

Forum

University is for unity

"University," said a friend of mine, "is going out for coffee, and meeting new people to go out for coffee with. That's all university is for."

Obviously he exaggerated, but I think he's got a point. What is a university for? I'd say it is a meeting place, and that a lot of people don't take advantage of this aspect.

Many students here suffer from psychological tunnel vision; they cannot see beyond the next assignment. Students spend a lot of time worrying about that next essay, and comparing with each other how much they have to get done ("Oh, I've got it worse than you; I've got this and this and that to do"). It's the attitude that life is, in the words of C.S. Lewis, nothing but "term, holiday, term, holiday, and work, work, work, until I die."

University should mean more than studying.

University provides students with a unique viewpoint. The vast majority of us are unmarried, do not hold full-time jobs, and do not have families of our own to take care of. We are of the age to really understand what is happening in the world around us, and we are learning things which (hopefully) will be of use to us when we do enter this "Real World". We are able to judge the world without being embroiled in it. This is a position of which more students should take advantage.

The university is a forum in which people with various interests can meet and exchange ideas. There are people from all areas of the city, of the province, even of the world. Also, there are people of all faculties and interests in life. Later on, when you have a job, your chances of meeting people in other fields are limited; people tend to stick around fellow workers.

One reason that this university is so divided on issues that students are somewhat distanced from each other. People tend to think of themselves as members of a particular faculty, or program within a faculty, such as Honours Whatever; rather than as a member of the university as a whole. And we all refer, if only in jest, to the stereotypes marking each faculty. The anti-cutback protest should bring university students closer together, because there is one thing which Engineering, Dentistry, and English students all have in common: we all have to pay tuition. And I would venture to say that none of us want to pay higher fees, or see the quality of our education go down in any way. And no protest will work without unified action.

But this kind of unity can only be achieved if students bother to put down their books and take a look around. Because knowing what's going on (and how it affects you) is the first step towards caring about it, and that *should* lead to actually doing something about it.

Whether it involves protest or not, unity among students requires a common effort to get to know one another, whether it be by participating in extra-curricular activities, or simply starting a conversation with a stranger. This unity will result in a university, and later, a society, in which the members understand each other.

So go out for coffee, meet someone new, talk about common concerns, and raise a little hell.

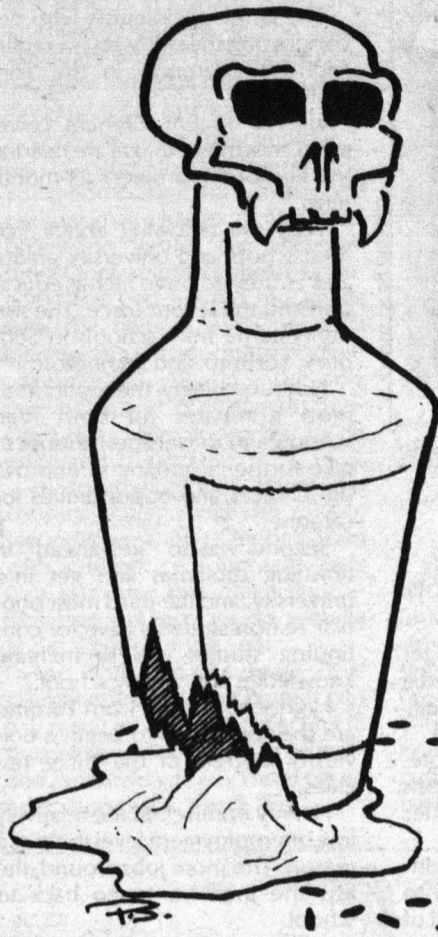
Elaine Ostry

The Gateway

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ENJOY THE
GOOD LIFE!

Letters...

More middle class blandness...

