

Free papers are nothing but trash

AH, AUTUMN, WHEN THE LEAVES START TO turn colour and fall to the ground, and the daily commuter rags along with them.

Only problem is, one of these processes is quite natural, while the other most definitely isn't. Nor is the overabundance of *Metros*, *Rush Hours*, and *24 Hours* a seasonal occurrence: by the looks of it, these rags will be littering our buses and sidewalks for months to come.

Now, far be it from me to harp on free news publications that are widely available in and around campus, being the editor of one myself. And there are, admittedly, more than a few issues of the *Gateway* that don't find their way to the recycle bin each week. But there's a difference between something that's costless and something that's valueless—and as anyone who's been suckered in to reading one of the above-mentioned dailies can attest, those publications undoubtedly fall into the latter category.

In fact, the only redeeming quality about them is that they're free of charge. But at what cost? We all know that newspapers and magazines subsist almost entirely on advertising revenue. However, the key distinction here—and one that we've apparently been taking for granted until now—is that worthwhile news publications are just that: news publications that happen to have advertising content in them. Commuter rags, on the other hand, are advertisements that happen to have some news content in them.

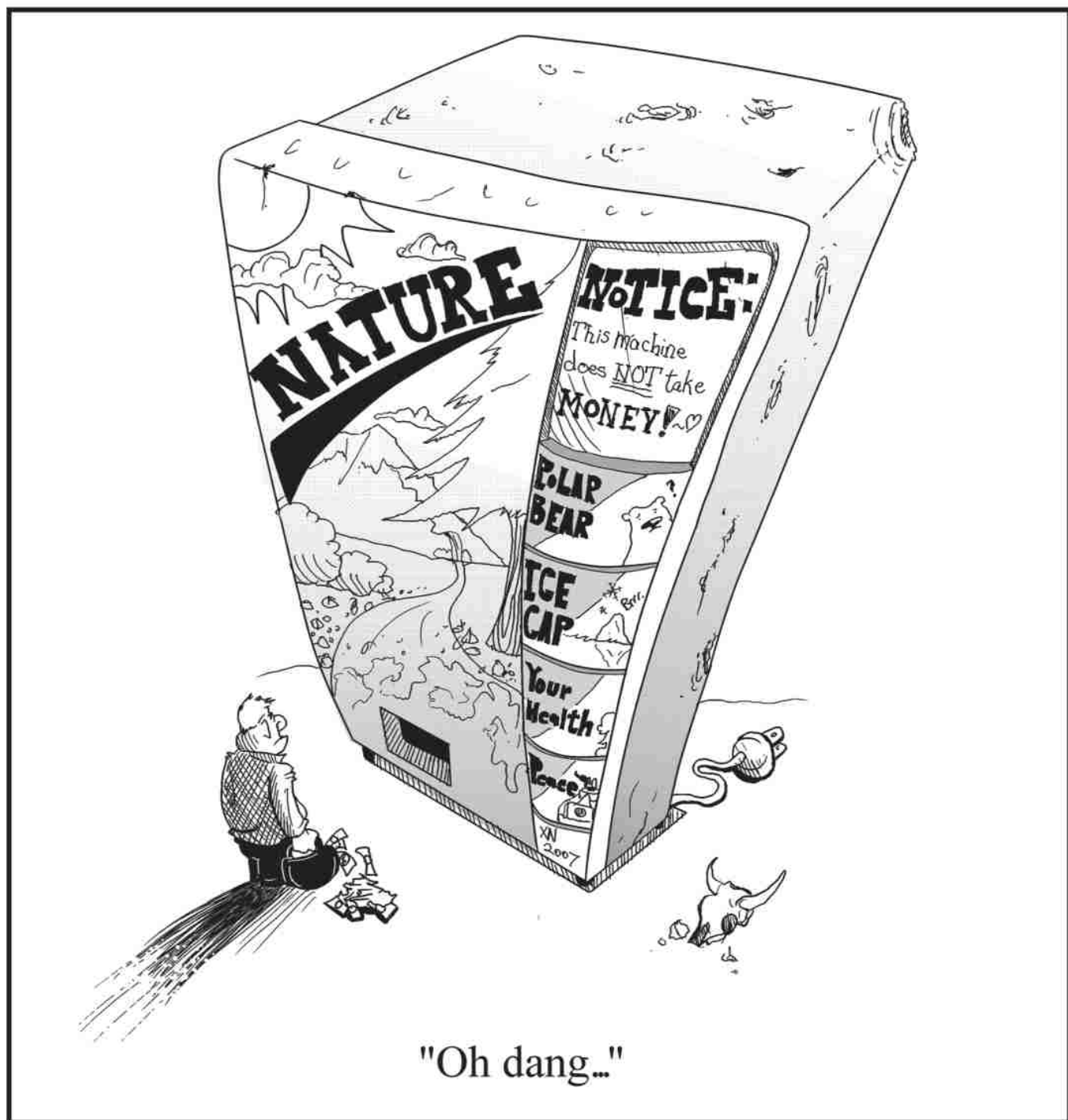
How else can you explain the fact that people will plug in a loonie or two to get a copy of the *Journal*, the *Globe*, or the *Post* on any given morning, while they'll do everything they can to dodge those Metro hawkers at the same time? (It should also be noted that pedestrians have been doing dances around the Sun's pusher-men near campus recently as well). If you're ever bored and need to kill five minutes waiting for the bus, try this experiment: watch one of those "distribution agents" try to hand out copies of their publication to passers-by, and see how many people actually take one. And of that group, try to watch how many actually do more with it than glance at the cover once and chuck it on the ground.

