

Pinpoint

October 1996 • Vol. 1, No. 1

A quarterly supplement to Humber Et Cetera

- Uncovering the myth about Asian super students
- The fight for academic freedom
- What's wrong with the public school system?

Playing the education game

Michael Hatton wants 100,000 student letter-writers to help him sleep better at night.

The head of Humber College's School of Media Studies says Ontario universities want to hang on to their current monopoly of handing out degrees. And, he says, private schools are itching to get a bigger piece of the post secondary pie. He fears both may get their way if a recently appointed advisory panel tells Education Minister John Snobelen to implement a two-tier system of post secondary education - one where the rich can pay for higher quality education and others will have to settle for cheaper, degree-less programs at community colleges.

Hatton, and others like him in the college system, want the five people on the panel who will help decide the fate of over 300,000 post-secondary students to be inundated with a flood of mail.

The current system of post secondary education in Ontario, with its division of degree-granting universities and diploma-granting community colleges, is being put under scrutiny. Snobelen, who just last year publicly extolled the virtues of "creating a crisis" in education, wants the panel to find new ways of dealing with increasing demand and alleged financial strains. One option for the panel is to advise Snobelen to licence private institutions, like Toronto's DeVry Institute of Technology or Sutherland-Chan Schools Inc., to hand out degrees, as long as their students can fork out the required \$10,000 to \$20,000 a year.

Imagining such a future is not difficult. Critics of private, degree-granting schools envision young students across Ontario surveying their post secondary options. Option one - non-degree-granting community colleges. Option two - more expensive university degree programs. Or option three - private and very expensive degree-granting institutions where the best quality education or training is almost assured. Most Ontarians couldn't even dream of affording the third option, critics say.

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by **Matthew Guerin & Christine Siemiernik**



"The capacity to learn and the organ with which to do so are present in every person's soul, so one must turn one's whole soul from the world of becoming until it can endure to contemplate reality."

-Plato

"That everyone can learn to read will ruin in the long run not only writing, but thinking too."
- Friedrich Nietzsche

Pinpoint

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Letter from the Editor

Joe Oppedisano



In his *Republic*, Plato envisioned an ideal society where education would be tailored according to one's standing in society. The ruling class would be educated in the maths and sciences, artisans would study the arts and philosophy, the more physically inclined would be trained as soldiers, and the working class would simply be educated in their intended trade.

According to Plato, universal education would create chaos and endanger the existing class structure, a structure which, for many, was key in the maintenance of reason and order in society.

Plato wrote, "good education and upbringing, if preserved, will lead to men of a better nature, and these in turn, if they cling to their education, will improve with each generation both in other respects and also in their children."

A seemingly just and well thought out plan, yes, but what Plato failed to realize was, that as centuries turned, the lower and middle classes grew stronger in resistance and uniformity and would eventually rebel against

their "more highly educated" oppressors.

When French rebels stormed the Bastille in 1789, the first blow was struck in the war between the classes, a war that continued on through the German and Italian revolutions of 1848, and still continues today.

Over the last few years, the division of classes has been at the forefront of discourse concerning the education system in Canada. But no longer is it a division existing solely between society's upper and lower classes; today's classrooms are engaged in battles extending far beyond the guidelines of Plato's original blueprint, and the state of our entire education system hangs in the balance.

The issue of "class warfare" as it pertains to our education system in Canada is the subject of the inaugural edition of *Pinpoint* Magazine. This issue will explore the current divisions that have been created in education: the rich vs the poor; alternative vs public schools; the techno-

elite vs the techno-peasant; men vs women; blacks vs whites vs Asians; colleges vs universities.

While it is not our aim here at *Pinpoint* to be the saviours of the Canadian education system, our goal is to highlight the class struggles that currently exist within the system and expose the hypocrisies, or, to "pinpoint" them, if you will. May I also add that our education system is suffering from a variety of ills that our magazine hasn't touched upon.

Overcrowded classrooms, high drop-out rates, rising drug use, and increasing violence in the schoolyard have all contributed to the decline of public education in Canada. Add to this the fact that many schools have begun to cut drama, music and art programs from their curriculum, which will eventually result in a generation of robots unable to think and lacking any creativity.

I wonder what Plato would have thought of the saddened state of today's education system; something tells me he would be asking Socrates what went wrong.

The All-Ages Computer Club

Angela, her eyes shining like black pearls, locks her gaze on the computer screen. One hand is busily clicking on the mouse, the other is twirling around her long curly hair.

Angela is a four-year-old student at the Leroux-Froebel Bilingual School in Toronto, a school where the focus is accelerated learning for preschool and school-aged children.

Aileen Leroux, the school's co-founder, uses computers to teach reading, math and play

"The children are very skillful. I have early math programs and early reading programs. The children pick it up quicker with the computer," he said

Children at this school get comfortable with computers long before other kids have taken their first journey into cyberspace.

Right now they may be the exceptions, but educators say they will have to become the norm if Canadian students are to get on the on-ramp to the information autobahn.

Eric McMillan, editor of Toronto's *We Compute* magazine, says there's

by **Carl Mitchell**

an advantage to kids who have a computer at home. And ultimately, it is this kind of edge that will determine who gets a particular job, or who moves ahead in the company.

Leroux agrees, "I see that happening in the future, unless they can put computers in the schools, in every school, so the children can have more access."

Chris Wilkins, president of Edge Interactive Publishing, a Toronto based software company specializing in educational multimedia, agrees that accessibility will be a deciding factor in determining who will keep up in the new rat race.

"There's no question that's a problem," Wilkins said. "Forty per cent of Canadian homes have a computer. Those 60 per cent who don't, feel at a disadvantage. The only thing to do is make things more accessible."

The difficulty lies in making sure that access is not denied, or granted, along socio-economic lines. According to a study by Statistics



KIDDIES ON COMPUTERS: Making the jump on to the information super-highway.

