

"ombudsman"

The "Ombudsman" column in the Gateway needs people if it is to function effectively. People to research various complaints, people to garner information from the "closed shops" around campus, people to take an interest in others' grievances and try to help solve them. If the "Ombudsman" is to be effective, it will take a lot of work - a lot more work than the two people co-ordinating the column can give it. If you - staff member on campus, student, administrator, an outsider who thinks they can give a different perspective - think there are problems on this campus and you can help solve them, contact us.

Apply to Kevin Gillese, editor, in the Gateway offices (SUB 282) for further information. Or contact Dirk Schaeffer (439-5486).

The Board of Governors has decided that this University does not need an ombudsman.

There are people who argue that there is very little this University needs more than an ombudsman, but even they might agree that what we don't need (again) is the Board of Governors' ombudsman. After all, how much sense does it make to have an ombudsman, whose only job is to defend the underdog, getting paid to do that by the top dog? How much real defending can he do under those circumstances?

It's a real paradox, and there seems to be only two possible solutions: either you have a top dog who is so honest and full on integrity and open to real criticism that you don't need an ombudsman in the first place; or, you find an ombudsman who does not have to depend on the top dog's generosity for his livelihood. Of the two, the second one is somewhat likelier, at the University of Alberta, now.

So, what does it take to be an ombudsman? A lot of human characteristics, like time, patience, a passion (why not?) for justice. A salary? No. Power? Never. Power corrupts. Authority? Some - enough to get access to records, documents, files. A good investigative newspaper could do as well although it would take a lot more work. Status, a title? No way. If those impress you, it's too late for the ombudsman to do you any good anyway.

On the other hand, an ombudsman without official sanction, without appointment, without salary, has two advantages that his official counterpart inevitably lacks. The first is freedom, which matters most. The second is that because he has no power or authority, he is left with only one weapon to work with: publicity.

And that is exactly what has been missing from the activity of the ombudsmen we have seen so far, either on this campus or in this province. And publicity matters, almost as much as freedom, if the ombudsman is ever to accomplish anything. Because one thing you learn if you spend any time around top dogs at all is that no matter how many times you manage to get individual cases straightened out, until public pressure of some kind is brought to bear the principle will not be straightened out, and each new sucker will be screwed and shafted just as each previous one was, as long as the top dog has something to gain.

Another thing you learn is that only the top dogs benefit from secrecy and confidentiality. Publicity, and public pressure, are the only ways to fix that. And an ombudsman without power has only those tools to work with.

So what do we need now, for a powerless ombudsman? We need someone with time, patience, honesty, integrity, and a passion for justice. That hopefully is me. And we need someone with the tools of publicity at his disposal. That's the Gateway and its editor, Kevin Gillese. And we need sources of information. That's you.

We (Kevin and I) are willing to do whatever we can to create a meaningful and powerless ombudsman. We're two of the people who feel that this is something the University needs very badly. But of course, we could be wrong: unless some of you come to us with your problems, grievances, complaints, and injustices, there will be no need for us to much of anything. And unless others of you come to us with information that supports or counters these grievances, we won't be able to mount arguments, make cases, bring to bear any reasons or pressures worth reporting or printing. So that much of what we can do will be very much up to you.

Who are you? Any member of the university community: students, the lowest dogs; faculty, the house niggers; staff, the other niggers; and even administrators, many of whom are not much more than major-domos, if that. Any of you may have suffered what you feel are injustices, many have seen yourself as well-shafted by individuals, or by the system as a whole. We'd like to know about it, and see if anything can be done.

Some of you, still unshafted, may have nothing more than questions about procedures, standards, principles, interpretations, or the various rules and limitations that affect your lives: academic, financial, legal, what-have-you. We'd like to hear about those too, and again see if anything can be done.

We'll try, at first, to keep things confidential: grievances and injustices, around this university, are much like rape - somehow, it's worse to admit to being a victim than a criminal. We know that; and know it is one of the primary illegitimate sources of power of the top dogs. We'll respect it.

But on the other hand, we know too that just in the case of rape, there isn't going to be much that can be done about anything until somebody admits to being victim; and we may want to persuade you to do that. Just persuade, not coerce. And if we can find ways to work while still protecting anonymity, we'll try those first.

