

Less Bears, more porridge

So the university's Athletic Services Board has decided that some of its athletic programs have to go to make ends meet. In these times of cutbacks and funding shortages, attempts to pare budgets and austerity measures are necessary and even laudable. But by cutting programs of men's and women's track and field, cross-country, judo, and women's field hockey, the committee is doing students and the university a great disservice. These sports provide opportunities for about 130 university athletes to participate each year. In addition, while track and field may not have a great "revenue-producing" capacity, it has won the U of A an international reputation — something no amount of money can buy.

The criteria can all be questioned and disputed: whether media interest, success record, community interest or championships held should determine whether students at the U of A are allowed to participate in any sport on the intercollegiate level is debatable.

More important, though, is the philosophical question involved. What is the purpose of a university athletic program? Should it allow the maximum number of athletes to participate in a maximum number of sports, or should it allow a handful of athletes to train and compete in "first-class" programs?

Of course, it would be ludicrous to distribute crumbs among a myriad of inter-collegiate sports at the U of A. But the university must decide whether it is going to restrict itself to having one or two national championship athletic teams, or whether to attempt to implement more programs on a less lavish basis.

This is just the latest example of low profile, athlete-oriented sports being sacrificed for the high-profile games coaches love.

Whatever happens this time, you should think about football if you're considering trying out for a team. No matter what else gets cut, you'll know your team will be around.

Cooking with gas

Progressive Conservative government member Rollie Cook feels he has it all figured out. As pointed out in the news story on page one of this edition of the *Gateway*, the Edmonton MLA thinks that the biggest problem at the university is the question of tenure.

The tenure program at the university provides job security for the professors, and ensures that they will not be dismissed for unfair or political reasons. While I'm sure that every student has had a bad experience or two with professors of one sort or another, the rampant incompetence that Mr. Cook fears certainly does not exist. There is absolutely no reason for the "blackmailing" attitude that Cook defends: by threatening the autonomy of the university Mr. Cook is threatening the very nature of democracy that his government so valiantly defends.

Cook's estimation of the professorial quality on campus is based on nothing but personal observation and opinion; or at least, so he told me in an interview Monday. Assuming that he did not take a class from every professor on campus, then one must wonder how he reached his conclusions. Hearsay, perhaps?

The legitimacy of the tenure system is an age-old problem that neither Mr. Cook nor myself can solve. But the use of threats and intimidation by the provincial government is inexcusable. Cook admits that there is inadequate funding for the U of A, yet he thinks nothing should be done about it until tenure is reformed. Strange tactics for a government member, a representative of the people.

If Mr. Cook is so concerned about deadwood and people cleaning up their own back yards, then I suggest that he focus his ardent campaigning on the Alberta legislature, where there is enough deadwood to build Edmonton's new city hall.

Gordon Turtle

the Gateway

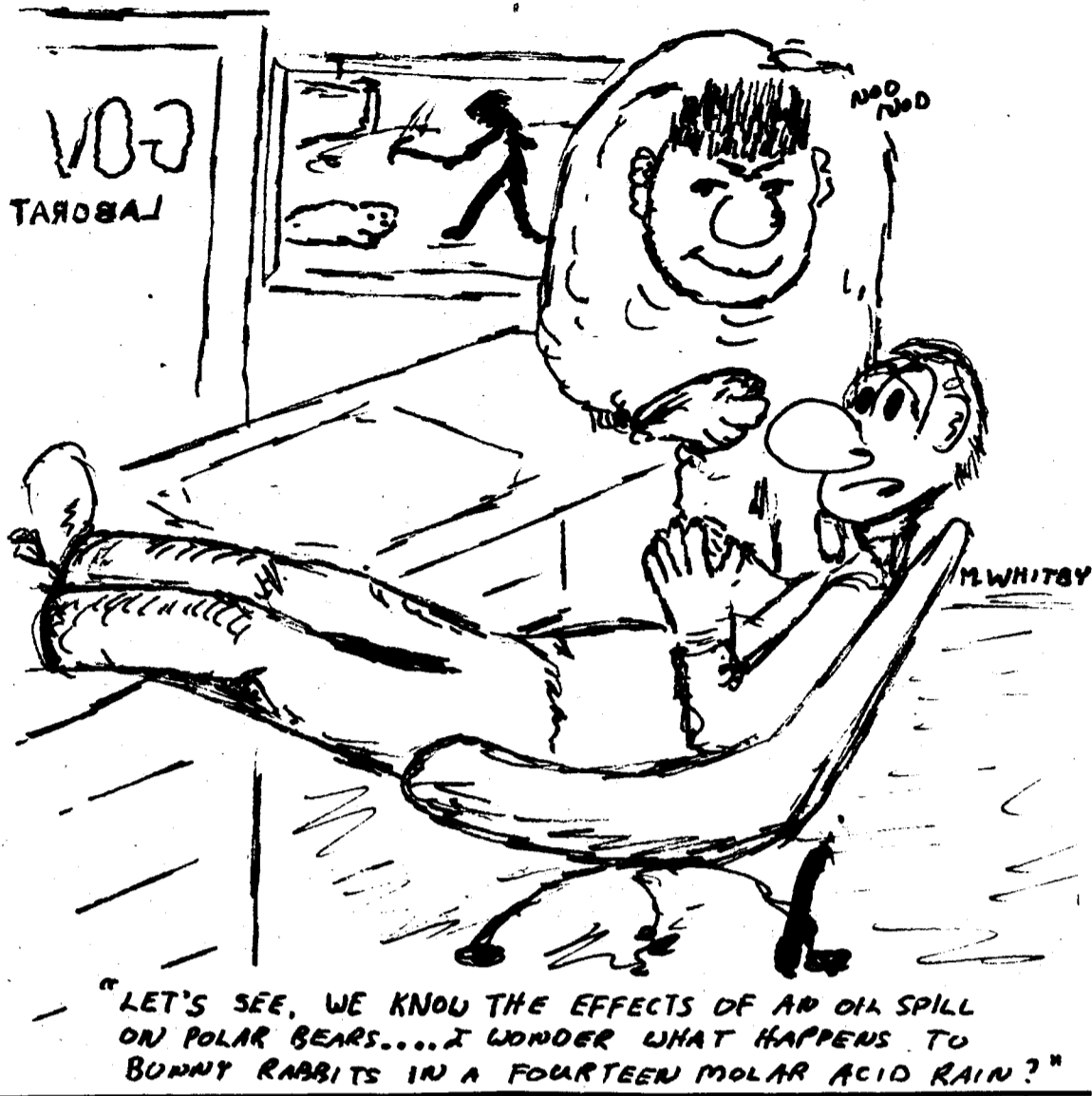
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Vote shows student ignorance

