

Yes, this is International Youth Year

By Carolyn Ryan

Two weeks into International Youth Year, and counting. Look around. Are the people you pass aware that the world is treating them with more respect and concern in 1985? Don't they know they are the elite of the world, with the most to anticipate, the least to fear, and the best of all possible worlds to tend?

From the looks on their faces, they don't. See that scruffy-looking yahoo in the corner of the library lounge? He's wrapped in his own international year, aided by a dose of fantasy in the form of pills. Those three with angry faces talking with helpless gestures have just visited the Career Centre to discover that the jobs they were counting on again this summer are part of the \$85 million cut from youth job creation programs last fall. Somewhere in the university, at least one student is seriously thinking about suicide, convinced things can't improve.

Yet these are some of the people from whom the United Nations designated this year one of participation, development and peace.

What have words ever got to do with anything? We've seen nothing so far, and no plans for anything in the months to come, to indicate that our government is willing to care about the problems of youth.

The Liberals created the Ministry of Youth last year under Celine Hervieux-Payette, as a "harmless" piece of political pacification designed to combat a perceived danger in the growing number of youths dissatisfied with futile and fleeting job creation programs and lack of productive input into the decision-making process and society in general. The good Ministry was given no money to work with.

Then in May of 1984, the Department of the Secretary of State of Canada spawned the International Youth Year Secretariat, with a budget of a whopping \$12 million, meant for "special projects developed by young people to mark the year" (IYY Secretariat Newsletter, September 1984). Fine, and undoubtedly some worthwhile projects have been assisted. But grants from the Secretariat cannot be used to pay any wages, so if an organization wants to do something for IYY, its own staff must plan it in its entirety, on top of their original workloads. A lovely mess indeed, to commemorate a year in which the UN suggested a priority be made of "increasing employment opportunities through formulation of effective programmes, policies, and plans to reduce unemployment." It seems instead that the Secretariat's goal is to provide the biggest splash, and the most publicity possible, per youth dollar.

These tokenisms were created under Trudeau's rule. Things are very different in Ottawa now, and International Youth Year seems to have been lost in the change of office. Certainly, any attempts to reach students, which must be one of the most accessible of all youth sectors, have been low-key, to use an exaggeration. What percentage of the non-student youth population knows this year is different for them than any other? They need respect, aid, and power much more than we as students do, for at least we will have an education, and thus a head start, in a few years' time. They will have nothing to look forward to but more unemployment and less dignity.

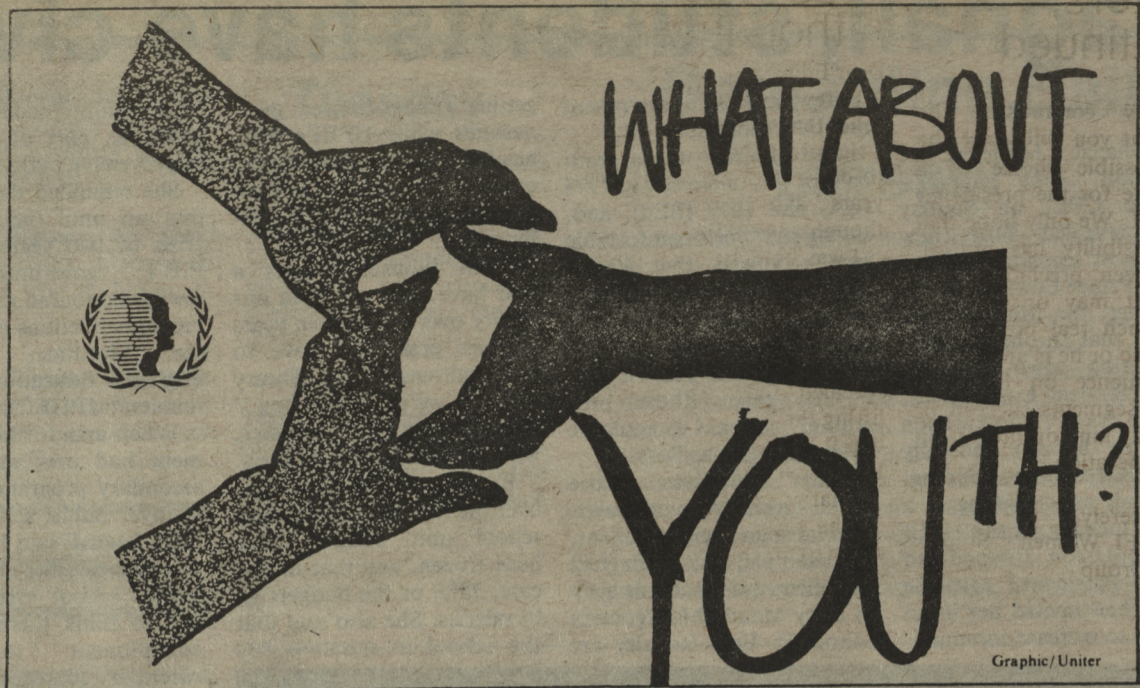
Bashing IYY can easily become addictive — it's all too simple to do. We need to decide now, before another eight or ten months pass, that this year should be different for people between the ages of 15 and 24. We must take an initiative in designing our own celebration of youth.

