

editorial

Time to Repeal a Bad Law

The rally to be held by the *Alberta Legalization of Cannabis Committee* (ALCC) this Saturday, lends me an opportunity to vent my dissatisfaction concerning what has been a pet peeve of mine for many years now; namely the issue of legalization of marijuana.

Somehow it seems *passee* to be still talking about decriminalizing marijuana in the late seventies. And yet it's still there - a law which should have been repealed many years ago, but by the actions of a cynical government and an apathetic nation, remains "on the books".

It could be argued that marijuana — or rather, cannabis, since its derivatives should be given the same respectful regard — has been *de facto* legalized. Very few individuals, after all, are imprisoned these days for the simple crim of possession of cannabis. But to make this point is to ignore the fact that an unjust law remains which may, at a police officer's or magistrate's whim, be discriminatorily imposed on a particular individual, proving the old adage that bad laws are the worst form of tyranny.

Why are the cannabis laws unjust? Because they equate law not with the practice of justice, but rather, with certain groups' narrow definition of morality. If laws are made to protect society as a whole, then such victimless "crimes" as drug usage have no place in the law books. There is very limited evidence that the use of marijuana detrimentally affects the individual user. There is no evidence, that I am aware of at least, that the marijuana user seriously detriments society.

I have no wish to see our nation turn into a reflection of Huxley's *Brave New World*, where its citizens parade around in a *soma*-induced euphoria. It is certainly unfortunate, from a purely utopic point of view, that certain people should feel the need for artificial stimulants in order to cope with the pressures of modern life. But it is the ultimate injustice - and a form of moralistic tyranny - that such individuals, given their "weakness", should be prosecuted, or rather, persecuted by the law.

From a very personal point of view, I have seen people arrested and harassed as a result of this unjust law, and have noted that this harassment has inflicted far more psychological damage upon the individual than the drug itself might have hoped to induce. It was once thought in the sixties that marijuana was the instrument by which the youth of North America could be incited to revolt against the notorious establishment forces. If any young person is still pretentious enough to believe this argument - to think that one artificial stimulant can provoke an entire reversal of social, political, and cultural beliefs - then perhaps the best way to negate such ignorance is to take away the truly contentious issue, that is, the fact of the drug's illegality.

I, for one, am weary of this issue. If it weren't for the actions of a cynical government which calculates votes like a banker tallying receipts at the end of a business day, cannabis would have been legalized long ago. With the return of widespread apathy amongst the youth of the seventies, and with all the middle-class "tokers" hiding out in suburbia, secure from "the long arm of the law", the subversiveness of marijuana usage is surely, and fatally, undermined. Let's legalize the damn stuff and get it over with, so that we may tackle the more serious injustices at hand.

