editorial

The fight goes on

There is still a pressing need for reform in society's treatment and attitudes towards women, despite the many gains achieved by elements of the women's movement of the 60s and 70s. Advertising, television and films, and the employment market are still dominated by sexist and belittling attitudes, and band aid legislation has not done enough to ensure equal rights for women in any of these areas.

It is important for people to recognize the importance of the women's movement, even if we are momentarily thrown off the track by irrational arguments from both sides or a false feeling of having solved the problem. If women are still pigeon-holed for certain jobs, (how many male cocktail waiters do you see?), if rape and abortion laws, legislated by men,continue to discriminate against the female victims of male harrassment, and if corporations continue to portray women in their advertising whose greatest concern is the whiteness of their wash, then social and economic equality for women has not been achieved.

Capitalism depends on exploitation of women, especially in the labour market. Gore Vidal, a prominent American novelist and writer, recently outlined in his essay "Sex and Politics" how the current free enterprise structure can only handle a certain number of employable people; indeed, a level of unemployment must be retained in order to keep profit levels where the businessmen want them. By keeping women away from jobs they are capable of holding, the job market is held superficially competitive, and men continue to act in what has become in their own best interest: keeping women in the kitchen.

At a more basic level, from the moment of birth we are filled with ideas and attitudes that are sexist. Letter writers to *The Gateway* and other insecure men find that when their confidence, their position amongst their female peers, and their ability to get laid and be proud of it are threatened, they must instantly scream "bullshit" as a reply to a decent argument. Most anti-abortionists are men, most rapists are men, and most politicians are men: the odds against women are certainly stacked in an obvious direction.

A simple trip to a downtown lounge proves sexism is still rampant. Men, looking sillier than shit with their disco haircuts and clothes, still huddle at their tables hoping to score while condemning the women who fall prey to sexual *machismo* as easy or sluttish. It's disgusting, but it's commonplace.

The women's movement is not about eliminating relationships with women, it's about achieving some equality. For that reason, the movement is not irrelevant or redundant: it is vital, intelligent and absolutely essential.

Gordon Turtle

the Gateway

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If it happens on campus...it's news to us.

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I don't like Mondays.

Just who are the scum here?

I had hoped to spend my years at university in a community of open-minded, concerned and rational human beings. If the letter written by Bruce Christensen, et al., entitled "Moslems off the Wall" (Feb. 20/80) is at all representative of the student body, my hopes were obviously baseless. This letter is not a polemic but a plea for sanity.

Consider: a people's revolution, based on a "holy" cause or otherwise, does not occur unless there has been intense, prolonged and overwhelming human suffering — suffering to the extent that the people are willing to risk their lives, *en masse*, to change their situation. In Iran, the United States was instrumental in supporting a regime of terror. The Iranian people are angry. Who can blame them for their anger?

Yes, Iran has broken international law by taking U.S. citizens hostage. Yes, it is wrong to break international law, if international law is designed to protect all nations. But we seem all too eager to ignore the C.I.A.'s blatant support of the Shah's regime against the wishes of the Iranian people; we seem to think that the United States has clean hands in this matter; we seem to think that Machiavelli was right.

Canada's action in Iran will of course be considered heroic in the United States. What we must ask ourselves is whether our motive in this matter was to save human lives or to ingratiate Canada with our imperialistic neighbors. And in any case, Canada is not blameless; to forge passports and illegally remove U.S. citizens from Iran is an act which shows about the same respect for international law as evinced in Iran's original capture of U.S. citizens. So you see, Mr. Christensen, charging another country with hostility when one's own country is involved in that hostility is sheer hypocrisy.

I am not here allocating the final moral blame to any country involved in the Iranian situation. It is clear that everyone involved is blameworthy, in some absolute sense, but distributing moral blame *post facto* is unlikely to help anyone, except, of course, those narrow enough to think that they are blameless and so able to "cast the first stone." I do not advocate that we refrain from criticising the hostile acts of the international community, but I do suggest that we think before screaming blue bloody murder.

Finally, I should like to point out to Mr. Christensen, et al., that Canadian support for imperialistic nations is Canadian support for international hostility. The United States has repeatedly shown its disdain for "integrity" in international affairs. If we dogmatically support American opportunistic aggression on the world stage, we cannot intelligently claim to seek anything other than war.

And **no one** who labels an entire race of people "scum" has any right to claim human dignity or integrity as his own.

