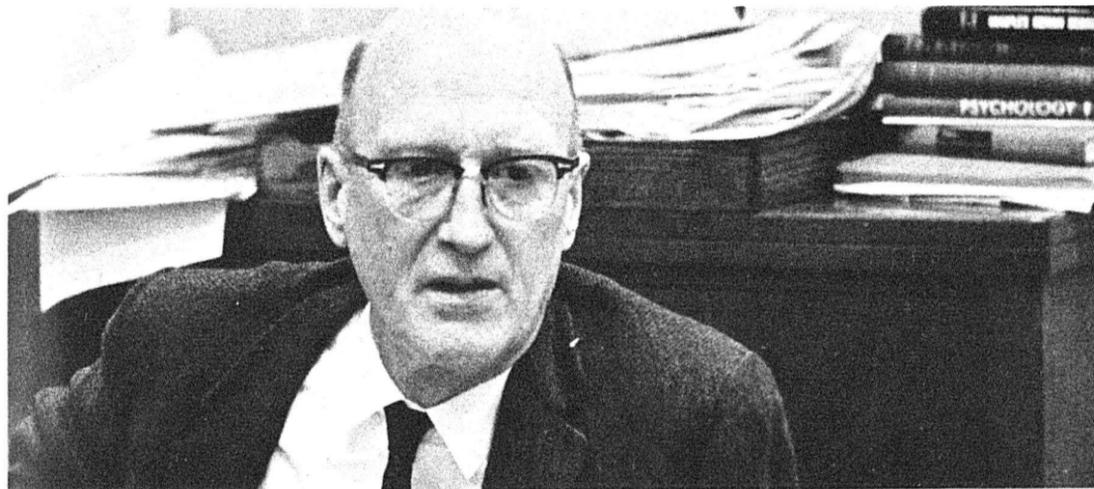


causes and cures



An interview

with A. B. J. Hough

The counsellor speaks

Casserole: How many people have dropped-out this year?

Hough: Frankly I can't begin to answer that one. Partly because we do not get absolute figures here.

If one drops-out of this university, one has to go through a very complicated procedure unless one takes off and writes in. And that is he has to come here and be seen by a counsellor. They discuss the issue, and remember the role of a counsellor in this situation is not to persuade the individual to stay in university, but to discuss the problem and find if he has just got his wind up over nothing.

Then he must go and see the dean of his faculty or the director of his school. From there to the library to make sure he's got no books out. And from there to the awards office to make sure he hasn't got a grant or loan or scholarship still in force. And from there to the registrar, and then, and only then, is he allowed to drop-out of university.

It's the dean that approves the withdrawal, not us.

Casserole: Are drop-outs increasing or decreasing relatively as the university gets larger.

Hough: I can't answer that one, because I don't know of any study that's ever really run a test on it. **Casserole:** It seems, that this year anyway, we've lost a large number of people in the students' union building. We've lost more than I can remember in my rather lengthy history at university.

Hough: It seems to me there was some faulty information running around about what happens if you withdraw before or after the mid-terms, and there was this tremendous rush this year to withdraw. I wasn't ever aware of so many withdrawals in that nervous week after New Year's and before exams as this year. Now I can't give you any figures, because they haven't been compiled yet.

Casserole: Are more students coming in, relatively speaking, as the university grows larger.

Hough: Oh yes, and there's a very funny thing about this. About six, or was it seven, years ago we were seeing a build-up in requests for counselling services which far exceeded the rate of growth in the student population. And then, I think it was the year before last, it started to level off. And last year the increase was approximately the same, in ratio, as the increase in the student population. I think the reason for the sudden increase was that we'd begun to offer some additional services. This means that now we are able to deal with the problem cases better.

One problem with this fluctuation is that I really can't plan staff increases effectively, because if I get these staff and they seem to go over, there's another little spurt in requests for counselling, and up goes the ratio. It's the most unpredictable thing.

Casserole: It seems in first-year

courses the general tendency is for the teacher to cover the field as quickly as possible using a lecture system. Which means the student takes down notes and gives them back to the teacher in his own form on an exam.

Do you think that students would be happier if they were asked to take more of the responsibility for their own education? Do you think the system could be revamped so that students wouldn't be told the facts and would have to discover them?

