

Those who can't do,  
teach...

# The Gateway

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...those who can't teach,  
teach gym.

Woody Allen

## Residents want LRT to go underground

by Ann Grever

Will the LRT go underground on the southside?

That may depend on whether the Belgravia/McKernan residents win their fight to keep the LRT underground through their neighbourhood.

Belgravia/McKernan is the first community the LRT will go through from campus. The underground campus line should open in 1990.

The transportation department has recommended that the LRT surface north of University Avenue.

In April the Belgravia/McKernan community formed a transportation committee to consider the city's proposal for a surface line down 114 street and a station at 76 Avenue.

Last Thursday the committee met with about 150 residents to establish a formal position to present to the Public Affairs Council. The meeting unanimously voted against a surface LRT down 114th Street and the majority voted against a station at 76 Street.

The residents object to the surface LRT's social costs. The line would go past two schools and split the community. Bob Camp, one of the members of the community transportation committee, said that the transportation department of



Buses better than above ground LRT for residents.

Photo Bill St. John

the city did not specially consider the neighbourhood.

The city's projected costs of an underground LRT (from 34 million dollars to 59 million dollars) as opposed to a surface LRT (from 20 million to 23 million dollars) were not geared to "this special community" said Camp. The projected costs of a surface line did not include other costs like the purchase of houses, landscaping or operating costs.

"The city approach is that this is strictly a transportation matter," said

Don Wimble, another member of the committee. "Other departments are not involved, and important issues are not getting into the equations. "The transportation department is doing what it thinks is a good job but only considers figures and arguments that support its position."

Hassan Shaheen of the Transportation department said, "Residents don't appreciate the difference in costs... reacting essentially on the basis of perception."

"Belgravia and McKernan con-

sider the neighbourhood as mature and special... but if we go underground there we will have to go underground in other subsequent communities which is economically unfeasible... There is no economic justification."

Percy Wickman, one of the aldermen for Ward 5, also supports the above ground line. "If the LRT could be built underground with a cost increase of up to 10 per cent, I would support it just to give the residents the peace of mind."

"The community leaders have

put me in a difficult situation," said Wickman. He claimed that when the route of the LRT was changed from the CPR right of way to 114 Street, "the residents preferred LRT over widening 114 Street... at that time they fully understood the LRT would go surface."

But as residents at the meeting said, "We are being railroaded into a railroad. (Aldermen) Starosik and Wickman don't have the political will. We are the test case — if we lose, the city can go through any community."



## Sweat over debt

VANCOUVER(CUP) — The average student graduating from the University of British Columbia in 1985 had a debt load of \$10,000 — up \$6,200 from 1984.

UBC awards director Byron Henders said that a survey the awards office conducted last May showed the average student debt load jumped 263 per cent from May 1984, when the debt load was \$3,800.

"It wouldn't surprise me if the average jumped to \$15,000 per student (with a loan) next May," said Henders.

B.C. awards officers have been forecasting trends like this for the past two years, Henders said, but no one has paid attention.

"A single parent with two kids and a \$12-14,000 debt cannot pay off their loan if they get the average job a university student gets after graduating," he said.

A person with a debt load of \$12-

14,000 would have to pay about \$150 per month for 10 years to repay their loan.

Duncan Stewart, student council external affairs co-ordinator, said the figures show coming to UBC to improve your skills doesn't make financial sense for many people.

"It used to be that a graduated student would catch up in total earnings with someone who didn't go to university within four year," said Stewart. "But now, with the job market the way it is, it takes a student 10-12 years to make as much money as someone who didn't go to school."

Stewart said this shows that the B.C. government shouldn't have removed the partial grant program two years ago. During the program the provincial government gave students a money grant that didn't have to be repaid along with their loan.

## Michener repairs to happen

by Suzette C. Chan

With a little luck and a lot of money, Michener Park residents can look forward to renovated units as early as next year.

Nearly everyone involved with Michener Park agreed the 18-year-old development needs massive repairs.

U of A Housing and Food showed off a newly renovated unit last week, demonstrating the extensiveness of needed repairs.

"We renovated one suite as a pilot project," said Housing and Food director David Bruch. "We wanted to get support from the tenants, the students' union, and tenants in other residences. This is not an isolated community."

The renovations to the unit cost about \$5,000 but Bruch said mass renovations would bring the price per unit down.

Bruch said he is optimistic about getting funds from the university to renovate a number of units in time

for the 1986-87 academic year.

The cost of renovations would be absorbed by a university grant.

"I don't think it's smart management to raise rents every time you have to make repairs," he said.

Bruch said the Housing department would like to have \$5 million but will settle for \$300,000 for next year.

Housing Operations Manager Stan Perka explained that everything from the location of drain pipes to the bathroom lights would have to be changed.

Among the renovations in the unit are:

- standardized door, lights, medicine cabinet and other bathroom fixtures;
- new, efficient refrigerators;
- re-routed drain pipes from behind kitchen wall into the ground;
- replacing plywood cabinets with scrubbable surfaces;
- carpeting bedrooms and living room for more warmth, less noise;

- replacing linoleum tile with roll-goods covering;
- safety bars so small children do not fall from upstairs;
- more shelf space;
- private fenced-in backyard.

The changes made to the test unit may not be carried over to other units. Burch and Perka said changes will probably be made in response to residents' suggestions.

Isla Alexander, who edits the *Michener Park Free Press*, has lived in Michener for three years and says she approves of Housing and Food's plans.

Alexander said she doesn't have any "great complaints" about the maintenance services and Housing and Food, she attributes tilted floors and doors that don't open or shut properly to the age of the units.

She added that she was "dead jealous" when she heard a lucky family snatched up the renovated unit in the middle of September.

Stephen Hume, editor of the Edmonton Journal

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