

The Midas touch makes good

by Lucinda Chodan

He wasn't Jason, but it was a golden fleece.

The Montreal city police fraud squad are looking for a con man who converted about \$500,000 to gold after advertising a non-existent computerized backgammon game in many Canadian newspapers, including *The Gateway*.

The ads, which appeared in *The Gateway* November 6 and 8, hyped a Danworth 6-Level Backgammon and Chess Computer for \$62.45. Readers who sent away for the game later received a notice in the mail informing them that they were also being billed for a custom-made black vinyl case for the game, at an additional \$22.50.

The fraud suspect, Bryan Gould, was last seen in Vancouver at the end of November

and may be heading for Taiwan, according to police.

Gateway advertising manager Tom Wright says the newspaper lost about \$1200 on the unpaid backgammon ads.

"We usually don't run out-of-town ads without a cash payment. But since the guy had two pages of credit references, including two banks, we weren't too suspicious.

"Even if they had been checked, they're all dummy references — he just set up a bunch of his friends at all those phone numbers.

"I don't feel that badly, though. The ad ran in virtually every newspaper in the country."

City police are unsure of how many Edmontonians were defrauded, but nationally, about 8,000 Canadians sent away for the bogus backgammon game.

At least one *Gateway* reader was bilked by The Man and the Golden Fleece, but Raymond Dieno is philosophical about the loss of his \$62.45.

"I guess there's no chance of getting the money back... I hope the gold price keeps falling," says Dieno, who finished his agriculture degree last term.

Dieno sent a cheque to Danworth Electronics November 7. He received a notice in the mail three weeks later.

The notice said Danworth Electronics had manufactured a "handsome attache case" for the game. Customers who paid by Chargex had \$22.50 added to their Chargex bills.

The card ended, "In closing, all of us at Danworth Electronics

want to wish you a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year. May you find many hours of pleasure with your Twin Challenger."

Dieno laughs ironically as he reads the card.

"I got a little suspicious when I got the card," he says, "so I phoned the operator in Montreal, where they (Danworth Electronics) had no listing.... Then I phoned Toronto, and there was no listing there.

"Then I phoned the Better Business Bureau.... who told me he had converted all the money to gold, and there was a warrant out for his arrest."

Dieno contacted the SOS column in *The Edmonton Journal*, who filed his name with the Montreal police in case the money can be returned.

He's taking a stoic attitude about the money, which he has given up as lost.

"It looked like a really good deal, but I got really sucked in."



The non-existent backgammon game.

Test-makers commit class crimes and fraud society

The Educational Testing Service (ETS), the makers of LSAT, SAT, GRE, GMAT and other tests, has been accused of perpetuating a "specialized kind of fraud" by consumer advocate Ralph Nader.

In his 550 page report released this week, *The Reign of ETS: The Corporation That Makes Up Minds*, Nader says ETS is the largest standardized testing corporation in America and one of the most powerful — though little known — corporations in the world.

"They have assumed a rare kind of corporate power, the power to change the way people think about their own potential, and through the passive acceptance of their test scores by admissions officers, to decide who will be granted and who will be denied access to education and career opportunities," he said.

The Reign of ETS reveals that claims made by the Scholastic Aptitude Tests (SAT), Law School Admission Test (LSAT), Graduate Record Examinations (GRE) and Graduate Management Admission Test (GMAT) and dozens of other tests, are undermined by hundreds of ETS' own studies and internal documents.

Nader's report documents that 90 per cent of the time, the tests predict first year grades no better than a roll of the dice and that ETS tests have even less ability to predict upper-level academic grades, the ability to gain from education or to graduate, accomplishment outside the classroom and eventual career achievement.

As well, ETS scores correlate directly with the amount of money a student's family earns and exclude a disproportionate number of minority applicants who are capable of succeeding.

"The tests were conceived by the upper class for the upper class," says Nader "and have served as a formidable barrier to millions of students."

Nader also pointed out that the ETS — imposed definition of

aptitude is undermining standards of good writing and performance ability, because of the stress placed on multiple choice test-taking ability.

The product of six years of research *The Reign of ETS* is based on 200 interviews and hundreds of internal ETS and U.S. government documents

Erratum

In our January 17 issue, the story on the January 15 Students' Council meeting quoted councillor Alan Fenna as saying, "It is probably a good opportunity for the SU executive to make useful political acquaintances." (Referring to the University Night debate.) It should have been noted that Fenna's comment was ruled out of order

Lister resident expelled

Another Lister Hall resident has been evicted from the residence complex and expelled from university for the remainder of the academic year.

