

## Harper playing his cards right

IN THE POKER GAME OF CANADIAN POLITICS, Stephen Harper is starting to look a lot less like Ed Norton and a lot more like Johnny Chan.

The Prime Minister took a lot of flack for declaring Québec to be a nation within a nation, but in light of the Conservative budget passing and the rise of conservative non-separatists in *la belle province*, Harper is suddenly looking pretty good.

By giving a symbolic sign of respect to French Canadians, Harper dealt with a lot of criticism, but apparently his message got through to the Québécois, who, despite what your dad always told you, are an important part of Canada too. And it seems as though they're responding favourably to that message.

The Conservatives have kept the goodwill of the Bloc Québécois, uniting with Gilles Duceppe's party on several ideological fronts while not allowing Québec to be the cigarette-waving elephant in the room. The budget marked the best opportunity for the other parties to force an election since the nation debate, and the fact that it was voted through marks a huge boost to the Harper minority, keeping them in power and preventing the third federal election in four years.

More importantly, Harper appears to have some allies in the powder keg of Canadian politics. With the conservative non-sovereignist Action Démocratique du Québec (ADQ) party taking official opposition status in Québec's National Assembly—and knocking the Liberals out of a majority government in the process—the Conservatives can look forward to the separation issue becoming even more diffused as the Parti Québécois' political clout shrinks even more.

With both the Liberal and sovereignist movements losing ground and with conservative values gaining in the province, Harper has reason to be excited about the way Québécois are voting. Though provincial results don't always translate over to the federal level, the rise in right-wing voters bodes well for the Conservatives in the province where they've had a difficult time grabbing a foothold in the past two elections.

As Québec is seeming like less of a problem every day, Harper has also been addressing the concerns of his other critics—he stopped off in Edmonton to announce federal funding to reduce emissions. While there are concerns with his plan to pump it into the *middle of the fucking Earth*, at least even Stephen is making strides to appease environmentalists. With Stéphane Dion pushing a strong environmental agenda, Harper is taking some of his steam by focusing on the same issues and trying to find solutions to the questions Dion is raising. Harper's increasing environmental focus started with the removal of Rona Ambrose as Environment minister—a position she was making a mockery of—and has continued to gain momentum as it has become a bigger issue to Canadians.

While many still don't agree with Conservative politics, it's hard to deny that the PM is doing a good job at balancing his party's ideals with the concerns of the opposition in Parliament. Once under heavy scrutiny, things are all going Harper's way now. He's also playing the minority government role to a T, doing what he needs to in order to keep power while not being afraid to bring motions before Parliament. It took a little patience, but it seems that now, all the cards are coming up Stevie.

PAUL OWEN  
Sports Editor

## Second time's a charm

TUESDAY'S STUDENTS' COUNCIL MEETING PROVED once again why our union's governing body is worthy of neither our respect nor our attention. Though councillors torpedoed a previous meeting's proposal of allowing the Students' Union to run a deficit budget, our esteemed representatives saw fit to pass the *exact same motion* this time around.

It's unsettling to hear that something voted down a mere two weeks earlier was revisited and passed once again. Councillors were able to rethink the proposal and review the issues at hand. My question is: what the fuck were they thinking the first time around?

MATT FREHNER  
Editor-in-Chief

## LETTERS

### The squeaky nurse gets the grease

I was appalled at the article on the front page of the Gateway [on] 22 March (re: "Nursing Grades Exposed"). I feel their [sic] were some glaring [sic] mistakes that may end up costing some exceptional professionals their jobs, and it is the Gateway's fault for perpetrating these.

I am one of the students affected by this so called "exposure" and am fully satisfied with what the administration has done. First, an apology was given to the students by those responsible. I have no idea where my learned friend Mr Harding was because, to tell you the truth, no one even knows who he is.

Second, the students complaining are those that did not follow the original direction of deleting the e-mail, such as Mr Harding. Next, the ID numbers of students were not right beside their names; in fact, they were associated with an incorrect name. I myself did not observe any "academic probation" comments either.

Lastly, Amanda Tsui is quoted as saying [that] "people in my classes were appalled." That is funny because in my class, the class affected, I would say very few cared and actually told the professor responsible to not worry as she nearly started crying. I am disgusted that the tyranny of the few is considered the voice of the majority. Perhaps, when Mr Harding talks about professionalism, he should look closer at himself and ask if it is the press he should have went to first or his administration. Greater research should be done by your staff before they report.

TREVOR GILL  
BSc Nursing II

### Grades gaff patched up

I am writing to clarify some points in Allison Grant's letter concerning the "Nursing grades exposed" article (re: "Lay off Nursing dept," 27 March). The following pieces of information should help.

First off, there is a misunderstanding about who the affected people are in this incident. The grades released belonged to both after-degree students as well as fourth-year collaborative program students such as Victor Harding. He was not on the after-degree mailing list so it was not possible for him to follow the progression of e-mails. There are students like Mr Harding who did not receive a debriefing or an apology in class (which he attended). Negligence does not apply to students like Mr Harding.

The culture of this University is built on a foundation of active inquiry and open dialogue. It should be well within the capability of a professional faculty such as Nursing to engage in that dialogue and inquiry when an error is made and to do so without resorting to personal attacks.

