

Editorial

Letters to the Editor should not be more than 250 words in length. They must include your signature, faculty, year of program, I.D. number, and phone number. Requests for anonymity are at the discretion of the Managing Editor, but the above information is required regardless. We reserve the right to edit for libel and length. Letters do not necessarily reflect the views of the Gateway.

Drugs not real problem

The latest issue of LIFE magazine caught my eye the other day. On the cover, a man is shown lighting up a joint of crack, the latest, most hideous drug to hit the streets. "I am a coke addict" it says beside him in big red letters.

For those of you who haven't yet read the October issue of LIFE (and at \$3.50 per copy, that probably means most of you), the cover story spells out "What happens when nice guys get hooked." After reading the article, I felt as if I had just been flogged about the ears with a shiny new *National Enquirer*.

The reader is matter-of-factly presented with the tragic tale of Tom and Dave, two roommates who also share an addiction to cocaine. These guys are so coked-out their nasal passages are blocked from years of abuse. They have to smoke their favorite drug instead of snorting it.

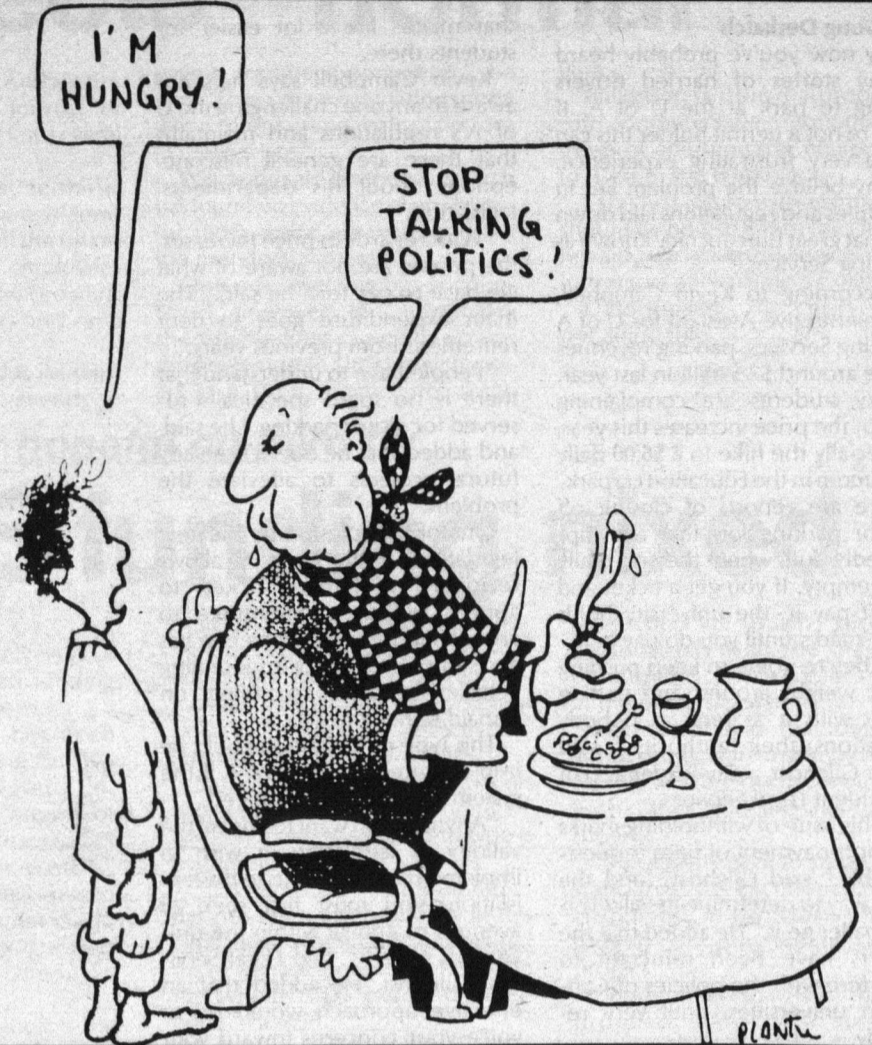
The plot thickens. Tom has just lost his ninth job in three years. Who wouldn't fire a person who is always showing up late for work after night-long binges? After four drug-free days, Tom tries to make a fresh start. He sees his drug counselor one afternoon. She wants Tom to take it one day at a time. The next night he does a "little coke" to celebrate his new job. The night after he and Dave go on a major high. So much for starting over.

