

Eighteenth Century Day

York celebrates the 1790's with zest

DAVID GROVES

Members of the York community celebrated the 1790's with *An Eighteenth-Century Day* at Atkinson College on Saturday. The conference was jointly sponsored by

the Humanities Department, Atkinson College, and the newly-founded York Society for 18th-Century Studies.

Ninety-two students, alumni, secretaries, and members of the

faculty gathered in the Fellows' Lounge to celebrate what Professor Ann Shteir called "a decade of heady fermentation". The 1790's in Europe, she said, saw the establishment of public education and divorce, the French Revolution and English conservatism, as well as the spread of new intellectual forces like botany, natural history, romantic poetry, and women's literature.

In the 1790's, a new generation rejected many established attitudes about politics, literature, sexuality and society. As William Wordsworth wrote,

*Bliss was it in that dawn
to be alive,
But to be young was very heaven.*

The *Eighteenth-Century Day* also featured an imaginary debate between Edmund Burke and the Marquis de Condorcet, starring Atkinson professors George Hopton and John Harney. Both were dressed in authentic costumes of the period. As the conservative Edmund Burke, Harney pleaded eloquently for an organic, co-operative society, while Hopton, as the more radical and rationalistic Condorcet, spoke of the potential for individual perfection and the need for fewer social restraints. The debate was enlivened by polite insults and courteous aggression on both sides. Both Burke and Condorcet blamed modern-day evils like pollution, the holocaust, and Hiroshima, on the philosophy of their opponent.

The highlight of the day was a discussion of royalty in the 1790's

by Professor Brian Hepworth. George the Fourth and his Queen Caroline were "two of the more grotesque characters of the age," according to the speaker, who then described the comical wedding of this obese English king and his drunken, lecherous, German wife.

The talk was accompanied by several caricatures of the royal couple. One ominous cartoon showed King George squinting obtusely at a portrait of Oliver Cromwell while his candle expired.

Readings from *The Mysteries of Udolpho* and other 1790's Gothic horror novels were given by Professor Norma Rowen, followed by a discussion of Mozart's last operas by Peter Sandor, a graduate of York's M.B.A. program. The 1790's encouraged writers and composers to depict extreme situations, far-away places, and lurid passions. Peter Sandor noted this connection between continental operas and English novels of the period.

Participants in the *Eighteenth-Century Day* also enjoyed a lavish dinner followed by an illustrated talk on William Blake by Glendon Professor Janet Warner. Professor Warner stressed Blake's discovery of the human body and its revolutionary importance for the 1790's.

In the evening a delightful performance of arias from Mozart was given by Hildreth and Hollis Rhinehart, Joan Wick Pelletier, and Michael Herren. The celebration concluded with a spritely discussion of English country dances by graduate student Jenny Rieger.

New Mac Prez protests funding cut: they lose dons

BARB TAYLOR

"The student always gets hit, we carry the burden especially in poor economic times," said Randy Dobson, President of MacLaughlin College Council, in response to increases in residence and meal plan fees announced last week and the federal government's plans to limit educational transfers to the '6 and 5' expenditure control guidelines.

Last week federal Finance Minister Marc Lalonde announced cuts to the transfer payments which will mean a reduction of \$40 million for Ontario. Richard Baldnis of the Ontario Federation of Students (O.F.S.) pointed out that this amount is in addition to \$320 million cut last year from federal revenue guarantee transfers.

The Board of Governors passed residence fee increases of 12.3 percent and meal plan increases of 10.5 percent, for 1983-84. "These increases are similar to incidental increases occurring across the province above the '6 and 5' guidelines," said Helena Mitchell, Chair-

person of the Canadian Federation of Students/O.F.S.

"My fees are increasing and I'm not seeing anything but cutbacks," said Dobson. Reductions in administration funding of student security last year, and the elimination of donships at MacLaughlin for next year are two examples Dobson cited. "Councils and students are being requested to fund things which should come from administration," said Dobson.

"The Ontario government and the universities should take a position to persuade the (the federal government) of the folly of their ways," said Macdonald.

Macdonald said the universities will continue to lobby the federal government for more funds. "CFS will be meeting with Serge Joyal, Secretary of State and will lobby for an increase in the percentage of funds available," said Mitchell. CYSF President Morris Bevilacqua said he intends to raise the issue at the next CYSF meeting.



FAIR COMMENT

Greg Gaudet, last year's CYSF President, comments on the upcoming General Elections and Referendum...

