

Fraser queries YUDC explanation for housing site location

By JUDITH FRASER

I am writing this in response to Mr. Spearn's commentary in your last issue. I wish to make it clear, from the start, that I am not against a housing development on campus, it is only the proposed site that I question. I am interested in arousing student awareness concerning this important issue.

1. I disagree entirely with Mr. Spearn's points one and two. While we both realize that greenspaces, are, as I said, "Psychologically necessary" I do not believe that they could be "cleaned up and enhanced by development adjacent to it." Nature can never be improved upon. Housing development require soil grading, bulldozing of the landscaping and inevitable tree cutting.

I am not concerned as much with the few decorative trees York has planted. I am concerned with the stand of the hundred year old pine trees and their surrounding woods west of the graduate residences which Mr. Spearn avoided mentioning in his letter of last issue. This area would not be "cleaned up or enhanced" if there was construction

or housing near-by. Erosion, polluting and scarring of the landscape would be inevitable if the development occurred in those woods, not "preservation."

If housing is placed on or near the edge of the ravine more erosion would occur especially since the banks are largely composed of clay. A retaining wall to prevent possible erosion would not be a permanent solution, nor would it "enhance" the aesthetic look of the area. For my peace of mind, and for the other who are interested in conserving York's greenspaces, I would like to have Mr. Spearn's reassurance in writing that the woods would be left alone, without a developer's version of "enhancement."

2. In addition I disagree completely with Mr. Spearn's belief that the Murray Ross Parkway would not offer the same or even better amenities as the originally proposed site. Water vanes, gas and other utilities would have to be put in both areas. Transportation access is better at Keele and Finch, and there are already complementary housing sites across from the Murray Ross Parkway site in the housing area.

There are also two banks, grocery stores, and the restaurant 'strip' that is along Keele Street.

My proposed substitute site in front of the "Keele Street and [Hydro] corridor" would also enjoy the use of the new subway station. The land area there can more than adequately accommodate this substitute site and any proposed future sites. As to Mr. Spearn's comment that the housing would be beside "a major arterial road with the tank farms across the road further east" did not prevent the already existing housing on from being built.

3. To address Mr. Spearn's points two and five, I never stated that all students are bad, I did comment however that the likelihood of problems increase with the amount of people on campus who are not under the jurisdiction of the university. Also, in reference to campus security and the fact that the housing site would allow for "more eyes on campus," I believe that if the eyes of 38,000 times two or 76,000 student eyes have not prevented the burglaries, assaults, and vandalism then another 1,000 or so eyes from a housing site won't make any difference.

To use the ravine as a buffer against the rougher elements of the Jane-Finch corridor is more than an "interesting" point, it is a necessity. I know that all urban areas have rougher areas, the Jane-Finch Corridor is one of the worst in Metropolitan Toronto and therefore must be considered in any planning on York as it is adjacent to the campus, and its affects on campus will be more than clear if not planned for.

4. How will the presence of non-students affect York? Personally, I have witnessed how the peace and tranquility of Stong Pond has been ruined by off campus visitors. Trees have been vandalized, the pond's fish stock have been depleted (despite the signs which say no fishing allowed) and the Canada Geese have been abused. Yori's grounds are generally clean now because the students care about the campus on which they live; off campus visitors have not demonstrated this courtesy nor have I ever seen campus security around to correct the problem. I feel that the general atmosphere that we all take for granted at York will be lost and we will become like the University of Toronto. Our pedestrian

walkways that we take for granted for their security and cleanliness will become like their Philosopher's Walk where it is unsafe to walk after dark and that student, not campus security, group security must be relied on to patrol the walkway.

Obviously it is necessary to increase the financial base of the university, but not at the risk of student safety and our pleasant academic environment. York's already ineffective security system would find it impossible to cope with the new elements introduced by the housing site so close to campus buildings.

Any of us who must live or go to school on this campus should be aware of the problems I have brought up in this letter. I feel that another student survey should be made since there has been more debate on this topic. Students should have a right to inspect any plans submitted to the YUDC, and a right to veto a proposal if they feel it is short-sighted. After all, it is the student body that will be exposed to any problems caused by whatever site proposed.

Letters Cont'd

cont'd from p. 6

the rest of us is concerned, we don't even rate the rhetoric-laden "throne speeches" that used to be a mainstay of the CYSF pages in *Excalibur*.

We are about due for the annual CYSF complaints about student apathy. I submit that it takes vision to excite University students, to bring relevant issues to light, to take a stand on apartheid, or underfunding, overcrowding, or the sorry state of teaching in some faculties of this University. This year's president is almost always inattentive at significant public meetings (for instance, the recent TTC forum) and when he does stand up to ask his obligatory question, his remarks are most often ill-informed, ill-considered or incoherent. I suppose that the students must take some blame for all of this; after all, it was our votes which put Blink into office in the first place. I suppose it is idealistic to expect that talented, energetic people will step forward as candidates for next year's CYSF executive, but it would be awfully nice to see an election where the winner wasn't necessarily the person who put up the most posters, or to see a CYSF president who had an opinion on something more important than beer brands or sportswear.

