

# The Gateway

THE GATEWAY is the newspaper of the students of the University of Alberta. It is published by the Students' Union twice weekly during the winter session on Tuesdays and Thursdays. Contents are the responsibility of the editor, opinions are those of the person expressing them. Letters to the editor on any subject are welcome, but must be signed. Please keep them short: letters should not exceed 200 words. Deadlines for submitting copy are 2 p.m. Mondays and Wednesdays. Main offices are located in Room 282, SUB for Gateway, Room 238 SUB for Media Productions. Phone 432-5168, 432-5178, 432-5750, Advertising 432-3423. Circulation 18,500.

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## editorial

Tuition fees are going up, housing and food prices are going up, even marks are going up - at least according to the Faculty of Arts Dean and a professor in educational administration. Dean of Arts George Baldwin has been very vocal about the dropping standards of literacy among undergraduates and it must have come as something of a surprise to him when he was given data from Institutional Research last month which shows marks for freshman courses (up to English 299) in the English department have remained virtually constant for the last five years. If the literacy level has dropped and marks are the same as they were, obviously English profs are being a little easier in marking. (Before all you students begin rushing to the English department to begin signing up for courses, I might add the situation seems similar at many departments around campus.)

Baldwin admits there's been a softening in marking attitudes, although he says that's better than the "stingy sixties when it was very unusual to see an 80 or a 90 per cent." These days we see 12 per cent of the Arts undergrads walk away with degrees with distinction (as opposed to the sixties when two or three per cent would be awarded a B.A. with distinction.)

It's hard to say whether this trend, which Jim Balderson in Education calls "academic inflation," is good or bad. On the one hand, it shows that marks are only good when they're measured in relative terms, i.e. the old 80 per cent knowledge out of a possible 100 per cent "perfect knowledge" only begins to mean something as long as there's a comparison with the way others scored on the same test.

On the other hand, on our own campus, where they recognized ten years ago that some sort of percentile system should be used and thus adopted the nine-point system, there has never been consistency between faculties (or even departments) and many people find their "percentile grades" meaningless.

On the other hand, although debate has died down from the five-year-ago furor over pass-fail to a blind acceptance of what is at best a flawed and inconsistent nine-point stanine, there is hardly anyone on this campus who cares discussing the problem.

On the other hand, most of us just want to get the hell out of this place and will take whatever stanine crumbs we can get to do so.

by Kevin Gillese

## Let's have a Hahnd for all those who care

In response to Mr. Hahn's letter in the Nov. 25, issue of the Gateway.

It is certainly gratifying to see that some students do care about what is going on around them, and refuse to be locked in this intellectual bubble which we refer to as the U of A. It is people like Mr. Hahn that make me realize that possibly the work and involvement of myself and my fellow councillors, and especially the executive, is not an exercise of futility.

The lack of awareness of Mr. Holden's letter in regards to the "exploitation" of the editor's page in the Gateway, by council members is extremely disturbing. There is the constant cry of student apathy and the lack of response to student concerns by the Students' Council. Yet, there is little if any involvement by these people who yell the loudest.

During the catastrophe of the Students' Union forum, on

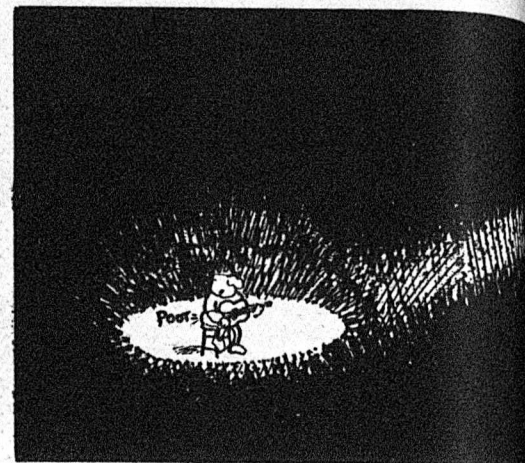
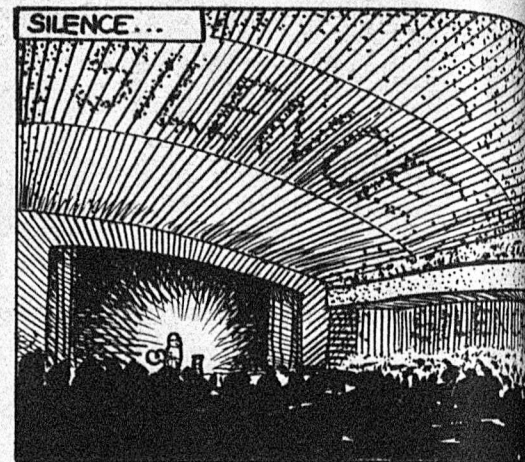
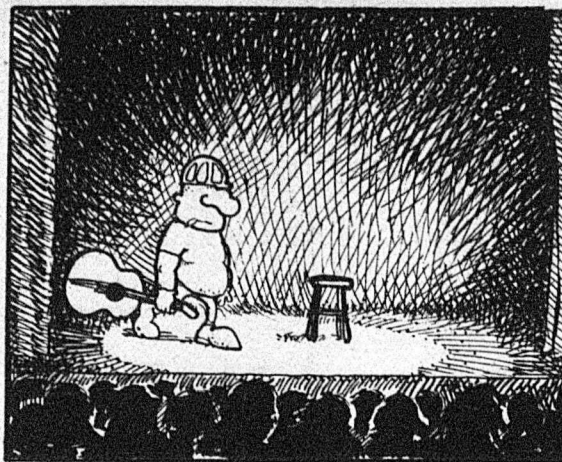
National Student Day, there was a very loud voice which kept harping about the aloofness and the unapproachable attitude of the student council. This individual expressed a strong desire to attend a Students' Council meeting, therefore an invitation was offered.

