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excalibur

Founders residents protest meal plan

by John Andrews

Founders College students marched to the housing and food services offices March 22 to protest the proposed 19 meal-a-week plan for 1990-91. Eighteen students carried banners reading "NO QUALITY. NO CHOICE. NO CHANCE."

Students told *Excalibur* they felt cheated because they were not informed of the plan earlier. The students were invited to talk with Crandles, present him with a petition and discuss the meal plan for 90 minutes.

Crandles told the concerned students, the plan "is not etched in stone and is only a proposal. It has not reached the Board of Governors as yet . . . there will be a detailed explanation and students will be informed in due course."

Crandles said the plan is necessary because the university will no longer be profiting from the vendors in Central Square once the Student Centre opens. He said the university has to look elsewhere for money to pay the bills for Complexes 1 and 2. He explained that the money housing and food services gets back from the caterers has always fallen short of the bills. He estimates there has been a total loss of about \$3 million that has been made up by the vendors in Central Square and the vending machines, and that undergraduate residents have always been subsidized.

He emphasized that the new plan has nothing to do with Marriott and that Marriott will give the university any plan it wants.



photo by André Souroujon

Survival tactics

Thirteen ways to survive essay/exam hell:

1. Run down Steeles Ave. with an arm load of jelly doughnuts yelling "OH!" at the top of your lungs.
3. Imagine the fun you would have working at McDonald's for the rest of your life.
5. Get lots of natural light and maintain a good relationship with your Mom or Dad or both if you are so inclined.
4. Make sure your medicine cabinet is full of essentials: aspirin, Penaten cream for hives, eye drops, A5-35 for typing elbow, antihistamine, sleeping pills, waking pills, birth control devices (sex relieves tension), potato chips and bubble gum.
6. Vote early! Vote often! in *Excalibur's* mascot elections.
7. Alphabetize your tupperware.
8. Go to the dentist.
9. Sleep. Cry. Poke a friend in the eye. (Some members of the *Excalibur* editorial board do not agree with this statement.)
11. Pretend you are the president of the CYSF and organize a protest.
2. Find a comfortable place to lie down. Breathe deeply but evenly. Imagine all of the tension leaving your body. Then eat about a million chocolate chip cookies.
10. Shout at complete strangers in foreign languages.
12. Avoid making long distance telephone calls.
13. Think up excuses for not having your essay in on time, like: "I left it in my unlocked car in lot 1A and it was stolen."

This is the list of eligible voters for the 1990-91 *Excalibur* editorial election. If your name does not appear on this list and you feel it should, talk to Nancy and Heather.

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The kittens found in Winters cafeteria last week have found a temporary home in residence.

letters

We will publish, space permitting, letters up to 500 words. They must be typed, doubled spaced, accompanied by the writer's name and phone number. Libellous material will be rejected. Deliver to 111 Central Square during business hours.

Sorority apologizes for poster furor

Dear Editors:

I am both amazed and embarrassed at the furor caused by the poster that was jointly created and distributed by Delta Kappa Gamma Sorority and Phi Delta Theta Fraternity. I wish to assure my fellow students that at no time did we intend the message to be sexist or offensive. I deeply regret that the poster has been construed in this manner and wish to apologize for any misunderstanding on behalf of Delta Kappa Gamma.

Karen Steckoll
President
Delta Kappa Gamma Sorority

Writer responds to critique

Ken Shorley's name was lost on the way to the printer. He wrote a letter to the editor entitled, "Les Miz reviewer called elitist," which was published March 15.

Dear Editor:

This is a response to Ken Shorley's letter in opposition to my March 6 critique of *Les Miserables*.

I strongly agree with Shorley's suggestion that he should ponder my critique again to make sure that he hasn't misread me.

However, I'd like to point out just a couple of the chasms in his argument:

Re: "Your article almost implies that any non-white patron would not be welcomed at *Les Miserables*."

I call things as I see them. A lack of visible minorities in the audience says a lot about the social setting of a show like *Les Miz*. It is not that minorities "would not be welcomed," as Shorley suggests, but there are far deeper social implications involved that I could discuss with him over coffee some time if he can't figure them out.

Re: "... your article has forgotten what *Les Miz* really is: ENTERTAINMENT. (That's it.)"

Shorley seems to have missed my point. The performance of *Les Miz* can indeed be entertaining. So is the performance of a cat with a ball of wool. However, he should take up his own offer to reread my critique and will then be likely to find that I've nothing negative to say about the *performance* itself — just the setting.

