

EDITORIAL

Change loan system

Being in a good mood yesterday, I was casting about for nice things to say in today's editorial regarding the way the government has helped me get through University.

Sadly, "help" would be a rather ironical word to use in describing the government's role in a student's life.

The Alberta Tories cite the drop in world oil prices as the reason for Recession Trauma and thus for having to penny-pinch in grants to universities. The Loughheed team's contribution to post-secondary institutions via students loans is an example of the short-sightedness in Tory policy.

There is a fifty per cent "remission" on loans to students applying for their first year of University. Remission is the portion the loan that you don't have to pay back; that is, if you borrowed \$1,000 and remission was forty per cent, the government would send a \$400 cheque to your bank. (In the second year, remission is forty per cent. In the third and fourth years, it is twenty-five per cent.)

In effect, the Student's Finance Board (SFB) punishes some for saving and rewards others for spending their summer earnings on a car or stereo or whatever.

Yes, the present system is designed to entice individuals to further their education; it's designed to help out high school students who couldn't find work in the summer.

But the government needs to go for the gusto here and simply make more grant money available to high school graduates. Sure, the ceiling for loans has been raised from \$56.25 to \$100 per month; this means students can borrow more. It also means students can expect to go deeper into debt.

The pieties about how much the government is already subsidizing education are not impressive. Advanced Education needs to be shaken up along with Social Services, Economic Development, Native Affairs, and Housing. In other words, if Advanced Education wants to argue restraint, then why not argue for private institutions funded by private donors? That way, the Tories can save a whole bundle which in turn could be placed in the "powerful" Heritage Savings Trust Fund.

And if those other departments decide to ignore the problems of today, well then just imagine how happy everybody will be!

Indeed, it seems to me that students should be encouraged to finish their degrees. So why not switch the remission set-up around. Give students entering their fourth year the most "remission" cake to go along with their loans; and award grants to first - years in order to make university an accessible alternative. To make the package complete, the SFB should make remission payments at the end of every school year instead of waiting four and one half years. Making payments every year would mean interest savings for the government and it would let students know where they stand on a yearly basis.

Brent Jang

Days gone bye

I grew up watching the Edmonton Eskimos, living and dying with their fortunes and failures on the field. So, following the Eskimos this year - particularly this weekend when they snuck into the playoffs like they were walking backward through the backdoor of a movie theatre to get in without paying, it seems obvious to me that they have reached the end of an era.

Do not get me wrong, I am pleased about what has happened. I grew up with the Eskimos of the 60's. When the offense was a three yard plunge into the line, a dropped pass and a shanked punt. When Neil Armstrong and Norm Kimball subscribed to the quarterback of the month club (one more time everybody: whatever happened to Fran Cosentino?).

When John LaGrone led the toughest and most practiced defense in Canada.

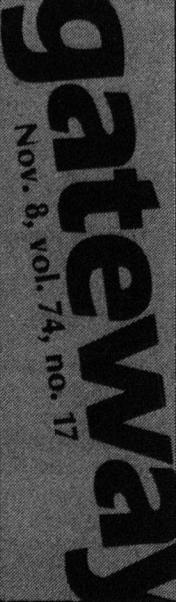
Winning Eskimo teams are like a freak of nature, a spell of bad weather that happens every 20 years or so. This has been a particularly long and unpleasant streak. Thank God it is over at last.

Kent Blinston

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As the Gilbertologists grew tired of their bricks and Tinker toys, they ran off to Garneau playground for some fun. Simon Blake, Barb Eyles, Neal Watson and Kent Cochrane played football with Chris Pentelchukis shoe, while Lois C. Dayes, Shane Berg and Ludwig played shoeball with Christine Koch's foot. Ian Mant, Nate LaRoi and Frank Bevacqua decided to bury Brenda Waddle in the sandbox, but Jordan Peterson, Steven Downs and Ian Ferguson came to her rescue. Tom Huh, Algard and Zane Harker took turns on the slide. Jack Verme and Kevin Arthur decided it was all too juvenile and returned to the office to watch Mr. Dressup.

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« LETTERS TO THE EDITOR »

Chapter and Verse

Denise Burrell's letter on abortion (Nov. 1) deserves a reply. She, a pro-choicer, correctly states that the crux of the issue is the question: is the fetus a person? She answers the question in the negative, which is certainly her prerogative, but her reasoning as to how she arrives at this conclusion is faulty in one case, and simply false in the other.

