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WEDNESDAY, JUNE 6, 1990

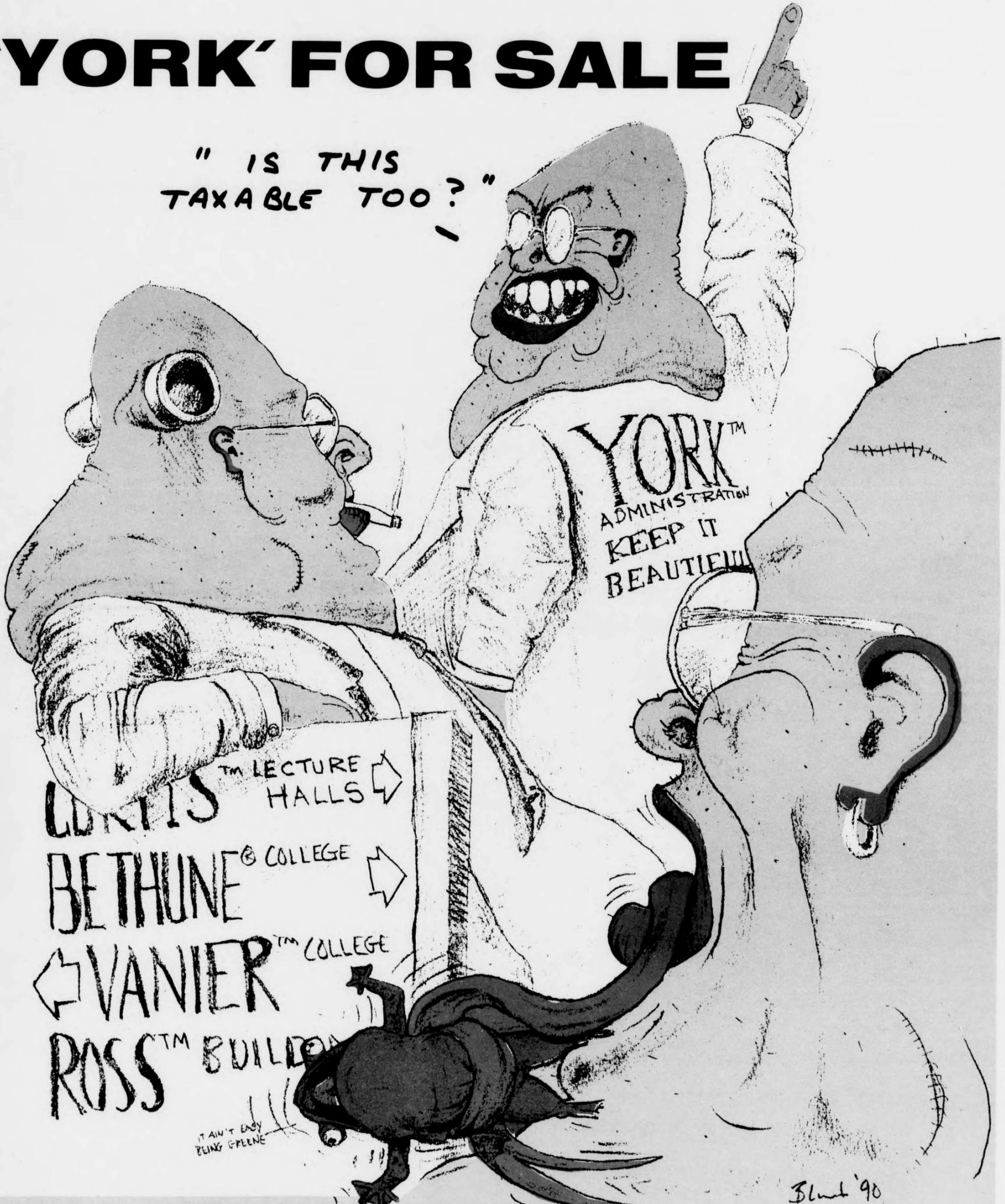
VOLUME 25 ISSUE 3

# excalibur

YORK UNIVERSITY'S COMMUNITY NEWSPAPER

## 'YORK' FOR SALE

" IS THIS TAXABLE TOO? "



by Michele Greene

**W**e have been right all along about those people up there. York administration is running the university like a business. This time, however, it is overreaching.

Suspicious about York University Ltd. in business for itself have been confirmed by a licensing fee imposed on all products carrying the York name.

It has failed to keep its members (students) well-informed about its policies. Nor

has it shown adequate respect for its members' own policies and initiatives. In fact, the administration has exposed itself to a conflict of interest. It has betrayed the students' trust.

Continued on p. 2

# ANALYSIS

cont'd from front page

The York University Licensing Board (YULB), a committee of university vice president representatives, charges a 6.5 per cent fee to manufacturers of York products intended for commercial and promotional use.

CYSF is upset about this. We should be too. Here's the catch: the manufacturers are adding the Board's fee onto the price of the product. This means we will pay 6.5% more for our orientation T-shirts because they bear the name of the school we already pay so much to attend.

In principle, the licensing program is a good idea. It has three goals said Harriett Lewis, Legal Advisor to York. Known as the "3 P's," the purpose is to protect, promote, and profit, in that order. The licensing program prevents the York name from being printed in a negative way. A manufacturer must be licensed by the YULB and its logo approved in order to produce and sell York products.

The YULB encourages manufacturers to become licensed. The more products sold, the more often the York name is seen. The university is well promoted this way and may attract new students and potential licensees. According to Lewis, there are now approximately 20 licensees.

Lewis said there have been cases of companies who make money from using the York name without permission. The YULB wants to recoup this profit, which will go back into the university for scholarships and upgrading facilities.

## protect, promote, and profit

CYSF is in the market for a manufacturer to produce the orientation T-shirts. CYSF has taken the job of ordering the T-shirts from the college councils. With more and more minors coming into residence, an orientation not centred around alcohol has become important; George Sanghera, CYSF Vice-President (Programmes) says he is doing the ordering so the college councils will have more time to concentrate on this goal. The YULB doesn't seem to trust this group of students with a responsible approach to orientation. "Give us some credibility," said CYSF President Jean Ghomeshi.

The University of Calgary had the same problem when their licensing policy, the first such one at Canadian universities, went into effect in 1986, said Faye Baker, Co-ordinator of Trademarks and Circulation (TC) at the University of Calgary. It now has 69 licensees.

Their purpose was the same as the YULB's — to protect, promote, and profit the university. They had

no intention of costing the students money. With the Olympics fast approaching in 1986, U of C had to protect itself from companies trying to profit from the U of C name. Also, they were able to generate revenues to upgrade university facilities. Their licensing fee was also 6.5% and, not surprisingly, their licensed companies were also adding the fee to the price of the products.

Lewis was aware of this problem. She believes the competition between licensed manufacturers will eliminate this tendency, because whoever has the cheapest price will get the contract. Therefore, the manufacturers will eventually be forced to drop the fee if they really want the university's business.



graphic by Brett Lamb

The TC in Calgary, however, saw that this was not happening in their case, so they began rebating the students.

According to Baker, it became an "accounting nightmare." She elaborated that the Physical Education department had been a good customer for university clothing. The TC sent refund cheques to the department, which then divided the money between about 30 teams. Then the money was split up again and sent to each student. Unfortunately, many of the students had since graduated or left for the summer. The same scenario occurred when the money was sent to the student council then to the clubs and finally to the students.

On May 30, 1990, the University of Calgary changed its licensing policy. Instead of charging a percentage on the manufacturers' sales, the TC now charges a licensed company a flat rate of

\$100 per year. Baker says the university hopes the companies will regard this fee as an administrative expense. It is not large enough to cut into their profits so the end user will not pay extra. Also, to divide the fee up between all of their clients would be an accounting mess for the manufacturers. So the \$100 fee is enough to protect, promote and profit the university as well as save the students the expense.

Obviously, the YULB did not research this project. If it had, it would have learned from U of C's experiences. It would have also learned from the TC about the ACLE, an American licensing organization that advises institutions licensing their names. It has been helpful to the TC, said Baker.

(Last year, CYSF spent \$6000-7000 on orientation T-shirts according to Sanghera. This works out to \$390-\$455.) Baker, at the University of Calgary, disagreed. She said, "it is a lot of money for a student government. These groups are non-profit. Besides the executive, they depend on volunteers and fundraising to exist."

Other college and university student governments in Toronto are not burdened with this expense. U of T, Ryerson, and Humber students don't pay for the use of their logos. At U of T, an "understanding exists between SAC (Student Administrative Council) and the administration that [SAC is] officially sanctioned to utilize the U of T logo in any way," said Richard Gray, SAC executive assistant.

The Ryerson Student Union is registered with the Institute. It doesn't pay to use the logo because the RSU is a non-profit organization run by and for the students, said Jim Butterly, Student Group Co-ordinator. Angie Kazmirski, ex-director of publications and promotions of the Humber Student Association Council, says the HSAC can use their logo, which is slightly different than the college's logo, with the understanding it will not be defaced. A trust exists between these student governments and their administration. Money is not an issue.

Humber vice president John Cecil said no licensing policy is in place at Humber because the college has not received many requests from companies interested in printing Humber merchandise. If a company is interested, as long as the proposed logo is not slanderous, permission is given to the company. The only way the college benefits is in promotion of its name. No profit.

Cecil agreed that the licensing policy is a good idea for protecting the university name. He also understood the administration's motive in light of the provincial government's lack of funding. However, he did openly wonder about the ethics of charging students to use the name of their own institution.

