

EXCALIBUR

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

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Excalibur, founded in 1966, is the York University weekly and is independent politically. Opinions expressed are the writer's and those unsigned are the responsibility of the editor. Excalibur is a member of Canadian University Press and attempts to be an agent of social change. Printed at Newsweb, Excalibur is published by Excalibur Publications under the auspices of the Council of the York Student Federation.

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Why York needs a Newspaper Act

There's a reason why newspapers don't like to get government grants or loans — their sort of investigative journalism is bound to embarrass or alienate the hand that feeds them.

As much as campus journalists don't like to admit it, the final money veto rests not with any editorial board, or board of communications, but with the students' council.

There's been several flagrant violations in Canada this year. At the University of Alberta, the students' council demanded that the newspaper give one page to the council. The editor refused. The council tried to fire him, and Canadian University Press investigative commission arrived on the scene. They correctly diagnosed the problem: the council was breaking one of CUP's basic principles, the freedom of the press. A solution was found: like any other advertiser, the council could buy advertising space and label their message as such.

At the University of Toronto this year, Varsity has the lowest budget in four years despite a 25 percent rise in printing costs. The communications commissioner decided it was time to dissolve the Varsity board — a buffer of appointees that partially shielded the paper from politicians' budget strings. His proposed action got no support.

At York, Council of the York Student Federation communications commissioner Neil Sinclair dissolved Radio York and Excalibur's board of communications and set up one more to his own liking. Instead of including campus media representatives on the board, he and college council politicians sit and wade through the work. The college councils have complained they aren't told of the meetings. True or not, few attend anyway.

In effect, Neil Sinclair, a politician, is warning Excalibur about what he thinks is going on and should go on — in strict economic terms. He felt he knew the answers as to when Excalibur should publish and just how many pages. He felt it didn't effect editorial policy. But it does. Certain events deserve more coverage than others. As advertising goes up, so must the number of pages.

At York, there's the college councils to think



about. Rightly or wrongly, like many of York's readers, they feel we're nothing but an organ of CYSF. If Neil Sinclair had his way, perhaps we would be. Unfortunately, as a student service we are caught between the two.

Every year, when the CYSF budget was ratified by a majority of the college councils, Excalibur was the biggest bone of contention. And CYSF didn't defend the paper very well. This year, Winters College president Dennis Lee convinced his council to cut Excalibur's budget to 40 percent of what we needed. He wanted to get at CYSF so he picked on us. Instead of getting another council to pass his budget, Fletcher kept that decision. Having seen no effect on CYSF, Winters bravely rescinded the motion.

Excalibur has finally found a better way to finance itself. You as a student would pay \$4 for the newspaper. Two dollars would come out of your present \$10 fees to CYSF, and the other \$2 would be a fee increase. Unfortunately we need the money to cover increased costs and increased coverage. (Over the past three years, Excalibur's news coverage has decreased steadily while advertising has gone up to partially cover increased costs.) The concept of a fixed fee per student is nothing new. Glendon College students each pay \$6 for Pro Tem.

Excalibur would be ruled by an independent board with representatives from the college councils, CYSF, graduate students and Atkinson.

This board, by its very nature would attract those genuinely interested in media. They would ultimately hire and fire the paid staff.

Because the money comes directly to Excalibur, the distrust between the politicians and the journalists would finally come to an end. The main reason, finances would be gone.

Instead of playing one politician off against the other, Excalibur would continue to serve a basic news function, unimpeded by any threats of financial loss. It could better serve as an objective third force on the campus.

And finally, because Excalibur is primarily a service — a newspaper that anyone can pick up — every college would automatically join. It would be wrong for the students of one college to subsidize the students of another simply because one set of politicians felt they'd like to use the money somewhere else.

Chances are, if you don't think the paper is doing a good job, the board of directors won't either. And they'll certainly let the editor know.

If you think the Newspaper Act is a good idea, we're glad. If you don't, please tell us. Perhaps we can convince you. Whatever you think talk to your politicians about it. We'll be coming to CYSF and the college councils in the near future with the proposal. We hope they'll sincerely see the merits of our case. And then we'll be taking it to you in a referendum with the CYSF elections in March.

All letters should be addressed to the Editor and sent to Excalibur, Central Square, Ross Building, York University, Downsview, Ontario. Excalibur reserves the right to edit all letters more than 500 words long. Unsigned letters are the responsibility of the editors. All letters will be published however due to space limitations letters may not be published the week they are received.

Letters to the Editor

Day care issue leaves questions

I found the articles on daycare carried in the most recent issue of Excalibur to be extremely confusing because they neither provided sufficient information about the process by which the John Becker report was developed nor did they systematically challenge the assumptions which appear to underlie the report.

It does appear that one assumption underlying the report was that the psychology department would be the major department concerned with doing research within the daycare centre or that other members of the academic community wishing to engage in such research would have the same spatial needs, need the same number of subjects, and use the same criteria governing assignment of children to classes. As a sociologist engaged in research in this area, I feel that this is not a valid assumption.

The report also appears to have assumed that a research facility and one that is designed to serve the York community can commit itself to the time schedule and other aspects of organization which are currently used throughout Metro. If the daycare centre is to be a research facility, surely the hours and other aspects of organization cannot be fixed they must be problematic since one of the responsibilities of such a research facility would be to test the appropriateness of the accepted ways of organizing daycare facilities.

If the facility is to serve the York community then it makes little sense to assume that the hours during which the facility would be open would be 7:30 am until 6:30 pm. Those hours are established on the assumption that parents will leave their children at the centre before going to work. In other words, those hours are designed for centres located in the place of residence not the place of work. In addition, if York were to adopt those hours, no service would be provided night school

students and staff. If the service is needed by day school staff and students can we assume that it is not needed by night school students and staff?

And then there is the issue of the role of the parents in a preschool which is also a research facility. Is it impossible to have parent control within a research facility? If it is, are there some areas within which parents can exercise control? What types and degree of parent participation — as contrasted with control — are seen as compatible with the needs of a research facility? These are difficult questions which cannot be ignored by the university. Nor should the university assume that it will be possible to avoid these questions by giving parents a choice between a parent controlled facility and a facility which affords no opportunity for parent control or participation.

A great deal of systematic research is desperately needed within the field of day care, a field which has not tested the assumptions which form the basis for the

funding and evaluative decisions of the provincial government. In defining the role of the university within this sphere, it is essential that the needs of the parents, the children and the researchers be thoroughly considered. Some of those needs are conflicting. Given that conflict, the solutions which apparently are contained in the Becker report are inappropriate, and, if implemented, would undermine the ability of the university community to conduct appropriate research or to serve the parents and children needing day care services.

Ellen Baar
 Social Science

(We regret that you found the daycare coverage confusing but agree with the questions you raised. Despite the coverage by the front page news story, editorial and Marilyn Smith's rebuttal, space did not permit us to go into the specific area that you have questioned. — ed)