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# the VOICE

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## Quote of The Week:

**“If you believe in what you are doing, then let nothing hold you up in your work. Much of the best work of the world has been done against seeming impossibilities. The thing is to get the work done.”**

**--Dale  
Carnegie**



## **A Bug In Your Ear... An AU ANNOUNCEMENT**

Athabasca University's Mathematics Diagnostic  
Assessment is now published online at  
<http://www.athabascau.ca/html/services/counselling/math/>.

Two versions of this online test contain 30 or 70 questions

that will help assess students' mathematical skills. Based on their score, the assessment will recommend which Athabasca University mathematics course a student is likely ready to take successfully.

You may also find the online English Language Skills Assessment useful. It is found at <http://www.athabascau.ca/html/services/counselling/esl/>

Thank you for your cooperation in this matter. Please contact me at the phone number or e-mail address below if you have any questions or concerns.

Dean Caplan  
Instructional Media Analyst  
Dept. of Educational Media Development  
Athabasca University

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## **Strange Heirlooms Fall Cleaning Impossibilities By Tamra Ross Low**

Spring cleaning, or fall cleaning. Some of us like to us like to clear out our junk before the warm weather arrives; others pull out the brooms and dustpans as the summer fades. The changing of seasons marks the years, and we are reminded to clear out the clutter when we rake up the leaves or

take out the mowers and sprinklers.

I'm one of the lazy ones. I like to say I do a big cleaning every year, but really I don't get around to it until I have to. I have the dubious luxury of a basement. Dubious, because while it affords an abundance of storage, it, well, affords an abundance of storage. Anyone with a basement understands the paradox.

I spent all of yesterday cleaning my basement. Not because I am suddenly motivated (although I'm proud to say that after 5 years in our house, we finally reorganized the entire main floor last month, and it was entirely of our own motivation), but because my

father is coming from Quebec for an extended visit, and right now he won't fit in the basement, let alone be able to live in it.

We started yesterday around 11:00 am, and ended around 1am. The job is only about half done, and my deck and living room are filled with bags and boxes to be sorted, donated, recycled, and repacked. I can't believe the amount of stuff we have down there, nor do I know where most of it comes from? We found things my husband and I have never seen before. I'm quite certain that my neighbors sneak in when we're out and store some of their junk down there.

I know I'm not alone in this. Everyone with a basement seems to have the same problem. There are the items you got rid of, but they keep coming back. I have a Christmas print cake tin filled with Tupperware beverage glasses that I've given to the Sally Anne 3 times. I found them again yesterday. My husband rolled his eyes and swore that he took them to the donation bin last year. Hmm....

Doing up all of the accumulated laundry revealed that I have two identical copies of the same black shirt, which I only had one of before: Same brand, same style, same relative age and wear. I had no idea that shirts bred. Why can't my favorite jeans do that?

I found receipts for stereo equipment that my ex-boyfriend bought, and I have not seen him in 8 years. I thought I'd burned all that stuff when I went on the big 'wash that \*hole right outta my hair' rampage of 1996.

Also in the basement: Assignments I wrote in high-school, a steel sandwich grill with analogue temperature gauge that belongs in a museum, a dial phone that weighs ten pounds, some funky 60s smocks that my mom wore (and that are nearly back in style), an under-the-couch stockpile of 100s of balls of crumpled paper, coupons, receipts, twist-ties and pop caps (my older cat watched with moist saucer-eyes as we swept her stash into a bucket), a fat black spider in a thick cottony web that probably was the work of months (I vacuumed him up because, you know, they say nothing can live in a vacuum {heh}), my husband's boy-hood snow pants, a full-sized weight bench, a stack of 5 year-old newspapers that should have been recycled, a wooden spinning wheel that belonged to my great grandmother (who I never met), 2 extra sets of speakers, a small graveyard of useless appliances, an extra stereo and computer, and 2 spare CD Rom drives – just in case. I figure I could get \$50 for the lot of it.

At least 90% of my clutter is made of paper. A company has developed a way to make cement bricks from shredded paper, and you can build houses out of it. Let's say I'm about 30% of the way toward my dream home.

Not only do I have no idea where most of it came from, I wonder how many years I've taken off of my life moving this crap from house to house. We've been toting around a broken floor lamp for 5 years.

