

# Scales of Justice?

Is it any wonder why some women's advocate groups feel they have to use radical measures in trying to evoke change when faced with the cold-hearted and archaic thinking reflected in a court decision handed down last week.

An Ontario judge sentenced a man to 90 days in jail on a conviction of physically assaulting and raping a woman — a crime which carries a maximum penalty of 14 years.

To add insult to injury, this man will be allowed to serve his sentence on weekends so that he won't have to lose his job.

The reason cited by the judge for such a lenient punishment was because the man had no past history of violence. Therefore, it was his opinion that the man would not inflict any more shame on his family and friends in the future.

Does this mean that if you show enough remorse for your past actions and enough good intent for your future ones, that it somehow erases what you've already done?

The judge also went on to say that the victim showed no signs of having any lasting or long-term ill-effects from the ordeal.

I wasn't aware that proof of lasting or long-term mental or physical "ill-effects" was a prerequisite for justice. Are we to assume from this that the onus is on the victim to prove what degree of pain and suffering was incurred or if the victim isn't harmed too badly that it somehow lessens the severity of the charge.

Let the facts speak for themselves. The woman was at a bar celebrating her 27th birthday. When she left to go home, the man followed her down the street, waylaid her, beat her up, raped her, and left her for naught in a dark alley in the dead of night.

I know it's not just my being a woman that makes me want to scream injustice. Human compassion says that this is wrong. Ninety days given up on weekends, so as to not interfere with the man's earning powers, is not a fitting punishment for a violent crime.

Despite the fact that in many ways our society has "come a long way" in addressing equality rights, decisions to trivialize violence against women such as this one only goes to show us just how far we still have to go to.

Juanita Spears

## The Gateway



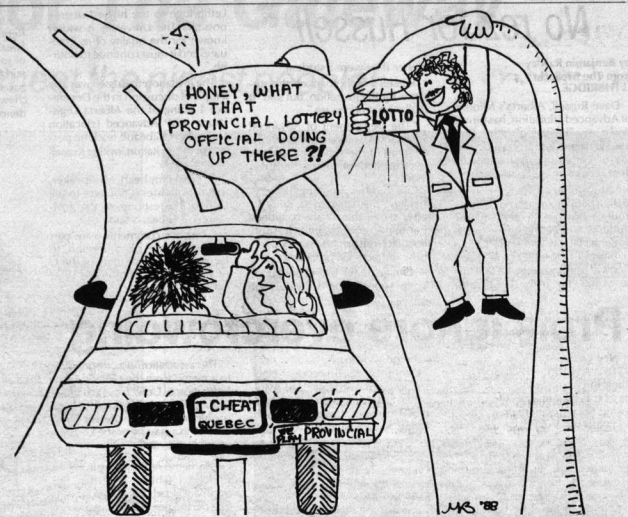
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Letters to the Editor are encouraged and always welcome. If you have a comment which would be of interest to the students of the University, please do not hesitate to send it. All we require is your name, address, and phone number, and student ID if you are a student. We will print their names missing any of these.

Letters should be no longer than three hundred words. Mail or deliver your letters to Room 282 SUB, or drop them at any SU information booth.

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## LETTERS

### Arts lounge not elitist

On behalf of the Romance Languages Graduate and Honours Society (RLGHS) and all the students who signed our petition, we would like to reply to the scathing (and inaccurate) allegations made by Mr. Ross Penner in his poorly written letter concerning the Student Lounge in the renovated Arts Building ("Elitist Arts Lounge," 19 Jan. 1988). It is unfortunate that he has chosen to air his views in the Gateway, without having done the same at an all-department meeting held by the RLGHS on Tuesday, 12 January 1988. It had been well advertised beforehand. At that assembly, no dissenting opinion was voiced at all, and the general reaction of all present was more than favourable. This lead us to believe that few, if any, graduate and honours student members of the departments concerned were opposed to the idea of an "exclusive" lounge for these students.

