

The Alumni Wolves and the Beat, Evil Days to Come

By KENT BRUYNEEL

The Alumni has it all wrong....The head in Memorial building...The clock slowly ticking...The skateboard magazine alternative

Fourth year university is a necessarily hectic life; it is mostly filled with drinking draft beer, and staring groggily at school books; and the ubiquitous clock slowly ticking. But there are the foreshadowing signs, if you look close enough. A certain sense of finality creeps around and you steal through each obstacle without fully understanding that more is being lost, than gained. And then it is over, and the stern reality becomes clear. Instead of feeling accomplished, one experiences anti-climax; not, so much, that university was a waste, or that it carries no intrinsic value -- simply put, the undergraduate degree is a minor achievement in a field of massive challenges.

And then, like a shunned lover, the alumni association starts calling, and writing, and asking for money, and reminding you of the whole shoddy scene. My memories are of Skydiggers concerts, the head in Main Building and William Butler Yeats; but the manila envelope with the polite reminder that I owe for all these times rings annoying and nearly offensive. From convocation, and since, it was made abundantly clear to me that no less than a savage dog on the brink of outcast status would contribute to the

alumni fund. And though UPEI was the stage for the best four years of my life, I paid for it. Further I am pleased to wear my "Property of UPEI" shirt and promote the institution in every verbal way I can; but I will give them none of my cash. Now if they had waited five years before asking perhaps I would have felt a sense of nostalgia and, indeed, donated. But even if I had the money, which is not what a reasonable person discusses with strangers, I would sooner buy skateboard magazines than donate to any school with an Irving building -- and I do not skateboard.

The K.C. Irving Tax Dodge... "The Million Pound Shithammer"...The starving idealist...On the way out kid, on the way out...The cold, cold ground... the Air Canada Veterinary College

The Irving corporation hit the Atlantic like a million pound shithammer and the Atlantic says "please hit me again" and here's a building for you. I once took the SMT non-stop bus lines to Montreal; it stopped 56 times along the way. All the way I shook my fist at the mere thought of some Irving schlep lighting his hand-rolled cigar with my C-note and laughing at schmucks like me who allow them to continue to thrive: and now they have a building on my alma mater with their patriarchal name. I know their donation was considerable in its amount, but nominal in its effect on the family. A million dol-

lars to the Irving corporation is neither a burden nor a compliment; it is advertising, and a tax dodge and it bears a striking resemblance to the General Motor Place in Vancouver, and the Molson Centre in Montreal. But that is merely my opinion; however the world is built on opinions, like the opinion of the industrialist who flees his home market to avoid paying taxes, and operates like a corporate PAC-man, swallowing smaller businesses and feels no guilt about it. Or the billionaire family who donates a token of its tax burden to a school of higher learning on the condition that the new building carries their name, thereby legitimizing, and canonizing themselves in one act of nefarious generosity.

The only thing left for us graduates is a polite no, like the way one handles little kids hawking chocolate bars outside a liquor store. Maybe on the way out, I always say, yeah, maybe on the way out. When they plant me in the cold ground, the alumni fund and the higher powers at UPEI can erect buildings to any corporate icon, and the Kelly building can be renamed the Coca-Cola Plaza and the AVC can be re-named the Air Canada Veterinary College and the standard of education may remain the same, but the process, the institution, and my blessed memories will be dumbed down a little... but by then, it will make no difference, and I will have no interest in the matter.

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