And even so — is that really *all* that *Les Miz* is about? Entertainment? Look again, Shorley. Shows like *Les Miz* have become big business, inherently tied to the mega-industries of advertising and marketing. So think again when you are 'suddenly' overcome by the *desire* to see a show like *Les Miz*. You just might find a similarity to the reasoning behind choosing Tide over ABC.

Re: "Renounce your whiteness to the world. Give all your worldly possessions to charity."

That's asking a bit much, don't you think? I think I'll do my bit by not giving my dollars to shows like *Les Miz*, thanks.

Re: "Don't write until you can be objective..."

If Shorley's definition of objective is 'giving the facts without bias' then I'm sorry, but I'll have to pass and leave such boring rhetoric with the bleeding-heart liberals. My definition of objectivity,

however, is the idea of observing a subject from *outside* and then relating to it. I'm sorry Shorley but given a poll I think most people would agree that my critique was in fact quite objective. What is criticism if it is *not* objective? Shorley should open up his eyes to the real world, and he might be surprised to find that even the finest journalism (you know, 'just the facts') is objective as well.

Re: "See another perspective." I just did

Darren Alexander

Prof. Barrett criticizes Doucette's "dribble"

Dear Editor:

May I comment on a reference to me by your writer, Tim Doucette (*Excalibur*, Tuesday, February 20, 1990: 6). Mr. Doucette refers to "Stanley Barrett, the Neo-Nazi and author of *Is God A Racist?*" I am profoundly disturbed that a university student (I assume he is one) would make such a libellous comment without checking his sources, or consulting some of the local experts at York University on the analysis of racism, such as Professor Frances Henry.

One might almost think that Mr. Doucette had not read my book. Indeed, in a letter of apology to me, he states exactly that: he had not read my book, and penned his dribble solely on the basis of the title. In my book — a study of the right wing in Canada — I describe the peculiar process by which some formerly left-wing individuals, with a penchant for superficial analysis and sweeping claims about the world scene, have swung over to become avid

cont'd on p.3

con't from p. 2

members of the fascist right. I trust that the irresponsible and shallow research that went into Mr. Doucette's article does not imply a similar fate.

Sincerely,
Stanley R. Barrett
Professor

**Today
at 4 pm**

Perezosa has Glendon's support

Dear Chief Rodent Officer:

We, several students at Glendon Campus, respectfully submit our ballots to your mascot election.

As you can see, they are all for the perezosa. We felt the perezosa best represented the bilingual nature of Glendon College. This is very important to us.

As well, we feel that not having a photo taken with Prince Charles is of utmost importance to the integrity of a candidate. The chipmunk, we have heard, has on several occasions been seen in the company of Charles and Di; but not being conceited, "arrogant or obnoxious," he of course

would not mention this.

The fish is a sexist slob, despite the capability of alliterating!

The pelican is disrespectful in threatening to eat the fish.

The mouse was a close second to the perezosa, but we felt the fixation with cheese was to his/her detriment.

The bear didn't have good enough looks — she looked, shall we say, "drawn." Any animal who can't show up to have a photo taken doesn't deserve to be offi-

cial mascot.

So, as you can see, the perezosa is the obvious candidate. In spite of the requirement that a CRO be impartial, we hope that you will break this rule and join our campaign.

Yours respectfully,
Some Glendonites

Thursday
Staff meeting at **4 pm**

letters

First House criticizes Excal article

Dear Editors:

With regards to the article on First House in the March 6, 1990 *Excalibur*, the members of First House would like to express their concerns about the article's accuracy.

First your statement that "the telephone has been used as a place to urinate, and urine has been left in bottles all over the floor" is a mark against the whole house in general, whereas only two individuals were involved. There were not bottles "all over the floor" but rather two or three small bottles of urine. This

entire disgusting situation was taken care of within the House, with House members cleaning up the urine themselves, and it has since stopped.

Second, the statement, "Residents of McLaughlin College are living under intimidation from residents of its second and third floors" is ridiculous. Granted, there may exist to some an irrational fear of such a large group of closely-knit males, but this fear is unwarranted. There has never been, nor will there ever be, any physical harm to any resident student.

Third, we have a problem with the resident tutor's statement that he "alleges that the First House... is responsible for much of the damage in the building, but this cannot be proved." We find it disturbing that *Excalibur* would print such a bold, slanderous statement.

We were also disturbed that *Excalibur* chose not to mention any of the good things First House has done, and is doing, for the McLaughlin community.

