

The Gateway

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editorial

There is a certain brand of discrimination which no one seems to be concerned with these days - discrimination based on age. The Traffic Injury Research Foundation of Canada has recommended young drivers - between 16 and 19 - be banned from highways between 9 p.m. and 5 a.m. Provincial authorities, notably Solicitor-General Roy Farran, are not worried about the discriminatory aspect of such a recommendation but say it won't be implemented "because it's a very difficult thing ... to enforce." Likewise with the idea one woman in Sherwood Park had about imposing a curfew for teenage people - there was no reaction to the idea based on human rights violation, only because (again) it would be impossible to enforce.

Young people are discriminated against by auto insurance companies every day - charged higher premiums whether or not they have accidents because the companies' premise is that you're guilty even if proven innocent. Young people looking for accommodation are not protected from discriminatory landlords under the Alberta Human Rights Commission. And actually, the same can be applied to most age groups; although the human rights commission placed job discrimination for people 45 to 65 years of age under its jurisdiction in 1972 - there are still no clauses to protect other age groups from tenancy discrimination, job discrimination, etc.

Senior citizens began to realize the extent to which they were discriminated against when government subsidized housing began running out a couple of years ago and they found they were refused accommodation because landlords would not have "old folks" in their housing units.

Senior citizens have, at least, begun to do something and have lobbied to have their status recognized legally. Other age groups - other than the 45 to 65 executive middle-age category - have not done so.

Although the provincial government is beginning to recognize age discrimination - it is expected that new human rights legislation this fall will include a provision concerning tenancy discrimination against those under 25, not enough indication has been given to the government about the severity of age discrimination. Although most people recognize a line must be drawn somewhere - a 10 year-old should not be allowed to drive a car, or a 5 year-old walk into a pub and be served - the issue of discrimination against people who are recognized to have legal adult rights i.e. the right to drive a car after age 16, must not be allowed to continue.

It is, in fact, just as bigoted, unethical and unjust as any other form of discrimination. Age groups must make the government 1) recognize such discrimination and 2) follow through with legislation against it.

Kevin Gillese



Course Guide: the defence rests

I feel compelled to answer Mr. Jung's letter printed in the Sept. 28 edition of *Gateway* with the purpose of explaining why there will be no Course Guide this year.

Mr. Jung makes the assumption that the primary reason that the Guide will not be published is simply that Students' Union finances are critically low. I'm afraid that this is simply not true and it is unfortunate that he was led to believe the contrary.

There are two equally important reasons for publishing a Course Guide. One is to help students to better chart the course of their Academic careers and the other is to provide feedback to professors in the hopes that improvements in weak areas will be forthcoming. Both students and staff members have in the past doubted the ability of the Guide to carry out either of these roles properly. The stigma of the "anti-calendar" from the late 1960's still sticks with the present version of the guide.

Despite the fact that the evaluations have been vastly improved by the present Course Guide Co-ordinator many problems concerning the validity and reliability of the results still have to be ironed out. Technical and statistical validity were two things that the past Guide sadly lacked. Why use a Course Guide if you can't trust the results? The literature in the field suggests that Guides can be most useful if handled in the proper manner.

Then too, many professors still feel somewhat adverse to acting on the results, because of memories of several past Course Guides that were, in some cases, nothing short of slanderous or unuseful disasters. I have to wonder what is the sense of

channeling all of our students to what are presently considered "good" professors and courses, when the very good possibility exists (as documented at other Universities) that credible, constructive criticism can improve even the "bad" professors.

The Students' Union Executive has taken the stand that a short-term loss of a not quite perfect Guide is well worth the long-term gain of putting out a Guide that is both credible and useful in the eyes of students and staff.

This November students will again fill out course evaluation forms, but the results will only be used as private feedback to professors. Many instructors have already commented that the questionnaire has much more merit than in past years. We feel that a one year wait will regain the confidence of all sections of the University community. The present questionnaire will be used as a "dry run" so to speak and students and staff will be asked to suggest improvements. Additions will be made (particularly concerning course content, curriculum and more importantly how much is being learned from each professor) and the questions re-worded so as to prompt more reliable responses. With this carefully refined data as a base to work from a published Course guide will come out in 1977-78.

