

Speak out against skit

As we move towards the end of the twentieth century, women are gaining some of the respect and equality they have deserved for centuries, nationally and internationally. As usual, isolated, conservative Alberta seems to be generally out of touch with the 'real world.'

Last night in SUB Theatre, the U of A Engineers presented their annual skit night, evidence of just how out of touch some men really are from a contemporary, progressive, society. I didn't attend, but I talked with two students, one male, one female, who did attend. The entire program was centered around sex, not love-related sexual intercourse between equal partners, but predominantly sexist: content with abuse, degradation, and objectification of women.

To see sexism in a different light, compare it to racism. If a group presented an entertainment evening with the predominant theme anti-black, or anti-semitic, it certainly would not have been tolerated. In fact, I'm sure immediate or maybe even violent objection would have occurred. Racism occurs when an identifiable group is obviously oppressed, belittled, and degraded. It is not acceptable and neither is sexism.

Women make up fifty per cent of the population of this institution, and it is horrifying to see them objectified and degraded. Even if only on stage, you can be sure that these attitudes will carry over into academic and then professional life.

Engineers play an important role in today's society. In the professional sphere they are looked up as educated, logical individuals who literally build our world. If the misogynist attitudes presented last evening are carried into professional lives, women who are now beginning to ascend into the professional community will reject with disgust, abhorrence, and mistrust the male engineers of today.

Much of the behaviour last evening was spawned by some thinking that skit night is humorous and socially acceptable - it is not. In fact, most of it is childish, repugnant, and demeaning, especially to those who present it. Sexism is everywhere, all around us, all the time - but that doesn't make it right.

Some spectators last evening walked out during the performance, some others who managed to stay until the end were violently upset and ashamed that this kind of regressive presentation was allowed on University grounds.

Considering last night's activities, it must be understood that the maintenance of negative stereotypes and the ridicule of women's bodies only serves to set us all back decades.

This is supposedly an institute of higher learning, where new and different - and yes, even progressive ideas must be embraced, not rejected and demeaned.

Education is the key, in an egalitarian society men as well as women must be made aware of the cumulative detrimental effect of sexism. Registering strong objections to activities such as last night's show can effect change that is desperately needed on this campus.

Barb Eyles

How useless is CFS?

I saw the infamous Gord Stamp at a party last Friday night. Gord seems to have given up on the idea of defeating the CFS referendum.

"I gave it my best shot," he said regretfully.

The simple fact is that after DIE Board, the University Disciplinary Panel, and Students' Council, there just isn't anyone else that Stamp can appeal to.

Since we are in CFS for sure now, I may as well outline my main objection to CFS - namely that the Federation is simply a self-centred lobby group based on greed-and get in on the ground floor for the planning of the "withdraw from CFS" referendum which will be held next year.

When I first heard that the Canadian Federation of Students was coming to campus, I thought it would be great for U of A students to become involved in the students' movement.

At the time I wasn't too clear on what exactly the students' movement was - I'm still not - but I thought it had something to do with making the world a better place.

In mid-November, after attending their first CFS conference, Students' Union VP Academic Barb Donaldson and VP Internal Peter Block came running to the Gateway offices and explained enthusiastically how the U of A delegation had helped defeat a motion to aid all the oppressed people of the world.

Unlike its predecessors, the National Union of Students (NUS) and the Canadian Union of Students (CUS) which suffered serious division over the Vietnam War and were full of stereotypical student radicals, CFS is going to concentrate on "education issues."

In this age of cutbacks and governmental restraint, so the argument runs, someone has to be on the lookout for the interests of students.

But what Block and Donaldson and other proponents of the new CFS are forgetting is that University students are not some oppressed minority struggling for a fair shake; they are the elite of society.

We fool around from three to ten years at the taxpayer's expense - it's so much easier than getting a job - learning to be doctors, lawyers, and engineers so we can make more money than the plumbers and construction workers who financed our education can ever dream of having.

Most students are filled with self-importance, but the fact is, many working people quite rightly view students as parasites.

How can we justify our time at university unless we intend to put something back into society?

