

# 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 Newsweb, Excalibur is published by Excalibur Publications.

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## Reports could be the only game in town

Reports are everyman's blessing.

The ones who commission them, impress by making it appear as if they want to make important changes, but before doing so they must get the facts — all the facts. So? Commission a report.

Those that compile them not only learn a great deal from the research, but also get to claim pseudo-expertise on the subject, afterwards.

Those that read them are impressed with the magnitude and the thoroughness of the work, and get to claim near pseudo-expertise on the subject.

Newspaper editors love reports because reports do the research they never have time to do, and they provide great, meaty copy.

And so with the report of the President's Committee on Staff Compensation and Personnel Policies, released earlier this week.

It's a great report — 59 pages of in-depth analysis and recommendations. The staff, it appears, has a morale problem caused by an administration that was too busy with other things to think about the people who make this university run.

Last year we had another great report: the Report of the Task Force on the Status of Women. Sounds great doesn't it? That report showed that while 95 per cent of non-unionized staff are women, "practically none of the senior

administrative staff is female". An interesting fact; and of course that inequity has been corrected.

Next year the university will be treated to another report; a report on the goals and objectives of York university. We can hardly wait for that one to come out, because it will probably incorporate all the previous reports as well as introducing new material for its readers.

H. Ian Macdonald, since his appointment to the highest post York university has to offer, has obviously placed a high priority on the gathering of information. Hopefully we shall reap the benefits of this work, soon.

As most of the recommendations proposed by these reports will take years to implement, it would be unfair to ask for immediate action. But the York community needs some indication that the administration takes seriously the game of commissioning reports.

The administration could start by implementing one of the most important recommendations that the Committee on Staff Compensation makes—the establishment of a vice-president of human resources.

It will cost money, but it is an important area of concern for the York community and will go a long way in bringing about everyone's goal — the humanization of York.



"Trick or treat"

## Does the public need to know?

On Monday, an 18 year old boy armed with a shotgun burst into a classroom in an Ottawa high school. Six students were wounded; the youth shot himself.

On Tuesday, the Toronto Sun ran a double banner headline about the shooting. It devoted its front page and centrespread to the incident, with such headlines as "School day of gunshots, fire and suicide", "Sheer terror in classroom" and "Spectre of Brampton looms over Ottawa".

If, by appearing on the covers of Time and Newsweek, Squeaky Fromme was able to spark more attempts on the life of the president of the United States, then newspaper coverage of Brampton's Michael Slobodian or Ottawa's Robert Poulin may do the same for Canadian school children.

What does the public have a right to know? How should information be presented? Who determines what to disclose and what to keep secret?

There is no question that press coverage of nasty, sordid, brutal or tragic events often does a great deal of harm and precious little good. In the September issue of Saturday Night magazine, Peter Rielly studied a horrifying case in point.

Last March, in Ottawa, the city's police superintendent and chief morality officer called a press conference to announce "the most sordid investigation we've run into in some time". Ottawa police had unearthed a "model agency" which allegedly offered the services of

young boys to homosexual clients in exchange for money.

Names of suspects were released.

"A teen-age homosexual vice-ring!" cried the Ottawa Journal and the Citizen. The papers printed, not only the names, but the addresses and occupations of 18 men charged with sodomy, buggery, gross indecency and contributing to juvenile delinquency.

Warren Zufelt, a federal civil servant, was among those identified. Driven beyond endurance by this exposure, he jumped to his death from the roof of an apartment building.

Later, charges against several of the 18 men were dropped for lack of evidence.

Did the public have a right to know?

Peter Rielly thinks not. He refers to a 1974 publication of the Ontario Press Council, To Name or Not to Name. Dr. Lita Rose-Betcherman, a member of the council, chaired a special committee on the subject. She concluded that "what is involved here is nothing less than a clash between two civil rights—the public's right to know and the individual's right to be considered innocent until proven guilty."

Rielly calls this "recklessly imprecise and dangerous gibberish." He writes: "The public has no 'right' to know the lip-smacking details of every sad, sordid little sexual adventure to be recounted before the courts, and to put the two claims on the same footing is to betray an ignorance so profound as

to be shocking."

He is right.

In Monday's Globe and Mail, for instance, there is a page two story concerning the trial, in Brampton, of Henry Robert Williams, self-confessed rapist and killer of three girls. An especially disgusting aspect of this story is alluded to in the kicker above the headline: "Wife describes beatings".

Life for Karen Williams, a Grade 1 school teacher, must be difficult enough. But to have to describe, in detail, the violent and ugly ceremonies she has undergone with her husband in bed, and to have those descriptions displayed in newsprint across Canada—that is a miserable fate.

What end is served? The dissemination of truth or the titillation of the reader?

One finds the most horrible jolt of all on the editorial page of Monday's Sun, the same issue in which words and pictures of the Ottawa classroom shooting are splashed about, without thought of consequence. The sole editorial deals with the LaMarsh commission into media violence.

"Scrap the commission," urges the Sun. Don't talk about it; don't worry about the influence of media on man; don't worry about the proliferation of violent crime. Just recognize that "La Judy" is earning \$250 a day, that it's "too expensive". And scrap the commission.

What saddening stupidity.

Does the public have a right to know? You tell us.



Just for the fun of it

Excalibur staff meeting  
today at 1 p.m.  
room 111 Central Square  
Everyone welcome

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

Staff at large — Paul Stuart, Ira Micay, Steve Hain, Paul Kellogg, Warren Clements, C.T. Squassero, Ted Mumford, Shelley Rabinovitch, Frank Giorno, Bob McBryde, Evan Leibovitch, Gary Cook, Bill Perry, Robin Beckwith, Karin Melnik, Bill Gladstone, Paul Hayden, Debbie Pekilis, Deidra Clayton, Jeffrey Morgan, Lorne Wasser, Michelina Trigliani, Mixine Kopel, Ian Mulgrew, Ross Freake, Doug Tindal, St. Clair, Barbara Beltrame.

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