But the irony of this whole situation is that we have been waiting for this crusader against student apathy to appear and fulfill his verbal exhibition of student concern. Because, as Ms. Gillese promised, every meeting of the Students' Council has been advertised in the Gateway.

So, in the future, instead of complaining about the members of Council trying to stay in contact with the people whom they represent, contact your council rep! I am sure he or she will be more than willing to clear up your obscure opinion of the Students' Council.

Doug Agar  
Education Rep

## BUB SLUG by Delaney & Rosmusen



## Prof reads between the lines

We have passed through a decade of great ferment and change, and at present the situation appears quiet and unexciting. What one generation fought for just a few years ago the present generation takes for granted. Such struggles are obviously at their weakest point; there is no strong student-oriented, faculty-supported democratic movement on campus now, but it doesn't mean the issues are resolved. It is this struggle which the Proposal for Reorganization of the University Governing Structure (Gateway, 23 Nov) wants to cut off for good.

It wants to cut off struggle because it mistakes a low ebb of participation as apathy; not only student apathy, but faculty apathy as well. Why else complain so bitterly about time spent in committee work? Because not all faculty willingly participate, so the burden of government falls on a relative few. Rather than ask the important question: why is there apathy, this Proposal gets around it (or above it) by reducing participation and imposing on the University an authoritarian, centrally determined governing structure.

The signatories to this Proposal appear frustrated with apathy and their answer is POWER. Of course, the apathetic are also frustrated. Our University does not have a fully democratic governing structure. The lines of power described in this Proposal (see Folio, 25 Nov) already exist albeit in some controlled form since staff and students do sit on operational (not advisory, as proposed) Faculty and University committees and councils.

As anyone who sits on committees and councils knows, the struggle for expanding participation is a continuing one. Yet, the Chairmen who signed this

Proposal seem to be saying that the answer to a problem of centralized power is more centralization. Wouldn't this lead to even greater alienation on the part of staff and students? Wouldn't this lead to University government by default in the hands of a very few (the very few considering themselves the administrative and, heaven help us, the academic elite?)

Perhaps they are of that turn of mind which finds the organized collegial anarchy of the University intolerable. We are not and need not behave like a modern corporate firm, but the Chairmen are apparently unaware of the distinction. Their concern is commendable and their frustration understandable, but their proposal is an answer to neither.

This Proposal is based on a misapprehension of the problems of the University community. It is one-sided, it is

backward looking, it is, some might say, reactionary. It is in its own way neglectful of and irresponsible to, the people who are this institution. It could be said this Proposal expresses a lack of imagination among certain Chairmen. I suggest they show a very presence of imagination in concocting such a structure as they propose at this time in history.

They show themselves ignorant and insensitive to the struggles for democratization in our part of society and of and to the frustrations which we experience because of governing structures which accommodate rather than revolutionize. This Proposal will be opposed so strongly that it will reflect on the credibility of that small band of concerned and frustrated (Chair)men.

Richard Frucht  
Professor of Anthropology

## Barker defends three-ring circus

As a result of the letters in the Tuesday, Nov. 30 edition of the Gateway, your brief contained in the Nov. 23 edition (in which you insulted both Skulk and the residence students of Lister Hall) has come to my attention.

I do not wish to defend Skulk or Lister Hall. I feel this has been amply handled by Mr. MacPhee, Miss Davis, and Miss Elliott. Needless to say I was appalled by your depiction of Lister Hall, but what really disgusts me is the callous manner in which you pass this offending brief off as an example of Gateway humor. Clearly this is not acceptable.

No only have you insulted Skulk, and perhaps hurt our gate for next year, not only have you insulted the residence of Lister Hall, but you have done the Lister Hall Students Association a great

disservice. This year, as in past years, one of our major concerns is non-residence students entering our complex and causing problems. By your brief you have implied that Lister Hall is the place to be for these "packs of savages" who indulge in "brutal senseless madness."

The situation demands a retraction and an apology.

In closing, I would like to thank those students who felt strongly enough about the residence, our home, as a good and valuable place to live, that they took time to defend the honor of residence students from this blatant example of irresponsible journalism.

Dennis Barker  
Henday Hall President  
Chairman, Skulk Committee