

Front page ads are totally bush league

ARE THE PASSENGERS IN THE FRONT SEAT MORE important than the ones in the back? This is a question the *Edmonton Sun* felt was important to pose to its readers last Friday. More important than, say, showing the entirety of a photo depicting Jarret Stoll scoring against the San Jose Sharks in a shootout.

Flip open the front page and you'll find the true message—an advertisement for the new Hyundai Sonata, which apparently has so many airbags, it's like living inside the Stay-Puft Marshmallow man. To the right of that, showing up late like a non-Kenyan marathoner, is the cover as it was originally intended. If you consider the page bearing the ad to be merely a "wrapper" for the newspaper, then the *Sun* has done the impressive feat of putting ads *underneath* other ads.

The *Sun* is not the only offender in this respect. On Friday, the *National Post* also felt like selling out to the Korean automaker, covering up half of a photo of North Korean leader Kim Jong-il and South Korean President Roh Moo-hyun working towards a long term peace. This may be, to understate the matter, kind of a big deal. On the other hand, when you can get a Sonata starting at \$22 295, nuclear disarmament deals can wait.

Advertisements on the front page are nothing new: both the *Journal* and *Sun* have been running ads along the bottom of the cover for years. The act of covering up newspaper content, however, makes this practice of far greater concern. The front page of a newspaper—specifically, "above the fold," if there is one—is a place for the newspaper's most important content, be that a hot photo, top story, or both. Placing an advertisement here is a tacit admission by the publisher that this paid message is more important than anything else that's happening that day.

The oft-maligned *Dose*—thankfully now just an online celebrity rumourzine—as well as Edmonton's more recent threesome of free dailies, are well-known for this practice. When smaller publications do it, it's merely poor taste, but when larger paid-for publications like the *Post* and *Journal* start selling out, it cheapens the relationship between the publisher and the reader. Subscribers pay for these papers, and therefore have the right to expect a higher standard.

Advertising, in its most basic sense, is simply a method used to get a message out to the public. Newspapers can use advertising revenue to keep the purchase price of the paper reasonable, forming a symbiotic relationship that is useful so long as the boundaries between business and editorial content are respected. When the business side begins to infringe on content, it's time for the publisher to step up and restore the balance. Hyundai isn't to blame—they're merely doing what companies do best: generating interest in a product they are selling with the aim of increasing profits.

Print media has seen various technologies threaten its supremacy over the years, be it radio, television, or the Internet. Print media survives by specializing in what it does best: in-depth coverage and analysis, presented in a well-designed layout with professional-quality photography. *Dose* failed due to its sound bite-style stories and ADHD-inducing layout. If major dailies like the *Post* keep running what essentially amounts to an Internet-style click-through ad on the front page, they may very well be next on the chopping block.

MIKE OTTO
Photo Editor

They've got their man

WHEN A MOUNTIE IS KILLED IN THE LINE OF duty, people understandably listen. And read. And watch. A manhunt is launched by the authorities and the public alike, with the killer's face promptly displayed by every major news outlet in the country.

Or, in the case of Emrah Bulatci, the lead suspect in the killing of Constable Christopher Worden, "accused killer." Of course, he may well turn out to be the Mounties' guy, but in the eye of the law, he's innocent until convicted in court. With his image already burned into the collective mind of the public, however, he's as good as guilty—let's just hope that they've really got their guy.

ADAM GAUMONT
Editor-in-Chief

I knew that Fire Sale at
River Valley Cycle
was too good to be true!



MIKE KENDRICK

LETTERS

Not all women are gold miners, Lettner

What an enlightening piece by Graham Lettner (re: "I ain't saying she's a gold digger," 4 October). I assume it was done with the intent of causing every female on campus to throw their paper to the ground and stamp their feet. Yet while I do believe Mr Lettner was exaggerating to cause a reaction, I still feel the need to defend my sex.

Perhaps in the '60s there were women who went to university to find a husband, but I'd like to think that we've progressed a little since then. In fact, I would say that our "survival smarts" would have more to do with getting a degree and job than finding the man with the largest wallet.

As for every man needing to be marriage material, I think a night at any bar can support the conclusion that girls are out looking for a good time just as much as guys. If you're willing to draw those conclusions about the ladies, then let's indulge in some male-related stereotypes as well, like how guys are just looking for girls who will put out, or that guys will run in the face of a girl who actually plans on having her own life and career after marriage.

So while I thank Mr Lettner for his deep insights into female behaviour, I think his theories might still need some tweaking.

KRISTEN FLATH
Business V

RATT not worth bad service or faulty elevators

You'd think that service in RATT would've improved since the Students' Union pulled the majority of their operations out of the Powerplant, but the service at SUB's top-floor bar has only seemed to get worse since the semester started.

Now, this isn't meant to knock the SU or even RATT's employees, but I think everyone who frequents the establishment can agree that something needs to be done to keep students frequenting the mediocre bar.

Every time I go there, the service and food are horrible. It makes me wonder why I keep going back, and if it weren't for the convenient location, I wouldn't. When I'm hungry, I'd like to be able to get fries and a burger that aren't cold—but that's all RATT seems to serve.

The only saving grace is that I might not even make it to RATT because of the shitty elevators. Once, a friend of mine got stuck in one of the elevators for an hour, just because she wanted to go meet her friends for a beer. Now it's one thing for a beer to cost \$5, but to cost an hour of entrapment in a bloody elevator is not cool.

If you're able to get there, you'll either face a near empty room or one that's packed wall to wall. Still, the service will be identical. Identically bad. And you'll wish that the elevator ended up plummeting into SUB's basement.

The sad thing about all this is that

students aren't demanding that anything be done about the most convenient of bars. Their bar.

DEREK EDMUNDSON
Arts III

Friendly neighbourhood Dave reminds you to vote

Though municipal politics traditionally has little to do with post-secondary education, it's very important to remember that the next city council will be seeing through the first leg of the Universal Bus Pass and will be critical in creating more affordable student housing in Edmonton.

So, get out and vote on Monday October 15!

DAVE COURNOYER
(VP External emeritus)

Letters to the editor should be sent to letters@gateway.ualberta.ca (no attachments, please).

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. And if you've bothered to read this far, then this air high-five is for you, my friend. Enjoy it; you fucking earned it.

LETTERS FROM THE ARCHIVES

RATT doesn't need to hold hands of drunks

My response is *no*, RATT is not responsible (re: "Is RATT accountable in on-campus accident?" 11 January) Wake up, this is 1994. We are *all* well educated on the effects of drugs, including alcohol. We *all* have freedom of choice, and if we choose to drink to the point of falling down and whacking our heads, that is our choice and that means we are responsible, and no one else. It's time that we learned to take responsibility for our actions. Just because they offer an intoxicating drug does not make that establishment responsible for the actions or stupidity of its patrons. To refer to Shakespeare, in *Henry V* spoke of personal responsibility, saying that a king is not responsible for the thoughts or endings of his subjects, nor the father responsible for actions of his son; likewise, RATT is not responsible for a kid who cannot hold his liquor and/or make it home.

SHANNON ENNS
13 January, 1994

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.