One of the bulkiest items, and the hardest to store, is a 30 year-old tricycle. It is small and solid, with deep maroon paint and solid black tires worn treadless and as soft as suede. The ridged steps on the back – to stand on with one foot while you push – are bare of paint, and the small coasting bars on either side of the front tire are losing their chrome. The plate on the front, which bears the name of the manufacturer, is worn illegible.

Why do I keep it? Because it was a gift from my grandmother and grandfather, on the occasion of their last visit to Calgary when I was 5 years old. Grandpa lived another 20 years, and Nana is still going strong at the age of 93, but they never came to Calgary again, and the tricycle is the only gift they ever bought me. I still get a cheque from Nana every Christmas, but cheques don't make memories.

Objects hold memories, and their value increases proportionally, perhaps even geometrically, to the age of the memory and the dearness of the person it invokes. Age does make one more nostalgic – even those of us who spit on sentimentality, and who think 'heartwarming' is a four-letter word.

Memories make us hold onto the strangest things – things no one else would even consider. Like the tricycle of a 33 year-old woman who does not want children, or the piece of packing tape folded over a tuft of cat hair.

About the latter: My beloved cat, Max, caught his tail in my tape gun three days before I had to have him put down at the age of 14. I cut a chunk of his fur to remove the tape, and found it a few days after he died. I keep it tucked under the small black urn that contains his ashes. It reminds me of his colour and his soft warmth.

I also keep a Sears' catalogue from early this year. The cover shows a white zippered sweater that I like, but do not love. My mother was dying when the catalogue came out in January, and did not want me to know how ill she was. So, when I would talk to her on the phone, she would talk about things she would do in the future. She wanted to buy me that sweater for my birthday in July, because she knew I liked sweaters and was sure I'd love that one. I did not have the catalogue, but she asked me to pick one up. I forgot, and she kept asking, so finally I did. She continued to talk about my birthday, right up until the end, and when the day came – 1 month after mom died, I wanted that sweater most of all, but not to have the sweater, of course. Instead, I have saved the catalogue.

Isn't it strange that the things we keep around us are often so insignificant in material terms? People in movies and soap operas always cling to sentimental objects of great value – like a grandmother's diamond ring, a jeweled pin that has been passed through the generations, or a priceless piece of art.

In reality, the things that invoke our memories are rarely treasures in the conventional sense. I recall a line in the movie *Singles*, when a man proposes to his pregnant girlfriend while they eat chili-dogs in the park: "Please, don't make me remember this chili dog for the rest of my life!"

These things happen... who knows who might have an old chili-dog wrapper tucked away in a drawer. I wonder, sometimes, what kinds of objects other people hold on to, and if they are as strange and varied as mine. The one thing I know is that when you are in someone's home, you can never predict which items they hold most dear. It might be the fine porcelain vase on the mantel, or the tattered receipt being used as a bookmark in an old almanac. Anything can be precious.

I say this in reminder to those who will look at my basement and ask why I keep all this junk. We all have our junk – and we all have our treasures.

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*Tamra lives in Calgary with her husband and two cats. A fulltime AU student, she splits her free time between her duties as an AUSU councillor, writing her first novel, and editing written work by other students and friends.*

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## **From My Perspective: Reading books By Debbie Jabbour**

The other day I was having an email discussion with several other Voice writers when one of them brought up the topic of book reviews, stating that a particular book was one you would “not want to put down.” I responded with a semi-serious question, “you have time to read books???” His answer provided a helpful suggestion, and really got me

thinking about the whole issue of reading for pleasure.

I've always been a voracious reader, and the library is one of my most revered places. Those of you who are long-time Voice readers may remember my article on an encounter with a librarian. The article detailed my experience as a small child – in Grade One, but

reading at a Grade Six level – having to prove to the vigilant bookmobile librarian that I really was capable of reading all those difficult books I wanted to borrow.

From the moment I learned to read, I rarely went anywhere without a book in hand. At school I would arrive at class, and rather than hang out in the hallway waiting for class to start, I would sit down in my desk, reading my book. I would be so absorbed in my reading that often the class would be well into the lesson before the teacher would notice that I still had my nose stuck in my book and yell “Debbie!! Put down the book and join the class!”

Reading was not just a solitary activity for me, either. My friends and I spent many companionable hours together, not saying a word, just sitting in the same room reading our books. I never minded being left to stay with relatives in the country – as long as they had plenty of books for me to read, I was never bored. Reading was often a distraction from the task at hand, and I was easily sidetracked. For example, if I was sent to lay old newspapers on the floor of a room that was to be painted – guaranteed I would be found still sitting on the floor hours later, completely absorbed in reading those newspapers!