First, she says, fetuses aren't persons because the law, as indicated most recently by the Borowski case, says they aren't. But, after all, we make the law, and we, that is the voters, ultimately make the definitions too. I think the whole Borowski case is a red herring, therefore, and a foolish tactic for the Pro-Life forces to use. What, after all, would be the point of getting a legal decision in favour of the fetus's personhood, if the majority of Canadians felt differently? No, the proper goal which Pro-Lifers must aim for is the changing of public opinion and therefore the changing of the law, which is the democratic way. They should abandon these attempts at legal shortcuts. However, this point cuts both ways. Likewise, Miss Burrell should not argue that fetuses aren't persons simply because the law says so. The law says so because people believe so. The question remains: are people right or wrong: is the fetus a person or not? Remember, the law, as a reflection of the popular will, is often wrong. The expulsion and exploitation of BC Japanese in WW2 was a legal action now widely perceived as immoral and unjust. I have just been reading books about Christians in Germany and France who resisted the unjust laws of the Nazis by hiding Jews. Jews also, take note, were legally unpersons. So reference is certainly being made by these lawbreakers to a higher moral law.

Which brings us to Miss Burrell's second argument: that there is neither theological or Biblical support for the personhood of fetuses. Wrong. Here is the Psalmist talking about how God knew him in the womb: "For thou hast possessed my reins: thou hast covered me in my mother's womb.... My substance was not hid from thee, when I was made in secret and curiously wrought in the lowest parts of the earth. Thine eyes did see my substance, yet being imperfect; and in the book all my members were written, which in continuance were fashioned, when as yet there was none of them." (Psalm 139: 13-16.) Now here's the prophet Isaiah: "And now, saith the Lord that formed me from the womb to be his servant...." (Is. 49:5); and Jeremiah 1:5: "Before I formed thee in the belly I knew thee, and before I camest forth out of the womb I sanctified thee and I ordained thee a prophet unto the nations."

Now many Christians take these passages to indicate a personal relationship between unborn child and God and to justify the notion of personhood from conception. In fairness, it must be noted that Jewish Talmudic scholars as early as two centuries before Christ considered that a baby only became viable three months after birth, so obviously there are two conclusions to be drawn from Scripture, but that, at least, is one more than Miss Burrell allows.

Miss Burrell's concluding argument is that, since we cannot prove the personhood of fetuses, we should therefore proceed to cheerfully abort them. Might I suggest that the opposite tack is more humane: if we can't be sure, we should err in the direction that is less likely to make us all party to mass murder?

Steve Weatherbe
 Faith Editor
 Alberta Report Magazine

Let's get serious

I have been following the abortion debate (the term is used loosely) between W. Opheim and K. Moore. I agree with D. Burrell (Nov. 1) that the argument has degenerated to rhetoric and name-calling. Her balanced review of the issues is refreshing, and it is in this spirit that I write this letter. With the air cleared, we can begin a serious discussion of abortion.

I wish to put forward two premises, that (1) abortion is the ending of a human life, but that (2) making abortion illegal (by declaring that it is immoral) infringes upon human rights because it threatens an individual's right to choose whether or not to reproduce. Thus we have the basic quandary surrounding the abortion debate. I have no general solutions to this dilemma, and I believe that the moral aspects of abortion are personal. However, the legal issues are broader in scope, and a basic tenet in our society is that individual rights supercede collective will (however that might be determined). In that case, abortion's legal side leans toward pro-choice.

Finally, I would like to ask, in general, why males are the most vocal anti-abortionists? And if they are, is it because they have such a small share in the physical and emotional experience surrounding reproduction, that they have so much energy and venom for discussing abortion as merely an issue, rather than as a highly personal and sometimes traumatic event.

M. Antolin
 G. Studies

Okay Warren we forgive you

Kathleen Moore, this is Warren Opheim. This is not another pro-life/anti-abortion letter. This is to explain my reaction of Nov. 1 to your letter of Oct. 25.

I wrote my response very soon after reading your letter. I am only human and, therefore, prone to emotion. In this case it was one of extreme upset — dare I say outrage? — over your apparent indifference to the fate of the unborn child. To me this is equal to submission to the pro-abortionist