

Harbinger's column

Harbinger is York University's peer counselling and referral service. Drop in at 214 Vanier residence or phone 667-3059-3632. Open 10-6, Monday to Friday.

Chocolate and alcohol can trigger migraine attacks

By SUE KAISER

"Aaaow, me brayne hursts!" — A. J. Gumby of Monty Python

At least 10 per cent of the population is afflicted with migraines, and over half of these people have some traced, hereditary disposition for the attacks. Migraine is not merely a bad headache. It involves the constriction and dilation of blood vessels in the skull, sometimes on one side only. Often, nausea and vomiting accompany a migraine which explain the terms "sick" or "bilious" headache found in early medical books.

Many migraine sufferers experience warning signs which can include momentary loss of vision

and perception of flashing or jagged lights. During an attack, all of the five senses are super sensitive and even small amounts of light or soft noises can cause extreme discomfort and pain.

During extensive research into the causes of migraine, certain environmental factors have been shown to frequently precede attacks. These factors are called triggers, and can include alcohol, allergies, sunlight, loss of sleep, high humidity, low barometric pressure, and irregular eating habits. Foods which contain tyramine (cheese, wine, citrus fruit) or phenylethylamine (PEA) (chocolate and alcohol) are common migraine triggers, possibly because of biochemical

changes which alter the body's handling of these substances.

Just as migraine symptoms vary from person to person, and from one attack to another, each migraineur has a unique combination of trigger factors which brought on an attack. The Migraine Foundation in Toronto recommends that every migraine sufferer keep an accurate record of migraine attacks. This should include the length of an attack, the severity, and a description of all activities, and meals during the 24 hours preceding the attack. A list of warning signs symptoms and trigger mechanisms is available from the Migraine Foundation, and will help you discover possible triggers. This information can then

be used to help you avoid some attacks.

While there is much that migraine sufferers can do to improve their situation, every migraineur should see a doctor who can take tests to rule out possible organic causes of head pain. Skull X-rays, EEGs, visual acuity tests and blood sugar tests are often done to uncover possible tumors, acute infections, diseases of the ear, nose or sinuse, eye problems (such as glaucoma), or head injuries.

Migraine is commonly thought of as a "woman's" ailment, although statistics show that migraines attack men and women in fairly equal proportions. Migraines do, however, occur more often in women who are menstruating.



Although the exact nature of the influence of female hormones on migraines is not known, studies have proven they are closely linked. Birth control pills work by introducing more hormones into the body, and there is little doubt that they can both aggravate pre-existing migraine, and produce migraine where none existed before. In general, women who have migraines are advised to avoid the Pill, and choose another method of birth control.

If you suffer from migraines, consult your doctor, or contact the Migraine Foundation, 390 Brunswick Ave. Toronto. (920-4916).

More letters

Young Socialists to fight gov't cutbacks

1977 will be a critical year for York students. All of us will be faced with a \$100 tuition fee hike as of May; student aid is being cut back; the York Board of Governors has decided to implement the 250-300 per cent fee increase for international students and the CYSF has embarked on a project that will weaken our ability to fight these attacks on our right to an education.

The CYSF has called a referendum asking us whether we favour continued membership in the Ontario Federation of Students (OFS) and the National Union of Students (NUS).

Barry Edson, the president of CYSF is campaigning to withdraw York from OFS and NUS using \$500 of our money.

His anti-OFS, NUS campaign has serious implications for the entire student movement.

The CYSF's campaign is the second such threat against the OFS that we have seen this school year. Last fall, students at the University of Western Ontario in London voted narrowly to end their membership in OFS. An anti-OFS campaign was carried at Western by members of the students council who claimed that OFS was "too radical" to represent the interests

of Western students.

The withdrawal of Western from OFS dealt a hard blow to the federation both financially and in their ability to successfully organize coordinated provincial student actions.

The formation of the OFS in 1972 was the result of students in Ontario realizing the need to stand together and organize to defend themselves against government education cutbacks which began to be implemented in that year. It was OFS that initiated and helped to build a demonstration of 2,500 students at Queen's Park last January 21st to protest the cutbacks.

Today, this new threat to the OFS by the Edson council takes place at a time when we are again facing huge attacks on our right to an education by the Tory government. Ontario has become the most expensive province to go to school in!

Never has there been a greater need for all students to unite and organize across the province against these government cutbacks. The weakening of OFS through the disaffiliation of student councils like Western and York can seriously harm the ability of students to successfully do this.

The OFS referendum is shaping

up to be a key issue in the CYSF elections taking place at the same time.

The challenge before students who want to fight Edson's moves to pull York out of OFS and NUS is to use the elections to campaign for student support.

We in the Young Socialists think that only through the united massive, public action of thousands of students can the government cutbacks be successfully fought. We think that the OFS and NUS are an important part of this strategy. At the same time we think that students have to fight within OFS and NUS to challenge these organizations to lead this kind of struggle.

We are running in the CYSF

elections on the platform of the United Left Slate (ULS).

The ULS has centered out the issues of the cutbacks and the need to fight Edson's moves to pull out of OFS and NUS. This is very important. All the candidates in the election should be forced to take a stand on these issues.

The existence of the OFS and the government attacks is at stake in the referendum. Our efforts in the elections are going to be directed towards convincing every student on this campus of the need for York to be in OFS as part of the fight against fee hikes and cutbacks.

David Johnson and Cheryl Pruitt, Young Socialist candidates running on the United Left Slate.

Staff meeting today at 1 Room 111

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