Block and Donaldson plausibly argue that there is little point in having motions about El Salvador and nuclear disarmament on the books because an organization with the limited resources of CFS can not hope to solve such problems.

But if CFS was truly as effective in lobbying for changes to the student loan system as the organization claims, surely similar lobbying efforts could be thrown behind unions, womens' groups, or even the peace movement.

University students have a duty to society and until CFS remembers this, the Federation can not be taken seriously.

Mark Roppel



LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Put that in your terminal and data it!

In January 17th, 1984 edition of the Gateway, there was an article on page 3 entitled, "Funds Misappropriated Again - MORE TERMINALS" written by Neal Watson.

The new terminals were part of a donation package by Digital Equipment Corporation - DEC (also partially funded by a matching grant from the Provincial Government), specifically aimed to improve research and graduate student facilities as well as to provide some advanced facility for senior undergraduates in Computing Science. The reporter failed to point out that these terminals cannot be used to access MTS, but are connected to the state-of-the-art DEC computers, and thus, cannot be used for lower level Computing Science courses. Thus, the charge of "Misappropriation of funds" is incorrect, as advance Computing Science students will soon be able to attest. This term these terminals will be used for a graphics course, for some undergraduates in an operating systems course, and for some Computing Science students enrolled in a computer-assisted cartography course. Next year we plan to make these terminals available for a specific third year course.

If the reporter had just asked me about these terminals, I would have been glad to provide this information. I wish he had asked.

Lee J. White
Chairman of Computing Science

Just how sexist was it

Isn't groupthink wonderful? Tuesday evening in SUB Theatre was an excellent example of the Engineering Faculty's "Encouragement-Recruitment-Make Women Feel Welcome Program" which is in high gear this week. The Engineering Skits' "Entertainment," other than kicklines, was little more than masturbation,

penises, castration, bestiality, fear of menstruation, phallic everything, a little racism, and a lot of degradation of women. Chants of "show us your tits, show us your tits" at every woman near the stage, including a guest judge, reminded me of a junior high school locker room. I wonder whether the Dean feels like a proud parent at their behaviour.

Not all Engineering students condone this type of behaviour, thank goodness. I saw several men leaving the theatre early saying "I can't take any more of this." To those who do: Can you say "Sexism?" I know you can! Can you define "Misogyny?" You just did.

Name Withheld

The communist paranoiacs are out to get me

In 1945, a Soviet cipher clerk from the Soviet Embassy in Ottawa defected. He was Igor Gouzenko. This man had served in the NKVD, predecessor to the KGB, before his defection. When he defected, he had about 300 Canadians listed as Soviet Spys and such, many of which were public servants. Little was done until 1946 due to the fact that few people could believe that the Soviet Union actually had spied in Canada, or, for that matter, any Soviet Ally.

By now the reader may be wondering why I wrote of that incident. It has to do with 'Security Bill C-157' the section that deals with the Security Services director and that person's ability to overrule an elected representative and the fuss about the director being able to do that.

Well I support that ability of the Service's director. I believe that Canada did not eliminate all of the Soviet sympathizers or agents then, and I also believe that there are Soviet agents in government that are both active and inactive in Canada today. Such agents would be most likely in the public service. Possibly even 1 or 2 elected officials could be

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Today is the beginning of a new life for editor Mark Roppel. His Astuteness, the high priest John Algard, ably assisted by Gordo his pet frog and Alex the poet laureate, has declared said Roppel to be the newest Gilbertologist. Novitiate Roppel is now an assistant deputy priest. Assisting with today's ceremony are Anna Borowicki, Ninnette Gironella, Shane Berg, and the ever elusive Jim Moore. Neil Watson sang a song in memory of his late editor; Terry Linberg drew the line at the end of the bar. Zane Harker flashed by, and was joined in his visually amusing games by Tom Huh and David Orrell. Georgeanna MacKinnerney and Ian Ferguson are off on a wee bit of a fling, and Sarah Hickson is watching her Michael Jackson Video Previews. Jordan Peterson was last seen revising the catechism of Gilbertology: Myths and Transvestites.