

way back

The back pages of York's women

By Mary Griffin

Looking back over old newspaper clippings it is interesting to note the changes that have occurred in the attitude of the general community, and more specifically York and Excalibur, toward women.

In October of 1968 Excalibur published a front page picture of a bare female chest with "York Festival" button strategically placed over each nipple.

The following week the only response from the community was letter to the editor signed "a believer in equal rights for women".

The writer insisted that all girls at York were not lesbians and that they be given a similar thrill.

You can imagine the kind of response we would receive now should that picture be published. However, today it is constitutionally forbidden to publish

articles and pictures of a sexist racist-nature in all Ontario university newspapers that abide by the principles of the Canadian University Press, including Excalibur.

The Toronto Star Women's Section of May 1969 published an article entitled "Today's girls find out that a BA doesn't mean a job."

The "girls" in the article were all over 21 years old and were all in secretarial positions. They were described in such terms as "attractive blonde BA."

This type of approach to articles about women still tends to be common in the media today. The irony of it is that this particular article was written by a woman.

It emphasized the now dying attitude that liberal arts degrees for women serve only to develop her into a well-cultured wife and mother.

On March 8, 1908, 15,000 women garment workers demonstrated in

New York City. Their demands included equal pay for equal work, the right to form unions, and to vote, and the end of the "workshop" conditions of the places they worked in.

Their slogan was "bread and roses." Bread is a symbol of economic security and roses represented a better way of life.

This event precipitated the establishment of International Womens Day as a protest against the oppression of women and a celebration of the strength and solidarity of Women.

The first of these days was celebrated in 1910. Since International Women's Year in 1975 and the revival of the celebration

of an annual International Women's Day; there have been significant improvements in the situation of women in the York community, although according to Sandra Pyke, advisor to the President on the status of women, there is still much more to be done.

In February 1975, Excalibur reported on the Senate task force report on the status of women that was chaired by Joanna Stuckey.

According to Pyke, many of the recommendations of the report have been acted upon. This year her office is focussing upon the unique problems facing mature women students.

She, and other faculty and staff members, have made presentations to community groups using an audio visual package to geared to a mature female audience.

This program stresses the opportunities available to mature women through university. It has been well received.



All letters should be addressed to the editor, Excalibur, Room III Central Square. Letters must be typed, triple-spaced, on a 66 stroke line. Letters are limited to 300 words (seven column inches). Name, address, or phone number must be included or the letter will not be published. Excalibur reserves the right to edit for grammar and length.

Deadline Monday 4 pm

letters

Battered Wives are NOT fun

Battered Wives are not a rock group. They are women who are assaulted-physically, emotionally and economically. *Battered Wives* are not entertaining. They are women who are often afraid and ashamed, even though there are so very many of them. *Battered Wives* are not famous. They are women whom society tries to pretend do not exist.

Last Thursday, exactly one week before International Women's Day, a rock group calling itself the Battered Wives and using a logo of a fist with a woman's lipstick was on campus.

The graphic implies that women will kiss the fist that beats us. The women of York see this as a reminder of society's complacency about the real battered wives and all victims of mindless violence.

As part of the activities around International Women's Day, the York Women's Centre is sponsoring an afternoon dealing with violence against women. Today, from noon to 2 pm in the Bearpit, there will be a panel discussion about violence in its many forms and there will be self-defence demonstrations. Speakers included representatives from the Rape Crisis Centre, Interval House, Women Against Violence Against Women, and the Women's Referral and Education Counselling Centre.

We care about women who are battered.

Battered Wives are not just a way to spend an evening. Think about it. York Women's Centre

Why Winters hired Battered Wives

The Winters College Council had to determine whether the title of the rock group *Battered Wives* was merely the adoption of a sensational social cliché for the sake of publicity, or more positively, and identification with women who are assaulted.

Before hiring the group, the Council concluded that the background of the group, (isolated if not ostracized from the Toronto music scene as being neither "punk" nor traditional rock) the consequent choice of their name, and the offer (rejected) to assist at a benefit concert for WAVAW (Women Against Violence Against Women), did not suggest either mere publicity or mysogyny

whatever the assumptions of the ignorant or self-righteous. The "showbiz" cliché "Battered Wives", for that is what it is, adds the real insult to real injury when applied to assaulted women.

The commendable attitude of the York Women's Centre inviting the audience to "Think about it" had, at least, the potentially constructive end of asking for thoughtful consideration of the name and all its implications for both women, language and music, whatever one's pre-suppositions.

In 1899 Cardinal Logue condemned a play of W.B. Yeats without having read it, and with singular naivete said in his letter of condemnation that he had not read it. Eighty years later, we cannot hope for much better with regard to those who condemn the musical tastes of others; but it would be more effective perhaps for those who write in complaints to the President of the Winters College Council to take the trouble to discover sex, and not address her as Dear Sir.

Barb Taylor,
Winters College Council
President.

Student's aren't progressive, BUT...

I just this morning noticed the poster announcing last night's concert by the *Battered Wives* sponsored by Winters College Council. No doubt you have received many angry letters concerning this concert but I feel very strongly about the issue and want to add my own protest. I was long ago disabused of any allusions I might once have had about the "progressive" nature of York students but for all that I am simply amazed at the callousness displayed by the Winters College Council. It seems so obvious that the problem of battered wives is a desperately sad and cruel one, that I'm really unable to comprehend how you could sponsor a concert by a group that treats this tragic condition as an ironic joke. Would you, for example, invite a group that called itself that Gas Chambers and put out a poster showing Jewish children gasping their last breath? Or a group entitled Chilean Torturers whose logo is a political prisoner with electrodes attached to the genitals? I think not. (Or at least I hope not.) Yes you were apparently not disturbed by posters showing a lipstick covered fist - one that presumably has just beaten a woman senseless.