The licensing fee highlights the lack of communication among the administration and CYSF. CYSF did not know about the fee; Sanghera said he accidentally found out about it at Student Affairs. Lewis claimed that all faculties, college masters, departments, including CYSF received memos in April 1989. She said that she and Peter Donato discussed it. But, Sanghera said Donato didn't know anything about it. Donato was unavailable for comment. Further, as of May 30, Lewis said she had never met Sanghera personally; he had only called to ask her some questions.

Sanghera claimed that he and Lewis argued for an hour and a half. YULB members Murray and Janis Roy (Alumni Affairs) were unaware of concerns about the licensing program.

Murray said money collected from the fee will pay primarily for expenses in running the YULB; then for scholarships and upgrading facilities; and finally in developing a line of York clothing which could take up to five years to be successful.

The Olympics may be coming to Toronto in six years. (Consider the University of Calgary and the Olympics in 1986.)

Lewis claimed that the "York-Wear" line will be developed only after other expenses have first been paid off. YULB hopes the line will be successful enough to support a venture like a York boutique in Simpsons or a shop in the airport. Revenue from the clothing would then be put back into the university in the form of scholarships or other needs such as books for the library.

## "Give us some credibility"

The fee doesn't stop with clothing; it applies to all commercial or promotional merchandise. According to Lewis, a pen with the York logo for internal day-to-day use (such as in an office) would not be subject to the fee because it is not for commercial or promotional use. CYSF gives out pens for free to students but because their constituents do not have offices, these pens will be subject to the fee.

Sanghera felt that this kind of inconsistency should make the administration realize that it is failing to do its job — looking out for the students.

Lewis sent a letter to the *Lexicon* claiming she was misquoted in the May 18 article "Irate students to fight York logo tax." Sanghera saw the letter and said in it Lewis claims the students will receive a refund. He confronted her with the letter and wanted her promise to be made legally-binding. During their discussion on May 31, Sanghera asked that the policy be changed so manufacturers chosen by student groups would not be charged. Lewis would not agree, but she did arrange a Board meeting to which CYSF would be invited to discuss alternatives. Sanghera feels Lewis will back the students' position.

In the meantime, Sanghera is taking action to protect the students in case an alternative cannot be worked with the YULB. He is sending memos to the licensees threatening their license if they refuse to drop the 6.5% fee from the price of the merchandise.

## FACULTY AND STUDENTS

### HOST A JAPANESE UNIVERSITY STUDENT

Japanese university students participating in a month-long summer language program at York University's English Language Institute are placed with a homestay family for one weekend. Homestay begins Friday August 17 and continues through to Sunday August 19. If you would like to open your home to one or two of these students please call the English Language Institute at 736-5353.

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# Federal cutbacks to York-based women's magazine

by Ira Nayman

Imagine a magazine that deals with a variety of women's issues, including women and literacy, women and the media, women working for peace and violence against women. It would have a mixture of scholarly articles and first person accounts from non-academics, especially marginalized women like natives or Russians.

While we're dreaming, let's make the publication bilingual. Each issue would have a theme, and would have guest editors knowledgeable on the subject; decisions would be made on a collective basis. It should be a handsome publication, well illustrated, written for both academic and general readers.

As it happens, such a magazine already exists. *The Canadian Woman Studies Journal/Les Cahiers de la Femme* has published

for nine years, most of them out of York University.

Now, imagine that this publication no longer exists, because, owing to federal cutbacks to the Women's Programme of the Secretary of State, that may soon be the case.

"We have enough money left from sales and subscriptions to keep us going, probably, to the end of August . . . after that, we don't know," said Jane Springer, current Managing Editor of the *CWS/CF*. "Unless we get new funding, [we may be] out of business."

In February, the federal government announced cuts of \$1.6 million to the Women's Programme, including \$194,000 cut from the budgets of three publications (the *CWS/CF*, *Healthsharing* and *Resources for Feminist Research*). Under pressure from feminist groups across the country, funding for women's centres

was reinstated for a year, but money for the magazines was not.

Thus, 45 per cent of the *CWS/CF*'s budget (\$90,000 out of \$200,000) has disappeared.

According to Springer, the federal government advised members of the magazine's editorial board to seek alternate sources of funding to make up the shortfall. "We have sales and subscriptions — it's not like that's our only source of revenue," she said. (*CWS/CF* has a circulation of 9,000, 500 of which was gained in the past year.)

"We also fundraise for particular issues," Springer added. For the latest issue, for instance, on women and housing, *CWS/CF* approached the Ontario Ministry of Housing for additional money. But, Springer did not believe this was the answer: "We really need those operating funds to have a sustained life."

On April 26, York President

Harry Arthurs wrote Secretary of State Gary Weiner asking that funding be made available for *CWS/CF* until it could find enough money to ensure its survival. "*Canadian Woman Studies/Les Cahiers de la Femme* is a unique and high-quality publication with a worldwide reputation," Arthurs wrote. "It operates in a thro-

roughly professional manner on what are, after all, very limited resources. Surely the government would not wish to see this publication disappear without giving it a chance to become self-sustaining . . ."

The government cut back funding to the women's groups pleading fiscal restraint, but Springer does not believe it. "The money they took from us was \$1.6 million . . . it's such a piddling amount of money in their overall budget," she remarked. "They are political cuts. Definitely. There's no doubt in my mind."

Representatives of the affected publications have been trying to meet with Weiner, with no success; a meeting scheduled for last week was cancelled. "We've been trying to meet with him for two months — he obviously doesn't want to talk to us," Springer said.

A national day of protest will be held on June 12.



graphic from Ontario Federation of Indian Friendship Centres

*You're under cardiac arrest:*

## The smoke's on you

by Sophie Robov

A new smoking policy for York University is in the works for the fall which could leave smokers on campus fuming. Among the options under discussion is handing out tickets to smokers who light up in non-smoking areas.

As a result of the Smoking in the Workplace Act which came into effect earlier this year, York has been obligated to revise its present smoking policy in order to meet the requirements of this new government legislation. The Act provides a concrete outline for what can be designated as a smoking zone. Consequently, current smoking areas will have to be checked again, and those that do not meet the new criteria for space and ventilation will have to be altered or become non-smoking zones.

According to CYSF Vice-President (Internal) Caroline Winship, York's present smoking policy is "half-hearted," as it presents the community with regulations but doesn't back them up with effective methods of enforcement. She revealed that many students are in favour of a revised policy. They are aware of the dangers of second-hand smoke and feel it necessary to reduce the risk of exposure. Conversely, she feels that suggested options, such as the banning of tobacco products on campus, are "too rigid" and will make smokers feel victimized.

emphasized that, although there has been discussion of "written or verbal cautions," including notifying the offender's superiors, nothing has yet been finalized. He

Pond said that the Presidential Committee on Smoking is examining smoking policies from other post-secondary institutions, including Brock and George



graphic by Brett Lamb

pointed out that enforcing any smoking policy is "a community function," not just the responsibility of one group.

Brown. Although some aspects of these policies may not necessarily represent viable alternatives for York itself, they will still be used as a check-list and to assist with wording York's own policy.

Winship, who is also a member of the Publicity and Education Sub-Committee, stressed that implementing the new policy must not be handled in a confrontational or vigilante-like manner. The Sub-Committee is looking for promotional ideas on how to present a new policy to the students. Winship added that "students are people too," and that they must be presented with "an intelligent game plan."

### York security may be handing out tickets to offenders

One possible method of action being considered for York's revised smoking policy is the handing out of tickets to offenders.

There is, however, some opposition to this idea. Eric Pond, Assistant Director of Security,

Union members are also reluctant to confront offenders with written warnings, in case they react violently. According to Pond, advertising the policy in the months before its implementation would increase awareness and prevent any such incidents.



York Provost Liz Hopkins led a spirited 15-minute romp around Stong Pond on May 30, finishing at Tait-McKenzie. More than 200 walkers were rejoicing in their physically healthy lifestyles as part of Participation Day.

photo by Peter Stathis

## More bread for the butter

by Peter Stathis

CHRY, North York's community radio station, has received a \$30,000 donation from the Canadian Secretary of State.

The federal grant was the first of its kind to an alternative radio station. It was especially prominent considering the Secretary of State has quite recently cut funding to women's groups and native media.

The large cheque was given to CHRY to fund current affairs programming, specifically a new programme called *Bread and Butter*, which airs at 12:15 pm Monday to Friday.

CHRY station manager Dani Zaretsky said *Bread and Butter* is a community access programme which should "generate attention on issues and groups that are underrepresented in the mainstream media." The show involves

people from the campus and Toronto community at large discussing subjects of interest. Zaretsky mentioned programme concepts that included the disabled, foreign students, racial discrimination, sexual harassment, and the role of student journalism.

Current affairs co-ordinator Levinia Lanza remains the key figure in obtaining CHRY's grant and instituting the *Bread and Butter* programme. She first approached the State office during the summer of 1989 and had a final proposal ready by December of the same year. The grant cheque arrived at the end of March 1990. Lanza is ultimately responsible for ensuring the programme gets on air. She manages the staff who volunteer as producers; recruits speakers for the discussions; and acts as the CHRY contact for people's ideas and critical input for future shows.

# EDITORIAL

## End police violence

It cannot be easy to be a police officer. Having to deal with crime, with violence, with human failure and degradation on a daily basis would harden even the most compassionate of us.

What can we make, then, of the fact that four Metro officers have been charged in shootings in the last eighteen months, all involving black victims? Were they racists, using the power of their uniform to act out private fantasies? Is the predominantly white police force racist?

You don't have to see a conspiracy to realize that there is a serious problem here. Metro's officers are largely isolated from the communities in which they work, and many may suffer from a siege mentality. These are conditions under which unnecessary force, racist violence, may flourish.

