

## Educate educators

The recent debate on the Letters page of *The Gateway* about the literacy — or lack of it — of Education students is the latest manifestation of what has long been rumored. Many students in other faculties are fond of alleging that Education students have problems performing simple manual dexterity tests, and that the only people less proficient than Education students at stringing words together comprehensibly are their third-grade pupils. The fact that the latest charges come from within the faculty, though, is evidence that Education's reputation is based on some truth.

The issue is not whether Education students should criticize their colleagues, or whether the criticism is giving the faculty a bad name with the rest of the university community. There are obviously serious problems within the faculty, and having spent three years in Education, I can attest that they aren't confined to the few examples cited by *Gateway* letter writers.

Literacy, writing competence, the ability to think — the university spent a great deal of money recently to discover that almost half its first-year students don't have it. The figures don't pertain only to the Faculty of Education, but their effects there are obvious. If graduates from the faculty are allowed to begin teaching without attaining some kind of academic competence, young people entering first-year programs will certainly be worse in the future.

Maybe "literacy" problems are not unique to the Faculty of Education, but they are most serious there. The faculty should not be the lowest echelon in the university hierarchy. Students should not be the leavings of other faculties with higher entrance requirements or more stringent performance requirements. Education students should not be the laughing stock of the university — but they are right now.

Perhaps a combination of more selective entrance requirements, stricter academic controls and more screening in the student teaching program would help. Even more important, the Faculty of Education itself should reassess its priorities and shift from emphasizing personality development to providing a modicum of aural and verbal competence.

Students shouldn't underestimate the ramifications of the problem, though. No graduate of the university will have more influence on the future of this province than any Education student. That alone is reason for concern.

Lucinda Chodan

## Rock jock walks on

The departure April 1 of Gary McGowan from the directorship of student radio CJSR marks the end of a very successful term of office.

During the three years that McGowan held the position, the radio station grew both in physical size as well as in stature in the university community. McGowan made CJSR a viable and usually excellent radio station, taking it from virtually nothing and spending long hours improving its performance.

McGowan possesses a singularly amazing knowledge of Canadian radio and music, and his talents will likely take him far in the biz. That is, if his work at CJSR is any indication.

Gordon Turtle

# the Gateway

If it happens on campus . . . take your skis.

VOL. LXX NO. 39  
THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 21, 1980.  
TWELVE PAGES

THE GATEWAY is the newspaper of the students of the University of Alberta. With a circulation of 18,500, the Gateway is published by its proprietor, the Students' Union, Tuesdays and Thursdays during the winter session. Contents are the responsibility of the editor; editorials are written by the editorial board or signed. All other opinions are signed by the party expressing them. Copy deadlines are 12 noon Mondays and Wednesdays. The Gateway, a member of Canadian University Press and the Youthstream Network, is located at room 282 SUB. Edmonton, Alberta, T6G 2J7.

Newsroom 432-5168  
Advertising 432-3423

STAFF THIS ISSUE: Bruce Pollock, Peter Michalshyn, David Marshall, Wayne Renke, Marni Stanley, Kitchener Pijlitt, Garnet Du Gray, Dora Johnson, Maxine Murphy, Sue Eberlein, Howie Spragins, Sue Tech, Barb Horricks, Russ Sampson, Hunter Karlos, Marianne DeWindt and Linda Fisher — sorry we couldn't get your names on your article. Oink.

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## Protection for all

No human being may be denied the equal protection of the law on irrelevant or trivial grounds, such as sex or race. Age may only be used as an indicator of competence; to vote or drive a car, etc. Humans may not be deprived of life, liberty, or property except by the due process of law.

Observed fact: organisms belonging to the species *Homo sapiens* are human beings. These organisms reproduce sexually; a sperm cell from the male, uniting with an egg cell from the female, forms a single-cell zygote. This new organism, nurtured within the womb for a time, continues to grow and develop as did his or her parents.

To refer to abortion as an available option for women faced with economic or social problems presupposes the denial of the fact not the opinion, theological speculation, or revealed dogma of the humanity of the unborn child. P. Christopherson in the Feb. 14 *Gateway* has entirely ignored this question; the Jan. 22 *Quixote* column at least addressed it, but in a very pathetic manner.

A fetus cannot sustain life, so it is not human. What about diabetics, renal dialysis patients, people with heart pacemakers. An apple core is not an apple tree. Neither is a fetus a PhD, a touch typist, or a lumberjack: apple trees give apples and shade to earn their name. The appellation "human being" is not a functional definition, nor is it one that can be bestowed because of appearance.

To make the abortion debate a genuine debate, the pro-abortion forces will have to try a lot harder.

What is still debatable is the nature and extent of the sacrifices the State may impose on a woman in order to save the life of the innocent human being

who lives within her. This is a matter of opinion, and my opinion is that neither death, grave risk of death, or serious disability may be so imposed, and that the philosophical question of "killing be action" versus "killing by inaction" is not a fit subject for legislation. Thus, I admit of some grounds for legal abortions, but require legal

control of abortion, and severe penalties, comparable with those for other forms of homicide, for all participants in illegal abortions. More conservative and more liberal positions could be argued for from the same premises, but to argue for the "right to choose" becomes very uncomfortable without a very good refutation of fetal humanity, and I have not seen one forthcoming.

John Savard  
Grad Studies

## Moslems off the wall

I feel there must be a realistic response to the utter garbage presented in *The Gateway* by the "Iranian Muslim Student Association" of the University of Waterloo.

There is no excuse for the taking of hostages, no matter what the situation. To attempt to justify this action perpetrated by the students at the U.S. Embassy is equivalent to Adolph Hitler's excuse for "cleansing" Europe of Jews.

In all humanity, a religion cannot be found where trade in human life is condoned, so to say that these hostage-takers are even Moslems is a falsehood. The Iranian Government, in its policy of supporting these dangerous radicals, can only project an image abroad of a nation of fanatics, barbarians, and people just out of the trees who know nothing of international law.

The rescue of the American diplomats from the clutches of the Iranian barbarians will be seen as a heroic gesture from a nation that is not afraid to

uphold international law. Diplomatic immunity, in any case, precludes prosecution from taking place by the host nation for whatever the crime. A fair trial for the hostages on the charges that the students deem just would be impossible, to say the least. One should note that the presiding judge would have been the same judge that has sentenced over three hundred people to death in the last year. So much for justice in the chaotic country of Iran.

In closing I must say I take offense when some scum of the earth denotes my country as having lost dignity and integrity by performing an act of humanity.

Bruce Christensen Ed III  
Brent Aliksiuk Sc I  
and five others

## Arts spots open now

Nominations for executive positions in the Arts Students' Association, representative positions on Students' Council (5 open) and representative positions on General Faculties Council (6 open) will open on Friday, March 22, 1980 at 9:00 a.m. All interested arts students are invited to pick up nomination forms from the ASA office (Rm. 2-3, Humanities Center). Nominations close for all positions at 4:00 pm on Wednesday, March 12.

Dennis Theobald  
ASA Returning Officer

## Fun... Fun... Fun

The Gateway needs editorial staff for next year to fill the positions of:

News  
Production  
Photo  
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Associate News  
Arts  
Sports  
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Apply to: Keith Krause, Room 282 SUB, before March 7.