There are two types of people in the world...

...those that divide people into two types; and those who do not.

Regina gives OK to wet T-shirts

REGINA (CUP) — Engineering students planning a wet T-shirt contest were given the green light when the student union lifted a three-year ban on such events.

"I'm not a moral judge," said student union president Mike Fedyk.

"I'm not going to stop them (the engineering student society) because I don't agree with it, or because any other particular group disagrees with it."

Wet T-shirt contests were banned in a 1980 amendment to the student union's constitution, the result of a large uproar over a wet T-shirt contest that year.

"I thought that council (the council responsible for amending the constitution) was exceeding itself by forbidding wet T-shirt contests. It was taking itself too seriously," said vice president internal David Goodwillie.
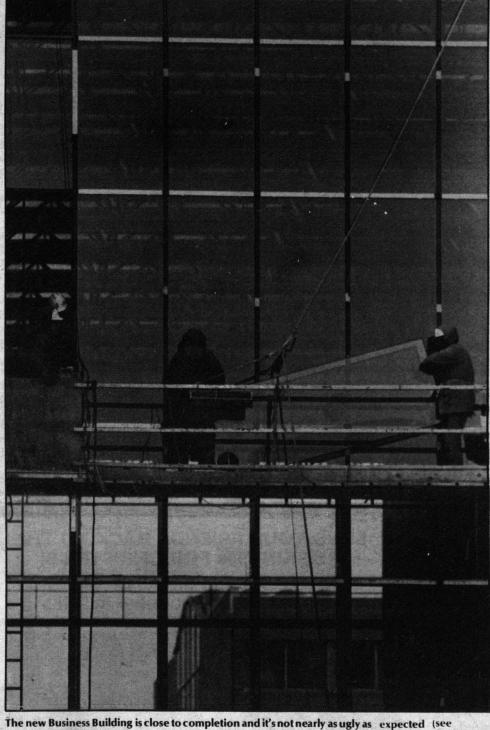
Most councillors expect objections to the T-shirt contest but the SU is not willing to deal with complaints.

"We'll just funnel them over to the engineering society," said Goodwillie.

A representative from the women's centre said, "Our hope is that no women will show up to participate."

"That type of humor is hard to understand," she said.

The engineering society members are including a wet men's underwear contest as well.

The new Business Building is close to completion and it's not nearly as ugly as expected (see story page two).

photo Bill Inglee

Marsland makes move in chess

by Mark Roppel

Humans have always been better chess players than computers. Even the biggest and the best collections of integrated circuits have no feel for this game of strategy and intellect.

But U of A computer scientist Dr. Tony Marsland is doing his utmost to alter the present situation.

Marsland's program, *Awit*, tied for second at the recent World Computer Chess Championship.

The championship was held in New York from October 24to 25 and saw 22 programs for universities and computer firms around the world compete. There were entries from various countries, including England, Sweden, the Netherlands, and the US.

This was the fourth such championship. The tournament is held every three years. Previous sites have been Stockholm, Toronto and Linz, Austria.

The finish was surprisingly good for *Awit* since it is one of only two or three computer chess programs in the world to use the "selective search" form of programming.

"The commonest technique is the exhaustive search," explains Marsland.

The exhaustive search or brute force approach considers every possible move and countermove for a limited number of moves into the future.

"A typical program sees three moves ahead for each side - towards the end perhaps nine," says Marsland.

The selective search method operates much more the way a human thinks: it "discards a large number of moves."

Awit "tries to find a plan or a theme," says Marsland.

"The program builds a position that cannot be violated - pawn sturctures that cannot be violated in one or two moves - and then I look for what I can do in three moves."

"It's a maximum time for surprise type program ," says Marsland. "This is the way humans play chess. You don't launch and attack until you are well protected."

The advantage of this selective search method is that by quickly discarding any variations that show little promise the program can concentrate on and see more moves ahead on the fewer plans of action it is considering.

People turn to magic and spoon bending

by Gilbert Bouchard

Horoscope got you down? Biodex tell you to crawl into a hole and fill it up after yourself?

Well, Dr. James E. Alcock can't read tarot cards but he can tell you why so many people seem to be turning to the occult sciences.

Alcock, a psychologist from York University and the Canadian representative on the Committee for the Scientific Investigation of Claims of the Paranormal, gave a lecture on the psychology of belief and the lure of the paranormal last Friday afternoon in V-121. Alcock is also a regular contributor to the periodical, *The Sceptical Inquirer* and the author of *Parapsychology: Science or Magic?*

The paranormal has an undeniable grasp on the pulse of modern society. We live, according to Alcock, "in an age when people are turning to magic and superstitious belief, an age of moonwalks and spoon bending." Belief in the paranormal is widespread, both in the general population and among university students.

Why the need for magical solutions?

One reason, according to Alcock, may be that during every major break in the normal functions of a society there also is a corresponding upsurge in occult practices, as witnessed by the rise of paranormal activities before the French revolution and the fall of Rome.

"Since WW II there has been a great change in our society and what we were trained for may no longer be relevant. The fabric of society is falling apart," continued Alcock.

"We can't even predict what these changes to our social structure will produce. Nevertheless, these changes will produce a certain level of anxiety and stress, but this alone does not explain away the occult," he says.

The traditional belief system that once protected people from this stress and anxiety has broken down. "For example, religion had protected people from anxiety and stress in the past, and gave people meaning for their lives, but psychology and science have broken down people's faith in traditional religion," said Alcock.

And once traditional religion is removed the occult sciences move in to fill the vacuum of belief. "Most important of all, the occult sciences give people hope for *something* after death - one of the bases of paranormal research is scientific proof for the survival of the soul after death," stated Alcock.

In a technical and scientific society like ours "scientific proof" and scientific method is almost mandatory. Parapsychology feeds on both science and religion, and falls halfway between the two. But as a science, parapsychology has its foibles. It provides too many excuses to explain away the bad results (example: the investigator wasn't psychic enough to provide the subject with the proper vibes), and after one hundred years of research parapsychologists still have produced no demonstrable properties of the paranormal and no theories.

Regardless of its shortcomings parapsychology still has an immense following and probably owes much of it to the very nature of human belief. "Our beliefs are imposed on us by

society and our upbringings, we don't choose our beliefs," said Alcock.

Our beliefs can be divided into two groups: scientific-humanist (logical, rational belifs), and Transcendental beliefs (faith). People switch between the two forms of belief quite easily. Parapsychology is a hybrid of the two systems, sharing traits of both.

"Children believe quite easily in magic and only gradually drift in scientific-humanistic thinking. Hence, people revert back occasionally in moments of stress. As a matter of fact, people are willing to turn off their logic at a drop of a hat," commented Alcock.

So not only are people predestined to non-logical, magical thinking, many people can be led into the false belief that they've witnessed a paranormal happening several ways. For example, people are much more affected by positive pairings than negative pairings, therefore people will tend to remember more instances that were remarkable than instances of no great importance. We remember dreams that "come true" but forget the hundreds of dreams that don't come true or are just plain silly.

Men also aren't movie cameras; what we perceive is

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