

Set that bar low and you'll always succeed

AT FIRST I DIDN'T EVEN REALIZE I WAS DOING IT, but by mid-afternoon yesterday it became apparent that I had been actively scanning online news sources, half-expecting to hear of a plane that had gone down or a suicide bomber who'd blown himself up a mall.

It's not that I'm sadistic, but since it happened to be the fifth anniversary of 9/11, I subconsciously figured that if disaster was to strike again, *that would be the day*. It's a morbid thought, but I wonder nevertheless how I'd have reacted if tragedy really had occurred (horrified, no doubt)—and a small part of me probably would have said that it was inevitable.

I've always had a habit of developing unrealistic date-fixated expectations, and while common sense tells me that I'm no more likely to die in a plane crash on 11 September—or that I will find myself in a perfect relationship on Valentine's day or that I will be free of all my flaws on New Year's—than on any other day, I still can't help but hold my breath in quiet anticipation every time another mark comes up on my calendar.

My only consolation for this slightly embarrassing trait is a firm belief that I'm not alone. Well, maybe others don't share my obsessive googling trait, but at the very least, unrealistic expectations are widespread in university.

Most students start off bright-eyed and overly optimistic about their academic careers. But allow me to be the pot that calls the kettle black, and urge you to re-evaluate how sensible your outlook for this year really is.

You may currently be on a high and loving the university experience, but bear in mind that the jovial atmosphere of beer gardens and Refest won't last forever. Midterms and finals will start appearing on the horizon sooner than you might think, so if you expect your university days to be a blur of keggers and pub crawls, you might find that your time in this institution ends long before it comes time to convocate.

You should expect to have days where you feel stressed and unsure of your choices. There has yet to be a semester when I haven't called up my dad after pulling an all-nighter and informed him I'm about to drop out of university and become a welder—at this point, it's become a normal part of my essay-writing process.

Nobody sets out to fail, and while goal-setting is an advisable step towards academic achievement, people can get carried away—my personal list of New Year's resolutions continues to get more and more creative as the years go by. But while there's nothing wrong with wanting to do well, you should in all seriousness be asking yourself if getting straight As is really an achievable goal.

As a general rule, two minutes of studying is recommended for every minute spent in class, so if you plan on taking a full course load, you'll find that being a student takes up about as much time as holding down a full-time job. Add to that time spent in labs, part-time jobs, social life and physical activity, and you'll quickly realize there are only so many days the human body can function without sleep.

So take my advice and avoid overloading your schedule, because you really do need the occasional lazy Saturday spent lounging around in sweats. And while padding your resumé might seem like the best way to ensure future success, be honest with yourself about how much you really want to do. There's absolutely no shame in admitting that, like me, you'll never actually go to the Nordic ski club's Sunday morning practices or take the time to write that letter to Amnesty International.

With the drop deadline only a week away, remind yourself that there's nothing forcing you to stay in BIO 108 and "tough it out." Keep in mind it's never too late to switch programs or even faculties. Trust me: sometimes there's nothing more liberating than throwing in the towel and admitting that 2006 was not the year you'd learn Russian tap-dancing—or whatever your pipe dreams may be.

NATALIE CLIMENHAGA
Senior News Editor

LETTERS

Kicker comes clean on '06 absence

I had a chance to read the article that you wrote about the Bears kicking situation (re: "Controversy surrounds Golden Bear kickers," 7 September) and here are some facts that you might have not known about it. The reason coach Friesen found out about me not playing for the team at such a late date is because I never knew that I was going to play somewhere else until the day before I told coach Friesen. It was nice to find a team that wanted me. I am sure you are all still wondering why I left the Golden Bears football team and now I will tell you why.

In the off-season, coach Friesen had numerous meetings with us to find out ways, from the players, in which we could improve the football team. This was an excellent idea from the coach, so I made a strong case to find a kicking coach in order to improve my skills and help the Bears become a stronger football team. During the summer I met an exceptional kicking coach and I thought it would be an excellent idea to have him as my kicking coach. The only obstacle was that he did not live in Edmonton, so when I got the opportunity to work with him this year, I had to seize that opportunity.

