

Goodbye TLF

by Randal Smathers

Last year, someone in the office scoured our Calgary sister paper, *The Gauntlet*, and noticed their free classified section, Three Lines Free. It seemed like a good idea at the time; famous last words.

I was production editor last year, and volunteered to start a TLF of our own. Call me Dr. Frankenstein. I had hoped that it would let people send things like birthday greetings, get well messages, things like that. Maybe even start a few witty exchanges.

Last year TLF was comparatively tame, probably because I was a ruthless editor. If I got a rude message from, say Joe Phussel, and it was signed "Jane Doe" in the TLF, out it went.

This year, Winston Pei is our production editor. He's a lot less suspicious than I am, and therefore he let slide a few messages through that I wouldn't have. That's not to say that Winnie was wrong and I was right; instead it's merely an acknowledgement of two different editing styles.

TLF, like Frankie's monster, grew in size, and developed a malicious edge. We started getting phone calls from people who had received seemingly-harmless TLF's, and were very upset by things we didn't realize were nasty codes. Campus Security dropped by to have a chat about one TLF. Organized groups started using TLF's to send a variety of messages: some innocent, some rude, some potentially libellous. All of a sudden, TLF's had to be double and triple checked to prevent abuses, and for what?

So Candi, Bambi, and Hugh G. Rection (among many others) could show off their limited senses of humour. So a few people could, by using a variety of names, write not three free lines, but twenty-seven. So those ignoramuses who give 'Geers a bad name could try and heap abuse on those who objected to *The Bridge*. So that people who think a hot-foot is an art form could play practical jokes.

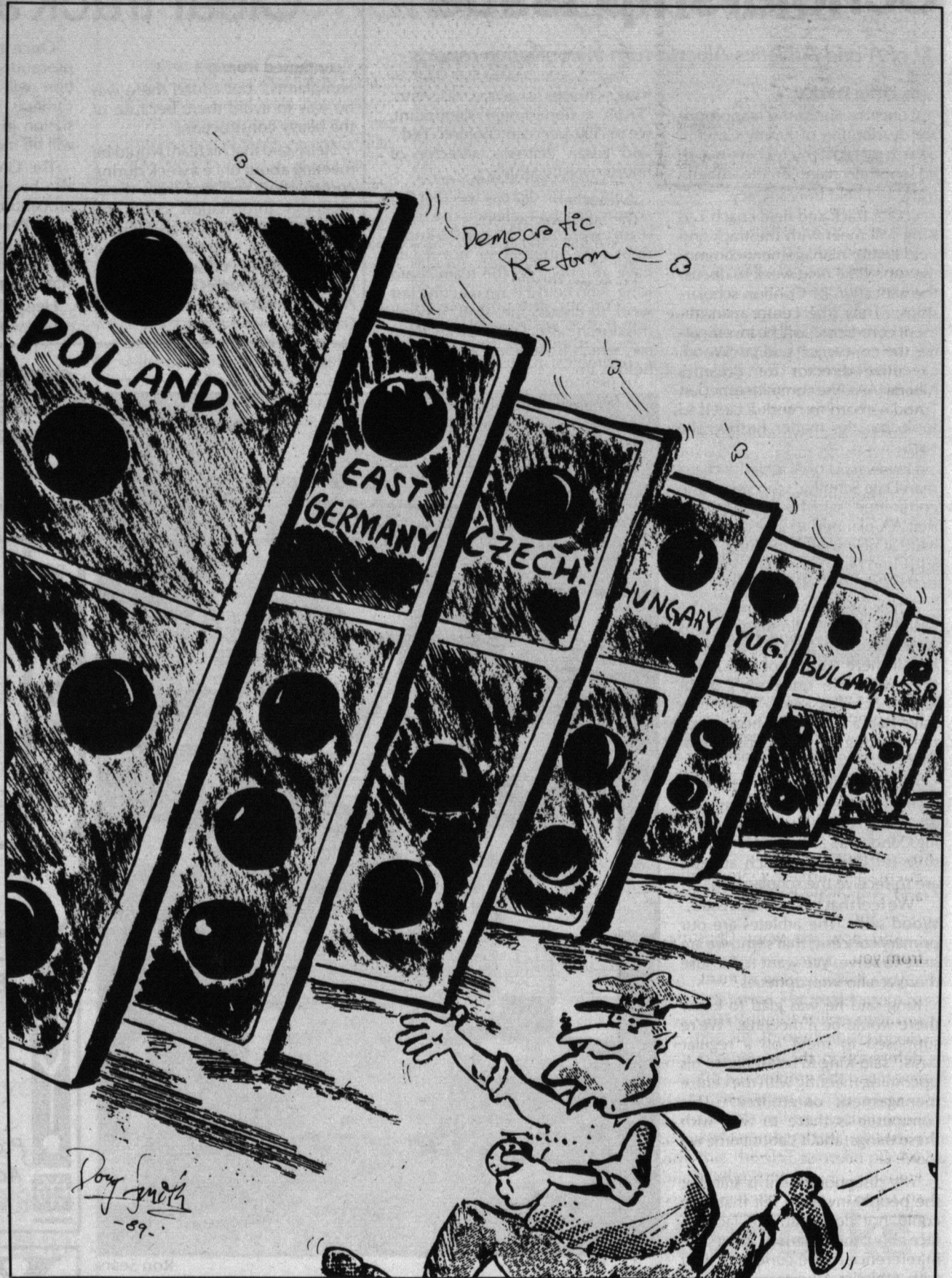
It wasn't worth the effort, and it wasn't worth the risk of libelling someone, or letting the morons abuse innocent people through the TLF medium.