Reading has always been my favoured method of relaxation, and my choice of subject depends on my mood – so I enjoy reading a wide variety of books, both fiction and non-fiction. My preferred way of getting the news is by reading the newspaper instead of watching TV. I would much rather “read the book” than “see the movie.” I enjoy reading technical manuals too... the first thing I do when buying a new piece of equipment is read the manual!

As a university student, however, my love of reading has been put on hold. Don’t get me wrong. I am passionate about my studies, and my course readings give me great satisfaction. But it is not the same as reading purely for pleasure, and this is something I really miss. It’s been a very long time since I actually read a book that was not mandated by Athabasca University. My fellow writer’s comments made me realize that I need to change this.

He commented that finding time for reading can be managed by using little “micro chunks of time” throughout our busy day. It may be while we are waiting in line at the drive-through, waiting to pick up our kids after school or a dance lesson, getting our car filled up with gas, or while sitting in the doctor’s office. I’ve tried this with my textbooks... I carry them around with me, and try to read pages here and there whenever I can. But I find that I cannot put a proper level of focus on the course when reading a few paragraphs here and there, and often lose my place and forget what I’ve read. If I were reading a novel, or a non-academic book, this would be different. When reading a paragraph or two from a book that is weaving a gripping story, it’s relatively easy to put it down and pick it up later without losing continuity. When the book is going into an analysis of race relations in historical Canada, detailing the chemical composition of the brain, or explaining a formula for calculating probability; it’s quite another matter.

His words made me think that perhaps I'm making a mistake in feeling that all my free moments should be occupied with academic reading. Putting my love of reading on hold has been depriving me of an important source of relaxation. Finding success in university studies requires balance in how we structure our lives. I've already learned the hard way that neglecting my physical health because I'm too occupied in my studies can have serious consequences. It's no different with mental and emotional health. Taking a little bit of time for ourselves to engage in an activity we enjoy outside of schoolwork can have a highly restorative effect on our equilibrium, and leave us refreshed and re-motivated.

Of course, reading for pleasure is risky behaviour for me, since I may find myself completely distracted by the book – to the detriment of my other activities. It's possible that if I have too many non-academic books at my disposal, I will be inclined to forego my studies on days when I'm feeling stressed and burned out, gravitating instead toward a novel that "I just can't put down." I'm also quite capable of getting so lost in a book that I forget to go pick my daughter up from school! Even going into a bookstore can be quite dangerous, since I am easily tempted to invest a significant chunk of my paycheque on books. But I think the benefits will outweigh the risks. I've sacrificed many things in my goal toward a degree, and placed much of my life on hold. Several important things, however, should never be sacrificed, because they are integral to success: 1. your own physical, mental and emotional health, 2. your family, and 3. your friends.

Not only does reading for pleasure help me find balance in my mental and emotional health, books are my friends. I look forward to spending some quality time with those friends by doing some non-academic reading during those "micro-chunks of time" throughout my day.

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*Debbie is a native Edmontonian, and a single parent with four daughters. She has worked as a professional musician for most of her life, and has enjoyed a rich variety of life experiences - with many more to come! Debbie is working towards an eventual doctorate in psychology, and currently serves as the president of the Athabasca University Students' Union*

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## **Canadian Fed Watch!**

### ***News Across The Nation...***

*December 11, 2002*

**By Karl Low**

### **If you Drink & Drive - Avoid Manitoba**

With one of the toughest new programs to combat drinking and driving, the Manitoba government has [passed a law](#) that allows the government to seize and sell your automobile if you are involved in drinking and driving. This can even happen on a first offence if your driving leads to causing injury or death to another person. Other new penalties in this law involve the loss of your collision insurance (since in Manitoba it is a provincial program) if a collision occurs while you are impaired. Even if the accident is not your fault, you still lose \$1,500 dollars worth of coverage. In addition, a surcharge of at least \$300 is added to the licence renewal fee of a person convicted of driving while impaired.

Fortunately, the law is worded in such a way that you first must be convicted before they can actually sell your vehicle, so there is a chance to present a defence if you simply had the bad luck to have just finished a liqueur filled chocolate before they pulled you over for the breathalyser.

