

Editorial

Social scientists tell us that we are living in an age of familial breakdown. They blame over population, modern technology, the women's movement, the sexual revolution, and a legion of other factors. We are told that the ideal arrangement of professional father, homemaker mother, and 2.2 children living together in harmony is no longer the norm. I say hurray.

The fact is, for most of us, such model family relations never existed in the first place. Such ideals have caused a good deal of pain and disappointment as many of us have grown up to learn that we harbor unrealistic expectations of those to whom we are related by blood.

I know that my position on this issue is likely to offend a good many of you who stand by your traditional values. My intention is not to denigrate those values. If you disagree with me from a personal standpoint, then consider that your own family relations are quite likely unique in contrast to the rest of Canadian society.

*The Canadian National Clearing House on Family Violence states that 1 out of 4 girls and 1 out of 10 boys will be sexually abused before the age of 18. 75% of the perpetrators will be a family friend or relative of the victim.

*Marriages have almost a 50-50 chance of 'survival' and there are over 56,000 single parent Canadian families — 47,000 of which are headed by females.

*One in ten Canadian women are abused by their husbands or live-in mates.

*The Alberta Child Protection Registry reported over 10,000 allegations of child neglect, 3,448 allegations of physical abuse, and 964 allegations of sexual abuse of children — last year.

*Federal Census Data indicates that 27 Canadian children under the age of 14 took their own lives in 1984. Recent figures are expected to be higher.

We are bombarded, on a daily basis, by sickening media reports of wife beating, child molestations, and marital infidelity. A good many of us want to know what happened to the good old days. Well, the good old days are dead and gone and I'm not entirely sure what was so good about them in the first place. Were such things as mental cruelty and substance abuse any more acceptable when they occurred behind closed doors? I doubt it — certainly not for the countless victims who suffered in silence over the past few generations. The facts were no less horrible when we were ignorant of them — they never are.

Those of you who are under the impression that you and your family slip through the cracks of those dire statistics should do one of three things:

- 1) Relax and count your blessings.
- 2) Take a much closer look at your own family situation.
- 3) Bury your heads back in the sand.

Kathleen Beechinor

Letters to the Editor

Prison Pen-Pal

Dear Students:

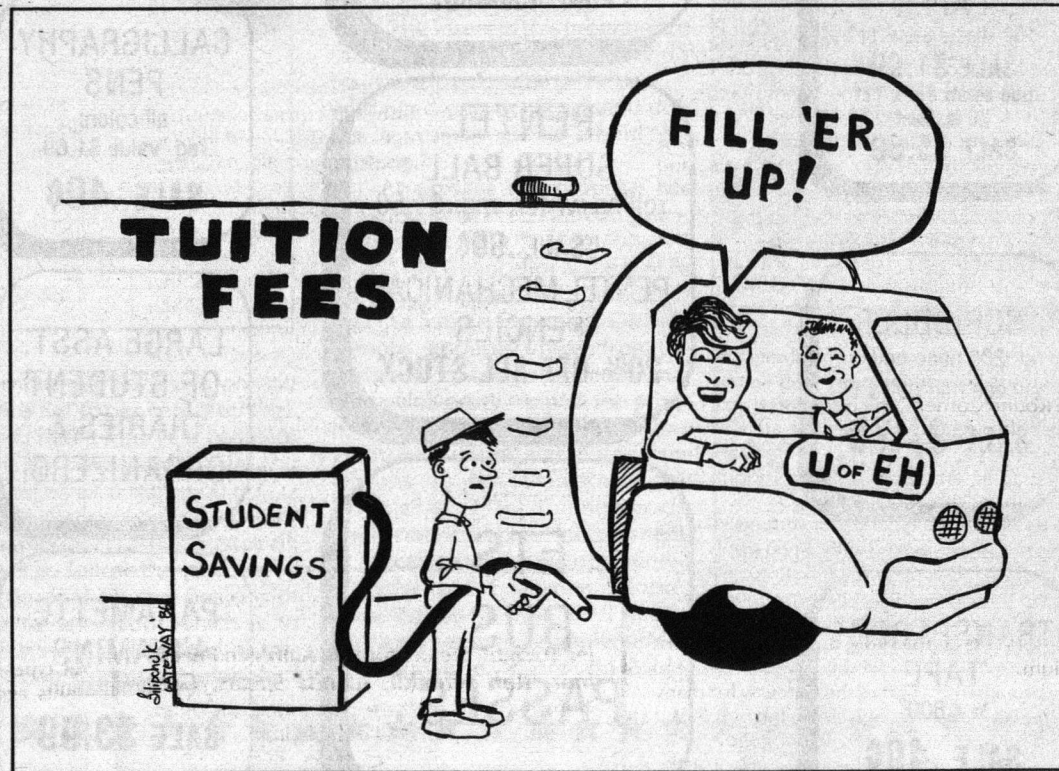
I am presently confined at the Jackson State Prison and I would be very grateful if I could perhaps establish a correspondence with anyone wishing to do so.

Please understand — just because I'm in prison that doesn't necessarily mean that I'm a criminal. We all can make a mistake and nobody is perfect. Is God the only one who forgives?

I hope it isn't considered presumptuous for a man of low and humble station to venture to have a friend.

