

"We stand on guard for thee"

Gate girls give good guidance, get gawks

By STEVEN SCHWARTZ

If you've ever entered York through the main gate, then there is no doubt you've become accustomed to the ever-present eye of the security guard. However, a sigh of relief comes over

you if you notice warm smiles beaming from the gatehouse this year. As you pass, you take a quick look. You see two girls. Women security guards? Well, not exactly.

Since March of this year, the securi-

ty people have hired two young women as gatehouse parking attendants. Their function is to inform those people entering the campus of the parking regulations and answer any questions.

The job is an important one. For most people who stop to get information, this is their first contact with York. Because of this, these women have to give a favourable impression. Being courteous, neat in appearance, friendly and helpful are necessary requirements, which is sometimes difficult since as many as 300 people stop in a day. In a five-day week, 3,000 smiles between the two can be a strain.

Sometimes these women meet incredible challenges. A large and ominous visitor once descended upon the gatehouse and thrust his parking ticket at them. At the same time he verbally assaulted the girls, telling them they must be out of their minds. The girls held their ground, expressed their sympathy, explained the parking regulations and routes of appeal.

In cases like these, appeals are to be made to E.S. Annis, chairman of the parking committee. On the other hand, perhaps you've been one of those bewildered people perplexed by the disappearance of your car. In this case, a trip over to the gatehouse girls will solve the problem. The girls phone security and get the answer.

People's parking problems are not the only crises faced by this dynamic duo.

Once, an emergency arose when a student while walking to his car, tripped, fell and knocked himself out. Fortunately, the accident was witnessed, and the gatehouse girls notified security, who were able to assist the victim to the medical clinic.

At other times, these girls give out temporary parking permits, maps (75 a day), and instruct emergency vehicles needed on campus.

Perhaps, by now, you're wondering just who these two women are.

Jan Hilliard was one of the many students who graduated from grade 13 and failed to find employment. Her hunt for work took her twice to Western Canada, where she was unsuccessful. During this period of about a year and a half, Jan applied for the gatehouse job twice.

The first time she was rejected, according to the union, because a relative was working in the security department. One wonders whether the fact that she was a woman had

anything to do with it. In any case, her second application was accepted and she became York's first gatehouse girl.

Her partner is Ginny Walsh, a secondary school teacher out of work. She has an Honours B.A. and expects a teaching certificate from the University of London. Without actual possession of her certificate, she found it impossible to get a teaching job.

In the meantime, Ginny is reduced to a gatehouse. However, she relates that the job is enjoyable and says you meet many different people. Ginny's husband is currently enrolled in the M.B.A. programme at York.

So there they are, the gatehouse girls. Frankly, the idea is great. The only question is, why just two? After all, York has many entrances. Why not have gatehouse girls at all of them?

Rosemary McCracken

Working in London

By ROSEMARY McCracken

Finding a job in England was anything but difficult. Notices advertising positions were posted everywhere.

Each time I took the tube in London, I was confronted with the picture of a smiling man in uniform and cap who told me that jobs in London's underground system offered 25 to 40 pounds per week, plus sick benefits.

London teems with agencies — agencies for finding a flat in one of the world's most over-populated cities; agencies for procuring a charlady; and, perhaps the most common, employment agencies. Walking the three blocks up Kingsway from the Strand to Bloomsbury Road, I passed no fewer than five such bureaus, their windows plastered with fluorescent notices inviting the passerby to decide upon his choice of sick benefits.

One morning, I succumbed to the appeal of a pink daisy in the window of St. Paul's agency which offered me the position of stenographer, with only a little typing and no experience necessary. I promptly trotted inside. Ten minutes and one telephone call later, I was on my way to Broderick's Investment Brokers to "interview" the Area Sales Manager.

The job at Broderick's included typing and some bookkeeping. The salary was only 25 pounds a week but, as I was told, the benefits were remarkable. Mr. Robertson, who was to be my new boss, pronounced my poor 30 wpm typing speed "splendid."

"But are you sure you will find the work interesting enough?" he asked. "So many girls have quit on us recently."

The first day on the new job, I arrived promptly at nine o'clock to find I was the only one in the office. At 9:15 a.m., the executives started to trickle in, and at 9:40, Pamela, the other stenographer, arrived with a short "Sorry I'm late" to Mr. Robertson.

The first tea break of the day was at 10 a.m. and lasted for 20 minutes. Lunch break was at noon, followed by tea breaks at two and four.

The day proved pleasant enough. I passed the time typing a few letters which had to be re-typed because of numerous errors; nobody seemed to mind. Intervals between letters were filled by washing tea cups.

"Why is it so difficult to keep staff in London?" I asked Pamela. "Most girls would rather work as temps — temporary help — through an agency," she replied. "That way they can earn one pound an hour instead of 18 to 25 pounds a week."

"They save their money and then take off for three or four months in the summer, which you can't do in a permanent job. Or they'd rather collect the benefits of unemployment than take the low pay and long hours of a permanent job."

