

John Thompson the Inside dope

Probably you have all, at some time or another in your sordid, barren lives, wondered about *Inside* magazine. "What is this fabled publication, issued under Gateway auspices", you may have asked yourself, or "When are they going to get rid of that stupid in-group mag?"

Well, now the Arts Page offers you an invaluable interview with John Thompson, editor of *Inside*, and we feel that it is the definitive article on the magazine.

Our intrepid Gateway interviewer found Mr. Thompson reclining in his palatial suite in Lister Hall . . .

Q: Mr. Thompson, what is *Inside*?

A: A magazine.

Q: What sort of a magazine?

A: Rather a dreadful one, perhaps, but terribly sincere.

Q: I mean, what sort of things do you print?

A: Stories, poems, plays, articles, interviews, critiques, fantasies, tirades . . . anything that strikes its editor as being non-libellous and worth-while.

Q: And you are its editor?

A: Behold the man!

Q: I understand there has been some difficulty about finances this year.

A: Yup.

Q: Would you care to elaborate?

A: Not really, it's too painful. Basically, what happened is that the magazine woke up one morning last session to find that its budget had been wiped out of the proposed Students' Union budget by Eric Hayne, the then treasurer.

Q: What had *Inside's* budget been?

A: \$4000.

Q: Isn't that rather a lot?

A: Not really, I think; compare it to the total Union budget, or even to the Yearbook budget, and it looks pretty moderate.

Q: Why was it wiped out?

A: Well, Eric Hayne only had so much money to work with—the expression, I believe, is that the Union has "grown into" its budget—and he was anxious to chop out any dead wood he could find. I guess he thought the magazine was dead wood.

Q: Was it?

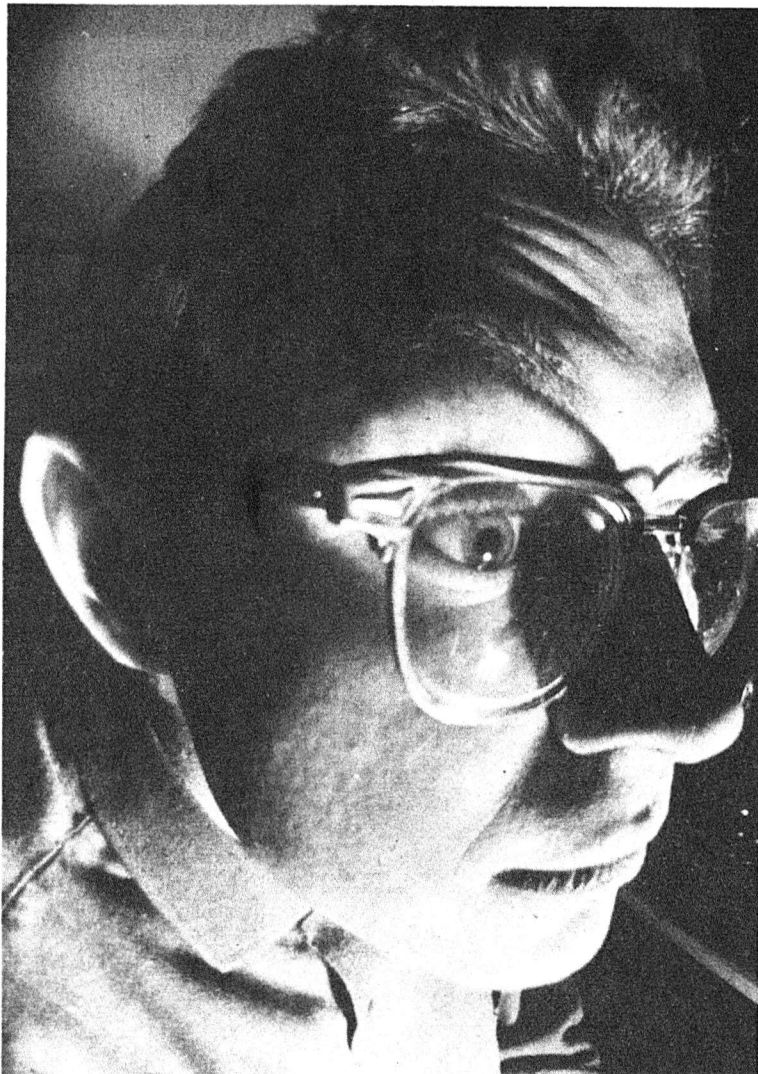
A: I can't judge it objectively, having been so closely involved. (I was Associate Editor last year.) Some people whom I suspect very much didn't like it. Others did. I'm sure some of the criticisms levelled at it were valid.