STEPHEN WOZIMIRSKY
Kicker/punter, 2005 Golden Bears

Unreal time not had by all at beer gardens

You would think that after all of these years, the SU would get its act together. The year-opening beer gardens was a sad display of the year to be expected from the SU. Not only did they only have one tent, with two lines, to sell beer tickets to thousands of students, but they only had six lines in the entire beer gardens for people to pick up their beer.

We waited over 40 minutes each time about the beer gardens and beer. It's pretty sad that you have to get in line right after you order two beer, so that by the time you get to the front of the line again, your beers are gone and you need two more.

The SU showed that they do not care about the beer gardens, nor do they care about setting a good first impression for their students. I mean, it's not like they didn't have all summer to coordinate the event and arrange volunteers. This sad display for an SU-organized event further exemplifies that the SU is too caught up in political BS, and doesn't have a grasp on reality and doing the right thing for their students.

If they are not going to make the most of the beer gardens, then I suggest they hand the beer gardens off to a student association that will put 110 per cent effort into the beer gardens, and will ensure that students are having the time of their life, rather than complaining about the lines, waits and unorganization [sic]. Jeez, that sounds a lot more like the year-end beer gardens, where no one waits and everyone is having an unreal time. Maybe the SU should take a few lessons away from that.

KENDAL HARAZNY
Business IV



Irwin's underwater eulogy a total croc

I think that the comic "Bitten" by Robin Sissons (7 September) in regards to Steve Irwin's tragic death was in poor taste. I don't think it should have been printed, as poking fun at someone's death is never humorous, it is classless. Perhaps I was so disgusted because I have travelled to Australia and I have been to Mr Irwin's zoo. I have stood three feet from him, watched him feed the crocodiles and seen his excitement and passion for wildlife first-hand. I have met his wife Terri Irwin and had a discussion with her as well as having our picture taken together. I have seen their daughter Bindi Sue and heard her talk about her love of snakes. People may not care for Steve Irwin's methods, but it is undeniable the positive effect he had upon people and the attention he brought to wildlife conservation around the world. He has spent millions of his own money simply buying acres of land in Australia for wildlife conservation. His zoo is no ordinary one. Animals have habitats, not simply cages. The kookaburra birds are free to come and go, and the kangaroos have acres in which to hop.

I hope you have the chance to see his zoo for yourself someday so you

will see for yourself that the money he made went to helping the creatures and the world he loved. He was a hero to millions of people and taught them about something important: preserving the planet. This man was someone's son, someone's husband and someone's dad. Would you have printed a comic poking fun at the tragic deaths of those Mounties killed at Mayerthorpe?

BRIONY HITCHCOCK
Education IV

Longtime comics critic nun too impressed

To those who read the orientation issue of the school paper and turned away in disgust I can only say that it was representative of past publications. Having been a student at the U of A since 2002 I have seen the Gateway persist in spreading what Mr Edge refers to as "blatantly discriminatory" materials (re: "Cardboard comic crass," 7 September). Granted, the news and sports articles are generally free of controversy; the opinion articles and comics on the other hand show the ignorance and bigotry of certain contributors. An example of this can be seen in Thursday's comic "Queer" (7 September). It started out harmless

enough but rapidly degenerated into an affront on the dignity of Catholic nuns.

Although these submissions are held up under the much-abused banner of Freedom of Speech, they are not only socially and intellectually deleterious but damaging to the reputation of the University itself. I find it incredibly ironic that "the Gateway reserves the right to ... refuse publication of any letter it deems racist, sexist, libellous or otherwise hateful in nature," and yet seems to hold no such compunction about the contributions it publishes.

S SPARSHU
Arts IV

Letters to the editor should be dropped off at room 3-04 of the Students' Union Building, or e-mailed to letters@gateway.ualberta.ca.

The Gateway reserves the right to edit letters for length and clarity, and to refuse publication of any letter it deems racist, sexist, libellous or otherwise hateful in nature. The Gateway also reserves the right to publish letters online.

To be considered for publication—letters to the editor should be no longer than 350 words, and should include the name, student identification number, program and year of study of the author.