

Abortion referrals soar, sex counselling's busy but... Harbinger is nearing the end of the road

By OAKLAND ROSS

After years of tiptoeing from one financial crisis to the next, Harbinger Community Services is again teetering on the brink of ruin. This time it may be for real.

Harbinger, York's free clinic for abortion referral, birth control information and sex counselling, has budgeted expenditures for 1975-76 of \$20,639. So far, it has received only \$11,150. That will last until February 15. Various student and college councils have promised a further \$2,700 which will extend Harbinger's lease on life until March 30. There is a fair chance, depending on how their own finances work out, that CYSF and the colleges will knock in another \$2,900 to support Harbinger until April 22.

But that's the end of the line.

Bill Robinson and Carol McBride, the two full-time directors of Harbinger, are currently trying to rally support from the university community for their fight for survival. They are requesting that the university administration provide \$10,000 to tide them through this year and that an ongoing funding formula for Harbinger be established.

They have received letters of support from Osgoode's legal and literary society, the York feminist magazine Breakthrough, student governor Shelley Rabinovitch, the Jewish student federation, the council of the York student federation, the York faculty association, York health services, and several college councils in-

cluding Bethune, Founders, Winters and Stong.

One of the charges frequently lodged against Harbinger is that the services it offers are redundant; they merely duplicate those which health services and the centre for counselling and development already, or easily could, offer.

However, in a memorandum circulated to assistant vice-president John Becker, vice-president Bill Farr, president Ian Macdonald and Harbinger director Bill Robinson, York health services director Dr. James Wheler wrote that the Harbinger staff members have been "relentlessly cooperative with ourselves in the more familiar areas of contraceptive counsel, information re venereal disease, referrals for pregnancy termination and related problems. These are very time-consuming, repetitive and speaking personally as a trained physician, extremely tedious when my efforts could be directed to more challenging pursuits."

"UNTOUCHABLES"

In the same letter, Wheler refers to Harbinger's clientele as the "sexually non-aligned, anti-establishment types" who are "essentially untouchables".

According to Harbinger director Bill Robinson, the clinic handles an average of 10 clients a day — sometimes as many as 20. Harbinger has referred 44 women for abortions since September 1 — an increase of exactly 100 per cent



Harbinger directors Bill Robinson (left) and Carol McBride chat with Radio York manager John Thompson in Harbinger reception area.

over the same time period last year. This indicates that there are a lot of "untouchables" at York and that they are on the increase.

Harbinger is housed on the second floor of the Vanier residence in three rooms which neighbour health services on one side and the office of the York homophile association on the other. The reception area, which is really a converted double occupancy residence room, has a large shelf filled with booklets covering such sex-related topics as vaginitis, venereal disease, homosexuality,

and birth control. There's a coffee kettle, a bulletin board, a couch (actually a bed pushed up against the wall), two full-time counsellors and, usually, a host of part-time volunteer workers. The other rooms are for private counselling. It's not a hive of activity, but it's busy.

Lately, Bill Robinson has been spending most of his time and effort simply trying to scrape together enough funds to see Harbinger through to the spring. His \$8,500 salary (assuming there's enough money to pay it) could probably be put to better use, but he has no choice. Harbinger has always been funded on a strictly ad hoc basis. The directors determine what money they need and then do their best to get it — from the university, the colleges, the CYSF, wherever.

Harbinger has existed in several incarnations since it first appeared (as the York University Student Clinic) in 1970. At that time, according to Robinson, it was more of a response to the drug scene than to anything else. It dealt mainly in crisis work — calming down kids having a bad time of it on acid.

But the drug scene has changed. Robinson feels that students now are better educated about drug use and, anyway, most have switched to booze. Harbinger has almost completely moved out of the drug counselling business. Robinson and McBride now concentrate on sexual matters.

