

Familiarize yourself with printing

There's an antique printing press in Scott library

By JUDITH NEFSKY

Professor William Whitla believes that students should be well aware of how dependent they are upon the people who edit the texts they use. For this reason, he encourages students, particularly students of English literature, to familiarize themselves

with the history of printing. And to stimulate such an interest, he has, with the help of the Scott Library, the Faculty of Graduate Studies, and the Department of English, made available a Bibliographical Press.

Most of the equipment, situated in room 123 of the Scott Library, was purchased from the Evangelical Mission of Stouffville, and was formerly part of the equipment of Livingstone Press of Toronto. Dating from 1860-1890, it includes two hand-presses, a guillotine (i.e. a huge paper knife), several hundred copper and steel plates, and a quantity of type and other type-setting equipment.

Professor Whitla supervised a group of Graduate students in 1971 who printed various items. They learned that it can take an inexperienced "compositor" several hours to set the print for a single paragraph. It's easy to see why — the typeset must be read backwards and reversed. After the technique is mastered, however, the process goes much faster.

Professor Whitla developed his interest in hand-printing at the Bodleian library of Oxford University. He points out that at some universities hand-printing is a required skill in certain programmes. Particularly in the early days of printing, authors were virtually at the mercy of the typesetter, who would often change spacing or punctuation, and add or delete words, so that the lines would be the right length. There was also the problem of inexperienced compositors. In texts of Shakespeare, for example, apprentices would mistakenly alter passages that were vital by misspelling or spacing poorly. Around 1890 hand-pressing was widely replaced by mechanized methods, making errors less frequent.

Some of the graduate students that have worked with the press have made studies of the historical problems of printing.

Professor Whitla hopes to supervise a new printing group this year. If there is any interest, a group of undergrads might be formed.



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Morgantaler demonstration on Saturday

There will be a public meeting and demonstration in support of Dr. Henry Morgantaler, the Montreal physician on trial for performing illegal abortions, Saturday, October 27. The meeting is at 10 a.m. at the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education, on Bloor St. West near Bedford. The demonstration will leave OISE at 1 p.m. Contact Kathleen Dalton at 368-7315 for further information.

ANNOUNCEMENT

to all Great Bush
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Meeting

Tues. Oct. 30, 1973
7 p.m.
Room 215
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