

Excalibur

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

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 Daison's, Excalibur is published by Excalibur Publications.

News 667-3201

Advertising 667-3800

Shedding a sorry tear for the giants' plight

The daily newspapers of the past few weeks have been characterized by an unending succession of reports of layoffs, production slowdowns, and plant closures in the automotive industry, both here and in the United States.

Most recently Ford announced that its plants at Oakville and St. Thomas will close for three weeks this month, laying off a total of 6,300 employees.

Hard on the heels of that announcement came General Motors' decision to close its two assembly plants in Oshawa for a week sometime in mid-January, affecting 3,500 employees.

Ralph Ashford

If Ford doesn't die do we get a refund?

Along with the second semester, a myriad of predictions rolled in with the new year. I then found myself wondering why our ostensibly civilized and rational society needed so many astrological crutches. Came up with a lot of questions and no answers.

A soothsayer, Abdul Hafiz Attar, has informed us that an earthquake (complete with Sen-surround?) will sink Australia, Mao Tse-tung will find himself assassinated, President Ford will join Henry Ford I and Israel will bomb Mecca starting a Third World War, ultimately stimulating the economy.

Incidentally, Attar has a claimed accuracy rate of 95 per cent.

Most assuredly, these are comforting thoughts, particularly for the Americans. But do we really need to know what the future holds for us? If Attar's predictions actually do come true most of the time, knowing what the future held obviously never changed anything before.

Horoscopes. If I had stayed home when my horoscope told me not to go out I'd still be a virgin.

One's heart must go out to these troubled giants.

Six years ago, when the automobile industry was producing cars twice as fast as people were producing people, no one could have suspected that the day would come when the market would be glutted.

When scientists have - for only the past fifty years - pointed out that the earth's oil reserves were finite, who could have anticipated that one day 12 miles to the gallon would be a luxury few could afford?

The public must weep for the industry in a time of trial it could not have expected.

The Zodiac. I can't even have a decent relationship with a girl because the minute she finds out I'm a Gemini (schizophrenic philanderers by nature) she becomes wary about my intentions and her well-being. Whether or not I am a two-faced Don Juan is irrelevant; I certainly don't need prejudicial outlines of my character available at her fingertips via astrology handbooks. Why the need for a derived compatibility? (And for that matter, why is it primarily the feminine gender that finds such horoscological hogwash interesting?)

However, I suppose debating the consequences of the planetary positions at the time of your birth is about as hopeless as debating the proverbial question 'Is there really a God?'. But it does appear quite convenient to witness a coincidence and label it an empirical fact, doesn't it?

Who needs scientific explanation when we have God's will?

I'm planning a 7,000 mile motorcycle trip in the spring. Well, Abdul, what are my chances?



And now, the envelope please...

It's time once again to dole out the winter Excalibur awards for persons or events which made the first term such a fun period to live through.

- The When-is-a-Harold-Town-not-a-Harold-Town award to the campus artwork which staged an unceremonious retreat into storage.

- The Retreat-under-fire medal to administrator John Becker for his self-admitted "abrupt and ham-fisted" eviction notice to the campus

clubs in N105 and N109 Ross.

- The Most Memorable Quote award to president Ian Macdonald for his line, "I have no wish to become a prisoner of the ninth floor." The award is a cake with a file in it.

- The Growing-old-Gracefully award to the opponents of the severing of the link between tenure and promotion.

- The If-you-can't-afford-our-terms-you-don't-deserve-to-be-educated booby-prize to the Ontario government for its determined slashing of its financial support to the province's universities. Is there any place you'd rather be?

- And finally, the Adding-Insult-to-Nausea award to Versafood, for serving cold, tasteless pap, and then having the gall to make people line up for it.

Harbinger's column

The availability of abortion in Toronto

This column is the first of a weekly series to be written by the staff of Harbinger Community Services on a variety of issues, including drugs, birth control, health care, abortion and related topics. Because of limited space, these columns will be able to provide only the most basic information on each subject; requests for further information should be directed to the Harbinger office (214 Vanier Residence, 667-3509/3632), as should suggestions of topics you would like to see covered in this column.

