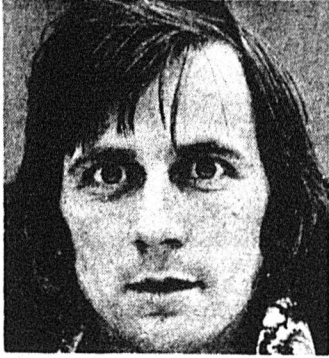


the fifth column



by Paul Cadogan

EDUCATION FOR THE "MEEK"

Howie Meeker has published an article in February's Maclean's in which he berates (for the thousandth time) Canada's minor hockey set-up.

For most people who are in a position to sweat (but don't) when Meeker sounds off (but don't) his most annoying characteristic is that he is right.

However, when one thinks about Meeker's idea one realizes that Canada's treatment of sports within the school system isn't what you would call passable in any sport.

Our high schools piously adhere to the chestnut that their purpose is to provide students with an EDUCATION. Sports are officially considered to be frivolous in spite of the fact that a successful athlete can, by the life-style to which they graduate, pretty well fit any definition of success that a high-school teacher can think up.

Gymnasts, swimmers, soccer players or any other minor sport participants as well as hockey players have to perform and practice outside of the school system in order to get any kind of coaching or support for what they do.

Figure skaters and hockey players cannot even hope to get any competition, ice time or anything else, within the school system. Private clubs for figure skaters and outside sponsored hockey teams are their only recourse.

The situation in the United States is now roughly the same as they have for football. Hockey players can play for a high school team throughout their term of interment in the system and, upon graduating, play in an excellent league in college.

The main excuse, as I mentioned, was that the high-schools are providing their students with an education. Any ass but a school official knows that this is not the case.

The number of students who graduate with honors from the high-school system and are hard pressed to work their way through an entire book unassisted is appalling.

Costly teaching aids such as films by the mile, teaching machines and other means of perverting the human mind are the real frivolities when a 16 year old with a knack for the game of hockey has to choose between school and his sport in order to play.

The potentially good gymnast who cannot afford to join one of the clubs that offers good instruction wastes time in dull classes to graduate to university where the coaching is at a level consistent with his or her ability.

It is really about time that our school system woke up to the fact that sports are anything but unimportant. Almost anyone can enjoy a sport of some description and the school system should be the place to have the facilities available.

Auditoriums or gymnasiums around the city are now repositories for the numerous Bingo players in Edmonton. The biggest worry the school boards and parents have right now is whether to get liquor into the Bingo games—it would be far better if they were to use these facilities for less sedentary activities. After all, this is the supposed reason why they exist.

AN OPEN LETTER TO THE GOLDEN BEAR HOCKEY TEAM

When you go into the dressing room to get ready for practice tonight, take out your sweater—not the one you wear in practice, but the one you wear for games—and take a good look at it.

Look at the green and gold colours, and the emblem, and think about just what it means to be a Golden Bear. There are people who would give their eye teeth to be able to wear that sweater. There are people who would be deeply honoured to skate around wearing the Golden Bear emblem on their chest. It's an honour many of you have yet to prove you deserve.

I've heard many of you talk about how you'd love to compete for your country. You say it with a catch in your voice, "I'd give anything to play in international competition."

Last weekend someone commented that the Bears had done just that against Poland at Christmas. "Not the same thing," was the answer, and the man who said it made it sound like playing for the University of Alberta was like playing for nothing at all.

What I really wonder is how you would play if you *did* get the chance to compete for your country. What makes you so sure your loyalty would be any greater just because you would be wearing a sweater with CANADA instead of BEARS across the front? If you don't have team pride at this level, you're not going to get it by changing sweaters.

And that's your biggest problem right now: You've got no pride at all. Talent wise, you are a team that should have taken this league by storm. You are playing for one of the finest universities in Canada, and you just don't care.

You take your wins as a matter of divine right, as if you get them because Clare Drake gets wins, no matter how crappy the team is. And it's true, this team has lucked into a lot of undeserved wins. Do you ever feel you must *earn* your wins? You've got no humility.