What about the Kids' Day Programme we initiated years ago that has now evolved into a residence-wide event? What about the foster

child drive we started for the residence (we now support two foster children)? What about our involvement in: college council — a chairperson and 10 councillors in the last three years, residence council — two chairpersons, athletic council — three co-ordinators and 10 representatives in three years, athletics in general, food drives, blood drives, college orientation — three co-ordinators, Mac's Well Coffee Shop — two managers in three years, Dyna-Macs Weightroom — two co-ordinators in two years. . . . (The entire list is too long to mention in this letter).

We believe *Excalibur* readers should get the whole truth about First House before making any opinions which might be detrimental to this great college and residence. We must assume by the article *Excalibur* does not agree with this philosophy; that only the negative things make a good story. What a shame that the media can only concentrate on the bad without the good.

Sincerely,
The Socket Hockey All-Stars
First House, Tatham Hall

opinion

to protect those few individuals who do damage the building, and offer a conciliatory internal rebuke to those individuals.

The problem is the university administration cannot prove who is causing the damage and therefore cannot lay charges, and subsequently cannot remove the few offenders.

First House persistently has prohibited the administration from prosecuting the offenders, and yet they scream when they are told they will not be allowed to return as a house next year. It seems logical that if First House refuses to work with the administration in removing the few bad individuals, and yet they cannot deal with them through their internal methods, the whole house must accept responsibility for the actions of those few individuals causing damage.

First House alleges they have never damaged the elevators, yet when *Excalibur* asked, at the meeting, "Were you guys involved in the damage?" there was dead silence. One individual quietly said, "[It] has never been proven." *Excalibur* clarified that was not the question. After the question was repeated there was dead silence again. One person then offered a quiet "no."

Excalibur asked individuals from the floor about damage to the elevators, and received replies ranging from a grin and a slight nod to shrugs of complete idiocy.

First House has two argu-

ments in its favour; the first only slightly. First House members state they do many positive things for the McLaughlin community. They are heavily involved in the college council, residence council and athletics. First House also supports two foster children. These and other activities are very beneficial, yet offer little justification for their destructive actions.

The second argument in favour of First House is that their complaints against residence tutor Sean Squires have gone unnoticed. Regardless of whatever First House has done, they do not deserve the treatment they are receiving from Squires. First House members are the first to say they are not innocent and neither is Squires, and yet members of First House are the only ones catching the blame.

For the record, *Excalibur* interviewed president of First House Mike Skinner, McLaughlin residence tutor Sean Squires, provost Beth Hopkins, and also attended a meeting with residents of McLaughlin College. In total, interviews lasted for over six hours and four and a half hours on tape.

It would seem that First House has the potential to provide much benefit to McLaughlin College, yet its internal method of dealing with problems is failing. If only responsible characters had worked to achieve a level of sanity on the floor, First House would not be in its present position.

Excal reporter responds

by David Tompkins

Concern has been expressed about the accuracy of statements in the March 6 article in *Excalibur* entitled "Mac residents living under in-

timidation."

Sean Squires, the resident tutor, has accused First House of being responsible for much of the damage in the building. This damage includes \$3,800 to the elevators, broken furniture, broken windows, a broken sink

on another floor, both First House telephones ripped off the walls and the "infamous" urine bottles.

First House alleges they fix whatever they break, or they pay for whatever they break. They maintain a code of silence

SUMMER RESIDENCE 1990

The deadline for York students' priority for Summer Residence is Monday 2 April 1990.

York students interested in applying for positions as Summer Residence Dons are requested to submit a resume and covering letter to Master Fred Morgan, Room 205B, Norman Bethune College no later than 9 April 1990.

Due to production problems, certain paragraphs in this article were juxtaposed in the March 22 edition of *Excalibur*. The following is the correct version of the article.

by Nancy Phillips

A motion to impeach CYSF vice-president (finance) Franco LoFranco was defeated at last Wednesday's council meeting and CYSF president Peter Donato says he will now press criminal assault charges against him.

Donato tabled the motion in response to an alleged assault against him by LoFranco on January 10 and subsequent threats allegedly made by LoFranco against vice-president (external) Peter Merrick.

Donato filed an official complaint with the university after the alleged assault in January. Although no one was present,

Donato claims that LoFranco assaulted him in the CYSF president's office. He claims that LoFranco caused welts on his neck and a gash on his right buttock.

LoFranco says, "I didn't touch him. I'm smarter than that. . . . Donato is making allegations that aren't true." The university will hold a tribunal

CYSF pres to lay charges against vp

on the matter on April 20.

At the council meeting, Donato said that he had an agreement with LoFranco that LoFranco would resign after he tabled the revised budget at the February 22 council meeting in exchange for Donato dropping the charges with the university. Donato said LoFranco had originally asked for the deal, but then did not resign, and so the charges were not dropped. Donato told *Excalibur*, "I made the mistake of acting in faith with Franco."

