

editorial

There is nothing more antagonistic to original thought than business efficiency. In fact, as long as the universities can remain inefficient there is hope for the world.
—E.W.R. Steacie at St. Francis Xavier, 1957

Animal pragmatism

At first glance it is difficult to argue with the good intentions of many so-called Animal Rights groups.

Their insistence that strict standards be applied to the use of animals for scientific research is no doubt partly responsible for the general improvement in the care and intelligent use of lab animals over the last three decades. With their humanitarian slogans and their compelling belief that 'all life is sacred,' it is not surprising that the groups find enthusiastic members among the liberal-minded university population.

Yet despite their value as a moral safeguard against animal abuse, a few of the movement's more radical members are focusing more and more critical attention on what were considered to be harmless organizations.

Paradoxically, as provincial and federal regulations governing the breeding, care, and intelligent use of lab animals have become more detailed and more strictly enforced, the Animal Rights groups seem to have become more vocal in their objections, and more radical in their methods.

In the wake of a recent incident at Western University (the research facility was broken into, several lab animals were 'liberated,' and equipment was vandalized), it seems appropriate that people re-examine their stand on this issue and on the organizations which presume to represent animals.

Last year, while pursuing faculty reactions to some Animal Rights literature for a story in *Excalibur*, we were surprised when certain faculty members chose to remain anonymous when discussing (or refuting) some of the more sensational claims in some of the Animal Rights literature.

More than one faculty member in both the psychology and biology departments told us of incidents of vandalism in other Canadian institutions, academic or otherwise. The recent incident at Western seems to substantiate the professor's claims that such incidents are far from isolated, and furthermore that they have been occurring with great frequency.

While it would be unfair to blame specific groups for the incidents, it appears that this seemingly benign movement has generated a growing radical fringe.

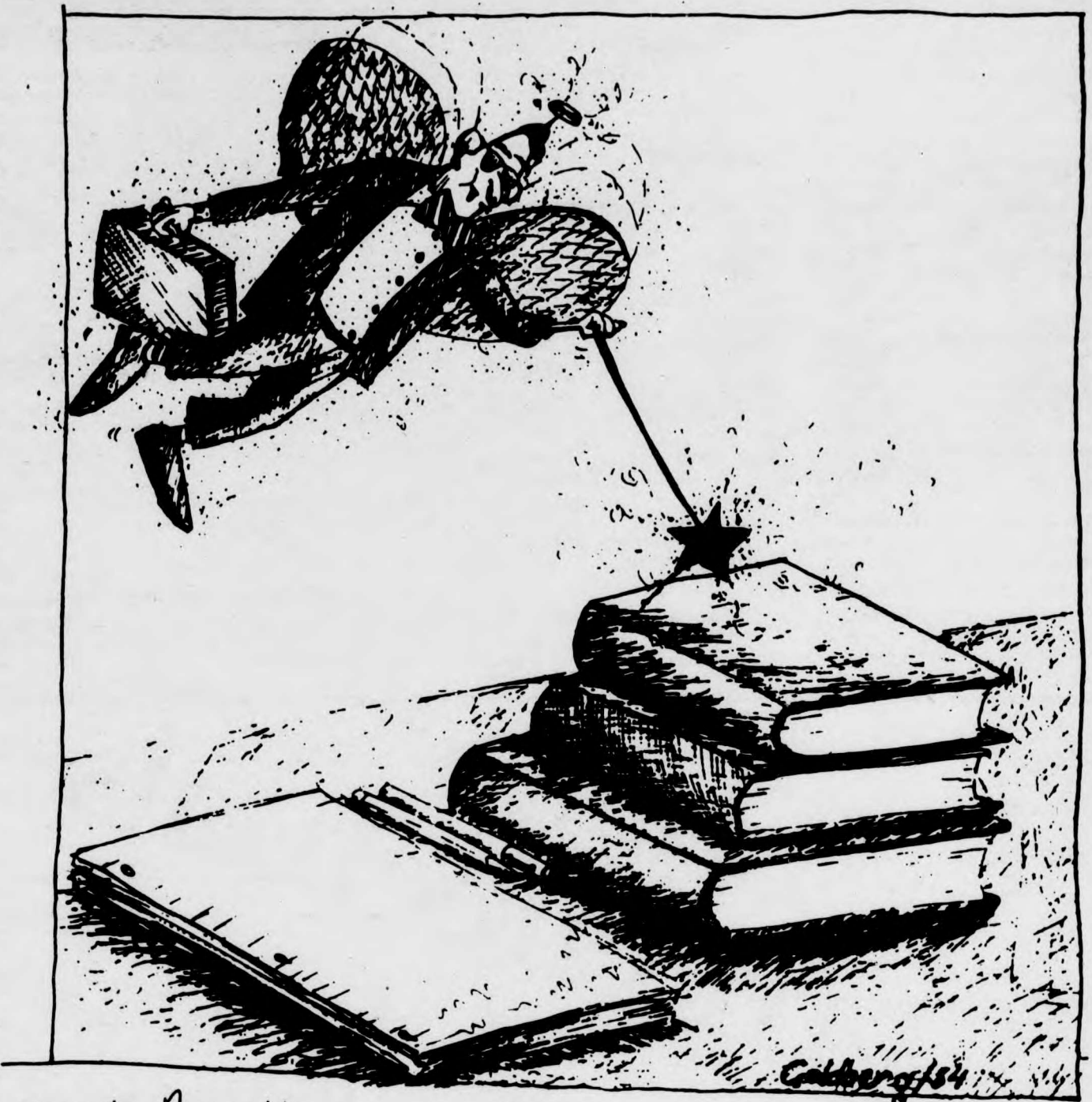
With the often irresponsible, propaganda-style literature that these groups are using, it's not surprising they have created a reactionary contingent. Their literature most often presents an unsubstantiated appeal to the emotions, using misleading or false statistics, while refusing to admit that what their argument really boils down to is a question of relative morality.