There are solutions:

- Restrict the "fleeing felon" rules. In some of the cases the blacks who were shot were unarmed; in most, they were moving away from the police. They were, in short, not a threat to anybody.

According to the law, however, the police have the right to fire on people moving away from them if the officers believe they constitute a legitimate threat to public safety. This law is being used to justify excessive force against individuals; it is time it was changed.

- Institute a progressive visible minority hiring programme. The siege mentality is easier to foster when officers are dealing with an unfamiliar culture. When members of a police force are taken from the community which they will patrol, their ties make them more sympathetic to what is going on there, less likely to react with unnecessary violence.

- Give a civilian oversight committee the power to investigate allegations of police violence and to lay charges. Justice is not seen to be done (and may not be done) when police officers who operate in the same milieu investigate each other.

Police can easily forget that their power derives from the consent of the individuals who make up society. They are not above the law, despite their possibly harder circumstances, and it is up to the individuals in society to judge their actions, not other police officers.

The solutions to Toronto's police problems are easy. Finding the political will to carry them out will be hard.

Ira Nayman

## Profiteering: by any other name

York University had a reputation for providing accessible education to low-income students. I say *had* because things have changed. Over the last half decade, York's tuition price tag has fattened to become one of the steepest in the country.

I can understand that because of provincial underfunding and cut-backs, York has had to try and scrape together money from other sources: selling off university land, accepting donations from fascists and, lately, charging students for using their own university's (and colleges') names or logos in any way, shape or form.

So what's the big deal? Well, how about disregard for basic ethics for starters, followed by a good dose of greed. Let me be clear: if I wrote Vanier or Founders or York on a shirt, I could technically be asked to pay for it, literally. This sounds like a disguised incidental fee to me (remember they were abolished a few years ago by the provincial Liberals).

The cost of going to school, buying books and living in Toronto is plenty high enough without students having to pay for any unnecessary extras. The York administration, however, has defended its 6.5 per cent licencing fee (ie: logo tax/ royalty payback), saying they must protect the university's good name. Besides, it seems the extra "licence" revenue will be dropped back into the university's budget. How nice! Why not just be up front and call a profit scheme a profit scheme. Let's stop with the semantics.

Administration claims that to remain consistent, it must charge every manufacturer who uses the university name, even if the customer is our own student council. It tries to brush off responsibility by saying the decision is up to the manufacturer to add the initial tax back onto the final sale price.

This is a cop-out. Let's be honest: students wouldn't get charged if the university hadn't charged the factory in the first place. York University Ltd., the North York corporation, is making enough money off its students without this slap in our faces and yank at our wallets.

Is York a place of higher learning or merely a profit-minded corporation? Is each student a bright young mind or just \$2000 in the bank? What comes first: the students or the corporation?

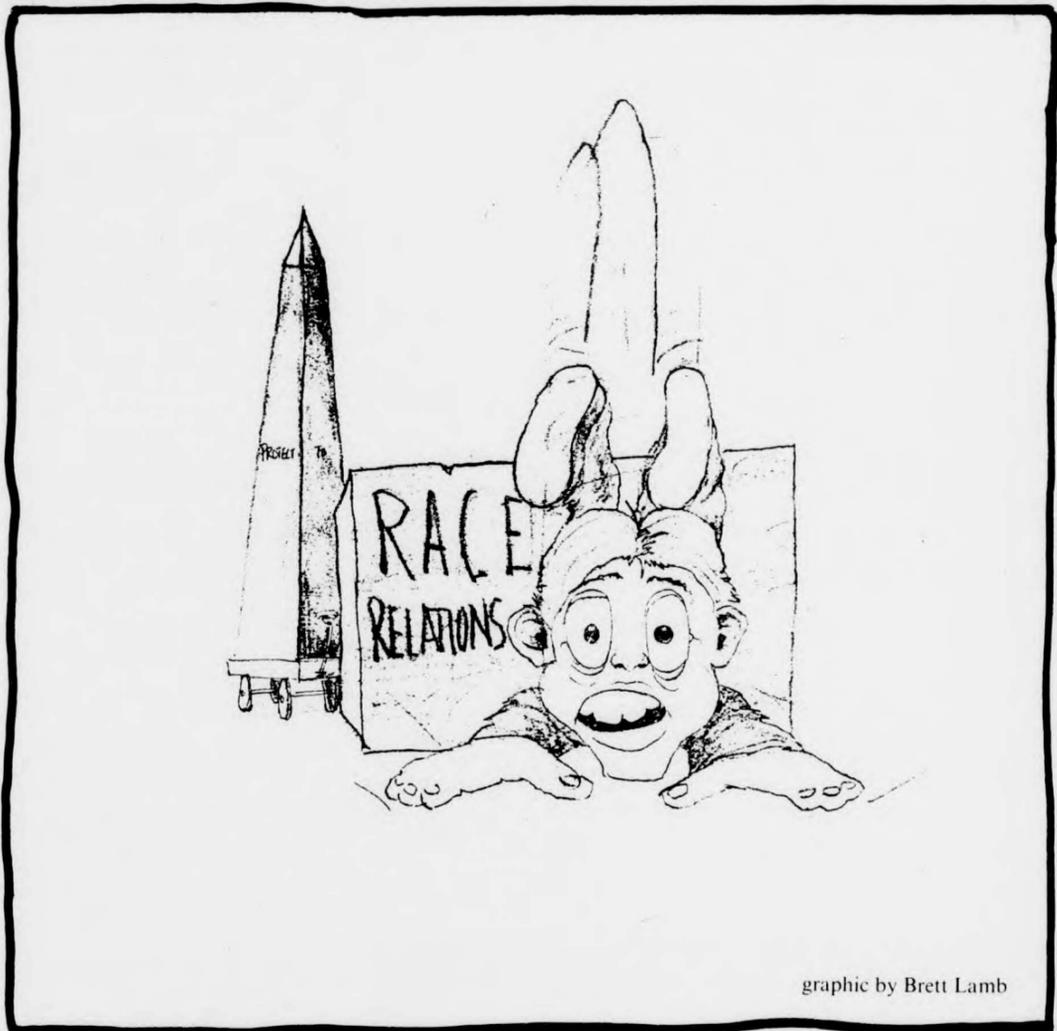
Peter Stathis

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

MAILING ADDRESS:  
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 York University  
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graphic by Brett Lamb

## LETTERS

*Excalibur* welcomes letters to the editor on all topics. We will publish, space permitting, letters up to 500 words in length. They must be typed, double spaced, and accompanied by the writer's name, signature and telephone number. The opinions expressed belong to the writers and do not necessarily reflect those of *Excalibur* staff or directors. However, letters judged to be racist, sexist or libellous by the editor will be refused. All material is subject to editing. All submissions must be addressed to the Editor-in-Chief, Room 111, Central Square.

## Excal goes green — York can be beautiful

To the editor,

Considering it's the summer and there aren't many people around I was impressed that *Excalibur* is still coming out all summer long.

I thought the May 30 issue looked great, especially the "Meech Lake Accordion" cartoon and the green front cover. The front page just proved that York can look beautiful.

I guess it just takes some time to find somewhere they aren't fixing or building anything.

Keep up the good work, *Excal*.

Tracey Agoraki

## University security is very helpful

To the editor,

I am taking my first course at York, at Atkinson College, and a recent incident has positively influenced my impression of the university.

After exiting the campus onto a busy Keele Street on May 28 around 10:00 pm, my car stalled and I could not restart it. I became quite anxious as one of my greatest fears is my car breaking down.

Almost immediately, a car drove up behind me and a couple came out to offer assistance. I later discovered they were off-duty York security officers. They tried several times to start my car, and I took them up on their kind offer to drive me to a nearby towing company. They made sure I was getting the necessary assistance before leaving without waiting for thanks.

These security officers certainly extended their helpfulness much beyond the call of duty when they went out of their way for a stranger.

Sincerely,  
 Maria Jelinek

## Sun review should burn in Hell

To the editor,

I completely disagreed with Andrew Sun's review of MC 900 Foot Jesus in the May 30 *Excalibur*. It was a "hellish" record, not "a Hell of a" record.

The album may sound dense, but it feels dry. It is monotonous. There's no conviction in the rapper's voice. He sounds mechanized. There's no anger or passion or conviction. It's like a robot. He's just conning anyone stupid enough to waste his time.

Maybe records aren't so important, anyway, but I like music. It pisses me off about these guys because they've got a cool name

and really cool cover drawing by Charles Burns. The thing is, the album is better as a poster, than on your record player.

Sorry Andrew, but I don't know where you get your taste. This stuff is dull. If that's all you have to do, I wouldn't mind doing reviews either.

Herschel Marshall

**(Editor's note: Anyone wishing to sign up for record reviews (or films or theatre or concerts) should speak to the editors as soon as possible).**

## Terrorism open letter closed mind

TO THE SMARTIE TERRORIST(S),

You may have won the first round, but there are four quarters to every nerfball match, and I have yet to score.

The official *Excalibur* position is that we do not deal with terrorists. It is up to you to make demands, so that we can reject them out of hand. (By the way, the despoiled smarties have, to nobody's surprise, disappeared in custody. Do you doubt, yet, that we take smartie terrorism very, very seriously?)

The investigation is proceeding, and I expect arrests to be made at any time. Be scared. Be very scared.

Yours,  
 Generalissimo Ivan

# The YFS and OFS Stalkyard

The Stalkyard is a new column that will document and analyze the policies and initiatives of the YFS, York Federation of Students.

by Sal Nensi

The CYSF held an emergency meeting on Sunday, June 3 to discuss two major issues. President Jean Ghomeshi made both motions: first to make CYSF bilingual, second to hold a referendum on joining the OFS (Ontario Federation of Students).

