

Through the past darkly — this year

News Analysis
Lucinda Chodan

Looking back at this year's papers, I can't help but notice a number of recurring issues — tuition increases, cut-backs in the quality of education, accessibility, student aid — that have almost become clichés because of their frequency of appearance. Clichéd or not, they were the big news on campus this year, as the university felt the pinch of skyrocketing inflation and miserly funding by the provincial government.

Relations between the university and the government hit a low this year, with students beginning to realize that in negotiations with the Tories, the government has all the cards — and the card table, and the poker chips . . . Advanced Education Minister Jim Horsman

sidestepped attempts by this year's Students' Union executive to negotiate with him as equals, because with no real opposition in the Legislature and no cohesive, vocal mass student groups, there was nothing to force the government to do anything it didn't want to.

On the other hand, the year saw a continuing move away from student participation of any kind in campus affairs. Limited accessibility to university and the Syncrude mentality which permeates everything from politics to spending habits in Alberta took their toll on the student body. The liveliest debate on issues, traditionally drawn from groups like the Young Socialists, has disappeared, mainly because so have the Young Socialists. They, along with most of the radical

left, have gone, very accurately discerning that the vanguard of the revolution isn't going to be found among the students of this campus.

Students this year showed little apparent concern for issues that didn't affect them or their careers directly. That's why there was little general outcry about tuition increases or housing hikes, probably because many of the people who are most affected by issues like these have already been culled out of the university population by higher tuition, and general inflation. This year, and in the future, the campus will see more and more students whose parents can afford to pay the price, no matter what it is. It also means, though, that the general complacency of students will continue as fewer and fewer discontents — single parents, women and lower income scholars — are admitted to universities here.

Student leaders reflected the conservatism of their cronies. You can't fault the Olmstead executive for not being radical, because they certainly didn't make any promises, and that isn't what students voted for. And although their leadership often faltered this year, it would take a cattle prod and a year's supply of blasting powder to generate much activism amongst this year's crop of students.

What does the future hold for the U of A? Well, unless some miracle, like an NDP legislature,

occurs, there will be little change in attitudes towards post-secondary education in the province. The Tories, who short-sightedly prefer welders to Arts PhDs and heavy-duty mechanics

to History majors, will continue to underfund universities and fatten technical schools and colleges. As a result, the quality of a university education will decline in the province, but no

one will squawk because the middle classes will be too wrapped up in their business courses here to notice and the upper classes will be at Harvard.

Well, as Aristotle said, "All who have meditated upon the art of governing mankind have been convinced that the fate of empires depends upon the education of youth."

When will they ever learn . . . ?

Kirk Kirkwood

"Where's Kirk Kirkwood?"

It wasn't the start of a national manhunt but it was some sort of recognition.

You may have noticed that I didn't write a column last week. You didn't. Well, somebody did.

I was sitting in HUB when last Thursday's *Gateway* came out and I was looking to see how they had filled my space (doesn't Lucy have pretty teeth?). Beside me, a group of people were also flipping through *The Gateway*. One of them turned directly to page three, stared at it blankly and said, "Where's Kirk Kirkwood?"

I almost answered, "Present," before it sunk in. He wasn't looking for me; he was looking for my column. Somebody actually reads this column!

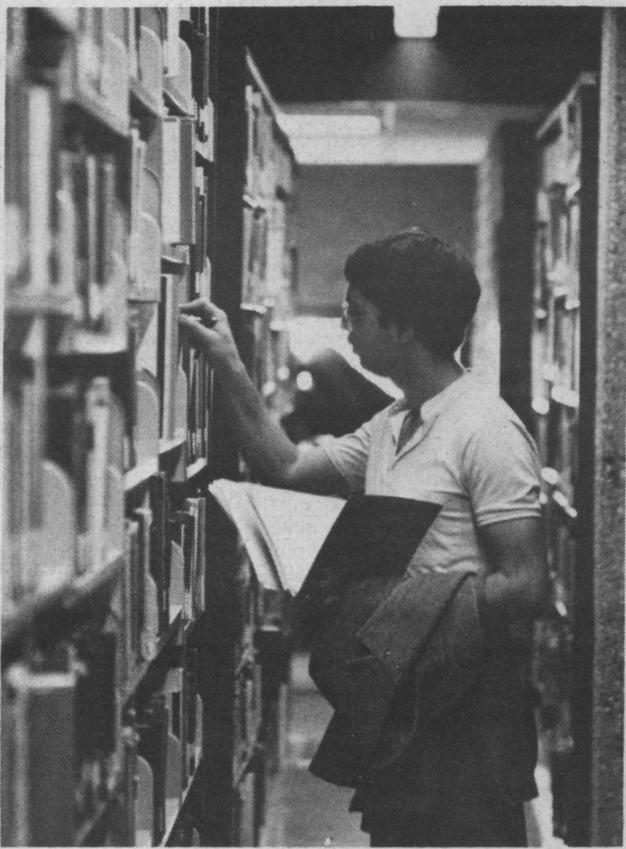
In fact there may be two people. Once, in CAB, I sat at a table and started reading a *Gateway* that had been left there. My column (Attempted Moustache) had been neatly ripped out and saved. Somebody actually liberated my prose from the dreary pages of *the Gateway* (its not so much the writing but the way the ink comes off on your hands, ick) and saved my ideas from being buried under a pile of dirty paper plates and food judged inedible by people stupid enough to eat there in the first place. How kind. I suppose it could have been saved by the same person I heard in HUB but please, let me believe I have two readers.