Sydney Sabine
Arts III

Idiotic proposal

I feel I must violate my previous suggestion (*Gateway*, Jan. 31) that all parties shut up on the subject of abortion, to address the idiotic proposals of Mr. John Savard (*Gateway*, Feb. 21). The gentleman's first argument is that there must be very extenuating circumstances in order to justify abortion (e.g. the threat of death and disability to the mother). The woman's simple desire to not have a baby, he says, is insufficient; the fetus is a human life with human rights.

Crapola, I say; a fetus has no more right to life than an egg has a right to be fertilized. To grant women the right to birth control, and then withhold the fail-safe of abortion, is to return conception to its original state of a kind of vaginal Russian roulette (with somewhat improved odds); to insist that accidents not only *will* happen, but that accidents *must* happen.

And if Savard's second proposal of government regulation of abortion is adopted, we will see the day when the Abortion Justification Board of the Alberta Government Moral Authority Commission (empanelled at taxpayer's expense) solemnly considers the report of a doctor who says that his patient has a 60-70% chance of surviving parturition; or the testimony of Mrs. Joan Smith that she never wanted a baby and, at any rate, hubby John was wearing a condom on the fateful night(s), and why do these things only happen to me, boo-hoo-hoo, etc.

Laissez-faire would seem preferable to such farces.

Jens Andersen

This time I really will stay shut up (scout's honor) even if Mr. Savard of some other dingbat proposes that a clinical douche after conception, is murder, punishable by the laws of the land.

LETTERS

Letters to the *Gateway* should be a maximum of 250 words on any subject. Letters **must** be signed and should include faculty, year and phone number. Anonymous letters will not be published. All letters must be typed (or **very** neatly written). We reserve the right to edit for libel and length.

Art mirrors life yet again

That MCP Tony Redunzo had better can it. That statue in the Power Plant is taken from life, sure, but that's nothing to be proud of.

Of course the woman's underneath, that's where men have always put them, but did you notice that she supports the male? That he depends on her? That she subordinates everything for him? The exaggeration of breasts and thighs is typical of a male sculptor. That's how we're seen. I find the male's swollen head appropriate. And really, take another look at it. The woman's half is beautiful, suffering but strong. The male half is crude, ill-formed and ugly. Thus does art mirror life.

Olive Z. Nuderynot
Grad Studies
Geology

Call of the wild

The Alberta Wilderness Association (AWA) is on the warpath to stop progress. Opposed to everything from the Kananaskis Provincial Park to the expansion of Sunshine Ski Resort, the AWA is determined to turn back the clock a few thousand years. But in their haste to oppose everything from motherhood to apply pie, the AWA has lost its main goal; that of helping to preserve our wilderness areas for future generations to enjoy.

The AWA consists of roughly 1,600 members, most of whom live in the southern part of the province. It is also fair to state that most members are inactive in the association, since only 100 of them attended last year's open annual meeting in Red Deer. Nevertheless, the leadership of the AWA is driven by a fervent zeal to be the self-appointed opposition to any resource issue arising in the province. This constant harping on the negative has disillusioned many of its members, and has reduced the AWA, in the public eye, to a "bunch of wild eco-freaks".

While constantly condemning the Alberta government, it is astounding to realize that the AWA received an administrative grant ($5,000 in 1978) from the same government. And rather than offer alternatives or constructive criticism to government policy, the AWA gleefully attacks them. The Slave River dam, the Odyssey project, the Lake Louise ski resort, and the twinning of the Trans-Canada through Banff, are just a few issues that the AWA has denounced and proceeded to undermine the government on. And now that the government is reluctant to give the association another grant, the AWA is surprised to learn that you cannot bite the hand that feeds you.

To overcome its financial difficulties, the AWA has jumped into bed with the Alberta Fish and Game Association (AF & GA), on some kind of lottery scheme. What these two groups have in common has never been explained. While the one group wants to preserve animals, the other group wants to shoot them all. And now they are selling lottery tickets together. Strange.

This has greatly bewildered the public, and even most of the AWA's own members. With their monstrous four-wheel drives and their tendency to "sling lead all over the place", the AF & GA is hardly concerned about preserving our wilderness areas. Yet, the AWA leadership has decided that it is the perfect union. However, it is hopefully nothing more than a "shotgun marriage".

At present, the AWA is nothing more than a radical and negative pressure group, opposed to development in general, and the government in particular. It has lost its goal of helping to preserve and manage our wilderness areas. The AWA does not stand for anything, and when you do not stand for anything, then you fall for everything. Even for lottery tickets with the "lead slingers".

It is time that the AWA realizes the potential it has in being a leader in the wilderness field. Through constructive policies and proposals, the AWA can help to change our society for the better. The choice is up to them.

Wilf Golbeck