LoFranco did not speak at the council meeting.

Donato called Merrick to be a witness to the assault. Merrick said that LoFranco alleged that Donato cut his buttock as a result of tripping over boxes, but Merrick and Donato had taken all of the boxes out of Donato's office two days before the alleged assault.

Merrick also alleged he was subsequently threatened by LoFranco, who allegedly said that Merrick "wouldn't make it to the tribunal." Merrick told *Excalibur* that he is not comfortable in the CYSF office now and that he does all of his work at home, and that he has witnesses to the threat.

Merrick also told *Excalibur* "I have been threatened by another presidential candidate and this can be backed up." He would not say who the candidate was or why the threat was made.

Vice-president (programmes) George DiPede said, "This fiasco has been going on for a long time. Peter shouldn't have waited so long" to bring this to council.

Vanier representative to council, Morley Conn, said he could not support Donato's motion because that, in effect, would be voting that the president's version of the story was right, but there was no one there."

Only three council members voted in favour of the motion to impeach LoFranco. The rest of council voted against it.

Academic commissioner Tina

DeLuca said she voted against the motion because Donato waited too long — two months — to bring it forward. "If it was important," she said, "it should have been dealt with right away. The budget could have been done [without LoFranco]. There's always a way."

Donato explained that he waited because he wanted to keep the issue out of the public eye to preserve the image of the CYSF.

DeLuca also said Donato should have got his deal with LoFranco in writing, and that "it takes two to tango. Franco is the easiest person to pick on because he has a temper. But that doesn't mean he's violent."

DeLuca added that Donato had circulated a memo before the council meeting to all council members except for LoFranco, outlining his motion and why it was being put forward. Donato said he did not give LoFranco a copy "because I knew he'd see it anyway. What is formal with regards to Franco LoFranco? What's the point?"

Donato said he's lost faith in a lot of his council members because of the motion's defeat. He said DeLuca was the person he had the most faith in because he was expecting her to support his motion.

DeLuca said this was just an assumption on Donato's part. She does admit, however, that she did see a mark on Donato's neck after the alleged assault.

Donato added, "Frank has done a great job of intimidating people on council, including Peter Merrick."

LoFranco told *Excalibur*, "It's all a joke. Donato showed irresponsibility as president" by bringing forth the motion.

Donato said a Metro Police officer will lay assault charges against LoFranco after the officer receives written testimonies from people, including Merrick, who are either witnesses or have been threatened. He hopes to have charges laid by the end of the week.

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Student charges CYSF pres with sexual harassment

by David Tompkins

An article entitled, "Donato 'sexist and threatening'" in Bethune College's newspaper, *The Lexicon*, on February 20 has led to a charge of sexual harassment against Peter Donato, president of the CYSF. A female student filed a complaint at York's Sexual Harassment and Education and Complaint Centre (SHEACC) March 15.

The article quoted Donato as saying the student is a bitch, needs a slap in the face and a swift kick in the ass.

Donato does not deny saying these things to *The Lexicon*, but he told *Excalibur*, "The comments have been blown all out of proportion."

The student, who asked to

remain anonymous, said she had "arranged for mediation with [the provost] when the article first came out, and a meeting was set for March 15, but [Donato] didn't show up."

Donato said, "The meeting was cancelled."

"*The Lexicon* took what I said out of context," said Donato. "I've been quoted out of context a lot in *The Lexicon*... [*The Lexicon*] wanted to put the screws to me."

The student said that John Montesano, editor of *The Lexicon*, phoned her in advance and told her the article was about to be released. She said she was "unaware of any reasons [Donato] would say these things."

The student said Donato was given a chance to retract the statements, and chose not to.

Donato said he was never offered a chance to retract any

statement, and he said he would only consider retracting statements if the student apologized for her behaviour. He said, "She's the reason this whole thing happened."

Donato said he received a card, prior to the article in *The Lexicon*, which said in letters cut out from newspapers, "Dear Peter: Hope it hurts! The Peter Donato Right Buttock Fan Club Inc." This card referred to an injury he says he received in an alleged altercation with CYSF vice-president (finance) Franco LoFranco.

Donato said the student who has filed the charges and another student "asked me two days later if I had received the letter."

Donato said the student has also been very abrasive in her demands for financing the York Women's Centre. He said she has often been in the council's office and has been

abrasive towards all members of the CYSF council.

Donato said, "There are people at the Women's Centre who don't want to be connected to some of the things she's said or done."