Canada, 46 per cent of people with high incomes had a computer last year, while only nine per cent of low-wage earners had access to home computers.

"The areas to worry about are the middle aged people whose jobs are being phased out," says McMillan. "Computer literacy has changed. In the '70s, we had to learn programming and different languages. Now things are more user friendly."

Companies who wish to keep up in the technology game will have to stay afloat with current trends, he says.

"Innovative companies will become the big players. Learning to operate a computer is essential."

Jim Cinq-Mars, vice president of sales and marketing at the Institute for Computer Studies in Toronto, believes the Internet may be the tool that finally narrows the gap between economic classes. "It's ubiq-

uitous and affordable for the have-nots ... it levels the playing field."

Tito Faria, who runs the Cyber Arts program at Don Mills Collegiate in North York, says computer technology is not to be feared. "It's an available, prominent medium that should not be overlooked."

The Cyber Arts program is a one-of-a-kind program linking arts and computer based technology for students.

Faria is not convinced there is a real division between the computer literate and illiterate. "Part of it is media hype. Computers are the latest saviour like TV and video It's supposed to be another cure all," he said.

But for Angela, who is happily playing the Lion King CD ROM, computers are not levelling the playing field, creating the great divide or curing all problems of class or culture. As far as she's concerned, they are just plain fun.

The All-Girls Club

Ann Hancock isn't worried about being politically incorrect. She is one of a growing number of parents and educators who are embracing the age-old idea of educating girls separately from boys.

As vice-principal of Toronto's Bishop Strachan School she believes girls find it easier to be themselves and develop with a great deal more confidence in a single-sex environment.

Studies by the Wellesley College Center for Women have shown that girls do not perform as well as boys in ordinary classrooms, are not called on as often as boys, and are less likely to participate in class discussions. When they reach puberty, the problem becomes worse as they lose confidence and self-esteem.

The solution for some parents is to send their daughters to a school for girls only.

According to the Canadian Association of Independent Schools the number of girls enrolled in private schools has increased almost 10 per cent over the past four years. But, not everyone can afford the high cost.

The Bishop Strachan School has been operating since 1867 as an all-girls school. It is the oldest school of its kind in Ontario and was the first to teach women subjects such as sci-

by **Holly Crawford**

ence and math and send them on to university. The school continues to provide 800 students with a single-sex education, for \$11,500 a year in tuition.

"Girls go through a period of being outgoing and confident and then suddenly they become withdrawn, passive and unwilling to engage in anything in the classroom. The all-girls environment eliminates that," Hancock said.

The school spends a lot of time looking at how girls learn best, says Hancock. As a result, there has been an increase in interest in math, science and computers, areas girls traditionally shy away from, and a 100 per cent placement to university, she added.

"They can go on working in an environment that promotes self-esteem that they can be successful in."

But not all all-girls schools are private.

Loretto Abbey in the Peel Region Separate School Board was recently ranked one of the 10 best schools in Toronto. Loretto's 400 female students receive strict discipline, wear uniforms, and learn in boy-free classrooms. Operating since 1847, Loretto Abbey offers this setting without

extraordinary tuition fees.

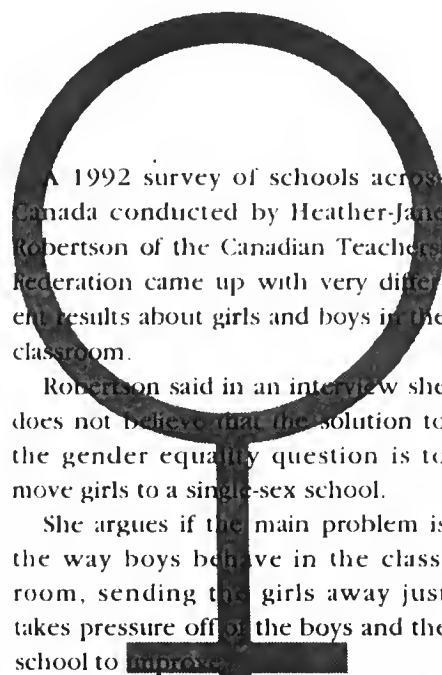
Principal Linda Langero has taught in both all-girls and co-educational classrooms and thinks the advantages of single-sex classes are clear.

"In a single-sex environment the girls do not feel threatened, sometimes with boys in the room they won't want to answer a question and get the wrong answer. The girls will take more chances, and there is no pressure on them to impress the opposite sex," Langero said.

In the spring of 1996, the Etobicoke Board of Education considered trying the all-girls approach at one of its schools. While some members of the board supported the plan, others said the single-sex approach didn't belong in the public school system.

Glen MacNeill, Etobicoke trustee for the school in question, believes that an all-girls school would be a type of segregation that doesn't belong in a public school.

"The public school system is paid for by public tax dollars and is meant for the public. It is meant to mirror the community, and not to be exclusionary in any way," MacNeill said. "When you open a school in the public system that is meant for just one group of people, you then have a private school."



A 1992 survey of schools across Canada conducted by Heather-Jane Robertson of the Canadian Teachers Federation came up with very different results about girls and boys in the classroom.

Robertson said in an interview she does not believe that the solution to the gender equality question is to move girls to a single-sex school.

She argues if the main problem is the way boys behave in the classroom, sending the girls away just takes pressure off the boys and the school to improve.

"If you take out all of the girls who see a problem and set up a girls school for them, and the rest of the schools just keep doing whatever they were doing," she said.

According to Robertson's research, the much publicized gap between the sexes in math and science doesn't exist in secondary schools. Her results indicated there was only a measurable difference in the numbers of men and women in those courses at the post-secondary level.

"The gender differences around math and science are increasingly limited. We can no longer argue that there are such differences, the data just isn't there to support it," Robertson said.

"What are we all losing? What does it mean when we give up on mixed sex schools in a mixed sex world?"

