

THE VOICE

VOLUME 10 ISSUE 07

February 13, 2002.

www.ausu.org

QUOTE OF THE WEEK:

"Optimism and humor are the grease and glue of life."

--Philip Butler



A Bug In Your Ear... READER FEEDBACK!

Any comments, suggestions, feedback, or submissions may be sent to Tammy Moore, Editor of The Voice at tmoore@ausu.org. Thanks for your writing contributions and support. I look forward to hearing from you all!

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR:

RESPONSE TO "From My Perspective: Saying Thanks"

VOLUME 10 ISSUE 6

[February 6, 2002](#)

Good points, well done, and thanks for saying thanks. Today's society is in one large hurry, rushing around, and without time to think of others. I for one did fill out the course survey form, for two reasons. First, I did want to show both the university and the tutor how much I appreciated the course and the assistance I had received. The second reason was selfish, in a way, to score a few points for my tutor, as she informed me she tutors one other subject on my list - I got used to her style and liked it.

Debbie Jabbour's article: *From My Perspective: Saying Thanks*, brought back a time when I didn't say thank you. My grandson was lost in a shopping mall, panic had obviously set in quickly. As I was running through the mall, peering into every store, nook and cranny, a woman came up to me and said, "If you are looking for a little five year old boy he is in the bookstore, the clerks are entertaining him, safe and sound." With that news I tore off towards the bookstore and found him safe and sound.

You can well imagine my relief. Then I stopped dead in my tracks. I frantically looked around for that woman, she was gone. I never did get a chance to say thanks, and I have never forgotten that day, or my mistake.

Thanks once again, Debbie, for the reminder...

Gregory West
Anthropology, Athabasca University

RESPONSE TO "FED WATCH"

VOLUME 10 ISSUE 6

[February 6, 2002](#)

In Fed Watch, Karl Low says the following: "After his last cabinet shuffle, some Liberal members have taken the Prime Minister to task for the lack of women on the new Cabinet. Out of 39 members of Cabinet, only 8 are women. To have an agency devoted to international development trying to teach other nations how to go about gender equality when our performance in our own government is meagre at best smacks of hypocrisy." 8 out of 39 is 20.5% so if women make up 50% of all Ministers, this would perhaps be a cause for concern. However, there are 62 women members of parliament out of 296 (should be 301 but 5 seats are currently vacant). 62 out of 296 is 20.9%. Therefore, the proportion of female to male cabinet members is almost exactly the proportion of female to male members of parliament. So what is the complaint? Looking just at the Liberal party, there are 39 women out of 168 members or 23.2%. To meet this same proportion, 9 out of 39 Cabinet members should be women. Based solely on proportional facts, I don't think the PM did too bad. Where is the hypocrisy? I think we should be more concerned about the qualifications of Cabinet members than their gender.

If Mr. Low's concern is that only 1/5 of the members are female, that is a completely separate issue. If there is not a more even split between male and female members in the House of Commons, that is because we as citizens have not voted for them. This is called democracy.

Mr. Low's comments, similar to concerns voiced by other female MPs, are not logical and do more to harm the gender equality issue than to support it. As a woman and a Canadian citizen I would not want anyone in a prominent government position just because they are a certain gender. I want the person that is most suited to the job. (I realize that this rarely happens but that is a problem with our system and unrelated to the gender question).

I would be interested to hear comments to this argument.

Thank you.

Kathy Wiens
AU student

RESPONSE TO “HOW ABOUT A STUDENT STRIKE?”

VOLUME 10 ISSUE 6

[February 6, 2002](#)

I read the recent article entitled, 'How About A Student Strike?'

Apparently the writer, former Athabasca University student Mark Gueffroy, is advocating for a strike of post-secondary students.

Although his idea is interesting, to what end?

If there is a cost of an education, who if the student's don't want to pay their fare share, will pay the rest?

As a taxpayer I get a little tired of hearing about how the government needs to spend more money here, and more money there. The people asking for this increased spending have a vested interest in having the money spent in their areas, because they will profit from it. What we need to ask is why spend the extra money when we do not know if we are getting the best value for the money already being spent.

In the instance of the Athabasca University how do we know the tuition fees and tax grants are being spent effectively. We have a portion of our fees being invested in a virtual university idea with the majority of the investment having been lost.

What ever the amount we as students pay for our educations through our tuitions, we must know that it does not cover even 20% of the entire and true cost of our education. There is only one pocket for the money to come from it is in our jeans. So when you ask for more money from the government to be spent on something to lower the fees we pay, it comes from us in the end.

Can we afford as taxpayers to pay anymore taxes for yet another group that wants the government to increase funding.

Norm Greenfield

Student ID# 9905938



Economic Exploitation and Impoverishment: The Most Crucial Issues Facing Women Today

by Sandra Moore

When will equality between men and women become a reality? In today's society women are still stereotyped into the primary caregiver role, when women work they are also faced with juggling childcare and household duties. This can portray them to employers as less competent and capable workers than their male counterparts. Single mothers greatly outnumber instances of single fathers since it is more acceptable for the children to stay with the mother when a divorce occurs. Women are on average living longer than men, leaving our society with an abundance of elderly women living on meagre pensions because they were part of the stay at home generation of women, and pensions go on how much income you made in your lifetime. Considering that one in five Canadian women live in poverty (Morris, 2000) it is evident that economic exploitation and impoverishment are the most crucial issues facing women today.