Q: Then you think Hayne had a point, cutting it out of the budget.

A: No, not really. Let me make this clear: *Inside* in any given year might be really rotten — a hundred times worse than the feeblest aspects of last year's magazine—and yet it would be worth carrying on. Kick out the editor, yes! Or at least apply pressure if you think the magazine stinks. But *Inside* or a magazine like it is simply indispensable to a healthy university.

Q: Why?

A: Because it is important that the creative people on this campus reach an audience of their peers. Because if poems and stories and plays aren't at least as important



—Lyll photo

THIS—John Thompson, *Inside* editor, member of the *culturati, literati, and cognoscenti, roue, jolly good fellow and BMOC*—as seen through the distorted eye of a Gateway camera.

to this university as, say, a football team—get this straight, I'm in favor of having a football team, too—then this university is as good as dead.

I'm not saying that everybody should be interested in what *Inside* prints; that would be a silly demand. But I think a sizeable minority of the student body should be, and are. And their interests have to be taken into consideration when the money's passed around.

Q: So we're back to money. What's the current position?

A: After ceaseless lobbying, it's still up in the air. Council has voted \$500, which will nicely take care of one 16-page issue on newsprint. The Finance Committee will decide this month whether the Union can afford more. I devoutly hope it can.

Might I here go all gushy for a moment, and express my deep appreciation to those who have supported the concept of the magazine in Council? Marilyn Pilkington has been especially helpful, but Council as a whole and the Executive in particular have all been terribly kind. I think they'd really like to see the magazine

flourish; it's just a question of Do we have the money?

Q: What if the Finance Committee decides they don't?

A: Then all hell breaks loose. No, then Alternate Sources of Revenue have to be found.

Q: How about advertising as a revenue source?

A: An interesting possibility, but hardly for this year; after all, an advertiser wants to be assured of some regularity of publication, and with things so uncertain, what could I guarantee him?

Q: What other possibilities are there?

A: Frankly, I'm not at all sure. That's why we're relying so much on the ingenuity of the Finance Committee. But you can be sure of one thing: I'm not going to let the magazine die. [Collapses, overcome with emotion]

Q: There has been some mention of changing the magazine's name. Why?

A: [recovering suddenly] Well, in its first year the magazine was tucked inside the Gateway, hence the name *Inside*. Last year, for various reasons, it wasn't. And unfortunate connotations gathered around the name—people went around muttering "in-group" and so forth.

Q: So you're going to change the name?

A: Nope.

Q: But . . . ?

A: In the first place, I haven't been able to think of a better name. In the second place, I think it's important to maintain some links with the past, even with the unhappy past. In the third place, *Inside's* editor should always have the charge of cliquishness thrown at him, otherwise he may get complacent; the temptation of filling the magazine with contributions from one's friends is a real one, and has to be fought constantly.

However, as an economy move, the magazine is being printed on Gateway newsprint this year. To symbolize this fact, I'm modifying the magazine's name. Until such time as we get back on white paper, the magazine will be called *Pulpinside*. How's that for a compromise?

Q: What kind of material are you interested in for, er, *Pulpinside*?

A: As I said, stories, plays, poems, articles, fantasies, critiques and so forth. Especially from new writers, people who haven't appeared in the magazine before, people I don't know personally.

Q: How should such people get in touch with you?

A: There is, in the Gateway office on the second floor of SUB, a little room marked *Inside*. Messages and manuscripts can safely be left there. Or people could try me at A516 Lister Hall, 433-2651, though I'm not home most of the time.

Q: How good do people have to be to get printed in *Inside*?

A: Examination of past issues would indicate Not Very; after all, if our contributors were all that good they'd probably be getting printed somewhere else.

A: Well, this business of finding good material is tricky, especially finding new sources of good material. But even trickier is putting together a magazine which, as a whole, radiates that indescribably something that distinguishes the readable from the unreadable.

Q: Can you be more precise?

A: No, though I wish I could. I think this was perhaps the magazine's greatest problem last year, maddening because so intangible.