At the same time as we are improving our own product, the Students' Union is discussing with the University the possibility of publishing the Guide as a joint effort in the future. The project would be strictly a 50-50 proposition and each group would have its interests represented so that no one party would dominate. If this joint effort is approved then

the Guide would enjoy the added credibility of being sanctioned by the University.

I might also say that it is most unfortunate that the *Gateway* article of Sept. 14th played up the financial saving on not publishing a Guide this year (which, by the way, is closer to \$15,000 than the \$11,000 stated). Sure we can use that money elsewhere, because the fact remains the Students' Union financial situation is not the rosey. But that's not why the Course Guide was dropped for this year (relatively speaking \$15,000 is a drop in the bucket) and the financial situation of the Students' Union is not the result of some mythical "bust" that has occurred over the past four months. The good effects of being out of HUB will not be felt for at least several years until reserves that were eaten away over the years can be replenished and new priorities set. The present Executive is trying to start the economic rebuilding process, at the same time as protecting the students' academic interests by pushing for many things that often do not cost a cent, but are nonetheless vitally important. (i.e. Ombudsman, extended library hours, more study time in the First Term, an Exam Registry, changes to the Student Loan Plan, etc.).

As for pre-registration this Spring and being able to choose courses more carefully, hopefully Mr. Jung and others will be able to take advantage of Student-run counselling services that the Students' Union is attempting to institute in each Faculty this Fall.

Ken McFarlane
VP Academic
Students' Union

Had I enough brains

As much as I enjoyed reading the letter "Had I no brains..." in Tuesday's *Gateway*, I still feel obliged to point out that it does not provide a totally accurate account of what happened that infamous Friday afternoon in RATT. Yes Manfred, I am a "he-type", a "big man", or, as the less athletically inclined are wont to say, a JOCK. Up to now, however, my friends had tended to think of me as a kind of GENTLE GIANT rather than the aggressive bully you portray me as. In defence of my character, then, I must point out that I am basically an innocent figure in a admittedly sordid affair. The real culprit is my fellow jock, Ron Stewart.

If you recall it was another very busy Friday afternoon at RATT in which every seat was taken, except for the two you had stashed upside down against the window behind your table. Now I've been working at RATT for four years and I have seen such things done many times and rarely have I interfered. As a matter of fact I would not have become involved on this occasion if Ron Stewart had not already informed you that you must give the chairs up to some of the many people who were looking for a place to sit.

In fact, Ron picked up (hefted) one of the chairs and holding it aloft asked all those within earshot of they needed a chair. Having two friends who were about to leave because they

could not find seats, I took the chair from Ron and after depositing it with my friends, I returned for the second one. Apparently you did not find me as physically imposing as Ron because you attempted (albeit somewhat feebly) to hold on to the chair and as a result I had to yank it out of your hands. You then called me a number of very

nasty names Manfred, and had no sense of humor, well... who knows what might have happened.

Anyway, Manfred, thanks for the free publicity. I'd love to tell you how grateful I really am, but I've got to go now and meet Ron in the weight room for our daily work-out.

Tom Barrett
Arts

Bacus backs us up

You may not realize this, as you are still a rookie on campus as well as in life but your first responsibility as editor of *Gateway* on this campus is to the students. I know that both the Engineers and the Commerce Undergraduates' Societies attempted to unearth you or one of your photographers, writers etc. for days prior to last Friday's "War Against the Engineers" (By the Commerce students) to give some preliminary coverage and

help get student apathy squashed early in the year. Your obnoxious comment by phone to our president that you make the policy decision on *the Gateway* - without real investigation yet - leaves much to be desired in the way of real concern for campus affairs.

Perhaps if you paid more attention to your position and not your place (ego-trip) you could accomplish a more legitimate and ethical job.

B. Boyce
VP - BACU
4th year Commerce

What?

Re: Paleo-fascist fascination.

How very astute Tom Black! But maybe the Snowbirds can make a MAN out of Mr. Bird. Leni Riefenstahl we DO love you!

Lynn McClure
Arts II

Ed. Note: Perhaps if you paid more attention to the people observing your meets, Mr. Boyce such as the *Gateway* reporter and the two *Gateway* photographers in attendance, and to the coverage in the *Gateway* Sept. 28, p. 3 photo and 10 columns inches of computerized coverage on your "war" you would be less apt to make "legitimate and ethical" judgements.