

EDITORIAL

The winner is...

1980/81 was, to say the least, a difficult year for the Students' Union.

Financial problems occupied most of the executive's attention, and were the main reason for their reluctant decisions to close the Music Listening Room, RATT and Fridays food service, and the Music and Tape Store (maybe), and to suspend Bert Best.

These are all fairly negative achievements, but achievements nevertheless and this year's executives should be given collective credit for these moves. The operating deficit, which was more than \$300,000 last year, has been cut in half, and prospects for next year look even better.

If anything, the executives were slow to implement the drastic changes and cutbacks needed to get the SU back on its feet. But given the bureaucratic structure of the SU, the need for approval by Students' Council, and the time taken to grasp the gravity of the situation, they cannot be faulted for lethargy.

Unfortunately, it was not a year to make positive policy; few forward initiatives came out of either Council or the executives. Exceptions were such progressive moves as their stand on North Garneau, their support for the Federation of Alberta Students (FAS), and the Canadian Federation of Students (CFS), their establishment of the Women's Center, and their moves to increase funding to student services.

Looking more closely at each portfolio: we still have no course guide from the vp academic and little or no progress on it since last year. Darrell Rankin did put in plenty of time in committees and General Faculties Council and such, but it is difficult to point to any concrete achievements he has made.

In the external portfolio, Kris Farkas spent most of her time working closely with FAS and other student organizations. The result is a much stronger FAS at the U of A, an achievement that will pay off in future years. Farkas also did a good job building support for cutbacks campaigns, and began reconstructing the portfolio, which was left, to put it mildly, in shambles by the previous occupant.

Pat Haws in finance has been good with the numbers, and she put in long hours trying to analyze and solve the murky morass of SU finances. In fact, Haws probably knew more about the SU financial problems than did the departed general manager. Unfortunately, her financial acumen is counterbalanced by her total political naivete; this has sometimes compromised her effectiveness in council.

Vp internal Jan Byer spent most of his time this year sitting on the political fence trying to be nice to everyone until he saw clearly which way the wind was blowing. This won him lots of friends, but got little done. He did, however, perform the delicate balancing act of his portfolio between various clubs, faculty associations and other campus groups well.

Probably the best executive member has been Nolan Astley, the president. His work with the Board of Governors, his almost singlehanded coordination of the North Garneau campaign within the bureaucracy, and his willingness to act when necessary (such as the firing of Bert Best) restored to the position some of its leadership potential. Astley was not "the invisible man," and he did not have to contend with a bickering executive; both of these advantages over previous years allowed him to get things done.

In sum, this year's executive did a fine job. The Students' Council is still too apolitical and not exactly sophisticated, but the executive managed to make the best of a difficult year.