"Higher education in America flourished chiefly as a qualification for entrance into a moneymaking profession, and not as a thing in itself." - Stephen Leacock

Five member panel to decide fate of Ontario colleges

Continued from Page 1

"Everybody for the most part is pretending there's not a class struggle," says Cynthia Hilliard, head of the Ontario Community College Student Parliamentary Association. In the 1995-1996 school year, 42 per cent of university students and 57 per cent of college students received financial assistance through the Ontario Student Assistance Program.

"In Ontario, we are one of the few, if not the only jurisdiction in North America, that's decided that college students shouldn't get degrees, or at least not easily," says Hatton, who is acting as a panel advisor for Humber. Once the new advisory panel comes forth with its recommendations, "I think there's a possibility that new institutions will be allowed to grant degrees and colleges won't be among them," he laments. Those new institutions will be private, if the panel comes down on their side.

The five member Advisory Panel on Future Directions for Postsecondary Education is made up of three representatives from universities, one community college representative and one former Tory minister of education. They claim to be impartial and open-minded about their upcoming recommendations, but considering the background of the individuals involved, it's not too difficult to predict the results, critics say.



Michael Hatton

"In Ontario, we are one of the few, if not the only jurisdiction in North America, that's decided that college students shouldn't get degrees, or at least not easily."

"We don't know what the minister has said specifically to the panel members," says Hatton. But with university representatives holding a majority of the advisory panel, including David Smith, principal emeritus of Queen's University, David Cameron, a political science professor from Dalhousie, and Manulife's Fred Gorbet, a Board of Governors member from York University, it seems the "decks are stacked" in favor of universities keeping their exclusive degree-granting privileges.

"Absolutely," universities want to hang on to their degree monopoly, says Hatton. But even if they don't, Hatton believes private institutions and not colleges will probably gain degree-granting rights.

Also on the panel is Bette Stephenson, a former Tory Minister of Education and a proponent for private universities. Only Centennial College President Catherine

Henderson is representing Ontario's 20 community colleges. The panel's recommendations could be the first step in the introduction of a two-tiered Ontario education system, starting with post-secondary.

David Trick, assistant deputy minister of education says, "there is no strong mechanism for students to move from [college] to [university]," or vice versa. Many students have reported repeating work they had already done in a previous program.

Hatton says, "If it costs us X number of thousands of dollars to send a student to college, and it costs us X plus to send one to university...then if we're going to add more seats to deal with demand, we'd prefer to add them to college. Applied degrees offered by colleges are not only a cheaper route, but in fact, would reduce the increasing demand and the duplication." And he doesn't fear the introduction of private, degree-

granting institutions in Ontario. "I think...if the government allows private institutions...the universities which currently exist will become more competitive," he says.

Consultations are being held throughout the province and the advisory panel is welcoming written submissions. Humber's brief is being compiled by William Hanna, chair of general education, who says the major recommendations will be scrapping duplication within the system, allowing colleges to grant applied degrees and centralizing postsecondary transfers between institutions.

Humber Student Association Council President Steve Virtue, who is helping Hanna, says the education students receive at Humber is as good as a university education. "I think that Humber has stepped over many of the colleges in Ontario. I think we're closer to being a polytechnic university like Ryerson."

"We're out there to listen and learn," says David Smith, chair of the advisory panel. With that in mind, Hatton suggests, "If 100,000 community college students wrote letters saying we want to be treated the same way university students are treated, we want the same funding...and we want to be able to graduate with a degree...I can assure you that would [happen] next year. The political machine listens to people, but it's volume."

"All men by nature desire knowledge."
- Aristotle



The Truth about Asian Super Students

Anna Li is uncomfortable about the way she has been categorized as a "super" student - because she isn't. Li, currently enrolled at the University of Toronto, is an average student who has been saddled with the Canadian stereotype that Asian immigrants excel at higher levels than most other students.

Eight years ago, Li came to Canada as a landed immigrant from Hong Kong. Rather than face Communist rule once Beijing takes political control in 1997, her family chose to leave. Since arriving in Canada she has noticed that Asian immigrants are being prejudged.

"Many Canadians seem to have the perception that some landed immigrants, for some reason or another, excel more in the Canadian school system than most other students do, and it's just not true," she said.

Lisa Vu, a Humber College student in the Legal Assistant program, came to Canada in 1982 from Vietnam. Vu agrees that the perception exists and impossible demands result.

"I think Asian kids already have enough pressure just to learn the English language," she said. "This perception just adds to the pressure."

"Some landed immigrants do feel pressure from this stereotype if they are just average and not particularly genius," said Jonas Ma, executive director at the Chinese Canadian National Council which has been "actively involved in combating racial discrimination".

Ma attended school in China up until Grade 11 and said he thought the system was too competitive and conformist.

"It is an elitist system. If you don't get the best marks, you don't get into the best schools; and therefore you can't go on to higher education," he said, noting that higher education is more available in Canada than in China.

Ma said the methods used in Asian schools are not the best for students and that Canadian schools have more balance. "In some Asian schools, the students are discouraged from anything but studying and, as a result, often become socially inadequate," he said. "In Canada, the

schools are better at developing a variety of areas such as sports and the arts, as well as maths and sciences."

by **Leanne Lavis**

Ansby Lau, a social worker at the Chinese Family Life Services of Metro Toronto, said parental expectations are what drive Asian children to succeed.

"The parents in China have more expectations for their children. They want them to study hard," she said. "When you are young in Hong Kong (about Grade one level) you have a lot of homework and textbooks to read. As well, there is homework supervision from the parents."

Trade Information Officer Karen Park, of the Korea Trade Centre, was born in Korea and came to Canada when she was 15. She said

Korean children may do better in school since they are taught to be highly competitive and task-oriented by their parents.

