

EDITORIAL

Politicking

Well, well. I was just sitting here, praying to Odin for something to write an editorial about, when in crawls a letter from Greg Madison. Maybe there is something to divine intervention after all.

The gist of Madison's letter (printed elsewhere on the page) is that "sexism and the subjugation of women is totally devoid of humor." To begin with Madison is wrong in his basic assumption: there is humor in sexism and the subjugation of women, or, to put it more accurately, people find humor in it. Not just sexism either. As feminist Sheila Ballantyne points out in her novel *Norma Jean the Termite Queen*, many women develop a "ghetto humor" to cope with their situation in life.

But Madison is not only wrong in his main premise, he applies it in a shifty way. Neither Andrew's editorial nor the Gateway "interview" with Phyllis Schlafly that inspired it (when the WRCUP Human Rights Coordinator saw it and had a severe conniption) - neither of these two articles laughed at the predicament of women, as Madison would like the reader to believe. The satirical interview, in fact, could best be described as feminist black humor - the barbs were quite clearly aimed at Schlafly's excessive submissiveness. One would assume from Andrew's editorial that this is what he found funny. Madison presents no evidence to the contrary, aside from his own suspicions.

But perhaps it is unfair to single out Madison for subtly implying that Andrew is laughing at women's suffering. Such distortions, after all, are rampant in the world today:

If you are against outrageous military spending you are in favor of letting the communists overrun the world. If you are against the stupidity of some feminists you are in favor of keeping women barefoot and pregnant. If you are against dosing Uncle John with laetrile you are in favor of letting him die of cancer. It's an old, old argument.

The example that comes most readily to mind, of this kind of argument, comes from William F. Buckley's review of *Life of Brian*, wherein he took the film's mild pokes at Christianity and magnified them in his mind until they became a vicious attack on religion in general. No doubt Mr. Madison will be pleased to learn that his own mind operates in much the same way.

• Robert Greenhill just passed through the office, looking funky in his new three-piece dreadlocks, and puffing on a spliff the size of a football (don't breathe any of this to the police, by the way). The smoke must have gone to his head somewhat, because he was talking about the necessity of legalizing the killer weed.

His soliloquy reminded me that it is the tenth anniversary of the first editorial I ever wrote for legalization. Time, experience, and observations of numerous potheads has tempered my enthusiasm a little, but legalization still seems like a good idea.

As with alcohol and coffee there will always be those who can't handle their drug intake, but the laws and police don't deprive them of their supply at present, and probably couldn't even if they tried.

And there is the contempt generated towards the legal system by the laws, and the time and money wasted in enforcement, the lives ruined, the high price and dubious quality of contraband dope on the market... well, you've probably already heard all the arguments.

• Another lesson from the SU election :

The most valuable possession of a journalist is independence, and a reputation for independence. The quickest way to lose both is to become a candidate or a political worker.

Jens Andersen

Achievement

No man has lived to much purpose unless he has built a house, begotten a son, or written a book.

