

# THE GATEWAY

volume XCVIII number 13 ♦ the official student newspaper at the university of alberta ♦ www.thegatewayonline.ca ♦ thursday, 18 october, 2007



RYAN SHIPPELT

**SOMEONE FOUND THE GREAT PUMPKIN** Engineers Without Borders dropped a gourd from 100 feet onto a van to raise awareness for the Make Poverty History campaign yesterday at Varsity Field.

## Students set sights on civic politics

Newcomers in wards 4 and 5 aim to address city-wide and student-specific issues

RYAN HEISE  
Deputy News Editor

Edmonton's municipal election ended Monday evening with wards 4 and 5 each gaining a new face representing many students of the University of Alberta.

In Ward 4, where the University sits, Ben Henderson edged Lewis Cardinal by a small margin to claim the seat left vacant by long-time councillor Michael Phair's retirement. Following his victory, Henderson explained that it's going to be important for council to address the major issues that affect not only students, but the city as a whole.

"We've got a real housing problem in the city right now, and it's taking everything off of the market that's actually in the affordable range for everybody on a low income, and that includes students," Henderson said, adding that a lot of the solution will actually lie in the hands of the provincial government.

"I think we have to keep on pushing the Province to come to the table to create some incentives so we can get some more things built and happening."

Former Students' Union advocacy director Don Iveson upset incumbent Mike Nickel to represent Ward 5. U of A political science professor James Lightbody said Iveson's victory was an "impressive win," attributing this to a well run and managed campaign.

"What was impressive about Iveson

in defeating a very strong incumbent, Mike Nickel, was that he had very good skills in organizing a campaign," Lightbody said. "He chose the right people to work with and they produced."

**"I think the EAS will be pretty strong with our advocacy towards this new council. I'm pretty sure that we'll be able to get some things done."**

JUSTIN BENKO  
PRESIDENT  
MACEWAN STUDENT ASSOCIATION

Iveson, whose platform included a large focus on transit and housing, said that addressing these matters will be easier now that they're more prevalent in the public at large.

"I think there's an awareness out there of the issues that maybe there wasn't a year ago," he said, "And that bodes well for getting seven votes on council to support building student housing and transit."

However, the first-time councillor explained that he won't just be focusing explicitly on student issues when it comes to the City and the University working together.

"I also look forward to working

with the University collaboratively on not just student issues, but partnerships between the City, Capital Health, and the University that will help put the city on the map as a destination for scholarship," Iveson said.

This election marked the first major advocacy effort put forward by the recently formed Edmonton Alliance of Students (EAS), a municipal advocacy group made up of the U of A Students' Union, the NAIT Student Association, and the MacEwan Student Association.

The EAS sent out questionnaires regarding housing, transit, and bettering the student experience in Edmonton to every candidate running, posting the responses on their recently launched website. Students were then encouraged to evaluate the responses and become informed about the candidates in their respective wards.

MacEwan Student Association President Justin Benko said that the advocacy options for the EAS are looking positive following the elections.

"I think the EAS will be pretty strong with our advocacy towards this new council. I'm pretty sure that we'll be able to get some things done."

SU President Michael Janz echoed these sentiments, adding that the recent civic election was an important chance to get students engaged in politics, as there may be more on the horizon.

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## SU rekindles idea of CASA membership

NATALIE CLIMENHAGA  
Senior News Editor

Five years after leaving the Canadian Alliance of Student Associations (CASA), the University of Alberta's Students' Union is reconsidering its membership options.

CASA National Director Zach Churchill was on campus Tuesday to meet with members of the SU executive and to give a presentation in Council on the value of federal lobbying efforts.

"What we do affects students on campus," Churchill said. "We've seen \$800 million earmarked for postsecondary education, [Finance Minister James] Flaherty quoted CASA when he presented that budget in the House, [and] we've seen our policies adopted in the last two economic updates from the federal government."

In 1995, the U of A was one of the founding members of CASA, which currently has an alliance of 20 student associations across Canada. However, that union ended in 2002; since then, the SU has been unaffiliated with any federal advocacy groups.

Students' Union VP (External) Steven Dollansky explained that, five years ago, one of the major reasons for leaving CASA was that the SU wanted to spend more on advocacy at the provincial level. He said that at the time, the SU took the \$40 000 they had been spending on CASA and invested it in strengthening the Council of Alberta University Students (CAUS), as well

as funding the beginning of the SU's advocacy department.

"Since then the advocacy department has expanded exponentially," Dollansky said, adding that the SU now spends around \$250 000 on advocacy efforts.

"But at the same time ... instead of spending \$40 000 nationally and \$10 000 provincially, now we spend \$250 000 provincially and zero nationally," he added.

SU President Michael Janz added that he believes the SU now needs "to look at lobbying to all three levels of government." Joining CASA would cost the SU \$46 000, or between \$1.57-\$1.60 per student; in comparison, this year's membership fee for CAUS is \$1.21 per student.

However, Dave Cournoyer, last year's SU VP (External), explained that the 2006/07 executive also analyzed the strengths and weaknesses of CASA, along with investigating the effectiveness and of lobbying the federal government.

"The conclusion that I came to last year, and I think it's still accurate this year, is that our fight for postsecondary education is across the river here in Edmonton—it's not in Ottawa," Cournoyer said.

"I don't think that using students' money to pay for membership fees for a national organization like this is an effective use of the advocacy budget and of the students' money," he added.

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## Look up—waaaaaaay up

You don't have to crane your neck to get all the dirt on campus construction—just dig this handy three-page report.

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## Road-trippin'

There won't be a paper next Tuesday, as the Gateway is hitting the road to hang out with other student journalists and learn about newspapering. But fear not, as we'll be back on 25 October!