"I think Korean parents are very aggressive in education. From kindergarten on, they try to send their children to the best private schools (whether they are wealthy or not) and they want their child to be at the top of their class," said Park. "Parents push their kids, compare them with other students, which can be hard on kids. Even though Korean kids have many talents, parents expect them to get jobs people admire (such as doctors and lawyers) - very well educated professions."

Alan Bresgi, assistant director of public relations at the Japanese External Trade Organization in Toronto, said his initial reaction to hearing that landed immigrants do better academically in Canadian schools was that it was a stereotype. However, thinking back to his own experiences in Japan, where he attended one year of university, he reconsidered.

"If there is a stereotype, the reason why that stereotype may have developed is because of the diligent study habits that they have," he said, noting that Japanese children start studying routines around the age of five. "Universities are very hard to get in to and children are fighting for spots at the best schools from kindergarten on."

Bresgi said students who come to school in Canada after being in the Japanese education system feel as though a tremendous weight has been lifted from their shoulders. "It's almost a relief to them. There are no social pressures and they are a little freer to do the things that interest them."

Many landed immigrants from India are also perceived as being high academic achievers in Canadian schools, notes Raj Sharma, owner of India Jewellers and the India Foreign Exchange in Toronto. He said children from India definitely do better in Canadian schools. "I believe that the children in India are much more ahead than the children in Canada. The people in India give

a lot more attention to education that is not as diverse (more academically focused and less concerned about sports) and that is more disciplined," he said.

Intriguingly, some foreign students say that Asian immigrants who recently came to Canada are likely to do better than those who arrived over a decade ago.

Education is obviously a priority in Asian countries and this priority does not change when they immigrate to Canada. Education is so important to Asian families that they give up many things so that their children can have the best academic opportunities.

As for Anna Li, she says she will continue doing her best at university, landed immigrant or not. And, for immigrant students - be they "super" or otherwise - she advises: "Just be yourself, move at your own pace and don't worry about what anyone else thinks. Just aim to do your personal best."

"Many Canadians seem to have the perception that some landed immigrants excel more in the Canadian school system, and it's just not true"

-Anna Li, U. of T student

Rethinking the way we teach

The other day my younger sister returned from school in a frenzy. She had just written an art history test in which the students were required to memorize close to 100 different pieces of artwork— 10 of which would be on a test. She is a very bright student and a very talented artist. She has dreams of becoming a world renowned painter. She failed the test miserably.

Yet again public schools are not accommodating the unique needs of students who don't thrive in mainstream classrooms. As a result, progressive schools are popping up in a hurry, eagerly thinking up new methods to stimulate these "bright-underachievers." But why can't our publicly-funded classrooms, the ones that are ranked as first-class by universal educators, do this for us?

Despite what Education Minister

John Snobelen may think, rote learning, standardized testing and tedious quizzes are wrong. They create lazy teachers and boring students and serve as inaccurate measurements of a student's intellect. By limiting education to structured regurgitation we are capping a student's critical and analytical skills. Students differ widely in their preference for how they like to learn. We accept the fact that none of us likes to eat, drink or dress the same, so why must we all learn the same?

Students need the opportunity to brainstorm, to experiment and to test new ideas in a stimulating and less structured environment. Each student should have the opportunity to pursue learning in ways that are unique to him or her. Teachers would then be respected for their abilities to enable individual students to achieve their unique poten-

tials.

And solutions such as these aren't that difficult to come by. According to progressive school advisors, additional funding is not the crux of the problem. What these students need are teachers that genuinely care about what they are doing. It's good-bye to the polyester-clad science teacher who's been referring to the same syllabus for a quarter of a century. Metro school boards need to loosen up on their job security packages and concentrate on bringing new and innovative role models into the classroom.

Establishing progressive schools geared towards specific factions of students is not the best answer. Establishing public-school environments where individual students and young Canadian artists can feel comfortable, is the answer.

-Jenna Johnston

Dear John...

As our loyal Education Minister, you keep telling the public that computers are what today's students need. You recently announced plans to bring computers to every student in every classroom throughout Ontario by way of the Technology Incentive Partnership Program. In other words, you pay half, we pay half.

That's all fine and dandy John, but I just have three questions for you: first, what kind of computers are Ontario students going to get? There are schools throughout Metro today that are still using Commodore 64s or seriously outdated 286s, and very few have CD ROM or Windows capabilities.

Unfortunately, these out-dated dinosaurs are the only things many schools can afford because of cuts to education funding (thanks John).

And there are only about 30 computers in most labs, not the 35 or 40 needed to accommodate increasingly larger class sizes (thanks John).

Which leads me to question number two: how do you expect school boards to pay for these computers, John?

Acadia University, in Wolfville, Nova Scotia solved the problem by having students pay for their new computers themselves. Not an incredibly ingenious solution, but I must say, it is quite effective.

Is that what you see for future Ontario students John? Grade five students working summers to pay off their student loans? Little 8-year-olds selling lemonade at roadside stands all across Ontario in order to make enough money for their new PC? Or tiny junior and senior kindergarten

kids sitting on street corners, with signs reading "will work for Windows '95?"

And finally, who is going to teach these students to use their new computers?

At present, no curriculum exists to teach teachers how to teach or use computers in their classrooms. Elementary and high school teachers can take courses to get certified to teach computer science, but they are not obliged to (and the course would cost them about \$800, even if they were so inclined). How are students going to learn to use their personal computers, John? Are you going to teach them?

Thanks, but no thanks John.

-Michela Pasquali

Education or Employment?

Ministry Moves In The Wrong Direction

The Ontario Ministry of Education has recently released a discussion paper entitled "Excellence in Education: High School Reform." Included in the 16 page document is a plan to redesign Secondary School curricula so that students are streamed towards future career and education goals. But the "Course Series" system, which is intended to respond to "the goals that the students have set for themselves", would in fact prevent them from reaching their full potential and leave them with a one-sided education.

Under the plan, all students would take a number of Series 1 courses, providing them with a common curriculum base. Those students planning to go directly into the work force, an apprenticeship program or college, would choose the remainder of their classes from Series 2.

