

EDITORIAL

FAS grows up

\$3.50 is a small price to pay for an effective student lobby organization.

The Federation of Alberta Students (FAS) has, over the past five years, grown from a scrappy little upstart bunch of student radicals to a stable, respected and effective voice representing the concerns and views of the majority of post-secondary students in Alberta.

Of course, after only five years, problems still exist. FAS lacked credibility and was removed from students. Some of its policy positions gained more enemies than friends among students and government officials, and the stigma still remains.

But thankfully, this has been changing.

And with a successful FAS expansion referendum, these positive changes can be continued and amplified. With the additional \$2, FAS can begin devoting more and more of its energy towards lobbying the government for effective education policies, rather than spending so much time simply building grassroots support. The base of support has already been established, and it is time to build on it.

Students are still reluctant, however, to wholeheartedly acknowledge the need for a lobby group. Somehow, their naive attitude sees it as horribly "radical" to oppose government policies.

This is silly. Lawyers, doctors, bankers, and indeed most professional and blue collar occupations all have their own lobby groups designed to fight government measures harmful to their interests. The same logic that applies in the real world should also apply to students.

High tuition fees simply are not in any student's best interest, regardless of their political persuasion. And this is not the only issue of concern to FAS. Improvements in the student aid program, greater student representation on various government bodies, and increased funding for universities and technical schools all receive attention from FAS, and their research and lobbying has led to improvements in some areas.

The internal structure of FAS is also scheduled to change, providing the individual members with more direct input into the people and policies of FAS. This can only make the organization more responsible to the concerns and problems of the members.

The U of A is the first major campus to have a vote on the expansion referendum. This provides students with an opportunity to set the example and show their support for FAS. In the long run, this support will show results — a better and more effective education policy for the people of Alberta.

And for \$3.50, that's quite a deal.

Keith Krause

the Gateway

If it happens on campus...it's news to us.

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GOOD-BYE HAROLD... SO LONG TED, ALAN... I'M...
 << sob >>... GONNA MISS ALL YOU LITTLE FELLAS...

"Coverup" story a fantasy

I am writing to express my concern regarding the front page story of January 13, "Nuclear coverup underway." This article seems to be both an example of sensationalistic journalism, and an illustration of a favorite tactic of pseudo-scientific groups, making alarming but baseless allegations. I will attempt here to point out the fallacies in Mr. Pawlick's arguments.

The major point seems to be an increase in infant deaths in the northeastern United States following the accident. However, the radiation releases were only detectable up to twenty miles from the plant. It is senseless to look for effects covering the entire northeastern U.S.

One must also consider the many other factors affecting the number of infant deaths, including the increased birth rate seen at that time of year. Even close to Three Mile Island, the public was exposed to a dosage of less than three chest x-rays, far less for most individuals. I must also note that the quoted Dr. Sternglass has already tarnished his reputation over Three Mile Island. At the time of the accident, he predicted an immediate large (5-20%) increase in the leukemia rate, which has not appeared.

In regard to some of the other points mentioned: I do not find a printing error in a government publication the least bit surprising; medical journals are not text books. They deal in new knowledge and, particularly in the highly disrupted area of the effects of low level radiation, and can be expected to show the occasional discrepancy. The Three Mile Island accident has been the subject of investigations. I am aware of at least three such, and, rather than trying to confuse the public, nuclear officials commonly oversimplify in an effort to be understood.

A more reasonable allegation was mentioned in passing at the end. The thyroid concentrates radioactive iodine (a product of nuclear reactions) resulting in

thyroid disorders. However, no radioactive iodine escaped the Three Mile plant, only radioactive noble gasses which do not become incorporated in living tissue.

Finally, the central intimation of this article is of a massive coverup. A government coverup is improbable in this post-Watergate era, especially with the strong anti-nuclear element at work in Washington. (President Carter was forced, prior to Three Mile Island, to soften his strong pronuclear stance.) Furthermore, although Canadian governments are notoriously stingy with information, the American Freedom of Information Act could have been used by Mr. Pawlick to obtain whatever it is that he feels governments are 'covering up.'

While a government coverup

is hard to accept, the idea of a press coverup is ludicrous. Rather, at the time of the Three Mile Island accident, something close to hysteria ruled the news media as reporters from as far off as Japan flocked to the site within hours of the first signs of trouble. Far from covering up for the nuclear industry, government and the press in the U.S. have come close to killing it in a process going back years before the accident.

In conclusion I wish to mention both that the nuclear industry is at a standstill in this time of increasing need for clean, cheap energy, and that there has never been a fatal accident in the nuclear industry, a safety record unprecedented in any industry.

Robert Morewood
 Science I

Uphold right to drink

In regards to the ridiculous letter concerning the closure of RATT ("Close RATT for Good"), calling student patrons of RATT "drunken slob" only indicates the low degree of education that this person absorbed during her four years at the university.

What she, as a phys. ed student, does not seem to realize is that the academic students do spend a great deal of their time "cramming their heads with knowledge". We should consider ourselves fortunate to have such a fine pub on campus where a student can go a few times a month to relax and have a beer and friendly chat with fellow students. The closure of RATT would be a blow to the comradeship of being a U of A student.

It is reassuring, however, to see that patrons of RATT are not being asked to show U of A ID cards before entering the premises. This will undoubtedly cut down on the number of non-students who like to frequent RATT and will probably help eliminate the occasional problems that occur on campus at night.

Perhaps this procedure should be considered for the dances at Dinwoodie as well. It seems that sometimes the standard line used in Dinwoodie cabaret conversations is "So what high school do you go to?"

Herb DeWaal
 Science II

Get Down and Party!

It's time for a party for all Gateway staff and whoever else we like. Details in 282 SUB. Friday, January 30.

Be there or be sober!