

the Gateway

EDITORIAL

Vita brevis

"Orwell made the Aspidistra (a house plant) the symbol of keeping one's courage up in the face of adversity, of remaining cheerful when confronted with gnawing poverty."
Alison Thomson, March 7, 1981

Orwell summed it all up. Alison Thomson, sometime Gateway staffer, died Monday of natural causes, while leaving her Garneau apartment for work at the Edmonton Sun.

Alison was never to my knowledge confronted by 'gnawing poverty' nor anything resembling it, but through Orwell and others and by other means, she showed the genuine compassion for those who were.

She did live a life of "courage in the face of adversity," a much-clichéd phrase, misused by those pitiful people who use 'adversity' as a crutch, and a perverse 'courage' as their rationalization for not bothering trying to help themselves lead better lives.

Alison never lacked this sort of motivation, and though her adversity was not economic, it was intimidating.

She was a committed feminist, nearly a socialist, and significantly outspoken.

"Of course we're equal now, aren't we? We can go into law or medicine if we want to, we have access to birth control, and we're paid the same for equal work. The law says so.

Sure. We also sit with clenched teeth in lectures when the professor tells jokes about dumb housewives, or shows slides of Playboy centerfolds between the biology specimens.

We're equal now. We "smart chicks" can make it in a man's world. We can also be raped and sexually abused by those men. And then abused again by a male dominated judicial system that has decided if a man honestly believes a woman wanted sex, he can't be convicted of rape, no matter how irrational that belief may be.

We are portrayed in pornography as things to be acquired, knocked around, shit on, and left. And then we are told it's all art...

We must work together, militantly, demanding our fair share, and our rights in this society. And we must do so independently of our other political demands. Let's not fall for the socialist line that after the revolution, all that will be OK. Socialism is a necessary precondition for equality, which certainly can't occur under capitalism. But socialism doesn't guarantee women's liberation."

Alison was 16 years old when she came to the U of A from rural Alberta. She was 20 when she wrote the above, which appeared in her Aspidistra column last year. During these four years, she worked at the Gateway, both as an editor and a reporter.

She sat on Students' Council, ran for office on an ingenious joke slate, held the position of Students' Council speaker, and maintained above an eight average through two years of pre-Med and two years of Medicine. She also presided over a local NDP constituency, and chaired the NDP Health Services Committee.

This fall, she planned to come back to the U of A to resume her medical studies.

In this, there is more than Orwell's 'courage', adversity or no. More coldly put, and ironically, I think, is William F. Buckley's rule: "You've got to drive yourself!"

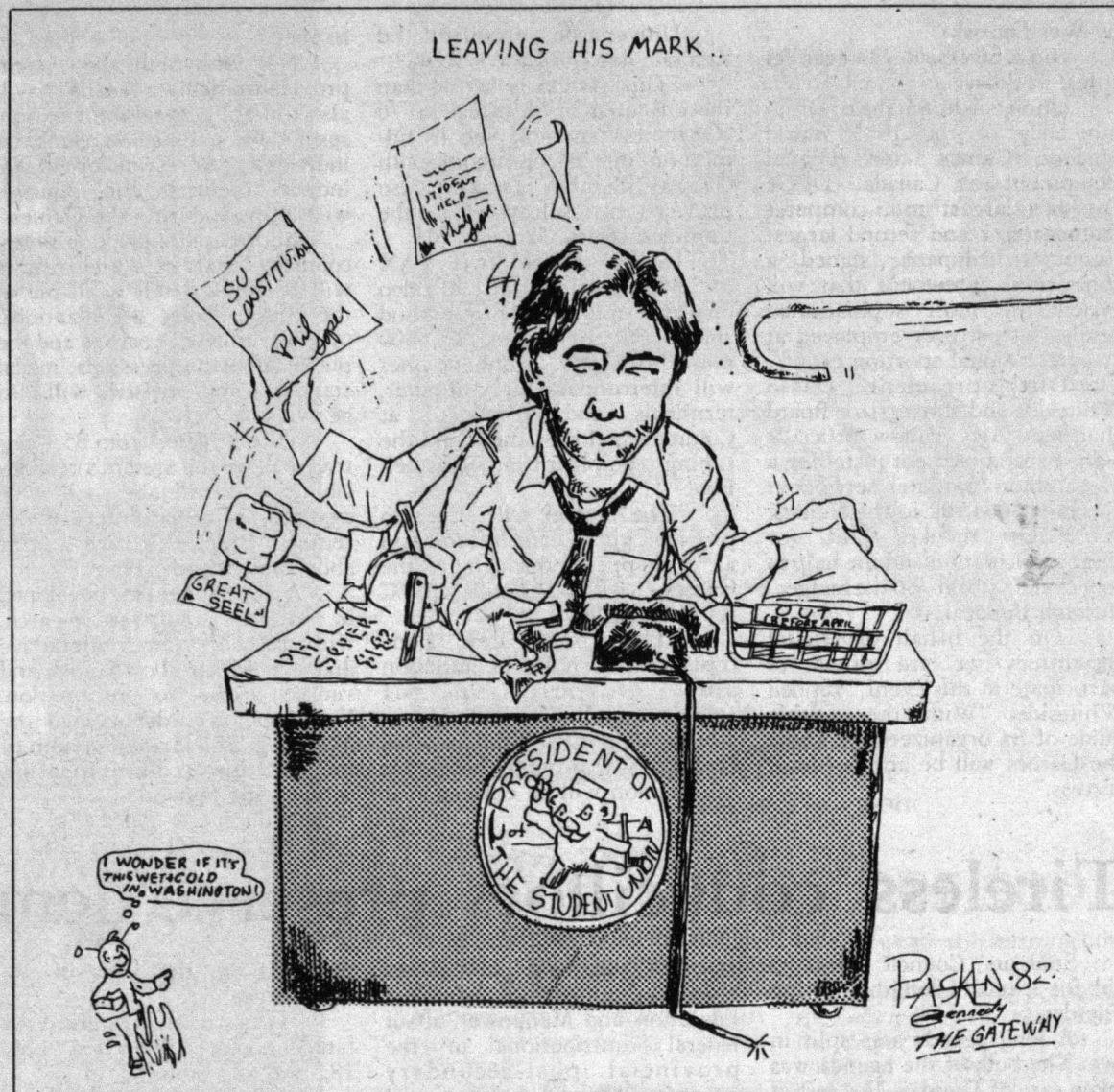
Buckley would have cut his typewriter in half if it would allow him to work faster and better. Alison Thomson possessed this spirit.