Alphonso Hayes 179535
State Prison of Southern Michigan
4000 Cooper Street
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Jackson, Michigan
49204

Letters to the Editor should not be more than 250 words long. They must be signed and include faculty, year of program, phone number and I.D. number. No anonymous letters will be published. All letters should be typed, double-spaced, or very neatly written. We reserve the right to edit for libel and length. Letters do not necessarily reflect the views of the Gateway.



One man opposed

by Greg Whiting

If the economy had been booming, it's entirely possible that the Alberta PC's could have won the last provincial election 81-1 or even 82-0. They didn't, but it still makes for some interesting speculation. What would the opposition be like in a province where only one non-government member had been elected? Let's watch New Representative Liberal MLA Nick Marker in the province of Atrebla and find out . . .

Marker (to official aide): Well, once again, I'm off to defend the interests of the downtrodden in this province from the government juggernaut that wants to run over their rights . . .

Aide: Don't get thrown out today, Mr. Marker. There's nobody there to complain about it.

Marker: Yes, I know. I think that was somewhat justifiable yesterday, though . . . after all, I did call the premier a two-bit, penny-ante, lying, snake in the grass.

Aide: I'm sure he knew you didn't mean it personally. Oh, and remember, you've got a fund-raising lunch at the Convention Centre today.

Marker: Right. Whoops, I'm late. (Exits)

Marker enters the legislature, walks to his seat (the government occupies both benches and has given the opposition a T.V. tray at the end of the room across from the speaker), removes the cardboard cutout of himself and turns off the tape player which says "Oh, oh" every thirty seconds. A government MLA is just finishing his speech.

MLA: . . . should make this valuable bill a part of the laws of our province.

Speaker: Gentlemen, most of you know that we agreed yesterday that we would vote on this bill at 8:15 this morning. It is now that time, so . . . all in favor!

68 government MLA's: Aye!

Speaker: All opposed!

Marker: Nay!

Speaker: Well, that one was closer than usual, but the eyes have it once again . . .

Three and a half hours later, the official opposition sets up his tape player and cutout and leaves for lunch. He walks four blocks to his official office to meet his official aide so that they can drive to the Convention Center in the official Studebaker. He is exhausted — the government was debating a controversial bill (or at least as controversial as he could make it) in the morning, and

he had to give every other speech. (And, at the end of the debate, the government had won the vote, 73-1)

Marker: Whew. What a morning. I hope I can still talk when we get there.

Aide: are you going back this afternoon?

Marker: No. They voted to recess for the day at 12:30. I'm glad they did it when I was there instead of waiting till I left. I guess my complaint got through to somebody.

Aide: Oh, you mean the time you complained when they recessed for two weeks without telling you and you had to go every day to see if they were back yet?

Marker: Yep. Oh, no, the official Studebaker has a flat!

Aide: Guess we'll have to ride the official Transit Company bus.

Marker: We should lobby for a newer car. This is the third time this month.

(Marker rides to the luncheon and arrives just when he was scheduled to speak. He has, however, forgotten to ask his aide who he will be addressing, and the aide had to go to the washroom and won't be back for another few minutes. There are two lunches this week — one for the Procrastinators' Society and one for the Postal Union. Realizing that neither group could reasonably expect anyone to be on time to their meetings, he waits for his aide.)

(Later)
Marker: And, once again, I would like to thank the chairperson and all the other wonderful members of the Procrastinators' Society for coming to this luncheon . . .

Aide: (Whispers) Breakfast.

Marker: . . . er, breakfast today. Remember to vote for the NRL's in the next provincial election!

Chairperson: Thank you, Mr. Marker. If you want to donate to the NRL's, or become a member, call Mr. Marker's aide at 555-6758 — when you get around to it. (Aide to Marker): I think I should tell you that the premier just joined our group, so it might be a while till the next election.

Marker: (Sighs) That figures. (To aide): How many position papers do I have to write this afternoon?

Aide: About a dozen.

Marker: Well, let's catch the bus. Life ain't easy as the official opposition.

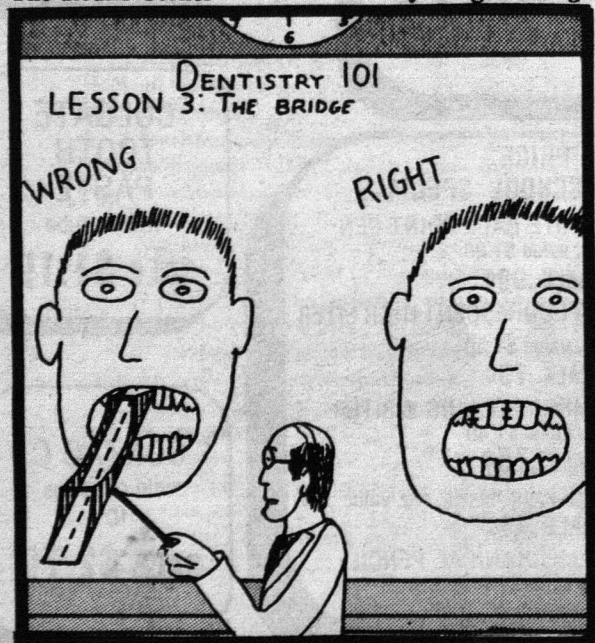
The Gateway

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The Round Corner By Greg Whiting



"Any questions?"