CYSF has officially changed its name to the YFS (York Federation of Students). In addition, the new CYFS will become a bilingual corporation. In French, the name will be FEY (Federation des Etudiant(e)s de York).

There are numerous reasons for the name change. George Sanghera, VP (Programmes), feels that the change to bilingualism will help main campus' relations with Glendon, which is already bilingual. Caroline Winship, VP (Internal), also supports the name change. She said, "the old CYSF was seen in a bad light by the students. Changing the name to YFS/FEY takes away some of the elitist notions created by the old council."

Ghomeshi is concerned that this move will not be fully understood or accepted by the York community and that council will be accused of spending additional funds unnecessarily. But he feels that the name change makes an important statement and that the timing is especially significant.

Ghomeshi then addressed his election promise to fight for a reduction in tuition fees. In order to effect a change in the tuition fees paid by students at York, he said, "we must join with other students across the country to aggressively lobby the government to provide more funding."

To that end, Ghomeshi motioned that an agreement reached between the YFS' negotiating team and OFS be adopted. The details are as follows:

1. OFS waives membership fees owed for 1988/89 and 1989/90 by the YFS. (YFS was \$90,000 in arrears.)
2. YFS pays the \$30,000 yearly fee for 1990/91.
3. YFS holds a referendum in 1990/91 to determine if the students at York wish to become members of OFS in 1991/92.

Ghomeshi is optimistic that OFS membership is "the way forward to fight the dismal situation of tuition fees." He asserted that York students had to become united and involved and, together with their new executive, lobby for their rights. Asked to comment on an ideal situation, Ghomeshi responded: "a freeze on tuition hikes with a move towards the abolition of tuition fees altogether."



## I WRITE WITH AN AXE

### Frog legs and scam

by Brett Gellert

The death of Jim Henson brings up some interesting questions:

Who invented all the other frogs?

Does Jim Henson's estate own the patent on frogs?

Who would even come up with the concept of eating frogs' legs?

Are people in France totally insane? They eat snails too.

Anyway, Jim Henson brought something to everyone's childhood. Who can forget Kermit telling us in that almost hypnotic voice to memorize the alphabet and send vast quantities of our parents' money to Jim Henson Inc. They were fun times once we learned that Big Bird could not fly, leaving us safe to walk around without being bombed by flocks of slow-thinking yellow birds the size of Winabagos.

What I'm trying to get at is that the days of good characters for children are over. Now we are being over-run by hordes of kids with crazed looks in their little eyes, sugar-coated cereal with the nutritional value of styrofoam pumping through their veins, pretending to be human-sized turtles who could easily make Bruce Lee look sick.

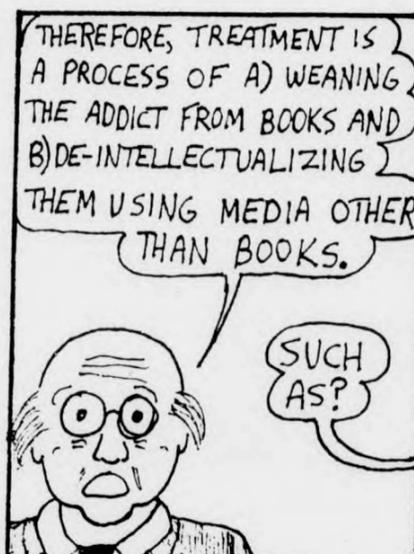
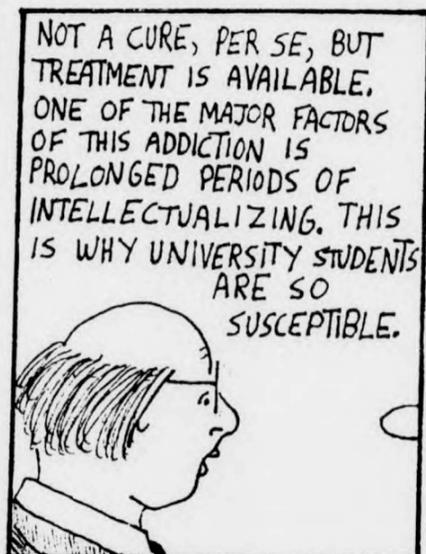
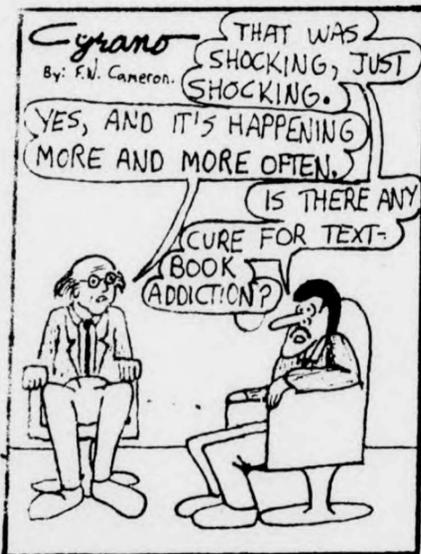
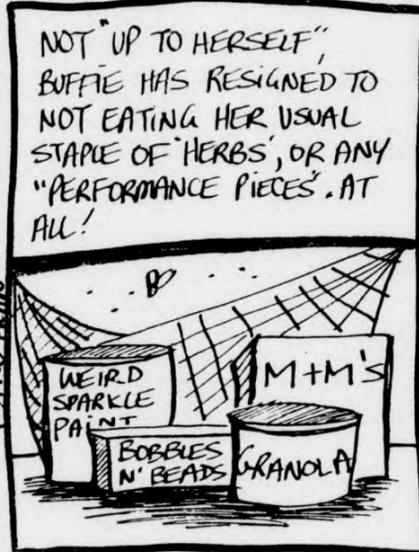
Now I will freely admit that talking turtles with ninja abilities is not a mind-boggling concept. In fact, I find it harder to believe that people in France (remember those wacky French people who charge you \$35 for garlic bread in a cafe) think that Jerry Lewis is a comic genius. If you can cope with that,

giant pizza-eating amphibians (that can talk and get away without paying massive amounts of income tax on toy and T-shirt sales) is as easy as breathing. The problem seems to be that dozens of children are now beating the living daylights out of each other; acting out their favourite bits of the movie, or cartoon, or back of Mutant Ninja cereal boxes. And, of course, there is the danger to the economy. Thousands of brain-damaged adolescents with artificial turtle noses and masks (only \$23.95 in most stores) will flock out into the streets looking for plastic to melt down to make more action figures (just \$125.98 each sold separately). Everything including the Prime Minister's expression will be melted down for more turtles.

As for the old days, all I can say is that you never saw Kermit the Frog pick up a fully automatic machine gun in one hand and a sword in the other and fight gang violence on Sesame Street. I can just see the movie promo now:

"Just when you thought it was safe to go back to the swamp, evil thugs took over Sesame Street. Now, it's up to him to get it back. Mr. Hooper's dead. Guy Smiley rules the town with an iron fist. But Kermit the Frog plays by his own rules. He's a frog who isn't afraid to kick butt. It's time for: THE MERCENARY MUPPET FROM MATTEL!"

Actually, that isn't such a bad idea. The sequel could have Kermit beating the hell out of those wimpy turtles. Think of the toy sales, the cereal commercials, the T-shirts. That's what entertaining children is all about.



**Marshall McLuhan  
after all those years  
page 8**

**More record reviews than  
you can shake an armadillo at  
page 9**

**Dr. Limbo —  
how low can you go?  
page 11**

**Don't just sit there —  
write something!**

## Haunting antiwar film Handmade Hoskins

by Ira Nayman  
*The Raggedy Rawney* directed by Bob Hoskins produced by Handmade Films  
Bob knows acting. Bob knows writing. But, does Bob know anything about directing?  
*The Raggedy Rawney* is the first directing effort by popular British actor Bob Hoskins (who also wrote the screenplay). On their first directing assignment, actors have a tendency to use odd angles, rapid camera movement and other extreme cinematographic tricks (check out Danny De Vito's *Throw Momma From the Train* for proof).  
Happily, Hoskins avoids this pitfall: *The Raggedy Rawney* is a marvelous anti-war fable. Hoskins' direction is rarely showy, from the crisp night photography to magnificent countryside vistas, the direction is always in the service of telling a clear story.  
And, what a story! A young man deserts from an army, dressing as

a woman in order to escape detection. Traumatized, unable to speak, he falls in with a band of gypsies trying to avoid army patrols; they mistake him for a rawney, a mad woman with magical powers. The man falls in love with a young gypsy woman, and shit happens.  
*The Raggedy Rawney* is a charming tale, with fascinating scenes of make believe gypsy life, including a wedding and joyous farm work. The love story is understated (thank goodness!), but, in any case, is only one part of a rich fabric.  
For, despite the sylvan countryside, despite the joy with which the gypsies live, war haunts every frame of the film. One scene early in the film involving a little girl playing with make-up in a barn is both innocent and shocking. Even at the happiest moments, the rawney's presence or the age and infirmities of the gypsy men (all the able bodied young men hav-

ing been pressed into military service) serve as a reminder of the effects of war.  
As Bob Hoskins has stated, war is the real villain of the film. The time is not specific, although the gypsy's partially mechanized army suggests the present or the recent past; *The Raggedy Rawney* is a statement against all wars, fought at any time.  
Bob Hoskins turns in his usual solid performance as Darky, the leader of the gypsies. But, it is Dexter Fletcher, in the title role, and Zoe Nathenson, as the young girl with whom he falls in love, who give the film its most heartfelt performances.  
George Harrison's Handmade Films (*Time Bandits*, *Mona Lisa*, *Withnail and I*, *How To Get Ahead in Advertising*, and on, and on) has another winner on its hands. It almost makes you wish other multi-millionaire rock stars started film production companies.  
Almost.



