

Hardcore racism is not a thing of the past

A few months ago the *Obiter Dicta*, the Osgoode Hall law school newspaper, received a vile and racist letter which claimed Osgoode was becoming a "national joke" because too many Black students were being admitted. Misplaced intentions and poor judgement caused the editors of the paper to print the letter in hopes of alerting students to the level and degree of racism on this campus.

Although I don't agree with the publishing of the letter I do understand what the editors must have felt upon receiving it.

This year I was the first Black female editor of *Excalibur*. With that came a lot of reactionary criticism. I was accused of making the *Excalibur* into a "Black paper;" I received numerous letters accusing me of being racist against white people and of being "Black-centric"

These letters I could stand; in fact I expected them. I knew when I began as editor that my particular bias, which I don't apologize for, is not usually expressed in mainstream media. As a Black woman the stories I felt were most important and the way I felt things should be edited was very different even from some of the people I work with.

Because the mainstream press is dominated by people of European decent — and, in the decision-making positions, particularly men — their bias is the one you are used to seeing. I know for some people a change from what they are used to can be very threatening.

However, the quantity and blatant nature of racist letters to the editor that appeared on my desk was particularly disturbing in light of the fact that there is an underlying assumption by many

people at this school that racism exists only in the most subtle form.

Sometimes I too was tempted to print the racist letters I received, just to make people aware of the real level of hatred circulating among our fellow students and, for all I know, staff and faculty (most of the letters came unsigned). But it is not my job or my intention to provide a forum for this kind of garbage.

Last week one of the most disturbing letters arrived under my door. The anonymous note made a reference to the Ku Klux Klan and advocated killing Black people — in other words me, my family and my friends.

Too often people on this campus, particularly people who have had very little personal experience with racism, direct their attention full-force against fighting "systemic racism" — struggling for courses more reflective of ethnic diversity or demanding more tenured professors of colour.

Undoubtedly the effect of the curriculum and faculty at this university on perpetuating oppressive attitudes cannot be underestimated. But as important as these struggles are, sometimes they overshadow the very basic fact that Black people, Asian people, Indian people, First Nations people, anyone who 'looks different' and women from all races are still subject to the most basic and violent forms of hatred.

Not only are there people out there who want us out of the university, there are people out there who want us dead.

J. A.



So long, Harry.
Thanks for the memories!

excalibur

Excalibur
420, Student Centre
York University
4700 Keele Street
North York, Ontario
M3J 1P3

Telephone:
Advertising • 736-5238
Editorial • 736-5239

Excalibur is York University's
community newspaper.

Excalibur is a volunteer organization. We will consider for publication all submissions that are not deemed libelous or discriminatory by the editors and staff. The opinions expressed are not necessarily shared by all members of the staff or board of publications. Final responsibility resides with the editor-in-chief as outlined in the constitution.

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Business Manager Merle Menzies
Advertising Assistant Patty Milton-Rao

EXCALENDAR

Thursday April 2

Important Staff Meeting at 5:00 pm
(Last one of the term. Party!)

Friday April 3

Gone Fishin'

"Terrorism is the
surgical strike of the
oppressed"

- Slacker guy