

I always turn to the sports page first. The sports page records people's accomplishments...

# The Gateway

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...the front page, nothing but man's failure.

—Earl Warren  
former Chief Justice  
of the U.S.A.

**"If a child is dying we can't wait until the political problems are solved..."**

## Arafat stresses Palestinian plight

by **Lutful Kabir Khan**

"The world must dissociate the social and medical concerns of the Palestinian people from their political dilemma."

Dr. Fathi Arafat, M.D., chairman of the Palestinian Red Crescent Society (PRCS), and the younger brother of PLO chairman Yasser Arafat, was speaking on the occasion of the Palestine Awareness Week.

"If a child is dying we can't wait until the political problems are solved first before helping her."

Arafat sadly noted that the western media has been focussing on just one aspect of the Palestine problem while completely ignoring the plight of five million homeless people scattered in refugee camps over many different countries and living under the most torturous conditions since 1948.

"The Palestinians are rarely portrayed as human beings in need of social and medical care," he said.

The Palestinian Red Crescent Society was established in 1968 with the humanitarian service to the afflicted refugees in mind.

Over the years it has established 70 hospitals, 100 out-patient clinics, and a number of social service centres in Lebanon, Syria, Egypt, and Jordan.

Arafat's headquarters are situated in the Acre Hospital near the Sabra refugee camp in Beirut. It is a modern facility with intensive care units.

"Providing health care and social services in Third World countries is

always difficult due to shortage of funds, personnel, and equipment," said, Arafat, "but our problem is even more serious due to the scattering of the Palestinian people and the ravages of war."

"Many of the U.N. health facilities were discontinued after the Israeli invasion of Lebanon and the PRCS were operating the only health services for war-torn Lebanon."

"There is acute shortage of water and electricity, but our volunteers are working in hardship. We have children digging wells to get water for the casualties staying in shelters."

The work of the Palestinian Red Crescent Society is carried out by volunteers, more than 50% of whom are women. "We have over 3000 non-Arabs volunteering for PRCS and just one of them is Dr. Christian from Canada," said Arafat.

"The PRCS places strong emphasis on training of people in social and medical fields under diverse conditions," said Arafat. "Many of them refused to leave the hospitals during the 1982 Israeli invasion and died martyrs."

"Many Arab countries and some Asian and Socialist countries, the World Health Organization (WHO), non-governmental organizations in Canada and the U.S.A., and donations from individuals provide almost half of the \$100 million budget of PRCS."

The rest is provided by PLO," said Arafat, "but we need more



Drs. Abu-Laban (left) and Fathi Arafat

photo Kabir Khan

equipment and personnel to meet the increasing demand of social and medical care of the Palestinian refugees who are often neglected by the health services of the host countries."

Dr. Arafat spoke in Arabic while

Dr. Abu-Laban, Vice-President (research) U of A, translated for him. But Arafat answered the questions from the audience in clear English.

"I am very pleased to be amongst you. Students are the people who

spearhead peaceful movement; they are energetic and they can help," said Arafat. "The Palestinian Red Crescent Society is very humanitarian in nature; we are serving the cause of world peace."

**"We need more skyscrapers on Whyte Avenue..."**

## Heated debate erupts over Varscona

by **Matt Hays**

A heated discussion characterized a meeting to determine the fate of the Varscona Cinema, at Garneau community hall last Thursday.

"The owners have acquired a demolition permit and they intend to use it," said local architect Brian Alsopp to a group of about 60 people.

"There are very few buildings of this class in the city."

He also named the Varscona as one of his five favorite Edmonton buildings.

"A rejuvenation of the building could lead to the redevelopment of west 82nd Avenue," Alsopp added.

Strathcona MLA Gordon Wright was present for the meeting and feels that responsibility for the project lies with the government.

"If we are to impose a financial penalty on the owners then it's unfair," he stated.

Susan Morrow, Honorary Lady Mayor of Strathcona, felt the suggestion that the Varscona be turned into a repertory cinema was not a feasible one.

"Through my business experience I'd have to say I can understand the owner's position (to sell the building)," she said.

Gilbert Funk, a local businessman, spoke adamantly for the destruction of the building.

"I'm not in favor of keeping that rat-trap of a building. We live in a new age. We need more skyscrap-

ers on Whyte Avenue. I'm in favor of progress."

Funk also had a few words for the already-preserved east end of Whyte.

"Who colour-coded these buildings? Red, blue, yellow — it's reminiscent of something from the

flower children of the sixties!"

A cooler head of opposition then rose to speak. David Margolis is the lawyer representing the present owners of the Varscona.

"The owners have a severe economic problem," stressed Margolis. "They have tried many eco-

conomic ventures — none have worked."

Alsopp countered that "the building can be made into an economically viable part of the community."

"This may be the finest original free-standing theatre in Canada."

Organizers of the evening asked that people write the provincial minister of Culture, Dennis Anderson, concerning the issue. Anderson has the power to proclaim the Varscona an historic sight, thus saving it from demolition.

## Palestine Awareness Week

by **Lutful Kabir Khan**

Palestine Awareness Week was inaugurated last Saturday with an informative lecture on the social and medical aspects of Palestinian refugees.

Dr. Fathi Arafat, Director, Palestinian Red Crescent Society, was the speaker. He is also the younger brother of PLO chairman Yasser Arafat.

The week-long activities organized by the Arab Students' Association include lectures on the historical and cultural perspectives and the future of the Palestinian people. Dr. H. Barclay, professor of Anthropology, and Dr. B. Abu-Laban, Palestine-born Vice-President (Research) of the U of A, are scheduled to speak.

The lectures are on Tuesday, Nov. 25 and Thursday, Nov. 27 at 3:00 p.m. in Humanities Centre Lecture Theatre 1.

Two films — "The Palestine People Do Have Rights" by the United Nations and "The Native Sons: Palestinians In Exile", produced by

Tom Hayes, will also be shown during the week. In addition, there will be a slide show of a recent trip to the occupied West Bank.

The Arab Students' Association will maintain an information booth in HUB Mall, 10 a.m. to 2 p.m., Monday through Thursday.

## U sign lights up soon

by **Greg Halinda**

Get ready for a flashy new electronic sign to bring you news of upcoming university events.

"We're hoping to have it up within six to eight weeks," Wayne McCutcheon said of the new sign, which will be stationed on 87 Avenue near the Butterdome. (McCutcheon is the U of A grounds manager).

The message board will measure 24 feet long, and will be set about 22 feet above sidewalk level. It will convey messages via a matrix of over 900 light bulbs.

Messages will be programmed with a PC in the Department of Athletics Services, but will not be limited to athletic events. Any faculty or department will be able to run public service announcements across the board.

The new sign will do with elegance what the grimy old yellow signboard perched beside the Pavilion did with simplicity. No commercial advertising will be carried.

The custom sign will be paid for with the help of an Alberta government grant.

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