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Prof speaks on obscenity

By Hugh Westrup

Proposed changes in the federal government's legal definition of obscenity could lead to restriction of artistic freedom and increased police harassment.

These were the forecasts made last Monday evening in U of T's Innis College at a public meeting sponsored by the Canadian Civil Liberties Association to discuss the federal obscenity bill.

The amended law includes a section on child pornography, the option of trial by jury, an increase in the severity of punishment, and extends the definition of obscenity to include "the undue exploitation of... violence, crime, horror, cruelty or the undue degradation of the human persons..."

Panel member Louise Arbour, Osgoode law professor, expressed her dismay at the new definition.

"The change in the new law is dramatic," said Arbour. "A sexual connotation must no longer be there for material to be prosecuted as obscene. This is a clear departure from the ordinary definition of obscenity."

"So much for Edgar Allan Poe who could be charged with exploiting horror. This law places the motives of the artist under suspicion."

Arbour said the limit of society's intervention should be the prohibition of public obscenity.

"Surely it is important for Canadians to reflect on the matter of what is obscene but we should not have to reflect on it in courts of law," she said.

J.S. Midanik, former chairman of the Metro Toronto Board of Education, who was described by moderator Barbara Frum as a "civil libertarian and curmudgeon" also voiced fears about artistic control.

"We're talking about the restriction of serious artistic work," said Midanik.

He referred to a number of instances under the present law in which police officials have quietly censored art gallery exhibits by threatening to charge gallery owners unless they removed art works deemed offensive by the police.

Midanik, who objects to obscenity legislation of any kind except that outlawing child pornography, was concerned about the role of the police which he called "the most restrictive element in society".

"Many laws are precise but this is criminal law of opinion," he said. "No legislation like this should be put lightly into the hands of law enforcement officers."

Mark McGuigan M.P., defending the new law, responded to Midanik by saying, "we can only assume police will enforce laws in a reasonable way."

McGuigan, who took part in drafting the amendment, said the central issue is the detrimental effects of pornography on society. He said he believed pornography contributes to anti-social behaviour although the scientific studies he referred to at the meeting reach mixed conclusions about the effects of pornography.

A second speaker defending the law was Father Brad Massman, director of the social action archdiocese of Toronto. He said he was pleased with the law but wished it would also exclude the use of expert witnesses, "intellectual prostitutes", who are regularly called to testify at obscenity trials.



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mary broderick

ELECTION BULLETIN

Nominations for the following positions are now being accepted at the CYSF office, Room 105, Central Square.

- One CYSF representative for Stong College
- One CYSF representative for Founders College
- Two CYSF representatives for Graduate Studies
- Two CYSF representatives for Environmental Studies
- Three CYSF representatives for Calumet College
- Two student senators for the Faculty of Fine Arts
- Eight student senators for the Faculty of Arts
- One student senator for the Faculty of Science
- Two representatives to the Board of Governors

Nominations for the October 25, 1978 election close on Friday, October 13, 1978 at 5:00 p.m.

Wording for the referendum, also on October 25, 1978 was not available at press time but will be announced in next week's Excalibur.

Applications for Deputy Returning Officers and Poll Clerks for the upcoming elections are now being accepted in the CYSF office.

Faralee Chanin
 CYSF
 Chief Returning Officer

Stong peeved with food

By Evan Adelman

On Wednesday, September 27th, posters were hung throughout both Stong and Bethune Colleges citing specific grievances the residents have made regarding Saga's cafeteria facilities in Stong College.

"The Saga Food Boycott," has a sizeable list of complaints including cold food, undercooked potatoes, small portions that are disproportionate to the price, exorbitant prices considering the low overhead due to no waitress service and an inconsistency in prices.

Stong's Food Petition states that "as we have no choice (residents are obliged to accept \$700 towards

the meal plan) the least we expect is palatable, good-tasting food that is nourishing and filling."

The petition was brought forth at Stong's general meeting of September 28th. The promise of a closer investigation into its accusations will be initiated through the establishment of a Food Users Committee.

Saga's food manager, Liz Austin said, "If for any reason the food is unsatisfactory and is not up to a student's expectations, then by all means it should be returned for either a new portion or for a full refund." Also, once specific occurrences are made known to my staff, we will act immediately to rectify them at this end."



your student council

The Council of the York Student Federation is pleased to announce to the members of C.Y.S.F. that after attempting incorporation for over the last four years it has now succeeded.

The Council wishes to express its deep gratitude to Douglas Wise, the Council business manager and John Hammond, legal consultant, for their efforts in achieving this goal.

A "Taste-In" has been scheduled to the fifth of October. Pierre De Serres will demonstrate a new method of quick and easy cooking for those people who are busy at work during the day. Watch for more details - via C.Y.S.F. posters.

A reminder that the C.Y.S.F. Typing Service will begin operation on October 3rd in room 105f Central Square (The back door entrance to the C.Y.S.F. offices).

The delegates to the Ontario Federation of Students Conference for C.Y.S.F. are Vice - Presidents George Karayannides and Herman Yamagisi. A brief summary of the major motions and events will appear in next week's column. For complete information contact C.Y.S.F.

On behalf of the Council,
 David W. Chodikoff,
 President, Council of the
 York Student Federation.