

## But is it news?

Engineering Week is upon us again — the time for 'gears' to let off steam by drinking, carousing, drinking, misbehaving and drinking. Every year this event occurs, and every year *The Gateway* faces the question 'Is this news?'

Should we cover the whole event? Concentrate on the especially unsavoury aspects? Come out in righteous indignation against the many sexist rituals? Or just report what we feel the public should or would like to know?

Engineering Week is not the only event that causes these questions to come up. Questions like this are faced by all media when deciding what is and what is not news. Most news sources try to be objective — but they cannot devote the same amount of space to every story. Some decisions must be made about coverage, and these decisions are always somewhat subjective.

Some newspapers, especially those run by students, have abandoned objectivity altogether. They are believers in "advocacy journalism", believing a newspaper must be an "agent of social change," crusading against injustice and evil. If this means that only one side of an argument is present, well, too bad. The editors know best, and the public is incapable of making up its own minds about any issue. The answer to "what is news?" is, for these people, "whatever I want you to do something about." The idea is not to inform but to inflame. This is fine for those who like to have their thinking done for them. For the rest of us, it isn't good enough.

So, for a medium that does try to be objective, what is news? Are francophone rights in Alberta news, or do they only become news when a demonstration takes place on the steps of the legislature? Is it news when one politician criticizes the performance of another, or is it just an easy way for that politician to get his name and picture in the newspaper?

News media are constantly bombarded with happenings. It is very easy to let the group with the loudest voice and biggest events become news. After all, a march down Jasper Avenue is sure to produce some good pictures. The people on the other side of the story may get to make a few comments, but unless they stage a counter-protest, they're not going to get a three column photo on the front page.

Political infighting is the same thing. Some politicians see it as their duty to bring transgressions by other politicians to the attention of the media and the public. Others see this process as free publicity. They merely put on the proper tone of righteous indignation, and start namecalling, and the next day it's on page one. (And when the voters go to the polls, they see a name that is familiar, even if they're not sure why.)

The media have to guard against this kind of manipulation. It's their job to expose the public to all sides of the story, not to let the 'easy to get' story become the headlines. It is also up to the public to be more aware of the newsmaking process. Ask yourself, "What is the motive behind this story? Where is the other side?" If the answers are unsatisfactory, be wary. The media can both manipulate and be manipulated.

Roberta Franchuk

## The Gateway

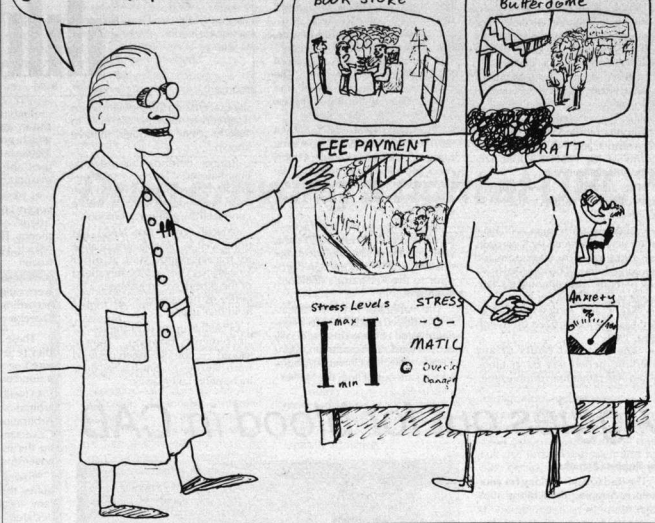
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Letters to the Editor are encouraged and always welcome. If you have a comment which would be of interest to the students of the University, please do not hesitate to send it in. All we require is your name, address, and phone number, and student ID if you are a student. We will not print letters missing any of these. Letters should be no longer than three hundred words. Mail or deliver your letters to Room 282 SUB, or drop them at any SU information booth.

*The Gateway* is the newspaper of the University of Alberta students. Contents are the responsibility of the Editor-in-Chief. All opinions are signed by the writer and do not necessarily reflect the views of the *Gateway*. Copy deadlines are 11 a.m. Mondays and Wednesdays. Newsroom: RM. 282 (ph. 432-5168). All photographs printed in *Gateway* are for sale. Call the photoeditor at 432-5168 or come to room 238 SUB. Advertising: RM. 256D (ph. 432-4241). Students' Union Building, U. of A. Edmonton, Alberta, T6G 2J7. Readership is 25,000.

As you can see, the subjects are reacting just as I predicted.