Zoe Nathenson (LEFT) and Dexter Fletcher (RIGHT) play young lovers in Bob Hoskins marvelous film about gypsies, war and apple wine, *The Raggedy Rawney*.

## Cadillac Man: warmed over wonderful

by Ira Nayman  
*Cadillac Man* directed by Roger Donaldson released by Orion Pictures  
**WARNING:** The following review is rated R—part of the ending is REVEALED. For those who prefer not to know how a movie ends before seeing it, discretion is advised.  
As science progresses, art seems to regress. Creating a film used to be like performing microsurgery on an ailing heart — a long, often painful process resulting in a stronger whole. These days, filmmakers are closer to Dr. Frankenstein, trying to create a functioning whole from various cast off body parts.  
Consider the film *Cadillac Man*. It tells the story of Joey (Robin Williams), a womanizing car salesman who has to make the pitch of his life when a crazed

gunman (Tim Robbins) bursts into his showroom demanding to know which dealer slept with his wife. *Cadillac Man* has more than a few funny moments, some interesting drama and charming performances; you could do much worse for an evening's entertainment.  
But, having Joey talk directly to the camera is more than a little reminiscent of Michael Caine in *Alfie*. The banter between salesmen could have come straight from *Tin Men*. The hostage taking scenario is a close relative of *Dog Day Afternoon*.  
Even the performances, as good as they are, seem recycled.  
Robbins, as Larry, adds a psychotic edge to what is basically a reprise of his character from *Bull Durham*. Williams, who is too likeable to be convincingly sleazy, isn't far removed from his character in *Dead Poet's Society*.  
What's the point? Like photoc-

opies, films that borrow from other films are never as sharp as the originals. When Hollywood based more of their films on novels, at least something new was added to the formula.  
Robin Williams continues to show signs of Woody Allen Disease: the illogical need for great comic performers to prove themselves as serious dramatic actors or directors. The reason seems obvious: while comedians may get the love, serious actors get the respect.  
But, Williams either does not have the courage or is not being allowed to do straight dramatic roles; *Cadillac Man* is another of those movies where the drama is mitigated by wildly improvisational comedy scenes (like *Good Morning, Vietnam*). While Williams is not a bad actor, seeing him in more serious roles is like listening to Black Sabbath played on a Stradivarius.  
That's just not what the instrument was made for.  
And, the Hollywood ending is lame beyond belief! I ordinarily do not like to give away endings, but *Cadillac Man*'s resolution, where everybody who bugged Williams throughout the film either gets something they want and goes away or walks up to him and says that all is forgiven, requires a response.  
Cut it out.  
There is no need (and less logic) to having Joey's shady friend drop in and forgive the \$20,000 debt Joey owes him. Joey, and the audience, should be allowed to simply revel in the fact that he is still alive. But, no — a half dozen plot complications are resolved in the final two minutes of the movie.  
*Cadillac Man* is a very easy film to like. Unfortunately, it's a very hard film to justify.

## No Future

So, you say you didn't like *Back to the Future, Part II* because it was too science fiction? Well, not to worry — not only does *Back to the Future, Part III* not have much science fiction, but it doesn't really have much that's different or original.  
*Future III* has Marty McFly (Michael J. Fox, BELOW RIGHT) finding the time travelling DeLorean in 1955, and having to travel back to 1855 to save Doc Brown (Christopher Lloyd, BELOW LEFT) from Biff Tannen's ancestor, Buford "Mad Dog" Tannen (both played by Thomas F. Wilson). Things are complicated when Doc falls in love with a schoolteacher (Mary Steenburgen, LEFT). Not to worry, though — the requisite happy ending arrives in time, complete with trite, superfluous moral.  
Director Robert Zemeckis (RIGHT) has grafted his time travel story to the western, with indifferent results. The only original or interesting thing about *Back to the Future, Part III* is the ending, but it's not worth sitting through the rest of the film to get to.



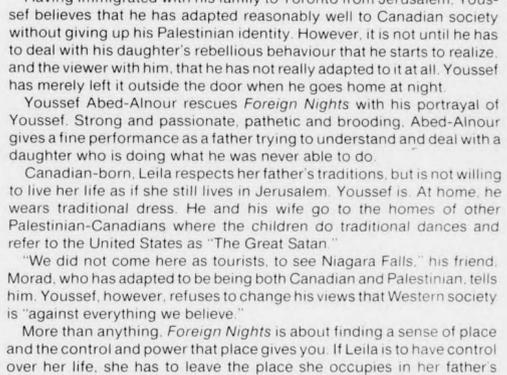
## Chopsticks and Matzo Balls Stereotypes do not make movie

by Jim Russell  
*Chopsticks and Matzo Balls* directed by Peter Wang distributed by Festival Films  
If you had ABSOLUTELY nothing to do one evening and were considering going to see *Chopsticks and Matzo Balls*, I would advise you instead to sit on your front porch and watch the cars pass by. Not only would you be putting your time to better use, but the traffic would be more "provocative, humorous and insightful" than this film claims to be.  
*Chopsticks and Matzo Balls*, according to the press bump, is supposed to be a "film that makes fun of racial stereotypes and cultural differences," but the writer (Peter Wang) never makes use of the absurdities and contradictions inherent in the subject matter. Instead, the story becomes

bogged down by the very stereotypes Wang wanted to ridicule.  
Granted, there are a lot of laughs in *Chopsticks and Matzo Balls*; unfortunately, they are confined to the actors laughing at their own jokes. No doubt, the movie was meant to be funny, but the story is handled in a decidedly "unfunny" manner.  
Take, for example, the star of *Chopsticks and Matzo Balls*, Arthur Weiss (Marc Hayashi). Arthur is a brilliant, Oriental laser scientist whose spaced out Jewish mother thinks she's Oriental. Funny, eh?  
And, then we have police Lieutenant Lu (Peter Wang — director, writer, actor), a guy with all the mannerisms of Inspector Clouseau, but none of the humour. He does, however, have a whole platoon of Keystone Kops under his command, including a black sergeant whose main contribution to the story is a recurring donkey laugh. Getting funnier?  
Arthur has a brainy girlfriend (Maryann Urbano) who speaks eight languages and strives to attain the ultimate spiritual experience: orgasm via meditation. Great, eh? Can hardly catch your breath, eh? Wait! There's more! You see, Arthur gets so frustrated with his girlfriend's unwillingness to engage in conventional sex that he runs into a shower stall and masturbates.  
Now, THAT'S FUNNY!

So much for the humour of *Chopsticks and Matzo Balls*. Now, let me turn your attention to the equally lame and inane "provocative and insightful" side of the film.  
Arthur, after accidentally blasting a hole through his research partner's head, joins the ranks of the unemployed. He goes from job interview to job interview until he finally nets a job with a slick high tech firm that needs his expertise to build a laser rifle.  
Our hero is so happy to be gainfully employed that he never stops to ask himself, or his employer, what the rifle is going to be used for. It is only after the rifle has been successfully field tested that Arthur figures out that his employer is planning to use the weapon for nefarious purposes, and enlists the aid of Lieutenant Lu to thwart his plans.  
Wang, who got the idea for this film from his real life as a laser technician troubled by his conscience, wanted to follow up his previous film, *The Great Wall*, with "funny movies that work on many levels." What he has instead given us is a 90 minute film in search of a reason for its own existence. It's a story with the moral "modern technology kills," to quote Lieutenant Lu, and that scientists shouldn't do research for military purposes. Now, that's novel.  
You shouldn't assume, from what I've said so far, that *Chopsticks and Matzo Balls* has nothing going for it. True, the characterizations are paper thin, and the acting is solid walnut. Yes, the dialogue is so bad it's embarrassing.

And, yes, the cinematographer had difficulty focusing on moving targets, and the editor did join the scenes together with the same dexterity that I employ to hem the bottom of my pants.  
Still, the lighting was good, and I really liked the way the opening credits flashed on the screen — very unique. So, if you're into snazzy credits and nice lighting, go ahead, spend your \$7.50.  
I give *Chopsticks and Matzo Balls* a 000 out of 10, and it really doesn't matter where you put the dismal (sic) point.  
**Finding a sense of place**  
by Paul Gazzola  
*Foreign Nights* directed by Izidore K. Musallam distributed by Norstar Entertainment Inc.  
It would be easy to dismiss *Foreign Nights* as just another teenage-rebels-against-too-strict-father film, despite the ethnic twist that the family is Palestinian.  
If the film had focused on Leila, the rebelling daughter, I would do just that. While she captures the confusion and uncertainty of someone forced to run away from home, Terri Hawkes simply lacks the rage or anger that goes along with the confusion. She spends too much of the film looking dazed and confused.  
But, her father.  
Having immigrated with his family to Toronto from Jerusalem, Youssef believes that he has adapted reasonably well to Canadian society without giving up his Palestinian identity. However, it is not until he has to deal with his daughter's rebellious behaviour that he starts to realize, and the viewer with him, that he has not really adapted to it at all. Youssef has merely left it outside the door when he goes home at night.  
Youssef Abed-Alnour rescues *Foreign Nights* with his portrayal of Youssef. Strong and passionate, pathetic and brooding, Abed-Alnour gives a fine performance as a father trying to understand and deal with a daughter who is doing what he was never able to do.  
Canadian-born, Leila respects her father's traditions, but is not willing to live her life as if she still lives in Jerusalem. Youssef is, at home, he wears traditional dress. He and his wife go to the homes of other Palestinian-Canadians where the children do traditional dances and refer to the United States as "The Great Satan."  
"We did not come here as tourists, to see Niagara Falls," his friend, Morad, who has adapted to being both Canadian and Palestinian, tells him. Youssef, however, refuses to change his views that Western society is "against everything we believe."  
More than anything, *Foreign Nights* is about finding a sense of place and the control and power that place gives you. If Leila is to have control over her life, she has to leave the place she occupies in her father's house.  
The scene that sums up Youssef's plight is also possibly one that sums up the whole movie: Youssef and Morad are searching for Leila in the dregs of Toronto because Youssef, thinking the worst of his daughter, is convinced she has become a prostitute.  
So, there they are, Morad sheepish and curious, Youssef aloof and self-righteous, looking at hookers. Inevitably, Youssef is propositioned; his refusal is indignant. Offended by his belittling attitude, the hooker, disturbing in her pancake make-up, challenges him.  
"Are you afraid of me?" she yells. Youssef, possibly without realizing the significance of his answer, says yes. The prostitute represents all his fears; all the evil he sees in Western society. She is a person who has no use for his rules and traditions and, though in a twisted way, is an independent woman.  
There's not much chance that Leila is going to become a prostitute or forsake her heritage, but the fact that she could and, there would be nothing he could do about it, agonizes Youssef. Simply by leaving Leila, Youssef's sense of place has changed, and with it, his control.



