

The Gateway

member of the canadian university press

editor-in-chief - - - - lorraine minich

managing editor—jim rennie

news editor—joe will

production manager doug bell

casserole editor ronald yakimchuk

assistant news editor elaine verbicky

photo editor ken voutler

sports editor steve rybak

make-up editor frank horvath

STAFF THIS ISSUE—Today's faithful include Uncle Willie Miller, Rich "The Rocket" Vivone, Alex Ingram, Dennis Fitzgerald, Mike Boyle, Marjibell, Shirley Kirby, Bill Konkewitt, Bob Anderson, Marcia McCallum, Gerry Buccini, Jim Muller, Larry Mitchell, Bernie, and yours truly, faithful-to-the-end (and it's a long way off) Harvey Thomgirt.

The Gateway is published twice a week by the students' union of The University of Alberta. The Editor-in-Chief is responsible for all material published herein. Final copy deadline for Tuesday edition—7 p.m. Sunday, advertising—noon Thursday prior, Short Shorts—5 p.m. Friday; for Friday edition—7 p.m. Tuesday, advertising—noon Monday prior, Short Shorts—5 p.m. Tuesday; Casserole advertising—noon Thursday previous week. Advertising manager: Gordon Frazer, 432-4329. Office phones—432-4321, 432-4322. Librarian: Suzanne Brown. Circulation—10,000.

Authorized as second-class mail by the Post Office Department, Ottawa, and for payment of postage in cash. Postage paid at Edmonton. Telex 037-2412.

Printed by The University of Alberta Printing Services.

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FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 9, 1968

council creates a thing

By BILL MILLER

Students' council, in its unquestionable wisdom, Monday gave the academic relations committee \$1,500 to produce a "thing" for students taking arts and science courses next year.

What is a "thing", you say? Well, it's really an anti-calendar—but don't tell the wishy-washy academic relations committee—they'll get upset.

You see, an anti-calendar tells students what courses at the university are really like. It tells you about a course's (and a prof's) good points and bad points.

To call the academic relations committee's "thing" an anti-calendar will offend them. You see, it might offend the professors that some students have actually got the nerve to criticize them and their courses. And a professor who got knocked, instead of improving his course's content and its manner of presentation, would rather take the easy way out and initiate a defamation suit and things like that.

Besides, the academic relations

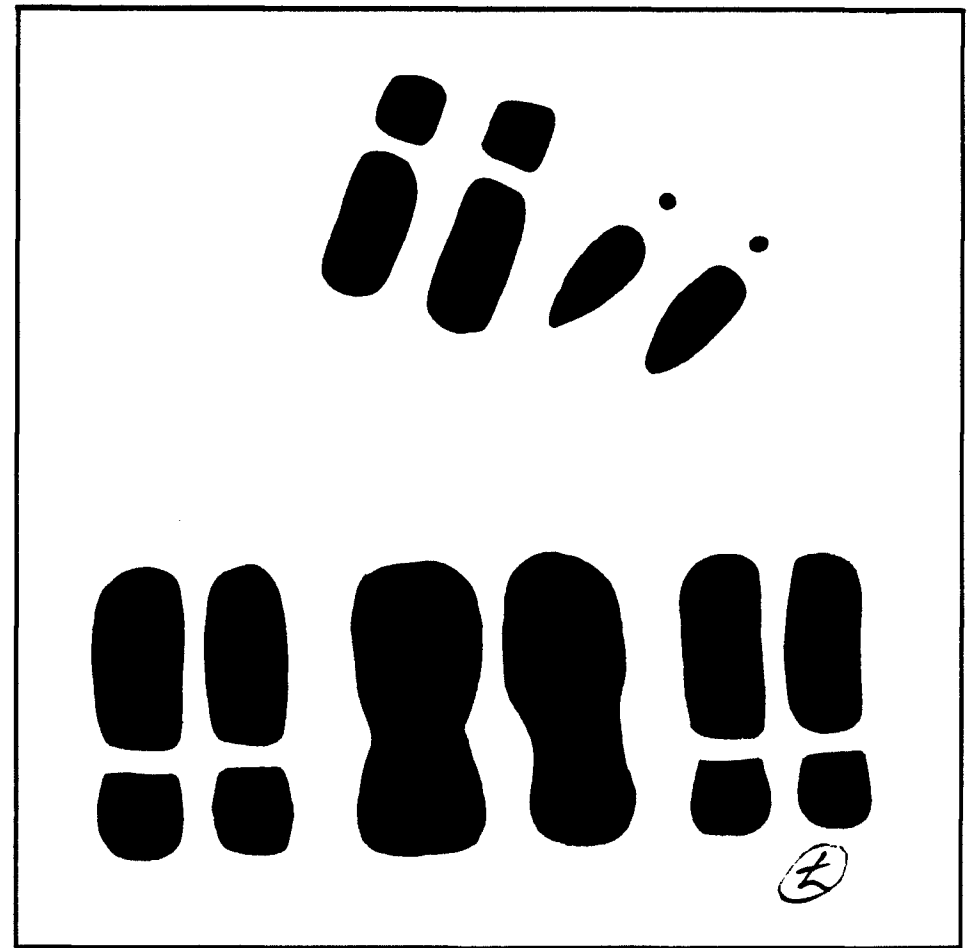
committee, hung up on euphemisms, says the "thing" is going to be a responsible publication and to call it an anti-calendar will give it the wrong image—something our image-conscious committee spends a lot of time worrying about (they canned the project in 1965).

