

Bridge only reinforces sexism

by Philip Preville

"The basis of all writing is verbal communication." These are the words of Canadian novelist W.O. Mitchell, as told in a recent interview with *The Globe & Mail*.

Mitchell went on to say that much more interesting things happen in verbal discussion than in written correspondence. This makes sense: all sorts of highs, lows and emotion are injected into discussion. Writing letters back and forth just doesn't compare. Mitchell then chooses the good stuff, the wonderfully insightful stories he is famous for, and writes them down for print.

There is an important implication behind what Mitchell says. Not all spoken word goes into print. The original spoken word is validated (ie. edited) a second, usually even a third time, before it is printed. There is a value judgement inherent in every printed word. Not everything submitted is chosen; only the worthwhile submissions make their way into print.

Hence the difference between freedom of speech and freedom of the press. Think what you think, and say what you want to say, but the process of print gives those thoughts and words added meaning. *The Bridge*, by choosing to print the material which appears in its pages, is effectively making the statement that its contents are worthwhile and, at least to some degree, valuable.

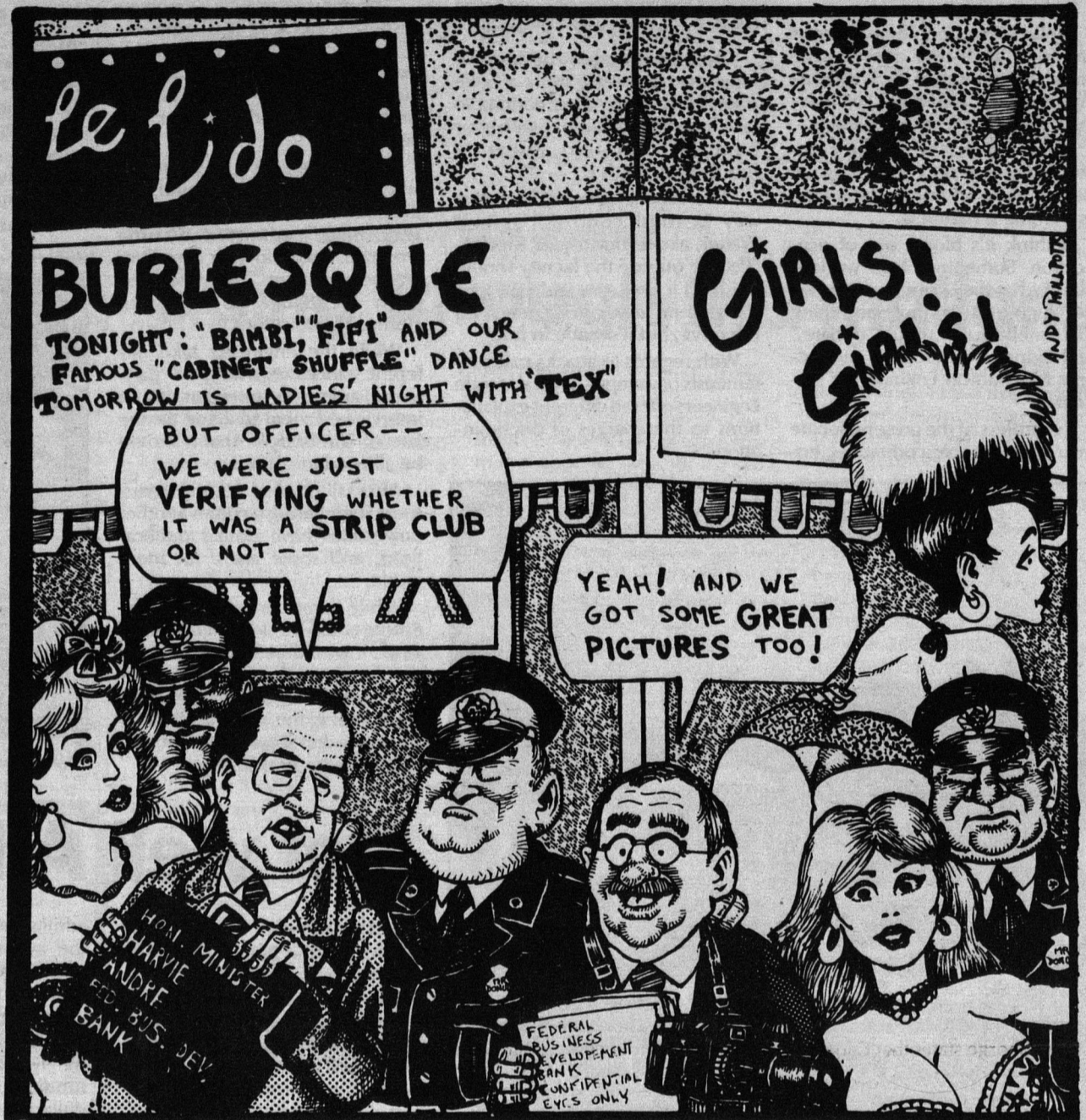
This editorial gives *The Bridge* much more importance than it deserves. After all, who sets their personal values according to *The Bridge*?

Sexist attitudes are an acknowledged problem in society, and printing sexist material is a very powerful means of continuing to reinforce and propagate sexist attitudes. *The Bridge's* message, whether its contents are taken seriously or not, is, "this is how we have fun and enjoy ourselves, this is what we choose to do with our spare time."