Wage equality in the workplace between men and women is off by 22%, women only make 73% of what men earn for full-year, full-time work (Morris, 2000). Employer's view women as less competent, capable and reliable employees because of the family responsibilities associated with being a woman. Married women are primarily responsible for childcare, household duties, and care of elderly parents. The wife's employment outside of the home is usually seen as less important than the husband's, because he makes more money or has a better job which requires his undivided attention to maintain. In order to take children to doctor or dentist's appointments, which are usually only scheduled during the working day, women need to take time off work. This emphasizes to the employer her family is more important than her job and she ends up getting passed over for raises, promotions or over-time hours because of this. Men, on the other hand, do not usually have these responsibilities that take away from their jobs, emphasizing to employers that their job comes first, giving them first crack at raises, promotions and overtime hours. Major family responsibilities, like the birth of a child, a major illness in the family or the inclusion of an elderly parent in the household force women to cease or cut back on their employment. This has a life-long impact on a woman's wages, pension accumulations, and experience in her chosen field. 56% of lone parent families are headed by women who are poor, compared with 23% of those headed by men (Morris, 2000). Many women decide to stay home and raise their children, which is an honourable thing to do, but when their marriage dissolves and they are left on their own, even if they have marketable skills or experience, they have usually been out of the workforce too long for it matter to employers. For most women who have chosen to stay home to raise their children the only marketable skills they can add to a resume are: cooking, cleaning, laundry, chauffeuring, child care, and multi-tasking. After a divorce the husband gets to keep most of the family's income while the mother is left with the dependants.

“The inevitable outcome is that, while the standard of living of wives and children collapses upon marriage breakdown, that of husbands rises to the point where they have almost twice as much disposable income as they had before their families split up (Canadian Advisory Council on the Status of Women, 1987).” Single motherhood can also occur from an unplanned pregnancy when the father is unknown or does not want to stick around. Teenage girls who unexpectedly discover they are pregnant are the most disadvantaged because they usually have to quit high school, leaving them without even the most basic grade 12 education. As a single mother, a low paying job is not enough to support her family when she needs to pay daycare, rent, groceries, utilities, bus fare and phone bills. Even with child support payments, if they come in on time or at all, money is stretched to the limit for single mothers stuck in the low paying jobs women with no marketable skills are forced to take. Financial issues facing low-income single mothers affect us all, because the children being raised in these homes may not be getting adequate nutrition, health-care, housing, or education because their mothers are so financially pressed even with working one, two, or even three jobs just to support their family; the children of today are our tomorrow. Chambermaids, cleaning staff, childcare workers, waitresses and receptionists are all relatively unskilled low paying jobs dominated by women. These types of jobs are stereotyped to women because these are the types of jobs women have done since the beginning of time. Men are more advantaged because they are more readily accepted for employment in higher paying fields like the oilfield or construction industry, where they can get an entry-level position and work their way up. Physically extensive work such as that done by chambermaids and waitresses need to have the respect garnered to them that they deserve with an adequate wage, similar to that of janitors or sales representatives.

Statistics facing elderly women are even more alarming. 49% of single, widowed, or divorced women over the age of 65 are poor (Morris, 2000). The Canadian Pension Plan is based on earnings, and as illustrated in the above paragraph “women’s work” are some of the low paying jobs around. Unfortunately, the vast majority of elderly women in today’s society come from the genre where women were expected to stay home to raise their children and keep their homes clean. In 1946, only one quarter of Canadian women were employed or looking for employment (Armstrong, Armstrong, 1983). On average men receive \$533 a month from CPP upon age 65, while women receive on average \$299 a month; 56% of what men receive (Morris, 2000). The American Association of Homes and Services for the Aging reports that over one half of elderly women (52%) and one third (33%) of elderly men will use a nursing home before they die. The AAHSA also reports that care from a free standing nursing facility averages \$127 per day or over \$46,000 a year in 1995. Health care coverage does offset some of the cost of a nursing home stay and there are also many non-profit nursing homes, but still with the minimal pensions offered to elderly women the costs for them to live need to be supplemented by their families, instilling in the elderly that they are a just a burden to their families. Pensions need to be raised, especially for elderly women who are in the lowest payable brackets, to help them regain a sense of dignity, independence and a better way of life in their final years.

A vast majority of decisions that affect the economical exploitation and impoverishment of women are made by politicians who are predominantly male and who are

unsympathetic to the poor in general. These politicians cannot fathom the magnitude of this problem because they are concentrating on more important issues like maintaining relations with other countries or finding ways to increase their own wealth. I, for one, feel this is a very important issue. Women need to be awarded with equal pay and opportunities in the workforce; divisions in labour distribution need to become a thing of the past in order for this to happen. Women need to know that they are welcome in fields like construction and the oilfield, not just in offices filing files and running computers for minimum wage, but out earning the big bucks like the men do. Governments and communities implement programs like social assistance, daycare subsidies, low-income housing and nutrition programs funded by our tax dollars to assist low-income families or single parents. Just as much effort should be concentrated on preventing poverty in women by enticing them to enter more male dominated fields of work with higher pay, raise minimum wage, impose restrictions on rental property costs (e.g. the monthly rent cannot not exceed a certain percentage of the value of the home), and strictly enforce child support payments. Women are always seen as the nurturers and caregivers of society, but with so many economical difficulties facing women today, how much do they have left to give to a society that treats them as lesser human beings?

Resources

[American Association of Homes and Services for the Aging](#)

Armstrong, P., Armstrong, H., "A Working Majority: What Women Must Do For Pay" Prepared for the Canadian Advisory Council on the Status of Women by the Canadian Government Publishing Center 1983.

Canadian Advisory Council on the Status of Women. Integration and Participation: Women's Work in the Home and in the Labour Force. 1987

Morris, Marika. [Canadian Research Institution for the Advancement of Women](#) : Fact Sheet: Women and Poverty. Spring 2001.



From My Perspective: The Monarchy

by Debbie Jabbour

"The king is dead. Long live the king."

When I was young I was very confused by these two sentences. It seemed like they were invoking some sort of a spirit that would bring the dead king back to life, a reincarnation of sorts. I was even more confused when the genders were mixed - "the king is dead. Long live the queen", although as I became increasingly cognizant of male-female dynamics the idea of a queen actually coming to life upon the death of her husband did not seem so far fetched! Eventually, of course, I learned the truth. The sentence referred to two different people - acknowledging the passing of one member of royalty while wishing long life on his/her successor.

This sentence has been in my head for the past few days, with the 50th anniversary of Queen Elizabeth II filling the news, and the announcement Sunday of her sister, Princess Margaret's, death at age 71. I'm not a monarchist, in fact I'm not sure I hold any strong opinion one way or another. But I can't help but find myself fascinated by the mystique of the monarchy.

