

Election suicide

I feel a bit sorry for students who run in the SU general elections, because they are usually expected to stand in front of hostile and cynical audiences to discuss issues that only a few seem interested in. A fair deal of confidence is required to "face the lions" during the campaign, and I respect most candidates who take the chance.

Nonetheless, and despite my best intentions, it is difficult to avoid cynicism when considering this year's slates contesting the election. The only significant difference I can discern is one of political naivete: at the election forum, presidential candidate Scott Thorkelson displayed a frightening lapse of political cool and plain good taste.

Pressed by a string of students asking him difficult and somewhat embarrassing questions, Thorkelson shot back and accused his questioners of being "plants" placed by the opposition candidates. He went on to name names, including people who hadn't even asked questions but were merely attending the forum.

As a presidential candidate, Thorkelson should be ready for criticism and constant evaluation, no matter how hard he tries to avoid it. Plants are as common as pamphlets at election forums, and any candidate worth his nomination deposit is prepared to deal with them, come forum time. Playing into the hands of his baiters by losing his cool and accusing virtually every familiar face in the theater of being a plant lost Thorkelson a lot of respect that he just couldn't afford to lose.

Later, the entire Thorkelson slate left the forum before it had been officially adjourned. Thorkelson stated "classroom speaking commitments" as the reason for their early departure. Alas, Scott, this I find difficult to believe.

Anyone who has an inkling of the nature of Students' Union campaigns realizes that the Wednesday forum is the single most important function held during election week. No one who wants to win schedules lesser events during the forum hours. To leave the stage before the end of the forum is absolutely inexcusable, and Thorkelson might well have said, "Vote for the Astley slate."

Because of the attention Thorkelson drew upon himself, his opponent Nolan Astley was able to escape any serious questioning. This was unfortunate, because Astley's platform has more holes in it than I care to count.

Astley strikes me as a nice, Joe Clark type, molded in the Dean Olmstead style. If Astley is elected, we can likely expect a very similar year to this one: the slate will probably spend most of its time avoiding controversy and worrying about its image. The slate ran a boring campaign, and one of the reasons Astley avoided being pinpointed at the forum is because there was nothing controversial in his campaign.

That's the key. Despite my own and other people's opinions about Thorkelson's platform, it at least outlined some specific proposals and ideas. Astley meticulously avoided saying anything that was worthy or controversial enough for discussion. And he'll probably win the election because of it.

The only people at the forum who seemed interested in anything but political posturing were the three independent candidates, Darrell Rankin, Mary Ann Gillies, and Ron Snyder. It's unfortunate that Snyder and Gillies are fighting for the same post, because both of them, as well as Rankin, deserve to win (at least on the basis of their campaigning).

The slate system is obsolete. Let's recognize that finally and then do something about it. That is, if anyone still cares.

Gordon Turtle

the Gateway

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Hey - don't criticize our service

I am always disheartened upon reading letters such as that submitted by Ted Mill ("SU services for us," February 5 issue of *The Gateway*) as these comments contain an overabundance of sarcasm and an underabundance of constructive criticism.

In reference to his comments regarding SU Records and SU Music and Tapes, it should be noted that 1) our prices are lower than most any other retail record store in Edmonton; 2) our selection is one of the best in the city, especially in the classical department; and 3) we provide specialized sheet music for University students and staff that is not normally available elsewhere.

In reference to his comments about SUB Theatre, yes, there are problems; but it should also be remembered that these problems are not new or simple and it will take more than a day to turn the Theatre around. If Mr. Mill were to compare the programming of the first term to the second, he would see a marked improvement. Finally, if he (or any student for that matter) would care to offer constructive suggestions as to Theatre programming, these would be welcomed. (The Theatre Manager's office is on the main floor of the Students' Union Building.)

With reference to his comments about RATT and Fridays, table service in RATT has reduced its security problems and increased the efficiency of bar service. If he (or anyone) is dissatisfied with the service in RATT (or Fridays), perhaps he should contact someone who can do something about the problem. (The Manager for Students' Union Food Services has his office located in Fridays Restaurant — lower north end.) Also, if Mr. Mill is unimpressed with the music in Fridays, perhaps he should speak with the programming director for CJSR campus radio (c/o Room 224 Students' Union Building, 432-5244). Finally, the request that

bar staff follow certain dress codes is part of an ongoing trend to improve the environment in RATT — as opposed to reinforcing an environment that once was a second-class tavern.