This is the kind of legislation that makes a lot of sense to me. There is no excuse for driving while impaired - taxi cabs, busses, or even calling on a friend in the middle of the night are all better options than getting behind the wheel and endangering everybody else on the road. For some people losing their licence is not enough to stop them from driving. Even the most hardened drunk driver will be hard pressed to get behind the wheel of their car if it's been taken away and sold, however.



## Chronic Wasting Disease FAQ Sheet

I have been following the progress of Chronic Wasting Disease through the elk populations of Saskatchewan (and now Alberta) with some interest. So finding this [Frequently Asked Questions](#) list created by the Canadian Food Inspection Agency struck me as a good place to bring newcomers up to speed on exactly what CWD is and what the dangers are.

Unfortunately, the list seems to miss out on a few very important things, and in some places even goes so far as to contradict itself. One of the most important mistakes that it makes is not pointing out that one well known vector of transmission of TSEs is through animals eating infected animal products when it is ground up in their feed. This is the most common means of transmission, and is likely how wild deer have contracted the disease - by eating some infected feed of a rancher. Of course, this would also mean that a variant of the disease is possibly already in our meat supply.

Their answer to the question as to what the CFIA does to prevent the spread of CWD is actually a contradiction of their earlier answers. The CFIA claims that "Elk may now be imported under a CFIA import permit which contains specific measures designed to prevent the introduction of diseases including CWD". However, they also say "It is not certain how CWD is transmitted"

If they do not know how CWD is transmitted, how trustworthy can their measures "designed to prevent the introduction of diseases" be to ensure CWD is not imported? Especially when they say that the presence CWD "can only be confirmed by laboratory examination of brain tissue from the affected animal after it is dead. There is currently no laboratory test available to test for the disease in live animals."

In other words, they can only conclusively test the dead animals, and they are not sure how it's transmitted among live ones, but we are allowing possibly infected live Elk to be imported into Canada at any rate.

Since we now have confirmed cases of CWD in Alberta and Saskatchewan and we are not entirely sure how it transmits or if it can jump species, does anybody care to hazard a guess at the economic costs of Alberta herds contracting mad cow disease, and why our governments seem to be not terribly concerned about it?

## B.C. Taking Steps in the Right Direction

The British Columbia government is finally taking some steps in the right direction to increase the number of graduates that it creates. Specifically, they are [putting over 21 million dollars](#) toward better educated nurses, with almost half of that going into making it easier for nurses and doctors to take their medical training. This is being done through a number of programs. One such program is for loan forgiveness that allow doctors and nurses to be forgiven 20% of their student loans for each year they spend serving in a

rural or remote community. Additional funding is also going toward developing online nursing programs and aboriginal nursing programs that will help aboriginal students have access.

It is very nice to see some money being spent on actual education rather than on educational buildings for a change. Let's hope it continues.

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*A native Calgarian, Karl is perpetually nearing the completion of his Bachelor of Arts with a Major in Information Studies. He also works for the Computer Sciences Virtual Helpdesk for Athabasca University and plans to eventually go on to tutor and obtain his Master's Degree.*

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## **Canadian Labour: A Short History**

***Development and Growth of the Working Class and Working Class Militancy 1880-1920 – The Role of Women and Children***

**By Wayne E. Benedict**

The period of 1880-1920 was one of transition for both capital, as it further monopolized industry and learned new ways to subjugate labour; and for the working-class as its divided factions foundered in the face of attacks from both capital and state. Labour leaders spent as much time and energy fighting each other's ideologies and tactics as they did battling capital.

During the decade of the 1880s, capital concentrated its power and managed record annual growth rates. These gains were largely made at the expense of the working-class labourers who toiled for bare subsistence remuneration in deleterious conditions to fill the coffers of the parasitic capitalist class. While aristocratic craft unions fought to maintain their shop floor power, traditions, and standards of living against increasingly concerted employer and state attacks, semi-skilled, unskilled, and unemployed members of the working class struggled merely to survive.

Groups of skilled workers across Canada were defending their craft autonomy largely through tactics similar to their artisanal predecessors'. Indicative of this struggle was Local 83 of the United Brotherhood of Carpenters and Joiners of Halifax, Nova Scotia. While showing a desire to expand their power through numbers by joining the "International", they continued their traditions of exclusionism. "Applicants who wished admission to the union were examined closely. Some were excluded automatically" (McKay, 1992). Craft/trade unions across Canada had varying degrees of success in their battles to maintain their conditions and wages. Their self-serving tactics however, were divisive of the labour movement as a whole. The vast majority of working class citizens were not skilled members of exclusive craft unions but semi or unskilled men, women and children and the unemployed.