There seems to be some innate desire among humans to desire a ruler of some sort. The ancient tribe of Israel, according to the Bible, was not satisfied with the system of judges their god Yahweh had given them, and demanded a king. Their wish was granted, and while they had many oppressive kings, the system also gave birth to great historic men such as King Solomon and King David.

Virtually every nation on earth has a line of kings through history, whether they be Aztecs, Incas, Phoenicians, Egyptians, Greeks, Romans, Japanese, Chinese, Russians or English. Many of these kings and queens were outstanding men and women who led their nations with strength and vision. Others were weak; some were cruel. But their legacy is one that continues to intrigue us.

Monarchies have largely been eliminated in today's world - with a few exceptions, Canada among them. Why does Canada still cling to the monarchy when so many others (such as the United States) have moved to a more 'democratic' form of government that relies on elected representatives rather than an inherited line of royal heads?

According to what I've been reading this past week, it is Queen Elizabeth II herself who has kept the monarchy alive for Canadians. Many learned opinions speculate that had she abdicated the throne in favour of her son Charles, Canadians would have long since come to the realization that the monarchy is redundant and unnecessary to our nation.

This could well be true, although I think Canadians have other motivations for continuing the monarchy. It seems to fit with our image of polite, traditional peacemakers, and our

respect for others is embodied in our respect for the ceremonial legacy and tradition of the monarchy.

Regardless of why Canadians continue to accept the monarchy, or for how long the status quo will continue, I have nothing but respect for three women who have been part of the royal family within my lifetime - Queen Elizabeth, Princess Margaret and the Queen Mother. Why?

At a youthful age of 25, Elizabeth ascended to the throne upon the death of her father, King George VI. No period of mourning was allowed - it was simply "the king is dead, long live the queen". From that point, Elizabeth has governed with grace and dignity, always aware of her role as queen. I recall when she travelled to Edmonton to open the Commonwealth Games in 1978. My father was part of the volunteer team organizing the games, and we took a keen interest in happenings. One of the most commented-upon was the need for Commonwealth stadium to solve one urgent problem. What would happen if the queen should happen to need to use the bathroom facilities before or after her opening speech? Certainly protocol would not allow her to climb the stairs with the masses and use the public toilet! City Council and organizers struggled with the question for days, finally deciding to build a special bathroom facility just for the queen, incurring costs of thousands of dollars. Edmontonians eagerly watched the opening ceremonies to see what would happen, but as it turned out, the queen never made use of what came to be known as the "royal biffy".

As humorous as the story may seem, it really highlights the odd kind of life Queen Elizabeth II is required to lead by nature of her station. I doubt that it is an easy life. What touched me most deeply was reading a story in the Edmonton Journal on Saturday, February 9, about all the different portraits that have been done of Elizabeth, and the various artists' comments about the experience. Right from the time she was a small girl, she was described as being extremely remote and coolly detached during these sessions. The only time her eyes would light up would be when she turned to look out the window. I cannot help but wonder if that window represented some sort of freedom to a young girl who was imprisoned by the weight of her responsibility from a young age.

Her younger sister, Margaret, also made sacrifices in the name of responsibility. While a young woman, she fell in love with Captain Peter Townsend, a match considered unsuitable due to his age difference (16 years her senior) and his divorced status. This relationship mirrored that of Margaret's uncle, King Edward VIII, who twenty years previously fell in love with divorcee Wallis Simpson. Edward realized that the monarchy would be harmed by that relationship, and made the decision to abdicate the throne for his love after only 11 months as king. This resulted in both being exiled from England and rejection from the royal family; the throne passed to King George VI, father of Margaret and Elizabeth. Perhaps the memory of this was all too vivid in Margaret's mind - certainly exile and rejection from family can be a soul-destroying experience, even when you have the comfort of a beloved mate. Perhaps Margaret simply had a strong sense of responsibility to both her family and her country and was willing to sacrifice her own emotional well-being as a result (Margaret was second in line to the throne at the time, her sister Elizabeth the newly-reigning monarch).

Whatever the reason, Margaret made the decision to forgo love for duty. How far that decision contributed to her subsequent lifestyle choices is a matter for speculation. The princess reportedly was a heavy smoker and drinker, with a reputation as a wild partier. Although she married a 'suitable' man some years later, it only lasted a decade before she became involved in an affair with a much younger man. After a cancer scare and subsequent stroke, her health began to decline, and rumour was that she suffered severe depression. On February 9 a third, fatal stroke occurred, and she died in her sleep. Prince Charles paid [tribute](#), stating, "my darling aunt had such a dreadful time in the last few years with her awful illness, and it was hard for the family let alone her to bear it....particularly as she had such a wonderfully free spirit and she loved life and lived it to the full". These words seem all the more poignant when you consider the sacrifices Margaret made - her life was not particularly 'free' nor "lived to the fullest".

At the age of 101, the Queen Mother will bury her youngest daughter. The Queen Mother, christened "Elizabeth Angela Marguerite", became queen upon her marriage to George VI in 1923. No doubt she played a major role in instilling the strong sense of duty and responsibility that her daughters embraced. The queen mother is beloved among Britons, and with good reason. She has always fulfilled her role impeccably, performing her duties to country and family in a manner that has earned her not only the deep love of the Commonwealth, but also the respect of nations beyond her realm.

Writing about these three unique, strong women has made me reflect on not only the monarchy and possible reasons why Canadians continue to embrace it; but it has made me think about the significant and successful role women have played in many governmental power structures. Women bring a different perspective to leadership, and it is no doubt this perspective that has contributed to the longevity of the English monarchy. Once Charles or William succeeds to the throne, a different era of rulership will begin. Whether the words, "the queen is dead, long live the king", will spell the end of the monarchy in Canada remains to be seen. However, the contributions of these three women will echo long into the future and may well sustain the royal family for years to come.



Find Some Happy Indians, The Whole World Is Watching

by Tamra Ross Low

Friday marked the official opening of the XIX Olympic Winter games - an event traditionally marked by increasingly crass and self-referencing opening ceremonies by the chosen host city. This year, as in the last two decades, the ceremonies had little to do with athletics or athletes, and more to do with presenting the international television audience

with a glowing tribute to the strengths, characteristics and achievements of the host city. Salt Lake's presentation was at times nauseatingly wholesome, yet strikingly familiar.

