

# SECOND WIND

Second Wind is an opinion column for Gateway staff.

What is Engineering Week? Different people will give you different answers. It is the attitude behind these answers that disturbs me.

An incident at the Gateway office prompted me to closer examine these attitudes. Actually, certain remarks by certain people upset me considerably.

Engineering Week is a week long fun-fest for those in the Faculty of Engineering. Whether they deserve a week for leisure activities or not is not the question. In the beginning, all faculties participated in a winter carnival at this time. Through the years, everyone lost interest but the Engineers.

People have been criticizing Engineering Week recently for some of the outlandish pranks and questionable material presented. This gotten so far out of hand that Engineering Week has had many changes this year, especially in the structure and awarding of points.

Officials of the faculty and of the

Engineering Clubs agree that the changes have been for the best. Some Engineers agree that some of the pranks have been getting out of hand.

After all this, I find on campus a certain ominous stigma attached to Engineering students as a whole. I have seen instances of people shunning an individual after discovering they are (shudder) an Engineer. This stigma permeates during this event called Engineering Week.

Here we have a faculty of students who celebrate an annual winter carnival. The manner and methods in which they practice this ritual is not agreeable to everyone. This faculty has admitted it has made mistakes in the past and has attempted to rectify those mistakes. To do so they must make changes that some may consider severe, and at the same time they wish to maintain the same spirit and enthusiasm as the original event.

The results are to be judged this year.

Some of the changes include the

elimination of a beauty contest. The use of princesses by the clubs to build up points was condemned on campus by many as sexist. The faculty after many years got rid of the contest, but still let the clubs choose a representative who could become the Engineering Queen if her club garnered the most points during the week.

An Engineering Week Task Force, set up by the faculty, recommended this change and others. They still recognized kicklines as not being detrimental to the event. Pranks such as kidnapping are to be treated as federal offenses. The Engineering Week newspaper, the *Godiva*, was to have all its material reviewed by an editorial board composed of professors.

These and other changes are an attempt to changing the Engineer's image. Some will work and others may not.

Yet there are some people who refuse to see or recognize these efforts.

In a conversation about Engineering Week, one of the participants uttered to the effect, *They're just a bunch of stupid people.*

What kind of attitude is that?

I was especially stunned since I considered this individual a rather fair and opened minded person. Obviously I was wrong.

At this same conversation I felt that some of the other participants had the same sentiments. It was as if no matter how far the conversation wandered along the topic, these people had and would still maintain these preconceived notions about all Engineers.

I may exaggerate now, but at that point in the conversation I was shocked and quickly becoming outraged.

Why is there always a scapegoat? The Engineers have made the first effort to change things. Why can we not congratulate them and await the results?

Wes Oginski

## Sexist portrayals unjustified

The status of women in Canadian society has improved in the last 60 years. Women have gained the right to vote. They have been accepted into institutions of higher education. They have sought and gained equal opportunity for employment in some predominantly male occupations. Yet, there still exists in Canadian society a deep-rooted stereotyping of women: each year students and staff at the University of Alberta witness Engineering Week (perhaps more aptly renamed sexual stereotyping week). Engineering week is supposed to be a week of fun. According to many engineering students princesses and kicklines contribute to this fun. As a result they feel that sexism during engineering week should be tolerated.

The predominant role of women in Engineering Week is a sexist one. They participate mainly as princesses and kickliners. Some would argue that women participate in other Engineering Week activities as well. The tug of war usually has a few female participants. However, the number of women participating in sexist roles far exceeds the number who participate as equals. The sexist role overshadows the non-sexist role. As a result, the student body is further socialized to accept a sexist view of women.

Defence of the tradition of selecting a Queen and having kicklines is supported by a few arguments. Probably the most common is that the "girls" are not forced to participate. They participate of their own free will. It is unfortunate that some women agree to take part in such activities. Perhaps they participate because they think it will be fun. But, I have no doubt that ego satisfaction plays a part in their decision. It is unfortunate that some women place ego gratification above the broader consequences of their actions. I doubt that any women who has been a princess or kickliner can justifiably state that her role was not a sexist one.

Many would respond to the above argument by saying that there is no place in society where sexism is non-existent. As proof they may point to the Miss Canada contest, the CHQT Cuties and the Dallas Cowboy Cheerleaders. From this premise, the conclusion is drawn: the sexist portrayal of women in Engineering Week is

justifiable. But consider this. Our university is supposed to foster progressive thought, and lofty ideals and principles. The motto of the university is *QUAECUMQUE VERA* - whatsoever things are true. The foundations of this institution are built on principles which are sometimes ignored by society at large. Because sexism exists outside the confines of this institution does not at all justify its existence within this institution. Thus, sexist portrayals of women in society do not provide justification for engineering princesses and kicklines.

Last, some say that the sexist role women play in Engineering Week encourages engineering students to participate in the week's activities. I doubt it causes many female engineering students to participate. I think some other promotional gimmick can be used to get people to

participate. There certainly is no lack of imagination and creativity in the Faculty of Engineering. This was proven in last year's Engineering Week Newspaper. The engineering clubs should put their creativity to better uses and find new mascots. New mascots which are less offensive than are the present.