Women, who were generally subjugated in the paternalistic society of the period, were treated no better in the labour market. Their pay was markedly lower than males who performed the same tasks and they were relegated to the most menial, repetitive and mundane jobs with no chance of upward mobility. Industrial working conditions were unwholesome and hours of work were excessive. Workingwomen were expected to perform their proletarian tasks as well as the maintenance of their respective domiciles (the double day). Although John A. Macdonald's government was concerned enough about the antagonistic relationship between capital and labour to establish a Royal Commission to look into the situation, women's issues were little more than a sidebar in its investigations. "The Royal Commission on Labour and Capital was not an enquiry into the nature of female labour in the 1880s...women were only a small part of such an inquiry" (Trofimenkoff, 1992). The male commissioners, like the women's male bosses on the factory floor, viewed the true female issues of poor wages, conditions and treatment as unimportant and the commissioners concentrated their inquiries on the nineteenth century moral implications of women working alongside men. Trofimenkoff (1992) believes that the 102 women who testified at the commission hearings were too intimidated to relate the true degradations of their situations.

Since working class families were so pitifully underpaid and there was a lack of government provided social programs, many had no choice but to put their children out to work in order to meet the economic needs of their families. Children were exploited in factories and shops, in their homes or those of neighbours, and on the streets in order for them to contribute to the economic—and in some cases, literal—survival of the family. Like women, children engaged in wage work and were required to provide unpaid domestic labour as well. Many children began their lives of drudgery "before they reached the age of eight" (Bullen, 1992). Bullen (1992) also argues that the societal

inequality between upper and lower class citizens can be gleaned from the irregular school attendance of workers' children who could not attend regularly as a result of their families' economic needs and their resultant obligations elsewhere. Alternately, middle and upper class children posted regular attendance at school, ensuring that they were intellectually groomed for the authoritarian positions that middle/upper class nepotism ensured. Therefore, working class children were denied the opportunities that a quality education would have provided, not the least of which would have been occupational mobility. Said mobility would not necessarily have been upward, as they would have undoubtedly faced vigorous prejudice and bias from the upper classes that held tight control over the economy and employment opportunities. However, greater knowledge and skills would surely have opened occupational doors.

Next week: we continue with *Canadian Labour: A Short History* when we examine the role of the Noble and Holy Order of the Knights of Labour, a movement of significant influence in the 1880's.

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## **Belly Bubblers**

**By Laura Seymour**

*(Photo provided by Laura Seymour)*

Years ago in Edmonton I started something that's literally changed my life – teaching belly dance. I've met a variety of women – most of them pretty dynamic.

They've been interested in doing something with their body that doesn't involve hearing: “and four more, three more, two and... eight more” (What happens to “one” more?).

My favourite story is of Amity, my best friend, who I met in one set of classes. She was a bubbly kid not even twenty, and she forgets my age to boot, so I'm forever saying “wrinkles come early in our family.” Amity has remembered and applied every lesson in the most creative ways imaginable: she won the highest price in history at a university auction after doing a Turkish Drop for the crowd (a killer move!). Amity has had more dates than any woman I know just by going to a bar, ignoring the men and doing some dancing! POW! “Hi my name is...” Every time.

In case some of you think all this attention was just because Amity was slim and young, think again. My next favourite story happened to a 15 year old, 300-pound girl who said she wanted to get into shape to dance at her cousin's big, Italian wedding. She said her male cousins would be watching her slimmer relations and she wanted some of the

spotlight. She had very little technique, but mammoth heart and determination. She attended that wedding only a few pounds lighter and wowed every man in there. No, she didn't wear a dance costume, just a respectable gown (For some reason, everyone asks if they have to wear an *I Dream of Jeannie* costume while looking worried!). Egad! No.

Other women, such as my student who chose the name 'Masitah', have told me of feeling called to this work – as if they have walked this path before. I relish having these women as my students. Masitah was energized and gifted. She picked up the steps in jig time and was geared toward practicing regularly. I'd get plenty of feedback from her if she didn't figure out a move, and lord only knows that doesn't happen all the time! She had the gift of a gorgeous body and always said that belly dancing is perfect for a diva!

