

By Tony Woolfson
GAA Chairperson

"All together now" Grad assistants' holiday message

Last Thursday, the G.A.A. engaged in a bit of live theatre in order to get across the message about cutbacks. Along with YUFA, YUSA, CYSF, Atkinson College Students' Association, and the Osgoode Legal and Literary Society, we welcomed ex-Premier John Robarts to the contemporary realities of life at the university of which he is the new chancellor.

The vestibule and corridors of that illustrious home of legal niceties, Osgoode Hall, rang out with the sound of our slogan, 'They say cutback: We say fightback.'

In keeping with the solemnity of the occasion, several G.A.A. members dressed up in theatrical costume.

Reality is usually less theatrical of course. Cutbacks are for real, and they affect every single one of us at York. Quite obviously, they affect some of us — students, graduate student t.a.'s, part-time faculty,

part-time — much more than others. It really wasn't much consolation to hear Robarts tell us at the installation ceremony that, in effect, he's seen it all before in the 1930's, that you get fat periods and lean periods (no prize for guessing which one we're in), and that it's all part of the human condition.

Nor were President Macdonald's remarks about how much he enjoys teaching much help to us as we contemplate such aspects of the cutbacks situation as:

- departments asked by Dean of Arts, Sidney Eisen, to submit budgets that entail cuts of four, eight or 12 per cent;
- Atkinson College is considering axing 30 courses this year;
- teachers in Social Science Division are told that 're-allocation of resources' will result in two-hour seminars being dropped to one-hour in first-year courses;
- likelihood of even bigger class sizes next year, in seminar rooms that were never intended to hold as many people as they now have to.

We must all keep questioning the nature and extent of the so-called budget 'crisis'. In particular, certain other aspects of the overall situation must be pointed out:

- provincial government allocations to universities to rise by only 5.8 percent this year, with inflation currently at 8.8 per cent (end of October);
- the share of governmental revenues coming from corporate taxation has decreased quite considerably in the past 15 years, while the share from personal taxation has increased in the same period;
- here at York, the central administration budget rose by 95 percent in the period 1973-74 to 1976-77, while the budgets of Glendon, Atkinson, and the Faculty of Arts rose by 44 percent in the same period;
- here at York, it seems that 18 new administrators were hired last year, but nobody can find out what they're doing (administering cutbacks?).

'And so it goes', as Kurt Von-

negut says. Well, not quite. There is one bright spot in the midst of all this depressing reality. 'York students want smaller classes, survey shows.' That was the headline to a piece in the *York Gazette*, November 25th, issue.

Clifford Jansen, associate professor in sociology, undertook an analysis of student enrolment last spring and found that the first choice improvement desired by all 514 students surveyed was for reduced (University) class size.

It's good to know that York students really do care about the quality of the learning that goes on at York. Unfortunately, their voice-like ours - is likely to be somewhere out in the wilderness right now... unless, of course, we all get together and fight cutbacks in every way we can. Phone, write, or call in person to our office, 129 McLaughlin College, 667-6341, with any ideas that you might have for fighting back.

Happy holidays, and well over the fast.

Excalibur

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

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Holiday greetings from us Excalibur types



It's party time

After the important items of delegates to the CUP conference, sub-editors' honoraria and the term-end review are sent packing, there

will be a party for all *Excalibur* contributors and friends. Drop by the office for details. There are lots of assignments to be handed out for No. 14... The staff meeting is at 1 pm.

letters

Cut Harbinger and Excalibur more, he says

Enclosed is a letter which I sent to Paul Hayden. I would like it reprinted in *Excalibur*. As I have no confidence in your integrity as human beings, or in your ability as editors, I demand that it be printed in its entirety - or not at all. If it does not appear in this Thursday's edition, I reserve the right to reprint it in another publication.

I have been following the politics of CYSF this year, and I would like to make a few comments regarding your performance as President.

Your decision to reduce Harbinger's grant did not go far enough. The sort of individual who approaches a service like Harbinger, is usually in need of professional help. As I understand it, Harbinger is not run by professionals, but by volunteers who often suffer from problems as great, or even greater, than do the people who come in for help.

I realize that talking with people who have similar problems has its value, but this should be supplementary to professional help. And it should only be done on a voluntary basis. If you feel that it is necessary to offer a service like Harbinger, you should at least insure that it is run by a professional who has a degree in a discipline which relates to social problems. A B.A. in philosophy is hardly appropriate.

