

# Knee-jerk reactions don't curb gun crime



MATT  
FREHNER

With the nightclub shooting in downtown Edmonton this past weekend, politicians and the public alike are going to use the situation as a soapbox for whatever their personal social agenda may be. But these incidents aren't going to find their solution in legislation or increased police presence. Violence is woven into city life. To suggest otherwise is to be disingenuous; it's to reframe a tragic incident with the aim of furthering a personal or political agenda.

Already there are murmurs from both sides of the gun registry debate. The first camp is decrying a lack of control as the reason for such incidents, pointing out that shooting down the registry program only encourages irresponsible and unaccountable gun use. Meanwhile, the other takes these shootings as proof that, tens of millions of dollars in excess spending later, the soon-to-be-defunct long-gun registry program was a complete failure, as forcing rifle registration hardly affects handgun crime—nevermind that with the Dawson College shooting, which caused similar outcry, Kimveer Gil's long guns were legally registered. Clearly, the Red Light Lounge shootings can be used to fuel either fire.

Others will undoubtedly see this as a sign of Edmonton's ever-increasing rate of gang violence, and will ask that more be done to stymie would-be gangsters with education or law-enforcement programs. This is, of course, a valid point. But we know that gangs are bad, and that gang violence occurs. And to reuse a trite example, the gross

over-use of police force during the Oilers' playoffs last spring shows too well that increased police presence isn't an effective way to combat violence.

Edmonton is still a remarkably safe place to live. There have been 32 homicides here this year, and there were 39 last year. But how many of these were caused by firearms or gang violence? In 2003, nine of the 23 homicides in Edmonton were firearm related, while in the same year there were 67 motor vehicle-related deaths, and 52 from falling down. This isn't to underplay the seriousness of gun violence, but simply to point out that Edmonton is still a relatively peaceful city.

What is served, then, by publicizing these shootings, besides using media attention as a scare tactic to further some disparate agenda and reinforce stereotypes?

For a specific example of how politicking can undermine the immediacy of a terrible shooting, we can look back to last Boxing Day's murder of Jane Creba in Toronto, where she was shot dead in what was by all accounts a meaningless act of violence. There was a federal election on the horizon, you'll recall. Though the campaigning had ostensibly shut down for the Christmas break, party leaders seized the opportunity to plug their respective lines. "We need more gun control; the Conservatives would have guns all over our streets," the Liberal camp said. "Gun control obviously doesn't work, we need secure borders. Oh, and by the way, this unpredictable shooting obviously proves that the Liberals are soft on crime," the Tories replied. Meanwhile, Creba was lost in the push for positive spin.

All that this kind of conversation serves to do is to objectify the deaths of innocent people. This time, let's try and keep politics out of it. Let's not approach appalling violence with Band-Aids and platitudes.

a variation to "Using the beer mash to feed the hawks?"

At this fair University where we boast of having as high a social standing as intellectual, why should dry radio broadcasts belie the reputation? We have two fine orchestras; why can't we use them? What's the matter with broadcasting their efforts now and then, especially the dance music from the weekly house dances?

Another idea is a feature night.

We have many clubs and societies on campus which would jump at the chance to "go on the air." And they could do it in a big way, too, at that; think how pleased their folks at home would be!

If these or, similar ideas were carefully carried out, the average listener, instead of disgustedly twirling the dial several hundred kilocycles from 580, would contentedly pull out the old briar, light up, put his feet on the dining room table, and murmur with relish, "Good old CKUA!"

Three overtown fans,

"FD"  
"WA"  
"MB"

5 February, 1931

*From the Archives is a semi-regular feature where the Gateway runs old-timey letters that we feel are of particular social or historical importance—or are just really hilarious. In this case, it's more along the lines of quaint—but you get the idea.*

# This Halloween, dress to impress me

Do it right or don't do it at all—and above all else, don't go as 'yourself'



ROBB  
MYROON

The end of October has finally arrived, and I feel that it's my duty to talk to you about a very serious issue that impacts many university students as the mid-term crunch ends. This infection often goes undiagnosed and unnoticed by the afflicted, while it's all too plain to the rest of the world. I'm talking about people who wear bad Halloween costumes, and this problem must be treated immediately.

First, here are some "Don'ts" about costume-wearing; the ones you should avoid like a little boy should avoid Michael Jackson. Don't pull the obvious stunt of showing up dressed as you always are, and then coming up with some witty line about who or what you are. No, "college student" isn't a costume, and the whole "nudist on strike" line won't work on me either.

If you do show up in costume, make sure you've put a little effort into it. I'm talking to the guy who arrives with his sports equipment on; try leaving your room to actually find a costume. We don't really care about your hockey team anyway; how many people actually watched your last game? And no, your parents don't count.

Ladies, the effort rule applies to you too. Perhaps the best of the worst is when a girl puts on a headband with cat ears. While the cat ears are a good start towards a solid costume, it's only cool for Bon Jovi to be halfway there. So round up some face paint; throw some whiskers on, or at least get some paws and a tail. Is it really that hard to put that extra bit of work into it?

Okay, so we all now have a solid



NICK WIEBE

**BOO!** Even if you play for the Golden Bears, don't dress up as a hockey player.

understanding of what not to do, but that's only half the battle. Even if you avoid the above-mentioned hall-of-shame outfits, that in no way implies that you have achieved costume nirvana. To truly heighten your Halloween experience to a new level—without taking all the candy from the little kids—you must create your own costume.

