

EDITORIAL

Don't stand so close

A former Princeton student filed a suit in Federal District Court in Pennsylvania recently, claiming \$500,000 in damages for being called a cheater. At issue was Princeton's honour code, which was instituted in 1893.

We don't have to contend with the honour code here at the U of A. And we should be thankful about that.

Under such a system, students write exams without supervision. That's right - students would be trusted not to cheat. In case someone steps out of line, the honour code calls for fellow students to report violations. Fat chance.

The weakness of the honour code becomes apparent once students decide to ignore violations. In a small class, students can collaborate during an exam to skew the bell-curve to the right. In a large class, a student can stretch his neck slightly to see what the person ahead of him has checked off in a multiple-choice exam.

The introduction of the honour system here would cause chaos.

Professors would be tempted to take advantage of low airfares now being offered and book a flight for midterm week. You see, their absence would be necessary if the upcoming midterms here were to be administered on an honour system. So why not stay far away?

The current U of A Student Code of Behaviour lists the following as offences: cheating, plagiarism, fraud, deceit, and other forms of academic dishonesty. The penalties for committing an offense range from expulsion to suspension to reprimand.

These rules and regulations are important and they serve to stimulate the otherwise dormant student mechanism known as common sense. Although some may say it promotes professor-student antagonism, the present U of A system ensures that students do their own work, at least during exams.

Students can already discuss their assignments with others, but this reliance often leads to mediocre papers. Imagine if exams became the domain of groups of students: I mean, why not just forget about individual initiative?

How many times has your professor cast an evil eye on the classroom? How often have you found an ominous figure lurking over your shoulder, pacing the aisles, and generally acting as Big Brother?

The professor doesn't enjoy that enforcer image; it's a role that is now accepted by students; it's not necessarily a villainous role, though. It's an authoritative capacity that's required because students will do anything, yes, even cheat, in this competitive atmosphere.

According to an article in the *New York Times*, the honour code was implemented in response to what a Princeton senior called "a continuous sly warfare between professor and student". Sure, professors could ask designated proctors to hand out the exams, then leave the room, and come back at the end.

This would place the onus on the professor to set up exams that are completely self-explanatory. That may not be too much to ask but in many instances the student has questions during an exam that will require the professor's clarification.

A major disadvantage of the honour system, in fact the crux behind the plaintiff's \$500,000 suit mentioned earlier, is its dependence on the tribunal. The tribunal at Princeton consists of a panel of nine students that investigate undergraduates' dishonesty. (Perhaps it would be best described as something like the U of A Students' Union DIE Board, except from an academic perspective.)

The honour system doesn't encourage students to be responsible. It doesn't invite students to go into an exam with high marks in mind. It simply opens the door for ill-prepared students.

So the issue of the U of A adopting an honour code, even assuming that we'll all uphold the rules of the game, is not a good idea. Laissez-faire exams are a fad of the past. Under our present scenario, an ill-prepared student would be too busy concentrating on the task at hand anyway, to even notice the professor.

Brent Jang

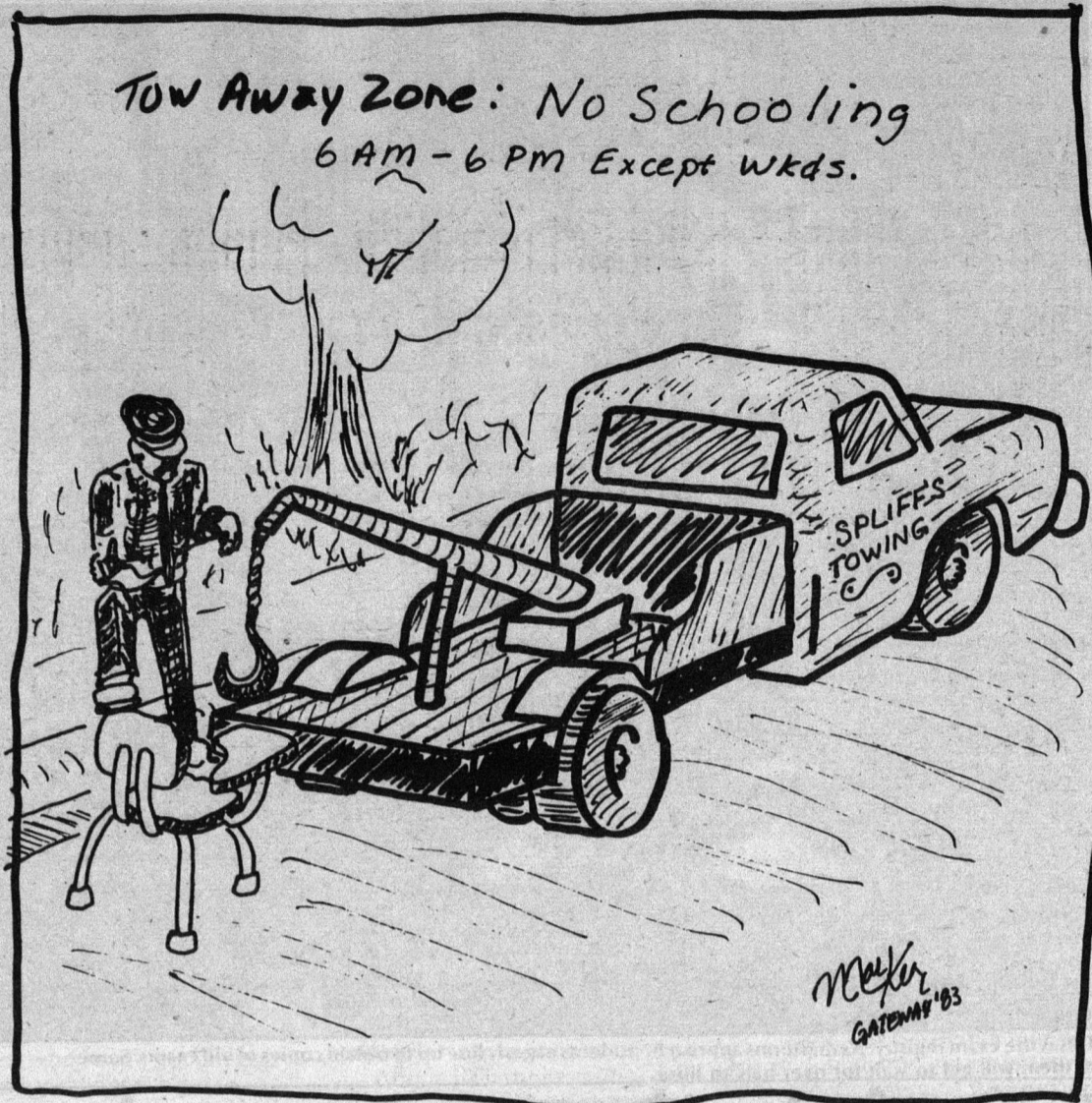
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Staff this Issue