I may not be a statistician, but I know enough to conclude that when you have to pay people to hand out something that one can already get for themselves for free, and when empty-handed, knowledge-hungry students who're too poor to pay for a subscription and too busy to read any real newspaper still won't take your product when it's physically placed into their hands, the commuter-rag industry is doomed to fail.

But it's not going to go down without a fight—at least, not if the advertisers that are the true driving force behind this distribution model have anything to say about it. Ultimately, however, it will fail because being free of charge clearly isn't enough of a motivation for people to pick these things up. Not when, between radio, television—and, most importantly, the Internet—free news content abounds in our culture. This has been proven in a deliciously ironic fashion by *dose.ca*, the online remnant of the once equally ubiquitous *Dose* newspaper—CanWest's first attempt at gratuitous tree violence (and, sadly, the superior of the two).

For the time being, however, it's not unreasonable to expect the City to provide quite a bit more in the way of recycling bins in the areas that these papers are distributed, as the current state of much of ETS's property is rather shameful. Likewise, it's not unreasonable to expect that the readers of all newspapers to take it upon themselves to dispose of their rag of choice properly, either. So whether you're ogling at the latest car crash in *24 Hours* or devouring some celebrity gossip in *Rush Hour*, please have the decency not to jettison it onto the floor of the LRT afterwards. Likewise, once you're done digesting all of the witty and insightful content of this issue of the *Gateway*, please be so kind as to ensure its placement in a paper bin (or, even better, the eagerly awaiting hands of another student) too. Otherwise, before you know it, you won't be able to see the forest for the landfills.

ADAM GAUMONT
Editor-in-Chief



ZHEN DONG

LETTERS

We suffered for suffrage, so make sure you use it

I couldn't agree more with Tuesday's article written by Natalie Climenhaga regarding female participation in politics (re: "YWCA Edmonton urges women to pursue a life in the political sphere," 2 October). The fact of the matter is that there's a complete lack of female interest in the political realm, and there seems to be no better example than at the student level.

Don't misunderstand me; I'm a political science student, and I see fellow female classmates actively engaging in poignant political discussion all the time, but as soon as I step out of the classroom, such examples are few and far between.

Many of my female friends say that politics just aren't interesting or applicable to their lives, but whenever I engage a male friend in political discussion, it seems that 95 per cent of the time they have an opinion.

In one of my elective courses, I had a female classmate ask our professor, "Who is George Bush?" and "I didn't know that there was a war going on in Iraq." I know that this is depicting an extremely biased picture of female students, but she was not alone in her inquiry. How could someone be so ignorant and uninformed?

My professor didn't know how to respond to her, and my classmate

simply said, "I don't care about politics because it's an ugly topic; I can't do anything about it, so why bother?"

If women want social and political equality, they have to take an interest in what's going on in the world around them and exercise their right to change it. I'm not saying that running for office is the answer for all women, but at least develop political awareness and vote—a right which Climenhaga points out has only recently been obtained in Canada and is still absent for many women throughout the world.

By not becoming politically aware and voting, you have no right to complain about potholes or the drifts of snow on our city's streets.

On 15 October, vote in the municipal election, and don't be like my fellow classmate, who will probably say, "I didn't even know that we had an election."

Don't let your voice be wasted; let your vote count.

ALLISON RUDZITIS
Political Science III

Hunting has benefits—like delicious deer jerky

I was amused to read "Hunted animals don't flourish, they stay dead" (Letters, 2 October). The author blatantly neglected facts in exchange for subjective nonsense aimed at stirring up others who are similarly ignorant. For example, Mr Pounder compared hunting to pulling the wings off flies.

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LETTERS FROM THE ARCHIVES

There is no "Man"

Reading the opinion articles in the *Gateway* lately, I have noticed an obnoxious pattern in some of the writing. What I refer to is a constant reference to the "Man." In case you are unfamiliar with this (which I doubt), the Man has been chosen to represent all forms of oppression, real or imagined. Tuition too high? Blame it on the Man. Sick of consumerism? Blame it on the Man! And so on, *ad nauseum*.

Not only is this undesirable because of its monotony and pre-pubescent ring, it's also pointless. What's often missing in these rants is the offering of helpful advice, insight, possible solutions, or calls to action. The *Gateway* is more than a platform for rants or complaints, and should be realized for its possibilities.

Using the "Man" as a scapegoat is also sexist, denying women their voice for oppression. Every one of us has felt the heaviness of the world pushing us in prescribed directions. So how do we deal with this? While the Man was convenient, easy, and well understood as a way of representing outside [unwanted] control on our lives, I feel that it's no longer a suitable metaphor.

What needs to happen is for us to put a face to whatever or whomever is trying to exert control on our lives. With specificity, cause and effect become more readily apparent. In this way, plans of action can be made to change the undesirable situation itself—or perhaps just the way it's seen.

In order for the *Gateway* to maintain (some would say achieve) a sense of credibility, it must move away from adolescence. This starts with you, the reader. There's a wealth of experience in the student body that isn't bearing voice. An increase in the diversity of the articles would make the paper more interesting, challenging, as well as more mature (hopefully) in content.

This is a call to action—a challenge if you will allow me to extend that white glove. There are incredible stories in everyone and I want to hear them.

PAUL EAURCHID
4 November, 1999

Letters from the Archives is a semi-regular feature where the *Gateway* runs historical letters that we feel are of particular importance—or are just really hilarious.

Now you can check out all the old-timey fun for yourself! Just go to thegatewayonline.ca and follow the links to the *Gateway's* digital archives.