To those people who used TLF the way it was intended, I'm sorry it's gone. To those who used TLF as a weapon, or tried to, I hope you flunk out, because you certainly aren't mature enough to be at a university. To those earnest souls who had to write to the person of their dreams, try talking to them—it almost undoubtedly works better. Our staff wishes you all the best. To the lusters who merely drooled in print over their favourite hunk of meat, tough. To those who avidly read TLF for its scintillating content, try the personals sections of other local newspapers.

At least I won't have to worry that my one enduring legacy at the University of Alberta will be a half-page of mindless drivel every issue.

The temptation is strong to close with one of the many truly ignorant TLF's I've read and rejected over the past year, but instead I'll just say: Merry Christmas to all, and to all a good exam season.

Dr. Frankenstein signing off.



LETTERS

Please keep letters brief. All letters must include name, faculty, year, phone number and ID number (ID and phone will not be printed).

Attention track team members

As a past member of the U of A track club, I am troubled by the stories on the front page of the past two editions of *The Gateway*. First of all, after years of seeing all track stories printed obscurely amongst the personal ads, I was not surprised at all to see bad press clippings posted on the front page reflecting *The Gateway's* attitude toward the

program. Secondly, I am disappointed in the athletes themselves. During the years I've been here, I've seen a track team win a national title one year, and then be dropped from funding the next. My advice is to be careful. The track team is not a major priority for the U of A athletics department. Dr. Haddow one year printed a finding that the Football Team spent more money on tape than was allotted our entire program. So watch your words.

I do not doubt that there are problems with scholarship monies, there always has been and there probably always will be, as long as

the number allotted is limited. I have known people that got scholarships and never ran one race. I also knew one who ran at CIAU's and did not receive one, so there have been problems. The difference this year is that the team members in question have gone about change the wrong way. Over the years I had some amazing times, and I met some great friends, and this is why I'm writing. I had those times taken away from me for a year, and I think next time the program is scrapped it will be for more than a year. So be careful.

Dave Findlay

Library clarifies late-night hours

We appreciated Fiona Cameron's article on the Cameron Library's 24-hour service from December 9-16. One small clarification from your accompanying photo, though: The Library's reserve room and circulation services will close at their regular hours—the overnight access to the main floor of Cameron is to provide study space only.

So while we hope we can relieve pressure on your frayed nerves by offering a quiet refuge to pull an all-nighter, please don't leave your final forays into the depths of Reserve readings to the witching hour.

Doug Poff
Information and Reserve Centre
Cameron Library



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