

**Emergency Services
Centre - 3333**

University

Artisan has 50 years' experience

Glassblower practises ancient art

In two small rooms in the basement of the Petrie Science Building, a highly-skilled craftsman practices an art hundreds of years old that has not yet succumbed totally to the efficiency of machines.

George Ensell is a glassblower, one of perhaps 25 in Toronto, and a man with more than 50 years experience in his field. He takes simply-manufactured glass tubing and turns it into highly complex apparatus according to the exact specifications of the professor involved in teaching or research.

Some of the pieces he makes take only a matter of minutes, while others will take a solid week to construct, such as one for space science researchers he himself cannot yet describe even after receiving the blueprints.

And on more than one occasion he has faced the prospect of scrapping his work half way through because the researcher involved has devised a better model.

"All the time you'll get something made and then they'll say they want to change it, but that's research for you," he said philosophically.

Advanced equipment

The equipment Ensell has to work with is considerably more advanced now than when he began as a 14-year-old apprentice in an English manufacturer's shop.

"The machinery (at York a large and small glass blowing lathe) has been available since the late '30's," he explained, "and basically just takes the place of hands. With the demand for specialized equipment now we have to have machines because our hands just aren't big enough (for some of the operations)."

But the precision work of forming the glass on the lathes — as well as the physical blowing and creation of intricate coils and joints — is still done by hand drawing on the skills of a master craftsman.

Stills to pump

He makes everything from stills (for distilled water only) to cold trays, mercury diffusion pumps ("a standard piece") and the type of thing mentioned above that defies description.

Most of the glass used by Ensell is Pyrex or a similar kind made by other manufacturers, although he said there are hundreds of special glasses for special purposes that he works with. While most of his work is for researchers, a fair proportion of his time is spent repairing damaged apparatus or making equipment for the regular classroom.

Factory machines — primarily in New Jersey U.S.A. — make the basic lab equipment such as flasks, beakers, bottles and test tubes, with the remainder made in universities and research labs by professional glassblowers.

No apprentice schools

Ensell's trade is not one of the most prolific in North America these days, and he pointed up the fact that there are in fact virtually no apprentice schools available any longer.

"In most cases," he said, "people go to a factory where they learn the basics and then go on the production line." He himself spent three years learning "the basics".

"There's so little (glass blowing) in Canada these days that people think you either just blow bottles or make gadgets at local fairs. But still, it doesn't create much of a stir anymore when you say you're a glass blower — no more than if you say you're a watchmaker."

Over the years, Ensell has developed a considerable knowledge of science (he spent 22 years with the National Research Council) and experimented with glass art forms. But the latter he isn't sure he wants publicized.

Abstract art

"I do a little abstract art, mainly for my wife, but it can get a little out of hand if people keep coming to you because they're attracted to the art form".

And in the tradition of craftsmen, Ensell has found a long family history of the practice of the trade dating back to the early sixteenth century.

"There was a gap of perhaps two generations between me and my ancestors," he said, "but we've traced glass blowing in the family back to Bohemia around 1600. The family then moved to Lorraine where they were forced to leave for England because they were Huguenots. But from what I can gather they were poor businessmen — they all went broke."



Odds & Sodds

Faculty seminar

The Division of Social Science is presenting the 2nd in an Interdisciplinary Faculty Seminar series, October 15 at 2:00 p.m. in the Faculty Lounge (S872), the Ross Building. Guest speaker, Bertram M. Gross, Professor of Urban Affairs and Planning, Hunter College, City University of New York will speak on "New Roads to Serfdom". All persons welcome.

Creative writing

Mr. Edward Parker, who has taught several creative writing courses at York will again offer a course beginning on October 16. "An Experimenting Class in Creative Writing course 1" will be conducted by means of a writers' circle. The process is one of evoking writing expression, beginning with one's own experiences and insights. Introduction to short story writing, expression through poetic forms and beginning writing for the theatre will be basic. The course will be held at Glendon College, Room A105, York Hall. Call 635-2503 for further information.

Writers series

York University poet Irving Layton will present the second reading in the "Writers and their Works" series, presented by The Faculty of Fine Arts, on Wednesday, October 20 at 8:30 p.m. in Burton Auditorium.

One of Canada's leading writers, Layton will be reading from unpublished plays written in collaboration with Leonard Cohen and poems from his new collection.

French play

"Amedee, ou Comment S'en

Quote of the week

He had the educator's peculiar genius for imparting knowledge without himself assimilating it.

P.G. Hiebert,
Sarah Binks, 1947.

Debarrasser" by Eugene Ionesco will be performed by le Theatre de Poche-Montparnasse of Paris, on Monday, October 18 in Burton Auditorium. The play is one of two French language productions in the 1971-72 Performing Arts Series. "Le Bourgeois Gentilhomme" by Moliere will be presented by Le Treteau de Paris on November 23.

Arctic concern

Three public meetings to provide information on what is happening to the environment and people of the Arctic as a result of the developing interests of industry in Canada's northland will be held October 25, November 1 and November 8 at Friends House, 60 Lowther Avenue, Toronto. The CFSC is working with the Indian-Eskimo Association to set up this opportunity for publicly airing the issues involved and getting some facts straight on present conditions in the Arctic.

The meetings will deal with the environment, the society and the rights of the Eskimos, including the Government's role and responsibility as protector of the native peoples of Canada. Some of the program participants to date are: Peter Cumming, Associate Dean of Osgoode Hall Law School; Kit Vincent, Secretary, Canadian Arctic

Resources Committee; Victor Allen, Inuvik; Anthony Hooper, Osgoode Hall Law School; Professor R.W. Dunning, Department of Anthropology, University of Toronto and Tagak Curley, Indian Eskimo Association field worker in Edmonton.

The hassle-solving specialists, with information and time to rap, can be found in room 214 of Vanier residence. Phone 635-3509. Otherwise known as the York Student Clinic, the student-run organization is in its third year of service to the entire York community.

Short-term counselling, information and referral services are available for matters ranging through sexuality, birth control, and childbirth to suicide, smoking and drugs.

Trained non-professional student counsellors work with the professionals of York Health and Psychological Services and other off-campus organizations.

The clinic maintains an up-to-date file of articles, magazines and books. There is a lending library with a three-day loan period.

Statement by the president: Tarnopolsky issue

I have recommended to the Board of Governors of York University the offer of appointment of Dean Walter Tarnopolsky as Vice-President of Academic Affairs.

I first heard of Excalibur's charges of 7 October, 1971, against Dean Tarnopolsky on returning to Toronto that evening. The charges of anti-semitism and of bias toward hiring American law professors I immediately and completely rejected as utter nonsense. Anybody who knows Professor Tarnopolsky at all well will immediately recognize them as nonsense. Since Thursday I have received a very large body of evidence and testimonials supporting the view that the charges could not be further from the truth. I am very grateful to all those who have spoken up so promptly and forcefully on these matters.

I believe that York University will be extremely fortunate to draw back to its ranks Dean Tarnopolsky as Professor of Law and, for a term of office, as Vice-President Academic Affairs.

— David Slater