From left to right, Youssef Abed-Alnour, Mohammad Bacri and Paul Morasutti worry about Youssef's headstrong daughter in the Canadian film *Foreign Nights*.



IT'S FOR YOU: Robin Williams (LEFT) and Tom Robbins (RIGHT) play broken telephone in *Cadillac Man*.

# The messenger has a new medium

Herbert Marshall McLuhan: *The Medium is the Messenger*. Edited by Philip Marchand. Vintage Books.

Twenty years seems short. His idea that a medium of communication is the message.



Philip Marchand is candid about McLuhan's work, and the difficulty of writing about a person who has

been so widely read. If you're not familiar with his work, you won't want to read this.

Marchand does a great job of explaining the concepts from McLuhan's work.

Marchand is candid about McLuhan's work, and the difficulty of writing about a person who has

Editing is a difficult job. It's a profession that requires a lot of patience and attention to detail.

Marchand has done a great job of editing this book. He has made it easy to read and understand.

Marchand is candid about McLuhan's work, and the difficulty of writing about a person who has

Since the sixties, McLuhan has dropped from public consciousness. His study confined to mass communications courses which his writing helped legitimize.

Marchand acknowledges that much of McLuhan's fame was a product of the sixties. A time of great social change, people were more receptive to his radical ideas than at any time before or since.

Marchand is candid about McLuhan's work, and the difficulty of writing about a person who has

## Canadian who made a difference

The medium is the message. The global village is hot and cold. The writing of Herbert Marshall McLuhan, the dropped the first in order to distinguish himself from his father, has had a profound effect on the way we view the media. Canada's intellectual comet, he was called, and "The prophet of the electronic age." At the height of his fame, this tweedy University of Toronto English professor was supported by such diverse personalities as Buckminster Fuller, Pierre Trudeau and Woody Allen. Since the sixties, McLuhan has dropped from public consciousness, his study confined to mass communications courses which his writing helped legitimize. By

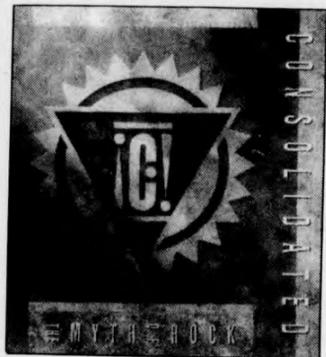
and large, said Philip Marchand, author of *Marshall McLuhan: The Medium and the Messenger*, the still remains to be discovered. Marchand wrote McLuhan's biography because he believed McLuhan's importance went beyond his twenty years ago popularity. "I think he's the brightest intellect Canada has produced," Marchand said, "one of the few Canadians who really made a difference in the world." Marchand acknowledged that much of McLuhan's fame was a product of the sixties. A time of great social change, people were more receptive to his radical ideas than at any time before or since. Not only that, but they were willing to overlook, and even embrace, some of the more problematic aspects of his work.

A collection of handwritten notes and annotations on a page, including phrases like "adding", "circles", "no", "by D", "possibly be", "ure in the", "Marchand", "outline", "an", "way", "self never", "people", "work", "book", "will", "Chance".

# PLATTER CHATTER



## The Myth of Consolidated



**Consolidated**  
The Myth of Rock  
Nettwerk Records

by Peter Stathis

Solidarity is about the fight against corporate fascism.

A sharp-edged hybrid between Tackhead and Public Enemy, Consolidated's album, *The Myth of Rock*, lampoons the implicit prejudice directed against minority groups by big government, big business and mass media.

The song list reads like a political call to arms: Fight The Fascists, White America Male (which samples an actual Ku Klux Klan chant), Stop The War Against The Black Community (a conspiracy to invoke martial law under the guise of the war on drugs), There Is A Mountain Filled With Blood, This Is A Collective and Message To The People.

Consolidated shows a flawless use of sampling mixed in with a massive drum/bass assault. The music sounds like a shotgun blast of anger — all encompassing and devastating. A perfect blend of meat-beat and sword-words, Consolidated songs will have youngsters dancing in the discos, and everyone else waking up from their slumber of ignorance.

Mass consumerism, the profit-minded music business, the two-tiered school system (which supports an elite and ghettoizes everyone else), and anti-abortion legislation are all on the Consolidated chopping block.

*The Myth of Rock* is anti-conspiracy to combat the cor-

porate offensive on individuality and authentic democracy. Information and entertainment in one loud bang! Buy this record and snap out of it.

## Buckwheat's Creole mix is hot



by Andrew Sun

**Buckwheat Zydeco**  
Where There's Smoke, There's Fire  
Island Records

From the red peppers on the cover, it should be obvious that this record will be hot!

Zydeco is a musical style from southwest Louisiana with only one purpose — to move bodies! It's a gumbo mix of dixie, blue grass, polka, rural blues and other things Creole French.

Among the most popular propagators of this style is Buckwheat Zydeco. Born Stanley Dural Jr., the nickname (yes!) is due to his resemblance to the *Our Gang* character.

With his *Its Sont Partis* Band, Buckwheat has been preaching his brand of Zydeco in bars and clubs across America and the world since the late 70s. It's a music infused with a hard driving rush that is more urban than rural, more bluesy than melodic.

Where *There's Smoke, There's Fire* is a good example of Buckwheat Zydeco's version of this American traditional music.

Buckwheat gains something and loses something from recording in the studio. On the plus side, this album achieves a more soulful feel, even more than his previous studio work, with subtleties not properly appreciated on a sweaty dance floor. No doubt the introspection is attributable in part to producer David Hidalgo, better

known as the lead singer of Los Lobos, a group known for its respect of traditional music on both sides of the border.

What the record loses is obviously the unrestrained liveliness found on a stage. However, the choice of material — especially covers — help to cover this handicap, providing some particularly stirring moments.

Buckwheat's renditions of The Stones' "Beast of Burden," and Hank Williams Sr.'s "Hey Good Lookin'" (which features guest vocalist Dwight Yoakam) are two choice cuts of melancholic zydeco. These tracks are somewhat hindered by Buckwheat's weak vocals, but his accordion playing could move crocodiles to cry real tears.

The up-tempo stuff is very infectious; Buckwheat's zydeco hybrid demands to be blasted loud in a steamy bar. The playing is spirited, and one can only wish the songs could be played out without having to fade after four and a half minutes. Some of the tunes really demand a no holds barred accordion spree from Buckwheat.

Where *There's Smoke, There's Fire* may not be a five alarm signal, but there's certainly enough heat there to make it worth warming up to.

## Hey — Lava Hay



by Gary Verrinder

**Lava Hay**  
Lava Hay  
Nettwerk/Capitol-EMI

This debut album from Toronto's Lava Hay is a departure from what they were like a few years ago, when I had the chance to see them at the Cabana Room, opening for some band I can't even remember.

Lava Hay, who now reside in

Vancouver, are the duo of Michelle Gould and Suzanne Little. On this album, they recruited members of Grapes of Wrath, The Waterwalk and The Tear Garden to back them up.

"Baby" starts the album off in a sort of John Cougar-Melloncamp way, but Lava Hay's voices soon take over. Michelle and Suzanne have the best voices I've heard in a long time. A great organ solo makes "Baby" more than just another pretty boy meets girl song.

"What Will You Do" starts more like a Lava Hay song — two folksy guitars and the women singing in tandem. The third song features great flute work from Bud Korz. "Holding On" is a country gospel song that even has lap steel guitar adding to the effect.

"The Alley Song," a sort of psychedelic song which ends side one, is a drastic change from everything else on this platter. It sort of reminds me of The Incredible String Band and Donovan (without the LSD).

"Won't Matter" is more of the same, this time sounding more like Patti Smith. "Waiting For an Answer" contributes to Lava Hay's mellow atmosphere. This is a beautiful pop song that is enjoyable to listen to.

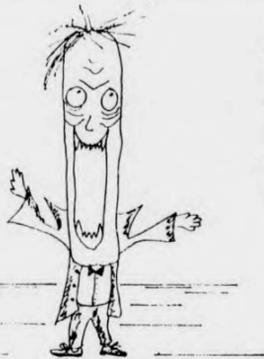
My favourite song on the album is "My Friend," which starts off as a country ballad, but turns into a foot stomper; it's one of those songs that you would put on to get every one to dance. Play this at your next party — no spectators at this hoedown. The great vocal work and drumming make me wish the rest of the album was as spirited as this song.

