

C'est la vie, n'est-ce pas?

SAVIEZ-VOUS?

Chaque mardi, mes amis, vous serez capables de lire en français!! Incroyable n'est-ce pas? L'année passée la cite étudiante de la Faculté Saint-Jean a demandé à Gateway d'imprimer des articles en français dans leur journal. A ce temps-là le rédacteur en chef nous a dit que c'était impossible car il ne pouvait pas mettre des accents et il n'était pas intéressé; en d'autres mots la cite revait en couleur!! Ainsi le conseil retourna à la Faculté, les faces sombres et les larmes aux yeux. Ces pauvres diables!

Mais cette année Gateway recrute de nouvelles gens et la cite décide d'essayer encore une fois. A notre surprise, Gateway appuya la demande; ils étaient en faveur! Le seul problème come vous avez déjà remarqué, est qu'on aura du français sans accents! Mais ce n'est pas grave, ce qui est important c'est que nous pouvons communiquer avec nos frères et sœurs de l'Université en français et vice versa. Nous vous invitons à participer à ce projet en écrivant des articles ou des revues de films, de théâtre ou de livres qui vous intéressent. N'hésitez pas car nous avons hâte de vous connaître. Envoyez vos articles à la Faculté Saint-Jean, boîte 38 ou au Students Union Building, boîte 68.

De la part des étudiants de la Faculté Saint-Jean, j'aimerais remercier tous les gens de Gateway pour leur générosité. A mardi prochain!

Salut.

Lise Malo
Présidente de la Cite Etudiante,
Faculté Saint-Jean.

Democracy okay, voters not

I believe the Provincial government is secretive, arrogant, evasive, and pork-barrel oriented. To back this up I think it is sufficient to cite a few well-known issues — nurses strike legislation, Metis office break-ins, Damsite #6, the dismantling of the ECA, Annexation land dealings, the Oldman River dam, MacDougall School, Kananaskis Country, reneging on agreed-upon cost-sharing of Calgary road improvements, the University's "pleasant surprise" regarding funding, etc., etc., etc.

However much I dislike the present government, no one can dispute their mandate nor complain that democracy is dead in Alberta or that the recent election is a farce. Mr. Marples, in doing so, is both wrong and inconsistent.

First, he presumes that it is undemocratic for the results of an election to be a massive majority. (He

compares our results with those of Eastern European one-party elections and infers the same case). Reality is incompatible with his theory. Each voter was presented with between three and eight individuals to choose from, representing up to eight parties of widely divergent views. Each made an individual decision. The result was a Tory landslide. Why? Most probably because no one presented an acceptable alternative, despite there being so many alternatives.

It was the people of Alberta who "practically denied those alternatives the right to exist". That is rightly their choice. Should the Communist party or Nazi party be represented in our legislature simply because they are alternatives? We have freedom of expression and freedom to run. We have laws that are an attempt to equalize economic power of political parties (although one may note that the order of finish was the same order as money spent — ie. PC, NDP, WCC, etc. — and this is the point where the strongest criticism may be made).

We could have an extended debate over the merits of various forms of proportional representation. I find it alluring to consider the possibilities of the last legislature having had an opposition of 16 Socreds, 12 NDP, and 3 Liberals, or the present one having 15 NDP, 9 WCC, 1 Liberal and 2 P.R.A. Independents.

However, this system is inconsistent with Mr. Marples' first concern of individual accountability of the MLA. In West Germany, there is even more party solidarity and elections between parties rather than individuals. There is also less ability of any one individual to win a seat without party backing.

It is hard to keep one's self-interest out of political analysis. As an Independent I tend to prefer a system where party and ideological warfare can be overcome. As an NDP supporter Mr. Marples leans towards a system that would give them more seats. However, both of us should agree that the provincial election is not a "farce". The decision of the people may be ill-considered but it is valid and democratic.

M.W. Etuelad
Law II

WASP hits WASPs again, shows no guilt or remorse

I write in response to a letter in the November 4 Gateway headlined (appropriately) "Everybody makes mistakes": Dear Mr. McQueen:

I object vehemently to your blatantly slanderous characterization of me as Adolf Hitler-like. Number one, I

continued on next page

CHOPPING BLOCK

by Jens Andersen

A few notes on this and that:

• Letters to the Editor. Two or three of these things reach our office every day, and they are a major headache to the person who handles them (i.e. myself) because of their illegibility, mis-spelling and grammatical mistakes.

The other week, for instance, we received an otherwise fairly intelligent letter on the subject of cruise missiles in which the word "missile" was spelled "missle" about 20 times. And this week we get another letter on the same subject which makes exactly the same mistake twice. Is this a plot???

Also, the first writer used peculiar abbreviations in his letter which he did not explain. When I phoned to ask about the abbreviations, it turned out that the phone number he put on his letter was not his.

And this week another student wrote a letter entirely in capital letters. On graph paper!

