

Personal emission credits don't cut it

FORGET GREENER LIVING: THERE'S NOW AN easier way to feel good about your relationship with Mother Earth: carbon emission trading. You can clear your carbon footprint—and your conscience—by paying someone else to make the world a little greener.

There are many companies who will take your money. A British company by the name of Climate Care, for example, will let you “offset [your] emission by funding sustainable energy projects.” A quick look at their website will tell you they promote energy-efficient lighting and wind power. For £110 (about \$250), you can get yourself a “climate-neutral wedding.” This method will also allow you to calculate and payoff your dwelling's energy consumption. Even the David Suzuki Foundation is catching on: they're buying credits from a Zurich-based company to offset emissions from their bus. Where does the money go? To projects such as solar-powered water heating in Eritrea.

But individuals aren't the only ones being cut some slack in the green rush: now the fishing industry can rest easy too. A recent study in the *Journal of the American Medical Association* has found that the health benefits from eating fish far outweigh the cancer risks posed by contaminants such as PCBs.

And thank goodness. Who are mercury, PCBs and dioxins to stand in the way of industry continuing on as is always has? Thank goodness we can't be forced into changing our water-polluting ways. So long as the fish are still healthy to eat, I'll still be munching on my Captain Highliner's, thank you very much.

Of course, there are skeptics. According to Oxford professor Steve Rayner, “These companies may be operating with the best will in the world, but they are doing so in settings where it's not really clear you can monitor and enforce their projects over time. What these companies are allowing people to do is carry on with their current behaviour with a clear conscience.” In other words, by trading carbon emissions you can keep driving your SUV, throw out your plastic cups and toss a bit of coin into the new clean, green industry without actually making a positive change.

There's no need for us to change our manner of living when we can just pay off the big boys to do whatever it is that they do for us, right? The way we do things is the way we've always done things. It's a tried and true method—so why should we change? I know I won't. Not so long as I can have my carbon-emitting fun-cake and eat it too.

But our actions *do* have an impact, and we can change our habits for the better—though I'm really not convinced that throwing money into the coffers of companies created specifically for the purpose of making us feel better is the answer. We might as well give the same money to an existing polluter so that it cleans up its act and decreases its impact on the earth. Sound crazy? So does paying some else to plant you a tree in a foreign country. At least this way we would be creating positive change within the existing infrastructure. One company lessening its impact on the environment with funds generated by a concerned populace could be the beginning of something great.

KRYSTINA SULATYCKI
Photo Editor

A whole new porpoise for whale blubber

WE'RE ON THE SHORE OF A NEW DEVELOPMENT in renewable energy. The Earthrace boat, a prototype high-speed watercraft that runs on bio-diesel, is the perfect fit for an oil-hungry North America, because it runs on the one thing that our society has in vast abundance: blubber. The boat, which is completing an “around the world” promotional tour, is able to run energy produced from the ass-fat pulled from liposuction. Even the captain of the boat is rumoured to have contributed to the cause. Considering North America's rising obesity rates, love affair with going under the knife and our energy-burning lifestyles, it's like a perfect match made at sea.

SCOTT LILWALL
Deputy News Editor

LETTERS

There's more to action than change

(Re: “It's going to take more than ‘action’ to bring about real change,” 13 February). I read Ms Hutter's article with great interest, in part because her analysis of direct action and activism was flawed. Proper advocacy requires diverse mechanisms to ensure many audiences are receiving your message. The Day of Action is one form of advocacy we decided to employ to unite students in a common message.

The Students' Union, though, is engaged in many forms of advocacy. Throughout the year we are in discussions with the provincial government, the Advanced Education Ministry and the opposition leaders on a regular basis bringing forward regular student concerns. We meet regularly with the Student Finance Board and advise [them] on financial aid issues and recommendations. This year we have begun a process of meeting with local community groups about postsecondary education; these groups range from the Alberta Chamber of Commerce to the Health Sciences Association of Alberta. We are also consistently engaged in rural Alberta by visiting such areas as Lloydminster, Peace River, Wetaskiwin and Grande Prairie—and that's just this year.

For years, the Students' Union avoided communicating to the public. Since we began communicating with the public, Albertans' opinions on the affordability for postsecondary education have shifted to the student position. This can be seen in the Alberta government's own numbers, where only 48 per cent of Albertans believe postsecondary is affordable. We are constantly engaged with diverse audiences to discuss postsecondary education and student issues. But every once in a while, to extend Ms Hutter's metaphor, we like to go back to our choir and reinvigorate our song.

