

# Excalibur

Everything secret degenerates; nothing is safe that does not show it can bear discussion and publicity — Lord Acton

## Arts council crushes student initiative

Howard Halpern is beginning to get the feeling he's getting the runaround and we can't really blame him.

Halpern has been trying to get permission to take his fourth year psychology courses on an ungraded basis and for all his efforts (and they've been considerable; see his letter below and the last two EXCALIBURS) all he's gotten is heartache and sore feet.

Halpern got his six profs to O.K. his plan and then had to petition the Committee on Applications and Memorials which promptly refused his request.

When the executive committee in Psychology protested, Applications and Memorials changed their decision. But, wouldn't you know it, the Council of the Faculty of Arts (under which Applications and Memorials functions) decided the same day that A and M don't really have the right to consider the matter at all until they, (Arts council) consider it.

So, Howard Halpern is back where he started. No decision.

Council of the Faculty of Arts meets tonight and again next Thursday but nobody is quite sure when they'll get around to discussing Halpern's request again. Apparently they're all hung up about establishing precedents.

It would be interesting and informative if they set the precedent that an academic decision agreed upon by a student and his professors is invalid.



"Back on the road again..."

## And Halpern speaks

When I petitioned the Committee on Applications and Memorials my concern was with grades.

I am now concerned with a more basic issue: the individual's right "to a fair and public hearing by an independent and impartial tribunal, in the determination of his rights and obligations (Universal Declaration of Human Rights)".

To petition for redress of grievances is a fundamental right. That any regulation ought to be petitionable is fundamental to democracy.

On Thursday November 12 Dean H.C. Sigman announced that the Committee on Applications and Memorials had unanimously agreed to reverse its initial decision and reconsider my petition on its individual merit.

Applications and Memorials is a committee of the Council of the Faculty of Arts.

On the same day the Council of the Faculty of Arts denied the committee the

right to consider my petition until the entire council has discussed the issue of grades for the whole university.

It is clear that the Committee on Applications and Memorials is not "an independent and impartial tribunal".

The council does not want to set a precedent. What the council fails to grasp is that it has already set a precedent.

As Professor Malcolm Weinstein, a member of council, pointed out at Thursday's meeting, the "denial of individual rights is in itself a precedent".

Says Prof. Weinstein: "The precedent of denying an individual's rights is dangerous in the long run, and this council should reconsider its action."

Howard Halpern

*Editor's Note: Howard Halpern has petitioned the committee on Applications and Memorials to take his fourth year courses ungraded. See the editorial above.*

## Letters to the Editor

### Sherman encounters the council

On November 3, Sherman had the fortune and misfortune of attending the CYSF meeting for allocation of funds. His fortune was in being present at such a delightful fiasco; his misfortune was the fact that he did not obtain his desired funds. However, he strongly urges that all York students who have not attended a council meeting of the CYSF, do so readily, and be sure to bring with beanies, popcorn, whistles and bubble gum, to compliment the mood which will be found there.

The first portion of that evening's meeting was highlighted by the appearance of a mysterious young gentleman, who entered

the room and whispered some words into the President's ear. Soon after this he was voted money to support a sort of hostel on Huron Street for disoriented youths. It is interesting to note that no one from York was directly involved in this project, and after the gentleman disappeared with the promise of \$150, there arose some doubt as to the seriousness of his intentions. It is now being rumoured that the money is actually being used to buy diaphragms for down-and-out prostitutes.

Following this incident, other funds were allotted to "off the street" organizations until certain members of the council received a startling revelation which made lucid the fact that there would not be adequate funds left over for York University projects. This realization was too much to immediately bear, and a 10 minute recess was called.

(Sherman took full advantage of this pause in the proceedings to charge down the hall and into a brilliantly lit washroom, where he relieved himself of the burden his six after-supper beers had caused him. Upon re-entering the council room, he immediately sat down so as not to expose the urine drops on his pant leg which may have rendered him unworthy to receive council funds.)

The second portion of the meeting was tinged with various exciting scenes, such as the chain-smoking Speaker's chastisement of one of the council members who had a terrible habit of posing as a loquacious Robert Stanfield, and of another who took lip sneering lessons from William Buckley.

Of course the highlight of the entire episode was Sherman's ranting of such words as; "frightening, ludicrous, absurd," and, "undemocratic, undemocratic". (It may be noted here that another female member of the council, detecting Sherman's distress, immediately approached him and began stroking his hand. Sherman, who is extremely sensitive to maternal desires, allowed her to do so until the motion was passed allotting him no money. At this point he lapsed into silent delirium.)

Ending notes include only a further recommendation for York students to sit in on a council meeting. It is a form of entertainment not to be missed.

Kenneth Sherman

### Teaching course for professors

There exists on the York campus a problem much more acute than that of nationality of our professorial ranks. Many professors lack the ability to teach.

Oh, everyone knows about that! But rarely do people get uptight about the teaching profession itself. Students at York are given well-furnished common rooms and coffee houses as well as dummy student councils to overshadow the ineptness of some of the professors who now lecture.

It bothers me to see other students walk out of a lecture due to boredom. Many a lecturer appears unruffled by these mass exits.

As in any profession, there are those who will never be terrific at their jobs. This exists in teaching too. However, if these people show some attempt at improvement of lecturing techniques or at least concern for poor communication, then inadequacies in teaching will be overcome.

The Phd graduate who cannot come down to the level of the majority of undergraduates should be taught how to teach. Because a professor knows his subject, does not mean he can teach. And because of lack of communications, those students who have a first-year professor or poor professor, may question continuing in a subject, in which they are interested.

The responsibility does not lie fully with the professor. A new professor must start his teaching somewhere. But for a student to lose a course or a year because of poor preparation or trial and error com-

munication, is a high price to pay for another's inexperience.

What I am recommending is that a mandatory course in teaching should be taken by new and incompetent professors (all new professors are not incompetent).

Too few students take the initiative to criticize a professor's methods of teaching. Certainly, it is a touchy situation trying to criticize someone especially a superior.

After twelve years or more of schooling, students know as well as anyone the qualities of a good lecturer. If students do not demand better professors, it is students who will suffer the consequences of poor education.

Criticism is part of education at all levels. If the professor does not learn, he is not a teacher.

Earle Glicksman  
Founders II

### Newman withdrawl

In my book, THE DISTEMPER OF OUR TIMES, I have a footnote which reads as follows:

"Several leading Montreal, Toronto and Winnipeg businessmen were involved in organizing an active anti-Gordon lobby that urged business firms to severely limit their contributions to the Liberal Party. The chief moving spirit of this group was William Pearson Scott, chairman of Wood, Gundy and Company, the Toronto investment dealers."

Since Mr. Scott is a governor of York University, I thought I should clear up this matter and point out he has told me that at no time was he ever involved in organizing an active anti-Gordon lobby to urge business firms to limit their contributions to the Liberal Party, and that in fact at no time has he been active in collecting funds for either the Liberal or Conservative Parties in Ottawa.

I fully accept his explanation, and I would be grateful if you would publish this letter.

Peter C. Newman

### Staff meeting

2:00 pm

Thursday

## Excalibur

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ADVERTISING  
Leo Smits, Jackie Stroeter

TELEPHONE:  
editorial phone: 635-3201, 3202  
advertising phone: 635-3800  
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