Losses? You do your mandatory half hour of brooding, and then it's crack out the beer, let's have some fun. As one of your captains commented the other night, you've got no class.

Why do you play the game? What motivated you to try out for this particular team? I've talked to most of you enough to know that each has his own individual reasons, usually good ones, for wanting to play. There's nothing really wrong with that.

What I do wonder is how many of you really want to *win* a game. Oh, sure, some of you want to turn pro, so you try to look good for the scouts in the crowd. Others like to win because it makes your wife or girlfriend proud. There are a myriad of other social reasons for wanting to win a game. But how many of you have ever wanted to win for—brace yourselves—the fans?

How many of you ever even think about the fans, except to complain if they don't yell loud enough? Most of you think the function of a fan is to cheer on the home team, but how many of you feel that you owe the fan a good performance?

I was talking to Clyde Smith last year at a press conference before the Western College Bowl, and he said something that changed my whole attitude towards athletes in general and college athletes in particular. (Smith, for those of you who don't know, was an offensive line coach for two years with the Golden Bears football team. He played for Bears in 1969 and worked as an assistant trainer in 1970. Before that he played four years with the University of Oregon.)

Anyway, Clyde was talking about player motivation. He said that in his playing days, his biggest thrill was to win for the fans. I thought this sounded a little hokey, and asked if any of the players on the Golden Bear team felt that way. He said, yes, all of them.

"You know," he said, "there are little kids in the stands who dream about growing up and coming to the University of Alberta and becoming a Golden Bear. There are grown people watching the games who wish that they could have played for a team like ours. But the ones who really get to me are the ones in the wheelchairs or in leg braces. They'd give just about anything to be able to play football, and you really feel bad when you don't win the game for them."

Disgustingly sentimental? Maybe, but it's an outlook most of you would do well to develop. Ray Kelly has a sign on his office wall that I'd be willing to lay odds that most of you have read and then promptly forgot because you felt it didn't apply.

The sign says, "What counts most in life is what you do for others. That which you do for yourself dies with you; that which you do for others lives long after you are gone."

The University of Alberta is a school with a long history of winning teams. And, by the way, a winning team is one which learns from its mistakes; it's not one that gets into the playoffs through the back door. It's a team that gives one hundred percent every game.

A winning team is one on which the players think more of their team mates than they do of themselves. It's a team on which a player is just as happy if his linemate scores a goal as if he did it himself.

A player on a winning U of A team is a Golden Bear first, and trying to get a pro scout's attention second. You're never going to be a winning team as long as you are motivated as individuals.

I wasn't going to add this, but your don't give a damn attitude after the losses in Calgary last weekend has got me mad enough to stick my neck out a little more and give you another quotation from Ray Kelly's wall: "Nobody is a complete failure. You can always be used as a bad example."

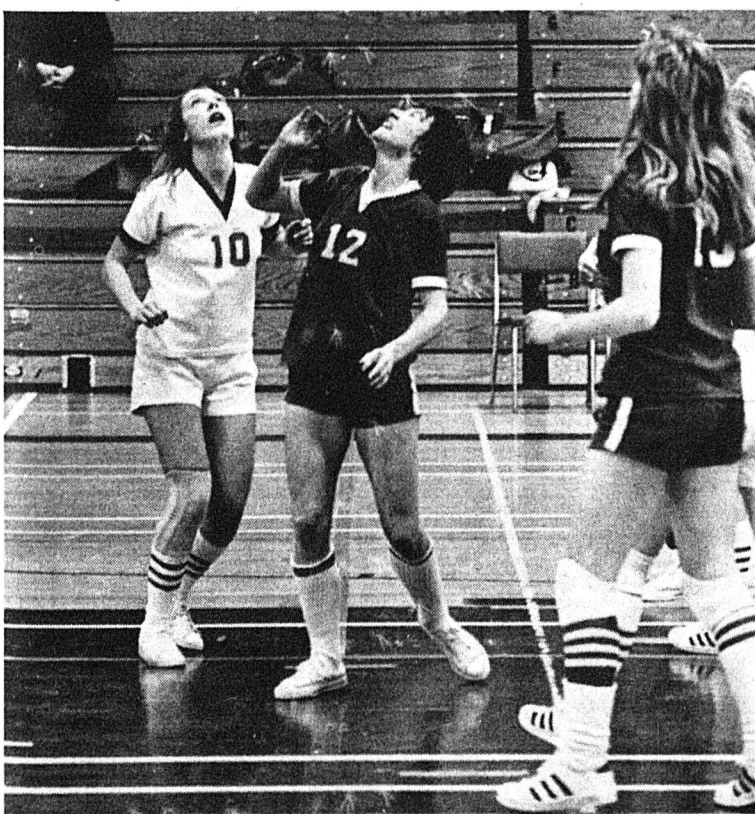
You're going to Saskatchewan this weekend, and many of you think you're just going to walk in and clobber the Huskies. "God, they're an awful team," you say. More of that damned Golden Bear arrogance. Well, guys, that "awful" team whopped BC on home ice last weekend, and they're going to be mighty high when you drive into town. They know if there is one team in the league they *can* beat, it's you. The myth of the Golden Bear Mystique is dead, fellows, dead and buried last weekend in Calgary.

