

The silver lining of the Green and Gold

FIVE YEARS AGO THIS WEEK, I SET FOOT INTO my very first lecture as a bright-eyed blank slate of an Arts student. I was eager to escape the cold, industrial grasp of my small-town upbringing and enter a world of progressive, metropolitan ideals. "The world really *is* different in the big city," I would tell myself, certain there was more to life than picking up cougars at the local watering hole and ostracizing those who didn't fit into the cookie-cutter form of a truck-driving WASP male so common to rural Alberta. And now, with my undergrad a year past expiry, with plenty of time left to go, nothing has really changed; in fact, I'm more terrified and confused by the world around me than ever before.

If I wanted to lie to you, as my profession has trained me so amply to do, I could tell you that in the time that I've taken at the U of A, I've seen it all and done more body shots than most Dekes can stomach for breakfast. But the truth is that even a grizzled old man like me, who revels in the chance to sow the seeds of wisdom among fertile neophytes, is still but a greenhorn in the grand scheme of the world.

I foolishly thought that a liberal arts degree would bless me with the critical thinking skills necessary to peel back the complexity of society and see it clearly for what it is beneath the layers of bullshit. But as it turns out, the deeper I dug, I only found more layers of befuddlement, and more questions than explanations. Where I expected to find sanctuary from the masses of ignorance, I was only met with more cretins, or worse, elitists who looked down their noses at me and my hopelessly naïve quest for self-discovery. As it turns out, mismanagement, corruption, and outright stupidity have less to do with regional differences and more to do with the fact that you can't pigeonhole every person into the same ideological manifesto that you yourself subscribe to, no matter how ironclad or bulletproof the structure.

And that realization, my friends, is the key to a happy university career. It didn't happen overnight, but eventually, I traded in my provocation for ambivalence, and my demagoguery for ... well, for using smaller words. I've stopped countering the opinions that I disagree with so fervently, accepting that I'm not always right; instead of letting myself get enraged, I just tune out, and I'm better for it.

I've stopped scoffing at the causes that I find pointless, I've stopped raging against the machine, and most importantly, I've indulged in more college vice and debauchery in the past four months than in my five years prior, all in the name of keeping it real. After trying to fight back and speak out against every perceived instance of the downfall of society, I finally accepted that I need to let go — I'm much happier to shut out the things that piss me off and partake in the thrills in life that make me truly happy.

In your tenure at the University, you're likely going to find yourself caught between trying to define your own emerging self while keeping from slipping into the toil of every other droning student around you. You need to stop, and just let it happen. The harder you try to grow up and force yourself into an idealized self-image, the higher you'll build your own ivory tower, wondering how and when your youth slipped out from beneath you. Don't lose yourself to blank stares at blank pages, and find the silver lining on the edge of what could be dull and featureless otherwise.

Take the advice of the wiser men and women who've come before me and spend your next four, six, or nine years at the U of A studying, partying, and discovering exactly what kind of person you want to be. You can't expect to grind your way through experiences, hoping they'll make you a better person — the best you can manage is to sit back, enjoy the ride, and let yourself develop organically in the ideal environment that university has to offer.

MIKE KENDRICK
Editor-in-Chief



LUCKILY, DEATH'S SUMMER
VACATION ENDED EARLY.

letters TO THE eds

The pop stops here

It was with happiness I read in *The Gateway* that the SU had approved the "single source beverage" agreement. Like so many in our obese, corporation-loving world, I like my bottled sugary drinks, and I don't like to walk far to get them.

It was with less happiness that I noticed the next day that prices on SUB vending machines went up by 14.3 per cent. Vending machines across campus soon followed suit.

My question to the SU is this: does the scholarship money come directly from this 14.3 per cent tax on those of us with addictions to bottled beverages that are probably slowly killing us? Or is the price hike pure coincidence?

MIKE SMIT
Computing Sciences

Hooray for journalists

I hate to admit that I haven't read *The Gateway* for the past 58 years, but when I picked up a copy recently, I was pleasantly surprised by the quality of the writing.

I was particularly impressed by Cody Civiero's article "Creationism get the evolving door." (May 8) It is one of the best pieces I've ever read on the topic, and very obviously well

researched. I see a bright future for this young man in journalism.

ART DAVISON
Chemical Engineering Class of '51

from THE web

He's the man with a plan

RE: "(100) Days of Mathewson gets a two-star review" (August 6)

I feel most student initiatives suffer greatly from a lack of planning which ultimately results in wasted resources and effects that actually increase student apathy. For once, it is great to see the SU Executive taking the time to thoroughly plan out how to go about their initiatives with bold vision.

Having vision and bringing it into fruition is a skill which is manifest in one's ability to plan. It is time to stop piecemeal initiatives and begin working from a holistic vision where initiatives are complementary so as to unlock synergies that ultimately result in resources being used to their maximum potential. With this a true critical mass may form in the student body and effective strategy may at last tackle the student selfishness and apathy to which this campus is swamped.

But I agree with you Lucas. Once you have the vision mapped out, it

often takes a true leader to make the sacrifices needed to pursue it — and not just altruistic sacrifices, but intelligent and thoughtful sacrifices. It is encouraging to see that Kory has vision; a good sign of a leader. This is something worth celebrating. Hopefully we can celebrate again when he uses his strength to bring that vision into material existence.

MARK MCCORMACK
Via Internet

Oilsands not yet a beach

RE: "Oilsands ecosystem on the road to recovery" (August 6)

I find it a bit odd that the would conclude that the "oilsands ecosystem" is "on the road to recovery" (as stated in the headline to this article) simply because one professor at the University of Alberta spends his time researching how to engineer synthetic forests after they are clear-cut and pit mined. I just came back from a trip to the oilsands and I can assure you that the "oilsands ecosystem" is *anything but* recovering!

On the contrary — based on what I saw with my own two eyes, and on what I heard from local First Nations people and oilsands workers — I would posit the the "oilsands ecosystem" is being poisoned at an alarming rate (this would include the regional watersheds, wildlife, forests, fauna, and

even people!). Perhaps, instead of celebrating the work of one U of A prof with a preposterously inaccurate headline, next time the *Gateway* will offer a more balanced approach (and a more appropriate headline) in its "News" section!

"ORGANIC INTELLECTUAL"
Via Internet

Unflinching populism

RE: "If a change is gonna come, I haven't seen it" (August 6)

Esoteric, though, perhaps a little complacent? Some referrals and specifics would definitely help your cause and make it less some post-Obama emotionalism and more dedicated activist. Though, I imagine that may be a little special interest and may compromise the piece's unflinching populism.

JOSEF CHECKEL
Via Internet

Er ... flinching populism?

RE: "If a change is gonna come, I haven't seen it" (August 6)

Err ... aren't esoteric and populist antonyms? And I don't see how deriding the voting public as "morons" is pandering.