

The spirit of the matter

I thought that the ad for "Jean Relief" in your September 27 issue was quite funny. Then again, I read it in the spirit in which it was written.

The real plight of the starving children referred to in the ad is certainly nothing to laugh at. However, laughing at this is not the point of the ad, which is to poke fun at the clothing manufacturers who might have us believe that designer jeans really are more important than food.

I encourage those who have condemned this satire to try to understand this type of humor rather than simply screaming "Uncaring!"; it is hoped by people who write such things that they will be seen as sarcasm rather than as an attempt to undermine a good cause. Again to those who objected, I ask, would you find an ad asking us to help save the termites a slur on the whale-lovers, or could you see the humor?

Think about it.

Greg Whiting
Engineering I

Right on, Ernie Baby!

Yesterday, as I made my way to the dubious delights of West Edmonton's consumer behemoth, I was driven to reflect on the bracing sentiments recently expressed by Ernest Braithwaite III. They are applicable, it would seem, not only to the University but to North American urban culture (in the anthropological sense) at large. As one rides the public conveyances or perambulates the halls of commerce, one is obliged to rub shoulders with what passes for youth in this decadent society. We have all seen them: nondescript hordes of indeterminate age garbed in faded denim jackets, frayed jeans or grimy corduroys, and filthy track shoes, their matted hair descending in unruly clumps to their stooped shoulders, their vacant eyes mirroring souls whose human impulses have long since succumbed to the deafening strains of punk-rock. Would not these sorry striplings, who open their mouths only to expel chewing-gum, inhale noxious fumes, slurp indescribable liquid concoctions, or bellow raucous obscenities, benefit immeasurably from the training offered by this nation's armed forces? Would not the ubiquitous Michael Bell be better employed barking orders to this motley crew than haranguing television audiences? Would not all responsible citizens sleep more soundly knowing that these youths were drawing an honest wage rather than adding to the national debt? It is a consummation, Sir, devoutly to be wished.

M.E. Yurkevich
Canadian Institute of Ukrainian Studies

Bussing by numbers

In this city there is a large institution - the University of Alberta. It houses this year 22,000 students.

Did any one ever calculate how much of our economy depends on these students?

The average student spends \$732 a month (double this if married). Now multiply this figure of \$732.00 by 22,000 students. My calculator shows \$16,119,400.00 a month spending in Edmonton by the students.

If you want to get technical, how about multiplying that number by eight (8) months of studies. Not including the spring and summer sessions. This figure is \$1,289,500,000.00 - Over 1 Billion!

Do you think such amount helps the economy in Edmonton? You bet!

Then how come:

- students have to depend on a bus system which stops its services before the library closes its doors?
- a bus system which forces them to arrive hours earlier than the class schedules, packed like sardines to boot?
- a bus system which does not consider night classes nor does it consider the part-time workers who try to support themselves during their studies?
- a bus system which runs when it pleases the 'brain' behind it not the bus users who pay for bus passes four months in advance?
- a bus system which does not hear the students' grievances nor listen to their pleas - not even before election?
- a bus system where rumours of stopping night service are regular threats, and a strike by January 1984 is in the wind?

Assuming the collective body will move from University of Edmonton, down to Calgary, or Lethbridge, or even UBC, can the city afford to let 22,000 people and minimum spending of \$1,289 billion go somewhere else?

I doubt it! I am sure you doubt it too.

Please, do something! Give us a reliable transit system!

a University student
cont. on page 6

LETTERS

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

★★★★★ WHAT'S LEFT ★★★★★

by Mike Walker

Health Care cut-offs one more step in program to destroy medicare.

This week, as many as 200,000 Albertans found themselves without medicare coverage. If they need medical attention, except in emergencies, they will have to pay the whole fee themselves.

These people have been cut off for being over three months in arrears in their medicare premiums. All together, they owe \$50 million in premiums, or an average of about \$250 each. Will the cut-offs force them to pay up? Some, probably. But many of them simply won't have the money to pay the bills, so they will do without coverage. In any case, this is irrelevant to the government since the real object of the new policy is to show Albertans that "there ain't no free lunch," to quote Hospitals Minister Dave Russell.

