

## No winner in war on homelessness

THE HEADLINES WERE CERTAINLY IMPRESSIVE; after all, a billion dollars is a lot of money—even for Alberta. But somehow, Premier Ed Stelmach's announcement on Tuesday that the Province plans to spend \$1 billion over the next ten years to eliminate homelessness still rings hollow.

Perhaps my skepticism stems from the irony of such a grandiose pronouncement. After all, it was Stelmach's predecessor who proposed a similar strategy not so long ago, going so far as to visit a homeless shelter himself—presumably to see the degrading effects of extreme poverty firsthand. To be fair, Stelmach's strategy—a co-operative endeavour across multiple levels of government—promises to be more well-rounded and coherent, whereas Klein's consisted mainly of slogans like “get a job” and much less discretionary distribution of monetary funds, such as tossing loose change on the ground in disgust.

Perhaps, then, it's the irony of a government awash in cash vowing to combat poverty with buckets and buckets of money—even when this largesse is the result of an economic boom that has driven the extreme economic disparity and skyrocketing rents that are the root causes of homelessness in the first place.

Or perhaps it's simply the sheer impracticality of such a pie-in-the-sky ambition—one that's necessarily doomed for failure from the start. Simply put, no matter how much money you throw at a problem like homelessness, you'll never make it disappear completely. There are, after all, more causes than a lack of funds, including addiction, mental disease, and even lifestyle choice for some. In other words, there are many who wouldn't be able to integrate themselves into urban society even if they could afford it.

More damning, though, is calling it a “war on homelessness”—because as we've seen time and again, waging wars on ideas simply doesn't work. One needs to look no further than our neighbours to the south, who are currently waging war on Terror, Drugs, and, arguably, Ideas (among other things), to see that such campaigns are little more than rhetorical tools aimed at garnering public approval and uniting people on issues otherwise more divisive and complex. The prospect of a fight against something vaguely evil may be exciting for some, but when your enemy is a decentralized, apolitical, nebulous, and ubiquitous entity, it's like chasing after a ghost—while hurting a lot of living souls in the process.

Theoretical politics aside, such undertakings have proven themselves to be inefficient in practice as well. From the displacement strategies of 1950s America to modern housecleaning methods seen in Olympic host-cities-to-be (most notably Vancouver), it's been made abundantly clear that while you can win a few battles, you'll never win the war.

Still, this isn't to say that eradicating homelessness isn't worth the effort. A billion dollars will surely go a long way towards getting people off of the streets and into the workforce—that is, if such plans are put into place. But as it stands, the Province's current war on homelessness doesn't even have a battle plan, let alone an exit strategy.

ADAM GAUMONT  
Editor-in-Chief

## No snacks for Samuel

IF THIS NEWSPAPER WEREN'T ANALOG AND archaic, you could probably open to this page and hear my stomach growl.

Why, you might ask? Because Students' Council has decided to not buy food for councillors during meetings anymore this year. That means no more food for the student press, either. All this for a savings of about \$1000.

Let me get this straight: the SU was willing to continue running a bar that lost hundreds of thousands of dollars, but won't make sure that councillors—and other's in Council Chambers—have the energy to sit through the snoozefest Council often degenerates in to?

The only saving grace to come out of this misfortune is that it might spur Council to be more efficient and avoid lengthy, superfluous debate.

RYAN HEISE  
Deputy News Editor



## LETTERS

### Dress-up no commentary

When I opened the latest copy of the *Gateway* to the opinion articles on sexy Halloween costumes, I instantly expected that I would agree with the article written by a female, for I too am irked by the slut-fest that is Halloween after the age of 13 (re: “Sexy Halloween costumes: poor taste or just plain fun?” 30 October). However, to my own surprise, I found myself doing the smile-and-nod as I read the male defense.

Halloween at our age and stage seems to be a night for the id to rear its ugly head and play around for a while. Apparently, for most girls, this night of masquerade allows them to unleash their inner slut (for lack of a better term), and dress up as a sexy “blank.” These costumes, however, are just that: costumes. Usually the intention is sex appeal, not social commentary.