The accompanying photos render an otherwise impotent story ridiculous. The guys are shown in their sport shirts as they cut and prepare their cocaine for smoking. It's all smiles as the tragedy lives on in the suburban California apartment. Another shot has the two smiling cokeheads waving at women on the beach from Dave's shiny Corvette. The captions read: "I have this need to see how far I can go," says Dave, "whether it's fast cars, motorcycles, surfing, or coke."

Shades of *People* magazine, why did LIFE even bother? The drug issue is a bandwagon with too much free space to jump on. While the government and the press (especially in the U.S.) cartwheel about screaming "epidemic" and "urine test", the public can only wonder how real this problem is. Where did this tempest come from, and what about more serious problems like alcoholism and poverty? If anything, LIFE magazine has only served to present a confusing image, and a nauseatingly glamorous one at best.

We must put the trendy issue of drugs back on the shelf and take a few steps backward. Otherwise this mass myopia can only lead to the persecution of innocent bystanders like you and me. And while the politicians and drug-law enforcers pat themselves on the backs, the hungry will only get hungrier.

Greg Halinda



Letters

Exodus to U of L

To the Editor:

I read with interest the article "Grades scaled" by Jon Oxley in the Oct. 7 issue of the *Gateway*. The story seemed to confirm the old saying "give them enough rope and they will hang themselves." It appears the U of A administration is bent on self-destruction.

The article describes what is apparently a squabble between the U of A and the U of Lethbridge. The U of A feels that the U of L is too generous with its grades, so the U of A wants to downgrade the GPA value of the marks possessed by students transferring in from the U of L. The obvious loser from this policy would be the U of A. Transfer students will merely go to the U of C (the other rival) instead. In addition, they draw attention to the fact that students can improve their GPA by attending the U of L, making it considerably more attractive. The administrators at the U of L must be chuckling right now.

However, beyond the humour, a very good principle is exposed by this action. If the U of C or U of L were willing to not only accept the U of A measure, but actually amplify its effect by offering a bonus in terms of GPA conversion for courses taken at the U of A, they could theoretically siphon off all the U of A students above first year. This would mean a rush of students to the U of L and U of C, as well as a wave of new government money for them. This tactic would reduce the U of A to being just another 4th rate community college. (This, by the way, works out quite well because, by fortunate coincidence, that is exactly where the level of instruction is at already.)

This finally brings me to the point of this letter. If someone working for the benefit of the students (such as the Students' Union executive) was willing to exploit this situation, considerable advantage could be derived for the students. If the U of A was forced into the position of actually having to hold on to and maybe even recruit its students, a lot of the nonsense we put up with (like the WCT) would disappear. In fact, now that Mike Hunter (VP External) will be having more spare time on his hands, perhaps he might consider contacting the U of C and the U of L and getting the ball rolling.

Arthur R. Bobke
Arts III

Hey! van Herk!

To the Editor:

Re: Professor Aritha van Herk's letter, Oct. 7, 1986

Over the years I have read with great interest van Herk's numerous stories and imaginative articles on literature, and especially her three outstanding novels. I am now convinced that I taught her very little. She has clearly taught herself more than anyone could, or would want to teach her. Further, her letter shows that after eight years she has finally formulated a perceptive answer to my original examination question about Charles G.D. Roberts. So I would be satisfied, if she had only gotten Sir Charles' dates right. His period of influence on Canadian letters was not, as she says, from 1886 to 1934, but rather 1880 (when he first published *Orion* at age 20) until his death in 1943. Oh well, some day perhaps, some day....

Rudy Wiebe
Professor of English
U of A

Mike talks back

To the Editor:

After a good start, I am somewhat concerned with the coverage the External Affairs Office and Commission have received this year. If one were to read any of the recent *Gateway* editions they would be left with the impression that we are only working on international issues; this is not the case.

In fact, the External Office has spent relatively little time on international issues. Our municipal, provincial, and federal projects have far and away dominated our efforts, energies, and time this year. I realize that none of these projects has council debating as heavily as any international issue, but I certainly wish they would get more than just "kudos". (See *Gateway* Editorial, Oct. 2.)

The very nature of the External Office means that we will have to deal with some international issues. And while I believe we should be selective in what we address, I don't think that we should cop out and not touch anything. This would mean we weren't doing the whole job.

So, as stated, the External Office and Commission has spent, and will continue to spend, time on municipal, provincial, and federal issues, primarily, and other issues where we deem it appropriate to do so. Our priorities are fine — I just wish the coverage would reflect this a little better.