### Mulroney dealing fairly

Re: Anti-Free Trade letter in the Jan. 5, '88 *Gateway*. Obviously, Dave Yadallee did not pay much attention to the IRSS seminar on Dec. 2, '87 nor does he know all that much about free trade. Sheila Copps did not present a good case against free trade. She spoke only with lots of emotion and she did not formulate any points that made any sense.

As for Prime Minister Mulroney, he is not playing 'Santa Claus'. All that he has been working on for years is now coming together for him: Free Trade, Meech Lake, the Day Care Program, Tax Reform, and many more. He has instituted many programs that directly aid Western Canada and in particular Alberta. Dave Yadallee is very wrong in saying that Mulroney is only pushing all his programs at once for the impending election. He has been instituting new programs since he was elected in 1984. The election that is imminent will not be decided upon free trade alone, but upon the many good and beneficial programs that have been put forward for Canada. Mulroney has had the strength to pull his party together through some rough times and still get some work done.

The free trade deal with the U.S. can only allow Canada to expand as we need to do and it will help our now ailing economy. It could also be the first step to the multilateral trade deal that many people desire. It can be our answer to the successful IEC. Our industries will flourish because the U.S. is an importing nation and we have the resources to export.

Our Prime Minister has had the courage to step forward and make changes in our country. He has taken a stand on the major issues, unlike the federal Liberals and NDP who cannot decide which way they are going to go. Turner's party is split on all the issues and he does not have the leadership to pull them together. Sheila Copps avoided that issue. The P.C. party knows where it is going and the steps to take to get there.

Randy Kerr

### Moriarty at work?

I was surprised and disappointed that your issue of January 5th made no mention of the fact that Wednesday, Jan. 6th was the 133rd birthday of the greatest living Englishman. I refer, of course, to Mr. Sherlock Holmes, late of 221b Baker Street, London, who is currently in retirement at his cottage on the Sussex Downs. The CPR Stockholders, Edmonton's Sherlockian society, hope that this omission on your part was accidental, and does not indicate that Holmes' arch-rival, the late Professor James Moriarty, has a relative or emissary on the staff of your newspaper. Some reassurance as to this justifiable concern would be most welcome.

P.H. Wood

### Good reviews for "GETAWAY"

Re: *The Gateway*, December 9, 1987

Congratulations to you and your staff on the Christmas '87 edition of *The Gateway*. "Fine Journalism since Tuesday" more than describes the effort and ingenuity exhibited in the issue.

It was Thursday December 5, 1974 that *The Gateway* first saw the light of day. We knew it was going to be a successful spoof when CBC's camera crew showed up the next day, looking for the MSRTV Tank that we had reported Campus Security had purchased to control parking violators. The second *Gateway* was published on April 14, 1975.

Another highlight of the '74/75 *Gateway* year was the introduction of two new cartoonists, Gary Delaney and Gerry Rasmussen, who have now moved over to the *Edmonton Journal* with their feature, Bubs Slug. I assume *The Edmonton Journal* is paying copyright fees to the *Gateway*.

Keep up the good work, and remember: don't take yourselves too seriously, nobody else does.

Bernie Fritz  
 Editor-in-Chief  
 The *Gateway* 7/75

### OBITUARY

During the holidays the life of Abdoullah A. Chehadi came to a peaceful end, leaving his family and many friends to mourn his departure.

Abdoullah was born November 8th, 1963 and was raised and educated in Lac La Biche, Alberta. After having completed his highschool in Lac La Biche, he enrolled in the Bachelor of Science program at the University of Alberta. His ultimate goal in this life was to become a pharmacist. It was due to his stamina, perseverance, and hard work that he was accepted into the Faculty of Pharmacy at the University of Alberta. He placed tremendous effort into his studies and spent many long hours in the Chinese library and other libraries on the university campus.

His sense of humour inspired many friends and family members. He was the eldest son in his family and was forever eager to offer words of wisdom and advice to those in need. He also helped many overcome the many hurdles of life with his encouragement. He was a very patient person and cared deeply for his family and his friends. Although he was with us for a short time on this earth, he accomplished more than many people do in a lifetime. He left behind many fond memories and legacies which shall be cherished and in our hearts forever.

And now we must say farewell to a dear friend, relative, and fellow student and pray that God will give him eternal rest and peace forever.

Although uncompassionate these words may appear.

To the forgetful eye they may draw a tear.

May God be with you now and forever.

May you finally reach your ultimate endeavours.

Your presence in this world was a blessing for us all.

You triumphed in challenges while others did fall.

May you discover a world of harmony and peace.

And leave behind your memories which have in our hearts sustained a crease.

Forever missed: Terry & Friends