

# Delphic oracle has no opinion of higher education

By DAVID WILLINGS

The story has made its imprint on modern mythology of the American girl "doing" Europe with her mother (what her psychoanalyst thought about this is not recorded). She woke up in her hotel room and said,

"Hey Mom, are we in London, England or Athens, Greece?" to which Mom replied

"If it's Monday we're in London, England. If it's Tuesday we're in Athens, Greece."

I too woke up in a hotel room. Memory rather than my surroundings told me I was not in the Lord Beaverbrook Fredericton and that it was Tuesday. I should have been in Athens on Monday but until then I had never been able to decide whether Air Canada or BOAC was world champion at lousing up people's journeys and making air travel a nightmare (although I inclined to think Air Canada had a slight lead). The previous day I had made the acquaintance of Laker Airways who run charter flights to various places from London. After a flight that was worse than Air Canada in its most chaos-out-of-order mentality I had arrived in Athens twelve hours late.

However, neither London nor Fredericton have an Acropolis. I can never function in the mornings without at least two coffees and once functional I headed for the

Acropolis. All the cliches in Roget's Thesaurus could not do justice to this monument to man's irrepressible creativity. Beverley Nichols writes how he felt compelled to go back to it again and again and I now see why for the same compulsion took hold of me. The Acropolis is the site of a series of temples erected in the 5th century BC on the site of the prehistoric palace of legendary kings Kodros and Theseus (who killed the Minotaur). Ruined now but still impressive the Parthenon dominates the whole area. This temple was dedicated to the virgin goddess Athena who protected Athens and Athenians. A stone's throw from the Parthenon is the Erechtheion whose decorated pillars still show man's urge to elaborate and beautify. A short walk from the Acropolis is the Agora (Market Place). In fact there are two market places, the Roman and the Greek. It was in the Greek market place that Socrates engaged in discussion and exchange of ideas with anyone who wanted to exchange ideas with him. It was here that Aristotle subjected his ideas to the acid test of free flowing dialogue. Perhaps Socrates and his followers were the real Professors before the whole process was sterilized by being institutionalized. From this spot emanated the driving force of Socrates' ideas "The unexamined life is not worth living" (also institutionalized!).

An excursion to Delphi is a must. Key Tours lay on a most instructive trip by coach for 480 drachmas (rate of exchange 28 drachmas to the dollar). This is excellent value for money. The Temple, the Museum, the spot the Ancient Greeks believed to be the centre of the earth are but a few of the historical landmarks. There were a whole lot of questions I needed to ask the Delphic Oracle but it wasn't functioning or perhaps it was. I stood on the site of the Delphic Oracle and asked it what the future of Higher Education was. I got no answer. Perhaps the Ancient Greeks were right that the Oracle could not lie. Let's face it - there is no answer.

The scenery on the drive from Athens to Delphi is unforgettable. The drive takes you up into the slopes of Mount Parnassos (take a coat or sweater, it can be colder there than in Athens) past Mount Helikon where the Muses were believed to live and give inspiration for creative work. I tried to establish communication but I guess the Muses have shut up shop.

The place is marked and the courier gives you all the details where Oedipus is supposed to have killed his father Laios and thus created a complex which has kept psychoanalysts in business the world over. As the courier expounded on the myth and pointed out the various places where the events are supposed to have taken place I could almost believe it happened just as the myth says it did. However, the last word on this lucrative and academically respectable piece of mythology was pronounced by my son "I can understand why he killed his father but I don't see why he married his mother". But I have digressed again and for this week I will stop writing.

To be continued next week.

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gigs in this area before they'd move out of Toronto and that wasn't possible. To replace the act, we've negotiated for Michael Quatro Jam Band from the U.S. (a three piece Emmerson Lake and Palmer type act with a chic guitarist and three albums) and Chad Allen (that's right - of Guess Who).

In other areas last year proved to be a good one for the Union. The Travel Office which started in late October closed out the year by aiding over 100 students with their travel arrangements. The fledgling service will be beefed up in the second term with a possibility of charter flights and low group rates to Europe and the south. Opportunities for visiting the south during easter break and Europe during the summer should be checked out with Gid Mersereau.

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