Michael Hunter
V.P. External

Humour

by Greg Whiting

Unfortunately, game show host and rock superstar positions are hard to come by. However, there are other easy jobs that you, as a graduate of the U of A, have a chance to land.

For example, meteorology students can get positions forecasting the weather for Hawaiian television stations. Since Hawaii's climate is extremely consistent, this shouldn't take much effort. It's possible that it would only take you about an hour a day to figure out that the weather would be the same as it was the day before. At that point, you could leave instructions with your television station to "play yesterday's tape" and go out on the beach to play volleyball with the tourists. If the management objected, you could offer to host a game show for them while you weren't working out the weather.

If you want to get a soft job that will let you stay in Canada, you can run for office as a member of a third political party, like the federal New Democrats or the Alberta Liberals. These positions require virtually no effort once you have them. Just sit back, wait for a government MP or MLA to say something you disagree with, and then jump up frothing at the mouth and say that you think the previous speech to be the stupidest set of sentences in the history of man. If you make your speech so vitriolic that the Speaker throws you out, you'll get media exposure which should help you to get re-elected. If you agree with a government speech, you can say so and establish a reputation as a diplomat working for the people and trying to help good ideas along even though your party didn't come up with them. Again, this shouldn't hurt your re-election chances. You'll never have to do any real work or actually be concerned about what you say since your party will never form a government anyway.

If you run for office from a party that does wind up forming the government, you can still have an easy life as minister of sports. All you have to do is condemn hockey fights now and then and think up new ways of keeping American football out of Canada.

Political careers are not for everybody. Even if you don't want to go through the process of being elected, you can still get a government job that requires virtually no effort and leaves you with plenty of free time. One such position is that of the guy who draws the winning lottery numbers. How hard can it be to flip seven switches to trap ping-pong balls in clear plastic tubes twice a week?

One soft career could have benefits for everyone if you become good at it. This position is that of a consumer advocate such as David Horowitz. All you do is the following: 1) buy products, and 2) tell people whether or not they work. If you buy, for example, an electric razor and it

cont'd. on page 17

The Gateway

The Gateway is the newspaper of the University of Alberta students. Contents are the responsibility of the Editor-in-Chief. All opinions are signed by the writer and do not necessarily reflect the views of the Gateway. News copy deadlines are 12 noon Mondays and Wednesdays. Newsroom: Rm 282 (ph. 432-5168). Advertising: Rm 256D (ph. 432-4241). Students' Union Building, U of A, Edmonton, Alberta, T6G 2G7. Readership is 25,000. The Gateway is a member of Canadian University Press.

Editor in Chief: Dean Bennett
News Editor: John Watson, Greg Halinda
Managing Editor: Kathleen Beechinor
Entertainment Editor: Suzanne Lundrigan
Sports Editor: Mark Spector
Photo Editor: Rob Schmidt
Advocate: Denise Whalen
Production Editor: Juanita Spears
Advertising: Tom Wright
Media Supervisor: Margriet Tilroe-West
Circulation: George Onwumere

"Where is she?" cried Laurel Tokuda. James Young and Emma strolled in sheepishly. "Where's who?" Doug Derkatch and Rod Campbell bellowed in unison. "Don't you know, everyone is out looking for her!" Suddenly, Sergeant Cam McCulloch entered the room and took control. "I need a search party, you Faith Gray, Jennifer Feinberg, Geoff Haynes, and Greg Whiting — check out HUB. Don't leave any rock unturned." Marc Simao, Frank Fellows and Glenn St-Germain offered to take the northern sector of campus. But Randy McCoy, Andrew Den Dong and Tim Terry whined, "We want deputy buttons." Andrew Rahn bravely stepped forward. "You can count on me, no assignment is too tough." Eric Janse and Nolan Berg, pencils in hand, set about sketching a search and find poster. Teo, Pat Maguire and Melinda headed south, while Danny Schnick, Mike Spindloe and Matt Hays set off to sniff out the eastern sector. As Jerome gave a detailed description of what she was wearing when last seen, Roberta suggested that we all synchronize our watches. "Is that Atlantic or Pacific time?" asked Alex. Arms akimbo, Kathleen warned, "This is no laughing matter." "You're right," chimed in Stephen Pandke, "I think I saw her leave with Bruce and Alex Miller, they said they were going out to see what might develop." Pernel Tarnowski turned slowly to Suzanne Soto and warned ominously, "It could have been you, y'know." Stay tuned for the conclusion.