

letters & comment

Excalibur lies and new low, readers say

Outright lies

I fully realize that the letters and comments published in *Excalibur* do not necessarily reflect the opinions of the editors or publishers, I do however question the continued poor press coverage extended to CYSF. This coverage becomes even more disturbing when, as is often the case, it is based on pure speculation or outright lies. I will cite just one such example for the purpose of illustration.

The BOG Report, by Harvey Pinder, in the Feb. 2, '78 publication stated that, "Excalibur is preparing a brief which argues that they should receive a direct check-off from the student fee in order to insulate themselves from the political vagaries of CYSF."

I for one do not disagree, in principle, to the possibilities of separate funding for *Excalibur*. As a member of *Excalibur's* Board of Publications I also sit on a committee of three to investigate this very proposal. I do however find it quite disturbing that *Excalibur* would publish that the reason is for "insulation from the political vagaries of CYSF."

Vagaries are defined as, whimsical or extravagant notions, and to the best of my knowledge CYSF has extended none toward *Excalibur*. This statement becomes even more disturbing when at the last Board of Publications meeting (Feb. 2-78) *Excalibur's* formal reason for alternate funding was to alleviate their current financial pressures. *Excalibur* feels that this move will also aid CYSF with their financial problems, and I tend to agree. Why then does *Excalibur* publish an outright blatant lie to the student body?

Press bias is to be expected and CYSF would by no means try to subdue it. Many of us find that *Excalibur* provides us with our weekly laughs, serves to keep us on our toes, and sharpens our wits. However press coverage which is either speculative or untrue is of benefit to nobody.

I for one shall be more than willing to strike better liaison between *Excalibur* and CYSF, and hope that in the interests of good journalism *Excalibur* is of the same opinion.

Robin Carter
CYSF Constituent Rep. (Winters)
Excalibur Board of Publications

Ed. note: Mr. Carter's accusation that *Excalibur* published "an outright blatant lie" is based on an erroneous assumption that the "political vagaries of CYSF" (as Pinder put it, although "whims" is probably a better word) and *Excalibur's* current financial pressures are mutually exclusive.

Bethune Council

We should like to take this opportunity to inform the general York community that the Bethune College Council is a united council of concerned Bethune members and intends to continue to carry on its business in the best interests of Bethune College.

Bethune College Council

Just a word from one of the 'bourgeois' element at Bethune in response to Naomi Laird's letter of February 2, 1978. Though I don't dispute Ms. Laird's right to decry her 'vicious enemies' on Bethune Council, I wish she had left others out of her tirade.

While complaining about the discrimination of fellow council members, Ms. Laird seems to feel free to exercise her discrimination and say that the Council's contribution towards the Bethune College ski trip was a waste of

money, even though she was not present (for whatever reason) at the meeting where this issue was discussed.

A lot of time and effort went into organizing this trip and making it an enjoyable but affordable weekend for those who took advantage of it. I don't think the Council's donation was a throw-away, nor do I think anyone else who went on the trip would judge it so. Council voted unanimously to donate the money and I feel it is wrong of Ms. Laird to denounce its democratic decision in such an offhand way.

If she thinks Council has done her an injustice, fine, but I wish she had restricted her condemnation of Council to that issue and not to other decisions made in the past. I'll take this opportunity to thank Council for their donation and hope that Ms. Laird's careless remark won't affect its willingness to support such activities in the future.

Sara McLennan
Bethune student

All letters should be addressed to the Editor, *Excalibur*, room III, Central Square. Please type letters, triple or double spaced, and keep them to around 250 words. Name, address and phone number must be included, but name will be withheld on request. *Excalibur* reserves the right to edit for grammar and length.

Deadline Monday 4pm.

In fact *Excalibur's* financial problems derive in part from CYSF's hacking almost 50 percent off our grant in its last two budgets. (CYSF broke a three-year contract with *Excalibur* in doing so.)

Furthermore, as a member of the staff, Mr. Pinder is entitled to express his own opinions, and as a columnist, his writings do not necessarily represent the views of the staff at large (Mr. Carter points this out at the start of his letter and then seems to forget it.)

Luckily, we have Mr. Carter's reassurance that CYSF would not try to subdue press bias.

Despite this, we cannot forget a vote by the CYSF executive in July '73 to suspend *Excalibur*, fire its staff and seize its property. Like Mr. Carter, we are more than willing to strike a better liaison with CYSF, beginning with financial independence from it. Then we won't worry about our grant dwindling every time we criticise CYSF.