—James O'Connor

Platoon ignores non-Yank view

Editor:

Platoon delivers its anti-war message—graphically. But Platoon attempts to go beyond the insanity of combat to show that poor and black soldiers constituting the US army are merely pawns on a chessboard for the rich and powerful. The message stops here. Vietnam à la Stone is still a truly American story—the enemy (Viet Cong) remains an enemy, faceless. "Our boys" and innocent Vietnamese villagers are inhumanly killed, but the "enemy" still deserves it. As long as the vantage point remains American, US military involvement remains uncriticized. Vietnam was a mistake but in this analysis, Nicaraguan, Salvadorean (and so on) military crusades maintain their legitimacy as long as "our boys" or pawns don't return in body bags. Given the repertory of Vietnam war films we've suffered through, isn't it about time we as an audience were enlightened to more than this.

—Patricia Bush

Irwin presented by F/V club

Editor:

Re: "From porn to Cronenberg Mark Irwin climbed the ladder of film success" by Andrew Vance.

I would like to thank *Excalibur* for their coverage of the event. (In the words of Andrew Vance, the evening spent with Mark Irwin proved to be an enlightening experience) But you've failed to recognize who sponsored and presented An Evening with Mark Irwin. The visit by one of Canada's finest cinematographers (*The Fly*, *Videodrome*, *Scanners*, *Young Blood*) was the first in a series of lectures presented by The York University Film/Video Students Asc. I would again, like to thank *Excalibur* for the coverage. Keep your eyes and ears open for upcoming guest lectures.

—Mauro Aballe
Co-Director, York University
Film/Video Students Asc.

CCPS glimmers on the horizon

Editor:

I have always found it hard to believe that in a university the size of York that there could be so many ignorant and warped people. My first two years at this campus for over the hill radicals and chic socialists did nothing but enforce my belief.

But alas there is a light on the horizon, a glimmer of hope in this socialist wasteland, and it comes in the form of the Canadian Coalition for Peace through Strength (CCPS). The CCPS, unlike many other organizations at York, is dedicated to preserving freedom and democracy for all Canadians. It is a peace group which is actually dedicated to peace, not appeasement. Hopefully it will soon get the recognition it deserves.

—B.J. Chatterton

Flag deserves better treatment

Editor:

Once upon a time, there was a flag. He was a white flag with a funny little spiky red thing in the middle and two thick red borders on his sides. Now the thing that made this particular flag different from most other flags in the world was that the

poor dear was sad.

You see, he had been flying now for many days, which wouldn't have been too bad if those days didn't include the nights as well. There wasn't even a simple light shining on the poor thing which, his mother said, was the proper and lawful thing to do. His keepers leave him up for many days quite often, and when they do finally lower him, he is left down occasionally for days at a time.

"My, oh my," uttered the flag miserably, sadly recalling his days of post-education where he was told he was an important national symbol, "I wonder if anyone remembers why I'm here."

The poor darling watched the people at his feet wander by, talking about essays and exams. He was the only flag as far as he could see, which only added to his dejection. And then, a stranger came along and struck up a conversation with him. It made him a bit happier in the rain and the cold. And the darkness.

"What's the matter, my dear flag? You look to be in the dark about something," said the stranger.

"Oh, I am," replied the flag blackly. "You see, my family tells me that they get treated much better than I do. Cousin Flag at the Parliament says that she is folded up at the end of every day with great care and love, and when they don't, they shine lots of lights on her. My sister, Flag, was at the Olympics and she told me that when she was raised, they played a neat little song and everyone cried. And, when I was young, Grampa Flag told me stories about his youth and about how all the young people went off and died in a far place, just so that he could be raised in the air every morning. A tear was always in his eye when he remembered."

The man nodded in agreement and said, "Gee, I'd sure like to help you. You know I'd probably get arrested if I took you down and folded you up, but I'll do my best to get York University to look after you and treat you with the respect that you deserve."

And then he saluted.

Walking away, the man turned and said, "Don't worry, someone still cares."

And the poor, wet flag was once again left alone in the darkness. Flying at night was not fun, he thought. And neither was staying inside for days at a time. So he just sat there. Stuck to the black pole. And didn't live happily ever after.

—Alyn Shisko

WANTED

for 1987-88

Editor-in-Chief
of

excalibur

York University's Community Newspaper

Applications are
now being accepted for this
paid, full-time
September-April position!

DEADLINE

**March 5, 1987
4:30 p.m.**

Submit applications to:

Chairman of the Board
Excalibur Publications
4700 Keele Street
Downsview, Ontario M3J 1P3

no phone calls

Applicants who telephone will be disqualified from consideration.