Engineering Week in itself is a good thing. It generates a lot of enthusiasm. It is a break from "regular" academic activities. But the sexist role women play in Engineering Week says nothing positive about the engineering students at the University of Alberta. It also says nothing positive about the perception women who participate in these activities have about themselves. Sexism mars the fun of Engineering Week.

Suzan Kalinowski  
Arts III

## Pathological porno

### A Proclamation

Respect for human dignity is so basic a value that it remains unarticulated until it is challenged. Then, basic laws are formulated upholding individual rights. But these laws, duly legislated and promulgated, are not the sole criteria: the fulcrum is the fundamental value of inalienable human dignity. An injustice occurs when one person denies another person that dignity. The reduction of a person to a feculent thing to be used or abused at pleasure lowers and reduces the stratification of the other, and it also has a reflex action on the self

To reduce another to a thing is also to reduce the self in a reifiable humanity. Women see pornography as hatred for women; but, since in current society there is an experience of male prostitution as well, the wider definition that pornography is an attack on human dignity is more germane. The human person - man and woman - is reduced to an object, a mere collection of glands. This is often referred to as a sexual aberration of a person with an inadequate personality.

The classical definition of pornography (Gr. *porne* - a prostitute & *graphein* - to write) is a description of prostitutes and their trade. In a derivative sense, it is writings, pictures, etc., to arouse sexual desire. Coprophilia (Gr. *copro* - feces & *philia* - loving) means an attraction to feces, and a preoccupation with obscenity, that is to say, a fondness for pornography. Voyeurs are those Peeping Toms who have a

tendency to look at sexual activity. Thus those who attend the annual Med-Show to watch the medical students masturbate on stage could be diagnosed as voyeurs.

A coprophiliac is judged to have an inadequate personality because of his or her preoccupation with feces and pornography. Alcoholism and drug abuse are comparable symptoms of an immature person who cannot cope in an adult world and seeks to escape. Some schools of psychology would say that the coprophiliac and the pornographer were not properly toilet trained.

We do not wish to deny the coprophiliacs their pornography. We do not even object to the coprophiliacs who produce the annual Med-Show, although we wish they would get some class from the Engineers. We do object to the affrontry of being confronted with this garbage everytime we walk into a store in and around the University. We resent the implication that university students are so inadequate that they would denigrate their fellow students and other human beings as reifiable. We will exercise the basic option of free enterprise and shop where smut is not sold. May we invite our fellow students to likewise not shop at these places. Even the birds and the animals do not foul their own nests. As for the medical students, they should drop the price of the tickets so that their sexual perversions are available to the average student; why do they have to imitate their older colleagues?

S. Wayne Mikelson  
Arts 4

## A twist of the knife

Saloo to the Geers:  
Best of luck, guys, in your bid to show the University that you're almost as good at partying as the Aggies. At least someone is making an effort, pointless though it may be. I actually enjoy watching the Geers come out of their desks and hidey-holes, quaff a few beer, pass out, puke and then return to their wimp-ass ways. What really makes me laugh is how they then brag about how they contribute to campus spirit and good times. The campus

doesn't really give a shit about a bunch of arrogant assholes who think their little bash makes up the U. of A. personality. Oh well; have your fun, boys, get the fiasco over with, then return the campus to the real partyers.

Engineers'll have a little fun this week though they act pretty tough, they're mild and meek. They'll yell, and belch, and fart, and cuss. But the Aggies just laugh; leave the partying to us.

Ken James  
Agriculture IV

### Student Counselling Services

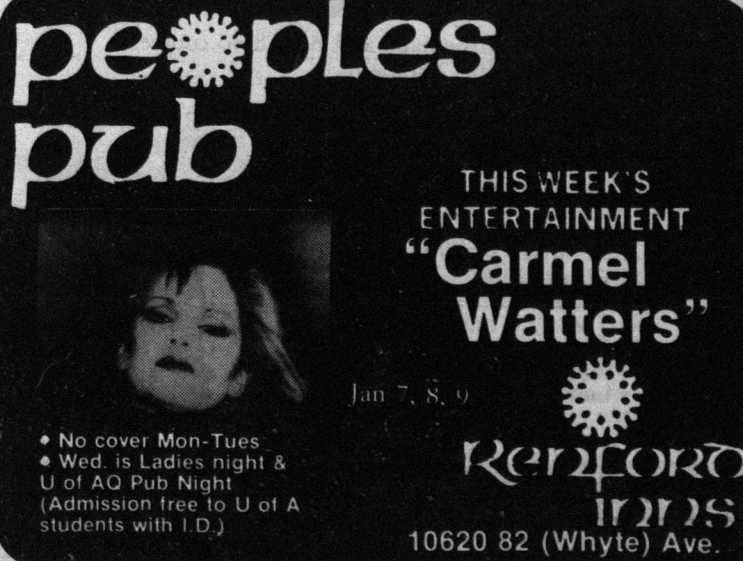
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Jan 7, 8, 9

**RENFORD**  
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