"We can handle people's sexual problems in a way that health services and the counselling and development centre can't because we run on a peer group basis," says Robinson. "At Harbinger, professional experience would be a liability. Sometimes people are afraid to ask questions of people in uniforms"

Robinson began working at Harbinger last August. He's an American who came to Canada after deserting the army during the Vietnam era. He began working in

a free clinic on Dupont St. and has worked in several others since, all of which had semi-formal training programmes. He has taken several university courses including one in biology and another in accounting. (He handles the administrative side of the operation.)

Carol McBride has been working at Harbinger for a couple of years. She had training in social work at Seneca College and worked in clinics for five years before coming to York.

But all those clinics are a dying breed now.

Robinson feels that the proliferation of free clinics, half-way houses and drop-in centres during the latter years of the 60s was a part of what he calls the "late 60s grass roots movement thing".

CLINICS CLOSING

"People saw a need and simply did what they had to do to meet it," he said. "Nowadays, the clinics are closing down because the institutional operations are responding to the same need."

Despite that, Robinson still feels that Harbinger is better equipped to handle students' sexual counselling than is either health services or the counselling and development centre.

"Some people use 'excuse' questions when they come in for help," said Robinson. "They hide the real problem they want to talk about. So, you've got to have time to listen to what they're saying. You can't run this thing like a factory where you've got to turn out so many units a day."

"If you listen just to what the person is saying, you miss levels and levels of meaning."

Robinson claims that many universities in Canada have services similar to Harbinger. However, he says, Harbinger operates on one of the tightest budgets.

Unless someone or something comes to Harbinger's financial aid, it soon may not operate at all.

Socialist candidate for presidency dreams of a massive labour party

By FRANK LENTO

Socialist Workers' Party candidate for the presidency of the United States Peter Camejo was at Curtis on Tuesday to give York students an informative talk on socialist ideas in the U.S.

"Exploitation by the ruling class is the true cause of inflation and unemployment," he said.

Quotes like this, sprinkled through his lecture, are among the reasons that he and members of his party are under observation by both the CIA and the FBI.

In fact, Camejo has been under surveillance since the late 1950s. He also claims to be "the first presidential candidate to be indirectly placed under 'arrest' by the FBI."

(An FBI officer once told Camejo he was under arrest to prevent him from entering the White House while a meeting between various associations and the White House staff was in progress. As no grounds for charges were found, he was released.)

"PROTECTION"

"Surprisingly, these organizations (the FBI and CIA) are supposed to 'protect' the presidential candidates," exclaimed Camejo.

As the CIA puts it, "Camejo is a nationally known protestor."

The 60 students who were on hand appeared pleased with the content of his talk. To show their appreciation they collected and donated \$32 to help cover his expenses.

Camejo discussed the class struggle that exists within the U.S., arguing that it exists sim-



Edward Kennedy resigns himself to holding mike for Peter Camejo.

ply to ensure that the ruling class has a steady labour force ready to be exploited by the small "capitalist minority" which, he says, "makes up less than 10 per cent of the population yet controls up to 90 per cent of the wealth of the nation."

"If the U.S. claims to be so rich, having six per cent of the world's population and controlling over one-third of the world's wealth," asked Camejo sarcastically, "why is there such a disparity between workers and the ruling class?"

His aggressive attack on racism in the U.S. and other nations was probably influenced somewhat by his early involvement in such struggles as the American anti-war movement and the black civil rights movement.

At the moment the Socialist Worker's Party in the U.S. stands in fourth place. Being

optimistic, Camejo thinks that it could easily capture third place this time. His optimism is the result of recent polls taken in the U.S. which show people are becoming more sympathetic towards the socialist programme.

Camejo also dealt with the question of Angola, and his answer might surprise some people. His party is not willing to support any of the factions in Angola. He wants all imperialist forces out. Camejo sees the MPLA as an "imperialist force, masquerading under the clothes of socialism."

Overall, his dream, and the dream of the Socialist Worker's Party, is to build a massive labour party having independent control of the economic machinery of the state. This, he hopes, will eliminate class division, racism and economic problems.



Birth control display in Harbinger office.