Part of the familiarity was due to some presentation features that were borrowed from ceremonies held by previous host cities (e.g. the audience was made part of the show by wearing matching white smocks and holding bright lights, as they did in the Calgary ceremonies) and by the Canadian commentary which has been done by the same announcers for many years. The Salt Lake ceremonies mimicked both the Calgary and Sydney, Australia ceremonies in another way, however: All three cities utilized the time-honoured tradition of hauling out and dressing up the local aboriginals to give their ceremonies a touch of tribal colour and spiritual authenticity.

This is not to say that the natives peoples have no place in the celebrations, but their vaunted place in the show implies a relationship between the native reserves and the cities that simply does not exist. The natives in the Salt Lake ceremonies were introduced as the 'Five Nations of Utah.' An impressive sounding title that may convince foreigners that these tribal chiefs are truly leaders of strong, independently governed nations within Utah's borders. A similar picture was painted at the Calgary ceremonies, and is repeated every time Calgary vies for the privilege of hosting any international event. Whenever proposals to host events are sent out of the country, you can be sure that dozens of colourfully dressed Indians with drums and hoops will accompany the entourage.

It is no surprise that this always happens. Canada, America, and Australia are all powerful, rich, first world nations that can boast nearly limitless funding, technology and organizational experience when vying for host duties, but they are all distinctly lacking in cultural panache. As a Canadian, I loved the Aboriginal music, symbolism and dance used in the Australian ceremonies because the Aborigines in full tribal getup look fantastic and have such unique spiritual symbols and music compared to the dominant Australian culture. No doubt many Europeans love to see our Indians dance and chant for the same reasons.

Organizers of international events know all of this, but do not be deceived. The 'celebration' of native peoples in this manner also effectively masks the uneasy

relationship that exists between the indigenous and dominant cultures in most New World countries. In North America, there is a prevalent notion that Australians honour and cherish the culture of their aboriginal peoples, when in reality the relationship between the two cultures has been uneasy, and there is still great [controversy](#) over the Australian government's treatment of aboriginal affairs. Undoubtedly, the same misunderstanding persists among European viewers of North American events.

Our use of Native American people and images in our most important presentations shows that Canadians and Americans understand that Aboriginal culture and spirituality are integral to our sense of Canadian cultural identity, though we may not recognize this on a daily basis. The aboriginals animal-inspired costumes and haunting, primal songs remind us of our collective history as pioneers in this land, and of our inevitable link to nature despite our ever-increasing reliance on technology. We welcome this reminder, and without it, our presentations may seem drab and lack spirituality.

There is no question that Native Americans are a part of our land and that they should be included in our national celebrations, so why, then, does it always seem like we are including 'token Indians?' Salt Lake went so far as to have their five First Nations' Chief's give gifts to five Olympic athletes to signify that the Nations had sanctioned the opening of the games. This kind of sentiment rings hollow when we realize that until 1980, one of those celebrated Five Nations - the [Paiute](#) - was refused recognition and funding by the American government, resulting in "nearly one-half of all tribal members [perishing] during this period for lack of health resources and lack of adequate income to meet their needs." Even today, conditions on the [Navajo](#) reservation (the largest of the five Nations with over 270,000 members) in Utah "are comparable to those found in some underdeveloped third world countries. According to the 1990 Census, about 56 percent of Navajo people live below the poverty level ... the average annual per capita income a Navajo person is \$4,106, ... and unemployment ranges from 36 percent to over 50 percent seasonally. Many Navajo homes lack electricity, running water, telephones, or all of those basic services."

The plight of Canadians and Australian aboriginals is in many places comparable to that of the Navajo. The inclusion of Aboriginals in cultural events may seem to indicate that the First Nations have an honoured place in our society, but in reality it would be more appropriate to say that Natives are 'utilized' than that they are 'included.' Nowhere has this distinction been more apparent than in Salt Lake's Pioneer Jamboree segment, in which a large portion of the cheery Mormon settlers were played by aboriginal actors. It is untrue, it smacks of tokenism, and it should offend us all.

FED WATCH!



by Karl Low

Dumbing Down in Ontario

Over twenty-three million dollars was given to Ontario Universities this year [based on their performance](#) as judged by the Ontario Government. The performance of the Universities was measured on three key indicators:

- ♦ the graduation rate of students
- ♦ the six month employment rate of graduates from undergraduate programs
- ♦ the two year employment rate of graduates from undergraduate programs

That the Ontario Provincial Government would tie funding to the rate of graduation is disturbing however, as it encourages Universities to establish policies of easier grading to improve their percentage of graduating students. These key performance indicators also tend to punish universities that have a higher percentage of students moving into post-graduate studies, or that offer programmes which promote non-traditional lifestyles such as one of social activism.

Unfortunately, the governments continual concentration on economics as the primary way to benefit people forces them into the practice of using quantitative rather than qualitative measurements. A university that manages to get 95% of it's students jobs as burger flippers will fare better under this system than one that creates Pulitzer prize winners among a group of non-traditionally employed. There was once a time when a University Education was about being a better citizen of society, not just a better worker.

Increasing Access

Better news comes for Ontario post-secondary students with disabilities. The Government has announced a plan to extend a pilot project of providing bursaries to disabled post-secondary students [province wide](#). This program will allow students with physical or learning disabilities across the province of Ontario to receive bursaries of up to \$10,000.00 to help support them while they are going through post-secondary education.

"The majority of students who participated in our learning disabilities pilot projects said that the supports they received helped them to be more successful in their postsecondary studies," reports Dianne Cunningham, Minister of Training, Colleges and Universities. This is hardly surprising however, as studies have shown that in order to afford post-secondary education, many students have having to take part-time jobs in addition to their

full time school status. It is little wonder that receiving an extra bursary can help take some of the pressure off and allow a student to concentrate more fully on their studies.

