

EDITORIAL

Unsociable rules

Big Brother is watching again. This time, he takes the form of the Alberta Liquor Control Board and its morality squad.

The ALCB, in its infinite wisdom, has decided students are not mature and responsible enough to share a brew at a social with friends before 5:00 p.m. They have therefore instituted a new policy denying all clubs and faculty associations beer and wine permits for socials before 6:00 p.m. Only if the social is a bona fide "event" (whatever that means) can a club obtain a permit.

The decision totally contradicts past ALCB promises that it would try to encourage drinking in smaller, more sociable environs than the beer barns and taverns this city offers. A small beer and wine social with 50 to 100 people, sharing a common interest is a harmless form of entertainment, and does not involve wanton drunkenness and debauchery.

Instead, the ALCB is being arrogant and paternalistic, fearful of some mythical image of the student as drunken maniac. This attitude is intolerable.

It would be slightly less galling if this decision originated from some clearly defined legal change, rather than from some gaggle of faceless bureaucrats, who probably have as much contact with reality as Prince Charles.

If the ALCB would get down off its moralistic high horse, and start treating students like sensible human beings, liquor laws in Alberta might yet move out of the Dark Ages.

The son of NUS

Students' Council's unanimous decision to join the Canadian Federation of Students as prospective members is a positive and progressive step for the student movement in Alberta and Canada.

For too long, the U of A has been shut out of participation in a national student organization. This was because of many factors, not least of which was the U of A's distaste for any organization which seemed not to adequately represent its interest.

But when we participate in the founding conference of the CFS, no one will be able to complain that we didn't have an opportunity to make our voice heard. U of A students did not like the National Union of Students (NUS), but this restructuring program eliminates the shortfalls and stigma associated with NUS.

The goals and purposes of the CFS also bear directly on the concerns of U of A students: their ultimate goal is "a system of post-secondary education which is accessible to all, which is of high quality, and which is nationally planned." Specifically, they can work to lobby the federal government, who pay roughly half the cost of a university education, to provide more effective and adequate assistance to the province and to students directly.

CFS will work with provincial student organizations under one umbrella, avoiding the needless and wasteful duplication of effort and the lack of communication so often found when different organizations attempt to lobby on the same turf.

Of course, the Students' Council decision to join CFS is contingent upon passing a membership referendum within the next three years, with a fee of \$4. One can only hope that U of A students at that time exercise their better judgement and vote for a strong and effective national student organization.

Keith Krause

the Gateway

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It began innocently enough with Michael Skeet's love beads, but slowly a very strange transition came over the clean-cut crew at the Gateway, and before you could say "Abbie Hoffman" - POW! - oh wow, man, it's like the Sixties, you know! Wes Oginski, Rich Watts, Gerard Kennedy, David Orrell and Greg Harris rushed in to see who could grow shoulder-length hair first (far out, man!). Maureen Laviolette and Eida Hopfe hung the new Che Guevara posters (groovy!), while Cathy Emberley and Mary Ruth Olson stormed out to raise consciousness (heavy!). Pat Just and Kent Blinston were brewing Molotov cocktails (hey, we say we want a revolution!). And Stuart Mackay was being REALLY radical and trying this new stuff guaranteed to expand your mind (cool, man!). Right on! Tune in, turn on, drop out! Change the world, like really! Peace, man, you know?

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Shocker misses the point

Each time the British jet landed at Lungi Airport and the newest load of beach-seekers debarked, we ex-patriates used to jokingly say that they would be driven in their tour bus — shades down — through the city's streets until they at last reached the clean, tranquil stretch of tropical beach on the other side of Freetown, Sierra Leone. Here, they could set up home in the modern hotel and during their stay venture out into the wilds only for those planned jaunts to see "the natives on location."

In many ways, Ms. Lisa Volkov's article "Shocking mutilation still performed on 74 million" in the March 18 issue of Gateway reminds me of the sort of people who found so much to gain from these jaunts — so much that made a "good story" back home. Like the so-called documentaries that still surface from time to time on TV that depict bare-breasted women with bones in their noses or men drinking cow's milk and blood from gourds, all in living Color, Ms. Volkov has chosen a particularly unique, vivid, and morally repugnant subject in order to attract our attention titillate our senses and momentarily satisfy our endless quest for the unusual, the profane and the grotesque.

I do not deny that clitorectomies are performed on many women (since when did genital mutilation become synonymous with a clitorotomy? Yes, we lived through Watergate — we know the power words can hold). I do not deny that women all over the world are mutilated, repressed and exploited.

But what goal has Ms. Volkov attained in writing the article? What positive, constructive reaction has she evoked in us? Certainly she has perpetuated the beliefs that other cultures — particularly the African — are unsanitary (midwives use glass splinters, razor blades, fingernails

to operate), inhuman (the wounded child is left to die in her own excrement) and God knows what else. I have rarely seen the Gateway insult the level of intelligence of its readers to such an extent. Note the position of the article — akin to a Playboy centerfold.

I certainly haven't seen the Gateway advocate a Nestle boycott. But of course, contributors and staff may not have seen in person the distended bellies and gaunt limbs of babies who were withheld breast milk and fed instead with Nestle's formula — despite the fact that mothers could hardly afford a pound of meat a week to feed the rest of the family, let alone the expensive concentrate which they insisted on buying even though

they couldn't read the label and dilute it correctly and besides, diluted alot, it lasted much longer — "Wasn't the Whiteman's food magic?" — and who cared that the bottle it was placed in wasn't sterilized — no one told them! — and what difference did it make that the made-up formula wasn't refrigerated — who had refrigerators anyway?

Talk about exploitation, Ms. Volkov, and look at our exploitation of them rather than continue to capitalize as our forefathers have done and we do, on their differences, so spectacular, yet such a mystery.

J. Olsen
Law I
CUSO Cooperante
1974 - 1976
Sierra Leone, West Africa

Male version as bad

Your article on female sexual mutilation, a topic with which we have been inundated in recent

years, was all very praiseworthy, but incomplete. 74 million women in Africa are mutilated, we hear, an appalling number, but why do we never hear voices raised about the mutilation of boys in western societies, by circumcision?

Your writer equated the mutilation of women with castration. No need to. There is a more direct equivalent. Circumcision is still practised, I suspect more often than not, and as far as I am concerned it is a ritual sexual mutilation, no more, no less. No one is going to get my permission to grind my foreskin into ham-

burger, nor those of any sons I may have, without excellent medical reasons. Apart from eradicating hemophilia in certain social groups, it never served much purpose in most cases.

We should be considering

our own superstitions, as well as those of the rest of the world.

Richard Miller
Grad Studies

Cease this mutilation

The article on mutilation and the methods for carrying out this procedure were shocking and abhorrent. Why do women have to be subjected to such abuse, such inhumane, cruel treatment? The dangers of this operation are quite obvious while the benefits for women are non-existent. They are left crippled and deformed. The only things that gain from this practice are the frail, insecure egos of those men.

For western cultures to ignore this practice would be a serious mark against humanity. Surely mankind has come a long way in the past 2,000 years and is able to eliminate the barbaric practices of our ancestors.

Marion Kupper
Education II