Are all the nurses on campus offended when they spot a Halloween sexy nurse? What about firefighters? Do they get offended because four guys wanted a costume where they could spray people with a hose all night?

How are these different from a Caucasian girl dressed up as a Geisha? Is this particularly offensive the Japanese culture? I suspect not—especially since I can recall two Japanese girls from high school that dressed up as “Fook Mi” and “Fook Yu” one Halloween. Halloween is fun, and if a girl wants to wear a sexier rendition of a cultural character, that's her prerogative.

Girls seem to enjoy it, and it goes without saying that guys do too, so I suggest that the people with a problem wear whatever they want,

shut up, and try to have a good time too.

MARGAUX KEITH  
Arts II

### Costumes aren't offensive

As for “sexualizing everything in order to make it a costume for women,” ask yourself, “Who's responsible for that trend?” It's the women who buy those costumes because there's a demand.

Nobody is forcing them to dress this way, and if they're confident enough to wear these outfits, what business is it of ours to look down our noses at them? Are they not worthy of respect? Is it vulgar to appreciate your own beauty? Why should a confident woman's body offend anyone unless they have their own issues with self-esteem?

“A faux suede bikini with a beaded fringe” isn't an attempt at representing Native American women—by the way, “Native” is no longer politically correct; it's First Nations now—as doing so would be quite expensive and not very conducive to dancing. She's only an adult playing dress-up, and how fun it is.

I have to wonder if the author actually knows anything about belly dance culture at all, because the modern Western belly dance costume (coin bra, midriff exposed, and perhaps harem pants or a thin skirt with slits) doesn't demean the culture it represents (and no, Western belly dance does not actually represent the Middle East).

Please do some research; check out a Raks Sharki dance recital and you'll see how empowering this dance form is. Women of all shapes and sizes are floating about and shaking it up on the stage, very often barely covered, beautifully made-up, and all smiles. Gorgeous.

If I wear my dance costume to a [Halloween] party, will people think that I'm a slut? I don't actually care, as I wouldn't want to befriend such judgemental folk anyways.

As for it being “usually white women that wear these costumes,” we're in Canada, where the majority of the population is of European descent (the term “white” is quite racist).

Perhaps we are not all as creative as Megan Cleaveley in piecing together our costumes from trips to the thrift store, but we don't need to be. Halloween is about having fun and loosening taboos, and if people choose to dress differently than ourselves, we shouldn't let that dampen our night.

CATHERINE MARY SCHEELAR  
Anthropology III

### Couch-jackers make off with driveable comfort

What no one was thinking when they found out that fucking motorized couch was stolen: “OH NO!”

LISA AMERONGEN  
Education

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## LETTERS FROM THE ARCHIVES

### The Masturbation letter

I wish to thank the engineers for clearing up a few misconceptions about girls. I realize now that I wasn't really a man, for I paid no attention to the exterior appearance of the human female. I thought the things that mattered about a girl were things you couldn't perceive by merely looking at her. I laboured under the delusion that women had a soul and that it would take infinite pains and a lifetime of love to discover that soul. I realize I was wrong, and I apologize humbly.

Apparently, all the things that matter are right there on the surface; in fact, a girl consists of nothing else. Moreover, there are quite sensible objective rules evaluating the factors involved, and it's possible to discover the thing that comes closest to possessing all these qualities in the greatest measure. I say “thing” because I'm still convinced that to be human is to have a soul. To elevate a girl to queenhood is to proclaim her the ideal woman. I don't think it's possible to discover a girl's soul in a week, or even to discover whether she has a soul. Of course, it's quite obvious that even if she has one, it doesn't matter.

I must also thank the engineers for clearing up an ethical problem for me. Since a girl is only a thing, it no longer matters how I use her; if she were human, using her would be ethically impossible. I can now use any woman with no pangs of conscience. Masturbation will be so much more pleasant now.

A LESS FRUSTRATED ARTSMAN  
2 February, 1960