Keith Krause

the Gateway

VOL. LXXI NO. 48
TUESDAY, MARCH 31, 1981
SIXTEEN PAGES

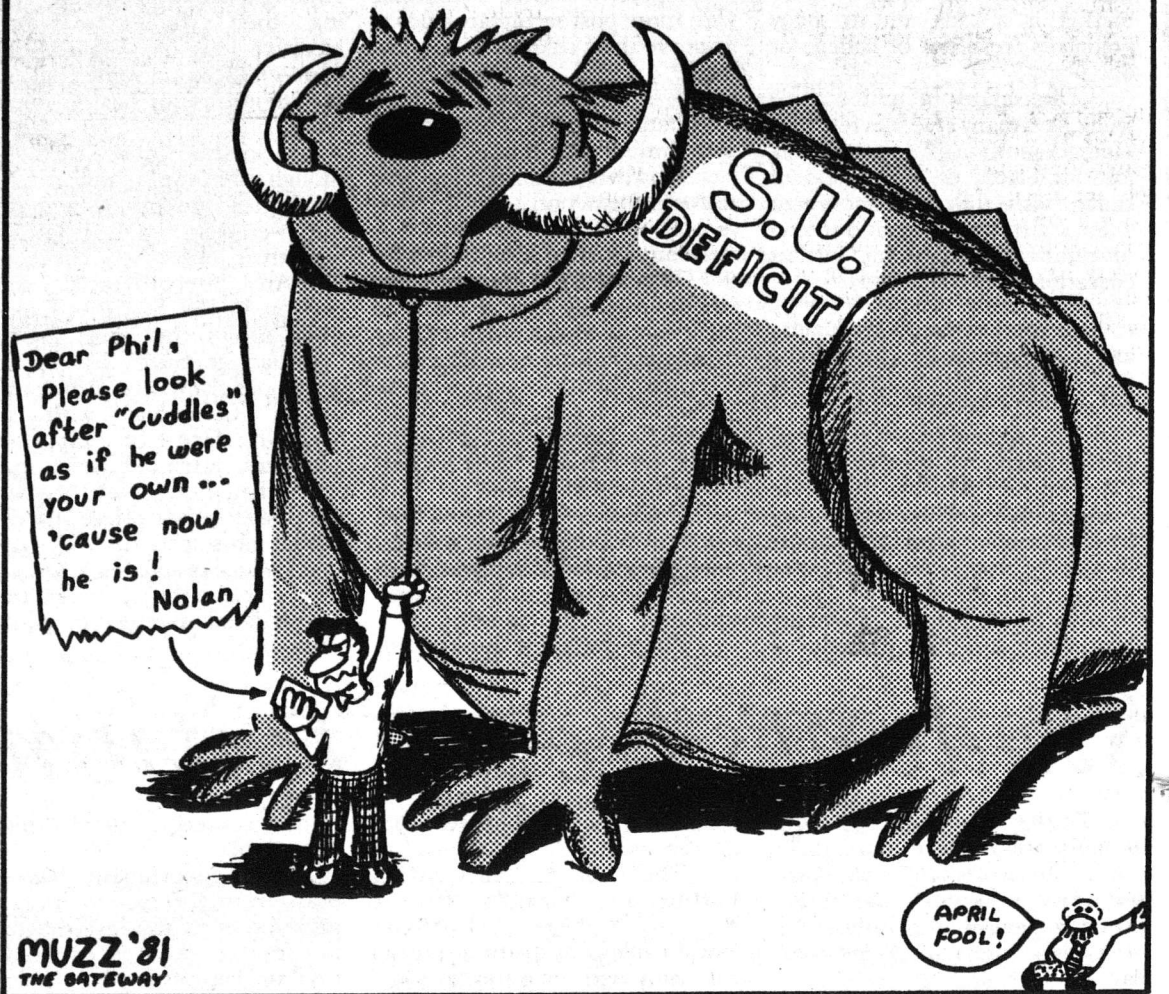
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The Art of Doing Nothing Club was in its quiet way steadily winning new converts. Nina Miller rolled in with some beer, and she, Cathy Emberley, Pat Just, David Orrell, Rich Watts and the irrepressible Alison Thomson very loudly got blitzed in the newsroom. Pat Murphy, Elda Hopfe, Igor and Jessica Levental and David Marples were content to just sit and smile at one another. Chanchal Bhattacharya was also smiling, but for his own reasons, while Michael Skeet and Murray Muzzby doodled aimlessly. Meanwhile, the Cheshire Cat beamed and contemplated next year...

THE GATEWAY is the newspaper of the students of the University of Alberta. With a readership of more than 25,000, the Gateway is published by its proprietor, the Students' Union, Tuesdays and Thursdays during the winter session. Contents are the responsibility of the editor; editorials are written by the editorial board or signed. All other opinions are signed by the party expressing them. Copy deadlines are 12 noon Mondays and Wednesdays. The Gateway, a member of Canadian University Press and the Youthstream Network, is located in room 282 SUB, Edmonton, Alberta, T6G 2J7.

