

# editorial

So, we're back to *Abortion*. I'll never get used to the vehement debate that this issue raises time after time on these pages. Because it rages so often, I usually tried not to get involved.

It seems that every six months or so a few more people discover the abortion-on-demand controversy; are appalled; and feel morally compelled to spill their guts all over the place. It doesn't take much to set them off, either.

When Student Council defeated a motion to support the International Campaign for Abortion Rights last week one letter of opposition (Feb. 20) elicited a page full of responses. (God knows what would have happened if the motion had been passed—I guess we would have had to boycott infertile women). I feel it's time for me to enter the discussion.

I'm suspicious of the fervor of the anti-abortionists. Though I am pro-choice, and strongly so, I recognize that there are legitimate arguments to be made against abortion. And I listen to these arguments with respect: there are difficulties with the possible abuse of abortion-on-demand; there is a moral dilemma in deeming when life begins and therefore when action such as this can be taken; and imagine for a moment the readjustment necessary for this society to accept abortion wholly and cope with the results. These matters cannot be dealt with lightly.

But who responds to the abortion issue? Usually the pompous, self-serving fundamentalists whose concern over the rights of the unborn blind them to any existing social circumstances involving the rights of the living. Often this conveniently allows *them* to judge what is right and wrong for *everyone* in *all* cases.

I'll bet these people have no idea of the realities of the situation. They simply judge, and that's when I, especially as a woman, get mad. Implicit in many of the arguments against abortion is a belief that it will be used as a "contraceptive" that couples (read-women) will gleefully "shirk responsibility" of "recreational intercourse" because—after all—you can get rid of "it" anyway.

What nonsense. Responsibility for contraception is a conscious choice that can not, and will not, vanish with the accessibility to abortion. It is simply *not* an appetizing nor convenient alternative for responsible people. To suggest this is to severely underestimate the integrity, the *morality*, of our peers. Especially the women.

Who are they trying to kid? Abortion still carries an enormous stigma. And the trauma is not all externally produced. Ask a woman who's had an abortion—if you can find one who will admit it—how she feels about it. I'll bet there's no indication of pride of having beaten the rap, or any suggestion that the experience was anything short of dehumanizing. Probably she's blocked it out of her memory, or is trying to.

And then try to assess your own feelings about her. Somehow, with that knowledge, it's not quite the same, is it? But that's the reality. Internal conflict and little, if any, outside compassion. So how can these anti-abortionists be so smug?

The real "interesting blind spot" in this debate is the one that refuses to see this situation. Not all women are opportunistic, sacreligious, witless, sleazy nymphomaniacs. Not all women will use this as a weapon against men, or to free themselves from the responsibility of sex. Not all women will demand abortion; in fact, most will never need to choose.

But there will always be some women who must choose, and they should have that right to do so, even if there is abuse of it.

Loreen Lennon

## the Gateway

VOL. LXIX NO. 39  
THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 22, 1979  
SIXTEEN PAGES

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

THE GATEWAY is the newspaper of the students of the University of Alberta. With a circulation of 18,500, the Gateway is published by its proprietor, the Students' Union, Tuesdays and Fridays during the winter session. Contents are the responsibility of the editor; editorials are written by the editorial board. All

other opinions are signed by the party expressing them. Copy deadlines are 12 noon Mondays and Wednesdays. The Gateway, a member of Canadian University Press and the Youthstream Network, is located at room 282 SUB ■ Edmonton, Alberta, T6G 2J7. Newsroom 432-5168 Advertising 432-3423

John Younie, Hal Cup, Pat Frewer, Russ Sampson, Jonathan Berkowitz, Beno John, Ann-Marie Lamoureux, Linda van Wagner, Gary "the Chucker" McGowan, Hollis Brown, Otto Cup, Zan Korba, Jim Connell, Veronica Uzielli, Len Thom (really), Professor Tony, Alison Thomson, Adam Singer was hanging around, Portia Prieaert, Richard Desjardins, Iotsa Press Releases, Van Cup, Chanchal and Silly Savage, have a nice reading week everybody.



