

Opinion

Rosa Jackson
Report retort



The Gateway's final issue last spring, a spoof entitled the *Alberta Retort*, did not go over very well with staff members at the *Alberta Report*. In April and May *The Gateway*, and University of Alberta students in general, were criticized; first by Link Byfield in an editorial which bore the headline "Why you're being ridiculed and why it doesn't matter", and then in an article called "Baiting one's elders," by Mathew Ingram.

While these articles were in some ways amusing, I felt compelled to respond to a number of the writers' blatant and unfounded accusations. The faults they find so apparent in *The Gateway* are, to my mind, far more evident in the pages of the *Alberta Report*.

First of all, there is the matter of political bias. In his editorial, Byfield objects to *The Gateway's* defense of "drear left-wing causes" such as "South Africa, American foreign policy, and student fees,... abortion, feminism, government intervention and gay rights." He complains that these causes are the focus of all campus newspapers, and that "nowhere, by and large, do university editorialists actually debate these biases."

Ingram, in his article, takes a different stance. He states that *The Gateway* has "always been considered far to the right of most other campus newspapers," and expresses concern over the fact that "students these days are focusing their attention not on Nicaragua and peace marches but on the Young Entrepreneur's Club and the Marketing Club."

I'm not going to worry about what the *Alberta Report* perceives to be *The Gateway's* political bias. The *Alberta Report's* own bias causes me far greater concern. I find it hard to take Byfield's and Ingram's indignation seriously, knowing that all the staff at the *Alberta Report* had to "pass" a political views test before being hired.

Another thing which affonts Byfield is students' lack of "good" ideals and "Christian virtues". He rants about "good" and "evil", "true virtue" and the "absolute virtue"; never considering that perhaps everyone does not share his views on what these are. Yes, reporters at *The Gateway* have written ("nagged", as Byfield puts it) against injustices in South Africa and the rising cost of fees (an issue which does, in fact, affect students), and have defended what they consider to be human rights. But the views stated are those of individuals, not those of *The Gateway* or of the student populace, as Byfield assumes.

I'm grateful that I'm allowed freedom of speech in this country. But I can't help wondering whether Byfield would like to see this right debated, too.

The Gateway

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The Gateway welcomes letters to the editor.

If you have a comment which would be of interest to the students of the University, please do not hesitate to send it in. Letters may be dropped off, or mailed to our office (Room 282 SUB), or may be dropped off at the SUB or HUB info booths. The writer's name, faculty and year of study must be included. Addresses and phone numbers are required, but will not be printed.

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Letters

Lord Godiva

Re: "Bouncy Babe" fun

Hey! What a great idea you've got! Let's add a semi-nude male counterpart to Lady Godiva to the freshman festivities! God knows I wouldn't bitch! Call him "Lord Godiva" and let him provide a little cheap titillation for the females on campus! Fair is fair, right? Tat-for-tit???

Shannon Cowan
Arts II

Landlords beware

I am a low income tenant who has seen my housing costs in Strathcona increase by \$560.00 in one year. \$360.00 of this was imposed by a landlord; \$200.00 was taken away by the provincial government. There are 34,000 students on campus, many of them with rental allowances of less than \$200.00 per month. When the government and landlords work together to raise rents by almost \$50.00 per month, then something must be done.

I believe there should be a tenant's advocate and a tenant's association in Strathcona. Tenants should win the right to bargain collectively with landlords, or win back the right to have Landlords and Tenants go to court for them. A tenant taking a landlord to court right now must do so alone. It is a lonely struggle. I believe there should be more public housing in Strathcona. We need rent controls.

A watchdog is needed in Strathcona to prevent numbered companies from Ontario from buying up property (cheap) in Strathcona, jacking up the rent, and then refusing to maintain their property. This is how affordable housing is lost.

After three years of struggling to get heat into the upstairs of the

building I live in, I am convinced that the City is not doing its job of monitoring sub-standard housing in Strathcona. There is no yearly boiler inspection in this building and there is no boiler permit. Over the past three years, various landlords have extracted thousands of dollars in rent from at least one totally unheated apartment.

My MLA tells me "there is nothing you can do" about a rent increase. My alderman doesn't return calls. I have found no one in a public office in Strathcona who is really putting their shoulder to the wheel on the issue of decent, affordable housing in this area. Obviously, tenants will have to do it for themselves.

I. Foord
BA, MA

Tripping through HUB

It's good to be back at University tripping over boards in HUB. Why was this work not completed over the summer? Furthermore, I heard a rumor that tiles for the floor are being imported from Italy at a cost of \$10.00 a square foot. Is this true? If so, whose idea was it not to buy tiles made in Alberta? The cost of Alberta made tiles is about 1/10 of those imported from Italy, not to mention the jobs it would create.

Randy Epp
Arts III

Lunch space lacking

The recent shutdown of the Subway and the Humanities Centre cafeteria by Housing and Food Services (HFS) represents more than the simple closing of food outlets. The closing of these cafeterias not only deprives students and faculty of convenient and relatively reasonably priced places

to eat, but compounds the already severe lack of space on campus. These eating outlets formerly provided a considerably large amount of lounge space for students to study, meet, rest and either buy or bag a lunch. Closing these spaces means still more people spilling into the already severely overcrowded HUB Mall.

HFS has attempted to alleviate that problem by proposing to add new seats to the CAB cafeteria, the monolithic mess hall that is a truly unpleasant place to eat. The CAB cafeteria is cold, impersonal, and downright ugly, and more importantly, its location is inconvenient for many Arts, Business, and Education students.

Perhaps the worst aspect of these closures is the fact that the view from the 5th Floor Humanities is now denied to students and faculty. Humanities' view of the High Level bridge, the legislature, downtown, and the river valley is one of the best in the city. The closing of this lounge makes the U of A an uglier place to be.

HFS argues that these cafeterias were closed down because they lost money. But should HFS's mandate be to make money from already financially strapped university students? Should short-term economics be put ahead of students' needs? We think not. HFS is *not* a privately-run business, it is service for students funded by students. However, if budget cuts make the closing of these cafeterias unavoidable, must the lounge spaces be closed as well? The furniture in the Humanities' top-floor lounge still rests there, unused, waiting to be sat on. Campus needs the elbow room.

Philip Preville, Arts III
Steve Penney, Arts III
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