What is surprising is that it takes a set of projects over five years at the cost of \$30 million to figure this out. It seems only common sense that the best way to increase the number of graduates coming from universities is not to bribe the universities to graduate more students, but rather to provide the students with the necessary resources so that they can devote their time and energy to learning rather than surviving.

Health Reports All Over

Roy Romanow's interim report on Health Care has already been roasted by most of the press as a document useful only for saying that Roy's doing something with the money that's been given to him. Exactly what, we're not sure, but something. In fact, the recent [press release](#) sums up the contents of the report quite nicely in four bullet points. In brief, Roy Romanow's ideas so far include raising taxes, user fees, putting more of it on the private sector, and "the reorganization of service delivery to preserve and improve the current system". None of these are new - in fact, these ideas are pretty much the same ones that we started with. It's too bad that with all the money spent on this issue, nobody it seems has yet thought of any real legislative solutions or incentive programs to encourage people to stay healthy, and keep the system working.

A growing body of evidence suggests that privatization is definitely not the way to go, and those that try it wind up [suffering](#) a massive reduction in quality and access. Despite this, various governments across Canada, unwilling or unable to make any of the truly hard decisions necessary to keep health care working instead are deciding to pass things off to the magic of the private sector.

I'll certainly admit it is a tempting option. After all, look what the magic of private enterprise has brought us in terms of goods and luxuries. Yet it seems by focussing on this aspect, we miss something critical in the development of good private sector companies -- those that make bad decisions fail, while those that make better decisions survive. This is fine if the companies are making consumer goods and services, things that don't really matter if individual companies fail. The difference in medical services however is that we can not afford to let them fail.

Not once.

We can't afford to have a person permanently injured because a "discount" chiropractic office didn't hire people with enough training. We can't afford to have people waiting for dialysis left up in the air when their provider goes bankrupt.

Without the freedom to fail, there is nothing that encourages the evolution of private providers to the best methods possible - and if that isn't there, then the entire reasoning behind privatization can and should be seriously questioned.



Time for a New Political Party

by Wayne Benedict

It is time for all Canadian unions to politicize in a synergistic manner. By actively participating in the political process unions, and by extension the working-class members that they represent, will have a say in the legislation, policies, and governmental initiatives that will affect every aspect of their being—both on and off the job. They can also act as a light in the dark for the unorganized

sectors of the labour market and the unemployed, educating those voters as to where they should cast their ballots in order to better their lots in life. Union non-partisanship contributes to the political diffusion of the working-class as a whole and the resultant political weakness of said class in society. Wage and salary earners and the unemployed make up the largest segment of Canadian society and if properly educated they could potentially take political control of any province or the entire country. Unions, as the only prominent examples of working-class organization, must take the lead in this regard, as no other group has the organizational or financial means to do so.

Merely encouraging the working-class to vote for the candidates of existing political parties will not be enough to turn the tide for the working class. New political parties need to be founded to represent the wage and salary earners (the CCF and its successor the NDP have always been a conglomeration of competing social groups that lead to schizophrenic indecision and internecine divisions). The working-class electorate needs to be reeducated to the fact that, as humans, there are many facets to our personal needs and desires such as ecology, women's issues, ethnic minority issues, welfare issues, gay/lesbian issues, etc. If the members of all of those groups were to look at their income, chances are that they depend on a bi-weekly cheque in order to survive. If that is the case, then they are members, or potential members (in the case of the unemployed) of the wage and salary earning class. These people must subordinate their many other facets to that fact and vote as a block for a party that would place first on their priority the quality, quantity and security of jobs in a responsible and pluralistic manner if they ever hope to better the voting strategy of the right-wing upper classes at the polls.

Nothing should elicit more pity from enlightened workers as a fellow wage and salary earner espousing the rhetoric of his or her master, such as the oft heard "Unions did have their place once, but with all the labour laws and standards, why do we need them [now]?" Nothing could make a multinational corporate executive or her right-wing politician bed-mate smile more broadly than to hear a subjugated servant echoing ones own beliefs. The most insidious of manipulations occurs when the manipulated doesn't even recognize the manipulation. Do you take offence to the terms "master" and "servant"? You should, as Canada's non-union employment environment is still based on

the British master/servant relationship embodied in the contract of service at common law.

The political status quo will only lead workers and their families further down the road of retreat towards a pre-WWII or Dickensian state of affairs. Syndicalism is an unreachable (and undesirable) vision and Canada's unions can and should be at the forefront of a new political movement uniting all of the wage and salary earners in order for the numerical majority to wrestle political control from the ruling minority. Canadian unions, including those in Quebec, are needed to work within the existing Canadian political structure and to help found these new provincial and federal parties.



Debt Management

by Mark Gueffroy

Debt has become a major concern for almost every person in today's society, which has become a culture that depends on credit to survive. There are many businesses and organizations that provide debt management services, charging a fee to clients already in debt.

The key to managing debt is to avoid panic, and to take one step at a time. The first step is to organize all credit data into one document. This will allow you to set goals toward becoming debt free, and assist you in reaching those goals. The document should include the name and contact information of the creditor, the amount of the debt, required monthly payment (if applicable), and the method of payment. Other information can also be included for your convenience.

The second step toward becoming debt-free is to make goals toward your debt management. Examine the information in the document you prepared above, and set goals for completing payments on a certain debt. Remember that you will have other obligations and cannot dedicate your entire income toward debt management. You will need to budget your expected monthly income, and determine the amount that can be dedicated for debt management. This amount can be sent to one creditor, or can be divided and sent to several if necessary. Be sure to make the minimum payment required in order to preserve or repair your credit history.

The third step is to reach the goals that you have set. Although it will be a challenge, remember that you are doing the best that you can, and make that honest effort. It is a

good idea to save some money for emergencies to avoid “borrowing” the money committed to debt management.

Debt management is a challenge. If you become frustrated, take some time for another task or for relaxing, and after allowing yourself to calm down, return to your task of debt management.

The author of this article provides free debt management consulting services, and is available to answer questions and provide advice. Mark Gueffroy may be contacted by email at markgueffroy@shaw.ca, or by phone at (403) 885-6045.



