

Promises not worth much

Open letter to Students' Council:

Last spring, in order to deal with the continual demands placed on the Students' Union to make donations to charitable causes, a referendum was held in which students voted to pay 50¢ each for the 1980/81 term to establish the Eugene Brody Board for charitable donations.

As was repeatedly promised during the referendum campaign, the by-law establishing the Board clearly stated that an annual referendum would have to be held in conjunction with the S.U. general elections in order for fees to be collected for this fund for the following year. This requirement was seen as being particularly important for the first few years of the Board's operation: since such a system for the funding of charitable donations had never been tried here before, it was felt to be important that students have a chance to evaluate the effectiveness of the system before they committed their funds in perpetuity.

While campaigning for the establishment of this system I found that the requirement of annual referendum was a key factor in many students' support of the proposal. There were fears that the funds might not be spent appropriately, and most students and student organizations to which I spoke specifically requested this guarantee of a chance to evaluate, and possibly reconsider, their support.

I was thus shocked and dismayed to discover last week that our Students' Council has, without giving any public notice of their intentions, quietly changed the relevant by-law to force students to make an annual contribution to this Board. Contrary to what had been promised last spring, there will be no referendum held on this issue, neither this year, nor in future years.

Although I can understand why the proponents of the S.U.'s two other up-coming financial referenda would be reluctant to hold a third, I find this action deeply disturbing for several reasons.

First, although it is possible that Students' Council may have the legal right to act as they did, what of their moral obligations? The S.U. Executive and most (if not all) of the current Councillors were on campus last spring. It seems reasonable to assume that they were aware of the promise of an annual referendum, and of the reasons behind it. Surely, as our representatives they have a moral responsibility to live up to the promises made to students in that referendum. If, in their wisdom, they had concluded that an annual referendum was not really necessary, and that it would in fact be harmful to hold such a referendum, then they should at very least have given the students notice of their plans to change the rules and a full opportunity to persuade Councillors otherwise, should students have objected to the move.

Aside from the questionable morality of this action, I fear that it may be setting a dangerous precedent for future Council actions. What is to prevent Council from making another speedy, silent change; for example, adding a clause allowing these fees to be spent in other S.U. areas rather than solely on charitable causes? Such actions make the word of the S.U. meaningless - will students ever again be able to believe a Students' Union "guarantee"?

Perhaps it is a good thing that the \$7.00 per student capital expansion referendum run concurrently with the Brody fund campaign did not pass, for it too contained a guarantee - it promised (again, to be by way of a by-law) that the funds it raised would be

used solely for capital purposes and could not be spent on anything else. (It is interesting to note that they are not promising where the funds from this year's fee referendum will be spent!)

In this open letter to council I ask:

1) that the recent change in the by-law eliminating the referendum requirement be reversed,

2) that a referendum be held on February 6, 1981 asking either:

a) that students make another donation to the Board for the coming year or,

b) asking for student approval of a by-law change eliminating the referendum requirement, and

3) that the S.U. constitution be amended so that in future, all major by-law changes must be prominently advertised in the Gateway at least two weeks in advance of the first reading of the proposed amendment, and if successful at first reading, advertised again at least one week prior to second reading.

Tema A. Frank
Commerce IV



Aspidistra

by Alison Thomson

Ms. Thomson suddenly remembered she's a med student, so she's off to visit her cadaver. Back next week.

So who studies here?

I would like to say a few words in response to Louis Guilbault's letter "Study space a chimera." It seems that the nuts are falling out of the trees early this year. We usually don't get complaints about study space until finals are in sight, and at 10:50 last Sunday morning I don't know how anyone could see as far as midterms.

As I listen, with an unsympathetic ear, to people complaining about the lack of study space, one question comes to mind: where do these people live? Surely if they can find a place to lie down at night, they could find a place to sit up and study. All they have to do is resist turning on their stereo and they have an environment which is not only quiet, but also private (unless of course, they live in a one-room hippie commune).

In the past the University has made extra study space available,

but it went unused. It wasn't because students don't want study space, they want social interaction space. The real reason they come to the University to "study" is so they can meet and talk with other students who are also "studying," and actually end up getting very little, if any, work done.

In closing, I would like to ask Louis one simple question. Who the hell would want to study at 9:00 on a Sunday morning anyway?

Andrew Chamberlain
Commerce II

Listen to the music

This letter is prompted by the frightful but rightful gnashings of Mr. Damur concerning the pathetic coverage given music on campus by the Gateway. We at Common Times Music Club thoroughly agree with you, but the problem is worse than you have stated. Information concerning campus music is not only absent from the Gateway, but from all public awareness! While Common Times does not control the contents (or lack) of the Gateway, we do offer two services that may help solve the problem.

Firstly, we have set up a notice board opposite the information desk, on the ground floor of SUB. This board is intended for notices concerning music and theater, especially those events on campus. Although its surface area is relatively small, it will be expanded to meet demand.

Secondly, we offer a 24 hour "music hot line" (432-5349), which gives as much information about campus music as we can fit on the message tape of the answering machine. Additional information may be added to the message by phoning the hotline, and giving it at the end of the recording, or by leaving a note at the office (Room 276 SUB). We at Common Times hope that these services will be helpful to all.

