

Cold front brings apathy with it

EXTREME WEATHER HAS WEIRD EFFECTS ON people. Some get mokey, some get cranky, but I get apathetic.

That everyone should follow the news has always been one of my pillar beliefs. The process of staying informed, engaged, and active in the goings-on of society is to be a good citizen—at least according to conventional wisdom.

However, this week, my interest in current affairs has plummeted along with the temperature. I must have scanned around 300 newspaper headlines in the hopes of finding an interesting topic to inspire this editorial, but the more news I read, the less I cared about it, much less writing about the latest scoops.

It's -30C outside, and I've settled into a comfortable state of apathy. It's not that I'm choosing to be apathetic; it's just that I can't decide what to care about anymore.

Even stock news items no longer seem relevant. Global warming? Well, I know this isn't how science works, but I find it hard to care about climate change when I have to wear snow pants on my walk to school so that I don't freeze to death. Normally, I try to live as environmentally friendly a lifestyle as possible, but for the time being, I don't care how much CO₂ is generated by running my electric blanket on full blast.

One of my roommates who works part-time at HMV recently lamented the swarms of teenage girls who come in proclaiming that they simply *must* buy every one of Heath Ledger's movies *immediately*. The fact that anyone could get that worked up by the death of someone they likely never met is beyond me, but deep down, I'm silently envious of their passion.

Reading through this week's headlines has only heightened my lack of enthusiasm for being emotionally moved by the news. My problem, I've come to realize, is that there's just too much choice right now.

For example, I normally love politics, but even that usually dry arena has left me with too many options. Super Tuesday is just around the corner, Senator Edward Kennedy has endorsed Barack Obama, and both Rudy Guiliani and John Edwards have dropped out of the running. But then before I can even begin to warp my brain around the nuances of the American political system, there's the predicted provincial election call coming after the 4 February Speech from the Throne.

Not to mention that there are always the world's million and one other problems that a privileged Albertan such as myself should feel for. Darfur still has civil strife, Kenya does too, Botswana is facing exhorbant inflation, and other places I'm not sure I could point out on a map are all in need of support in their quest for democracy. Amen.

But while these are all important issues—issues I should feel passionately about; issues that should remind me of how lucky I am to live in one of the richest countries in the world—truth be told, finding a long-lost box of hot chocolate in the pantry ignited more passion in my frostbitten heart than any front-page story has recently.

So while oil tankers spill, bombs are dropped, and politicians campaign, I'm going to lie under my electric blanket and sip hot chocolate until it's the weather, not the world, that changes.