Around the World...

by Billie Tennant

Being an enthusiastic traveller, I have found it hard to be in school for the past few years. I have been utilizing student loans, and their expectation that students live (in my opinion) half a step up from abject poverty has meant that I can hardly afford a trip out of the city, let alone overseas. My best friend Kim has opted not to attend post secondary, as she is not yet sure what degree she wants. In the meantime, she has been travelling the globe, returning home only long enough to get a job so she can save enough money to travel again. She is currently in New Zealand, on her second work visa through the Student Work Abroad Program (SWAP).

<http://www.swap.ca/common/html/splash/>

In an attempt to relive some of my glory days as a traveller, and to stave off maniacal jealousy of Kim’s weekly updates of hiking volcanoes and jetting off to New Caledonia and the like, I thought it would be fun to write a series of articles about travel. I envision the articles will be a combination of highlights from my travel journals, discussion of informative books and web sites, and will also feature places in and around Alberta that AU students (including myself) can afford to travel to. As much as possible, these will be written from personal experience.

If there is a place you’re interested in learning more about; or if you would like me to feature a great place that you want to share, please let me know! Ideas are always most welcome.



NEWS OF OTHER STUDENT UNIONS:

U of A student union slapped with \$170-K defamation suit

by Jhenifer Pabillano and Andra Olson, Gateway

EDMONTON (CUP) -- A University of Alberta student interrupted a meeting of the student union council Tuesday night to serve the union's president

with a \$170,000 defamation lawsuit.

Paul Conquest, a fourth-year arts student, is suing the university's student union and its president Chris Samuel for allegedly defaming him in a newspaper advertisement last spring.

Samuel took out a half-page ad in the April 5, 2001 issue of the Gateway, the university's student newspaper, in response to a letter to the editor Conquest had published about a student union award-committee selection in the previous issue of the newspaper.

The ad stated that Conquest's letter was "poorly researched" and made other statements that Conquest says are defamatory and have adversely affected his professional career.

Conquest says that despite numerous efforts, no substantial apology has been presented for the comments Samuel made in the ad.

"I think [Samuel] had every opportunity to rebut the opinion," Conquest said. "Did he have the right to attack someone in order to make the opinion? No."

Conquest's letter alleged the committees selecting student union scholarship recipients appeared unfair. His letter called for the "refund of all monetary awards granted by the [student union] to current and former [student union] executive and councillors."

In his advertised response, Samuel wrote that Conquest's letter was grossly inaccurate, and charged that Conquest "incorrectly stated the composition of this committee, which proves that he is uninformed and thus unqualified to make any statements about the awards selection process."

Conquest said he responded to Samuel's ad with disbelief.

"On one hand I was outraged because I took it as an attack. It wasn't focused on the issue; it was focused on the person and I felt like he was running me down in order to support his issue."

Samuel would not comment on the lawsuit, citing legal concerns.

Conquest said that prior to taking legal action, he hired a lawyer to write numerous letters to the student union, suggesting ways for possible amends.

"What I asked for was an apology that gives the same emphasis and space as the attack," Conquest said. "I wanted two quarter-page ads [in the Gateway] so that they would have a better chance to catch all the people who might have read the attack. And I wanted it to be put in right at the beginning of the year, to inform students right away."

Conquest said the student union agreed to his request in a letter but did not follow through with the ads at the beginning of the year. Subsequent correspondence failed to garner a response.

Conquest said he named the union, and not just Samuel, in the suit because the ad gave the impression Samuel was speaking to students on behalf on the entire council.

"The advertisement was placed under the union's logo and artwork and was undoubtedly paid for by the students' union. It become an official act of the students' union," said Conquest.

He said his central motive for the lawsuit is to establish his credibility among professors and peers at the university.

"The most important thing is that I want to go into graduate school. Going to graduate school, I need references from the academic community. Everybody that I potentially ask for a reference may have seen this, so I can't get an unbiased reference anymore."



Students rally across Canada in national day of action

by Staff, Canadian University Press

Thousands of college and university students in cities across Canada held a national "day of action" Wednesday, calling for an end to swelling student debtloads and soaring tuition fees.

National lobby group the Canadian Federation of Students, the organizers of the protest, say tuition fee levels have jumped an average of 126 per cent over the past decade, putting higher education out of reach for many students from low- and middle-income families. The group says the average Canadian student will graduate with a debt of more than \$25,000.

Below are early reports on the national protest from across the country. (Ed. note: Additional, more comprehensive reports will appear in the same format on Thursday's wire)

B.C. students storm legislature to protest tuition hikes

by Kevin Groves, the Martlet

VICTORIA (CUP) -- Thousands braved heavy rains in Victoria Wednesday to lodge their dissent with the provincial government and voice their support for accessible education.

Nearly 3,000 people, many of whom fear tuition fees in B.C. could double in the next few years, gathered on the soggy legislature grounds and marched around the downtown core.

"We're here to say we're not going to take massive tuition hikes," said Janice Delcourt, who traveled from Nanaimo's Malaspina University College. "That is just wrong."

The crowd heard from student and labour leaders and emcee Troy Sebastian. Sebastian invited any Liberal MLAs who may be present to come to the mic, although the invitation went unheeded.

Students from the University of Victoria, Camosun College, Malaspina University-College, North Island College, and Lanagara College in Vancouver all attended the rally.

Opinions in the crowd were virtually unanimous that tuition fee hikes would price education out of reach of all but the wealthiest.

"Cutting low-income people from getting an education is completely unacceptable," said John Gary, a student from Lanagara College, who made the trip across the Georgia Strait to be at the rally.

Gary added he will be able to afford to go to school next year should the freeze be lifted, but increased tuition will make it more difficult.

But other students said they are not that fortunate.

"If the Liberals hike tuition there's no way I will be able to go to school," said UVic student Thea McMahon. "It's just that simple."

Summer McFadyen, B.C. chair of the Canadian Federation of Students met briefly with Advanced Education Minister Shirley Bond before the rally but wasn't happy with the results.

"She just met us so she could tell the media about it," said the exasperated student leader. "She had nothing new to say to us."

McFadyen said she fears Bond has already decided to lift the freeze and go against her party's election promise to make education a priority.