Unless some massive inexplicable conspiracy is going on which renders at least four levels of institutional safeguards useless, it seems that these groups have little in the way of reasonable argument. There is no evidence that would lead us to believe that research scientists and biologists are any more prone to sadism or psychosis than any other segment of the population. The primary safeguard against inhumane animal treatment probably lies with the scientists themselves, before any of the elaborate safeguards are necessary.

Still, it is perhaps understandable that some people will disagree with the whole concept of using any animals for any research. For such people, lobbying provides a means by which their views can be brought to the public's attention. And while pamphlets, petitions, and demonstrations are perfectly acceptable practices, the incident at Western is far from acceptable. Like it or not, break-ins, theft, and vandalism are do not constitute reasonable or accepted behavior for civilized human beings; they are the rash, criminal actions of irresponsible reactionaries.

If Animal Rights groups are to be taken to such absurd extremes.

On the other hand, if they maintain their smug silence over this and similar incidents they leave many of their supporters with some pretty serious questions, the primary one being: Do I want to be even indirectly associated with this type of hysterical behavior?



and finally.....Hubert's pleas to the essay fairy were answered.

letters

Gotta problem?

Editor:
Do you know who your student representatives are? Do you know who to approach when you have a problem? Most students don't! The following is intended to help those entangled in the web of bureaucracy. Students represent you on a variety of bodies and are there to help you.

First of all, every college (and a couple of faculties—i.e. law, MBA) has a student council. These college councils look after college matters (i.e. problems in the residence, pubs, and college dances) Your council executive can be of help in a number of circumstances or can direct you to someone else. They can be contacted through your college council office.

The next body which represents students is the CYSF. Almost every college sends three representatives to sit on this Council. The president and many of the executives are elected annually by those students who belong to constituent colleges. The CYSF is a good contact place—an information service on a large scale. This council gets \$200,000 of your money so use its services. If they can't help you, they can usually tell you who can.

Every student is a member of a faculty. Student representatives sit on every faculty council. They are there to advise you if you have an academic problem. These students can be contacted through CYSF or through your faculty council office.

Also, student Senators are available for academic advice. These 23 students represent you on the University's Senate, the body that determines the academic policy of the University. The Chairman

of the Senate Student Caucus, Chris Costello, can also be reached through the CYSF office.

Last but not least, students have two representatives on the Board of Governors. The BOG concerns itself with the finances and administration of the University. Both Marty Zarnett and I can assist you in dealing with the administration and both of us can be reached through the CYSF office.

You may wonder how all the parts fit together. In many ways, this system can be compared to the Canadian federal system of government.

The college councils are the diversified municipalities or boroughs, and are represented on the CYSF, the central metropolitan council. Your faculty Student Programmes Office and Student Affairs Office are support organizations at the provincial level.

Then at the federal level, you have the BOG which would be like Parliament since it deals with money and administration. And you have the Senate which would be like the Canadian Senate since it deals only with academics and not money matters.

If you have any problem whatsoever, contact one of your student representatives. We are here to help you! Any of the above representatives can be reached through the CYSF office, 105 Central Square, or by phoning 667-2515.

—Pamela Fruitman

Good samaritans

Editor:
It would like to express my thanks to those who assisted me on Friday, December 14, when I slipped and fell on the ice between the Ross and BSB buildings. I would especially like to thank Chris and Mike for not only their con-

cern, but also their calm, clear thinking.
—Christine Camilleri

Excal 'sloppy'

Editor:
Re: Jose Ramirez' coverage of the visit to York by the astronauts:

Mr. Ramirez has insulted our distinguished visitors on at least two counts. First, he obviously could not be bothered to obtain the correct spelling of Dr. Robert THIRSK's name. A two-minute phone call either to the CRESS office or to Mrs. Penny Jolliffe in Communications would have provided the correct information. Secondly, Commander Robert Crippen, the Mission Commander of 41-G, was not listed as one of the visitors per se, but instead received only passing mention as one of the film narrators. Since Cdr. Crippen has not been present on most of Dr. Garneau's tour, we were especially honoured to have him as a visitor to York.

In addition, it was insulting to the Dean of Science, Mr. DAVEY, that his name was also spelled incorrectly. I realize that *Excalibur* does not try to compete with the *Globe and Mail* or other major newspapers, but the above errors were not typographical. They were simply sloppy journalism for which there is never any excuse. This is not the first time I have noticed examples of poor journalistic practice in *Excalibur*, but it is especially unforgivable when distinguished visitors to York are insulted.

Shape up, *Excalibur*!!
—Penny Seymour
Chemistry Department

excalibur

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