

Michael Lawrence

Cafeteria tales

Could busing become a real issue at York? A small field trip through the Central Square cafeteria suggests this depressing alternative.

Entering from the north-east the student begins his dangerous expedition through an unknown area of darkest Africa. Courageous caretakers are the only white men known to have set foot here before. Bravely battling through jungle paths of chairs and venomous cesspools of spilt coffee, the explorer suddenly crosses into the "promised land". The local chapter of the Moshe Dayan Fan Club is in progress, while the females of the chosen vie for the day when their princess status is converted into queenly leisure. The safari has only begun.

Crossing the banks of the Sinai our explorer enters Chinatown. Heated arguments concerning the technological impact of Minute Rice abound.

By this time our young explorer is thoroughly confused. His map tells him he is travelling through the land of Liberal Arts University, yet his eyes show him something different.

"How can these be the enlightened inhabitants of Universityland?", he asks himself. "Can this really be the place where tolerance is virtue, where the leaders of social integration congregate?" The answer is as obvious as it is depressing.

The short trip has been enlightening. Cultural alienation has reached a new intellectual level. Hypocrisy reigns supreme in a land where brother is easier said and never done.

The whites stare at the blacks with smirky amusement and the favour is returned. Italians, West Indians, Jews, Chinese, Quebecois, Americans — this is York University, a real cultural community. Now if only they'd get off their ethnic behinds and meet each other.

The explorer still can't understand. Sure, he knows that ignorant people are bigots, afraid of those who are different. But what explains this? He cries out for help.

The sociologists, psychologists and political activists arrive. "Resentment, domination, mutual security, mistrust, fear, group bonding, class mistreatment." The explorer listens patiently to the explanations.

"Certainly the analysis of these wise men is reasonable, but does it make this situation any more acceptable?" Once again the explorer looks across the checkerboard mishmash of tribes. Still not satisfied, he leaves the wasteland in search of the mysterious Canada Council Grant.

The Moral: That all races are inferior, that smugness is the signature of educated youth, that bigotry is not only granted but also requested.

With the Seaway closing soon, it's too late to send all of us back on a banana boat. So then, bring on the buses. Twelve watermelons to the west, twenty chicken soups to the east; humble egg rolls to be divided evenly. Shake the cafeteria well and there you have it, the racially balanced recipe.

Hopefully you find yourself offended by this little fable, and well you should be. Stereotypes, slurs and bigotry are all certainly offensive. Yet we sit smugly on a situation which may not be as exaggerated as the one described, or perhaps just not as visible.

Yes, we all have national, cultural and ethnic bonds and there is no shame in that. But does this make isolationism any more acceptable? Already I can hear the various defences and I grant them their separate validities. I could just as validly explain why a psychopath commits murder, yet I'm sure no one is about to tell me they find such behaviour acceptable.

The impression left by sights like the cafeteria suggests that social change is to be left to others. And yet if it doesn't happen here, could it anywhere else?

CYSF Column

Does Excalibur ever smile?

By MICHAEL MOURITSEN

Another hectic week finds me writing this column two hours before my deadline, so I have again put aside my desire to misquote every reporter within hearing range, and have assembled further notes of a miscellaneous (and perhaps repetitive) nature.

As I mentioned last week, the York Student Federation is organizing a travel pool file. The idea is that drivers and passengers will complete a form, indicating the nearest major intersection to their home. As the file grows, students and staff looking for rides to and from the campus, and drivers willing to drive, may refer to it to contact each other. There has been good response from prospective passengers, but the file obviously needs drivers, too. If you drive (48 per cent of York students do), and would like to cover some of your expenses, please register at the Federation's office, N111 Ross. Forms are also available at the information York bureau opposite the Post Office. Faculty and staff are encouraged to participate as well.

Students are also encouraged to register at the CYSF Office for temporary employment. We have already had a number of requests from various University departments for temporary help, and these requests will increase as the service becomes more widely known.

I would not recommend the campus Student Placement Centre (in the Temporary Office Building) to undergraduates looking for parttime or temporary jobs. The staff at the Placement Centre see their role as primarily graduate placement and career counselling. The abrasive personality and gratuitous career advice of the Manager, J.A. Weinstein, is simply not worth the long line-up to register for a part-time job. Application forms for the CYSF service are available in N111 Ross.

The Senate Bookstore Committee (which consists of three students and three teaching staff) has been investigating the operations of the York Bookstore over the summer. The Bookstore is operated as a division of Ancillary Services, and is owned by the University. The Bookstore Committee, as a users' committee, invites members of the University community to write in on any aspect of the Bookstore's operations; criticism and

suggestions are particularly welcome. The Committee may be addressed through its secretary, M.W. Ransom, S945 Ross. You should write soon because the Committee is planning to submit a Report, which will contain recommendations, to the October meeting of the Senate.

The title for this column was prompted by last week's issue, although I have always wondered: Do Excalibur reporters ever smile? I realize that the problems of the University (not to mention the world) are serious, and that Excalibur reporters apparently have a sacred mission to carry all of these problems on their shoulders, but don't some people have fun — at least sometimes?

I realize that as soon as I (dirty student politician that I am) begin offering suggestions on how to improve the paper, I shall be accused of interfering with freedom of the press (after all, everyone knows that's what student politicians like to do more than anything else.) But since I am also now an Excalibur staff member, I would like to suggest that a sense of humour is sorely lacking in this newspaper, and has been for three years. Last week's issue was generally dry, unimaginative and cynical, which cannot be blamed simply on lack of staff. I only hope that this tone does not discourage creative people from working for Excalibur, because a good staff is badly needed.

