

This letter seeks to advertise the presence of another socialist group on campus: the East European Solidarity Committee. Our group is made up of students and activists in the peace movement, women's movement, and other progressive groups. We do work with the aim of promoting discussion and activity within the left community around the struggle for workers rights and democratization in the countries of Eastern Europe. Unlike the Y.C.L., we do not believe that real socialism can exist in the absence of democracy, nor is there real democracy without the direct control of economic resources by working people themselves — socialism.

To us support for *Solidarnosc* in Poland cannot be hypocritically detached from support for trade union rights in Western countries — whether for striking Eaton's workers in Ontario, or for British coalminers in their fight to save their communities from forced unemployment. Similarly, we defend the right of Central American countries to be free of U.S. aggression as we defend that of Afghanistan to determine its future free of Russian tanks.

If you're interested in learning more about our group, or in becoming a member, drop by our literature table in SUB on Fridays.

Andrew Rodomar  
for the East European Solidarity Committee.

## Apathy not funny

RE: Student Union elections: Who Cares?

Amid all of the recent hoopla regarding the Student Union election I have arrived at a profound thought; that Student Union politics is a joke. Or is it? Maybe our cynicism towards it is just a symptom of our contempt for nolitical activities in general. Possi-

bly SU politics does serve a useful purpose, but what is the joke are our attitudes.

What causes such attitudes of apathy and cynicism? One would think that of any sub-culture in society university students would be politically active. But this is not the case. It appears that we are just a mirror of a culture in which non-participation and apathy are the norm. Take for instance those few souls who recently braved freezing temperatures to protest the testing of the Cruise Missile. The few students who bother to read newspapers either labeled the participants "communists," or filed them deep within the recesses of their minds under, "the odd."

We seem to be not only apathetic but to have a bias against those who are not. Of course I can speak personally with a clear conscience, not that I have been politically active in the past, but you see I have been extremely busy. At what you might ask? Well, at school, attempting to obtain good marks so that I can move on to another degree, or (shiver) get a job. I am certain that many other students share my problem. However, one wonders how the students who protested against the Vietnam war managed? Either they must have been brighter, or their programs easier, obviously. This is not to assert that the political turbulence of those times in the case today. The issues are different How does one protest a sick economy? Civil disobedience?

Notwithstanding this, it is arguable that a greater level of public participation (especially students) in political action would be beneficial. Those who do not like the status-quo have two choices: live with it, or change it. Far too few of us have chosen the latter. The way to show reverence for values is to act upon them. Hey maybe we could change things, maybe we could...oh, what the fuck, who cares... Somebody wanna pass me another beer?

Robert Girvan  
Arts II

## SECOND WIND

by Peter Smythe

*Too late to save us but try to understand  
The seas were empty, there was hunger  
in the land  
We let the blind man lead the way too  
long  
Easy to see where we went wrong  
The Alan Parsons Project*

Oh, the shame of it.

The people we elect into office tell us there is no money to go around but in reality the only thing lacking is priorities.

It's simply amazing how much a government can get away with if there is enough time before an election to feed the people and make them happy to ensure votes and re-election. How quickly we forget about the three years before, when we bitched and complained, only to forgive and forget and then let the cycle repeat itself.

Here in Alberta we will forget about the ridiculous travel bill (over \$850,000 in one year alone) the Conservatives built up. We will forget about the virtually nonexistent help they have given to the unemployed, the Dial Mortgage incident, and lack of priorities they continuously displayed. It is likely 75 more Tories will dominate the Alberta legislature after the next election. Promises, though rarely followed through, must go a long way in making us do the same thing every four years.

Of course this is just an example close to home, but this happens all the time in federal politics and in the United States. The priorities are the same, as these politicians feed the rich and take from the poor; as the story has been told many times before.

Poor people will always be a part of every society but it makes no sense to take away the little they have.

