

Editorial

An Editor's Notebook: exploring the ridiculous in university politics

University politics is not always the dull wasteland it seems. Gaffes and blunders occur just as often, if not more, as in the federal and provincial realms. *Excalibur* is proud to present two recent examples of the bizarre and ridiculous for your reading enjoyment. *Wednesday evening, February 4th*: While we at *Excal* were putting the finishing touches on last week's issue, the Council of Masters was preparing to partake of a sumptuous feast. The occasion—dinner with the Hare Commission.

The Council pulled out all the stops for this three person committee which is determining the future of non-faculty colleges. Rumours began circulating around campus describing the delightful and delectable odours that permeated through the thick cement walls of Stong College. Suddenly visions of the infamous eight course meal started dancing through our heads: foie de gras, or was it shrimp quenelles; duck à l'orange or could that have been the smell of pheasant under glass?

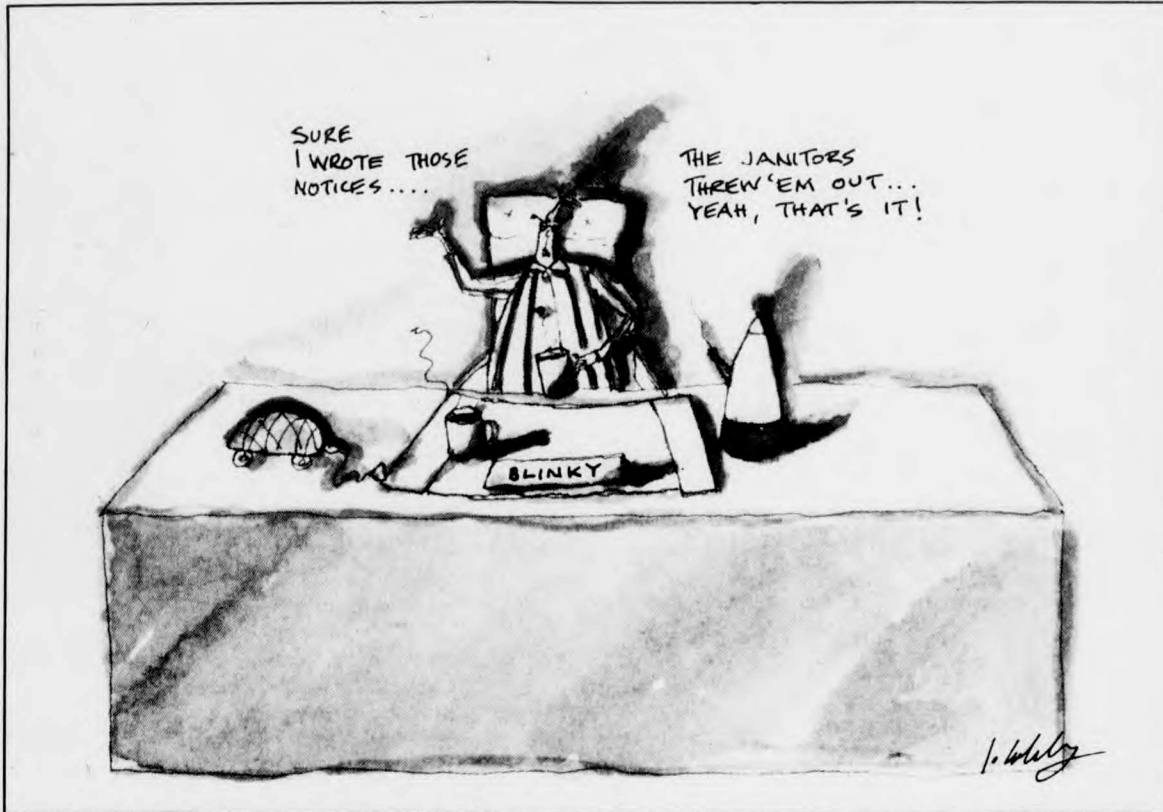
Sources told us that the white-gloved waiters served three types of wine. Our mouths watered at the thought of the Beaujolais Nouveau '84 sparkling in Waterford crystal glasses. Oh, why couldn't we, lowly members of the fourth estate, be the objects of such culinary bribery?

Operating under the assumption that the way to the Commission's heart is through its stomach, the Council of Masters spared no expense to explain how important the colleges are to University life. The Masters may not yet realize it, but they also did an excellent job of showing how sensibly they spend their budget.

Tuesday evening February 10th: David Dollard, *Excalibur's* super keen CYSF beat reporter had his newsbeat shoes ready to dance his way up to the Senate Chamber for one wild CYSF shindig. But his hopes were dashed on the rocks of incompetence; CYSF President Gerard Blink had neglected to send out written notices, which are constitutionally required at least 10 days before a meeting.

CYSF's absent-minded President sheepishly explained that he had "forgotten." But let us be thankful, yea grateful, that a greater sin was not committed. For most people would have held the meeting anyway, but CYSF, out of deep respect for their sacred by-laws, restrained themselves from this seductive temptation.

Imagine what the student sentiment would be towards CYSF if they had dared to abrogate the commandments of the constitution. Now there will be no council meeting for an entire five week period. Far better that CYSF honour its constitution and avoid this act of blasphemy than get on with business and be subject to the wrath of a disapproving public.



