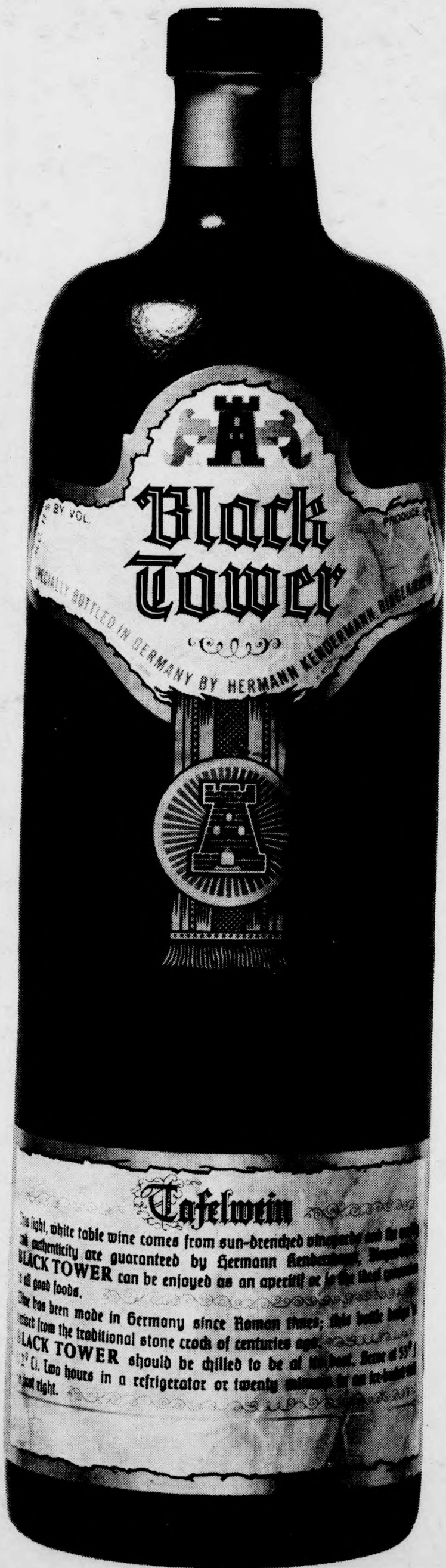


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The apprenticeship of John Mitchell

Bush's boss makes good

By JULIAN BELTRAME

The rise of John Mitchell through the floundering liquor structures of York University has been nothing short of remarkable, especially when you consider that he was nearing the end of his stay at York as a political and social philosophy student before there was anything called the Green Bush Inn or the Cock and Bull.

But in 1969 Mitchell started selling liquor at the Cock and Bull coffee shop, serving as the paid manager of the pub. Since then he has never really left the sphere of liquor operations at York, despite several sabbaticals.

COCK AND BULL

The Cock and Bull was the first pub for students at York, although faculty and staff could get their fill of the stuff as early as 1966 by frequenting the faculty common rooms. Mitchell believed this constituted a double standard, which became even more noticeable after the drinking age in the province had been lowered to 18.

After a year's absence, Mitchell came back as a graduate student, but soon discovered he could not live on the paltry amount he was getting for studying philosophy. And, since he was restricted from working part-time because of graduate school



John Mitchell

regulations, he dropped the department to take the job of student supervisor for Versafood.

But when the position of business manager opened up at the GBI there was little doubt in Mitchell's mind about what to do. Within a matter of months he had increased the trial \$50 a week salary to \$150, and at the same time had been given the posi-

tion of faculty common room manager at \$132 a week.

TWO MANAGERS

Mitchell at first co-managed the GBI operation with Paul Culver, who began the transformation of GBI from a two night pub operation to a business management service operation.

Mitchell recalls, "Paul Culver was a good manager, but how to you ask a guy from Osgoode to manage a pub?" Within a month Mitchell was the only GBI manager, and had doubled his salary.

"There just wasn't enough money to pay both Paul and me," he explained.

Mitchell saw it as his responsibility as manager "to make money" within the existing system, which is why his term as faculty common room manager was a tense one.

"I couldn't get a price hike on the hot plates and it cost me more money to serve a plate than what I was getting."

WORST RUN

The faculty common room operation was the worst run in the university, according to Mitchell. He cited the common room's failure to pay any provincial sales tax on their gross, an oversight which cost the university \$10,000 in back taxes, and was officially charged to the faculty equity fund.

While Mitchell holds more respect for the GBI operation, he is still critical of the GBI for failing to branch out into other areas of service when it lost its usefulness as a supplier of liquor.

Among the services which he feels are necessary is a centralized system of entertainment booking and paid help for the pubs.

The GBI had known of its eventual demise as early as October of 1972, when news of the new canteen licence was first announced, but it has been unable to find a useful place for itself in the changing university operation.

WEAK GBI

"By February in (the GBI) was the weakest political organization on campus," said Mitchell, "and without some kind of political status at York, you're nowhere."

With the GBI slowly sinking into the sea, Mitchell abandoned ship to take on the newly created and more powerful position of beverage manager, the office which will handle all of York's future liquor operations.

This latest move in his personal rise has brought the most criticism; many claimed that Mitchell has always sought to do what is best for himself and that he left the GBI before its business had been completed.

Harry Knox, assistant vice-president of business operations, said he hired Mitchell because he seemed the most capable of the applicants.

"We wound up with two chaps and Mitchell," he explained. "John had been a student here and had acquired a fair reputation, and the fact that he was familiar with York was an attractive consideration."

GRAD AT HOME

"If a graduate of York doesn't have standing at 4700 Keele, he doesn't have standing anywhere," Knox added.

Besides providing all liquor and preparing the financial returns for the university liquor operations, the beverages manager will also be responsible for periodic checks of the outlets as well as providing instruction to the outlet managers.

Yes, the GBI is dead, but John Mitchell is doing fine, thank you.

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