"We're giving her a last chance here to change her mind in favour of students and in favour of the tuition freeze," she said.

McFadyen added the sentiment expressed by students on Feb. 6 would only grow

stronger if Bond doesn't reconsider lifting the freeze.

"If she thinks she sees angry students now, she should just wait two weeks and see what happens when she asks them to pay double for their education," McFadyen said.

Students staged solidarity actions across the country. Five thousand students marched in Toronto, 3,000 marched in Halifax and 1,500 marched in Vancouver. Several hundred students also converged on Prince George, which is Bond's home riding.

Students also occupied the Newfoundland legislature and the Carleton University president's office. The Victoria demonstration was peaceful.

A group of 30 UVic students marched from campus to the Legislature, stopping at Camosun College and various high schools along their route.

More than just university students showed up to the rally.

Ten-year-old Emile Fumiere attended the rally with his parents.

"I think Gordon Campbell shouldn't make university tuition more because then only rich kids will be able to go," he said.

Alberta students protest 'slippery slope'

by Neil Parmar, Alberta Bureau Chief, Alberta Bureau

CALGARY (CUP) -- University of Calgary students took part in Wednesday's national day of action free skiing and snowboarding to demonstrate that "post-secondary education is on a slippery slope."

The activities were co-hosted by Canadian Federation of Students and six on-campus student associations to protest high tuition fees.

"Right now on campus you have rich students who come from wealthier backgrounds content with tuition levels, and other students who can't afford it," said Anand Sharma, a member of the faculty of arts student council at the University of Alberta.

While the U of A currently holds membership with the Canadian Alliance of Student Associations (CASA), Sharma hopes that one day the university will join CFS.

CASA was formed in part by students at the University of Alberta in 1995 for students to be represented to federal and inter-provincial levels of government.

Kory Zwack, the CASA representative for the U of A believes the CFS's lobbying techniques are problematic.

"It is very difficult the way they lobby, because to go against the federal government they are currently powerless to do anything to tuition with the jurisdiction of powers in the province."

"The fact of the matter is, do you support the band-aid solution or do you address the long-term solution?" said Sharma. "You have to do both, but that is the biggest problem with CASA. They do not want to talk about the issue of tuition. When they do, they talk about tuition increases and not the [tuition] freezes that student want."



ENLIGHTENING INFORMATION

**The Lunch Hour Talk @
Expressionz Caf  / 9142 St. & 118 Ave.**
Infoline: 474-6058 - Admission is free

February 21, 2002 / Noon - 1:00 p.m.

Civil Society: What is it?
with Martin Garber-Conrad & Scott Harris

Join us for a lunch hour conversation on the topic of civil society, as we explore some definitions & understandings, and examine the role of citizens in shaping it...

About our guests:

Martin Garber-Conrad is the executive director of the Edmonton City Centre Church Corporation (E4C) --- a community agency that runs a variety of programs for women, children and youth-at-risk. E4C works in the areas of housing, feeding, employment and outreach. Martin chairs the Success By 6 Council of Partners and serves on the board of Edmonton's Food Bank.

Scott Harris is the executive director of the Alberta Council for Global Cooperation (ACGC), a coalition of development and social justice organisations in Alberta, and is active in numerous areas of civil society from direct action groups to non-governmental organizations (NGO's).

February 21th, 2002 / Noon - 1:00 p.m.
Expressionz Caf  , 9142 - 118 Avenue
Infoline: 474-6058 - Admission is free

A presentation of:
The Community Networks Group (c)
6819 - 119 Avenue, Edmonton (Canada) T5B 4L9
Tel/Fax: (780) 474-6058 / Pager: (780) 419-7654

HAUNTED LAND

A documentary by *Mary Ellen Davis*
Canada-Guatemala 2001, 74 minutes

Tuesday, March 5 at 7:00 PM @ Metro Cinema
Zeidler Hall, Citadel Theatre / Tickets: \$7.00 at the door
INFOLINE: 471-6512

About the Film...

Two paths cross on a descent into Guatemala's past: that of Mateo Pablo, a Maya survivor of one of many massacres committed by local government troops, and Daniel Hernandez-Salazar, a concerned Guatemalan artist and photographer.

Together they travel to a remote site in the highlands where the community of Petanac once stood. The bones found there by archaeologists tell a mute story of agony... A lyrical and unsettling "road-movie" documentary... A unique opportunity to see it...

"A moving work, and a great testimony to break the silence about the genocide in Guatemala." - Nov. 2001, Rigoberta Menchu Tum, Nobel Peace Prize winner.

"An unforgettable feature documentary.", John Griffin, The Gazette, Montreal, Jan. 30/02
"An incredibly powerful film.", Matthew Hayes, Mirror, Montreal, Jan. 24/02

Haunted Land and **Mateo Pablo** are travelling to Edmonton, Nanaimo, Vancouver, Victoria, Port Alberni, Prince George, Calgary and Winnipeg. This tour is organized by the **Guatemala Canada Solidarity Network**. Please visit us: www.gcsn.org

The Edmonton screening of **Haunted Land** is sponsored by the Guatemala Solidarity Committee of Change for Children Association and Metro Cinema.

Courtesy of:
The Community Networks Group (c)
6819 - 119 Avenue, Edmonton (Canada) T5B 4L9
Tel/Fax: (780) 474-6058 / Pager: (780) 419-7654

The NEW Gallery 516 D 9th Ave. SW

(403) 233-2399

www.nucleus.com/~thenewgallery

thenewgallery@nucleus.com

FEBRUARY 2002

Main Space

February 8 - March 2

Title: DRIVING

Artist: Lee Goreas (Toronto)

Goreas will create an interactive installation surrounding our relationship (and more specifically the male relationship), to both institutional and popular culture through the use of humour. The exhibition will include: Par 2 Golf Course, an interactive sculpture based on the miniature golf course and Slow Down Show Down, a customized figure-8 race track that allows members of the audience to compete with each other using remote control racecars and other components. The video Ring of Fire will document the artists' view out of the front window of his automobile as he travels down the spiral exit ramp in a parkade. The car stereo plays Burning Ring of Fire by Johnny Cash.