## Exams available to lucky

The U of A electrical engineering department has managed to make the marking system even more of a farce than it is normally considered to be. This is being achieved by many of the professors reusing part of

the last year's midterms and finals in their present exams. Out of the seven finals I wrote in December, I have seen three which used at least one quarter of the last year's final. The one course, E.E. 440, had six questions, four of which were identical right down to the same typing errors and one question which had a slight change made to it from the 1976 final. This term's midterms seem to be following the same trend. Also, most courses keep the same assignments and labs (which make up 20% to 40% of your final grade) from year to year.

The big problem with this system is that only about one-third of the students know the

"right" people to get copies of the past year's assignments, exams and solutions. The people who do have access to this material are usually reluctant to let others see it for competitive reasons.

The mathematics department manages to get around the problem by making old exams available at the cost of photocopying them. The electrical engineering department, by ignoring the problem, has made it difficult to compete for grades against the "lucky ones" due to the scaling of marks which has no doubt led to some students flunking courses they normally would have passed.

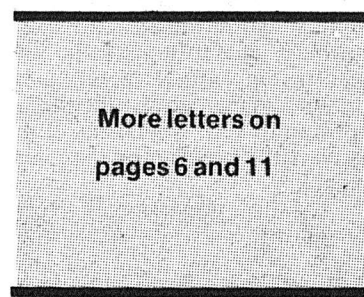
Name withheld  
Engineering

## Turtle?

I was startled, if not altogether surprised, this week to learn of Gordon Turtle's appointment as the new *Gateway* editor. Having known the man for over a decade, and having learned by now that my own reactionary views on politics, movies, and music hardly ever agree with his, I can only express the sincere hope that his current endeavors will turn out considerably better than the *Bonnie Doon Thistle*, which he edited some six or seven years back.

Allan Yee  
Grad Studies  
Civil Engineering

*New Ed's note: The first thing I plan to do with the paper is change its name to The Thistle.*



## Mid-term suicide

Once again the university has proceeded to "rip off" a significant proportion of the student populace by depriving them of their fair share.

It used to be that there was one week which was designated as Mid-term week and then a week's reprieve, referred to as Reading Week. The justification was to reduce the alarming increase in the rate of student suicides during and shortly after mid-terms, hence the need for a "recovery" period. However, the only reading done during this recovery period is that of the obituary columns to discover if you or any of your colleagues had carried out these plans for self-execution, while others go in search of power. What the powder hounds fail to realize is that all this time the university

has been getting a kick-back from the ski resorts, for it is the contributions during this week that enable the ski resorts to make their annual profits. The university makes a bundle and refuses to let us in on it. They won't even publicize this source of revenue. In future, the presentation of your I.D. card should entitle you to a special rate, say 15% off your lift ticket. That way the benefits go to the participants and are not mis-directed into the wrong pockets.

Furthermore, Mid-term Week has now been stretched into two weeks, and, even worse in some cases after Reading Week. If they're going to torture us for two weeks, then they should give us two weeks of Don't you agree?

Campus Crusader

## Work—right or responsibility

The Canadian University Press NATIONAL NOTES feature of Feb 20 imported a Grade-A meadow-muffin from London. I quote from NUS, European Style "the right to work is an essential right of all people." What lunacy has contributed to such an extreme twisting of facts? People don't have a right to work, they have an obligation to work. Society doesn't owe any person a job; no employer owes any person a job. The idea of a "right to work" is a most dangerous one indeed. It colors people's perceptions in such a way that they believe their unemployment is a serious transgression by society. Their "rights" have been denied. The truth of the matter is that by not

working they are transgressing their contract with society. If I don't work, everyone else's rights are being denied. The onus is on each of us to ensure that we are contributing to society, not vice versa.

In their left-handed way the NUS members have offered to take responsibility for students employment out of the hands of their governments (in whose hands it never rightly belonged). Unfortunately the philosophy did not precede the change. Witness the NUS attitudes that "the governments of Western Europe, increasingly unable to find a solution, are prepared to accept massive unemployment as a continuing phenomena." The blame is placed not on the

individual who is not working but on government for not letting them work. I am sure the Western European governments would be ecstatic to see people working. No society can advance if part of its members do not contribute.

Without realizing it, NUS Europe has backed into the only possible solution—self-responsibility. However, until they understand the rationale behind their actions, they will continue to emit doctrines fit for the spreader. The statement should more properly read "the obligation to work is an essential obligation of all people."

Ed Bossert  
Arts 23