Brian Bergman

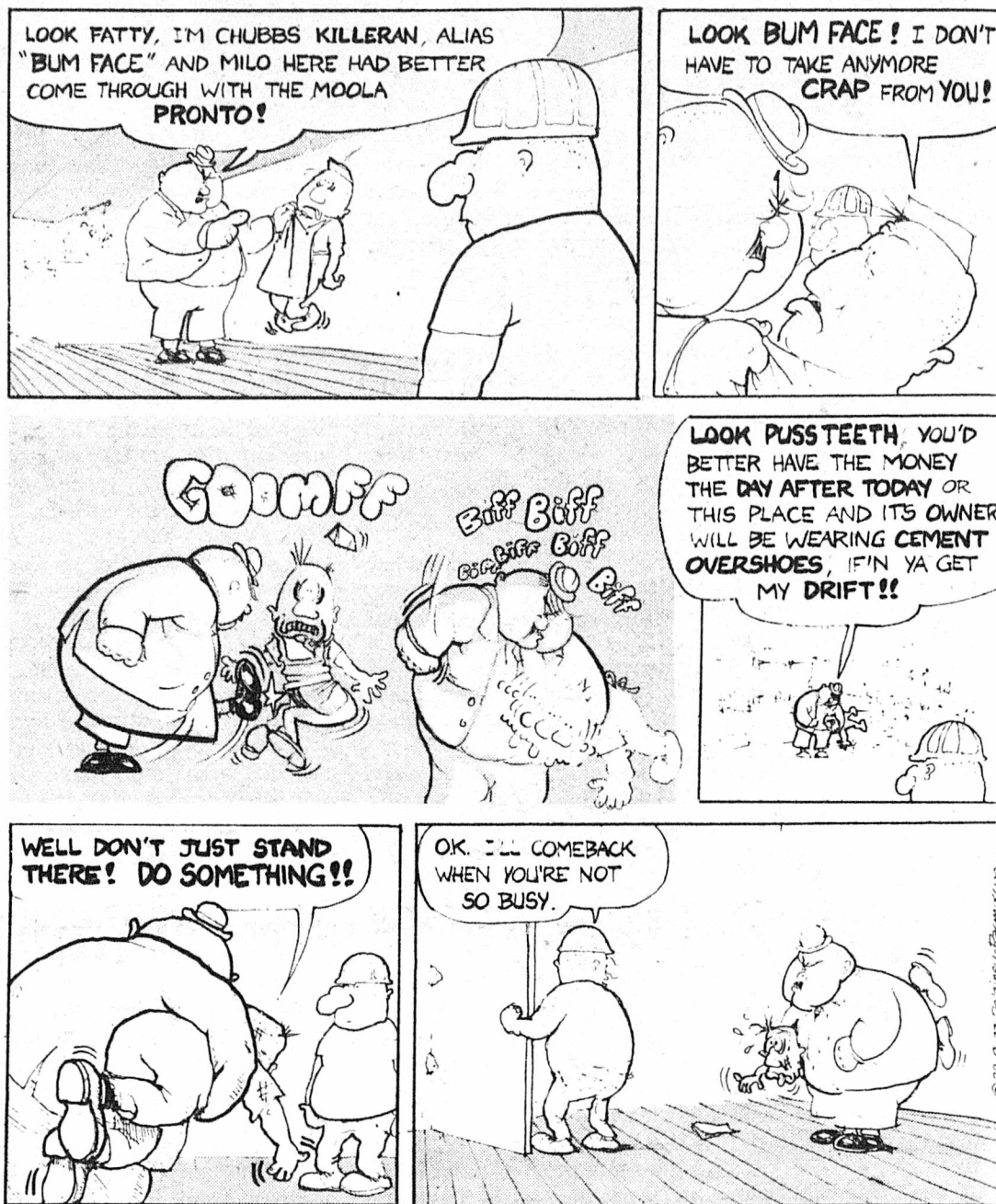
Gateway

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Of political concern — Kent State

Kent State was indeed a tragedy. Even the *Reader's Digest* admitted that. The facts stated in the article "Kent State Seven Years Later" are substantially correct: but one tacit assumption, made in both that article and the reply "Kent State Not End of Protest" does not correspond with the facts.

The war in Vietnam was not "immoral." The fall of Saigon did not represent the "victory of the Vietnamese people," as we've been told so often ... and as the authors of both those articles appear to accept.

The nature of VC terrorism: children maimed, mutilated, pregnant women cut open, people disembowelled.

The streams of refugees — simple hill people, ordinary peasants — now streaming into Thailand from Vietnam and Cambodia, with their stories of slaughter and fear — in Vietnam, of "re-education camps" where food is scarce and life short, and

in Cambodia, of the dreaded Angka Loeu (organization on high), of the emptying of Phnom Penh (everyone, including pregnant women and hospital patients, was ordered to just get up and walk out of the city — those who fell behind were shot), of the slaughter (as many were killed in Cambodia by the Communists after the war as died in all the fighting there).

Ode to Mutton

Mutton! Mutton! O mighty Mutton! whose name is whispered with dread in bastions of respectable journalism everywhere! Wielding quill and Lethbridge Pilsner and unparalleled grace and dexterity (or lack thereof!) Mutton, mighty Mutton, who holds prominent dead-beats in even lower esteem than we, the general populace, do! Mutton, whose courage is such that even as the ponderous wheels of the legal system grind

Who makes a tuss about these things? A lie is being written into the history books and we acquiesce.

It is time to become politically conscious. But political consciousness does not mean servility to the self-appointed guardians of world "peace."

John Savat
 Graduate Student

In defense of residence

It is unfortunate that Lister Hall is being criticised for what a few are.

In my four years here, three as one of those "immature seniors." I have seen a few animal acts, some acts of destruction, and the occasional overstepping of the bounds of decent behaviour.

I have also seen a few people undergo the due process of our laws, some dissuaded from further infringement by quick and thoughtful action by the seniors, and the occasional per-

son being helped in hours of need by the "animals" who volunteer precious hours to staff We Care, and Stress.

Yes, we live together, and living with other people is an art I fear too few of us on this campus ever master. Maybe, just maybe, a few of those people leaving because of "the noise" are really leaving because they find it hard to cope with the normal give and take of human relations.

That or they need a reason to explain why they're moving out into that (cheaper) apartment.

By the way, as a member of

the socials security staff and Mac Desk staffer, I can testify that I've had more trouble with out of Res students than with Res students.

All in all, what I've most seen during my stay here has been thousands of perfectly normal, sane, and reasonably happy University students coping with each other and society with very few problems. We're not lonely.

At least from my point of view.

M.W. (Stuntman) Ekelund
 1st Mac Social "Senior"