The artist incorporates elements from contemporary film dialogue, Modernist Literature, North American car culture and urban architecture for both beauty and social criticism.

Front Space

February 8 - March 2

Artist: Richard Smolinski (Calgary)

Calgary artist, SMOLinski will exhibit approximately 20 black and white images executed on paper with water-based media that portray male figures in a variety of roles. By examining the male gender's conventions, stereotypes and roles, the artist illustrates a number of motivating factors and societal influences that contribute to this behaviour.

+15 Window Space Epcor Centre for the Performing Arts

February/March

Opening: February 21 @ 8 PM.

Title: PLASMODESMATA

Artist: James McDougall (Calgary)

McDougall will combine biology and art to create drawings of botanical diagrams. These drawings become abstract through layering, repetition and superimposing the diagrams one after another with oil pastel and coloured pencil. Plasmodesmata is a term used to refer to narrow tubes that connect one cell to another in plants. The work uses biological theory and art to display basic life processes: cell division, maturation and growth. The artist uses these links to parallel the ever changing yet similar cycles of all organic beings. This exhibition will examine the relationship between scientific thought and practice possibilities.

The New Gallery

516D - 9th Avenue S.W.

Calgary, AB T2P 1L4

P: 403-233-2399 F: 403-290-1714

E: thenewgallery@nucleus.com

W: <http://www.nucleus.com/~thenewgallery>

Candice Noakes, Administrative Coordinator; Tammy McGrath, Programming Coordinator;

Melody Jacobson, Resource Coordinator / Web Editor;

The New Gallery--supporting and promoting contemporary art and artists since 1975

Main Space at Stride Gallery

Reginald Baxter

King Charles Cavalier Spaniel

February 22 - March 23, 2002

Opening Reception: Friday, February 22 @ 8PM

Artist Meet and Greet: Saturday, February 23, 2002

Since 1990 Reginald Baxter has been painting copies of a King Charles Cavalier Spaniel that at a rate of about 4 to 8 each year. The source for this image itself is a bit of a mystery as it was extracted from an "original art" catalogue where the artists' names appeared to have been fabricated. Upon the first examination the 30 or so dog paintings appear to be replicas of one another, but on closer inspection it is quite easy to spot subtle differences that render each work as a unique original. The paintings are a crude counterpart to current technologies (like photography or videography) where there is no such thing as an original, but only mechanically-made duplicates. These collection of paintings that begun as a mechanically reproduced image of a forgery painting have ironically ended up as original pieces revealing the non-mechanical nature of the human touch and our ways of seeing.

Reginald Baxter graduated from the Ontario College of Art with an Honours in Fine Art in 1989. His work has been widely exhibited in Canada and abroad in various galleries including Kenderline Art Gallery, Saskatoon, SK; Mercer Union, Toronto, ON; and 494 Gallery, Brooklyn, NY; and the Venice Biennial, Canadian Pavillion (collaborative bookwork with Tom Dean), Venice, Italy.

The artist will be in attendance at the opening reception. A brochure will accompany the exhibition.

Stride Gallery 1004 MacLeod Trail S.E., Calgary, AB CANADA T2G 2M7

Hours of operation: Tuesdays - Saturdays 11 - 5 p.m.

Storefront. Admission is free and everyone is welcome.

web: www.stride.ab.ca

eMail: stride2@telusplanet.net

PHONE: 403.262.8507

FAX: 403.269.5220

For further information about Stride Gallery's upcoming program, please contact Lissa Robinson, Director at 403.262.8507. The Stride Gallery is an artist-run gallery that is funded in part by the Alberta Foundation for the Arts, the Calgary Region Arts Foundation, the Canada Council and the generous support of the Calgary community.

Global Village Backpackers Banff.

Our hostel opened June 1, 2001 right in downtown Banff. Formerly the Woodland Village Inn, we are a unique hostel as all our rooms have ensuite bathroom facilities. We have a hot tub, sauna, internet access, kitchen facilities, pool table, tour desk, TV room, bike rentals, laundry facilities, lounge and a large outdoor courtyard patio.

A majority of our rooms are spacious 4-8 bed dorms. We also have, what we call, semi-private rooms. Each has a double bed in a loft above a 4 bed dorm. You share the washroom facilities with the dorm.

Room rates - October 1, 2001 - April 14, 2001

Dorm Beds	\$25.00	\$22.00
Semi-private	\$55.00	\$51.00
Weekly rate in a dorm room	\$129.50 (non-refundable)	

All prices include taxes and linen. Discounts are available to travelers carrying YHA, ISIC, VIP or GO cards.

2001/2002 Ski packages

3 Nights/2 days - only \$169
3 Nights shared accommodation
2 days ski passes (Lake Louise/Sunshine Village/Mount Norquay)
Transport to/from ski hills
Free pancake breakfast daily.

6 Nights/5 days - only \$369
6 Nights shared accommodation
5 days ski passes (Lake Louise/Sunshine Village/Mount Norquay)
Transport to/from ski hills
Free pancake breakfast daily.

We require credit card details to guarantee reservations.
We welcome group bookings. Please call the hostel directly for details.

Cheers

The Staff at the Global Village Backpackers Banff
449 Banff Avenue BOX 398
Banff AB Canada T1L 1A5

1-403-762-5521 Toll-free in North America 1-888-844-7875 fax 1-403-762-0385

Are you an Artist? AUSU supports the arts!

AUSU is interested in purchasing original works of art from students for use in promotional purposes. These promotions may include: gifts from AUSU to graduates at convocation, tokens of appreciation for volunteers, special presentations, etc.

The works of art must:

- be created by an AU Student
- be within a value range \$0-\$500.
- be accessible or easily transportable to Alberta

If you are an artist of any kind who creates a product you feel we would be able to use for such a purpose, please contact djabbour@ausu.org. Supply a brief description of the art object, a picture if you have it, and its market value.

WRITE FOR THE VOICE!

Contact Tammy Moore at tmoore@ausu.org for details on writing for The Voice, providing a sample selection of writing and preferred genre.