It seems every time the government (civic, provincial, or federal) tells us there is a great recession and we must "tighten our belts," the first offices to be housecleaned are the social welfare agencies. It seems logical that if the government is selected by the people to serve the people, social services should be the last to be cut back.

The Edmonton Food Bank continues to have tremendous trouble keeping up with the demand for hampers to feed needy families in the city. The provincial government doesn't have to directly help the Food Bank by giving them money (Lord knows it

would be disastrous to have the Tories nosing around in that operation that runs on the goodness of the public), but if the social assistance programs hadn't been slashed there would very likely be a lot less people in need. The federal Tories also have plans to cut back on social services so the Food Bank may not be able to keep up to the demand in the near future, if indeed they are able to now.

Oil companies and other large corporations continue to receive incentive grants to add to the millions in profit they may be making each year. Go where the help will come from around election time seems to be the trend.

The federal government will spend millions of dollars to replace military uniforms. The Tories promise to put millions into job creation programs, but to do this they must lay off thousands of workers. This sounds like something off a Gallagher or Bill Cosby routine.

A drop in the bucket token to Ethiopia is supposed to give our moral politicians the "pat-on-the-back" award. However, this was better than most countries and deserves some merit even though this country has lots to offer countries devastated by such disasters as famine. Foreign aid is another area that is likely to be slashed in the budget.

Reagan believes his defence budget must be increased by \$32 billion. This will help significantly since there is only about \$280 billion put aside for military expenditures at present. This should boost the arms reduction talks between Russia and the United States, set to start March 12.

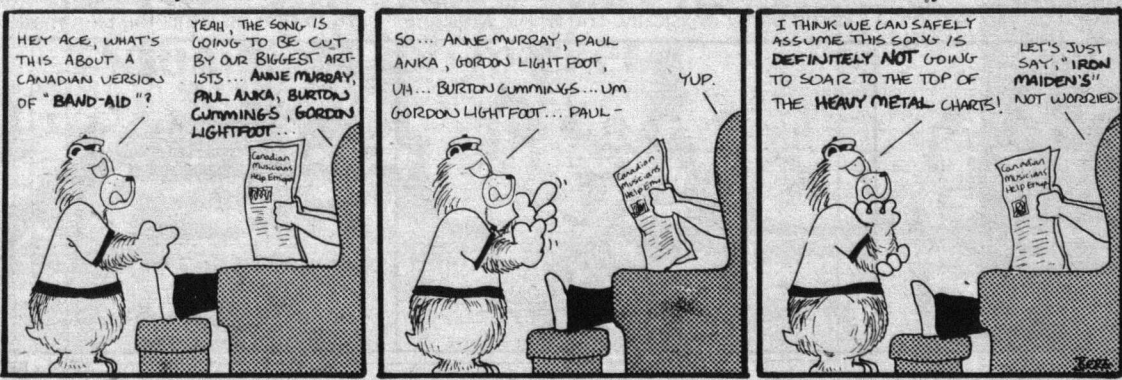
Perhaps I underestimate the difficulty of a premier, a prime minister, a president, or any politician for that matter, may have in empathizing with someone whose luck has run out. It is a fact a number of people abuse the welfare system, but the program obviously can't be stopped because there are a hell of a number of people who genuinely need help.

### Clarification

The Thursday, February 7 edition of the Gateway printed a Second Wind column that inadvertently did not contain a by-line. The column was penned by Mike Evans. We apologize for any confusion we might have caused.

### Bear Country

by Shane Berg



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The Gateway's

## Women's Issues Supplement

The Gateway presents its second annual Women's Issues Supplement to commemorate International Women's Awareness Week. If you have any ideas for the special section, or if you want to contribute articles, poems, photographs or layout and design time, contact Suzette or Gilbert (afternoons) at 432-5168, room 282 SUB. Submissions through the mail should be marked "Women's Issues Supplement." Please double-space articles on one side of each sheet of paper. **Deadline for submissions is Feb. 28.** The supplement will appear Mar. 7.