Ms Grant's letter conveyed to me a genuine sense of caring for the future of the associate coordinator. I share this concern; it is one of the reasons I spoke to the Gateway. I wanted to ensure that news coverage was fair. I owe thanks to the Deputy News

IN MY DAY, WE DIDN'T HAVE ALL THESE NEWFANGLED CONVENIENCES THAT THE KIDS TODAY HAVE! WE HAD TO DO THINGS THE HARD WAY! TODAY, YOU WHIPPERSNAPPERS ARE LUCKY TO HAVE THE INTERWEBS AND THE TELEBOXES ON THE RADIO WAVE STATIONS. IF WE WANTED TO RESEARCH A PAPER, BE DANGED IF WE COULD GO TO THE LIBRARY! I TELL YOU, WE HAD TO TAKE THE BUS THREE TOWNS AWAY, AND IN THOSE DAYS, BUSES WERE POWERED BY DOGS! I MYSELF HAD ONE OF THE FINEST YOUNG TRANSIT-HOUNDS. A PURE-BRED SHIT-TERRIER HE WAS! I ONCE MET A YOUNG BELLE BY THE NAME OF JOSEPHINE WHEN MY HOUND, AMBROTIUS, WENT A DIGGIN' IN HER MOTHER'S GARDEN FOR SOME CABBAGES. MY MOTHER ONCE GAVE ME A RECIPE FOR THE FINEST OF HER PRIZE-WINNING CABBAGE STEW AND ...



### The downside of dropping mandatory retirement for aging professors

MIKE KENDRICK

Editor who effectively communicated my points that what happened was an honest mistake. He demonstrated this by including an e-mailed quote as evidence for the accident, and by tastefully choosing not to disclose the name of the coordinator. The article was clearly not a personal attack on the associate coordinator or a recommendation for disciplinary action. Disciplinary action of the faculty member is not in any of our hands.

As the Nursing Councillor to Students' Council, I have a responsibility to represent the concerns of Nursing students and the grades-release incident was a real concern for many. If e-mailed commendations, inquiries to the [Nursing Undergrad Association] (NUA), posts [on the Gateway's website] and student-filed complaints with the faculty serve as indicators, my conduct as a representative has been appropriate. Regardless of how swiftly, seriously or professionally the release of information was handled *post hoc*, the error still occurred, and that error negatively impacted people.

Ms Grant's final point was that "a professional should contribute their ideas directly to the organization first before thinking of using the media." I lead an emergency meeting with the NUA where the faculty's Director of Development and Public Relations and the Gateway [Deputy] News Editor were present. None of my ideas were hidden from the organization before the article was published. I did not receive any contact from Ms Grant until her letter to the editor. My contact information has been available online on the Students' Union and NUA contact pages, as well as display cases in both SUB and outside the NUA office since September.

AMANDA TSUI  
BSc Nursing

### Students still need to care

(Re: "Unnecessary Courses 101," 27 March). I would like to thank Ms Malcolm for proving why there is a need for better awareness of sustainability issues on campus: while a class is not the solution *per se*, her article provides ample evidence that our current approach to environmental awareness is not enough to address the very real issues that our collective generation will face in our lifetimes.

While we sit on campus and congratulate ourselves for "reading the odd article" and discussing the Kyoto Accord in class, people outside of our very cozy University life must live with the consequences of our comfortable, consumer-driven lifestyle. It [takes] more than flipping off light switches and recycling paper. We must situate ourselves within the greater global context and understand what social, economic and political factors shape the current situation.

Our demand for cheap products, electronics, tropical fruit in January, gas to heat our inefficiently built homes [and] coal-fire electricity plants to keep us air-conditioned in the summer all have physical, social and political consequences for people in the regions that produce the materials and goods to provide us with the comforts we enjoy.

And the issues are closer than we think; one only needs to drive up to Fort McMurray or venture out to a sour gas well to see how ecologically and socially unsustainable our current practices are. I... believe that the only way to truly address the issue is to treat it as a *dialogue*. Nobody gains from preaching about sustainability; we also gain nothing from sitting back and accepting things as they are.

Ms Malcolm refers to *An Inconvenient Truth*. I suggest a few more films for her viewing pleasure: *Manufactured Landscapes*, *Refugees of the Blue Planet*, and *Bhopal*. Perhaps this will provide some insight [into] why we can't afford to accept things as they are and why relying solely on our "moral conscience" will only lead to further economic, social and ecological hardship in the years to come.

ZOE TODD  
Graduate Studies

### Let's use grown-up talk

(Re: "Truth more retarded than fiction," 22 March). Are you serious? I can't believe this "catchy" title made it to print. Rule number one for conveying dignity and respect towards people with a disability through language is *not* to use person-first language. In the same way that a toilet cannot really be "disabled," nor can the truth (or fiction, if I was to get picky) be "retarded." Rule number two is to avoid using outdated terms—so you scored the double feature with this one!

I know this is a student-oriented paper and it is supposed to be "edgy" or whatever. But does that mean appealing to the lowest common denominator by using playground slang? That is disrespectful.

I don't mind the swearing. I don't mind your opinion. However I do expect language to be used respectfully. Language convey beliefs and attitudes which can then in turn affect behaviour. You're not in the playground anymore.

KIM ASHBY  
Phys Ed III