Members of
"Common Times"

Feminist a sexist too

Upon reading Britt Griffin's interview in last Thursday's Gateway, I was appalled that one of Edmonton's "leading" feminists could be so offensive and close-minded.

If I were to publicly declare that "Women are typically flighty, fickle and vain creatures," I would immediately be engulfed in a well-deserved flood of condemnation. Yet Ms. Griffin expects us to accept such glib and stereotypical mutterings as "Men can often only identify their sexuality in reference to women," and "sexism reflects a male ideology...."

Sexism, Ms. Griffin, is not an exclusively male disease. If you have trouble accepting this, stick your nose in a mirror and take a clear, close look at female sexism at its most blatant.

Scott Rollans
Arts II

ROOKIE NIGHT

Here's your chance to decide:
(a) whether Gateway editors are for real
(b) whether you'd like to join the paper
(c) whether we make the best coffee on campus

Thursday, January 29, 7 p.m.
Room 282 SUB

P.S. You don't really have to be a rookie to attend.

Poster rippers: "we're no vigilantes"

We, members of the Ad-hoc Committee of Women and Men Staff and Students Against Sexism wish to make the following points, in the aftermath of our recent daring mid-day raid on Engineering Week posters:

1. We are neither prudes nor vigilantes of campus morality. Our raid was a protest against the objectification of women, as

expressed in "beauty contests" and their publicity. We are not against people having fun, but refuse to accept the imposition of propaganda which promotes sexist stereotypes, reinforcing popular images of women competing to please men.

2. We have nothing against engineering students as such; however, the institutions of the

engineering profession perpetrate a deeply-entrenched sexism, as well as racism. These include the initiation rituals to "Skule," the feudal ceremonies for receiving the iron ring, and the "old-boy" networks which reinforce male corporate power.

However, the hard done-by engineering students are not the only "victims" of anti-sexist

action. Feminists have challenged sexist posters in campus stores, and violence-promoting advertising in downtown businesses, and have demonstrated more than once against the violence against women.

3. On the question of censorship: We do not advocate the suppression of opinion by government or university administration. The exchange of ideas is necessary for learning; accordingly we are disappointed in the Engineering Society's failure to participate in the proposed Students' Union forum on sexism. Likewise Myer Horowitz is suppressing the clarification of the issue, and holding back the elimination of sexism by preventing debate in the GFC.

However, we make no apologies for our direct confrontation against the oppression represented by the Queen contest, and the overt promotion of violence against women and children in the *Godiva* article.

4. For those who accuse the Ad-Hoc Committee of focussing too narrowly on posters, we invite you to participate, along with us and many others, in the program of discussion, films and protest planned for March 6-8 to mark International Women's Day.

Cathy Barker
Member, NASA
Laverne Booth
Education IV
Greg McMaster
Eng. Sci. 7TO
Clare Vallenzuela
Arts I

Andrea Waywanko
Grad Studies-Geol.

SECOND WIND

by Peter
Michalyshyn

Second Wind is a very occasional column of opinion open to all Gateway staff members.

Those poor damned engineers. We hoped, at the Gateway, that by slamming them, engineers would change their sexist ways and become otherwise normal people.

But it hasn't worked. Even though most engineers and princesses admit Engineering Week is sexist, they're unwilling to admit sexism is necessarily bad. And so if dumping on them hasn't worked, then I guess the only thing we have to offer is our pity.

Like the Man said, "forgive them, for they know not what they do." Well, we've seen a crucifixion of sorts: in spirit, engineers' punching an innocent, moral man in the head is not unlike Romans' tying an innocent, moral man to the cross.

An unfortunate incident? of course. Just a few over-enthusiastic engineers stretching the bounds normally extended for their fun? I doubt it.

Behind the acts of violence and aggression, whether physical or in print, are the traditions of Engineering Week. Behind the traditions of Enginee. g Week is interclub competition that uses primarily women - princesses and kicklines - as objects to bolster engineers' own egos. And behind the need to bolster their own egos is an extremely human deficiency of self-confidence and individuality.

Sexism is but a symptom of these human shortcomings that plagued Romans and engineering students and all of us to varying degrees (so there's a bit of self-pity in this too). We see disruptions in our otherwise stable social order that we don't understand, and we're suspicious and afraid of what we can't comprehend. And what we can't control, we seek to destroy.

The Romans had what appeared to be at least a stable social order, but One Man seemed to threaten it and He was destroyed. On a somewhat smaller scale, but no less illustrative, the

engineering students see angry people railing against the one aspect of Engineering Week engineers refuse to comprehend - sexism - and they react defensively with violence and aggression.

As the spirit against sexism swells, as surely it is, engineering students will become scapegoats for society's changing values; as we seek new aggressions, so too do we victimize others for past aggressions that we would rather forget.

It's damned unfair. But it's also unfair that women are exploited by sexism, so we condemn it, as we must.

We also must ask ourselves what will come of all this. May we toy with the idea that feminism promises a new value system not centered on aggression, competition, or ego? Or must we recognize that something will take sexism's place in the present system, and we must be prepared to control it.

Whatever you decide, can we really blame the engineers?