No free lunch for the poor and working people of the province, that is. Some people get free breakfast, lunch, and supper courtesy of the people. Like foreign oil companies which get massive handouts in the form of tax breaks, or employers who drive down wage rates thanks to labour legislation designed to weaken trade unions, or former cabinet ministers who make millions on land deals thanks to inside knowledge of government annexation decisions.

But for most us, there ain't no free lunch.

Alberta is one of only three provinces still charging medicare premiums. All the rest fund medicare through the tax system, into which richer people pay more and poorer people pay less. That's the way most social services are financed and it's fair. (Of course, the tax system has built in loopholes to allow the extremely wealthy to avoid taxes altogether.)

Not only are medicare premiums a regressive tax (that is, they take a greater percentage of income from lower-income homes, and a smaller percentage from the wealthy), but the administration necessary to collect them is extremely expensive. The government admits that it costs six to seven

million dollars per year to collect premiums. This may not seem like a lot compared to the cost of the health care system as a whole, but this money is a dead waste. All the money collected through premiums could be collected in taxes, at a saving of over \$6 million per year.

So why stick with these silly premiums? That's simple. To abolish them would strengthen the medicare system - the government wants to abolish it. Continuing to charge premiums, cutting off those who can't pay them, allowing doctors to extra bill, and imposing hospital user fees are all part of the program to destroy public, universally accessible medical care in Alberta. The other part, which is only being discussed now, is "privatizing" hospitals. The cabinet is interested in turning hospital administration over to multi-national corporations, who would operate our hospitals for profit.

After all this is complete, all that remains is to disband the Health Care Insurance Commission, and turn over the insurance business to private companies.

These developments promise to make a few individuals and firms, notably the insurance companies, and hospital administration firms, wealthier than they already are.

As for the rest of us, if we don't stop the Tories, we will see one of our most important social rights - the right to high-quality medical care for all - taken away from us. Some of us won't get care when we need it because we won't be insured. Many of those who are insured will tend to get help only for emergencies or serious illnesses rather than preventative help, since there will be out of pocket costs for most services. When we have to stay in hospitals, we will find the administrators cutting corners everywhere in an effort to boost profits.

Only a united, aggressive campaign to save medicare can stop the government from going further. If we don't fight back now, we'll have ourselves to blame when we find medicare a thing of the past.

A National Universities Week Highlight
Special Lecture

by

Judge Raynelle Andreychuk

"noted dynamic speaker and humanist"

family court judge

former Chancellor, University of Regina

TUESDAY, OCTOBER 11, 8:00 p.m.

**Students' Union Theatre
University of Alberta**

Reception
to follow

sponsored by
The Senate and AAS:UA

B'nai B'rith



Hillel Film Night

11036 - 88 Avenue

7:30 p.m.

All members welcome!
No Charge

L'express

- Gourmet Coffees
- Deli Sandwiches
- Hot Sandwiches
- Soups
- Salads
- Liquor license after 3 p.m.

Main Floor SUB
7:00 a.m. - 9:00 p.m.



NOW OPEN EVENINGS!!

**Unitarian Fellowship
of Edmonton**

Sunday, October 9

10:30 AM.

Heritage Lounge, Athabasca Hall

Dr. Jean Lauber, Professor
U of A Department of Zoology
"Why a Unitarian Fellowship"

**President's Advisory Committee
on Sexual Harassment
(PACSH)**

President Horowitz formed an advisory committee on sexual harassment (PACSH) in 1982. The committee operates in accord with the definitions of sexual harassment adopted by the Alberta Human Rights Commission and the Canadian Association of University Teachers.

PACSH is composed of one woman and one man from each of the following University groups: undergraduate students, graduate students, non-academic staff, and academic staff. You can be put in contact with any PACSH member to talk about the committee, its procedures, or about how to lodge a complaint by telephoning the administrative office at 432-TALK (432-8255).