Voting will be difficult

GREG GAUDET

As most students know, CYSF is holding referenda on its membership in the Ontario Federation of Students (OFS) and the Canadian Federation of Students (CFS), the provincial and national student organizations. Presently, \$3.00 from each student's academic fee is allocated to OFS, \$1.00 to CFS. Although this might seem to be a small amount of money, it adds up to some \$35,000.00. Because this sum is considerably, the issues at hand are crucial and less lucid than supporters of both sides of the question might have voters believe.

If students vote "no", CYSF will no longer contribute the money set aside for OFS and CFS. This of course, will involve paying the membership fees.

Supporters of the "yes" side argue that students need national and provincial lobby groups to make their case and voice their concerns to the respective governments. While this is true, one can seriously question whether or not the present organizations are in fact able to do this. Students at U of T recently voted "no" and one critical report on OFS in "The Mike" suggested that OFS was so closely aligned with labour groups that the needs of students were at times overlooked.

The "no" side however, has no immediate solution to the problems CYSF might have in trying to represent students at the provincial and federal levels. Certainly one could argue that alone, CYSF could attempt to do this. Practically though, it is unlikely to occur. Constant contact would have to be maintained with both Ottawa and Queen's Park. CYSF does not have the manpower resources to do this.

It has also been argued though, that the \$35,000.00 CYSF will save if the referenda fail, could be put to use directly for York students, perhaps in attempts to lobby governments, perhaps to provide better student services. But there are a number of problems with this, not the least of which is the fact that some CYSF governments have been notoriously mismanaged and/or financially corrupt. If CYSF's present administration is re-elected, a big question lingers as to where the \$35,000.00 will go. Also, CYSF has been, for the past three years, lagging behind in its payments to the provincial and national lobby groups. Consequently, the money "saved" would not necessarily represent an immediate windfall.

Windfall or not, some legitimate concerns are raised by the "no" supporters. Experience indicates that OFSA fieldworkers - whose job it is

to assist member councils in their fights for students - are not often on campus. Only when referenda or other questions as to the benefits of membership in OFS are raised, do these staff people become easily available. Also, in both CFS and OFS, situations have arisen where the central committee or executive of these lobby groups have ignored specific mandates from their membership. These are not isolated, petty incidents, but are important indicators of how the organizations have been run for at least the last three years. One must also look closely at the arguments and results of referenda at other universities and colleges. How pervasive is the feeling that OFS and CFS are not putting students' money to work? What effects will "no" votes have on the finances of OFS and CFS - will they be able to continue to operate?

These are all questions that must be asked of both "yes" and "no" supporters. Students are voting on much more than a simple three or four dollars. The result of the referendum will not only effect the operations of CYSF, it will also have a considerable influence on the future of the student movement in Canada and Ontario.

On April 5th and 6th, the Council of the York Student Federation (CYSF), York's central student government, will hold its annual general elections. At that time, CYSF will also ask students if they support giving \$1.00 of their tuition fee to *Excalibur*.

To see the full implications of this seemingly straightforward question, one must understand how student activities are funded at York. Each year the university "grants" student governments a set amount of money deducted from your academic (tuition) fee. The amount presently allocated is \$46.00; \$27.50 of this goes to your college and \$18.50 to CYSF. The total amount granted to all student governments at York this past year was approximately \$800,000.00. It is the responsibility of the councils to distribute this money to those student activities which request it.

Excalibur is such a student activity. However, the paper's share of this year's money was roughly \$6,700, or 0.84 per cent of the total. In fact *Excalibur's* share of the total has dropped from seven per cent over the past six years. This despite the fact that production costs have skyrocketed in the same period and the fact that *Excalibur* is the only student-operated medium which is accessible to all York students.

How then is *Excalibur* funded? Most students believe it is by their student fees but this has already been shown to be, for all intents and purposes, untrue. In order to remain a newspaper of its high calibre, *Excalibur* has had to rely on revenue from advertising - not a stable industry at the best of times. When ads are low in numbers, the paper must be low in pages in order to maintain at least a break-even level of production cost. With a mere \$1.00 increase in your academic fee, *Excalibur* will attain a certain amount of financial stability. That part of the paper's revenue, at least, will be predictable and certain. These elements are vital to any business operation.

But perhaps the most important effect of direct student contributions to *Excalibur* would be the protection the extra funds would give the newspaper against the whims and desires of student governments. As any political science student knows, independent media play a vital role in ensuring government integrity. *Excalibur's* current precarious situation leaves the newspaper at the mercy of student governments that could - if they were offended by *Excalibur's* stand on an issue - withhold funds.

It is extremely important, therefore, that York students consider the issues surrounding the referendum question. The York community needs *Excalibur*, and *Excalibur* needs you.

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