Keith Jones, a second year agriculture student, was suspended by the University Disciplinary Panel following a

lengthy hearing Friday afternoon. Jones was found guilty of violating three regulations contained in the Student Code of Behaviour, part of the university regulations.

The charges stemmed from a rowdy party that Jones hosted in residence December 7 to celebrate the end of first-term classes. Jones received a reprimand for tampering with fire equipment, and he was expelled for damage of university property and disobeying the lawful instructions of residence staff and security officials.

Jones' counsellor charged his client had already been punished for the acts by his eviction from residence, and that further punishment would be a case of double jeopardy. After considering this argument, the disciplinary panel decided against Jones.

Jones was held responsible for all of the damages even though some of it was allegedly caused by his party guests.

Jones said he plans to appeal the verdict of the panel, though at press time, no official notice of appeal had been served. Pending the outcome of any appeal, Jones will be allowed to remain at university.

Meanwhile, Greg Kuipers, one of two students suspended last week for similar offences, has officially filed an appeal in his case. The appeal will be heard by the panel shortly.

Become a journalist and meet new people!



JOIN THE GATEWAY STAFF

The *Gateway* is holding its semi-annual ROOKIE NIGHT Thursday, January 24 at 7:00 p.m. in Room 282 SUB.

Edmonton Journal News Editor Steve Hume will give a newswriting seminar, and our arts and photo editors report they "desperately" need staffers. All news writers are urged to attend.

We'll hold you captive.

Kirk Kirkwood

I found my kitchen yesterday. The doorway had been buried behind a pile of laundry in the living room. I hadn't planned to wash anything until after midterms (it brings bad luck, I tell myself) but I needed a shirt. The shirt I had been wearing faded badly when I washed it by wearing it in the shower. I dug right to the bottom of the pile before I found a shirt that didn't smell like it had been used as a strainer in a rendering plant.

Anyways, down on my hands and knees, clothes scattered behind me, clutching a relatively odor-free Cheech Wizard T-shirt, I looked up and there it was. My kitchen. I'd forgotten I had a kitchen. Through Christmas exams I'd lived on coffee and cinnamon buns. After that I stuck with pizza and beer. And not much pizza. Christmas came, and between visiting friends and relatives, I ate pretty well. For the last couple weeks I've eaten mostly CAB soy burgers and salads.

It occurred to me that if I had a kitchen I might be able to cook my own food. There might even be some food in there. It smelled like there was something in there but I couldn't understand why I would buy so much limburger cheese. I had to investigate.

First, I had to find some way to get into my kitchen. I had two choices: I could walk on the floor and try to avoid stepping on the dirty dishes or I could walk on the ceiling. The ceiling looked sticky enough but I would have had to repile my laundry to get up there. I decided to walk across the floor and pick up plates as I went along. I had planned to put them in the sink or the garbage, whichever was the least full.

Both were overflowing. And the window wouldn't open either. I put the stack down on the floor and started to look for food.

I tried one of the cupboards. No food. Nothing but an empty box of soda crackers and the skeleton of a small rodent. It had been longer than I'd thought.

I tried another cupboard. A pile of dirty dishes fell over me. I jumped back and tripped over the dishes on the floor. Total damage: my last clean shirt and two weeks of dishwashing. A fair trade.

Still no food. Then, across the room I spied my refrigerator. A flood of memories ran over me. Memories of food, good wholesome foods I hadn't eaten for weeks. Bread, eggs, cheese, fruit, vegetables, meat, and milk, quarts of milk. All chilled and fresh, waiting in their appropriate states of softness, crispness, sweetness, tangyness...

In my ecstasy I must have flown to the fridge because I didn't step on a single plate. Then I crashed to the floor; the refrigerator was unplugged.

I didn't have the heart or the courage to open the door. Somehow in my grief I cleaned up the kitchen, the living room and the spillover in the hallway. I phoned a couple of friends and at midnight they came. We gathered around the fridge and tipped a final good-bye brandy. Then we wrapped the fridge in chains and padlocked it shut. We took it out to the pick-up and drove away. In the middle of the night, with only a few unconcerned motorists about, on a high bridge, we hoisted the fridge above the railing and let it topple to the river below. With a crunch it went through the ice, never to be seen again. But I was grateful to know it had returned to the coolness it had been denied in life.