The student said she is very aggressive and vocal about what the CYSF should be doing — especially with regards to the Women's Centre. But, she said, "[Donato] has something against strong women."

Further, Donato said the Women's Centre has distributed letters quoting him as saying, "If I can abuse my power, I will." The letter then implies Donato is misusing his power by not funding the Women's Centre.

The Women's Centre is an important organization, said Donato, but is not ready to handle a lot of money from the CYSF. The Women's Centre

does not have one leader, he said, as it is based on a collective model. The CYSF had been finding it difficult to deal with six or seven different people, he said, but since January, the CYSF has been meeting with two people regularly and it has been much easier. He said, "When it comes down to dealing with finances, you have to have people recognized as regular spokespersons."

Donato said *The Lexicon* published the article because it has been supporting CYSF president-elect Jean Ghomeshi and published the article to "deamean me, demean the CYSF and give Jean Ghomeshi an extra edge."

Donato said Ghomeshi promised full funding to the Women's Centre next year, and for this reason the Women's Centre campaigned strongly for Ghomeshi.

"longer hours and better service"

cont'd from cover

At 19 meals a week, Crandles said students are getting a great deal. While some students remarked that they were not eating on campus seven days a week, Crandles replied, "Does York have a part-time residential programme or not? York is indeed a seven day a week residential programme and I have no sympathy for the minority of students who only eat on campus five days a week or less. The programme is for the student who comes from Timmins or Hearst who stays in residence seven days a week and doesn't go home for the weekend."

To be more flexible, the servery will have longer hours and better service. Marriott, in Canada, is actually the recently bought out Saga Foods, and Marriott U.S.A. wants to bring its Canadian venture up to the American standards.

Although Crandles said he was "bummed out" by some of the service during his stay in residence, he told the protesters that he believes that if Marriott can bring its standards up to those of the U.S., then the plan will work.

The Founders students originally believed that the plan was a done deal. Crandles told them it wasn't and, "If any students have any good ideas, now is the time to let me know... join the process to make it better."

When asked why students were not asked about the deal initially, Crandles replied that you can't have a plebiscite on every issue.

Students also complained about the high cost of the plan, \$2,100 compared to \$1,600-1,800 for this past year. They said if the plan is added to higher tuition and residence fees, some may not be able to afford to return to York. Crandles said that broken down, each student can eat as much as they can for less than \$10 a day, which is the lowest cost in the province.

Both Crandles and the students said the meeting was constructive. However, students are still concerned with the high cost of the plan and the quality of service from Marriott. "With no competition, Marriott has no need for upgrading their service," one student complained.

This plan is only a trial, Crandles said. "During the course of the next 12 months, we'll have to examine what we should do with undergraduate residence feeding." Crandles said getting out of the "undergraduate residence feeding business" altogether is an option.

CORRECTION:

In Derek Polcyn's article "The Berlin Wall," two sentences should have read, "Historically, the German nation has held a Central European position, being neither Eastern or Western in its cultural characteristics," and "West Germany's chancellor Helmut Kohl's hesitation to guarantee the Polish west border indicates that the Germans have not yet come to terms with the loss of these territories."

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Humber cancels mandatory mealplan

by Tamara de la Vega

The meal plan at the new residence will no longer be mandatory.

Vice-president of administration John Saso announced that students will not be forced to buy a meal plan in order to live in the residence.

"We are looking at the possibility of offering it [the meal plan] to anyone," Saso said. Two weeks ago, it was an-

nounced that students at the new residence would be required to join a new meal programme that would provide a greater variety of foods and weekend services.

While students welcomed the wider service, they became enraged at the possibility of having to pay up-front for meals, tuition and residence fees.

According to Saso, the meal plan will be optional and "if you don't like the food there, you can eat at the Pipe."

The cost for the three different meal plans will remain the same and a "limited amount of 500 plans will be available on a first come first served basis," said Saso.

Students who opt for the meal plan will still be required to pay up-front, but there are some benefits. "You can get a well-balanced meal plan and there is no provincial sales tax," Saso said.

courtesy of Coven, Humber College

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Arts

cowboy junkies, out to show the world

by Howard Kaman

Cowboy Junkies
Massey Hall
March 16

The funny thing about the Cowboy Junkies is that, despite their recent prominence in the press, they've had precious little to say. Take last week for example: they were on the covers of *Now*, *Metropolis* and the *Toronto Star's* What's On section, and all they talked about was the difference between recording *The Caution Horses* and recording their last album, *The Trinity Session*.