Lava Hay's debut album is definitely worth checking out, although the slower songs like "My Friend" and "The Alley Song" are what makes *Baby* a must for any person who is serious about pop music. At times, Lava Hay are reminiscent of Suzanne Vega, K. D. Lang or The Feelies.

Lava Hay has definitely changed since its days as a Toronto bar band; they seem ready to make the jump to higher levels of success. Of special interest to York students: Michelle Gould is actually a graduate of the university. All the more reason to go out and buy this album.

Lava Hay will be touring Canada with 54:40, so look for them at the Diamond Club in Toronto within the next month

## Write for Excalibur



graphic by Dave Dumto

they'll sing your praises

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3 <i>Consolidated</i>	Courage	Intrepid/Capitol-EMI
4 <i>National Velvet (C)</i>	Courage	Intrepid/Capitol-EMI
5 <i>the Stone Roses</i>	Fools Gold	Silvertone/BMG
6 <i>Public Enemy</i>	Fear of a Black Planet	Dee Jam/CBS
7 <i>the Fall</i>	Extradiate	Polygram
8 <i>Michelle Shocked</i>	Live	Polygram
9 <i>Eleventh Dream Day</i>	Borsch	Atlantic/WEA
10 <i>Digital Underground</i>	Sex Packets	Tommy Boy

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# Pious winks: black comedy is becoming grey

by Steve Gravestock

Black Comedy emerged from the failure of humanism and its excessively optimistic view of human nature. The genre requires a cruel, somewhat inhuman distance from the horrible events on which it focusses. To some extent, human beings must become objects, otherwise we wouldn't be able to laugh at the cruelties the form depicts.

At the same time, if the artists don't enter into their characters' follies to some degree, their works have no human reality at all. The genre attempts to transcend irrationality and disaster by seeing it comically, from a distance, evoking a semi-hysterical, mystical response.

Normally, when black comedies fail, it is because the artists don't have the right moral approach. If they are afraid to empathize with their characters or share their follies, their films seem cold and inhuman; if they moralize too much, they don't allow the audience to enjoy the nastiness.

Black comedy has enjoyed a recent vogue in Hollywood, but the filmmakers who have exploited the genre show little understanding of how it works. They make blatantly liberal humanist breakdowns in social order, and then deny that they mean anything.

According to them, if we just act a little more rationally and humanely, things can always change. These filmmakers often soft-pedal nastiness or keep their distance from it. They want the audience to respect them for being hip enough to laugh at human irrationality, but have nothing to offer them other than traditional pieties.

They wink at us piously.

These films resemble the spy farces that abounded in the 1960s. *Heathers*, *War of the Roses* and *She-Devil* all falter primarily because the people who made them were too moralistic.

Michael Lehmann's *Heathers* (written by Daniel Waters) is about a teenage couple (played by Winona Ryder and Christian Slater) which systematically dispatches their cliquish, almost fascistic fellow students, disguising their murders as suicides.

All of the performers are good, particularly Ryder, Slater, Kim Walker (who plays a member of

one of the cliques) and Penelope Milford (who plays a left-over hippie teacher). The dialogue is intermittently brilliant, including some nifty references to pop culture.

Unfortunately, *Heathers* is centred around Ryder's Veronica, who is eminently sensible and unbelievably "nice." Consequently, the audience never doubts that she'll do the "right thing." We aren't allowed to enjoy the nasy, witty bits because the filmmakers undercut it with their consistent preaching. The film fizzles into a sappy, condescending ending when Veronica rejects an offer of friendship from one of the cooler teens to spend time with an unattractive, uncool one.

Susan Seidelman's *She-Devil* (written by Strugatz and Burns from the novel *The Life and Loves of a She-Devil* by Fay Weldon) tries to be a bitchy revenge fantasy, a feminist *Kind Hearts and Coronets*. Accountant Bob Patchett (Ed Begley Jr.) leaves his frumpy wife, Ruth (Roseanne Barr), for thin, elegant, wealthy romance novelist Mary Fisher (Meryl Streep). Ruth then wreaks revenge on the pair.

The Strugatz-Burn script has a couple of good ideas in it, but it never goes far enough. Ruth is too virtuous; she uses people, but never cruelly. It's a very chaste, very tepid revenge fantasy. Inexplicably, she's never really angry at Fisher, who is the real she-devil. After all, she is as much to blame for the affair as Bob is. Worse, the writers turn Ruth into a defender and supporter of oppressed, downtrodden women. She starts an employment agency which recruits women which the world

(meaning their husbands) has left behind.

The film features a great performance by Meryl Streep. She satirizes a romance novelist's pretensions and fatuities expertly. Her performance is undercut by Seidelman's direction, though; whenever Streep gets something going, Seidelman cuts away. She lacks the intelligence to center the film on Streep, and keeps trying, instead, for a postmodernist tone. (In Seidelman's eyes, postmodernism means a lot of references to television and pointless pop culture. She makes you long for Chaucer.)

Remember the scene in *Bringing Up Baby* where Katherine Hepburn broke her heel and limped around repeating, "I was born on the side of a hill?" All of Seidelman's projects seem to have been born on the side of a hill.

Like *She-Devil* and *Heathers*, *The War of the Roses* squanders a decent premise. A black comedy about the breakup of a YUPpie marriage is a good idea; it affords the opportunity to criticize YUPpie acquisitiveness and materialism.

Unfortunately, director Danny De Vito and writer Michael Leeson focus instead on the couple's irrational, vindictive behaviour. This could have worked if De Vito and Leeson had empathized with the

Roses. However, they view the couple's behaviour from the outside.

De Vito and Leeson include a running commentary by a family friend who cautions us endlessly on the dangers of acting as the Roses do. We can't laugh at the events because we are constantly being reminded of how harmful they are. This commentary cripples the film, even if we are ultimately grateful for it because of De Vito's performance.

Turner and Douglas fare much worse. Since De Vito and Leeson

parodies Hitchcock nicely, though obtrusively, and the parodic musical flourishes he includes are occasionally amusing. However, he's a real control freak, hung up on technique rather than content, and he refuses to get down and dirty. The film feels far too cold. Unlike *Heathers* or *She-Devil*, it doesn't work on any level.

The only black comedy made recently which escaped the moralistic trap was *Vampire's Kiss* (directed by Robert Bierman, written by Max Frye). The film is about

## They want to be hip, but offer traditional pieties

never empathize with them, they look like nasty psychos. The filmmakers have undercut their point by placing the breakup twenty years into the marriage rather than four or five as originally planned; there's nothing irrational about people growing apart after twenty years. In fact, it's totally logical.

De Vito and Leeson have structured the film very poorly. The battles between the Roses aren't scaled; they don't get grander or more ruthless. As a result, the film becomes very tedious very quickly.

De Vito is a competent enough director, even skillful at times. He

a YUPpie Don Juan, played by Nicolas Cage, who thinks he's a vampire. His psychosis results from being rejected by a woman; ordinarily, he rejects them.

Bierman and Frye present the character in graphic, frequently hilarious detail. It's quite unsettling, and often cruel, but at least it contains some honest emotions and observations; the filmmakers don't just waste our time complimenting themselves on how witty they are while dispensing pieties.

That's a lot more than you can say for the makers of *Heathers* (despite the obvious talent that went into it), *She-Devil* or *War of the Roses*.



From left to right, Meryl Streep, Ed Begley Jr. and Roseanne Barr in *She-Devil*. Let's face it: black comedy isn't what it used to be, if it ever was.



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# Can you Dr. Limbo under a snake?

by Peter Stathis

**W**hen I was a kid, I was petrified of snakes. I'd get nervous, hide behind corners, cringing in terror: genuine, teeth-chattering fear. Well, I entered the seventh grade and my class went to a zoological gardens where we had to pet the buggers.

I darn near soiled my pants.

Later in high school, I met this weird guy who built his own terrariums and went to the swamp to capture reptiles and amphibians. After helping him one day, I realized that the snake was basically a

stupid creature with nothing to gain by biting me. So now I don't mind them. In fact, I think they're slightly cool.

I never had a chance to ask, but I figure Dr. Limbo must like snakes too. He just strikes me as the kind of guy who would. I guess it's his snake-skin guitar strap that gives it away.

The doctor of Limbotics (Queen Street hep breeds with Memphis and Mississippi jazz/blues) played at the Siboney club last Thursday night. The Limbosaurus was back in Toronto after a 10-year hiatus in the States. Along with a four piece

horn section and scorching guest guitarist, Gordie Johnson, Limbo bewitched both the curious and the fanatical as we exalted his spike-bearded splendour. The good doctor chatted graciously with us in between a spirited set of his cheap dance music.

After a few songs, I could really savour limbosity's unique style, so me and my friend tried dropping the chorus of one song into the next. It usually worked. That's the kind of music I like. Don't think. Just toes tapping and beer flowing.

Cha!

## bohemia

a column by Ira Nayman

**T**here is something about the arts that makes otherwise hardened businesspeople go all mushy inside. Instead of talking about "cost per thousand" and "economies of scale," they suddenly say things like, "Good art will always find its audience."

It's most unbecoming.

As it happens, Canada is full of great artists creating worthwhile, meaningful works. That they will find their audience is by no means certain, however; in fact, without government support (so reviled by businesspeople, except when they need help), much of what we take for granted as Canadian culture would not exist.

Consider television. American producers see the United States as their primary market, and usually expect to make their money back from American sales. What they make in foreign sales is pure profit, gravy, although very welcome.