You see, youth is something to celebrate. We still have the chance to make a difference in our world. Some of us still have the enthusiasm. Most of us have the time.

Why not?

(Try to discover what's going on with the Secretariat. The address is:

IYY Secretariat
Secretary of State
Room 13-A-5
Ottawa, Ontario
K1A 0M5
(819) 994-2391



LETTERS

Sick of myths

Dear Editor,

I am currently engaged in a purely platonic relationship with several gays and lesbians on campus, and we have all discussed the idea of setting up a coffee shop, or least arranging a time when we could meet and discuss the problems encountered in a daily existence in the heterosexually-oriented campus and community of Prince Edward Island.

If the person who wrote the letter in your column was heterosexual (or as we say "straight") then we, in our group, have been asking ourselves what does he/she want to know. We trust he was not expecting a freak show.

The gay men on campus are not adorned in pinks or yellows, nor do they wear fur or frills; they do not giggle when a good-looking guy goes by — they do not exclusively hang around girls.

All the myths about gay men are just that — confounded myths.

Likewise, all lesbians do not talk in husky voices, or wear coveralls with a wrench sticking out of their back pockets.

The whole topic of homosexual lifestyles has been over-generalized and stereotyped to the max (pardon the Valley Girl cliché).

Gay life lives on campus and in every facet of society; unfortunately, it must be suppressed and shrouded in secrecy and fear because of ignorance and misconceptions.

Sincerely,
Those-in-the-know
(that is, the informed few)
The Gay Liberation Front

P.S. We would appreciate any other comments in future editorial sections.

Response to Webster

Dear Editor,

I doubt that many people were misled by Professor Gary Webster on the CBC, January 9. He said that he hadn't seen any evidence of fund-raising by any of the presidents of UPEI.

If he is ever in the Robertson Library, he might find that it was built as the result of fund-raising. Certainly the president at the time was not wholly responsible for the most successful fund-raising campaign, given the circumstances, of that time, but I think that I did something. One gift alone of \$400,000 was negotiated entirely by me. I was significantly involved in others.

Yours sincerely,
R.J. Baker
President Emeritus.

No women chosen

We wish to register our dismay and concern about the short list of candidates for the UPEI Presidency. That there are no women on the list strikes us as shocking and deplorable in 1985. Our concern leads to ask some questions.

(1) What were the criteria for selection of the short list? They are not readily discernible from the information provided about the candidates.

What is discernible is a remarkable correlation between the composition of the committee and the composition of the short list. The committee is all male and the candidates are all male. The committee includes professors from engineering, sociology & anthropology, classics, and religious studies while the short list includes

an engineer, a sociologist, a classicist and a minister (as well as a philosopher and a psychologist).

Sheer coincidence? Perhaps. But without further information about the criteria, we can't help but wonder.

(2) What were the characteristics of all of the applicants? Obviously names, other than the six on the short list, are confidential information but we think it is important that the general characteristics of the applicants be public knowledge.

Specifically we would like to know: (a) how many were female and how many were male, (b) how many were internal (UPEI) candidates and how many were external, (c) what fields did they come from and (d) where did they come from? Without such information, it is difficult to assess the fairness of the short list. In fact, without such information, it is difficult for us to avoid the conclusion that there were biases in the selection process.

Finally, we wish to remind

you that this is not the first time these issues have been raised. At several meetings held during the first semester, the necessity of having appropriate criteria was emphasized. As well, the possibility of bias in the absence of criteria was noted, and there was an explicit suggestion that you give serious consideration to female candidates. We are disappointed that these issues were apparently ignored.

The status of women at this university is of grave concern to us. While women make up just over half of the full-time student population and considerably more than half of the part-time student population, there are only three women on Senate, one on the Board, and less than 15% of the faculty is female. Without more conscious awareness of the desperate need to correct these imbalances, no change will occur.

We look forward to your reply to our questions. We share with all members of the

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Laying out a newspaper in a blinding blizzard (we're inside, of course, but still such dedication is amazing), we continue struggling for truth, justice, and whatever else we can wangle. Staff this week: Katy Baker, Robert Bodrog-Goodland, Glen Boswall, Kaberi Dasgupta, Carol Doiron, Lori Anne Heckbert, Ross Hartinger, Jim Lai, Ron Lewis, Brian Linkletter, Brian MacLeod, Jonathan Orłowski, Nancy Ross, Carolyn Ryan, Bob Stanley, Phil Stanyer, Jill Warburton, David YORSTON, AND Michael Zinck.

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