

# Editorial

## Of cigarette butts and coffee cups

Garbage. Yech. The U of A campus is plagued with it. It's impossible not to notice. Just take a stroll through CAB on a typical school day. By mid-afternoon the place looks like a war zone. Pop cans, cigarette butts, orange peels, coffee cups everywhere. Not to mention cafeteria trays, cold french fries, and used Gateways (at least we know people are reading us).

It seems U of A students are strong adherents to a drop it and leave it philosophy. Sure, just leave that empty brown bag or coffee ring. Someone else will take care of it for you. Of course, that someone else will probably just move it over or dump it on the floor. As for coffee rings, one can only grit their teeth and curse until it dries up or is wiped up by someone else.

Maybe littering is a form of stress release. Students have lots of extra stress to play with, so we need lots of ways to release it. Just thinking about going over to the garbage can to avoid leaving a mess can be stressful. To drop it and leave it is to thumb your nose at the establishment. It's your own little revolt.

I never thought about it until a student in his 50's was talking to me about his impression of the U of A campus.

He had attended several other Canadian universities in B.C. and Quebec and in comparing our campus to those of McGill, UVic, and Simon Fraser, he said, "The U of A has great professors, but is the place ever dirty."

Three years of wading through debris on this campus made me realize the truth of his statement.

Couch cancer is another affliction we must put up with. Gaping pits of styrofoam in the middle of nice, otherwise comfy couches that occupy various lounge and lunch areas on campus. It looks like the aftermath of a mouse gone mad.

To all you closet couch destroyers: why don't you chew your nails or maybe take up knitting? I only want to sit down, and not in that hole you just dug.

And instead of dropping that stuff and leaving, go out of your way and put it in the garbage can. Sure, your apartment probably looks worse, but that's no reason to redecorate the campus a la Warhol.

Greg Halinda

## The Gateway

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ERIK BAICH  
 - with help from Gary G., Eric V.M. and Evan W.

## Letters to the Editor

Letters to the Editor should not be more than 250 words in length. They must include your signature, faculty, year of program, I.D. number, and phone number. Requests for anonymity are at the discretion of the Managing Editor, but the above information is required regardless. We reserve the right to edit for libel and length. Letters do not necessarily reflect the views of the Gateway.



### Woman of words...

To The Editor:

The following poem is a tribute to the memory of Margaret Laurence:  
 Woman of words,  
 images  
 Strong in character  
 Literary renown —  
 fundamentalist  
 frown  
 Farewell  
 sleep snugly  
 In the cushion  
 of  
 your  
 Legacy.

— Nancy Leavitt  
 Arts III

### Arafat article unfair

To The Editor:

We, the undersigned members of Hillel-Jewish Students' Association at the University of Alberta, feel compelled to respond to the Gateway's coverage of the visit recently of Dr. Fathi Arafat, chairman of the Palestinian Red Crescent Society (November 25, 1986).

We do not object to your reporting of Arafat's visit. Based on our own history of persecution, the Jewish people are very sensitive to the need for a free and uncensored press.

We do, however, wish to comment on the quality of the coverage of Arafat's lecture, of the tendency of your article to report as indisputably accurate the various statements attributed to Arafat concerning the present state of relations in the Middle East.

For example, the article quotes Arafat as claiming that "The Palestinians are rarely portrayed as human beings in need of social and medical care". The obverse would indeed appear to be the case. If anything, the western media's obvious tilt toward a pro-Arab perspective throughout the 1982 Lebanon War placed the plight of the Palestinians clearly and indisputably on the front-burner of international attention.

Arafat is further quoted as suggesting that the plight of the Palestinian Arabs is more serious than in most other Third World situations "due to the scattering of the Palestinian people and the ravages of war", and that "many of the U.N. health facilities were discontinued after the Israeli invasion of Lebanon". This is another inaccuracy, one that is worked effectively by the PLO to win the support of the people of the West.

Granted, the lot of many Palestinian Arabs is far from enviable. But the Palestinians certainly hold no premium on suffering. Beyond this, the poor quality of Palestinian medical care results from a problem that is essentially internal to the Arab world. The oil-rich Arab states have the financial capacity required to improve significantly the quality of life of their Palestinian cousins, both those in refugee camps within their own borders and throughout the Arab world. For a variety of reasons, they have regrettably chosen not to do so.

In contrast to the Arabs states' minimal concern for the welfare of the Palestinians, the Israeli record of providing medical care and other social assistance to them is exemplary. Throughout the region, the Israelis furnish essential care to local populations who would otherwise do without. The standard of living and the quality of health service enjoyed by the Palestinians on the West Bank and Gaza since June 1967 is objectively far superior to that ever experienced previously under Arab rule.

The improved quality of life is extended also to many Palestinians living as refugees in states bordering Israel, despite the continued state of war between Israel and all Arab states except Egypt. For example, despite King Hussein's denials to the contrary, advanced Israeli medical care and social benefits are carried regularly across the Jordan River. Israel continues to care for the civilian populations of southern Lebanon, through the "good fence" across the Israel-Lebanon border. Thousands of Lebanese civilians fleeing PLO terror receive the most advanced medical care available anywhere in the Middle East in Israeli medical clinics at the Good Fence.

The condition of the Palestinians in Lebanon is worsened by the collapse of central governmental authority precipitated by the presence in southern Lebanon since the mid-1970's of "Fatahland", the base of the terrorist Palestine Liberation Organization (and all of international terrorism), as well as over 30,000 members of the so-called Syrian "peacekeeping force". Contributing further to the suffering of the Palestinian civilians is the bitter internecine struggle now being waged between supporters of PLO leader Yasser Arafat, PLO forces seeking to defeat the Arafat faction, the Syrian government, and the various Libyan- and Iranian-sponsored Shiite militias.

Arab state self-interest and inter-Arab power struggles are the primary causes of the poor medical care provided to Palestinian Arabs. Israel's contribution to the quality of life enjoyed by their Arab neighbours goes unrecognized and unappreciated by an international community susceptible to the highly sophisticated public relations campaign undertaken by the Palestine Liberation Organization and its many supporters.

We support any humanitarian effort that will help to alleviate all human suffering. We do however, ask that one examine with a dispassionate eye the facts concerning the source of this suffering and what efforts are being undertaken to relieve it.

Ian Feldman  
 Coordinator, Hillel  
 Jerome Marburg  
 Past President, Hillel