

Student council elects puppet editor

GATEWAY GOES ON STRIKE

Comment

In the course of this academic year, I have limited my activities with the Gateway almost solely to the writing and lay-out of sports pages. Some may even recognize me as your friendly long-winded hockey reporter. Partly through lack of adequate knowledge, partly through lack of personal interest, and partly on account of my personal views which tend to differ from many of other Gateway staffers, I have not concerned myself with any of the numerous issues with various political overtones which the paper has become embroiled in. However, the time has come when even I must rouse myself from my apathetic stupor and take a stand.

The Gateway, be it a good newspaper or a bad one, is simply the cumulative product of the efforts of a small number of people who are interested enough to put innumerable hours of their own free time into it. Anyone can work for the Gateway; all they have to do is to walk in and get involved in talking, researching, writing, helping with lay-out, or whatever. We even pay typists! All the policy decisions which the Gateway makes are arrived at through a democratic vote by all such staffers after due debate and consideration. They may be right or they may be wrong, but they are democratic and they come from within our own informal organization.

One of the most important of these decisions is the selection of a new editor for the coming year. Tradition has always had it that the name of our newly elected chief is passed on to Students' Council for perfunctory ratification in accordance with the provisions of the Students' Union by-laws.

But last night, for the first time in anyone's knowledge Student Council refused to recognize the Gateway staffer's own choice for editor-in-chief and instead instituted a person of their own choosing. The Gateway's elected pick, Ron Yakimchuk, has worked for the campus newspaper since 1966 and served with distinction this year as Lay-Out Editor. A very experienced young man, well liked by his fellow staffers, Ron won our nomination for the editorship with a 75% majority of the votes, over three other candidates. The Student's Union appointee, Mrs. Michail Jackson (I'm told her friends call her Terri) failed to work a single hour or write a single article for the Gateway in this or any other year, nor has she spent a sociable minute inside our doors meeting people and making friends. But she did stomp in one day to declare her candidacy for the editorship. In the questioning of candidates that took place during a special Gateway meeting attended by nearly all staffers, she so alienated everyone with her lack of knowledge and personal arrogance that not one person felt they could work with or for her in the coming year. Yet as of April 1 of this year we have been told that she is to be our editor-in-chief.

Thus on the basis of the argument in principle that the Gateway is a democratically run product of those individuals who are concerned enough to put their time and effort into producing an issue every Tuesday and Thursday and have the right to elect their own leader, and on the basis of the practical argument that Ron Yakimchuk is infinitely more qualified than an absolute stranger and political tool, which Students' Council has imposed on us, I must join with my fellow Gateway staffers in striking on Ron Yakimchuk's behalf.

It's an unfortunate situation, because the Golden Bears hockey team deserves the publicity they normally get in our pages. They have a hell of a good team and stand a good chance of representing Western Canada in the Canadian intercollegiate championships. They won a pair of important games over the weekend and I thought I had a reasonably good story written about it. Also, the Golden Bear volleyball team is hosting the WCIAA Championships this weekend and they deserve some promotion. However, I have no doubt that Coach Drake and his pucksters and Coach Saivula and his volleyballers will understand our situation without difficulty. Surely they wouldn't dig Students' Council telling them who will captain their teams next year. Especially if that person had not only never played a game, but also hadn't even tried out for the team.

I hope the reader can also understand equally well. The responsibility for the decision to arbitrarily replace our own democratically elected choice with one of their own favorites lies with Students' Union President Don McKenzie and his Executive henchmen Dave Biltek, Doug Black, Vera Radio, ad nauseum. This is the same Executive whose personal powertripping lacks parallels in recent S.U. history and whose myopic financial policy has threatened the very existence of the Gateway, Student Radio—CKSR, the Students' Union Art Gallery and Music Listening Room, and other vital student facilities. The reader may have noticed that the same Messers Biltek and Black are currently running for the two most prominent positions on the next year's Students' Union Executive. A vote cast for them is a vote cast in ignorance (they do have artsy posters).

Stu Layfield

More staff comment on p. 4, 5 & 8

The Gateway staff is on strike.

They will remain on strike until the council reverses last night's decision to select Ms. Terri Jackson as next year's Gateway editor.

Ms. Jackson was the recommendation of the Personnel Board, even though the Gateway staff last week voted 43 votes to nothing against her.

At a staff meeting two weeks ago, the four candidates for editor were questioned by Personnel Board and the Gateway staff. Following that the staff democratically voted in favour of Ron Yakimchuk and submitted his name to Personnel Board.