We'll report on those, in these pages, whenever it seems appropriate - anonymously if possible, with your permission if we have to mention names. And we'll try to get the rest of the story, both in terms of any individuals who may be involved and in terms of any general principles, regulations, or guidelines that may apply. We'll report on those, too, safeguarding whatever anonymity or confidentiality appears warranted.

And of course, we'll try to work with any of the existing campus agencies and institutions, wherever appropriate: and hope they'll work with us.

Okay? Okay. The next step is up to you.

My name's Dirk Schaeffer. I'm an assistant professor in the psychology department, with four years of survival on this campus in back of me. Contact me by mail there, if you want; or by telephone at 439-6486, day or night; or in person in my home-office - No. 1010 Newton Place, 8515 112 St. just south of the campus; with complaints, grievances, questions, wishes (good or bad), a burning thirst for coffee - whatever. Or contact Kevin Gillese in *The Gateway* offices, Room 282 SUB, phone 432-5168 or 432-5178, or at home, 11121-80th St. (433-2136). The next step will be ours.

"Ombudsman" will appear on this page each Tuesday, as long as he survives - Editor.

FAS asks provincial gov't to increase day care funding

The Federation of Alberta Students (FAS) called upon the Alberta government this weekend to increase the level of subsidization for existing day care in the province. In a Saturday workshop at the FAS fall conference, Jim Anderson, a U of A graduate student, talked about the quality of day care in Alberta. He is presently working on a survey of day care needs and standards.

Anderson pointed out that single parents represent 70 per cent of day care users and that there are waiting lists of up to 200 families at both the U of A and the U of C. He also expressed concern about government spending priorities. Despite the existence of the Heritage Trust Fund (\$1.5 billion in oil and gas royalties and rapidly growing) Alberta spends less per capita on day care than

does B.C., Sask., Man., or Ont.

On the question of day care standards, Anderson called the recently published government document, "Proposed Day-Care Standards" completely inadequate. "Some privately owned centres are actually harmful to children and the government proposals will allow this to continue for another five to seven years.

Many FAS delegates felt that the present level of funding for day care in Alberta (only \$4 million last year) is preventing many women from working or attending post-secondary institutions. The demand for increased subsidization was seen as a direct call for improvements in both the quality and accessibility of day care in Alberta.

Medical Schools Interior Mexico now Accepting Applicants for 1977 Terms. Contact R. W. Cary, P.O. Box 214313, Sacramento, CA 95821. Phone (916) 483-4587.

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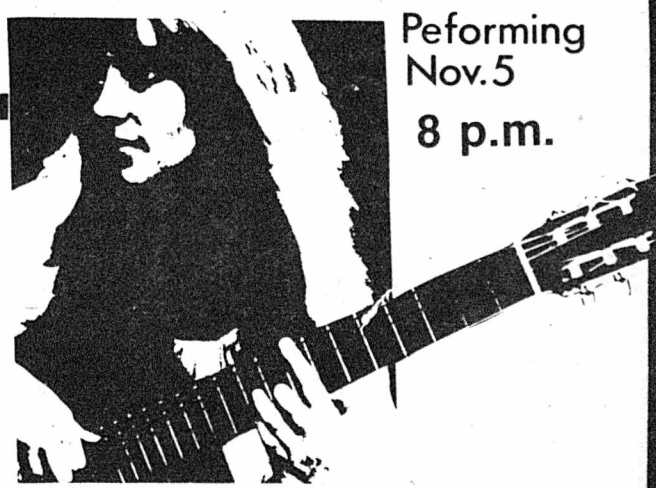
Progressive Conservative Youth Federation

MODEL PARLIAMENT

November 19 & 20, 1976

The U of A branch of the PCYF is looking for participants for its model parliament this month. Those wishing to sharpen their parliamentary debating skills can pick up registration forms, on a first come - first served basis, at room #3 Assiniboia Hall. A banquet and dance will follow the closure of parliament. Further information: Grant Barkwell 439-0996, or Joe McGhie 439-9218.

Liona Boyd



Performing
Nov. 5
8 p.m.

Acclaimed classical guitarist Liona Boyd is a masterful and sensitive artist who evokes an intensely personal rapport between her audience and her music..... Liona Boyd is a rising star in the ranks of internationally prominent musicians.

SUB Theatre

Tickets 5.50 at SU Box Office
All Woodward's Outlets, Coliseum
Bonnie Doon and Mike's
An SU Presentation