It is usual, therefore, for American programmes to be sold in other countries for a tenth of what they would cost to produce. Obviously, it would make economic sense for foreign networks to buy American shows rather than produce their own.

This is, in fact, what happens on Canadian commercial networks; it explains why they are so dominated by American programmes. If there were no Canadian Broadcasting Corporation, if the government had no Canadian content regulations, there would be no Canadian television pro-

grammes produced at all. And, similar arguments could be made for film, music, book publishing and magazines.

(Compounding the problem is Canada's closeness to the States, which makes us targets for their publicity bumph. The Carson Show, People Magazine and Entertainment Tonight are basically advertisements for upcoming works of popular art for which Canada has no counterpart. It, therefore, takes more effort (read: advertising) just to let Canadians know the work of their fellow citizens is out there.)

Rather than deal with these economic realities, businesspeople you wouldn't trust with a television converter make pronouncements like, "Government support of the arts leads to mediocrity." Well, of course, any art form is bound to produce its share of mediocrity (remember Sturgeon's Law). But, the 1980's were a time of excellence in Canadian publishing, film and TV, excellence threatened by the Conservative government's lack of commitment to funding for the arts.

Why is business so coy when it comes to the economics of art? There are a lot of cable companies, radio station owners and other businesspeople who aren't making as much money as they could be in an unregulated environment. They are good corporate citizens who seem to attract vocal free market advocates.

Don't be fooled. While not every decision or its results may be worthy, government support for the arts definitely is.



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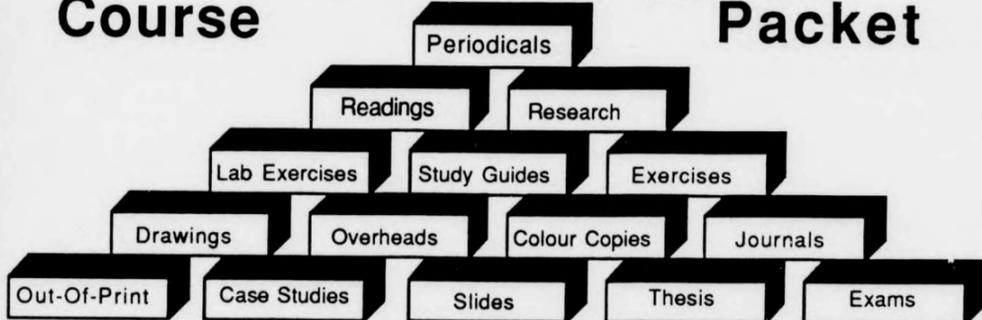
If they came in every day, it would take Kelly and his teammates 10 years to eat every possible combination of an Ainger bagel or bread.

I hope they start soon!

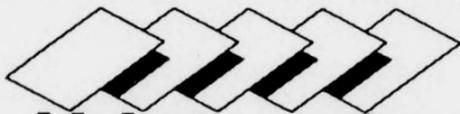
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SECTION

# What you see is what you get

## York summer athletics: a lot of balls

by Riccardo Sala

**D**o your own thing. That's the unofficial motto of York's varsity athletes when summer rolls around. Time to practice on your own or find a summer job. So it's also a time when intrepid sportswriters have to dig deeper for stories and keep tabs on what York's athletes are doing for the summer.

**TRACK & FIELD.** Under coach Sue Summers, the Yeomen and Yeowomen were in San Diego for a two week training camp, returning May 22nd.

"The York facility is booked during May for meets," Summers explained, adding, "San Diego gives the athletes a change of scenery."

"Sixteen team members made the trip down. The athletes paid their own airfare and the balance was fund-raised," she added.

Other team members are in-

involved in qualifying for the National team. One who has already done so is Frances Gareau. As Summers puts it, this is an off year for international competition, a goal to which many York track and field athletes aspire.

"This year there are no big competitions such as the Pan-Am, Commonwealth or Olympic Games taking place, so it's going to be a pretty quiet summer," she said.

"The Canadian Senior Championships which are held the first weekend of August. That's what we're really going for," Summers added.

The team still trains, five o'clock, Monday to Friday. "However, either because athletes have gone home (for the summer) or are working, there are only about ten to fifteen who come out consistently," Summers said.

**YEOMEN BASKETBALL.** Last

year's squad was as green as they come. With only one veteran, Mark Bellai, this rookie laden team finished fourth in the OUAA standings.

This year, most players will be returning with one year of experience under their belt. "We'll have five recruits hopefully," coach Bob Bain said. These include Bob Hitchon of Belleville's Moira High School, Chris Pollmann of Eastern Commerce and Clive Anderson, who played for three years at Acadia and is studying law at Osgoode.

Sir Sanford Fleming's Roberto Feig is currently upgrading to be allowed into York.

For the fifth recruit "we're looking at a ball-handling guard and a big player," Bain said.

OUAA rules keep Bain from working out with the team until the third week of September. "Theoretically I can't organize anything with the team," he said, "though I

can work with individual players," he added.

"Right now several Yeomen and high-school recruits are playing down at U of T's summer league. It's informal, but they have referees," Bain said.

**YEOMEN VOLLEYBALL.** The 1988-89 Yeomen Volleyballers were coach Wally Dyba's "Dream Team," a squad that ranked among the best in North America. Last year the team took a slight dip in fortunes, going six and four in league play and losing the battle to Queen's for the Ontario East Division title.

This squad is split up for the summer, with two players, Dexter Abrams and Adrian Adore trying out for the National team in Calgary. They will be joining former Yeoman and National team member Bill Knight.

"York is running a players camp June 24th to 29th and we are expecting about 70 athletes, lar-



gely from high school," Dyba said.

"The National team will be at York June 18th for a game against the Czechs," Dyba said. "From July 9th to 13th we're holding a coaching certification clinic."

Next year "we are going to have a more experienced team definitely," Dyba feels, "though I won't know until June which recruits are joining the team for sure."

**AS WELL.** Watch out for more news regarding the Yeomen wrestlers. Chances are there won't be a team next year, though that depends on who you talk to. And, if there is, what type of team will it be? Likely not of the same calibre as the 88-89 squad which took the CIAU title.

## Chambers stars

by Josh Rubin

**T**he man who coached the Yeomen to their first CIAU hockey title is going to the Quebec Nordiques.

After three years as an assistant with the Minnesota North Stars, Dave Chambers has been cast into the NHL's version of a bottomless pit, replacing firebrand Michel Bergeron as the Nordiques head coach.

In taking over Quebec, Chambers has his work cut out for him: last season, the Nords finished dead last in the league. That, coupled with the team's porous defence are certain to make a rough ride. Chambers, though, feels that patience is necessary. "It's going to take time. They're the worst team in hockey right now by

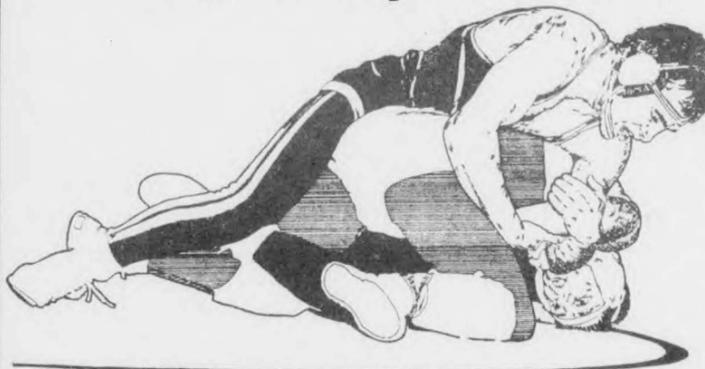
a long shot. Defence is definitely a priority."

A couple of bright spots on Chamber's roster, however, will be young forward Joe Sakic and defenceman Curtis Letyschyn. It is no secret that CIAU coaches are highly touted as being teachers of the game, and that is exactly what this young Quebec squad needs.

In an exclusive interview with *Excalibur*, Chambers also confirmed that uncertainty over the splitting of the North Stars franchise for the 1991-92 season played a large part in his decision to join the Nords.

Chambers is also sensitive to the nationalist feelings currently running high in Quebec. "I think it's important for me to have a francophone assistant. I'm also going to be brushing up on my own French."

## Don't expect another Hulk



by Riccardo Sala

**R**esembling less a York varsity team than a collection of ambitious wrestlers, four members of the Twist & Shout club made the trek to Edmonton for the Canadian Open.

Held the weekend of May 12 the four, Ari Taub, Courtney Lewis, Roy Su Wah Sing and Roger Levesque along with coach Kimin Kim took the opportunity to test their mettle against the best Canadian grapplers. Placing well at this

event qualifies wrestlers for a spot at the Canada Cup, at the end of June.

In the 57kg weight class, Roy Suh Wah Sing placed 7th.

Levesque, who had come on strong in the Ontario finals to advance to the CIAU championships, fell short here and did not place.

Lewis in the 74kg class finished 8th while Taub in the 100kg wrestled to a 5th place finish.

Former York wrestler Paul Hughes took bronze in the

62kg class.

Ontario took the provincial title while British Columbia's Burnaby Mountain Club won the club title.

The top six from each weight at the Open advance to the Canada Cup. However, wrestlers who finish lower than sixth can petition to be included. Permission is based upon past results. Both Sing and Lewis will petition to be allowed into the Canada Cup.

There is a good chance that there will be no Yeoman wrestling squad next year. Coach Kimin Kim will not be returning. Lewis, a team stalwart will be gone also as will be others. Taub and Levesque are likely transferring to another school.

"I'm not sure they can save the programme now," Sing says. He will likely finish his degree at York he says, but if there is no wrestling, then he will commute to Hamilton to train with McMaster in preparation for the Barcelona Olympics.

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