In his letter, Mr. Penner has chosen to trivialize and twist some of the points in our petition — omitting others altogether — in order to serve the questionable purposes of his flimsy argument. Obviously, if he were a language T.A., he would be familiar with their daily pressures and frustrations. Those graduate students who are not T.A.'s themselves have doubtless heard of and witnessed the mini horror stories that their colleagues' lives can become. While carrying three courses (the equivalent of five undergrad courses) or working full-time on their thesis, they are trying to manage a job which, strictly speaking, is supposed to take up no more than 12 hours a week of their time, but in the end can swallow twice as many — or more — hours in preparation time, drawing up of exams and study aids, private sessions with students, and marking of quizzes, not to mention the actual time spent in the classrooms. Our request seems benign and more than justifiable when viewed in that light.

Furthermore, Mr. Penner's assertion that grad and honours students are not the primary users of the Arts Building is false and almost laughable. Along with the professors and support staff, we occupy that building from early morning to early evening, often staying late to do what we are primarily here for, i.e. study and research. We need a room where we can gather to "let our hair down," away from professors and those whom we teach; in short, a place

where we can be ourselves, free to discuss our concerns in a relaxed atmosphere. The Power Plant is out of the question. Since it was opened to general access, it is next to impossible to find a place to sit there. In addition, many departments provide their graduate and honours students with a private lounge. Unfortunately, there is but one lounge in the building and we would like to have the use of it.

We do need windows and more space to retreat to periodically; the majority of us are cramped as many as three to a room in stuffy little offices that, in a few cases, resemble police interrogation rooms. Psychological studies have shown that lack of light and fresh air are detrimental to the proper functioning of the brain. After all, why are so many people depressed during the winter months?

Finally, the U of A Draft Policies propose that this institution become a major graduate research centre by the year 2000. Surely it will want graduate T.A.'s who are effective at and perform well in their own research and teaching responsibilities. What our simple request amounts to, then, is a plea for improved work and study conditions. A pleasant, tidy lounge exclusively for the use of Graduate and Honours (future Grad) students is part of the solution.

Paul Belanger  
Valerie Henituck  
Co-Chairmen, RLGHS

### Assumptions harmful

Re: "Foreign Students at U of A"; Gateway, Thursday January 14, 1988

As one of the students in the photograph accompanying the article, I thought it might be relevant to reveal that not one of the people pictured there are foreign students, but are rather Canadian citizens whose parents emigrated to Canada a number of years ago. There seems to be a glaring contradiction between the contents of the article and the photo used to illustrate it. To paraphrase (U of A Pres. Myer) Horowitz, citizens of ethnic origin are believed to be foreign simply by virtue of their looks. While the photographer Mr. Zukiewski did ask for permission to take the shot, he did not elaborate on its use. Had he done so, he might have been told the truth. It is common practice, it seems, that people "with skin... darker or more yellow" are

assumed to be foreigners, when in fact they are second or third generation Canadians who are unequivocally Canadian in loyalty and are pleased to be a part of a great internationalist country which is normally free of the xenophobic tendencies so indicative of other narrow-minded states. As Canadians, we are "a part of the heritage and structure of our Alberta society," and desire to be recognized as such by all members of the Canadian culture. Although this appears to be an "honest" mistake, I would hasten to add that in the future, accuracy should not be sacrificed for the sake of expediency.

James Song

### Thanks to IVCF volunteers

For the past thirty years, the Inter-Varsity Christian Fellowship Book Exchange has been providing a service to the university community. During the first two weeks of each term we take in texts, sell them, and return books/money to customers. Although this service has grown from a table in a hallway to its present location in SUB 034, and a size of over 9,000 books, it continues to be run by volunteers. As book exchange coordinator, I would like to applaud the dedication of these volunteers for providing this campus with an efficiently run book exchange. For the past two weeks from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. there have continually been at least two people working at the book exchange. I'm sure many of you may be thinking — well of course they volunteer, it's their club's fund raiser. Not true! All profit is donated to student mission projects in Canada and around the world. The University of Alberta Inter-Varsity Christian Fellowship Club does not receive any financial gain from the sale; and yet we always have sufficient numbers of volunteers. I would like to thank those volunteers and acknowledge their time, their patience (with my hyperactivity) and their sense of humour (that kept us all sane).

A note of thanks needs also to be extended to Colleen and Tina at CIBC, the Students' Union, the custodial staff of SUB, and the University of Alberta Bookstore.

For any of you who have never taken advantage of the IVCF Book Exchange, we look forward to seeing you in September!

Katherine Husing