People are dying constantly. A great many die of unnatural causes which cause great resentment. They are called wasted lives.

But, believing as I do that some lives are much, much more worthwhile than others, Alison's death was indeed a tragic waste.

She will be remembered most clearly by people who knew her and could appreciate her drive and could not keep up. I am one such person, but I'm trying. So many are not.

Peter Michalyszyn



LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Male uproar over abortion views

Response to Melanie Klimchuk's letter of March 9, 1982.

I did not enjoy Miss Klimchuk's carefully worded slam against the male gender. I enjoyed even less the nebulous way she went about it, namely through the topic of abortion.

Many things about Miss Klimchuk's letter rubbed my "almighty penis" and certainly my own sense of logic the wrong way.

First she states that men are trying to "beat women into submission with their almighty penises" and asks for them to just accept the fact that a woman's body is no longer property of the church and state.

She later goes on to state that because of media filled with sex "She (woman) is in fact a victim of societal rape" and thus there is an abundance of unwanted pregnancies. Perhaps either one of the two points by itself might stand as a decent argument. However the two together stand as a blatant contradiction.

On the one hand she asks that society give women a free hand in making their own decisions about abortion, and then goes on to state that women are incapable of making their own decisions concerning sex (the underlying cause of abortions I'm told) because society has programmed them the other way by making them sexually liberal. She asks for the right to make a decision because she is incapable of making decisions. This is ludicrous reasoning.

She infers that this "society" is composed purely of men. Surely

this female attitude is as biased an arrogant as any male attitude that has preceded it. She then goes on to state that denying women the right to abortion is "placing the life of a potential, over that of an actual human being." Surely this is only one reason for abortion (ie. when the life of the mother is at stake) It seems that there is very little or no moral dilemma. When this is the reason for abortion the moral dilemma evolves when any other of the host of reasons for abortion are used.

However the worst part of Miss Klimchuk's letter was not her ideas on abortion. It was more the prejudiced attitude that she

takes toward men. She stresses this attitude by saying that at least half of the "expendable breeders are bound to produce girls". Unfortunately Miss Klimchuk overlooks the fact that the other half produced will be boys. Boys and girls can never be the same or think the same but if the two genders are to get along together, neither should continually try to proclaim itself the greatest by running down the other.

Prejudice breeds prejudice, and no doubt letters like Miss Klimchuk's with their prejudiced fallacies should not be given the paper that they are printed on.

Conrad Schulte
Arts I

Volunteer your thanks

Volunteers play an important role in the community by sharing their time and talents with others. The U of A Branch of the Volunteer Action Centre is honouring volunteers March 15 - 19th and is encouraging you to "Thank a Volunteer".

It's easy to forget how important on-campus volunteers are in providing student services and in increasing the enjoyment of university life. Maybe you are a volunteer and don't know it! Student Help, CJSR, SORSE, U of A clubs, athletic teams and Student Affairs...are only a few of the many organizations depending on volunteers. So, whether you

volunteer on campus or off campus; whether you are a veteran or a neophyte, student, staff or just a regular Gateway reader...we want to say "Thanks" for your involvement.

On a larger scale, the Volunteer Action Centre is celebrating their 30th birthday during National Volunteer Recognition Week April 18th to 24th. Watch for the "thank-you" festivities.

Volunteers are special people. They deserve a piece of the cake!

Pat Simcoe
Volunteer Action Centre

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The Gateway is the official newspaper of the students at the University of Alberta. With a readership of over 25,000 the Gateway is published Tuesdays and Thursdays during the winter session, excepting holidays. Contents are the responsibility of the editor; editorials are written by an 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 the Canadian University Press and of CUP Media Services Ltd., is located in Room 282 Students' Union Building, Edmonton, Alberta, T6G 2J7. Newsroom 432-5168; Advertising 432-3423.

Staff this issue: table. An article of Dave Cox with a flat, horizontal Jordan Peterson upheld by Kent Blinston or Teri Paulgarrd, Peter West and Geoffrey Jackson. 2. Such a table around which James L. Stevens and Anne Stephen sit for Gunnar Blodgett. 3. A raised or sunken Michael Skeet on a wall. 4. To postpone discussion of i.e. Mark Fletcher or Marianne Nielson. 5. A horizontal stratum of Garnet DuGray or Martin Beales. 6. A tablet or slab bearing Bill Ingles.