True, this is worth talking about: the platinum sales of an album which cost \$250 to make is nothing to scoff at. But what about the music? When it comes to the Junkies, the music speaks for itself. You can describe the redemptive power of their single,

"Sun Comes Up, It's Tuesday Morning," all you want, or you can listen to the song. It's better to do the latter.

If just for the melancholy mood alone, the Cowboy Junkies in concert is difficult to describe. It has to be experienced, just as their music has to be heard. March 16 at Massey Hall, they weaved a web of relaxation so quickly, they almost seemed a part of the old Massey Hall itself. This is probably the largest venue they could play, while retaining the incredible intimacy and subtlety of one of their performances.

Margo Timmins' ethereal voice sailed through song after song, 18 in all, before the show was over. Between numbers, she sat on a stool on the stage and casually spoke to the audience with much more confidence than she displayed last summer during the band's first large Toronto concert

at the Ontario Place Forum.

A year of phenomenal success has matured the whole group, as they dedicated demonstrated on "Cause Cheap is How I Feel," "Misguided Angel" and the favourites "Sweet Jane" and "Blue Moon Revisited." Consisting of Margo's brothers Peter and Michael, family friend Alan Anton, accordionist Jaro Czerwinec, pedal steel guitarist Kim Deschamps, percussionist David Houghton and fiddler/mandolin player Jeff Bird, the band demonstrated the fine acoustics of the hall, as they went through their parts with subdued taste and finesse.

But it was Margo who stole the show. Although she still cradles the mike like a security blanket, her voice and manner exhibited the power and mastery borne of experience on the road.

The repertoire also demonstrated the changes the band has

gone through. From the meditative power of Mary Margaret O'Hara's "You Will Be Loved Again" to a new, slightly faster, "Sweet

Jane," the Junkies are clearly out to show the world that they are no melancholy flash in the pan. And so they shouldn't be.



by Scott Stoddard

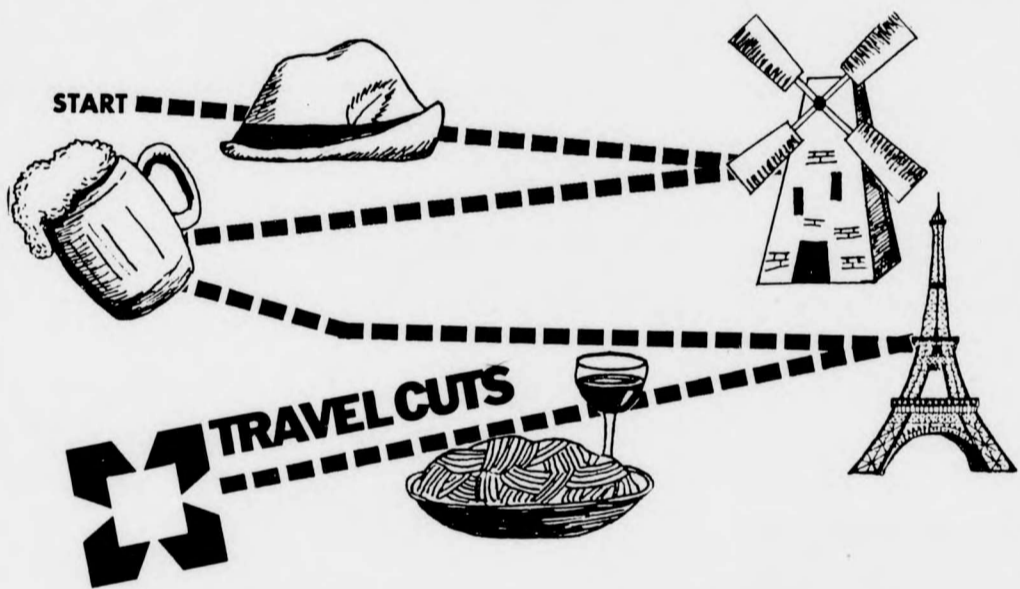
An ensemble of musicians and singers under the direction of fourth-year music major Nina Scott-Stoddard will present a free lecture-recital highlighting the lives and work of nine women composers who represent the baroque, classical and romantic eras.

Among the composers whose music will be performed and discussed are: Francesca Caccini, court composer to the Medici; Isabella Leonarda, a 17th century nun composer; Elisabeth Jaquet de la Guerre, whose patron was Louis XIV of France; Maria Theresia von Paradis, blind pianist-composer and contemporary of Mozart; Fanny Mendelssohn Hensel, sister of Felix Mendelssohn; and Clara Schumann, wife of Robert Schumann.

