraw or act responsibly in opposition to apartheid;
- 5) There is overwhelming approval among present and potential beneficiaries of the York Pension Fund for divestment of its South African related securities;
- 6) All organizations involved in the York Pension Fund have officially approved of its divestment in principle;
- 7) Independent legal and financial advice suggests the desirability and practicability of the York Fund's divestment;

THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES OF THE FUND, THEREFORE, RESOLVE TO:

- a) Divest the Fund of South African related securities within one year.
- b) Report every quarter on progress toward divestment until the objective is reached.

H.M. Stevenson
Chair, York Divestment Committee

Cosentino sends thank-you note to Excal staff

Editor:

Please accept my thanks for the fine coverage provided by *Excalibur* this year. Your reporter Dave Bundas was indeed very dedicated to uncovering as much information as possible for your readers. In fact all of your sports staff deserves our thanks for a job well done.

—Frank Cosentino
Head Football Coach

Professorial plea to lower flag on Remembrance Day

Editor:

It appears that York University has decided to abolish Remembrance Day. For at least the second year in a row the Officials responsible have decided that November 11 doesn't even warrant lowering the flag to half-mast on the main flag pole. Last year I phoned the President's office to object to the fact that the flag was not flying in a memorial position. Of course my call was passed on from the President's Office down the line to an unidentified worker who said, "They had forgotten." How incredible! One of the highest institutions of learning in Canada, York University, had forgotten Remembrance Day. But, I reasoned, slip-ups do occur, and I assumed it would not happen again. Therefore it was with more sadness than irritation that I arrived at the

University this November 11, 1986 to see the Canadian Flag at full staff.

It is said that, "People who forget their history are doomed to relive it again."

Whether one is a Pacifist, a Militarist, or just an ordinary Canadian, we should all be united in our abhorrence of war and at least once a year be mindful of the tremendous human carnage and sacrifice that has been paid.

President Arthurs would you please instruct your Officials to put in their daily diaries:

"November 11, 1987, Remembrance Day—Lower the Flag!"

—Prof. Frank A. Barrett

Excal reporters' comments reveal 'sheer ignorance'

Editor:

Some of the comments made by the two *Excalibur* reporters about our association's presentation of a king's coronation were a classic example of sheer ignorance.

To begin with, Bonnie Mitten's and Sujata Berry's Nov. 13 article, "Multicultural Festival full of food and fun" called this association "The Malayan and Singaporean group." Isn't it just hilarious to learn that two reporters covering an event involving groups representative of different cultures could even get the name of one group wrong? And isn't it ridiculous that these reporters could comment on our performance without having some basic knowledge of our culture?

Questioning the authenticity of the music and suggesting that it sounded like a tune from a James Bond movie, is not only a typical case of judging a foreign culture based only on the reporters' knowledge of their own culture, it is also clear testimony of their ignorance about our culture. In any case,

cont'd on p. 7