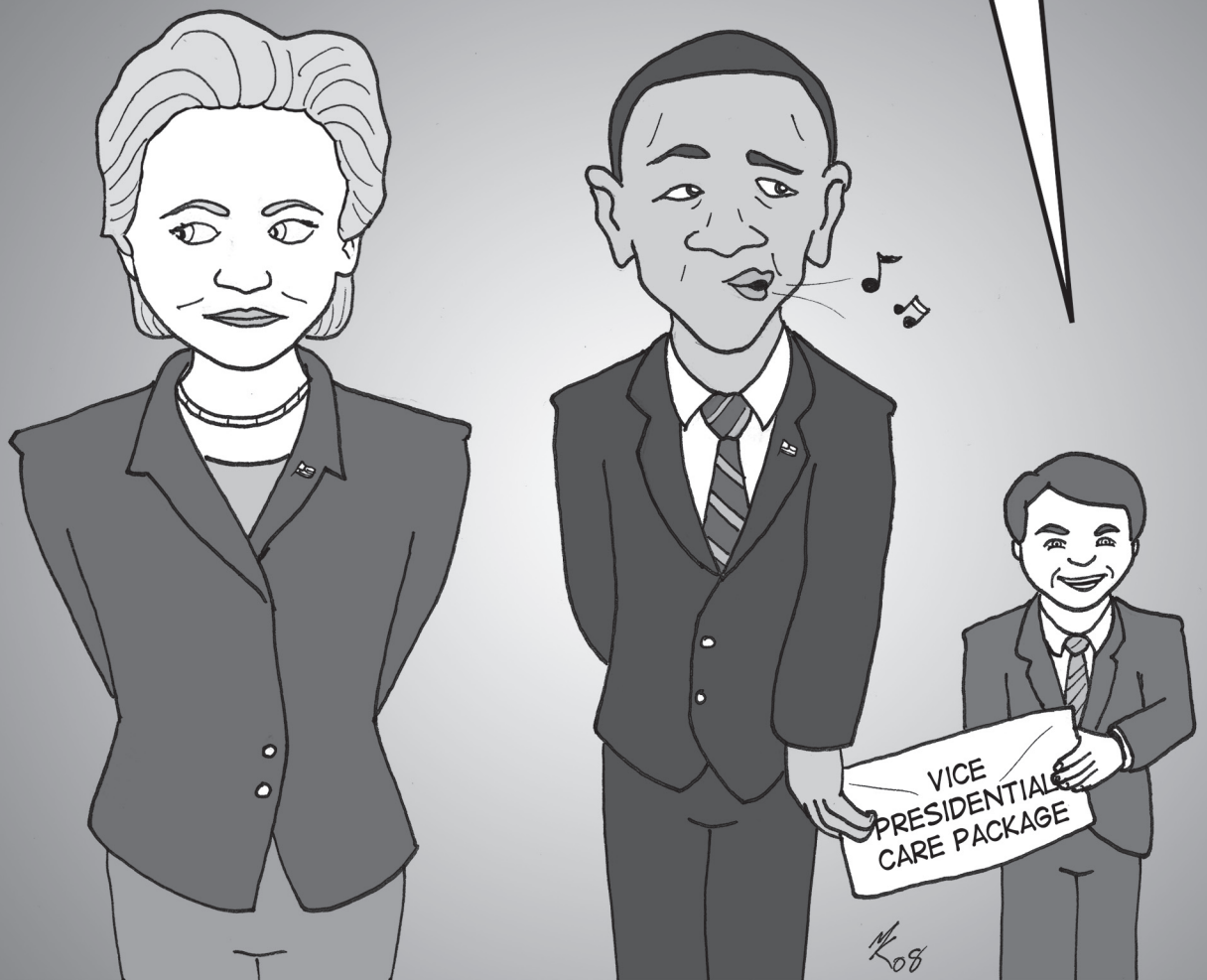
NATALIE CLIMENHAGA
Senior News Editor

First rule of idiot club

SOME YOUTHS IN SASKATOON MIGHT BE FACING assault charges after police uncovered their apparent "fight club." But though these morons obviously forgot the very first rule of fight club when they posted their videos on Youtube, in a city that's chief exports are grain, meth, and hookers, their mothers should be thankful that their sons are only beating the crap out of each other.

CONAL PIERSE
Opinion Editor

WELL FRIENDS, IT'S BEEN A LONG AND EVENTFUL RACE, BUT I THINK THAT I'M GOING TO HAVE TO THROW IN THE TOWEL. I'M AFRAID, THOUGH, THAT I JUST CAN'T PICK A SIDE WITHOUT GIVING IT SOME SERIOUS THOUGHT AND CONSIDERATION. GOOD LUCK TO THE BOTH OF YOU!



MIKE KENDRICK

LETTERS

Sharing the road doesn't mean drivers can hog it

In the 24 January article "We all have to share the roads—something you inattentive cyclists need to remember," Kyle Chisholm demonstrated a curious definition of the word "share."

Now, granted, it's been a while since I was in kindergarten, but I don't seem to remember sharing being along of the lines of bogarting something all for oneself. Why, then, does Chisholm's idea of "sharing" the road consist of telling cyclists to get off of it, in favour of the many marked bicycle paths he sees in his hungover stupor?

Do tell me, Chisholm, where precisely these many magical bicycle paths exist in reality? A quick consultation of my handy Cycle Edmonton map shows that the only northbound route heading right onto campus for cyclists is 112 Street (designated by the map, conveniently enough, as a "signed bike route on roadway"), the very same route you want cyclists off of.

Unfortunately for you, cyclists have just as much right to the roads—including the main ones—as you. I'd kindly ask you to respect that right. And while we're working on the issue of respect, I'd also kindly ask you to not belittle all cyclists just because you see some breaking the rules of the road.

If I had a dollar for every time I saw a driver break those same rules, I could probably afford to join you

in the mass congestion of personal transit polluters (if I even wanted to give up my bike).

Does that mean that I'm justified to wax poetic on the shortcomings of all drivers?

ADAM FERLAND
Science V

Fraternities more than just popped collars, bro

I believe that many people have an unfair bias against fraternities, their members, and their houses (re: "Garneau residents contend frat house," 29 January).

The biggest issue in this article seems to be that residents are concerned about loud parties in fraternity houses. As a member of a fraternity who lives in a fraternity house, I believe this to be an unfounded concern.

Many people have a stereotypical view of fraternities from movies, such as *Animal House* and *Old School*, which aren't accurate portrayals of what they're actually like.

While we do occasionally throw parties in our house, I fail to see how that is different from any other university student's house. In fact, most of the parties that I attend occur in non-fraternity houses. Also, a large component of fraternities is community service. My brothers and I regularly try to help our community by running events to raise money or bring attention to worthy causes affecting the Edmonton area.

I think that Garneau residents should give the Zeta Psi members

a chance to prove themselves to the community before discounting them as noisy, distrustful members of the society. Fraternities aren't just about partying; we believe in strong academics, student leadership, athletics, tradition, and community involvement.

Please look past movies like *American Pie's Beta House* and actually meet a fraternity member before deciding what fraternities are actually all about.

MARCUS ERLANDSON
Engineering III

Rudeness begets rudeness

I think that Maria Kotovych's article about her attempts to be obnoxious and rude to the people who she believes to be deserving of such treatment is quite despairing (re: "The kid gloves are off—it's time to be rude," 29 January).

Not only is she showing the digression of consideration within our species, but she's only perpetuating what she hates by acting as a model for it. Simple, polite responses to aggravating instances—and living in HUB Mall, I've had more than enough of those—are usually well received and achieve the desired results.

But by acting like an asshole, you're only reinforcing obnoxious tendencies in others. This can easily be explained by BF Skinner's behavioral model, which outlines that people will use a model's positively reinforced behavior as a template for their own.

In other words, if the model

behaves rudely and gets their way, the subject will then behave rudely to get their way. I can't speak for the general public, but I don't wish to continuously be facing intolerable individuals.

On another point, everyone does something that may annoy their surrounding public; who has the right to be a persecutor? Humanity is generally quite annoying, but by being polite, you're showing that you have the virtue to tolerate others.

This isn't a bad quality to have, and it actually used to be a quality that everyone strove for. Tolerating that which annoys is just a sophisticated reaction, and acting obnoxious is just an immature way of handling the situation.

RANDI URICHUK
Psychology II

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And though we're by no means your therapist's couch, we're not opposed to hearing about how your day went.