

The Gateway

The Gateway is the newspaper of the University of Alberta students. The contents are the responsibility of the Editor in Chief. All opinions are signed by the writer and do not necessarily reflect the views of *The Gateway*. News copy deadlines are 12 noon Mondays and Wednesdays. Newsroom: Rm 282, SUB (ph. 432-5168). Advertising: Rm 256D, SUB (ph. 432-4241). The Gateway, Rm 282, Students' Union Building, U of A, Edmonton, Alberta, T6G 2G7. Readership is 25,000. *The Gateway* is a member of *Canadian University Press*.

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Opinion

Stamp Out Postal Inefficiency



THINK ABOUT IT!

by Greg Whiting

The famous Pony Express advertised for people who were "willing to risk death daily." Canada Post seems to have trouble getting people who are willing to risk paper cuts.

It seems as if a day can't go by without a new story about postal inefficiency and blunders. All too often, you hear about a letter carrier dumping bags full of mail into the trash. I can imagine their excuses. "Gee, boss, I was putting it there so that nobody would disturb it while I rescued fifteen neighbourhood children from a hungry Bengal tiger." Or, "I was just testing our security, to find out if anyone would notice. HaHa, guess somebody did, eh? I'm suspended? Would you believe I was...er...leaving it there so I could make a citizen's arrest? Yeah, I saw a guy spitting on the sidewalk."

Another of Canada Post's big problems is the number of strike threats they have to deal with. They have a Letter Carriers' Union, an Inside Workers' Union, an Outside Workers' Union, a Truck Drivers' Union, a Mailbox Painters' Union, a Stamp Cancellers' Union (one branch for 34¢ stamps and one for 39¢ stamps), etcetera, etcetera. One of these unions is always threatening to go on strike, bring mail delivery to a complete halt, and foul up the lives of everyone in the country, unless their demands are met. They want more money. They want more retirement benefits. They want more sick leave, particularly during the summertime. Summer must be the season for paper cuts.

The price of stamps doesn't improve Canada Post's image a bit. In fact, the high cost irritates people — particularly if they get mail from the U.S. In 1973, it cost 8¢ to mail a first-class letter in either country. Now, it costs 34¢ or 39¢ here while it's only up to 22¢ there. The exchange rate makes up most (not all) of that difference, but the fact remains that an almost 400% price hike has occurred.

However, the high stamp prices wouldn't be so irritating if delivery times were as good as post office executives say they are. Some average delivery times I have noticed are six days from Toronto, twelve days from Denver, and seven days from Edmonton. That

last number would be acceptable if I lived in Abu Dhabi, since I live in Edmonton, I have to suspect that some mail would come faster if it was delivered by carrier turtle. This is particularly true in the case of a letter I got a couple of years ago in mid-April. It had been postmarked 67 (sixty-seven) days earlier. That number would be acceptable if I lived on Mars.

Sadly, post office executives find it hard to believe that they have a problem with delivery times. They frequently send out pieces of "test mail" to prove that the problem is all in the mind of the consumer. The way I figure it, the test mail has **TEST MAIL: RUSH** written all over it, and sending it out does nothing but slow down the rest of the mail. Meanwhile, the postal officials waste time and money doing things like changing employee titles from the efficient "postman" to the bureaucratise "letter carrier." Sure, the new title is non-sexist. But can you really imagine a famous film being titled *The Letter Carrier Always Rings Twice?* Or a song called *Please Mr./Ms. Letter Carrier?*

Now, I'm not going to say that Canada Post is always obnoxious and inefficient. Some postal employees I know of are quite courteous and try to be efficient. But the entire organization has a long way to go before it can get much more respect than Rodney Dangerfield.

THERE'S NO LIFE LIKE IT!

DOES YOUR PRESENT JOB ALLOW YOU LESS THAN 200 "SICK DAYS" A YEAR?

DOES YOUR PRESENT JOB REQUIRE YOU TO REMAIN AWAKE AT ALL TIMES?

DOES YOUR PRESENT EMPLOYER NOT SAY "THANK YOU FOR SHOWING UP?"

IF YOU ANSWERED "YES" TO ANY OF THESE QUESTIONS, MAYBE YOU SHOULD JOIN ...

THE MANY. THE SLOW. CANADA POST.

EVENTUALLY COMING SOON TO A NEIGHBORHOOD NEAR YOU!

Coming in the March 13 Gateway:

AIDS Supplement

What does AIDS really mean? How can we help the victims? What is being done about AIDS in Alberta? On March 13 read the AIDS supplement. You'll find the answers.

Still to Come:

The Pink Triangle (March 20)

The Gateway is organizing its second Gay and Lesbian Supplement. If you have any ideas or would like to submit relevant articles, poetry or works of fiction, call Suzette or Gilbert (afternoons) at 432-5168. Or drop by room 282 SUB. Submissions may also be mailed to the Gateway, room 282 SUB, U of A campus, T6G 2G7. Please mark all envelopes "Pink Triangle".

Deadline for submissions is March 14, 1986.

Photo meeting

Meeting for Gateway Photographers on Thursday 5:30 p.m. in Rm 236 SUB.

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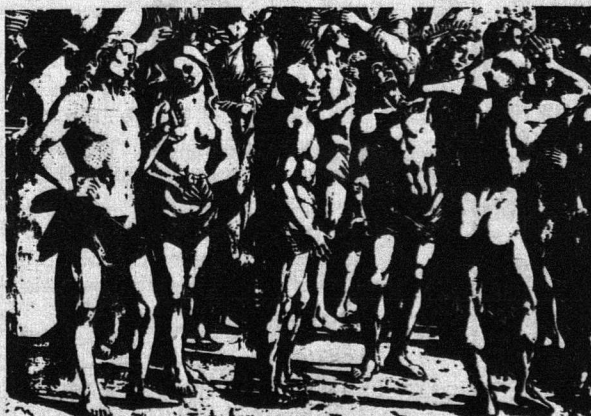
Editorial Elections

Positions Available:

- Photo Editor
- Production Editor
- CUP Editor
- Circulation Manager
- Sports Editor
- Advocate
- Entertainment Editor
- News Editor(s)
- Managing Editor

Deadline for letters of intent: resumes is noon Friday, March 7, 1986. Address or deliver letters of intent to Dean Bennett, Editor-in-Chief elect at *The Gateway*, Room 282 SUB, U of A. Resumes will be posted in *Gateway* office. Clippings optional. Editorial positions and salaries under review.

Gateway Literary Contest



Rules

1. Open to all persons attending a post-secondary educational institution in Canada, except the employees of the Students' Union of the University of Alberta and writers who have earned more than two thousand dollars from their craft in 1985.
2. All entries must be typed on a single side of good quality bond paper. The name, address, and phone number of the author must appear on each page submitted.
3. All entries must be submitted by noon March 14th, 1986. No late entries will be accepted.
4. Each writer may submit a total of three entries in aggregate.
5. Submission may be in French or English.
6. The winning entries and additional entries selected by the judges will appear in the *Gateway Literary Supplement* on March 27, 1986. The *Gateway* shall hold only first North American serial rights to any entries that appear in this issue. All other rights will remain with the author.
7. Entries will not be returned.
8. Entries should be submitted to: LITERARY CONTEST, c/o Suzanne Lundrigan, Room 282, Students' Union Building, University of Alberta, T6G 2G7.

Short story 3,000 words max
 Short poem 16 lines max
 Long poem 100 lines max

First prize all categories \$100
 Second prize all categories \$65

Sponsored by:

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