Italian Proverb

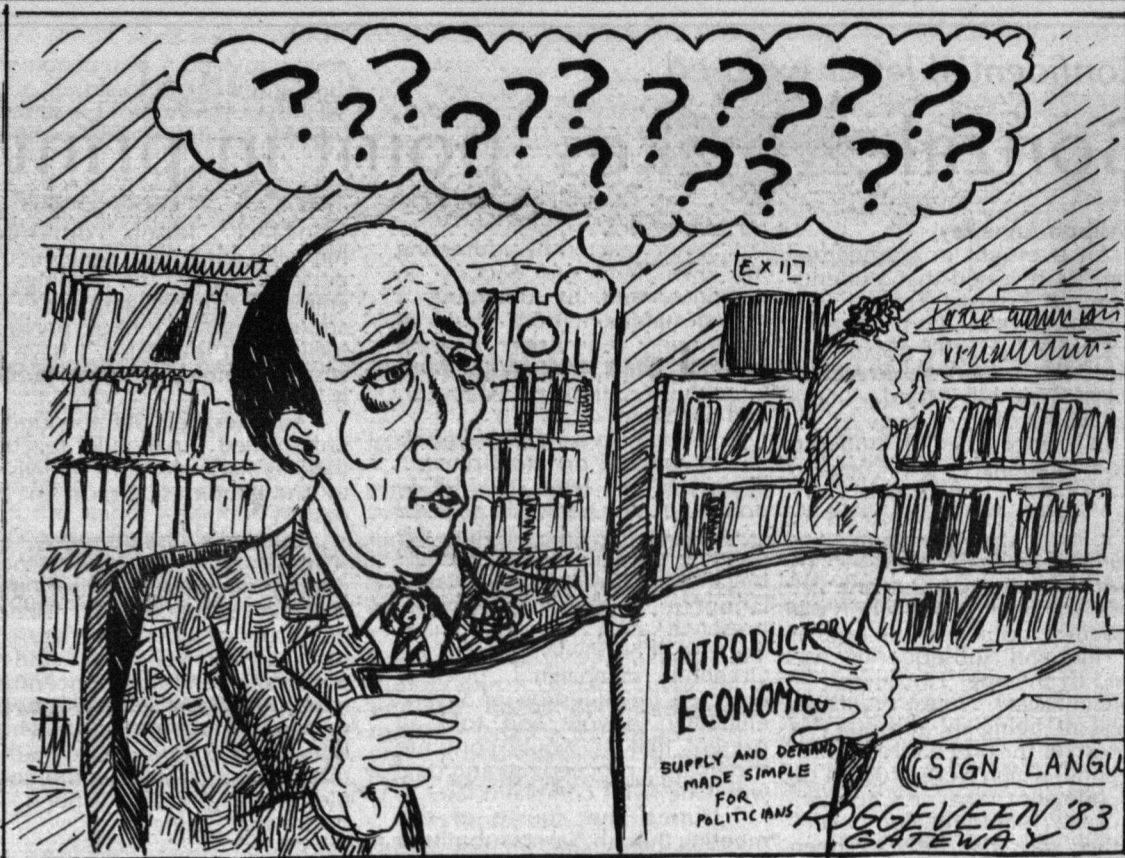
EDITOR-IN-CHIEF - Andrew Watts
 NEWS EDITORS - Allison Annesley, Richard Watts
 MANAGING EDITOR - Jens Andersen
 ARTS EDITOR - David Cox
 SPORTS EDITOR - Brent Jang
 PHOTO EDITOR - Ray Giguere
 CUP EDITOR - Wes Oginski
 PRODUCTION - Anne Stephen, Jim Miller
 ADVERTISING - Tom Wright
 MEDIA SUPERVISOR - Margriet Tilroe-West
 CIRCULATION - Gunnar Blodgett

Staff this issue:

Sing a song of suspense/Bottles full of rye/Four and Twenty journalists/Reach for the sky/When the bottles empty/They begin to sing/Working at the Gateway, man, that's the only thing!

Fresh from the Gateway concert kitchen, the following all-star staffers struggle to produce this day's opus: Ken Lenz, on electric type; Todd Race, on bass; Doug McQueen, on rhythm; Michael Skeet and Mary Ann Nielsen, on vibes; John Algard, on sax; Heather Ann Laird at the keyboard; John Roggeveen, without his coronet; Gilbert Bouchard, Bill Inglee, Martin Beales, and Pierre Mencke horn in on the brass; Margo Schmitt, on tuba; Nate LaRoi, on clarinet; and Jim Gerwing a cappella.

The Gateway is the newspaper of the students of the University of Alberta. Contents are the responsibility of the Editor-in-Chief; opinions and editorials are signed by the writer and do not necessarily reflect the views of the Gateway. Copy deadlines are 12 noon Mondays and Wednesdays. Newsroom: Rm 282, Advertising Dept.: Rm 256D, Students' Union Building, University of Alberta, Edmonton, Alberta, T6G 2J7. Newsroom phone 432-5168 (5178); Advertising - 432-4241, Ext. 28. The Gateway is a member of Canadian University Press. Newspaper readership is 25,000.



« LETTERS TO THE EDITOR »

Madison is not amused

I join Andrew Watts in anticipation of his first well-thought-out and coherent editorial. Unfortunately, his editorial, "CUP is not amused" (Gateway, Feb. 15), was neither. Instead, this article conveyed an amazing lack of concern over charges of sexism levelled against the Gateway by the WRCUP Human Rights Coordinator, Ms. Burke.

In his editorial, Watts states that "the very frantic feminists (presumably Ms. Burke) do not have much of a sense of humor." As a matter of fact, Andrew, I know "frantic feminists" who possess a well-developed sense of humor which is readily expressed - when presented with humorous situations. Sexism and the subjugation of women is, however, totally devoid of humor. Isn't it (sic) a shame, Andrew, that women have lost the ability to laugh at their repressive exploitation and the denial of their basic rights and freedoms.

It is distressing that Andrew Watts, our Student Union VP-External-elect finds so much humor in an issue of such pervasive social importance. This is not surprising, however, as Andrew Watts has a history of editorials expressing indifference to important social issues. A prime example being his inability to fathom the serious efforts of the peace movement toward global nuclear disarmament. Andrew Watts' apparent lack of imagination concerning alternatives to today's social problems is more serious now that he holds an executive position which deals directly with such issues. Perhaps well-thought-out and coherent External Affairs Board members could balance out Mr. Watt's self-professed inadequacies.