According to Scott-Stoddard "Women who composed before the Romantic era achieved considerable fame and respect in their own times. But the advent of the study of music history in the 1800s coincided with a time of denial of women's creative abilities, and women were left out of history books except as performers. Even today standard history texts rarely mention women as composers, and recording of scores of music by women are generally difficult to obtain. Our understanding of music history is incomplete as long as the experience of women in music remains denied or hidden."

The performance will be held at 3:00 p.m. April 5 in DACARY Hall, McLaughlin College and will be recorded for broadcast on CHRY at a later date.

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platter chatter

junkies lose their ambient sound



by Brian Tait

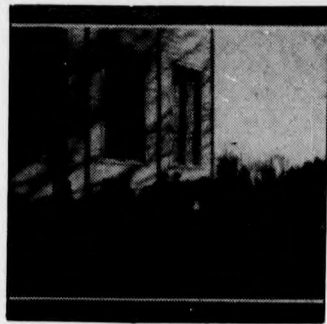
The Cowboy Junkies
The Caution Horses
BMG

Reviewing an album that has been preceded by as much media hype as *The Caution Horses* always proves difficult. There are always expectations, both on the part of reviewer and on the part of the artist(s). This album has been talked about for months and has been the subject of so many

recent interviews that it is virtually impossible to have not heard of the Cowboy Junkies, even if you have never heard their material.

For the uninitiated, the Junkies must seem like an unlikely musical phenomenon in an age when bands like Motley Crue and Aerosmith dominate the charts. The amazing success of their last l.p., *The Trinity Sessions*, proves that there is room for bands who defy the regimented pop formula.

Their moody, countryesque style defies classification, and herein lies the art of the Cowboy Junkies. The last album forged a niche for the melancholy sound of the band.



The Caution Horses is essentially a sequel to the first l.p. and does not represent any new direction. While there are a few more obvious influences and some songs do have a definite kick to them, for the most part, this new

album relies on the Junkies proven formula.

There is nothing really wrong with this approach, but it does give me the sense that I've heard it all before. This conflict makes it infinitely more difficult to pass judgement, regardless of whether it be positive or negative.

One of the pleasing things about *The Trinity Sessions* was the way in which it was recorded. In one day, all the tracks were recorded using one microphone. There are no overdubs and the entire album cost less than \$250. This technique captured the essence of the Cowboy Junkies because it was so 'real.' One could

hear the mistakes and get a feel for what the band was all about.

On *The Caution Horses*, the band has moved into the studio and this ambience is lost. This leaves the listener groping to make the connection with the band that their earlier releases allowed. If this past connection is lost, then clearly a new one must be found.



the writer's block

by Ira Nayman

The bad news is that there are no heroes in my writing. The good news is that there aren't any villains, either. Well, not as such...

As a rule, I don't like writing "formula" stories (westerns, spy stories, etc.), so I don't have much opportunity to use the white hats/black hats formula. Moreover, when I do use formulas (I must admit, I have a weakness for mystery stories), I try to play characters off people's expectations.

A large part of it is that I like to give my main characters some kind of motivation, no matter how simple or ridiculous, for their actions. Motivation tends to lead to understanding, which tends to weaken moral absolutes. I can't help it: I find purely "good" and "evil" characters impossible to take seriously, and not worth the effort of creating.

Not that my characters don't do morally unjustifiable (read: "bad") things. They certainly do. But, it is in the context of a universe full of moral ambiguity, where right and wrong aren't determined by which side you're on (or, more cynically, whether you're left standing at the end).

Furthermore, my protagonists

are no more likely to be "noble" than my antagonists; I do not see human behaviour in such black and white terms. Basically good people can do bad things, and basically evil people can do good things. Positive and negative characteristics are distributed, to a greater or lesser degree, to all.

Any other method of writing would not satisfy my sense of what human beings are really like.

This is not to say that I treat all my characters and their actions equally; in fact, all are subjected to moral judgements. (It's common knowledge that satirists are moralists who would otherwise be ignored.) It's just that when I write about an action I believe is morally unjustifiable, I try to make it an understandable part of the psychology of the actor, rather than sloughing it off as absolute evil beyond human comprehension.

I probably shouldn't knock formula writing. A lot of people watch formula films and read formula novels. Formulaic art makes a lot of money, far more than individualistic works. Why do good guys/bad guys conflicts have so much appeal?

Part of the answer lies in the Hollywood ending: the bad guys are defeated, the hero gets the girl, all the wrongs are righted.

Joseph Campbell, in *The Hero with a Thousand Faces*, wrote that the hero wages a symbolic battle against the evils that face society; by vanquishing them, social order is restored. I might add that the villain in this interpretation would represent the "other," the personification of all that we are not, all that is bad and wrong.