Q: How do you think your first issue shapes up in this regard?

A: Quite well, I hope. None of the contributions I'm printing is without a touch of humor, and none is at all obscure, though a play which will appear may strike some as slightly odd.

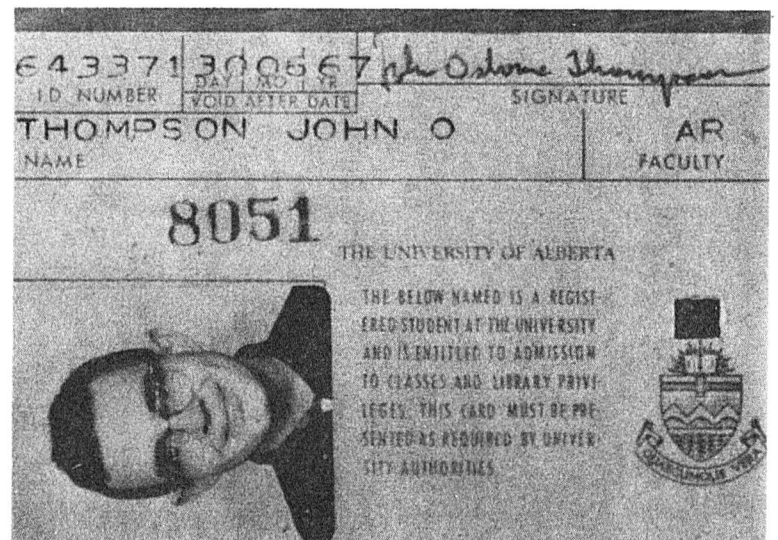
Q: Do you think humor is essential to a magazine such as yours?

A: Yes, though I'm worried about that, less in the specific terms of the magazine than in terms of the whole cultural climate at the moment.

Right now we're living through a great comic period in art, probably because life has become so grotesque. The trouble is that we feel guilty if for a moment we stop laughing at ourselves. This would be all right if the laughter were healthier, but it's the laughter of the damned . . .

Q: How about the other matter, obscurity? Is it possible to exclude obscurity from your pages?

A: Perhaps not completely. But I've come round to the point of view of those critics who flayed us for letting by to many topical and literary allusions. I had a conversation with Robin Mathews,



AND THIS

. . . the real John Thompson

Q: Thus prospective contributors shouldn't be scared away by the Impressiveness of It All?

A: Of course not! And I don't think I'm personally intimidating. The milk of human kindness oozes through my every capillary. So please, all you writers out there, cast your modesty to the winds and submit some stuff, or at least ask me if I'm interested. The odds are overwhelming that I will be.

Q: What presents the greatest problem in editing, ker-hem, *Pulpinside*?

whose memory we all hold dear, on this subject, and he pointed out that unexplained allusions were nothing more or less than bad manners.

Q: How about Joyce?

A: There you are! Joyce who?

Q: James Joyce, author of *Ulysses* and *Finnegans Wake*, two monumental obscure novels of unquestionable literary importance?

A: I don't know. I really don't know. If there is a Joyce among us, I should like to meet him, and I would probably publish his stuff. But I would certainly balance it with other things of an exquisite limpidity.

Q: You have yourself written poetry. Will *Pulpinside* print more poetry than it has done in the past?

A: Probably less; I shall be leaning over backwards.

Q: One last question: when will we see our first *Pulpinside*?

A: By the end of the month, God willing. And I have every confidence that He will.

PART-TIME MUSIC TEACHER

Required immediately in St. Albert, 20 minutes from University. Mornings, Monday to Friday. Grades Four, Five and Six.

ALSO: 2 Full-time Substitute Teachers, Elementary and Secondary Level, Salary according to Agreement.

Please contact:—

Dr. A. J. Proudfoot, Superintendent of Schools, St. Albert Protestant Separate School District No. 6, 60 Churchill Avenue, St. Albert, Alberta. Telephone 599-7766

ACCURATE OPTICAL LABORATORIES

12318 - Jasper Avenue

Telephone 488-7514

OPTICAL PRESCRIPTIONS AND REPAIRS
CONTACT LENS SUPPLIES

EMERGENCY SERVICE MONDAY THROUGH SATURDAY
CONVENIENT PARKING