I've got just one more thing to say and then I'll go away. Try to think of me for a minute as just Jane or Joe Student who likes to see the home team win; who expects to see the home team win. You owe it to me and to all the other faceless, but not voiceless, fans who scream at the games this year, and to all those who have cheered for the Golden Bears in years past to do your best. You owe it to us and to all the men and women who have ever worn the green and gold to give it all you've got.

We don't know you as individuals. Most of us have to use our programmes to tell you apart, but we see you as representatives of us and our school. When you put on your sweaters and skate onto the ice from now on remember us and remember those are *our* school colours you're wearing. We expect you to wear them with pride and we expect you to treat that Golden Bear emblem with respect.

Allyn Cadogan

P.S. Please don't be too rough on the scribe for this, fellows. She only said it because she cares.



Pandas stomp Dinnies

U of A's basketball Pandas accomplished two major feats over the weekend: they beat the University of Calgary Dinnies twice, 64-32 on Friday and 66-43 on Saturday; and they solved a problem that has puzzled scientists for years.

Pandas proved beyond a shadow of a doubt that dinosaurs, at least female Dinnies, were driven to extinction by pressure from other animals, particularly Pandas, rather than climatic changes, sunspots or any other postulated reasons for their demise.

The extermination process began early on Friday but Pandas handled it sloppily in the beginning. On the opening jump Chris Graves tapped the ball to Wendy Martin who drove in for a free layup and missed. That play set the tone for a mistake-filled first half.

Pandas' good defense plus some atrocious shooting by Calgary (they made just 13 of 75 shots in the game) did away with

any worry about Dinnies' scoring power. But U of A was committing far too many turnovers on offense - they finished with 57 for the night.

By halftime Alberta had a 22-9 lead, but it was due as much to Dinnies' ineptness as to Pandas' talent.

In the second half Pandas polished up their act considerably. They switched to a full court zone press about six minutes into the period and it forced immediate turnovers by Calgary. The press proved to be the key to Dinnies' expiration as they repeatedly threw away passes or allowed themselves to be trapped by Pandas.

U of A coupled their press with superior rebounding, pulling down a total of 64 rebounds to Dinnies' 31, to steadily pull away for the win.

Martin led Alberta, scoring 24 points and making numerous steals and interceptions on defense. Yvonne Shea and Graves added 10 points each for U of A.

Pat Walker was the only Dinnie to make double figures. She hit on five of nine shots and added a free throw for 11 points.

Saturday Pandas picked up where they left off the previous evening, using their zone press in the opening minutes. The result was the same as before: steals and interceptions for U of A, trouble for Calgary.

Confidently taking control, Pandas jumped to a 24-7 lead after 10 minutes before their shooting cooled off and Dinnies made a brief comeback.

On the strength of revived shooting accuracy (26% compared to 17% on Friday) Calgary outscored U of A 10-2 in the next five minutes before Alberta regained control to take a 33-19 lead at halftime.

In the second half Dinnies decided to use Pandas' strategy themselves, applying a full court press. Not a bad idea, but it didn't work for two reasons.

continued to page 11