

Plebiscite plague

by Randal Smathers

The recent Business and Medicine referenda caught most of the campus by surprise. The Students' Union were among those who were unprepared.

Pat Warrington of Development is the University official responsible for transmitting the referenda from Manitoba, where they have spread like AIDS. She contacted the SU while she was contacting faculties and student associations, earlier this year, but alarm bells didn't sound. This is not a criticism of the SU; even the most innocuous contact can pass on all but the most virulent of viruses.

It didn't take long for the SU to respond to the problem once it was diagnosed. David Tupper now sits on the committee to consider the future of such programs. This remains a major test for this year's SU, however.

To this point in their tenure, they have been following their own agenda for the most part. This time they are in a defensive posture, and they may be too late in adopting it. Sexually transmitted diseases are easier to cure.

Consider these facts: —the SU is lobbying the government to control extra fees. Their submission to John Gogo, Advanced Education Minister, says, "Extra fees must also be controlled by the government." These donations, if opting out is not possible, are fees, according to the Administration. —the SU is lobbying the government to allow tuition to go up only in "small increments." Every referendum that passes makes their lobbying effort that much more difficult. Even if half of the students opt out, Administration's position that students should pay for more of their education will be much stronger than it is now. —the SU is lobbying for a larger grant to the University, partly on the grounds that "Post-secondary education is an investment... that will in the long-term provide benefits that more than compensate for the short-term costs." A double-edged argument, especially if several faculties worth of students show that this statement is true for them, by supporting these referenda.

AIDS never kills anyone. AIDS sufferers die because of pneumonia, or renal failure, or some other symptom of the body's immune system breaking down. It is not the fees—or donations, or whatever you want to call them—that will hurt the student lobbies. After all, students have always been able to donate to their faculty if they so choose. It is the expression of student willingness to pay more for their education that will, if unchecked, cripple our lobbies.

Now that medicine has passed a referendum, we have to consider a campus-wide vote, because the damage has been done; the first bug is breeding. If we get a cross-campus vote, then at least we'll all have a say in our future. That may be the only way for the SU stand on tuition and fees to carry any weight. If there are five or six faculties that vote for higher costs, it will make it hard for the SU to lobby on behalf of "the students."

The frightening thing about viruses is their ability to mutate and adapt to cures, to develop ever more virulent strains, to attack undefended cells in the body: venereal disease, herpes, AIDS. And just think, it was the doctors who were the carriers for this one.



LETTERS

All letters must include name, faculty, year, I.D. number and phone number (I.D. and phone will not be printed).

Postcards a success

The postcards collected in support of the student transit discount and public transit were presented to Mayor Jan Reimer yesterday. A bus load of students from different Edmonton campuses took a collection of more than 8000 cards downtown and gave the Mayor and City Council a strong message that students are concerned.

Our work has paid off and the pass has been approved. The January Edmonton transit passes will be available for \$34 on the presentation of ID at specified distributors of the new Student Pass. The "Student Pak" trimester pass has been discontinued in favour of this monthly discount. Please watch for upcoming details about new campus vending outlets where passes will be available in mid-December.

The motion passed also includes a review of the pass and its effect on student ridership. The goal is to increase student ridership by 5% by April so that the review process with City Council will result in a further discount for students. With student support we hope

to see that a \$32 pass is a reality by next September.

We would like to thank and acknowledge everyone who signed postcards, and special thanks to the volunteers who made this project a success.

John Mark Fisher
Housing & Transport Commissioner
Wade Deisman
Vice-President External Affairs

Fools give cyclists poor image

Fellow cyclists,
I don't know about you, but I'm getting scared. I've heard (and overheard) complaints by pedestrians about cyclists before. But last week's satire, that advocated slicing us with wire and tripping us with hockey sticks, had to be written (although in jest) with a grudge in mind.

Chances are it was a grudge with a just cause. Although some of us have a bell (it's required by law) and use it early enough to give pedestrians an ample warning, a great many cyclists don't even have one. In spite of the fact that most of us cyclists ride slowly and carefully while sharing sidewalks, lanes and even roads with pedestrians, there are a few fools out there who cannot distinguish between a moto-cross track and a campus thoroughway.

I figure that if we don't want to be victimized by vigilantes or subject to restrictive on-campus bike laws, we should patrol ourselves. Although we can't be careful enough around the "wandering-walkman-wearer," we can put a bell on our handlebars and use it. When we see someone riding dangerously, we can warn them. As fellow cyclists, our comments will be better received than an irate pedestrian's would.

Just think, if we ride carefully and courteously and admonish fellow cyclists who don't, we will have every right to complain the next time someone steps off the curb without even looking.

Tove Larson
Science II

Dan Needham
Arts IV

Canadians not so pure

Re: Racism only a Symptom of Disease (Nov. 9)

Ron Sears mentions only the racism of the Americans. Is he implying that Canadians are not guilty themselves?

I agree that racism is a huge problem in the U.S. and that too much is made out of the black/white difference, but at least most Americans will admit that their country has serious problems. I don't think many Canadians would even admit to themselves that there is an equal problem here.

Granted, I've never heard a Canadian use the expression "nigger" but on more than one occasion (many more than one) I've heard people referred to "pakis", "chinks" and "kikes". I've also heard people tell "coloured" immigrants to "go back where they came from" but never heard this said to my white, blue-eyed immigrant mother or her family.

Because Canadians hide their racism does it make it any more acceptable? I think it is time Canadians as well as Americans realize that "people are people and race (as well as religion) is inconsequential."

The Gateway

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