

Joke slates serve purpose

Much ink has been wasted on the recently completed S.U. General Elections, but one more comment seems appropriate — a comment, specifically, on The Meaning of Joke Slates.

Joke slates have been getting a lot of bad press. They are derided as silly, useless, and above all, a waste of S.U. money. This argument ignores the fundamental functions of joke slates, which are to involve and interest people in the elections.

Quick, name the slates that ran in the 1988 elections. You might, after some thought, remember some of the candidates. But do you remember the Star Trek slate?

If joke slates are outlawed, as a certain humourless section of the campus seems to be advocating, interest in elections could fall dramatically. In a campus this large, it is far too easy to ignore the workings of student politics during the year. Election time then becomes yet another political event that can easily be overlooked.

Joke slates serve to awaken the awareness of students to the very fact that there is an election approaching. Stunts, posters, and themes that joke slates use may seem silly and childish to serious election watchers (and assorted hacks) but they are attention-getting. And in a campus where an election turnout of 24 percent is considered high, the elections could certainly use more attention.

Joke slates bring people to polls. If students are aware of the simple fact that an election is happening, they will vote. If they have been following the campaign of the joke slates they cannot help but be exposed to the 'serious' slates. Thus, even a student who professes complete disinterest in the election will have picked up the rudiments of the issues — and when he or she decides to vote, they almost always vote for the serious slates. (Joke slates received only 6,903 votes in the 1988 election, approximately 13.1 percent of the total vote).

Joke slates this year spent from \$785 to \$1200 on their campaigns. If that money were to go to sponsoring forums or putting up VOTE posters, no one would complain. But because the money is being used for something that serves the same purpose but is less serious and more entertaining, we hear howls of protests.

As much as our serious minded student leaders wish it weren't true, most students on campus do not care about student politics. It has become too distanced from the average person on campus. If it takes a group of people dressing up in funny costumes and putting their faces on posters around campus to bring some interest to the elections, I believe this says more about the relevancy of the Students' Union than it does about the flippancy of the joke slates.

Roberta Franchuk

The Gateway



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The Gateway welcomes letters to the Editor.

If you have a comment which would be of interest to the students of the University, please do not hesitate to send it in. Letters must be signed. Addresses and phone numbers are required but will not be printed.

Letters may be edited for length.

Mail or deliver your letters to Room 282 S.U.B., or drop them at any S.U. information booth.

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Old McPocklington had a farm.
 And on his farm he had a cow...



LETTERS

Abortion inhumane

I cannot think of a more selfish and inhumane act than abortion — taking an innocent human life because you were not willing to say no to your own personal pleasure, or take the necessary precautions. Abortion is not birth control! It is not something people should have a right to do! If murder is wrong, it should be wrong for all people, not excusable for selfish "me-firsts".

Our supreme court claims women should not be forced to carry out an unwanted pregnancy. Will it next claim that middle-aged children should not be forced to support unwanted elderly parents? Will it claim that parents should not be forced to raise unwanted handicapped children? Why not blow up the third world so we don't have to worry about feeding them!

The answer is not in destroying everything, and everyone, that comes in the way of personal pleasure, plans, or progress! What kind of a society saves the wicks and kills its own babies — and picks up the execution costs? This is not only a sad time in Canadian society, it is a sad time for humanity!

Tricia Westwood

Clearing the air

I am pleased to report that I will be able to continue as Arts Students' Association (A.S.A.) Chief Returning Officer (C.R.O.) for the March 30th and 31st elections.

In the March 24th edition of the Gateway, serious concerns were raised about my suitability for the position of C.R.O., due to previous involvement in a campaign for S.U. Executive.

In order to clear the air, and wanting to restore and maintain the confidence of Arts students in the integrity of this election process, I requested the Discipline, Interpretation and Enforcement (D.I.E.) Board to determine whether or not I was in conflict.

D.I.E. Board ruled in my favour, so the elections will be conducted as

planned. Polling will take place on Wednesday the 30th and Thursday the 31st, at polling booths located in the Tory/Business Atrium, HUB Mall at the perway to Humanities, and HUB Mall at the perway to Fine Arts Building.

I urge all Arts students to inform themselves about the candidates and hope that all will vote in order to make next year's Arts representatives of G.F.C. and Council legitimate ones.

Martin Levenson
 A.S.A. Chief Returning Officer

Use reason, not passion

Re: Quebec Too Powerful

Although there are merits to the points put forward by Messrs. Connors, Isenenger, and Preville, all three are making arguments from positions of bias.

While the points made by Mr. Connors may not have much weight on an individual basis, I believe that if they are taken as a whole tend to show where Quebec's heart is at. There can be no doubt that Quebec does not embrace the federal union with Canada with any elan. Quebec has had a government dedicated to separation and, even though they rejected separation, more than one-third of Quebec voted for it. Now that opting-out is the new "Canadian way", Quebec, although legitimately within their constitutional rights, has "opted out" of federal programs whenever and wherever they can. This same zealotism cannot be said of the other provinces. Quebec sees themselves within our federal system. It is no secret that Premier Bourassa's passionate support of the Free Trade Agreement hasn't been based entirely on economic reasons.

Although it's true that Quebec gets three judges by law and Ontario gets three judges by convention (personally, I would sooner have the law on my side than convention), the point is that no province should receive a set number of judges. I've should be chosen entirely on merit regardless of their province of origin. To take Mr.

Preville's argument to its logically absurd conclusion, maybe the U.S. Supreme Court should have one judge from Louisiana — after all, they have a Napoleonic civil code too. Further, as to the rest of the provinces, the statutes are as different as snowflakes in spite of their common-law tradition.

Further, although the Meech Lake Accord would give all the provinces a right to submit a list of candidates for vacant Supreme Court positions. Quebec is given the additional power of actually appointing their 'slate'.

As to federal job creation money, there are "lies, damn lies, and statistics," but regardless of how the figures are manipulated, the conclusion shows that relative to their population and their unemployment rate, Quebec did receive disproportionately more federal job creation money in 1986 than any other province.

Such contentious issues should be resolved using reason and not passion.

Harvey Baines

Panda gymnastics ignored

I would like to comment on your tribute to sports (This Year in University Sports) in the March 24th Gateway. The teams you featured were football, hockey, basketball, and women's volleyball. Why not women's gymnastics? Not one of the teams you featured won a Canada West title, how about a National title? The Panda Gymnastics team not only won the Canada West Championships but went all the way in winning the National Championships in the team event. What a joke this year has been for coverage of the most successful team on campus! We are not only the most successful but the most consistent. In the last four to five years, the Pandas have never been lower than third at a Canada West or National Competition. It's a shame that the Gateway has overlooked such a great team. But hey, we're only national champions!!

Monica Knech
 Captain, Panda Gymnastics Team