Hough: That's a rough one. I sometimes wondered if we wouldn't be wiser if we made first year a little more like Grade 12. In that way there would be sort of transition, and then we could move towards any sort of thing you are talking about. Perhaps there are students in first-year who would be bored even more than they perhaps are now. But I feel it would solve more problems than it would create.

One of the great problems, as I see it, with these very large classes, is the lack of opportunity to get discussion going—a little mind-stretching going—and the business of exciting people to pursue knowledge—to get background knowledge even to defend their own point of view—these are the kinds of things that are very hard. If you're facing a class of 100 odd students you almost throw up your hands and say "What can I do?"

cont. next week

J. Didinger, Jr., 1943 - 66

reprinted from *The Moderator*

Joseph C. Didinger, Jr., died at 9:30 a.m. on January fourth at Boston Army Base.

At first it was not clear how the victim spelled his name. But there is no doubt as to how he died.

The Associated Press called him Diddinger; the United Press preferred Diedinger. The Army, however, spelled the name correctly in a brief statement:

"At approximately 9:30 a.m. on January 4, 1966, Joseph C. Didinger, a pre-inductee from Thornberry Township, Pennsylvania, fell from a window of an unoccupied room on the third floor of the armed forces examining and entrance station, Boston Army Base. He was referred from pre-induction by Somerville Selective Service Board 22, and was one of 266 pre-inductees undergoing physical examinations."

Didinger was 22.

He was married and his widow's name was Gloria. A News photograph taken on the day of the incident shows her climbing the ladder that connects their 45-foot, two-masted yawl to the wharf at the foot of Boston's Lewis Street.

The boat's name is **The Outsider**.

The woman on the ladder appears to be tall, fair-haired, perhaps beautiful. She is wearing dark glasses, a blue parka, slacks, gloves, and boots.

Didinger was wearing a blue parka when he reported to the Somerville Draft Board at 6:55 that morning.

He had been driven there by John Ervin, his partner in the boat. Ervin, small and bearded, runs a leather shop in Philadelphia.

Between them they hoped to make the boat seaworthy by the end of the winter and sail to the West Indies on the first leg of a journey whose destination had not been decided.

Ervin wanted to sail to the Pacific—Didinger favored Europe.

At the draft board they looked out of place, said pre-inductee, Brian Brady, 22, of Somerville.

Didinger, he said, "was wearing this rough blue parka and crumpled trousers, and his hair was long and he hadn't shaved."

The other fellow sported a beard, he said.

It was too much.

"Right away there were comments from us regarding their appearance," Brady said.

Is it familiar?

Shortly after seven the bus arrived to take them to the base. Ervin said goodbye to Didinger, who with his 1A classification had every chance of being inducted.

He had held a IIS classification when he attended Penn State, but he stayed there only a year. He was not a good student.

His father, a Philadelphia architect who himself was graduated from Penn State, explained why:

"The place is too big now, much bigger than in my day, and I think my son asked his professors too many questions. He was fascinated by logic, and when he was in high school he used to take special evening classes in the subject. He was always searching for the truth. He asked a lot of questions."

Joseph Didinger, Jr., was self sufficient, and he worked at it.

He was in the Merchant Marine. He built boats. He was a garage mechanic.

His death left his widow in a state of shock.

She left Boston for Philadelphia on the fifth, taking with her some clothes, some snapshots of herself and her husband working on **The Outsider**, and his last Christmas present to her—a beautifully illustrated edition of Henry Thoreau's **Walden**.

She said she could not believe her husband would end his life without apparent reason.

background

The articles on these pages hopefully represent a cross-section of the disturbing undercurrent on campus. On the surface it is calm and quiet, but underneath are doubts and problems. The IBM-university was written by ex-University of Toronto Varsity editor, Ken Drushka. He edited the paper in 1964-65 and has worked with SUPA. The Schwarz report on student mental health is the first serious attempt, in Canada, to throw a little light in dark corners. Let's hope those in darkness aren't blind. On this page is a brutally edited interview with A. B. J. Hough, director of counselling services, which will be continued next week, and the Didinger story from *Moderator*, a national student magazine published in the states. All photos are by Jack Segal.