The Gang of Four

In the last two issues of *Excalibur* I have been made aware of the criticism expressed by readers concerning four of the paper's editors. The readers point out that the objectivity and straight forward interpretation of the facts have been misconstrued. The accuracy of *Excalibur's* reporting has been challenged. Is this an indication of the competence and - or bias's that *Excalibur's* editorial staff has incorporated into their many other talents?

Perhaps, the editors of *Excalibur*, like CYSF, should be left up to the student body for election, since *Excalibur* is a campus-wide newspaper. The communication of issues through *Excalibur* to the readers should be made into a task of relating the facts accurately, so that they are indeed worthy of public reading.

So editors, Paul Kellogg, Paul Stuart, Agnes Kruchio and Ted Mumford, this statement need not require any of the expertise you obviously possess in the art of reconstruction.

Tammy Muskat

Sunk to new lows

Excalibur has sunk to new lows with the publication of its Harbinger poll, and the accompanying editorial comment in the January 26 issue.

Using that comical 'survey' as statistical support of your contention that Harbinger is a valuable, wanted service amounts to nothing more than blatant bias and - or juvenile ignorance.

The article on the poll itself is full

of backward reasoning and your interpretations of the results are highly prejudiced. You state that 68 percent of the sample "believed that they were aware of the services offered by Harbinger."

However you go on to show that most of them had false beliefs. If 16 percent "were sure that Harbinger's staff were trained professionals", and 26 percent were sure they were not, and 58 percent did not know either way, then you have proven that only 1/4 of your respondents were correctly informed about Harbinger. The other 74 percent were not aware of the fact that Harbinger employs NO trained professionals.

You also make the foolish blunder of supposing that the 16 percent who felt Harbinger was comprised of professionals corresponds with the 16 percent who indicated they had used Harbinger. Unless Harbinger consistently misrepresents itself (either deliberately or not) to its clients, or some of those who said they used Harbinger were lying, those two groups could not possibly correspond: again, Harbinger staff are NOT trained professionals, anyone using the facility should know that. This directly contradicts the inference you make by stating, "... all of the people in the study who experienced the center first hand had come away favourably impressed...." Impressed or confused?

Furthermore, if 74 percent of your poll were either proven to be or admitted they were ignorant of Harbinger, how is it that 58 percent of the poll was "highly pro-Harbinger"? Surely those who carried out the poll misconstrued the responses they received, or incorrectly tabulated their results. No rational person could favour something of which he was uninformed.

Finally, you state that 70 percent of the group preferred professional counselling. Harbinger has no professional counsellors, therefore 70 percent of the group prefers counselling services other than Harbinger. Your conclusion, "... the sample group studied for the most part were aware of Harbinger as a social service agency and generally favoured it", is NOT supported by your poll. In fact the opposite is true.

What the article on the Harbinger poll DOES prove is the EIGHT York Students have used Harbinger at least once in their lives, and that Lorne Wasser is a hopeless poll-taker and statistician, and conspicuously prejudiced in favour of Harbinger.

An even bigger joke (if such is imaginable), is Paul Kellogg's irresponsible editorial regarding the

Harbinger article. Based on a ridiculously amateurish poll which admits it is NOT representative of York student opinion, how is it possible that any intelligent person, let alone the editor of a University Newspaper, could state, "it clearly indicates that the York community wants Harbinger and thinks it should be adequately funded." This is an outright false statement showing its author to be grossly naive and prejudiced. Funding for Harbinger should not be influenced by such ridiculous, prankish journalism.

If Harbinger wants more funding, a general referendum through CYSF is the correct means. THAT will "clearly indicate" the feelings of the York community".

Chris Testa
Janis Leader

Pinder's reality

In the past year I have refrained from using up space in the letters column of the paper so that students could express their views. I don't think the letters column should be used as a battleground between CYSF and the editors or filled with rebuttals.

However, it seems that last week's *Excalibur* and parts therein deserved some comment from myself. Various members of Council besides myself felt that one Harvey Pinder in his two articles last week was again confused and made several spurious reports on CYSF and its members. I also would like to note that the only other letter I have written to *Excalibur* dealt with a similar problem Mr. Pinder had with reality.

Excalibur should have or show some responsibility for its staff members, which brings up another question, are staff members allowed to submit letters to the editor? I know of no other publication in existence that allows such a procedure.

