

Excalibur

Everything secret degenerates; nothing is safe that does not show it can bear discussion and publicity
—Lord Acton

Excalibur is the York University weekly and is independent politically. Opinions expressed are the writer's. Unsigned editorials on this page are decided upon by staff vote and do not necessarily reflect the views of individual editors. Excalibur attempts to be an agent of social change and a forum of democratic debate. Typography by Fotoset, printed at Delta Web. Excalibur is published by Excalibur publications, a body incorporated under the laws of Ontario.

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For good or bad election on again

The October 25 Board of Governors election certainly had its problems — the key one was a short campaign period and little apparent student awareness that it was being held.

If two issues of Excalibur had appeared in the campaign period, more students would have been informed of the election and the candidates would have had some opportunity to debate, and present their views.

The decision of the Council of the York Student Federation election tribunal to call a new election for both student positions on the Board is certainly debatable.

Because the Revolutionary Workers League distributed endorsements of York Students Against Cutbacks candidates (against the wishes of the candidates) at their regular lit table in Central Square, which happened to be located directly opposite the advanced polling station, the tribunal opted for a new election.

Though it's unlikely that many were influenced by the RWL leaflet, if anyone was — then the conduct of the election was tainted. We hope the RWL will be more careful in future.

It's an ambiguous situation. While a runoff between Brayman and Weisfeld, who tied for second place, was necessary, personally it seems unjust to make Peter Brickwood, who clearly topped the polls, run again.

But, with a mandate of a mere 235 votes in a university which houses about 25,000 possible voters, it is not an injustice to the democratic process that he try and increase this mandate.

We would like to point out a problem with the process of electing student governors, which must be corrected as soon as possible: There is no constitutional mechanism for the staging of BOG elections. Thus CYSF had to step in and oversee the election according to its own constitution.

The council can hardly be faulted for its handling of the election. It is, after all, unrealistic to expect CYSF to please everyone with the way it handles a campus-wide election, when its jurisdiction extends to only five undergraduate colleges.

And the council would be quite within its rights to approach other constituencies in this campus and ask them to help with the cost of the two BOG elections (the last election cost approximately \$700).

The onus is on the student governors we choose now to set up a set of regulations for the conduct of BOG elections, to ensure that CYSF-member students won't pay for everybody else.

Xcal Board of Pubs getting off the ground

The following constituencies in the York community have representation on Excalibur's Board of Publications:

- The Council of the York Student Federation (a non-executive member and a vice-president).

- Three college reps; two from Complex A and one from Complex B, to be selected from the student councils of the colleges which are CYSF members.

- a representative from the York University Staff Association

- a representative of the York University Faculty Association

- a graduate student from the grad societies which belong to CYSF.

- a professional journalist from the York Alumni Association

- two members of the Excalibur Staff (excluding the full-time editors).

As soon as a majority of these eleven members are chosen, the Board of Publications can meet.

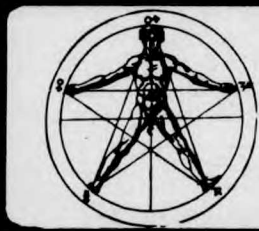
We request that these constituencies notify interim Board chairperson Bryon Johnson of their selections as soon as possible at 667-3201.

College members have expressed dissatisfaction with the way in which college representation is allotted. Therefore at today's Excalibur staff meeting, a motion will be put forward mandating Excalibur's staff reps to propose that the Board change its system, to ensure that every college which contributes to Excalibur financially is represented.

The motion will ask the Excalibur staff reps to invite friendly amendments from other Board members.

Harbinger's Column

by Judy Posner



Recently, a woman student from one of my courses approached me after class about a personal issue that related directly to my lecture.

Because I teach women's studies and focus specifically on women and their relationship to the medical profession, it was not inappropriate for her to ask me for some suggested reading on hysterectomy. She confided to me that she was very concerned, even "scared" about her own upcoming operation. The mature female at York comprises an increasing segment of the student population, so this woman's concerns should be increasingly relevant to those of us who teach courses relating to women.

My first response was a rather straightforward one. I asked who her doctor was and whether she had asked this individual for reading material on the subject. She had, but none was given. This is a sorry state of affairs.

Although as a non-medical person I am hesitant before in-

terfering with an existing patient-doctor relationship, it is clear to me in this case, that I am merely doing a job that others should have done. But the subject of hysterectomies poses a special interest for me as a teacher and as a woman.

I am forced to take a heavy ideological stance.

There is substantial scientific research on the fact that a great number, maybe as much as half of all hysterectomies are unnecessary. This is a fact that I would mention in my women's studies course. Like the alarmingly increasing number of unnecessary Caesarian child births, hysterectomies oftentimes reflect the ease with which the medical profession tends to tamper with women's bodies.

The next bit of advice I am inclined to give is that she could certainly request an in-depth explanation of the necessity of the operation and further she might want to consider getting a second

Pinball Wally



EXISTENTIALISM

Xcal staff meeting today at THREE on constitution @ the Board of Publications

Once more with Brickwood @ Weisfeld

The Excalibur staff voted to endorse Peter Brickwood and Abie Weisfeld of York Students Against Cutbacks for the first Board of Governors election. Now that a new election has been called we would like to say that the endorsement still stands.

We have never overestimated the power of persuasion commanded by an Excalibur editorial — people will make up their own minds, hopefully after giving each candidate a fair hearing. We hope that the following case for Brickwood and Weisfeld will merit consideration.

- Experience: Weisfeld has been a member of CYSF since 1975. Brickwood has worked tirelessly behind the scenes to get this election held, and is a member of the Senate Academic Policy and Planning Committee.

- Their election will ensure that the entire democratic student spectrum will be represented politically. Their tough stand against cutbacks will complement the efforts at co-operation by CYSF, the college councils and general meetings.

- The following line from YSAC's statement of principles merits our support:

"As students at York, we refuse to see our education and our principles sacrificed for a change in the government's social and economic priorities."

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or third opinion from a doctor with a known non-sexist bias. Here is where word of mouth is an important feature of women's relationships with the medical profession.

Finally, we turned to the topic of reading suggestions. Having done research on gynecological textbooks I can clearly suggest that this is probably the last place one would want to turn for a critical analysis of the necessity of hysterectomies. *Our Bodies, Ourselves*, the feminist bible on

female anatomy, makes a reasonable starting point for an investigation. Local women's collectives are also a worthwhile contact for suggested readings. And the women's bookstore on Harbord St. is a good place for skimming books on the matter.

Unfortunately, after all this is done, the decision of whether or not to go with the operation may not be an easy one, and I suppose it would be unlikely that many of us would want to go against solid medical opinion. But we can at least see to it that a variety of medical opinions are consulted. And once this decision is made, we should certainly see to it that we are well informed on the effects of such an operation. They may be dramatic and education is the best remedy for coping with its physiological effects.

In short, the subject of hysterectomies is an immensely loaded political topic. It is as controversial as any women's issue could be. Unfortunately, because most women are not trained in the art of medicine we may feel unqualified to assert ourselves in gaining information to assess the situation. But this is wrong. We are qualified to assess the competence of our physicians on a number of issues. Are they giving us the information we should have?

