

Strathcona candidates have been stumping on campus since the federal election was called. These three candidates will attend a forum at the Power Plant on Tuesday, November 1, at 11:30 am. Seen in action (L-R) are: Halyna Freeland, ND; Doug Main, Reform; Una MacLean, Liberal. Photos by Byron Collins and Clive Oshry.

Racism remains outside classroom

by Amy Gillard

Former Eckville school teacher Jim Keegstra will not likely be allowed to teach again, despite his success at having his criminal charge of promoting hatred overturned.

University of Calgary professor David Bercuson made this asser-

tion last Friday at a forum exploring the aftermath of Keegstra's conviction.

Keegstra was convicted in 1985 of wilfully promoting hatred against Jews when he taught social studies at Eckville Composite High School in Alberta.

This past July, Keegstra's con-

viction was overturned by the Supreme Court which declared that it infringed upon Keegstra's right to freedom of speech, as outlined in the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms.

However, Bercuson points out that Keegstra lost his teaching license as a direct result of his refusal to teach the Alberta social studies curriculum. Bercuson said that this decision will not likely change. Bercuson has written a book about Keegstra entitled, *A Trust Betrayed*. The book outlines

Bercuson's perspective of the events that led up to Keegstra's current position regarding Jews.

In Bercuson's view, Keegstra partially derived his anti-semitic position from a Social Credit prejudiced slant that some early party members held, which was directed into rural Alberta when Keegstra was growing up.

Keegstra merged his original position with literature he collected from anti-semitic groups and began to teach this new "curriculum" to his students, said Bercuson.

"What I found interesting is where he would start his lectures. His conception was that some-

thing is either true or it's not true," Bercuson said. For example, "he would then conclude that because Jewish people are not Christians, they are by definition, anti-Christian," he added.

Bercuson refuted Keegstra's viewpoint by pointing out that most issues are not clear cut. "We have founded an entire society on the notion that people can disagree and not shoot each other," he said.

After the lecture, the floor was opened to questions, of which Bercuson received many.

At one point, all heads turned to listen to a young woman who announced that she had been a student of Keegstra's. "A lot of my friends went along with his views to get good grades" she said, referring to their writing essays and tests that Keegstra required. When asked by Bercuson how she felt about the issue now she replied "I sometimes just say I'm from Sylvan Lake."

Later, the discussion became more general, touching on anti-semitism in other areas of the province. Bercuson was asked how he felt about anti-semitic material currently being allowed to remain on public library shelves. "I'm very much against the notion of someone taking books out. I don't know where you'd stop."

The discussion then focused on safeguards to help prevent the occurrence of future anti-semitism in Alberta schools. Bercuson said that measures have been taken, such as increased supervision of teachers in secondary schools. He pointed out, however, that this has yet to be focused on in the university environment.

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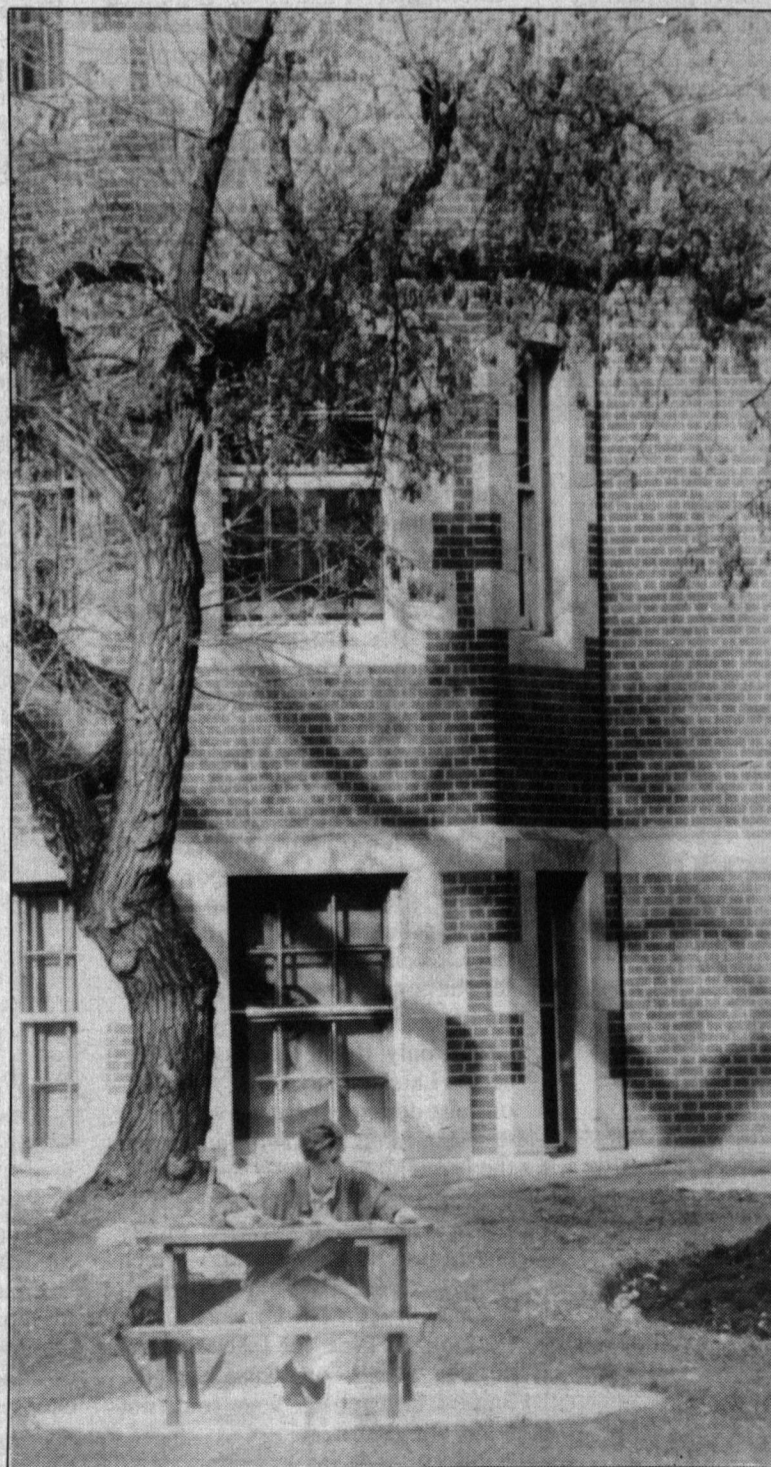
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Rob Galbraith

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