At Monday night's council meeting Personnel Board brought forth the name of Ms. Terri Jackson for Gateway editor. Council went along with the Personnel Board recommendations. This despite the fact that for at least the last fifteen years the Gateway editor has been the Gateway recommendation to Personnel Board. Perhaps there were warnings in the air, however.

At the council meeting one week ago Personnel Board chairman and SU Secretary Vera Radio disclosed that the Board had not yet made a decision on the Gateway editor and would not until it had taken into the consideration the wishes of the Gateway staff. Temporary chairman Charles Starko said, "Because Personnel Board has certain limitations and we're not all avid journalists we will listen to the responses of applicants and will also take into consideration the wishes of the Gateway staff, as they will be the people working with the new editor."

"When Law rep Gerry Riskin asked exactly how important the wishes of the Gateway staff were to Personnel Board recommendations, Radio replied, "You'll find out at next Monday's meeting."

"You are unable to answer the question then," persisted Riskin.

"Yes, I am," said Starko.

The Gateway staff is striking because it feels that council has apparently thought so little of the staff's knowledge of the newspaper that it arbitrarily decided last night to choose Ms. Jackson. At the same time the staff feels that it can not work with the new editor. Ms. Jackson made it abundantly clear at the screening session that the present staff would not be welcome if she was the editor.

Following the council meeting SU Treasurer Frans Slatter came down to the office and told the staff, "Apparently the plan went according to schedule. You should have voted for her, they might have chosen someone else. It might sound stupid, but that's the way it happens with people on this council."

Editorial

Individual reactions on the part of as many staffers as were available for comment after Council saw fit to ignore our overwhelming endorsement of Ron Yakimchuk to appoint Terri Jackson as Gateway Editor for next year appear elsewhere in this issue: however, the general position of the Gateway Staff on the subject is as follows:

1. *The democratic principle of the Gateway has been that any student on campus is welcome to come in and work with us. Putting out a newspaper is hard work, requires long hours, and in return for their efforts staffers are given every opportunity to influence and direct Gateway editorial policy. We feel that the appointment of a complete stranger as Editor violates this principle: Terri Jackson never set foot in the Gateway office until last month, and she has been on the campus three years.*

2. *Not within recent memory has the Council over-ruled a staff choice as Editor. This only makes sense, since the staff continuity necessary to ensure that enough competent staffers return from year to year will only occur if the returning staffers know and respect the new Editor.*

3. *Ron Yakimchuk, who was the candidate receiving two-thirds of the staff vote this year, is politically "middle-of-the-road" and is easily the best-qualified candidate for the job. Unlike Ms. Jackson, whose qualifications are entirely self-proclaimed and unsupported by any examples of her work, Ron has been active in Gateway in a number of positions since 1966. He knows this campus well, and has served on a number of student committees, including GFC, the SU Opportunities for Youth project (the study of Student government for which certain of the present candidates are taking credit, and is conversant with all aspects of Gateway production, from news-writing to layout.*

4. *Dave Biltek, one of the candidates who is running for President this year, had the following comment to make about Gateway plans to resist the imposition of a foreigner as Editor: "If you guys want to play dirty, you're playing against an expert." Right on' Dave ... But isn't it a bit obvious? You expect to win this election. The Gateway had been a thorn in the side of an inefficient, wishy-washy Student's Council this year, and you want to make sure that the Gateway is in no position to criticize your actions next year. The best way to do this is to appoint someone who will have a hard time getting a paper together, due to her inexperience and the fact that most of the staff will refuse to work for her. In playing a petty power game, "getting even" with the Gateway, the outgoing council is looking out for one of its own, since Biltek has been the power behind the McKenzie throne all year.*

5. *But the real losers are going to be the students. Ms. Jackson and her "group of friends" will have fun trying to put out a two page information sheet once a week; council will be able to do what they please with our money and our building, since Terri is unlikely to bite the hand that literally fed her her job, and the students will have to way of knowing what is going on. Today room 626—tomorrow the whole damn building.*

6. *We would like to apologize to the student body for the fact that we are not printing news as such in this issue of the Gateway. We should also stress that we have no particular issue with Ms. Jackson personally, though it is hard to remain neutral about one who is so obviously opportunist. However, in the light of her choice as Gateway editor, we suggest that Council has no alternative but to call for a reconvening of the meeting at which her selection was made, and that an open meeting be held wherein all views may be made public, those of the present Gateway staff and the Personnel Board as well. We suggest that at the Wednesday election Forum the Question of the Gateway Editor be thoroughly discussed.*

ELECTION RALLY WEDNESDAY

at 12:00 noon

SUB THEATRE

COME AND DISCUSS THE
GATEWAY