To the Editor:

It is with elation that I note the University has finally named the LRT station soon to be seen on our glorious campus. I can well imagine the painstaking combing of lists of proposed names before settling on what is obviously the best choice; University Station. What poetry! What imagination! The Facilities Development Committee and the Board of Governors Building Committee are to be commended on their avoidance of naming this facility after some illustrious alumni (say Joe Clark) or some long-forgotten president of our fine institution. Heaven forbid (gasp!) that they should name it after a past Students' Union president (Floyd Hodgins Station — could you imagine?) or a prominent, recently deceased politician (although Grant Notley Station does have a ring to it).

No, University Station it is. The university has again struck a blow for middle class blandness.

K. Cassady

Department of Athletics lax

To the Editor:

In the Gateway on January 29th I read that of the 10,000 people attending Face-Off '87, two-thirds were from NAIT and one third were from the U of A. I wonder if this is because we at the U of A are apathetic or if it is in part a result of the inefficiencies of the Dept. of Athletics?

I was involved in obtaining a block of tickets for Forestry for Face-Off 87. In the past two years Forestry has obtained tickets through BASS in Section 1 (blues) on the railing. This year, after learning on short notice (problem 1), when the game was and that tickets could be purchased either through BASS or the Dept. of Athletics, Forestry once again decided to get a block of tickets in that section. We approached both BASS and the Dept. of Athletics about getting tickets. As it cost a dollar less a ticket to get tickets through the Dept. of Athletics and they assured us that they would be able to obtain the seats that we wanted we decided this year to purchase through them. It took them a few days to get their tickets from BASS and what we received were tickets in Section 1 starting in row 24. They told us that unfortunately, some of the tickets had already been sold thus instead of a solid block we would be spread out over a large area (problem 2).

The day before the game I became aware of the fact that the tickets we had purchased were not on the rail (railing seats are row 20), so I went to the Dept. of Athletics to find out what had happened. The person that I talked to (who told me he was in charge) said, after I had explained the situation, he was not the one that had promised Forestry the

block of tickets on the rail. At this time he was informed by someone else in the office that Northlands Colliseum (BASS) had not given any rail seats in the U of A sections. It came as a surprise to him. Whose game is this? The U of A and NAIT's or Northlands?!!

I would suggest, as it is the job of the Dept. of Athletics not only to administer inter-University competitions but also to promote them, that there is much work to be done in the latter area! Perhaps better working relations with Northlands are needed to enable students at the U of A to obtain blocks of seats at the Face-Off games in the future. Perhaps the Dept. of Athletics needs to work more closely with student groups like the Foresters, Aggies, Engineers, etc. to promote athletic events. But it will be difficult to achieve student commitment if they can't get good blocks of seats so that students can share the experience of the NAIT-U of A rivalry with their friends, for the rivalry is a good part of why students go to the event. As for advertisement why not approach clubs via personal contact at the end of November (before exams) and see if they are interested in a block of tickets to sell, find out where they want them and how many they want. Perhaps in this way next year it will be the U of A that has the two to one majority. (Question: how many students bought their tickets from BASS?).

Robert Glassford

Farewell to a fine professor

To the Editor:

It is with sadness we heard the news of the death of Dr. Douglas Sheppard on February 3rd.

Dr. Sheppard, a Professor in the Physics Department, will be remembered for his enthusiastic lectures, his willingness to answer questions, and his concern for his students. Professors of this caliber are rare indeed, and it is a shame that all professors do not show the same interest in their students. We feel fortunate to have had him as a teacher.

We wish to express our condolences to his family.

J. Penhale
P. Singbeil

Sociology prof not racist!

To the Editor:

RE: "Racist Prof" letter Thursday, January 22, 1987.

As students of the 300 level sociology class being referred to, we object to the condemnation of the professor and his so called racist comments. Unfortunately, this student failed to understand the purpose of a 10 per cent discretionary marking system, which would never work against him/her. Not only was this explained in class, but the professor in question welcomes any and all class comments. This student also misinterpreted the professor's comments about Christianity and racial groups as racist, when in fact, his comments were merely stating documented facts not personal opinion.

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Letters to the Editor should not be more than 250 words in length. They must include your signature, faculty, year of program, I.D. number, and phone number. We reserve the right to edit for libel and length. Letters do not necessarily reflect the view of The Gateway.