As their waistlines expanded and their stomachs growled, the faithful Gilbertologists patiently slaved another Thanksgiving. Christine Koch, Sally-Ann Mowat, and Christine... discussed the merits of sage dressing, while Algard and Bernard Poitras fantasized about pumpkin pie. Patrice Struyk, Mark Lane, and Neal Watson complained about too much family togetherness, while Ann Greever, Simon Blake, and Cheryl Parsons cried over how they missed the folks back home. Joe Mackenzie and Ludwig planned their Halloween costumes as Martin Schug and Tom Huh dispensed turkey sandwiches. Finally, in desperation, Jordan Peterson and Brenda Waddle shouted, "Cheer up everyone! Christmas is only 64 shopping days away!"

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« LETTERS TO THE EDITOR »

Repeat this in English

I have been reading up on Ernest Braithwaite III. I think that he is a vulgar snob. If he is to put us down, we should do the same to him:

1. He makes spelling mistakes on his letters.
2. I suppose he took 2 years military service.
3. He makes \$750,000 a year; because that's about all that he is, a money filled snob.
4. He is totally perfect; I really believe it.
5. I really is a jerk.

I feel sorry for him wasting his ink on us "Western Peasants". So he can just take a suck fit. (sic)

Arnold Yeoman

Cutlines contemptuous

We are appalled. The Gateway still deems it appropriate to impose their crude brand of "satire" upon the student body. We don't understand the "humor" behind the caption for the picture on the front of the Oct. 4 Gateway. Why is wearing a graduation cap or a smile "silly"? As people who sometimes wear headcoverings and even smile on occasion, we seem to have missed the point. We both firmly believe in the integrity symbolized by The Cap and Gown, and the human honesty conveyed in a smile. Yet the staff at the Gateway seem to feel that both are adequate targets for "satire." Surely even sick humorists would draw the line at silly hats and smiles. Further, when you claimed that they were "innocent administrators with little hope for a look that's right," it only serves to demean the human condition that touches us all. We felt the picture symbolized the humanity of the university institution. Perhaps the responsibility rests with the editor in explaining the satire, for surely it cannot be assumed that after 15 plus years of education we would be able to figure these things out for ourselves.

Alan Herchuk,
Arts IV
Brian Carak,
Arts III
"Buckwheat and Alfalfa"

With symptoms like this I'd start to worry

My equilibrium was upset when I read the article about the Molson University Challenge (Oct. 4). I could not sleep, I could not eat and could not concentrate; I had bad dreams, I had stomach cramps and my brain hurt. But, I will have sore cheeks, I will be tickled pink, and will split my gut when Calgary wins the \$4,000.

M.S. Cadaver

SU contemptuous

The Students' Union needs to be reproved for their recent action against the campus "right to life" group. Not only has the Students' Union violated a fundamental Canadian right (freedom of expression) as guaranteed in the constitution, but far worse, has suppressed a voice speaking in favour of the unborn, those who cannot defend themselves.

Having taken the time to review the literature in question, I agree, it is gruesome.

I was shocked. One look revealed that it is not mere fetal tissue or a product of conception that is being removed in our hospitals, as some would have us believe. What I saw was the smashed and broken bodies of tiny human children.

But there are other gruesome pictures in human history. Auschwitz, Cambodia and El Salvador all stand as names that are linked with man's inhumanity to man. No one condemns groups for presenting evidence of tragedies in those places, why jump on the right to life group? Or is it that this time we are the perpetrators of the crime and cannot stand the truth?

Ken Light
Science III

The Real Problem

I agree with Ernest Braithwaite III and company. But Ernie, you are looking at a cancerous tumor that has been infecting society for a long time.

We can trace the problems of today back to the early Fifties and the grating of hips and music that started Rock and Roll. But wait, maybe it does not start there, what about the Roaring Twenties and the Gay Nineties? Maybe we can go back to the blossoming of non-church music forced on us by Beethoven, Strauss, Wagner, and Mozart, or to the flourishing of the decadent plays of Shakespeare and Co? Back further you say? The Renaissance, the Roman Empire, the Greeks, the Babylonians, ...?

Hey Ernie, how about you and your paramilitary friends getting together, grabbing some "right thinking" women, and moving into some trees? Preferably off campus so us decadent liberals do not have to put up with such closed-mindedness.

Colin Twissler
Pre-Vet II

Censor with a heart

This letter is in response to Tracy Pelland's objections to the removal of Penthouse, Playboy, and Playgirl magazines from the University Bookstore in the Students' Union Building and his allegations that the Students' Union is not minding its own business. As a point of information, it was the University Administration who removed those