SAMANTHA POWER
SU President

Car-driving crowd won't be pleased with 'Pass

(Re: “Students can't afford to pass this up,” 27 February). Saying that 81 per cent of UBC students used [their] U-Pass does not mean that it was useful for them. If a person uses their pass once or twice it does not make it worth spending an incredible amount of money when they could have bought a token for \$2 or \$3.

To say everyone will get a benefit is BS. Obviously 19 per cent of UBC students got absolutely no benefit from the pass. I think it's safe to say many more did not get their money's worth.

I have no use for a U-Pass and would get no use from it. Am I going to use it for the two-block walk to class? No. Maybe the five-block walk to the grocery store? Nope. Maybe the four-block walk to the gym or hockey rink? No, definitely not going to help me there, and not much good to get home from a night on Whyte Ave. Am I going to use it to go home and see my parents? No, I will get in my car and drive. Will I use

“Psst ... wanna buy a carbon credit?”



ADAM GAUMONT

it to get to hockey games across the city? No, I will drive. The only time I would ever use it is if when going to the one or two Oilers games that I go to each year there is only two of us going. Wow that is a great return for me, \$150 when I could just buy a few dollars' worth of tokens.

Don't try and get others to [subsidize] your costs when we are already living on a tight budget. Maybe you can help me out with my car insurance and parking costs, or the extra rent I pay to live close to campus to avoid commuting.

TRAVIS LIDSTONE
Law II

We can't afford not to

As a student at the University, [the] U-Pass seems too good to be true for students. First of all, the City of Edmonton is directly subsidizing students \$30 semester and the University is chipping in \$15 per semester. On top of that, you're getting a bus/LRT pass for \$18.25 a month compared to [\$54] a month. If I don't take transit, it reduces congestion on the road, frees up parking spaces and perhaps most importantly, reduces the amount of CO₂ emissions spewing into the air I breathe. Where's the catch?

DANIEL EGGERT
Economics III

Beware banning bottling behemoth

I'll start this off by saying it is unfortunate that the No side incurred a hefty fine that may or may not be justified (re: “Anti-Coke posters net \$900 fine,” 13 February). I however do not have the legal knowledge of other

Gateway letter writers and so I have no opinion on that matter.

What I do know is the Coca-Cola beverage agreement would provide an average \$524 377 annually, which is roughly \$15 a student. I worry that if the No side wins and the beverage agreement is broken that there will be very little change. Will companies providing vending machines swap Coke vending machines for Pepsi ones? Will food franchises that are providing Coke incur change over costs to stop providing Coke? Unless a deal can be made with Pepsi (which sounds ridiculous considering the costs) it would be a substantial loss for students.

I don't want to lose my \$15 to have a few Pepsi products in the stores and to have the option to purchase ethical products like Earth Water. For those wanting an ethical alternative to Coke on campus, go drink from your nearest drinking fountain.

STEVEN KALF
Computing Science 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.

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

Furthermore, e-mails featuring excessive amounts of exclamation marks, all-caps, large font sizes and emoticons are liable to be ridiculed mercilessly by the editorial staff.

LETTERS FROM THE ARCHIVES

Today's youth too young

During the past few weeks particularly, we have been hearing a great deal about the failure of student government at the U of A. May I have some of your so valuable space to discuss one of the suggestions that has been made regarding the cause of our sad condition—namely, the extreme youthfulness of the majority of our students.

Time was when 16-year-old Freshmen and Freshettes were rather rare specimens, and ... they did their best to become assimilated post haste into the older groups. And, whatever one may think of all college students, it will generally be admitted that the older ones have a greater responsibility—and it is not a sense of responsibility that is required to revive student activities? During the past few years, the average age of the Frosh has been decreasing considerably. The number of students around 16 years is now appallingly large, and, as a consequence our worthy University is beginning to look and feel like an overgrown high school.

The suggestion that has been put forward from time to time is that the age limit for entrance should be raised from 16 to, at least, 18. It is believed by a good many that such a move would be a good thing not only for the University, but for the students concerned. May I suggest that a discussion of this question would be in order—very much so.

“A READER”
16 February, 1928