Those deciding to try university would choose from Series 3. There would also be a fourth series of courses which would allow anyone who changed their mind along the way to switch streams.

Simple enough? Everyone gets what they want?

Not exactly.

This plan is not intended to fulfil the wants or needs of the students. It is not intended to help them reach their full potential, or to do what is best for them, but only to help them achieve "the goals that they have set for themselves," regardless of whether or not those goals are desired or even attainable.

A student with low self esteem may opt to go directly into the work force. Under the new plan, it would be the role of the school to stand idly by while students chose classes that would in no way prepare them for the realities of minimum wage labor with no benefits - or to encourage a student who enjoys art in grade nine to plan for a future as a painter, regardless of their natural abilities.

In the end the student who chooses the wrong series will be forced to take transitional courses, thereby extending their stay in high school, or to live with the goals that they set when they were 14 or 15 years old.

Schools are not factories. They are not machines churning out widgets for the labor force. Schools should provide a system in which students can grow and explore in as many different directions as possible. Where they can try new things and make mistakes.

"Excellence in Education: High School Reform" is just an attempt to turn our school system into an employment agency, and to rob students of the opportunity to learn for the sake of learning.

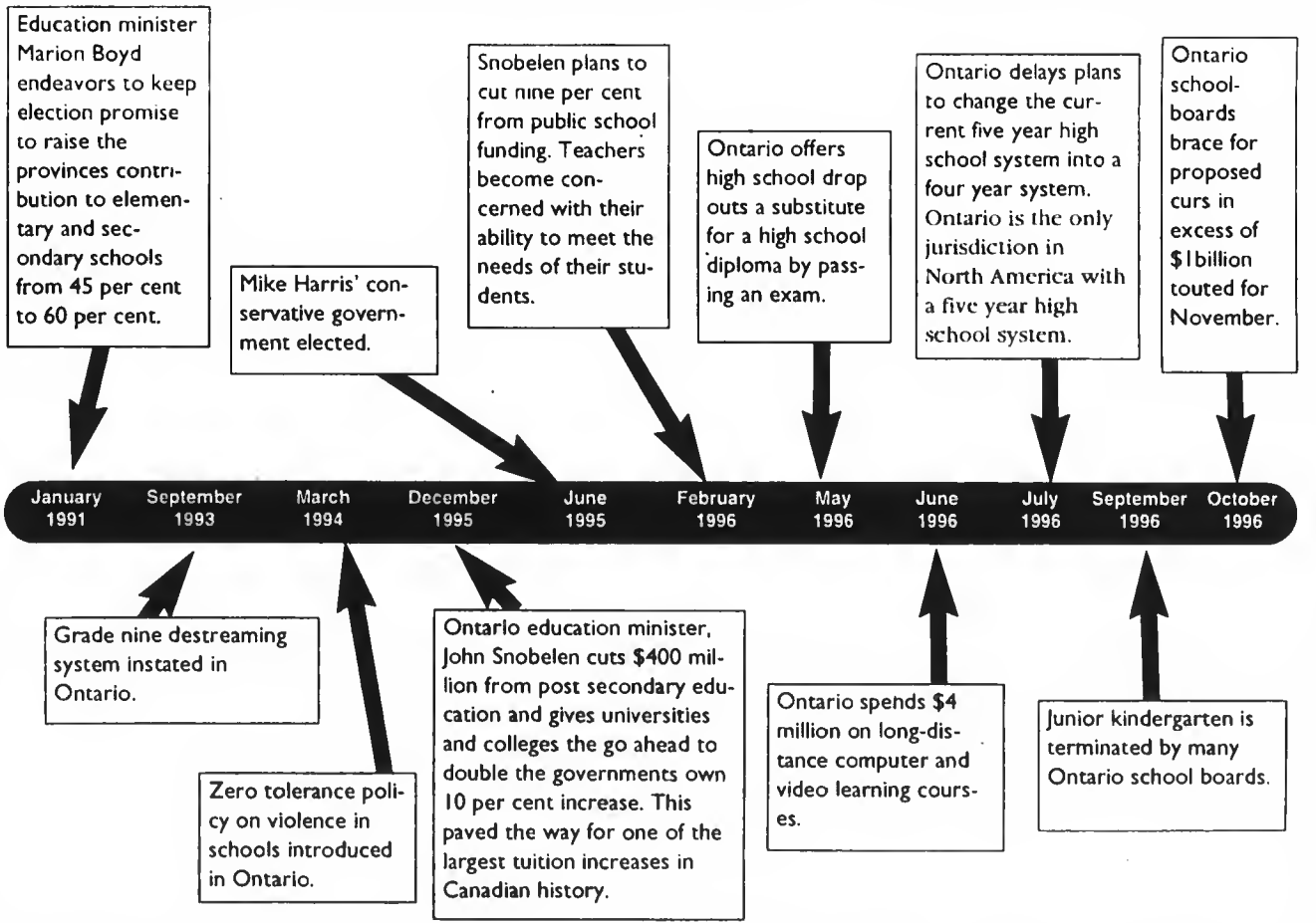
-Kerry Bader

"I am in favor of national school education free from sectarian teaching, and available without charge to every child in the province."

-George Brown

Dateline: Education

Compiled by Allison Haines



Academics Rally to Raise Freedom Flag

by Mike Trus

Western University's Psychology professor, Dr. Philippe Rushton, had no idea his research on racial differences would lead to such a violent reaction from ethnic minorities and social activists.

For investigating alternative — and some would say racist — reasons for the disparity between race and achievement in society, Rushton said he has endured anonymous death threats, physical assault and classroom disruptions by groups of militant social activists. One activist scrawled a swastika on his office door in blood red paint along with the words "RACISTS PIG LIVE HERE."

