

Excalibur

Everything secret degenerates; nothing is safe that does not show it can bear discussion and publicity — Lord Acton

Reflections of EXCALIBUR editor

It's not always easy to fulfill the two essential functions of a campus newspaper, that of encouraging participation from the campus community and at the same time producing an end product that is journalistically and technically competent. For the past two years EXCALIBUR has, therefore, hired two full-time editors to handle these functions.

This year the editor and managing editor spent most of their time training new staff and co-ordinating the basic production (layout, etc.) of the paper. For a number of reasons the results of our efforts became most apparent in the second term.

Of first significance was the fact that a hard core of staff had become fully trained at this point. News editors, Barry Lerner and David Chud, for instance, who started the year as cub reporters, were now competently organizing and editing the news. This was undoubtedly one reason why 65 per cent of our news copy this term was on York events. (We have done a content breakdown of EXCALIBUR copy for the issues running Jan. 8 - March 11.)

Also instrumental in increasing the quality of the paper this term was our success in improving layout techniques. This added greatly to the overall appearance of the newspaper.

But the most important factor in the general improvement of the paper's second term was student utilization of EXCALIBUR. For some reason students started using the paper more frequently. This influx of "viewpoints" and other small features enabled us to create the "University Forum" page, which we now set aside exclusively for opinions from York community members.

Increased submissions by students also helped boost our number of original features to a point where they represented almost 60 per cent of feature content.

Also of interest is the fact that original EXCALIBUR features this

year have been reprinted in other campus newspapers across the country, including universities in Montreal, Winnipeg, Calgary and St. Catharines.

This year EXCALIBUR attempted to break down its hierarchy and allow more staff participation. The creation of the two news editor positions is a structural indication of this. In addition, a loosely organized editorial board composed of all editors is now responsible for writing editorials. If the staff as a whole disagree with an editorial policy it can be discussed and altered at the next regular weekly staff meeting.

Discussion of staff participation also brings up the question of "bias" in the newspaper. In terms of news coverage we have always insisted that reporters make their stories factually correct. As in any newspaper, reporters pick their own "angle", that part of an event which they feel is most important to emphasize.

We have not been able to cover every event we wanted to. Reporters pick stories to cover according to their interests. (They're not getting paid and you can't force volunteer workers to cover something they don't want to.) If some of our readers feel that different events should be covered, we encourage them to come in and work on the staff next year. We'll take all the help we can get.

In a discussion on bias a frequently asked question is: Do you feel you represent the campus? (Implicit in this question is a suggestion that the newspaper's editorial policy should represent the mood of the campus.)

In answering this question I can only recall a personal experience I had in my first year at York, 1967. It was then that I joined a very small group called the Committee to End the War in Vietnam; hardly a radical group, at best a small "1" liberal organization.

But we were despised. Scarcely a day went by at our literature table when people didn't stop and tell us how we were "dupes of the communists", how the Americans were "fighting for democracy," and we should be supporting them. I think it's safe to say that our group did not represent the campus. And I'm glad of it. The campus mood over the years has, of course, changed — changed to such an extent that last year's Vietnam moratorium drew 2,000 students.

My point is that there are people working on EXCALIBUR who feel it is more important to adhere to a set of principles, which they believe to be honest, than it is to sway with every campus wind.

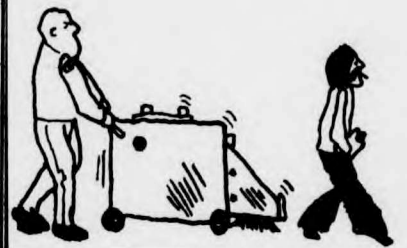
In short, some of us feel that the role of EXCALIBUR is to raise issues, stimulate discussion and, in cases, to change — not reflect — the mood of the campus.

The important feature about EXCALIBUR is not whether we do or do not represent "the campus" but rather whether or not the paper is open. And, in that regard, our policy has always been one of printing all articles regardless of their political points of view.

Next year the campus will be larger and our information gathering and reporting job will be even more difficult. Consequently, we'll be looking for recruits. Even if you don't always agree with everything we say don't think you can't work for the paper. Some of the most vocal critics of EXCALIBUR (i.e. Edwin Rothschild) ended up writing for us. No experience is necessary and, as Barry Lerner and David Chud will assure you, it's easy to move up into a position of responsibility. So when you come back next year drop in and see us. There'll be an opening waiting for you.

