

One-party politics coming to an end

by Randal Smathers

If a historian were to analyze Alberta's political scene through much of this century, he would likely classify it as a one-party democracy, with that party changing occasionally, but retaining a basic conservatism throughout.

British Columbia has also been, for most of the post-war era, a one-party democracy, with two major differences.

First, the Social Credit party has been in power all but a few years (Dave Barrett's N.D.P. won in 1971, but lost their first bid for re-election). Second, the ultra-conservative Socreds have been balanced by a large percentage of federal N.D.P. and Liberal M.P.s, by predominantly-socialist city councils in Vancouver, and by a strong N.D.P. opposition. That balancing act has not been present in Alberta.

However, the situation seems to be changing. With N.D. gains in Edmonton in federal elections, we suddenly become "Redmonton" to the more hysterical conservatives in the province. If the polls are right, Monday night will see us with a social democrat as mayor, and a woman at that.

Already, the McCarthyist bleatings of "Better dead than Red" are being heard; an all-too-familiar cry to a British Columbian. Every election, the Socreds — masters at every dirty political trick, from gerrymandering to patronage — renew the "Communist" label to sway the conservative-rural and conservative-rich ridings their way.

It doesn't have to be this way in Alberta. The provincial Liberals are in a position to offer a moderate choice to the electorate, but unless they prove themselves as a third party soon, Alberta could follow B.C. into a permanent two-party polarization, with the province divided ever more into left/right, rich/poor, urban/rural camps.

Either way, the unopposed one-party democracy in Alberta is over.



"There's one born every minute" — P.T. Fleckington?

LETTERS

Library staff ignores claims of harassment

During the preceding weeks a series of invidious and sickening affairs have revealed themselves to us. As frequenters of Rutherford North Library, especially fifth floor, each of us has had the misfortune of finding oneself subject to harassment of a sexual bent.

The most loathsome aspect of our unfortunate experiences concerns not the frustration and hatefulness of such a situation, but rather the library's stubborn inaction vis a vis occurrences of a similar nature. Such stagnation could perhaps be excused if the predicament were entirely new to the library. Unfortunately, however, this is not the case. For quite a number of years now Rutherford North Library has known of peeping Toms and photographers in the washrooms, of men who sit beside women and try to fondle them under the desk and, not to forget, a near rape. Furthermore, representatives from the President's Advisory Committee on Sexual Harassment have met with library employees to advise them on courses of action in the event of such complaints.

Despite the heightened level of awareness, we have nevertheless found that while the complaints continue to be registered the library officials rest stubbornly quiescent. Quite simply, the administration has neglected to provide the Circulation Desk staff, the ones most likely to first encounter complaints, with procedures stipulating the action which ought to be taken immediately. Such occurrences constitute assault and should be directed as quickly as possible to both Campus Security and the Police (this is

advice given to us by the Edmonton Police itself).

Such apathy and reticence on the part of the library is thoroughly appalling, and for two reasons: not only does it hinder any resolution of the predicament, but, furthermore, it sends a negative message to those who have been sexually harassed. It says that the harassment is a mere nuisance not to be taken seriously, something which we should not bother ourselves about. The only consequence of such an implicit message is victims of the future remaining silent.

Since it is apparent to us that such harassment occurs regularly at least in Rutherford North Library, until the administration there can provide to its employees guidelines of appropriate action, we would urge anyone with grave concerns to take the following action: either force the library official to contact either Campus Security or both Campus Security and the Police; or simply do this on your own so that the problem can be dealt with effectively and immediately.

Alison Elgert, Arts IV
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Nuts to motorists

To all you useless thoughtless motorists in this world who have yelled at, made snide comments and given the finger to environmentally-aware people on bikes going down one way streets: SHOVE IT!

Do you know how it feels to bike in the city? You have to be constantly aware of stupid drivers that should be constantly aware of you also. It just so happens that I like to know what is coming my way. It is a two way street people, unless you would like to acquire a chrome plated ass from a city transit bus. I sure wouldn't.

Melanie Meardi
Science I

P.S. I have never seen a transit bus take it easy on the 89th Ave bus loop, or anywhere else in the city for that matter. Slow down!

Smokers inconsiderate

Dear persistent smokers,

Last year our university officially became a nonsmoking campus. What does this mean exactly?

From my observations, this policy means that there is no longer any place for the smokers to put their butts. My apologies to

those smokers who take the nonsmoking policy seriously, for it is towards those smokers who persist in smoking in nonsmoking areas that I am addressing this letter.

One of the most absurd and annoying sights was seeing someone sitting directly beneath the No Smoking sign in the bus shelter — puffing away. I sure didn't find it any colder outside the shelter and there are seats out there. Why is this person so inconsiderate?

What has to be done to get people to comply with the policy? What is being done to enforce the nonsmoking policy of our university?

Dionna Tremblay
Arts III

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