THE HONEST TRUTH BEHIND BUNK'S LATEST SCANDAL!

Letters

Letters to the Editor are welcome, and should be sent to 111 Central Square. All letters should be double spaced and preferably typewritten. Although *Excalibur* may withhold names of correspondents in extenuating circumstances, all letters must be signed and include the writer's phone number for verification. Anonymous letters will not be published. *Excalibur* reserves the right to edit letters for length, and to withhold all correspondence which is of a libelous nature.

Awareness Week wastes print in *Excalibur*: reader

Editor:

Let me begin by saying that I was hardly surprised by your editorial promoting Holocaust Awareness Week. On more than one occasion I have found evidence on your pages linking *Excalibur* and the Jewish Student Federation. This doesn't concern me. Religious and political bias are not uncommon among university newspapers. Instead I am disturbed about the implications of Holocaust Awareness Week itself.

Your article suggests that the motive behind Holocaust Awareness is to stamp out the ridiculous notion that the Holocaust was a hoax, which, as you say, "flourish(es) in a climate of ignorance and prejudice." Thus, it appears that what we are really dealing with here is a platform to combat anti-semitism.

Is anti-semitism a problem at York. I shamefully confess that it is. But the reasons behind it are completely unrelated to the anomalous, crude teachings of the Nazis, Keegstra, Zundel, and the like. Campus anti-semitism is undoubtedly the result of an overwhelming Jewish population, some which is undeniably elitist and biased in its relations with non-Jews.

Case in point—I received in my mail box a week ago, a letter from the JSF (I wish I knew who authorized their access to it), inviting me to join their mailing list. Yet, half way down the page it implied that I had to be Jewish (I'm not) in order to participate in Federation activities.

Your conclusion states that "knowledge of the past is essential... if future (similar) catastrophes are to be avoided." I couldn't agree more. Education in the realm of irrational social and political errors is vital, especially in our economically and politically tense times. But 'disaster' education, in my mind, does not entail mass propaganda meriting a week named in its honour.

Furthermore, there are many other catastrophes which equally warrant awareness. Does the JSF, and thus I assume, *Excalibur*, propose to award these equal treatment? I can't help feeling that it is some-

what ludicrous to be investing valuable finances and print in order to remind us that humans are fallible and made grave mistakes in the past. It leaves one with a sense of helplessness and pessimism. Holocaust Awareness Week won't make us feel any better.

—John Lumsden

Parking at York is ridiculous

Editor:

Despite the architectural beauty of the York University campus, it proves to very impractical. I understand the construction is only partly completed, but parking at York is ridiculous. It really annoys me that there is so much land surrounding our buildings and we park miles away. It's not so bad in the fall and spring when the weather is agreeable, but in the winter it's a different story altogether. The single letter parking lots are not only far but walking to and from them is like walking through a wind tunnel. The last thing I want to face on a blistering winter morning is a hike through York's version of a barren arctic wasteland. And we pay to do this!

I understand that York plans to cash in on the booming housing market, well how about restructuring the parking situation at this time? If the planners were to establish parking lots on the land closest to the main buildings, it would allow the land further away to be used for the purpose of constructing housing development or whatever. It would be to the advantage of all concerned. If this isn't feasible, how about at least constructing covered walkways from parking lots to the buildings to provide some shelter to those who drive to school?

—Peter Constantinou

Has Blink done anything?

Excalibur:

I'll start off with a confession. I don't follow student government closely, but I do know enough each year to focus on a few issues, and to be able to identify the "key" figures on council, such as they are. It can

only be regretted that this slim understanding of the workings of the student government "machine" still counts me among the most "knowledgeable" students on campus. Indeed, the very mention of the CYSF sends most York students running for the door. And while I concede that it would be difficult for the CYSF to present their jobs as glamorous, it would be nice once in a while if they let the students known they were still breathing.

Given all of the 'fanfare' accompanying Gerard Blink's arrival in office last April, the promise of accessibility to and communication with the student body, I don't think it is out of order to take Mr. Blink to task on a few points. Precisely what has Gerard Blink done in his eight months in office? Just what is happening with the Student Centre anyway? I would suggest that instead of putting up cryptic signs asking students how they feel about Central Square he should spend some time finding out how students feel about York. One is tempted to counter with "How do you feel about Gerard Blink?" except that it is unlikely that anyone could feel anything about him. It's my belief that the average York student does not even know who he is.

It's been clear in recent years that the CYSF is closer to the administration than it is to the students it supposedly represents. The fact that former CYSF members are now appearing in entry-level positions in the York administration is a telling commentary on just how far this has gone. If the trend continues, it will be difficult to convince the few students who are still interested that the CYSF is looked upon as anything more than resumé padding or a springboard for future advancement by its members. The implications of a student government which is the functional puppet of the administration should be a matter of grave concern to the student body.

It seems to me that the CYSF has devolved over recent years to the point where they are more like a listless accounting department than a meaningful student voice. All Blink's promise of accessible student government has amounted to is a few committee meetings for somnambulant college council reps. As far as

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