On the issue of Miriam Edelson's appearance at York, CYSF did inform the community! The information officer for the Ontario Federation of Students Allan Golombek informed me a week in advance of Miriam's visit. In our discussion I asked Allan about a press release for *Excalibur*, posters, and notification to college councils. Consequently, Allan informed me that he would handle the press release for *Excalibur* and supply CYSF with posters, (which he did). CYSF put up the posters as did Osgoode Hall Legal and Lit Society and I sent a letter to all College Councils announcing Miriam's appearance and inviting them to an informal talk with her before her speaking engagement.

After talking to Mr. Golombek

this week, I again confirmed our earlier conversation and found out that *Excalibur* had failed to print the press release that they had agreed on.

Mr. Pinder further shows his ineptitude by stating that CYSF did not notify the students on the visit by Dr. Harry Parrott, Minister of Colleges and Universities.

CYSF notified *Excalibur* that the Minister was coming at least one issue in advance and was guaranteed "FRONT PAGE COVERAGE". Consequently this "FRONT PAGE COVERAGE" found itself on the third page with a grand space allocation of about five lines. CYSF also distributed 250 large posters announcing the visit.

Mr. Pinder again shows his complete lack of information and research when he states that CYSF should have demanded Dr. Parrott to appear on another day instead of the last day of classes. In the first instance it was not the last day of classes; second, CYSF was the only student council in Ontario last year that was able to get Dr. Parrott on campus to discuss OSAP. Third, the Student Council does not have any control over the elements and CYSF cannot stop the snow from falling or for that matter, demand a Cabinet Minister to appear when we want him.

To sum up, I would also like to point out that Mr. Pinder failed to appear at the meeting with Dr. Parrott and did not make his presence known at the meeting and discussion with Miriam Edelson. One good thing I would have to say about Mr. Pinder, is that he is consistent, consistently confused.

Paul Hayden
President, CYSF

Ed note: *Excalibur* did not agree to print such a press release from OFS, nor did we receive one. Given the importance of Dr. Parrott's visit and the way we have been keeping up on the student aid situation, it might have been appropriate to announce his visit on the front page. However editor in chief Paul Kellogg made it clear to CYSF vice-president Gary Empsey that we could not guarantee a space on page one.

The "five lines" Mr. Hayden refers to were nine in number, in **12 point bold face type** like this which is pretty hard to miss.

As for staff members writing letters to their own paper, we believe all students should be allowed to write us letters, and our staff members are students. For publications with the same policy, check any student newspaper.

to York President H. Ian Macdonald (send a copy of your letter to the Board of Governors' Chairman B. Gerstein c/o Mel Ransom, Secretary of the University). We suggest the following points be stressed:

1. Make it clear that you will not accept the proposed cutbacks.
2. Entreat the President and the Board of Governors to demand adequate support for higher education from the Province of Ontario.
3. Indicate that you are deeply concerned that the proposed cutbacks will lead to a decaying of the quality of academic life at York, and that in light of this you have serious reservations about returning to York next year.

We, the students CAN DETERMINE THE QUALITY OF ACADEMIC LIFE AT YORK UNIVERSITY — York's future is our decision!

Bessie Jacob **Stephen Durbin**
Gary Kenny **Deborah McKellar**
Brian Whiteside **Brad Varey**

Waiving merit pay

The undersigned librarians

members of the YUFA bargaining

unit are not applying for the merit

pay increase. We believe that there is

no fair way of determining who is

meritorious or of distributing the

merit funds.

Furthermore, we think that is is

inappropriate to consider awarding

merit at this time of financial

stringency especially with the

possibility of lay-offs. We would

rather see this money spent to

preserve staff positions.

Trudy Bodak

Joan Carruthers

Joanne Chumakov

Judith Hardy

Grace Heggie

Mary McLachlin

Ann Ricker

Lieselotte Schinkel

Beverly Smith

Mary Warkentin

Prevent cutbacks

STUDENTS, IT'S YOUR

DECISION

SPEAK OUT TO

PRESIDENT MACDONALD

Cutbacks in teaching staff at York for 78-79 pose a serious threat to the quality of education in this University — how can we prevent these proposed cutbacks?

We urge every concerned student to voice his or her opposition to the cutbacks by writing a personal letter

Why this page is ugly

Excalibur's Board of Publications decided last week, that for financial reasons, at least 40 percent of the paper's content must be advertising. Yet we've been deluged by letters and must resort to this gray layout to publish them, rather than let them gobble up pages. If your letter has yet to appear, don't fret. We'll print it as soon as possible. Please keep your letters to 400 words.