"I'd do the same but I rather like the family atmosphere around here. They don't expect much because the pay is so low. And I dislike adjusting to a new office every two weeks as temporary help must do. I hate change."

Is it any wonder the British economy's in trouble?



No wonder this gate house girl is smiling - she's one of the few students who got a part-time job on campus.

Mike Distaulo photo

Letters to the Editor

All letters should be addressed to the Editor, c/o Excalibur, room 111 central Square. They must be double-spaced, typed and limited to 250 words. Excalibur reserves the right to edit for length and grammar. Name and address must be included for legal purposes but the name will be withheld upon request.

Slaughter of students, militants, peasants continues in Chile

As the slaughter of workers, students and peasants continues at the hand of the military junta in Chile, diplomatic recognition from Canada may be imminent. The generals have blockaded literally thousands of political prisoners and Latin American exiles in stadiums, prisons, and foreign embassies (including Canada's). The need to oppose the coup in Chile is greater and more urgent than ever. The Chile Solidarity Committee was formed by several groups and individuals who agreed to carry out a solidarity campaign, presently around the slogans No recognition or aid to the junta and immediate asylum for refugees and exiles. We invite everyone who is interested to attend a meeting this Sunday at 2:00 pm to consider bases of unity, future activities, structure and name for the committee.

In other cities across Canada groups representing all political currents and interests have worked together to carry out effective solidarity campaigns, with full freedom for each component group to present their own position as well as those of the committee. So far in Toronto it has not been possible to unite all opponents of the Chilean coup in one defence movement, but this is our goal. We therefore hope that as many people and groups as possible attend Sunday's meeting. The location will be announced in

leaflets distributed around the campus.
Chile Solidarity Ctte.

Headline misleading in Mother's response to daycare story

Your issue of Sept. 20 contains an article headed "Child Care Excellent Despite Poor Facilities . . . But Mother Disagrees." Such a headline is misleading since it seems there are approximately one hundred sets of parents who have entrusted their children to the daycare centre as opposed to this one disgruntled parent. Many of these parents have continued the enrolment of their children and their own participation in the centre for one or more years. We might assume, therefore, that many people are satisfied with the care, attention and love given their children by staff and other participating parents.

A cooperative venture such as the Daycare Centre has the advantage of giving parents an opportunity to carry on with their own lives while yet contributing to the daily care of their children. A further advantage—that of financial, administrative and philosophical control—is also a disadvantage in that, like all cooperatives, compromises have to be reached. Thus, I find it necessary to refute the points covered by Mrs. Maiolami (ostensibly regarding the facilities of the centre, but actually covering many other,

less relevant aspects).

1. To my knowledge, the deficit consists mainly of a loan from the Toronto-Dominion Bank. Mrs. Maiolami exhibits faulty logic on this point since, if Accounting had been "stupid" enough to pay the bills, the Centre would hardly have registered this deficit. While the University has generously provided rent subsidies and payroll services, it has definitely not been incautious or "stupid" in its dealings with the Centre.

2. The \$16,000 deficit is explained by the fact that parents want quality daycare for their children and (since many are students or staff) need reasonable prices for this care. "Quality" implies excellence in facilities, equipment, food and staff. The move to Atkinson represents a significant improvement in the first three of the above. The Daycare Centre has enjoyed the services of outstanding staff members—people with excellent qualifications who have been paid poorly for long days plus meetings and weekend work parties (no overtime). In 1973-74, the Centre has increased numbers of staff and their salaries to a rate slightly more than competitive with commercial centres (I might add that among the staff are registered nurses, child psychologists, and specialists in early childhood education).

3. The structuring of fees is not exorbitant. Most commercial centres charge \$110.00 to \$150.00 per month (as opposed to \$85.00) for an infant under two years. And they cannot staff their establishments as completely as the Daycare Centre for the simple reason that the

four hours of participation by each parent replaces the services of as many as six to 10 staff (\$30,000 to \$60,000).

I believe that Mrs. Maiolami's child attends Kindergarten for half the day, so that in reality the \$85.00 fee represents the price for half-time in a commercial centre.

4. The unfortunate hostility to the benefit concert is due to Mrs. Maiolami's friendship with one of the givers of the concert and her precipitate action in complaining to Day Nurseries Branch about the facilities—an action which almost closed the Centre for everyone. However, at last observation, the only deterrent to the success of the concert was the timing (Sept. 27) on the eve of a Jewish holiday.

The Daycare Centre does need the income from additional enrolments and did use makeshift facilities for ten days. However, the staff cares about the children. This caring can overcome many lacks—particularly in view of the improvement over old facilities that Atkinson represents.

I hope this statement clarifies many of the points raised by Mrs. Maiolami.

Joan M. Hilborn
Chairman, Parent Board, Infant Section.

Member, General Parent Board.

York University Cooperative Daycare Centre.