You may perhaps invoke the right to freedom of expression and you would get no argument from me on that count. I believe that people have the right to express whatever they like no matter how utterly offensive I may find their views to be. But this principle is of no importance to the Battered Wives. You will recall that a few months ago, in response to pressure from feminist groups, they blissfully changed their name to *Wives* - only to change it back when they felt the pressure was off. And their assumptions were apparently well founded since Winters College Council apparently did not blanch at this name.

I suspect that you might feel that a lot of fuss is being made about a name. But names are important. "Nigger," "kike" and "frog" are just names too but we don't use them and we hold in contempt people that do. The question of *Battered Wives* is analogous but more serious too. I'm not just taking you to task for referring to "broads" or "chicks." I'm objecting to a cavalier attitude that treats the vicious exploitation of women as a bit of black humour to titillate the more jaded members of the trendy set.

I've said enough and you will make of this and other letters what you will. My hope is that you will have the maturity and character to recognize that you were wrong and will do something about it.

William D. Irvine
Director,
Faculty of Graduate Studies

Misty, easy etc., etc., ...

The misty shadow behind the white snow reflects gently off the misty lade. The log cabin that is York is free from spiders this fall. Desolation here is king. Down by the lake logs roll by logs and surrender to hogs. In a close crashing compassionate sound reflected here in the lake. While outside life goes on as only it could in a hurricane. Quiet befalls my bed in a quill upon which I ponder. Easy. There came a rapping before I knew it the door was open. Pondered did I in my path or did I waver and wander like this sheet of paper on which I write. In she strode on a grey hound dog she rode carrying a bucket of soap in her hand.

Narry did I tarry from writing. It was as if I had been struck across the face by a shadow.

El Dark

Don Sugg is on ballot

CYSF Communications vice-president, Don Sugg, requested that I use my discretion (under Section 12 of the Resolution Governing the Conduct of Elections and allow him to hand in a late nomination for vice-president of University Affairs. I allowed him to do this because he was called out of the office before the deadline and was unable to get his nomination for handed in on time. This was confirmed by Dolug Wise, CYSF's business manager.

Further, Jon Simon expressed his regret that the election was an acclamation to me personally, and to York Students, on the front page of Excalibur on March 1, 1979. Since it seems that York students are in favor of an election, I can see no reason to refuse Mr. Sugg's request.

Faralee Chanin,
Chief Returning Officer, CYSF

Glendon career talks successful, insightful

On last Saturday, March 3, Glendon College had an Open House which included six career sessions. As it was not possible to attend all of these I selected two, The Performing Arts and Meida, with Chairperson Robert Wallace of Glendon's English Department; and Business with Bernie M: Wolf, Department of Economics, Glendon. Both talks were most informative and included talks and discussions by members of Glendon Alumni with varied career experiences.

Most importantly these people generously provided a sincere and honest insight into career opportunities and the realities of the world after university. This was a unique experience for gaining first-hand knowledge and I would suggest that the various elected bodies at York consider holding similar events. After all, the time spent by the average student in a degree program is short indeed. Why not take advantage of the experience and knowledge of alumni willing to help in this regard? The result can only be beneficial.

Seamus Maurice Stokes
Founders College

Another side of Gay rights

The gay question is not a matter of rights. It is not a matter of whether we accept them or not. It is not a legal matter. It is however a matter of morals.

El Dark

As far as the homosexual is concerned on an individual basis, he or she has as many rights as the majority is willing to give him. If they demand their rights it's a matter of how far the majority will allow them to go.

The real problem with the majority not allowing the gay person to practice their way of life and to evangelize is that to us it seems so wrong. This sense is given us by God as part of our conscience, the knowledge of right and wrong. It is against what we believe to be right...

It is in the history of Sodom and Gomorrah we find out how God really feels about this kind of sin. Nations on earth at this time were known to offer their own children up to idols i.e., their own fabricated gods, by burning them alive. God knew about it of course and in various ways punished them. But when He viewed the situation in Sodom and Gomorrah (Gen. 18:20) He was displeased enough to burn the two cities with brimstone and fire. He wiped hat source of grief and hurt off his earth with every man, woman and child in it...

This condemnation of the sin of Sodom and Gomorrah is repeated by various writers throughout the Holy Scriptures by Isaiah, Jeremiah, Amos, Peter, Jesus and by John in the great book of judgement, Revelations. Any nation or group of people practicing this gross sin is heading for destruction.

Failure to acknowledge homosexuality as a punishable sin is sheer stupidity. History has pointed this out to us repeatedly. Are we too slow to learn; or do we simply ignore the warnings and continue to seek lust at any cost?...

God loves every creature he created; it is only our sin He hates. We were made for His pleasure, to have fellowship with Him. He is perfect in justice and judgement too however. We are given roughly 70 years of life and the body we live in. His love is great. It is really the cure for everything that we as humans seek. The Bible points to His Son, Jesus, as the way to true happiness. All other ways are hopeless and futile.

Ralph Mathews

Case closed on Hershorn

QUESTION: Since when is Ed Broadbent non-photogenic?
ANSWER: Since Gary Hershorn took his picture. Case closed.

Corinne Mintz