Your decision to offer Professor Forest the Bearpit was laudable. Although the *Excalibur* with its penchant for reporting only the negative aspects of CYSF actions, neglected to mention it (sic), there were many of us who witnessed you making Forest the offer. His declining the offer only manifested his inability to engage in an intelligent and orderly discussion. Obviously his intention is to create a disturbance and not the espousing of any ideal. Accordingly he should not be allowed on campus. I hope you make sure that he won't be allowed to return.

I believe that the time has come for you to reduce the funds of *Excalibur*. It is obvious that the paper is being used as a propaganda organ by a group of individuals of a certain political persuasion. A survey which it conducted, but to which few people bothered to respond, indicated that 72% of the university feels that the paper is too (sic) biased. (I would guess that the remaining 28% were members of the United Left Slate.)

The newspaper deals with issues that are of concern to only a small number of students and has never printed any articles which deal with education. I have yet to see a faculty member submit such an article, or even a letter to the editor (sic).

If you decide to continue appropriating funds, I feel it is your responsibility to insure that any

York member who wishes to write for the paper is able. I know from my own experience that this is not the case.

The only control this year's editors should have is to co-ordinate the newspaper. They are not capable of editing someone else's work. Anyone who writes a headline "Cuts could mean 30 less courses" (*Excalibur* November 3, 1977, page 1) is obviously ignorant of the basic rules of English grammar, and should not have control over another person's prose. I suspect that there are several students who would like to contribute articles to *Excalibur*, but cannot tolerate the dogmatic way it is run.

In terms of the number of issues they have to put out, the editors of *Excalibur* are the highest paid student editors in Ontario (sic). It is not unreasonable for you to demand much higher standards than the paper has today.

Eric Starkman

Editor's note - Excalibur hopes readers who have finished Mr. Starkman's letter will read on to hear our side of a number of issues he has raised.

Starkman claims *Excalibur* did not report Paul Hayden's requesting Jeffrey Forest to move into the Bearpit on November 21. The story which dealt with this event (*Excalibur*, November 24, p. 2) includes the following paragraph

concerning the events of that day: "Nugent and Forest turned down requests from CYSF president Paul Hayden to move into the Bearpit so pedestrian traffic would not be obstructed."

Secondly, Starkman states that the *Excalibur* survey which invited readers to voice their views on the paper found that "72 percent of the university feels that the paper is too biased."

In fact the word "too" did not appear in any of the response choices for the question Starkman is referring to. Nineteen people (44 percent) responded that *Excalibur* was *mildly* biased. Twelve people (28 percent) indicated they found the paper *extremely* biased. As we pointed out, 43 responses in a community of over 25,000 is hardly a consensus.

Incidentally, a Toronto daily recently printed the results of a poll which found that over 50 percent of the Canadian public found Canadian newspapers "too" biased.

Thirdly, Starkman writes, "I have yet to see a faculty member submit an article, or even a letter to the editor."

In fact, five faculty members have had articles published in *Excalibur* this year, and four faculty members have had letters published.

Fourthly, Starkman says that any York member should be allowed to write for *Excalibur*, and, "I know

from my own experience that this is not the case."

Starkman's experience was that he had one article rejected in the first week of the school year, and although he was invited to have another try, he never took *Excalibur* up on the offer.

Fifthly, Starkman writes, "the editors of *Excalibur* are the highest paid student editors in Ontario" in terms of the number of issues the editors have to put out.

A call to Canadian University Press in Ottawa revealed that for papers of comparable size (i.e. number of issues per year, number of pages) *Excalibur's* two full-time editors are in the middle salary range, not the top. The two editors are paid \$140 (before taxes) for a *minimum* 60-hour week.

Lastly, Starkman states that *Excalibur* is run in a "dogmatic way."

The *Excalibur* staff meets twice weekly to discuss the paper's and editors' performance. A staff vote decides which stories appear on the front page, what topics are selected for editorials, and what stand these editorials will take, as well as many other matters. The staff also elects and can recall editors.

Excalibur welcomes submissions by those who disagree with anything it does. *Excalibur* attempts to print every letter received.

Ted Mumford
Managing Editor