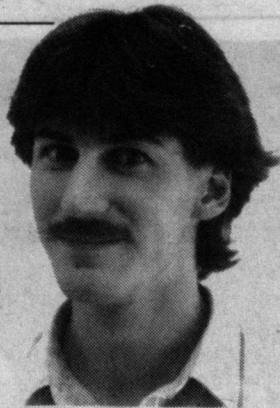


# Opinion

Mike Spindloe

## Osterman oscillates



The Code Inquiry into the failure of the Principal Group, now in its 170th day of testimony, returned to the front pages last week with the testimony of Connie Osterman. Osterman was Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs in 1985, when the situation at the Principal Group should have been dealt with by the Alberta government.

Osterman's testimony appears to confirm that the government's failure to take action flew in the face of evidence going back several years which clearly showed that the companies were in trouble and that the situation was not improving.

Not only that, but massive quantities of documents from a task force chaired by Osterman at that time have been conveniently destroyed. It is not difficult to imagine that these documents might have provided more coherent and consistent documentation of the government's role in this sordid affair than has the testimony of officials like Osterman.

The government of Alberta now finds itself sitting squarely in the hotseat which the Code Inquiry became for the Cormie family earlier on. As revelations of the government's incompetence in regulating financial institutions become public, it has also become clear that the Code Inquiry is vital to establish whether or not that incompetence extended to negligence.

If this is the case, then the government really has no choice other than to reimburse the victims of its negligence. With the recent news of the sale of \$40 million worth of Principal-held tax credits, 67,000 investors are still owed about \$250 million, or over half of the original total.

This is a large burden for Alberta taxpayers to shoulder, especially given the current fragile state of our economy. For now, we can do little but marvel at the waste, and wonder what other skeletons are lurking in the locked filing cabinets of our elected officials.

In the next provincial election, however, we should attempt to elect a government that will represent the interests of all their constituents, not just their own images and the interests of the rich and powerful.

Is this possible?

## The Gateway

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It was a dark and stormy night. Jennifer and Wayne slipped off into the blackness and wetness without leaving their last names. Rachel Sanders and Pam Hnythka chased after them, but they too disappeared into the mist. Amidst the fog they ran into Randy LaBoucane. "Where are P.J. Groeneveldt and Benjamin Galli?" he said. As they continued to search for the missing volunteers, they unknowingly sank into quicksand, joining Pat Hughes, Ron Kuipers and G. Winton. "Save us!", they screamed as Gina Garmichael, Lisa Hall and Roberta Franchuk wandered by. Hearing voices of desperation, the two girls ran towards them, but stumbled over a drunken Brian Crowley and became disoriented. Just then, Will Gibson, Dave Young, Clive Oshry and Jon Ludwig drove by. Seeing the unhappy plight of the volunteers, they stuffed them in their car and drove on. On the way, they ran into Jason Bodnar, Chad Orydzok, and Shelby Cook. When they regained consciousness, they continued to drive like maniacs towards *The Gateway*. "It's too late!" Farzad Varahraman and Doug Smith said when they arrived at the break of dawn. "Layout is finished."

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## Letters

### GSA stuck-up

Now hear this! The "Bar Tabs" article in the Sept. 8 issue of *The Gateway* was wrong. I should know, because I wrote it.

Sometime between when I did my exhaustive hands-on research of the various bars on campus, and last Friday, somebody changed the rules at the Power Plant.

It should be noted that, despite advertising to the contrary ("Everybody welcome"), only stuck-up sticky beak grad students and people — yes dammit, people: undergraduates are people too — accompanied by one of the aforementioned stuck up etc... grad students can go to the Plant between 3 and 5 Fridays (aka prime watering hours).

This rule is unfair to undergrads who patronize the Plant the rest of the week; in effect subsidizing the GSA's once-again private club. Has the GSA already forgotten how little money is to be made with restricted access to the Plant?

I urge the Grad Students' Association to remember those great words upon which modern democracies are based — Liberty, Equality, Inebriety — and re-open the Plant to all.

Randal Smathers  
 English III

### SUBway Ratt's

Re: Lunch space lacking

Over the summer the Students' Union was faced with numerous challenges. One of the more important ones was the closure of SUBway by the University.

In an effort to alleviate the space constraints posed by this closure, the Students' Union has taken the following measures:

The construction and implementation of a new and improved food service in Room At The Top (RATT). This food venue is open from 11 a.m. to 11 p.m. and serves a varied menu from freshly made sandwiches to pizza, and numerous delectable items

in between. With a 160 seat capacity, this lounge also boasts a fantastic view from atop the Students' Union Building.

We have also opened up Dinwoodie Lounge (2nd Floor SUB) to be primarily used as a venue in which you can bring your own lunch, whether it be a brown bag lunch, or one from the numerous eateries on the main floor of SUB. This space can also be used as a quiet study space, or a place to enjoy a break from the crowds.

The last of our ventures has been the demolition of a 400 square foot boardroom, which will be turned into a seating area (lounge) just outside of Dinwoodie Lounge. This will be open within a couple of weeks.

These three projects have attempted to open up more accessible space to the students and to hopefully take away the inconvenience of the closure of SUBway and the other HFS cafeterias.

Chris Welsh  
 Vice President  
 Finance and Administration  
 Students' Union

### Nigerians deceived

Writing in the *Globe and Mail* of Saturday, April 16, 1988, in a piece titled "Will Nigeria ever enjoy democracy?", one Oakland Ross said, inter alia, that President Babangida has "certainly... been far more respectful of civil liberties than was his repressive predecessor, Maj-Gen. Mohammed Buhari...". Let me begin by exploding this myth. Babangida's government is no different from Buhari's former government. Babangida usurped power from Buhari in August 1985 in what was an internal struggle for hegemony within the armed forces. Since he was part of Buhari's government, Babangida conived in all decisions at that time taken. He cannot be totally absolved for violations of human rights during the period.

When his "palace coup" took place, in an effort to gain legitimacy, he

"deceived" the Nigerian people into believing he never supported Buhari's human rights' violations. What a farce! As a Nigerian University lecturer (currently on leave of absence) it seems to me that the Canadian people and other parties interested in Nigeria should get the record straight: Babangida is a wolf in sheep's clothing. The country has witnessed massive violations of human rights, since his usurpation of power, comparable to what occurred under Buhari. As part of his ploy to cover up corruption in government, divert attention from the nation's economic ills and his inadequate policies for tackling them, as well as consolidate his power, he has continued to stifle dissent.

The most recent attack has been on labour leaders and the working people of Nigeria who have since seen through his "wall of pretense". The Nigerian Labour Congress (NLC) and the Academic Staff Union of Universities (ASUU) have been banned, and their leaders and other members have been in detention for the last few months without charges, without access to lawyers, or even hope of future trial. But these are only a few instances of Babangida's repression of the entire Nigerian citizenry. Yet the Western press continues to credit him as a liberal with benevolent disposition. This is not true.

The truth is that he is a military dictator like others (whether they be in Nigeria or elsewhere), and military autocracy lacks any degree of benevolence.

Vincent M. Okwechime, Jr.  
 Faculty of Law  
 Grad Studies

### Hall holds hostages

We are appalled at how the University of Alberta's Board of Governors has allowed its Housing & Food department to mislead and steal from student tenants at Lister and Pembina. Residents at both of these complexes seem to be the pawns on Housing