Thus, formula art becomes a form of emotional purgation: by identifying with the absolute good represented by the hero (and against the absolute evil of the villain), the viewer is purged of the evil within himself. While there is nothing wrong with this in small doses, when it is constantly, consistently reinforced, it gives people an excuse to avoid dealing with their own emotional problems, their own impulses to do wrong. Moreover, it tends to create a social atmosphere of moral absolutes which bears little relation to the real world.

This need for absolutes, especially in villains, carries over into real life: drug dealers and takers, Communists, the poor, the French, Jews (always Jews!) take their turn in the scapegoat role. Unfortunately, the effect on the body politic is the same as it is on individuals: society stagnates, its real problems not being addressed.

I have other reasons for not wanting to use the good guys/bad guys formula. By definition, heroes are male; in fact, the whole formula can be seen as an elaborate fable revolving around control of the material world. It is a particularly male conflict, necessarily excluding women.

I, on the other hand, like to explore female characters, and have made a conscious effort to make a substantial number of my primary antagonists women. To do this, obviously, I have had to go beyond male-oriented formulae.

There are also a lot of values inherent in the formula with which I disagree. The use of violence to solve problems is especially troubling; in the real world, cooperation is a much more useful strategy. In the real world, problems are usually too complex to be solved by violence in any case.

I believe that everybody wants to be the hero of her/his own life; my characters certainly believe themselves to be. But, but their actions, they are revealed to be no more (or less) heroic than you or I.

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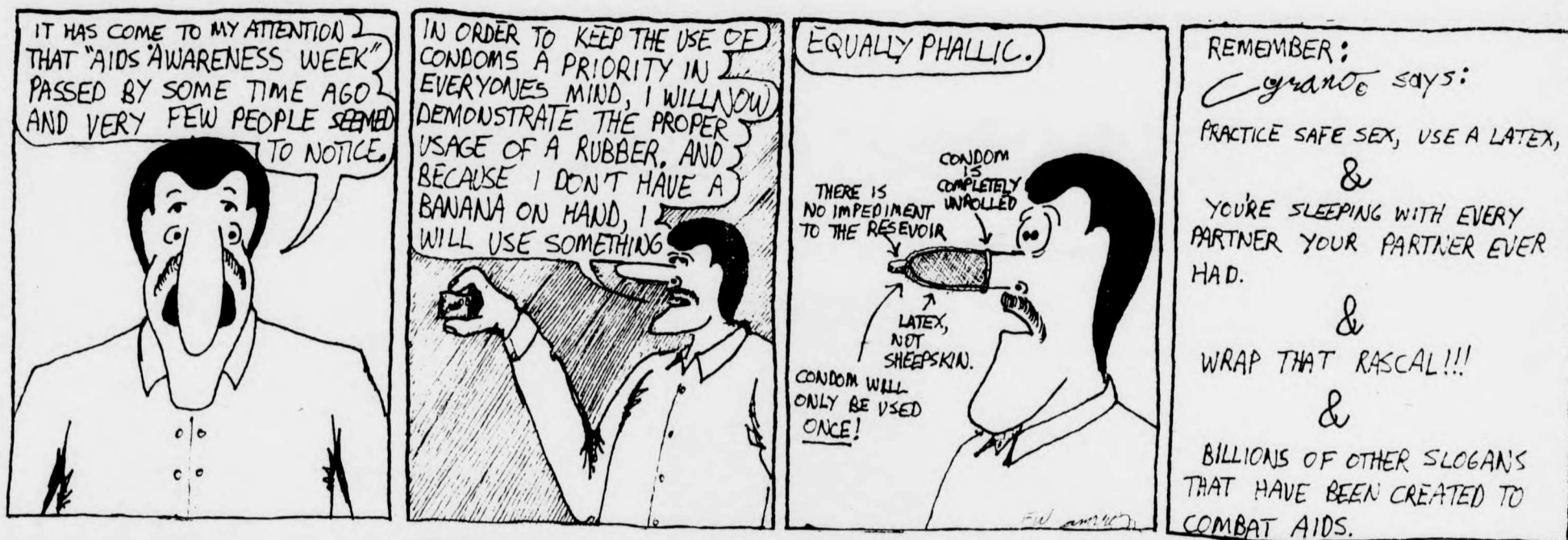
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Current practices do not meet University Standards as laid out in the policy, especially in Curtis Lecture Halls, Central Square and in some private offices. As members of the University community, we are all urged to observe the provisions of the policy now in place.