After lengthy pondering over the mis-spellings, illegibility, incorrect grammar, tortured syntax et al, which pockmarks the vast majority of letters to the Gateway (see Christine Baghdady's of today, for instance, keeping in mind that I corrected her minor errors) I have come to the conclusion that the errors have two sources: the writers' defective knowledge of even the most basic English, and their remarkably frenzied passion to unleash some cherished opinion on the student body.

It is embarrassing to prescribe the obvious remedies for such simple problems, especially when these problems afflict university students who should by now be tackling the finer points of English stylistics. But apparently advice is needed. Let me therefore say, if you are agitated about something, count to ten, swear a blue streak, or take a Valium before setting pen to paper. And when you do, make a rough copy first, revise it, and then type up a good copy (a free typewriter is usually available in our office if you lack your own). Then proofread your good copy.

Chances are you have now written something an intelligent person will actually read and think about, not dismiss as the semi-comprehensible ranting of an excitable nitwit.

• Not all letters to the editor, of course, are illiterate tripe. In fact, as a U of A 75th anniversary project several ex-Gateway staffers have put together a collection of the most interesting from over the years. I read a few of them when the magazine-size booklet was in production, and they contain some mighty piquant and juicy stuff.

The price of the collection is \$3.95, and it will probably be sold at the bookstore.

I should also mention (ahem) that it immortalizes one of my own contributions of a few years back.

• The junior radicals within Canadian University Press have come one step further in their fight for a national ad boycott policy. Last week they sent out a thick pamphlet detailing just about every facet of apartheid in South Africa, from the corporations who benefit from cheap black labor in the country, to commentaries by Samora Machel, the revolutionary leader of neighboring Mozambique.

There is plenty of meat in the packet, if one is willing to slog through a certain amount of left-wing agit-prop to find it. Still, there is the question of what the info packet has to do with the proposed ad boycott policy.

The proposed boycott policy, as you may remember from a previous Chopping Block, would, if implemented,

establish a yearly plebiscite where CUP newspapers would vote on whether to boycott certain ads or advertisers. If 66% of all CUP papers agreed to a certain boycott, even the dissenting papers would be compelled to boycott.

Accepting for the moment the proposition that certain advertisers, like those involved in sweating blacks in South Africa, are so dastardly that they deserve a horse-whipping of some kind, there still remains the question of whether the proposed policy can do the job.

Gateway, with the exception of one or two staffers, presumes to doubt it. To begin with, boycotting ads wouldn't scare many advertisers, since almost all advertisers can easily do without advertising in college and university papers (a recent possible exception is DeBeers, who allegedly find us indispensable for peddling their diamond rings to the youth market).

Secondly, even if by some miracle CUP established a boycott with genuine economic clout (and establishing a boycott won't necessarily be easier under the new policy) nothing but a modicum of corporate suffering will result unless CUP somehow uses the clout to force the sinful advertiser to change its ways.

This would require CUP skilfully publicizing the advertisers sins, and maneuvering and/or pressuring the advertiser into less sinful paths. But CUP, a mere collection of second-rate student journalists, simply doesn't have the talent to do anything that complicated and difficult.

And even if, by a further Act of God, they actually developed such talent, it would still be the publicity and negotiating that effected changes, not some two-bit boycott. For CUP, however, a yearly ritual of boycotting, and an occasional article full of leftist clichés is all they will ever manage to do. And for them this is enough, just as a weekly church service and an occasional pious platitude suffices for most Christians.

One longs to set these idealistic innocents down with a copy of Saul Alinsky's Rules for Radicals to show them how a real radical organizer operates.

• On the subject of DeBeers, the February issue of Atlantic has an excellent article about how the diamond cartel conned the general public into accepting the little chunks of carbon as a symbol of holy matrimony. At inflated prices, no less. After you finish reading the entertaining story of the swindle you will probably want nothing more than "a simple band of gold" to seal that deep and lifelong vow.

• And speaking of Mozambique's Samora Michel, whose noble and inspired prose decorates the South Africa information package ("Solidarity is not an act of charity, but mutual aid between forces fighting for the same objective"), why do the blacks in his Marxist-Leninist worker's paradise still cross over into repressive South Africa to earn their bread? And why does Amnesty International say such nasty things about jails and justice under Machel? Could it be that an eloquent black tyrant is just as bad as the worst whites? What a decisive blow for equality between the races!

One is also tempted to ask Machel, who is as dependent on Russian aid as the El Salvador junta is on American aid, what he thinks of solidarity with Polish workers.

• Did you know that Rich Watts, our News Editor, is a Hemingway idolater? Really! He would probably faint if he saw the brilliant "Nick Adams" parody, "The Sun Also Sets," in the November National Lampoon.

On second thought, Hemingway fans don't faint, do they?

• Have a good Tuesday, you degenerate bourgeois vegetable.

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Thursday, November 18