As for his comments about the Christmas break for Students' Union Canadian Union of Public Employees (CUPE) employees, it might interest Mr. Mill to know that all CUPE employees have several options (including working) for the Christmas break and that this arrangement was agreed to in its entirety by the union at our last negotiations session.

Finally, no one is asking Mr. Mill (or anyone) to "endure" Students' Union policy in any form. Perhaps instead of sounding off on the pages of *The*

Gateway (on matters that he does not know all of the facts), he (and anyone else who is seriously concerned) should contact his Student Councillor (in this case, Alan Fenna or Kate Orrell) or any member of the Students' Union executive (c/o Room 259 Students' Union Building, 432-4236) to resolve what he sees as problems or policies to be "endured."

On a concluding note, it is not Dean Olmstead, the Students' Union president, who is solely responsible for what goes on (right or) wrong with the Students' Union — all of his colleagues are involved in these decisions and deserve their share of the (credit) or blame.

Sharon Bell
Vice President
(Internal Affairs)

"No answer" executive

I agree with most of the Editorial of January 31 on the performance of members of the executive — especially the part about Chanchal Bhattacharya.

I have been trying to contact this gentleman since last September, without success. Numerous phone calls are met with the response, "He's not in his office." Then you leave your phone number and ask him to phone back, but he never does. And this is not just my complaint. Others have said the same thing. The first thing you should learn, Mr. Bhattacharya, is that it is common courtesy to answer phone messages left for you. If your Editorial writer is correct, Bhattacharya hasn't even come up with the Student Bill of Rights, which he has been talking about for two years.

I think that the criticism of Tema Frank is unfair. Given a government determined to raise tuition fees, and a totally apathetic student body, there is nothing much she can do. Persuading the government should be tried, which is the reason for inviting MLAs to dinner. And

there was no need for her to take a stand on the Convention Centre, because it was a non-issue right from the start. She has definitely taken stands on many other issues. She originated the idea of sponsoring refugees, which will remain as one of the most lasting of achievements of any Student Council. Tema may not be a first-class executive, but she has come up with the best and most original ideas on campus. Unfortunately, some people are afraid of original ideas.

E.G. Mani
Arts III

More parking problems

Occasionally a vehicle parking permit holder may encounter problems that prevent use of the registered vehicle for a period of time.

In such instances it can be arranged to use another vehicle without payment for parking, if certain conditions are met.

If the lot has an attendant, the vehicle operator must inform the attendant that the vehicle is being used temporarily. In addition, it is required the operator leave a note to the same effect on the windshield and telephone Parking Services (3811) advising of the situation.

If the lot is unattended, a note on the windshield and a phone call to Parking Services is required.

One reason why Parking Services is to be telephone is to ensure the temporary vehicle is clear. In one instance it was discovered a temporary vehicle was on the tow away list, much to the embarrassment of the user.

W.F.G. Perry
Director
Campus Security and Traffic

Rules for candidates

1. Strive to look tremendously important.
2. Attempt to be seen with important people, if you can find any.
3. Speak with authority; however, only expound on the obvious and proven facts.
4. Don't engage in arguments but, if cornered, ask an irrelevant question and lean back with a satisfied grim while your opponent tries to figure out what's going on — then quickly change the subject.
5. Listen intently while others are arguing the problem. Pounce on a trite statement and bury them with it.
6. If a subordinate asks you a pertinent question, look at him as if he had lost his senses. When he looks down, paraphrase the question back at him.
7. Get on important committees, but keep out of sight and out of the limelight.
8. Walk at a fast pace when out of the office — this keeps questions from subordinates and superiors at a minimum.
9. Always keep the office door closed. This puts visitors on the defensive and also makes it look as if you are always in an important conference.
10. Give all orders verbally. Never write anything down that might go into a file and incriminate you.

David A Trenton
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