To set the record straight: I was quoted last week by Agnes Kruchio, in an article about the withdrawal of the Atkinson College Students' Association from the York Student Federation, as saying that the Atkinson people would not let me talk to their Assembly. I simply did not say this, nor did I imply it, nor is it true. The withdrawal of Atkinson from the Federation is regrettable, but it was a friendly parting, and both John Montgomerie, the ACSA President, and myself, have expressed a desire to co-operate with each other and work closely in the next year.

ed. note: Reporter Kruchio insists that while the statement Mr. Mouritsen objects to may not have expressed his true feelings on the matter, he did in fact make the statement during the course of the interview.

Also, Mr. Mouritsen is not a staff member, but contributes a regular column on his political field, which is the CYSF.

About those rumors last week!!

Last week, Excalibur ran a column headlined Stop the world — let me off, along with other satirical pieces. We felt at the time that the headline alone, as well as a sub-heading labelled These are true rumours, would indicate to everyone that what they were reading was a compendium of gentle barbs with no malicious intent.

If anyone was offended or embarrassed we offer our sincere regrets.

Newspaper experience?
We give it away free!
Interested? Come to our staff
meeting at 2 pm. Room 111
Central Square.

All letters should be addressed to the Editor, c/o Excalibur. They must be double-spaced, typed and limited to 250 words. Excalibur reserves the right to edit for length and grammar. Name and address must be included for legal purposes but the name will be withheld upon request.

Letters to the Editor

Stong orientation goes over big high turnout

In your issue of September 13 you ran an article entitled, "Mac sizzles as York fizzes." As one of the people involved in the Stong orientation programme I would like to issue a complaint regarding your total disregard of our college's orientation programme. Some of the highlights of our week's activities were: four barbecues, each of which was enjoyed by over 200 students; a greasers dance which packed our JCR; a play which played to packed houses, put on by The York Masquers (three performances); three evenings of folk entertainment; two evenings of all night movies (one comedy night, one horror night); a pub and dance, which people had to be turned away from due to overcrowding (despite the fact that there was a dance in Bethune and one in complex one at the same time, neither of which was well attended. On top of this there were many other events including scavenger hunts, obstacle races, a hayride, a campus tour, a Stufel, and an afternoon of sports activities.

The cost of these events was about 1800 dollars and all events were free. Your only other mention of orientation in the paper was three photos of a barbecue in Vanier and as usual Stong was ignored. I would just like to say, in closing, that this is exactly the treatment we have grown to expect in the past

from Excalibur, but I am hoping that it will not remain so in the future.

BILL BATES
Chairman, Stong Services Committee

Loss of professor makes York smaller

There was a teacher who is no longer employed by York University. You know, he was one of those course directors who had one course, and one day a week which he managed to schedule at the university. His particular course was offered through the Social Science Department. We students managed to total somewhere around forty. This matter, at first hand, seems to concern so few of us. The teacher was one of those which necessary budget cuts had severed. His contract was not renewed.

One of the principal aims of the course was to emphasize through the efforts of academic and in-class situational dynamics, the feasibility of positive exploitation of individuals through social support. It is to be understood that the term "positive exploitation" entails a clear understanding of the individual being valued as an autonomous being. Being the good students that we were, upon learning of the department's intent, we signed a letter and presented it to Mr. Hill (Chairman, Dept. of Social Science). We saw the old and new deans of arts. We asked them to seriously reconsider the choice, to inquire into the possibility of remedying this matter, or to just plain dig up some bread somewhere.

Our representatives who attend these meetings were not simpletons. They were very much aware of the necessity of treading quietly, and remaining within the parameters of institutionalized education. We simply asked that they reconsider. We had found the course to be so vital, engaging, and novel that we found it unfortunate that it could not be offered to subsequent students. If you can imagine, we were being altruistic.

Let it also be understood that our cries of a modest injustice did not fall on deaf ears. Each of the gentlemen we spoke to was sympathetic, and did, in fact, check into the matter. It became clear that there was a very real shortage of funds, and it worked out that available money had to be put to other uses.

The arguments were convincing. But of course, we weren't convinced and vowed to see this through to the end. Now, the teacher was told that there may be some more money available at the end of June. (He was not told that first year registration commenced as of the first weeks in June). Nothing came of all this. The teacher is no longer associated with York University officially. So, administrators, faculty, staff, and students remember that there are some forty of us out here who are concerned students for whom this place, York University, has become a little smaller. It is a little less of an institution dedicated to education, and a little more of an impersonal place. We tried. We shan't forget. There is no one to blame. The teacher is gone and the university is the worse for it. Too bad.

JIM DOWDEN
2nd Year, Ind. Studies

Michael's facts are very inaccurate

Thanks to "Michael" for his good intentions in including the Writing Workshop among his "Mysterious Little Known Facts" (Excalibur, Sept. 13, p.7). But "Michael" is not very good with facts. After telephoning the Workshop office some weeks ago, he seemed to have everything straight. Of the six "facts" reported, the record is inaccurate on three counts, dead wrong on two, and right on only one.

The inaccuracies are unimportant ones. His outright errors, however, distort the efforts of the Workshop staff and of the serious students among the 839 who enrolled in the Writing Workshop last year.

First, a student may not simply bring an essay to the Workshop "for grammatical correction before offering it humbly to his professor." In fact, a student must attend the Workshop for at least several hours to learn how to correct his own grammar.

Second, there are never any fees for the legitimate editorial advice offered in the Workshop. The implication of "Draft editing is quite allowed" is that we will rewrite a student's essay for him. This, in fact, we will not do — not even for a fee.

Accurate information about the Writing Workshop can be found in Manus (p.33), in the Arts Calendar (p.56), or in room S713 Ross.

MICHAEL J. REHNER
Director, Writing Workshop