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Item: SOPER SLATE ASSUMES OFFICE WEDNESDAY



MUZZ '81
THE GATEWAY

Ugly practice can be halted

A single statement suffices to refute the letter by Richard Miller in the March 24 Gateway: the clitoris contains rather more nerve endings than does the prepuce.

Still, I must admit to one criticism of the article "Shocking mutilation still performed on 74 million" in the March 17 Gateway. The article asks why international aid organizations do not do more about ending this practice: I would think that the answer is obvious. Knowing they would have little success modifying the "local politics," they choose not to abandon sick, hungry children for the sake of the crimes of their elders.

Now for Mr. Olsen's letter. "What positive, constructive reaction has [Ms. Volkov] evoked in us?" It is true that an article describing a detestable practice arouses negative emotions towards those who perpetuate it. But if we get angry enough to put a stop to this practice, once and for

all, that will be positive and constructive from the viewpoint of the women who might otherwise be its victims.

Yes, Mr. Olsen, that article does perpetuate notions that other cultures don't quite measure up to ours. And it is true that we have done enough harm by means of our technological superiority (one cultural phenomenon subject to empirical verification) to make it difficult for us to claim much moral superiority with respect to our former colonies.

Still we have had democracy, at first a very imperfect sort, for longer than anyone else. We have been questioning the traditions of our culture for a while now. So the black slaves were freed; women got the vote; non-Christians live in our country in harmony and peace; you can't even get arrested for cohabitation, or for consensual homosexual acts.

Where else have the underlying assumptions of a culture been

voluntarily questioned by its people for so long a time?

By asserting that only one culture has any need to acknowledge responsibility for its faults, you have not helped the cause of understanding between different peoples and cultures one bit.

If such practices as suttee, infanticide, or clitorrectomy are approved of by a majority of the people in a country, it is useless to speak of "democracy" existing when such things are done to the weak and helpless. But this doesn't mean that only colored people (those not pale and pallid) require the colonial tutelage of a more civilized people.

I've been told that a majority of Canadians support the idea of making abortion a decision between a woman and her doctor.....

John Savard, M. Sc.
(I finally got out of here)

Worthless and pretentious prattle

The 24th of March must have been a slow news day for the Gateway to publish such worthless nonsense as "Do athletes need subsidies?" by Howard Bloom.

In addition to its internal contradictions (Hunger was attracted to a US university by the "opportunity to play" even though he "realized he would sit on the bench"), the article displays terminal naivete concerning the real issues involved in the awarding of athletic scholarships. What the author fails to realize is that admission to university, and qualification for scholarship, on a basis other than academic achievement, invariably leads to a compromise of scholarly standards.

The article is larded with ill-informed generalities. Example: most member colleges of the NCAA "do their best to insure (sic) that their students graduate." Fact: "four out of five NBA players haven't graduated from

college" and "almost two-thirds of all NFL players do not have diplomas" ("The Writing on the Wall," Sports Illustrated, 19 May, 1980).

"Think for a minute," Mr. Bloom pleads, "about the effect of having a member of the national team play basketball at Carleton." Many minutes later, one is still left to reflect on the purported effect.

How many readers of the Gateway can identify a single member of Canada's national basketball team?

The author would do better to ponder the program of courses taken by a typical "sports hero" at Montana State: Basketball Fundamentals and Techniques, Basketball Philosophy, Physical Conditioning, Wrestling Theory, General Biology (health), and Safety with Hand Power Tools.

Finally, Mr. Bloom's bald assertion that money "can be easily found" for athletic scholarships, in light of current financial difficulties being experienced at all Canadian universities, should be dismissed as pure poppycock. While it is certainly part of the Gateway's mandate to stimulate and provoke, our campus newspaper ought not to resort to such pretentious prattle in fulfillment of this function.

Bob Riley
Law II

STAFF
MEETING

Thursday, 4 p.m.

Room 282 SUB