A fellow student attempted to explain the defeat of the Students' Union expansion referendum in the March 27th issue of *The Gateway*. According to Mr. Billaway, the proposed increase in S U fees was squashed because students felt that because an increase in tuition fees was unjustified "then a higher increase [in S U fees] had to be worse."

If this was the line of reasoning that prompted some 55 per cent of the voters to cast a "no" ballot, then it was ignorance, rather than rational thinking, that has effectively put a sword to the goals of the Long-range Planning Committee.

Condemning the now defunct S U fee increase proposal on the grounds that it was equivalent to an increase in tuition fees is irresponsible. The 10 per cent increase in tuition fees is accompanied with tidings of broad cutbacks in general academic services — students paying more for less. Furthermore, with the fee increase for the 80-81 term, tuition will have risen more than 50 per cent in the past five years. The seven dollar increase in S U fees, on the other hand, was to have been used to instigate new development in the form of services to U of A students; improved licenced facilities, a new information desk and a covered SUB courtyard, to name a few.

The S U itself must stand accountable for the display of ignorance by the student body. When looking for financing, a developer approaches prospective investors with a plan to provide a greater net benefit to the investor in the long run. On the basis of information provided by the S U, the majority of voters clearly perceived better uses for their seven dollars.

As concluding remarks, I cannot resist a chuckle regarding the "P.S." attached to Mr. Billaway's letter. He voiced a laudable comment regarding his

political leanings, stating: "I'm opposed to any and all government fiscal spending." However, in the first paragraph of the letter, the following gut-tearing protest was voiced regarding our government's lack of funding: "a

10% [tuition] increase is far, far too harsh a burden for us all." Like many a banner waver, this man's philosophy originates not in the mind but in the mouth.

Phil Soper
Commerce II

Hope for Zimbabwe

Many of us were informed about the good result of the election in one of the racist countries — Rhodesia. I just hope one bad system is not going to be replaced by a worse one — Communist dictatorship. We were kind of happy when the Vietnam tragedy "ended," but the end was the beginning of a bigger tragedy. If only those people in Vietnam or Cambodia could have a democratic election, there would not be a communist Vietnam or Cambodia. What about a free election in the country of his Imperial Majesty Comrade Brezhnev, or in Bulgaria, Cuba, Czech land, Hungary, Poland, Slovakia, Rumania, China and others? The election practice in communist countries is such, vote for what is on the ballot, no secret ballot (people are frightened, they remember the consequences to those to had done it secretly) everyone must vote, boycotting the election is an act against "people."

Before Christmas Dad got a letter from his brother in Slovakia — gasoline went up from 4 crowns to 7.20 crowns a litre (electricians earn 10 crowns per hour — our electrician can buy approximately 40 times more gasoline) 2 kg white bread 8 crowns, 1 kg sugar 8 crowns, 1 KWH - 0.8 crown, 1 kg. meat 40 crown, 1 kg butter 40 crowns, airmail stamp 8 crowns. The communist system has no money for their fellow workers, but has lots of money for propaganda like sports and they have a lot of gold medals.

So that is the difference

between elections in Zimbabwe and communist peoples' democracies. I personally hope Zimbabwe in the future will have all elections as free as the last one and have no medals for promoting sports propaganda.

Jan Vavra

Turtle pie a favorite

I applaud *Gateway's* decision to hold the Kampuchea Benefit Concert to raise money for Cambodian refugees. This type of initiative from campus groups, other than the Students' Union, is long overdue. The event will be one of the more (some people have argued only) constructive endeavors that the *Gateway* has taken on this year.

I suggest the *Gateway* increase the amount of money raised by hosting a pie throwing contest before the concert. Many people, I'm sure, would pay good money to throw pies at campus notables. I for one would pay at least \$5.00 for the pleasure of throwing a pie in Gordon Turtle's face, as I'm sure would Dean Olmstead, Tema Frank, Sharon Bell and Willie Gruber; to name a few of the more sporting types around. Not only would an event as this raise a lot of money; it would clear a lot of tension and cap the year off ... with a maraschino cherry.

Scott Thorkelson
Arts III