During the past few months it has become increasingly difficult to obtain therapeutic abortions in Canada. Although it is still easier to get a therapeutic abortion in Toronto than anywhere else in Canada, the quota on the number of abortions that may be performed here has been lowered, and the criteria for approval of an abortion by a hospital board have been narrowed.

In 1970, the Criminal Code was revised to permit abortions to be performed on women whose life or health would, in the opinion of a hospital board composed of three doctors, be endangered by carrying the pregnancy to term. Since no definition of health was provided, it was left to each hospital board to interpret this term as liberally or conservatively as it deemed fit. This interpretation became steadily more liberal, in Toronto in particular, until the summer of 1974, when Otto Lang became the minister of justice (the federal cabinet minister responsible for enforcing the Criminal Code).

In August, Mr. Lang announced that he was seeking ways to prosecute hospitals that interpreted the law too liberally; he also began to apply pressure to other federal departments to stop funding agencies and organizations which provided abortion referral as one of their services.

These actions have resulted in charges that the justice minister, a Catholic with seven children, is allowing his religious feelings to restrict women's legal right to abor-

tion. The minister has rejected these charges, stating in a letter to Harbinger that they "border on being libellous". He defends his actions as "duty to caution against government funding of projects which may involve illegal activity".

Whatever the reasons for his actions, their consequences definitely have been to restrict the availability of abortion in Toronto, particularly for married women and women who are seeking repeat or second trimester abortions (abortions performed between the 12th and 20th weeks of pregnancy).

However, early abortions and abortions on single women are also being restricted — marriage is beginning to be recommended as an alternative by abortion committees, for the first time in two to three years, for single women who are seeking therapeutic abortions.

Abortions are most easily obtained by women who seek them early in their pregnancy (pregnancy cannot be verified until six weeks' gestation, with length of pregnancy being calculated from the first day of the woman's last menstrual period. This date is usually about two weeks before the estimated conception date.)

The woman must see a gynecologist, who then presents her case to the hospital abortion committee. If the committee approves the abortion, it can usually be performed within a few days. OHIP covers the woman's hospital expenses, as well as part or all of the doctor's fees, depending how much the doctor charges.

An alternative to getting an abortion in Toronto is to go to Buffalo. This has both advantages and disadvantages. Because abortion is a legal right, the woman is never required to provide reasons for wanting an abortion, and the abortion can usually be obtained within a few days, compared to the two weeks it often takes to arrange one in Toronto.

However, it is more expensive, as the cost, ranging between \$150 and \$190 for a first trimester abortion, is not covered by OHIP. Deferred payments can sometimes be arranged for women without sufficient funds.

Excalibur still needs reporters and photographers. Meeting for all staff today at 2 p.m. in Central Square

Editor-in-chief
Managing editor
News editor
Photo Editor
Entertainment editor
Sports editor
Graphics
CUP editor

Warren Clements
Doug Tindal
Oakland Ross
C.T. Squassero
Agnes Kruchio
Paul Kellogg
Peter Hsu
Gord Graham

Staff at large — Alan Risen, Ted Mumford, Steve Hain, Sue Cooper, Bob Livingston, Ian Balfour, Chris Gates, Shelley Rabinovitch, Julian Beltrame, Bonnie Sandison, Frank Giorno, Bob McBryde, Steven Brinder, Jim McCall, Anna Vaitiekunas, Dale Ritch, Paul Stuart, Marg Poste, Alan Shalon, Thomas McKerr, Greg Martin, Robin Beckwith, Michael Hollett, Anne Camozzi, Alison Olds, Ralph Ashford, Dara Levinter, Martin Felsky, Anthony Gizzie, Debbie Pekilis, Keith Nickson, Cathy Honsl, Mira Friedlander, P.T. Puhl, Jeffrey Morgan.

Business and Advertising

Jurgen Lindhorst