"If I'd have been Jewish and had a

of social and political assaults on academia. Its mandate was, and remains, to defend the principles of free research and debate, nationwide, according to SAFS' current president, University of Toronto Psychology professor, Dr. John Furedy.

By writing to newspapers and petitioning university administrators who fail to shield their scientists from militant social activists and politicians, SAFS claims it has been able to keep the hounds of political correctness at bay. Since its formation, SAFS' membership has swelled to just over 400 Canadian professors and intellectuals.

"The original impetus for SAFS founding was the Rushton case," said Furedy. "It wasn't that SAFS was in

policy. It's research which serves the purpose of continuing and deepening racial and ethnic tension."

Darnell dismisses SAFS. "I think most of the members of SAFS are using academic freedom to bolster their own arrogance," she said. "SAFS makes the assumption that knowledge is something abstract, isolated from the individuals who hold it."

Asked why he was studying racial differences at all, Rushton said: "Well, in order to explain them. I'm a scientist. It's my job to describe and explain the way the world actually is, not the way the world ought to be or the way people wish the world was."

As well as militant social activists harassing him, Rushton said former Ontario premier, David Peterson, called for his dismissal. Western refused, saying he had academic freedom. Former Justice Minister, Ian Scott, launched a six-month-long criminal hate-crimes investigation against Rushton, followed by a four-year-long investigation by Ontario's Human Rights Committee. No charges were laid.

"I don't hate blacks and I'm not a Nazi white supremacist," said Rushton, who is continuing his controversial line of research. "If I was a weaker man, or frail, I would have quit teaching altogether because of all the political harassment and the death threats."

Asked if she believed his work should be stopped, Darnell said, "I would not personally do such research."

Historically, science has been restricted by religious groups or military governments, but Rushton said since the Second World War and the Nazi's abuse, "a growing number of university professors are organizing themselves to say what other university professors ought not to be researching, especially when it comes to racial and gender differences."

"Like the Nazis and Communists, these people have political and social agendas other than pure science," Rushton continued. "This hinders the growth of knowledge and perverts the entire scholarly process. Once you start compromising the first goal of scholarship — which is to discover the truth — then you begin to undermine the very institution."

"Suddenly, the pursuit of truth is no longer the reason for researching. Instead, it's to make people feel good, or to make society a better

place — and it may be that those are worthwhile objectives but they're not the primary cause of a university."

SAFS' president, John Furedy, agrees, "It's not up to the scientists to tell students what to think, especially when it comes to political and social issues," he said. "They're university students! They can decide for themselves. It is the university's job to try and provoke thought that would not otherwise occur, not make people feel all comfortable, warm and fuzzy. That's a job for babysitters, propaganda ministers and churches." Furedy is an avid defender of academic freedom and unrestricted debate, perhaps, he said, because he is a Hungarian Jew who grew up under communism's iron rule.

Western's Darnell concedes, "Anthropology has an activist streak, for many of us. We see the work we do as having political and social implications."

While she describes herself as a supporter of academic freedom and open debate, she also says she believes there are those who, because of their race, social status, culture or gender, are in no position to speak about specific issues.

"Because I'm a white, privileged female there are plenty of times when it's not my place to speak about certain things," she said. "I'm prepared to talk about why communications fail between (native) Indians and mainstream Canadians. I am less likely to talk about, say, native spirituality. That's not my business. You want to speak about that, you go find a native person."

University professors in their ivory towers are not the only ones with strong views about academic freedom, scholarship and the right to openly debate any issue — in or out of class. Though he's not a member of SAFS, 29-year-old Mike Sullivan, a U. of T. postgraduate student working on his PhD in Aerospace Engineering, supports SAFS missions to serve and protect unrestricted research and open debate.

Asked who should decide who studies or researches a given subject, Sullivan said. "Well, since God isn't on the ethics boards of any university I know of, nobody's smart enough to say what should be researched or who should research it. I think it's best to listen to views from everybody."

"Ships float, shit sinks. I believe unrestricted research and debate allows us to see which is which."



Dr. Andrew Nelson, Anthropology professor at Western University, studies a prehistoric male jawbone.

swastika painted on my door, they would have sent in the paratroopers," he said in an interview in his closet-sized office at Western. "Instead of sending in security officers to deal with them, the university told me to tape my lectures and they'd have someone show them in class on video."

Rushton's theories inspired violent opposition when he compared blacks, whites and Asians over a 10-year study period. The statistical data he compiled purported to show that on average, Asians scored highest on all counts, followed by whites, then blacks.

Rushton joined an organization called the Society of Academic Freedom and Scholarship (SAFS) after it defended his right to conduct his research.

SAFS was founded in 1990 by Western University Psychology professor, Dr. Doreen Kimura, in order to combat what appears to be a rash

favor of Rushton's position, but we were against the way his academic rights were being abused."

Rushton, gained notoriety back in 1989 when he gave a controversial lecture on his provocative racial and behavioral I.Q. theories at the University of California.

"The media was there and they demonized me," Rushton said. "When I got back to Canada, I was surprised at the furor caused by the headlines."

Western University's professor of Modern Anthropology, Dr. Regna Darnell, is an opponent of both Rushton's work and SAFS. She was the president of Western's Faculty Association up until last year.

Darnell described his work as "measuring things that can't be measured. I wouldn't go so far as to call it racist, but I think it's bad research," she said. "Bad ethics and bad social

"Those who can, do. Those who can't, teach." -Voltaire

Acadia Students Plug In

Wolfville, Nova Scotia is a university town. Acadia University, a small, tight-knit community of about 3,600 students makes its home here. It's one of six universities in the province that's known for having the highest tuition rates in Canada. Acadia, in fact, has the honor of being the most expensive post-secondary institution in the country.

And the price has just gone up.

Some students wishing to attend Acadia got a jolt this year when they found out that the \$3,670 price tag would be jumping to a whopping \$4,870 to pay for new lap-top computers. Administrators say students are getting a great deal; students say the university is forcing them to pay for computers they can't afford.