Bob Roth
Editor in Chief.

The Cleaning Machine..



Excalibur The York University Weekly

EDITOR

BOB ROTH

MANAGING EDITOR

TIM CLARK

NEWS EDITORS

Barry Lerner, David Chud

NEWS

Brian Milner, Paul Thomson, Manny Masongsong, Mike Savage, Shelli Hunter, Jim Smith, Rhonda Rovani, Les Durkin, Ivan Fenton, Joe Polonsky

Karen Hood

PHOTOGRAPHY

Tim Clark, Harry Kitz, Dave Cooper, Sandy Cormack

ENTERTAINMENT EDITORS

Brian Pearl, John Oughton

ENTERTAINMENT

Steve Geller, Dan Merkur, Steve Davey

SPORTS

Tim Clark, Phil Cranley, Ivan Bern, Cam Smith

GRAPHICS

John Rose

LAYOUT

Louise Paradis

BUSINESS AND

ADVERTISING MANAGER

Rolly Stroeter

ADVERTISING

Leo Smits, Jackie Stroeter

TELEPHONE:

editorial phone: 635-3201, 3202

advertising phone: 635-3800

controlled circulation: 15,000

Excalibur, founded in 1966, is the York University weekly and is independent politically. Opinions expressed are the writer's and those unsigned are the responsibility of the editor. Excalibur is a member of Canadian University Press and attempts to be an agent of social change. Printed at Newsweb, Excalibur is published by Excalibur Publications under the auspices of the Council of the York Student Federation. Office: Central Square (southeast corner), Ross Building, York University, 4700 Keele St., Downsview, Ontario.

CYSF budget: Make it or break it

Robin Macrae called for a Budget Council Meeting last Tuesday night. Mike Fletcher's agenda for the same meeting contained nine points, of which at least five called for lengthy discussion, the word budget itself, not being mentioned anywhere in the agenda.

Is the President unaware of the work the Finance Commissioner is planning to do? Is the Finance Commissioner unable to communicate with the President?

The point is, that CYSF is going in two directions at the same time. Fletcher tries to tackle all kinds of business items, that arise every day in order to keep things happening. Macrae on the other hand searches for basic operating policies and funding procedures, which should underlie CYSF's decision-making. This undoubtedly would eliminate a lot of confusion on part of every council member as well as speed up its decision-making process.

Without basic operating principles and policies there is no way that Fletcher can even process half the items he has to bring to council. The decision-making process is clogged up with petty items, taking up valuable time which should be spent on Macrae's attempt to formulate some

basic operating and funding policies. We feel that Mr. Fletcher has noble intentions but good will alone won't be enough. Macrae's solution in hinting at his resignation as Finance Commissioner, however, does not exactly make our hearts jump either.

EXCALIBUR proposes the following procedure to be discussed and seriously considered before the CYSF Budget Meeting:

1. To discuss the Finance Commissioner's plan of dealing with the CYSF budget on a priority basis in certain categories like office, services, communications, etc. rather than individual allocations to individual groups.

2. To accept in principle his outline of procedure and instruct the Chairman of the meeting to rule according to those principles.

3. To reject attempts to split up the CYSF budget in easy-pass and difficult-pass categories.

4. To limit the questions of the council as a whole to the actual budget presentation of the groups involved, rather than general debates unrelated to their respective budgets.

5. To expect the CYSF members to discuss the budget presentations only in the light of written presentations, such as a budget proposal, which

should be circulated to them well before the meeting.

6. To accept the principle outlined in Bylaw No. 13, of the CYSF constitution, that financial pressure (read budget allocation) cannot be used to retaliate against editorial policy of the media (read EXCALIBUR).

7. To adopt the above stated principle for all grant applications of all individual groups as they apply to them in principle.

Nothing short of this will do if CYSF wants to grow out of its past role as being the generous benefactor of some chosen campus activities.

Macrae tries to deal in basics — and that's where the only kind of action will be coming from. What activities does CYSF want to support, and which activities have to be handed back to the College councils? Who supports campus-wide clubs, off-campus clubs, Student Clinic, guest lectures, and the media? Nothing short of a re-evaluation of present and future needs and present and future funds will be needed. CYSF's draft budget will be the first step. The second, and more difficult one, will be to convince the individual college councils to re-evaluate their own responsibilities and funding procedures in discussing the acceptance of the CYSF budget.