And here's to both of you. Whoever you are, you are persons of discerning taste and you obviously appreciate the latest of modern stylists. No? How about considerate and patient souls willing to tolerate the excesses of untrained potential writers? Would you believe two very bored people? If that is the case I hope that my column has inspired your lives: it must make you happy to know that there is someone in this world who is stupider git than you. So long as somebody reads this.

This in fact is your last chance to (revel in / relish / enjoy / read / peruse / skim / ignore) my column. Moreover, it is the end of my life. You see, I, Kirk Kirkwood, am a fictitious character. When the little wimp who created me stops writing this column I cease to exist. Unfortunately he is not so unstable that I can stay on as part of a split personality. Can fictitious people be reincarnated? Maybe I already have; I suspect the little wimp steals most of his (my?) material anyway.

But before I enter any fictitious afterlife I have a few fictitious friends I'd like to thank. These are the non-existent folks who have given me fallacious advice and no real support in the creation of this nonentity. Thank you Bart Beelo, Sam Hall and Wimpy Sisyphus. Thank you A. Vocalist (guardian angel and thanks also for the dictionary) and T.N. Roget. Thanks Bonnie D.O.A., Franklin D. Range, Gerrard D. Botch, Cuthbert Oregano and Linda Strong (tell Myer that if he brings avocado dip one more time he'll be lucky even to get warm beer). Special thanks to the fictitious folks at *the Gateway*, Hollis Brown and Nancy McGill; Keith Krause and Portia Priegert (come on now, I thought my name was silly). And most special thanks to the real Luke Warmwater, not the slime-sucking Aggie, but the one who is at the opposite extreme of my regard.

Abba dee, abba dee, that's all folks.



EUREKA! Now I can spend my weekend reading Lipsey, Sparks and Steiner.... On second thought, how much did you say a Pina Colada cost?

Law school might be tightened up

A proposal to increase the standards for admittance into the Faculty of Law will be considered by General Faculties Council (GFC).

The proposal would raise the grade point average from 7.5 to 7.75 and Law School Admission Test (LSAT) score to 625 from 600 for students with only two years of university.

The GFC executive committee did not endorse the proposal.

Finding alternate energy sources hard

by Peter Michalyszyn

By the year 2000, over half the world's energy will have come from non-oil and natural gas supplies, according to noted British conservationist professor Sir William Hawthorne.

The problem will be finding alternate energy sources before then, Hawthorne said, speaking at the annual Henry Marshall Tory lecture last Wednesday night.

One solution in the meantime is to conserve what oil and gas we already have, Hawthorne said.

"The first way to rationalize our energy problems is to charge prices at the opportunity cost of foregone future output," he said, — essentially at or above the world price.

"It is now U.K. government policy to sell North Sea oil to our home market at world prices," Hawthorne said.

"It would be ridiculous to do otherwise."

But Hawthorne acknowledged that conservation through higher prices doesn't come easily in communities with diverse economic and social needs.

"In some communities the concept of cheap energy is more important than cheap food," he said, alluding to North Americans' wasteful energy habits.

Improving insulation in buildings is another important conservation measure, Hawthorne said. While over half the energy in Britain now goes to heating buildings, this could be reduced with more insulation.

and more efficient engines and drivetrains could also reduce th 20 per cent of energy costs in Britain's transportation system, Hawthorne said. This would be particularly significant for Canada with its large transportation distances, he said.

Even conservation, however, cannot solve our declining supply of oil and gas and increasing demand from consumers and industry.

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