"Seventy per cent of our students come from the Maritimes and those demographics will change because many of those students won't be able to come to Acadia," says Kate Jenkins, president of Acadia's student union.

In a province where the unemployment rate is almost 13 per cent, compared with Ontario's eight per cent, and the average family income is only about \$38,000, close to \$12,000 less than Ontario's average, tuition increases are a serious matter.

Only a portion of students entering Acadia this year will be part of the project, called the "Advantage Program." Of the 1,100 students enrolled in first-year classes, 375 computer science, business administration, arts and physics students are in the advantage program.

The rest will just have to live with being disconnected. It won't be until the year 2000 that all Acadia students will be plugged in to the program.

Jenkins says that aside from the costs, the laptops have also proven to be more of a hassle for students than the godsend the university claims them to be.

Students are "upset about printing costs, about the \$75 fee for a carrying case for the lap-top, which they're forced to buy even though the insurance company doesn't require them to buy it, but I mean what can they do, they can't just throw the computer in their school bags. They're upset about [fees] for the modem and installation fees," she says.

Bruce Cohoon, director of public affairs at Acadia says students love their laptops. He says they're getting a superior product at bargain-basement prices and no hassles.

"From wired areas like class-

rooms, student lounges, public areas, you can sit down and plug into university software and the internet" he says. "And if something breaks down, help is just a phone call away."

Cohoon says the increased tuition fees have not turned students away from the Advantage program, in fact, he says, "the problem is with students trying to get into the program [this year] but who are not in the applicable programs."

He says the resources open to students with the advantage program are endless. Physics students, for example, can complete a lab assignment in mere minutes, as opposed to the two or three hours it would normally have taken them using conventional research techniques; English students can tap into electronic libraries and listen to an audio reading by Ernest Hemmingway of one of his novels; students studying French or any other language have access to language lab programs that rate their oral and written proficiency.

"It's exciting stuff," says Cohoon. "It's not trying to make education sterile, it's trying to enhance the educational experience."

Plus, he says, students are getting \$10,000 worth of hardware and software for a mere \$1,200 a year. But it's that extra money that's turning many students away, says Jenkins.

When you do the math, on computer or not, it still adds up to almost an extra \$5,000 after a four

"An alliance between the university and the corporate world is just [an example of] this push by some universities to create a two-tiered system of education"

-Vicky Smallman

year degree program and no computer to take home with you. If Acadia students want to keep their used laptops they'll have to dish out an extra \$800 when they graduate.

But the biggest problem Jenkins has with the program is the way it will eventually exclude Maritimers from attending universities like Acadia.

She says that while currently, 70 per cent of Acadia's students are from the Maritimes, this number will decrease in the future.

The university "fully expects that these demographics will have



Some Acadia students are paying more than \$1100 for laptop computers in the classroom.

switched from the Maritimes to other provinces in Canada, the United States and other countries."

Jenkins says high school students in Wolfville are already feeling frustrated with their bleak prospects for going to school in Nova Scotia.

"There's very low morale at the high schools because this is their community university but they can't afford to come here," she says.

And the 20 bursaries the university offers to incoming students every year just don't cut it, she says.

"I just don't believe that students from the Maritimes and students from this community will get the kind of coverage they need," says Jenkins. The lack of funding is "putting [education] out of reach for the very people who need it."

Vicky Smallman, chair of the Ontario component of the Canadian Federation of Students says programs like Acadia Advantage demonstrate a move in this country towards privatization in education. When universities exclude certain portions of the population like lower income students or non-traditional students such as single mothers, the general public should be on guard, she says.

"Acadia has always conceived itself to be a rather elite university, but moves like this where certain programs are billed as elite things is definitely a move toward privatization," says Smallman. "To have these public institutions use the groundwork that has been laid with public funds over the years to move toward private institutions is something I think the public should be worried about."

And the fact that the advantage program was made possible thanks to a partnership between Acadia, IBM Canada Ltd., Maritime Telegraph and Telephone Co. Ltd and Marriott Corp. has Smallman

concerned as well. IBM sold Acadia the laptops and provided free teaching and help personnel; MT&T installed fibre optic links around the campus and new phone systems that provide things like voice-mail and call conferencing. Marriott installed swipe-card technology on campus for food, security and other services.

Smallman says big business has no place in education.

"An alliance between the university and the corporate world is just [an example of] this push by some universities to create a two-tiered system of education," she says. "I think it's taking advantage of students who want a better situation and cutting off other students who can't afford it."

But Acadia's Cohoon says the fact that Acadia is involved in a partnership with the three corporations does not reflect a move towards privatization. He says IBM, for example, has been able to bring substantial expertise to the program that the university alone could not have provided.

"I don't see it as a step towards privatization, I see it as a giant step forward. We're bringing the latest in technology and pedagogy to students."

And, he says, the companies have no role in determining what's taught in courses, when and why. He says that's where the relationship ends.

"It will never happen. It can't happen. It's not the way this university is set up," says Cohoon.

The student union's Jenkins is more concerned with the students - their education, their lack of opportunities and their futures.

Students in the small town of Wolfville are under seige. Big business and technology are the aggressors. The university says they're taking a step forward, but students just think they're being stepped on.

Students "can't come to their own university," says Jenkins. And that doesn't seem to be a step forward, but a step back.

"Get a solid piece of scholarship under your belt and some diploma - mill will always want you."

-Robertson Davies

by Michela Pasquali

The Alternative to Public Schools

Second-hand sofas and bamboo blinds set the stage for alternative learning methods

Sitting in a classroom at the School of Liberal Arts is as comfortable as lounging in your own living room. Bamboo blinds camouflage the busy intersection below and potted plants perch on the window ledge. Indonesian rugs are thrown about and rows of desks are nowhere to be seen. Instead, the students have opted for a messy semi-circle around the teacher. It's a palette of delights. "It's like a dinner party with good conversation," adds one student.