Many will argue that the contents of *The Bridge* are not to be taken literally. That's like saying, "I'm not a racist, but did I ever hear a funny joke about the nigger and the paki."

We're all old enough to know that the attitudes validated by *The Bridge* are harmful and derogatory. The first step to stopping these attitudes is by stopping them. *The Bridge* can't be made to do so through legislation; that would be censorship. They've got to want to do it.

If they can't understand their role in reversing the ugly scar of sexism, then they're living in the dark ages.



LETTERS

Please keep letters brief. All letters must include name, faculty, year, phone number and ID number (ID and phone will not be printed).

Gateway column attacked by readers

What kind of low, base, vile, degrading energy that produces faculty weeks are you talking about? We of the Faculty of Home Economics Students Association and organizers of Home-Ec Week take offense at your article of November

21, 1989. We are not an apathetic faculty and we do not find it necessary to libel public figures and offend most of the campus population to involve our students and have some fun.

For your edification, Randal,

Home-Ec Week follows Engineering Week beginning January 15, 1990. Activities this year will include a hayride, a walking rally, noon hour information forums and a cabaret at Dinwoodie. The activities are open to all students and guaranteed

to offend no one.

Perhaps 1990 will be the year in which Home-Ec gets the attention and publicity it deserves from *The Gateway*.

Tamara Tuchak, FHESA

Re: Randal Smathers' editorial "Sexist allegations..."

It seems you have confused faculty pride and energy with misogyny. You know misogyny, don't you, Mr. Smathers? It's that phenomenon that prompts derogatory comments like, "when's the quilting bee?" It's also that nasty concept that ignorantly compares the inclusion of a spinach dip recipe in a publication to the degradation and humiliation of the female spirit and body in a campus paper.

Misogyny, Mr. Smathers, is that universal idea that keeps the engineering faculty and yourself from understanding that any continuation or defense of this type of action is dehumanizing, disgusting, and inexcusable. I would appreciate a lesson from Mr. Smathers on just what the "bounds of reason" are for the violation of human dignity.

K. Colvin
Arts III

Bridge sexism not satirical

On Wednesday, Nov. 22 in SUB a reporter from *The Edmonton Journal* asked my opinion on the Jan Reimer article in *The Bridge* newspaper. I was given an opportunity to read the article and I did so, warily. My replies to the reporter's questions were muddled: I only knew that I was offended and that I wished to avoid acknowledging the article.

I now realize that this desire to say nothing and do nothing is a part

of the problem that many women encounter when faced with such blatant sexism. This problem is a feeling of powerlessness — not feeling able to do anything.

And so I question the argument, expressed by some engineering students, that the article is satirical.

Satire is a coming together of humour and criticism: there is no humour in the degradation of Jan Reimer or any other woman, and if

this article is to be considered criticism, it must be a criticism of Jan Reimer.

There is a widely accepted theory that sexism results, in part, from men's fears and feelings of inadequacy when faced with the changing status of women (ie. power being acquired). If the aim of the article is to criticize Jan Reimer as a woman in her role as mayor, then this theory of sexism not only seems

more valid, it tends to be reinforced by such writing.

Come on boys (my 'female' intuition guides me in believing that it was not a woman engineering student who wrote the article), turning back the clocks to a time when having a woman mayor for our city was unthinkable is just not possible anymore. Don't tire yourselves out in a futile battle — adapt.

Roxanne Anger
G. Arts I

The Gateway

The University of Alberta Students' Newspaper Since 1910

Editor-in-Chief	RANDAL SMATHERS	492-5168
Managing Editor	PHILIP PREVILLE	492-5178
News Editors	LISA HALL	492-1483
	DAWN LEROHL	492-1483
Entertainment Editor	RONALD KUIPERS	492-5178
Sports Editor	AJAY BHARDWAJ	492-5068
Photo Editor	RON SEARS	492-1482
Production Editor	WINSTON PEI	492-1483
Circulation Manager	JIM KNUTSEN	492-5168
Advertising	TOM WRIGHT	492-4241

CONTRIBUTORS: Andy Philpotts, Eric Baich, Jim Kautsen, Kevin Land, Greg McHarg, Michael Krauthahn, Michael Snyder, Kelly Robson, Alex Millar, Ed Tymchyshyn, Brian Taylor, Eamonn Muldowney, Chris Griwkowsky, Stephen Notley, Abul Salek, Kisa Mortenson, Sigrid Sollback, Diane Wild, Pat Kiernan, Colleen McKenna, James Stevenson, Mitch Panciuk, Todd Saelhof, Bob Stauffer, Paul Murphy, Perry Gereluk, Greg Pohl, Michael Tremblay, Jeff Cowley, Dragos Ruiu, Renee Baril, Kevin Law, Clive Oshry, Colin Northcott, Gary Wong.

All materials appearing in *The Gateway* are copyright and may not be used without written permission of *The Gateway*.

Contents of *The Gateway* are the responsibility of the Editor-in-Chief. All opinions that are signed by the writer do not necessarily reflect the views of *The Gateway*. Copy deadlines are 12 p.m. Mondays and Wednesdays. General office: Room 282 SUB. Advertising: Room 276 SUB. Photos printed in *The Gateway* may be for sale. Photodirectorate: Room 236 SUB. Mailing address: Room 259 Students' Union Building, U of A, Edmonton, Alberta T6G 2J7. Readership is 30,000.