Greg Madison, Arts

Better job ads wanted

To the organizers of University Orientation Days: This Sunday, when I should have been basking in the glorious warmth of the sun, I waited with 150 other people in the dubious luxury of Lister Hall's banquet room. The occasion? We were all hopeful applicants for the numerous - or so we had thought - positions advertised for by the organizers of University Orientation Days. The big official-looking ads were run in the Gateway last week, stating that people were needed "to help guide students and parents around campus", and that "(i)nterested students must attend a three-hour training session...." So, happy in the thought of earning a few extra dollars, I showed up at said hall on said glorious day secure in the knowledge that a job would be mine.

Imagine, then, the concerted gnashing of one-hundred fifty sets of teeth that greeted the news that we were all to write a short test, and then that only thirty-five lucky ones would be chosen from the crowd. Needless to say, I was not one of the privileged few selected as suitably experienced and knowledgeable workers. I harbor no ill will towards the winners; they deserved the jobs more than I. However, I'd like to snarl at those who set up the training session. Sirs and mesdames, next time you're looking for help, show some consideration and include the number and type of students you're looking for in your advertisements. Had people known of the limited number of jobs available, and of the preference that would be given to those active in campus clubs and politics, perhaps they would have stayed home and soaked up the rays. I know I would have.

Yours, the peeved
 Heather Proctor, Ag/For 1

On the road to Nirvana

From the title "Footprint of the Buddha" (BBC) one would expect the film (which was screened, 27th Jan. at room 158 SUB) to deal mainly with the philosophy of Buddha. On the contrary the film deals very little on the philosophy, it rather dwells more on "Buddhism as practised by the majority of laymen and monks as well." In Sri Lanka TODAY. As a Sri Lankan and as a person who likes to learn more about the actual philosophy, I consider the above

two (philosophy and what is practised) to be drastically different. The reason for this could be that, anybody who wants, can become a Buddhist monk or layman very easily. Therefore, in that sense, the title of the film is drastically misleading as well.

So, those who were introduced for the first time to the Buddhist-philosophy by this film might have got a wrong impression. Therefore in the interests of those who wanted to learn about the basic philosophy by seeing the film, I would like to write down the basics as I understand.

In Buddhism there are two major divisions:

(1) A philosophy which shows the way to understand the truth (attain Nirvana) by giving up the ordinary life.

(2) A way to conduct a righteous life without giving up the ordinary life. This does not mean that one can not understand the truth (attain Nirvana) by conducting an ordinary life.

According to the philosophy, one does not have to believe in anything (including a God). As long as one believes s/he never can attain Nirvana, it is the understanding which leads one to Nirvana, (the highest state anybody can attain, **nobody** can understand more) and further nobody else can do it for somebody else (but can show the path).

Lastly, I should note that, since I haven't attained Nirvana, theoretically, the above ideas on philosophy could be wrong.

L. Samarasekera, Grad Studies

Gateway was "sloppy"

I feel that I must comment upon your coverage of a question that I asked to Robert Greenhill at the Election Rally of Feb. 9 that resulted in Greenhill reading a confidential memo regarding a possible sale of bookstore space to the University. I do not wish to comment on Greenhill's reading of the memo itself; the decision to read the memo was Greenhill's alone, and there was nothing in my question which, in my opinion, forced him to read the memo.

What I wish to comment on, though, is the way the Gateway wrote up my question. According to the Feb. 10 issue, I "wanted to know why the Therrien Slate had no right to use the selling of the Bookstore space in order to pay off the debt as a campaign platform" and, also, that I "charged him (Greenhill) with unfairly criticizing the Therrien Slate for using the sale of the Bookstore as part of the Therrien financial campaign". In fact, I never mentioned the Therrien Slate in my question. My question centred on two issues: first, that since Tom Wright, the Students' Union Business Manager, and Greenhill, the Students' Union President, were publicly contradicting each other over whether negotiations had begun or whether there had been merely "preliminary discussions" (as Wright stated), this reflected on Greenhill's ability to work as a team member; and secondly, that if negotiations had, in fact, begun I wondered why Greenhill, in his position of President, had not informed Council of these negotiations. Within the context of a political forum, I felt that Greenhill-adequately responded to these two issues. From a larger, administrative point-of-view, though, I still have concerns about the entire matter, which I have already discussed with Teresa Gonzales, the Vice-President (External), and which I hope to raise at a future Students' Council meeting.

I regret your inaccuracy in the reporting of this matter. I am especially angry that you would put words in my mouth, while completely ignoring the real content and purpose of my question. I hope that your sloppy journalism did not unduly influence any voters.

Vaughn Atkinson, Education IV

Letters to the Editor should be under 250 words. Letters must be signed, and include faculty, year and phone number. No anonymous letters will be printed, although we will withhold names. All letters should be typed or very neatly printed. We reserve the right to edit or delete letters for reasons of space or libel. Letters do not necessarily reflect the views of the Gateway.