Located in a north-end office block, The School of Liberal Arts (SOLA) is one of a growing number of alternative schools in Toronto.

The 12 faculty members are brainstorming for new and innovative teaching methods. High school co-director and English teacher, Mike MacConnell, has an array of velvet and satin costumes at the back of his class. Immersed in the lesson, students say this makes learning Shakespeare more fun.

MacConnell is not your regular private schoolmaster. Dressed in a red track suit with long shaggy hair and a second hand bike as his major form of transportation, his students like the fact that he once followed the Grateful Dead. "You feel like you can relate to him," says former student, Brad Sellors.

More and more mainstream schools are losing the interest of bright students and critics of the status quo say that in an increasingly borderless society, rote learning or standardized testing does not work. They say that while mainstream schools continue to emphasize conformity, alternative schools encourage free thought and learning in ways that are unique to each individual student.

by Jenna Johnston

In Toronto's west-end stands Inglenook, a public alternative school. Located in a beautiful Victorian style brick building on Sackville Street, Inglenook is the oldest school building in Toronto.

Although their teaching methods are similar, SOLA operates as a private alternative school while Inglenook remains public. The learning philosophy behind alternative schools such as these is to provide students with motivational strategies as opposed to teachers. Through a relaxed and non-authoritarian

approach to learning, the teachers try to stimulate the students to learn.

Starting with smaller class sizes, teachers devote more of their time to individuals and less to group lectures. While the classes at SOLA are capped at 15, the enrollment at Inglenook this year remains under 130. Teachers are available Monday through Thursday for after school tutorials that last up to an hour and extracurricular activities are kept to a minimum.

While attendance is strictly monitored, the teachers at Inglenook encourage the students to learn at their own pace. "No one forces you to work here," said a 16-year-old between classes. "They make you want to work."

The faculty at Inglenook encourage their students to pursue learning outside of the classroom. The Outreach volunteer program, which has been in place since the school's inception in the early 70s, is mandatory. Each Wednesday morning students are sent into the community to work and to learn. This term, one student is making rounds in a retirement home while another is designing layouts for a small magazine publication.

At the end of the term students share their new found knowledge with classmates in the form of essays, screenplays and artwork. Outreach assignments are worth 20 per cent of a student's final mark.

Like many of the typical students in alternative settings, SOLA's Brad Sellors quickly lost interest in learning once high school classes started. "At my previous school I was nothing but a number," he says. "The teachers seemed more concerned with churning out marks for summer vacations than getting to know their students."

Forming a personal relationship with each of the students, even before they are admitted to the school, is a top priority for our teachers, said teacher and co-owner MacConnell. "The personal relationship that we have with the kids is one in which we can find things out. We have the time to mark papers carefully and write extensive comments. If a kid isn't getting the homework done up to standard, we know why and we can help."

It is through this personal relation-



ROCK 'N ROLL HIGH SCHOOL: Brad Sellors' education at SOLA was based around musical topics.

ship that MacConnell picked up on Sellors' keen interest in music. Centering Brad's learning around musical topics, MacConnell rekindled his interests in school.

Sonja Sellors, a graduate of a traditional Toronto public school, sent all three of her sons to study with MacConnell. "Otherwise, I doubt that any of them would have gone to school past age 16," she said.

More and more mainstream schools are losing the interest of bright students and critics of the status quo say that in an increasingly borderless society, rote learning or standardized testing does not work

"I remember when my eldest son, Scott, handed in a history essay set out like a chess game," said his mother. "The school phoned me and they were absolutely amazed. Everything they taught Brad was through music, everything they taught Scott was through history and Mark through sports. They let them do their own thing and learn through the vehicle that interested them and that was what made the difference."

Still, attendance at SOLA is not

altogether optional. Prospective students meet with MacConnell and co-owner and teacher Dave Ferguson before they are admitted to the school to discuss commitment and objectives. The students are asked to promise that they will try their best and are warned about the two hours of homework each evening. In return, the teachers ask that the parents reward their children's efforts through extra privileges at home. "The challenge is to think for themselves," said MacConnell. "The promise is that if they do, they will benefit both in their academic and their home-life."

In gym class, MacConnell (referred to as Mike by his students) teaches his students how to play Ultimate Frisbee— football with a disc. "It's a pretty new and hip sport," adds Brad Sellors, who has now gone on to play with the Toronto Ultimate League. "Basically school had become a cool thing. I enjoyed the learning experience and that was the major difference."

After chatting in his cramped office to a reporter for well over an hour, MacConnell politely jumps up to attend a faculty meeting in progress. "We as teachers are just external aids to learning," he says before heading out the door. "When these kids meet people who really do care and who won't put up with any bull-shit, they fall in love with us."

Inglenook Success Story

When former student Robby Shaw decided to apply to Inglenook to complete his high school education, his father and school principal, Doug Shaw, expressed reservations. "I wondered how he could show up to school at 2 p.m. and still get the same amount of work done. As a high school principal, I think that if you go to school you should arrive for morning exercises and leave when the day is finished, even if you have scheduled spares in the morning."

The Shaw's reservations surrounding alternative schools diminished when they saw Robby's mark increase by close to 10 per cent in his first year. "He got very immersed and turned on by what he was learn-

ing," says his father. "He started to express his opinions and explore learning outside of the text book."

Now having sent Robby off to Halifax to attend university, the Shaws recall their first parent/teacher night at Inglenook. Everyone sat around in sofas and armchairs and ate a pot-luck dinner by the fireplace.

Happy with their son's new eagerness to learn, Mr. Shaw now recommends alternative schools to students that seem to be losing interest in school. "There is a significant population of kids in the mainstream that wouldn't make it. They march to the beat of a different drum, so I think that there has to be a place for an alternative, where they can go

"Glory to the divine teacher."

-John Lennon