The "thing" will be called, or is tentatively called a course evaluation guide. It doesn't change the concept of the publication—just the ever-precious image.

Of course, the ever-vigilant academic relations committee "anticipates" trouble with lecturers over the "thing"—anti-calendar, course evaluation guide, or whatever word or phrase they can find which will offend as few people as possible—and to protect itself, the committee has taken a number of precautionary steps.

It has asked the psychology and computing science departments to help produce a comprehensive questionnaire—a situation which, although it provides a great deal of expertise, seems to be somewhat of a conflict of interest.

Next, the computer program used



now, miss jones, for one thousand dollars, which of these gentlemen is the real campus patrolman?

to run the answered questionnaires through the computer will apparently weed out and reject the "bad" (crank) answers. How does the rather highly-paid editor of the "thing" decide whether a particular phrase is a "bad" answer or a particularly well-worded comment to a particularly crummy lecturer?

Unless the editor took the course himself, he is in no position to decide. With all "bad" comments taken out, the only way to tell the students a particular lecturer is bad is to damn him with faint praise.

Another precaution announced was to have a lawyer look for "libel" in the "thing" after it has been prepared. In Alberta, libel is included with slander in the Defamation Act, so that even while a particular comment is true, it may

be defamatory, and the publisher, in this case the students' union, would be open to a defamation suit.

A fourth precaution announced was to purchase libel insurance. Now that it has been announced at a public meeting, any insurer would be out of his tree to insure the "thing" against defamation suits—except at a high price.

You see, to announce you are going to buy libel insurance is like stuffing 100,000 one-dollar bills in your pockets, hiring a sound truck to announce you are doing so, walking beside the truck down 97 Street at midnight, and expecting not to be robbed.

The "thing" could have been a good project, but judging from the way it has been handled so far, don't count on it.

it happens to the best of us

By RICH VIVONE

One morning you will wake up and look around and see a great many insignificant things. Then you will say to yourself "What in the hell am I doing here?" and "What's the good of it all?"

Soon you will be on the way to school. You get on a bus and see a bunch of elderly people hobbling around on either one or two legs or a crutch and ask, "Is that what I'm going to be like in 40 years?" And you'll wonder if it's worth it.

You will look around and see all the stores brightly lit up with their sparkling advertisements which tell you how great everything is and the movie theatres and her escapes to fantasy and the beer parlours with their escape to wonderland. You will look in the shop windows and see the latest fashions which are either the Bonnie Parker look or the mini-skirt, depending on what section of the country you inhabit.

You'll probably drop into SUB cafeteria for a quick refresher before class and suddenly hear two persons arguing about student politics. They'll be ranting about likely candidates for next year's

students' union president, etc., and you will hear the constant bantering about the dull, boring kick lines. Then you'll repeat to yourself, "What's so important about that? Who cares about student politics? They can't do anything about anything anyway."

Then you'll suddenly remember that student politicians are the only people in the world who give a damn about campus politics. They don't care about the average student after the election. They just strut around in their new suits and blazers and try to look important but, really, no one even knows who they are—you think.

Then you'll see another couple vigorously debating the morals of mercy killing or heart transplants or the reluctance of an ass to be humanized. Then you will say to yourself, "so what, they aren't going to change a rotten thing. The world is going to be exactly the same after they finish the little discussion as when they began. It's stupid."

Later, you will stomp off to class even though you feel like doing about anything else but going to class. The prof may talk about the Persian Wars,

the Iran oil fields, Newton's Laws, Thomas Wolfe, the witchcraft of the Peruvians or the Dirty Thirties. Through it all, you will look out the window (if you are not in Tory because many rooms there do not have windows to look out of) and see the invigorating sun and then maybe transpose yourself outside where you can feel the balmy near-Spring weather. You may also look at the prof droning on and on in his usual manner and you ask yourself, "When is he going to talk about something very important, or even a little bit important?" You may realize that he doesn't talk about important things, he thinks them and saves them for himself to cherish.

At the end of the class, he may return the mid-term efforts and you'll get anywhere from a 'one' to a 'nine' and you'll say, "So what, does it mean anything?"

Then you'll pack the paper in your back pocket with your wallet and trot back to SUB and look for a partner to play snooker or ping-pong or shuffleboard.

Enroute, you will find a copy of The Gateway and you'll open it without look-

ing at the front page, thumb through the rest and toss it away saying, "There's nothing in it as usual" and the paper will lose itself in a garbage can or a can.

Then you'll stumble around SUB for a time but won't find a partner and you'll say, "Might as well go home because there's nothing going on here."

Well, if that's what's bothering you, forget it. It happens to all of us—to some of the lucky ones, it occurs innumerable times per year.

There is a solution, rather, a number of solutions. To some (perhaps the great majority) it means a weekend at the pub where you can get thoroughly drenched and drain the rust out of your system. Usually, you will feel better Monday morning and be able to get on with life.

To others, it will mean taking your girl out and treating her like the woman she is and, seeing her delighted will make you feel better.

To others, it means nothing because you are like that all the time. Others will sign withdrawal slips and get out. Some may take a trip over the bridge. The rest of us will endure because this is a part of university life.