Don't get me wrong here, going to the mall and buying an adult Batman costume always gets a reaction, but I've found the most memorable ones come hand-made. Being Halloween already, it's a little late to make one on your own, but next year you can dress to impress—as long as you follow these simple guidelines.

First, take some time to pick a high-quality, yet attainable costume. Because no matter how good of an idea dressing up as Buzz Lightyear sounds in theory, it would just be too

hard to pull off. In fact, I recommend doing a group thing; that way you're not alone in what you've done—and you can also gang up on the weaker, solo-costume wearers.

Second, make a weekend out of it. Don't think you're going to make some kick-ass costume between dinner and *Grey's Anatomy* (because I know your girlfriend makes you watch it too, guys). Go to West Ed after lunch on a Saturday, and work straight through until dinner. That way, you'll have all Sunday to put it together and make sure all the kinks are worked out.

Finally, remember that this is a contest, and we are not all winners out there. Keep this in mind during the process, and make sure you don't lose your composure for a second—otherwise some guy with an *Incredibles* costume will show you up. In that case, make sure to compliment him on his costume—he'll like that.

## LETTERS FROM THE ARCHIVES

### Upstart CKUA boasts broad listenership on dust-bowl-era dials

The newspapers are carrying accounts these days of investigations by the "Federal Radio Commission" on the matter of programs and their presentation. Now we see that the farmers would like to have our University station's power increased ten times. Since it is the farmers' request, our government will in all probability do it.

Now, it is well known that the great majority of users of powerful sets are in the towns and cities, since such are quite unnecessary in isolated places. Why should the owners of expensive sets be cramped by the exclusive broadcasting of farm entertainment? Moreover, why should "How to shoot coyotes from the old Ford" be heard all over the dial to the complete exclusion of "You're Driving Me Crazy"?

While we appreciate the value of farm talks, why should we be forced to listen to them if they do not interest us? Better to cut out the broadcast harmonics (the existence of one wave length all over the dial) than to make them even stronger as the farmers ask. And wouldn't the farm folks like a little jazz and popular music now and then as

LETTERS • CONTINUED FROM PAGES 5

### Rare 'dork' defence invoked in geek vs nerd case

This is a quick note directed to Vanessa Sztym, author of a very misguided letter with reference to Michael Smith's "nerd generation" article two weeks prior (re: "Gateway won't get fooled again over geek/nerd distinction," 26 October). I'll cut straight to the chase, Miss Sztym, you're very wrong in your characterization of a few choice terms which you seem to proclaim yourself an expert with. The word "geek" has very little to do with social aptitude. It originates from a late-nineteenth-century dialect of English, initially portraying a subject as "foolish." The proper evolution of the term becomes a contemporary use which is more at "social outcast," rather than being indicative of a possession of social skills at all.

Similarly, you misconstrue the term "nerd" as someone who does not possess these skills. In reality, this word indicates intelligence or competence in a particular field or area, rather than saying anything about one's ability to interact with others. I would hate to speak for you, but it seems that the word you're struggling for in place of "nerd" is "dork." Look it up. I'm not even going to attempt to tackle the scintillating use of logic in your letter.

On a final note, I'd like to point out that you brought this etymological backhand upon yourself through your unforgivable and unfounded claim of Captain Kirk's superiority over Captain Picard. Jean-Luc, as he is known to friends and lovers,

is both a gentleman and a scholar. James T Kirk is neither; he ought to be properly understood as nothing more than the space-aged equivalent of a schoolhouse ruffian. I'm also afraid Kirk's dizzying mastery over the English language is something you should seek to transcend, not emulate. Enough said.

JUSTIN K GHORY  
Arts III

### Stars' anatomical attire should have been mentioned

I really enjoyed your article "The worst dressed in the NHL" (26 October). While I can't disagree with your choices of the horrible Islanders uniforms or the "Burger Kings" sweater, there's one more choice that was missing from your article.

I can't believe the recent Dallas Stars' third-jerseys weren't mentioned, with the constellation-themed bulls head that, to me, looked much more like a medical book illustration of the female reproductive system.

By the way, even today, Sharks teal still looks very cool.

I just want to say that as a hockey fan I thoroughly enjoyed this article. Definitely some funny stuff. I want to suggest your writers continuing along this theme in a multi-part series, because there are some hilarious examples that were missed!

MATTHEW ROLHEISER  
Graduate Studies

### Oil's third-rate threads ought to be panned as well

To have a "worst jersey" list and not include Edmonton's alternate jersey is akin to having a hockey mullet Hall of Fame and keeping Chris Pronger (circa St Louis) off the ballot. The logo looks like the product of Bob the Builder with an industrial fetish, and when teamed with the shoulder derrick logo the Oilers look like the Right Said Fred All Stars. Add it up: proud free-standing derrick, metallic oil drop that resembles super cyborg sperm, some third thing. Of course, Todd MacFarlane has never had a history of bad decisions (cough! McGwire's 70th home run ball, cough!).

I really enjoyed the article, and have to come clean that I am an ex-Winnipegger that hates all five Stanley Cup victories the city of Edmonton holds dear.

DAN MACRAE  
The Carillon  
Regina, SK

*Letters to the editor should be dropped off at room 3-04 of the Students' Union Building, sent via carrier owl 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.*

*Letters should be no longer than 350 words, and should include the author's name, program and year of study.*