Divas should find that this is indeed the best possible work for them. The crowd dribbles and drools, marriages perk up, weight comes off, and suddenly you have the waist you've wanted half your life! Masitah is the only student I've had who has decided to make dancing an occupation. My student has blossomed into a multicolour-costumed, creative dancer who wows!

The music I pick is usually traditionally based but kicked up into modern rhythms. Some of my students ignore my comment, "If you hear some music you like, just let me know." Then three weeks later I hear, "What was that song you played the first week a little while in?" Yikes! Speak up when it hits you, me dearies! I always want to get them the artist they like or the style of music they want.

It's important to say that I have had some baffling students as well, like a ninety-year-old, feisty woman who said her husband would sit at home and ask, "Are you going out again?" She'd snap, "Yes I AM." Then he'd ask where she was going: Well!

The reaction from Belly Dance class must have been priceless! She kept up with girls who were eighteen-years-old and left some of the forty-year-olds behind. Those girls said later that they idolized the woman! Everyone wanted to be her when they got to her age! She had no cane, hearing aids or grey curls. She wore modern, youthful clothes and had goals. We adored her.

A couple of other cases should be mentioned. A woman with seriously advanced arthritis and another with breast cancer attended. Both of them expressed interest in life. Both of them were suffering dreadfully. The woman with arthritis had her toes and fingers fused from the advanced stage of the disease. She was in pain when she walked. "I feel better after I exercise, though" she informed me. The breast cancer victim had gone through two surgeries and plenty of worry. I was glad she was attacking the disease from a number of fronts. She kept her blood moving with exercise (and also fought depression with it), did as her Oncologist told her and saw a naturopathic doctor for help. Both inspired me that those with imperfect health can also dance the "dance of life".

The dance of life gets its name from the meanings behind the dance. It has many marked phases. There is life in general, sexual intercourse, birth, and death. Some dancers

attempt to show each phase but many work with restrictions imposed on them by their heritage. For instance, in Egypt it is considered “wrong” for a dancer to do floor work: she is treated as a goddess and so she should not lower herself beneath the people.

Whenever I get down from life’s little stinky moments, I remind myself of these remarkable women, and some of the things they’ve commented to me. So many of them thought I made the “dance look so easy” or have remarked “it’s a more difficult move than I thought!”

Masitah is still the only one who has fully bloomed from student to dancer. She’s getting married in February. I wish her the best of happiness...and that her career is exceptional!

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*Laura Seymour first published herself, at age 8. She has since gone on to publish a cookbook for the medical condition of Candida. She is working toward her B.A. (Psyc).*

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THE VOICE – December 11, 2002

**Dear Sandra,**

**I read your column last week about the overweight woman who felt men avoided her because of her weight, and I thought it was great! Since I now know that you answer questions related to weight issues, I was hoping you could help me with my problem. I am addicted to sugar. I can’t lose weight because I can’t fight my constant sugar cravings, do you have any suggestions or advice?**

**Sweet Tooth**



Dear Sweet Tooth;

I can relate to your problem, I too love sweets (then again what kind of person can really live on brown rice and chicken alone?). Wouldn't it be great if some scientist developed a diet plan to keep you thin and energetic on cheesecake and chocolate alone? We can dream can't we?

The body digests all sugars - fructose from fruit, white sugar, honey, etc. – and breaks them down into glucose, the body's primary source of energy. Our bodies are genetically programmed to crave calories to store up for times of famine. Unfortunately in the last sixty years we have not had a famine in our part of the world and our food choices have drastically increased. We live in a society that is surrounded by convenience stores offering 30 different kinds of chocolate bars or 24-hour grocery stores with bakeries enticing you to buy their sugar-coated treats with the smells wafting from their ovens.

Sugar in all of its forms is full of empty calories and has no nutritional value. Because of this sugary treats or drinks do not satisfy our hunger, causing us to ingest more than we should. Sugar in large doses also plays a number on our health. Cavities are mainly caused by the sugary foods sticking to our teeth forming an acid that eats away at the tooth enamel. Never mind our teeth, the amount of sugar in two cans of pop paralyzes 92% of your white blood cells for five hours following consumption (Sweet Dietary Success, 2003). This gives viruses and bacteria plenty of time to come in and wreak havoc on our bodies. Maybe this is why I'm always sick at Christmas time: the week long overdose of sugar from the eggnog and shortbread cookies take down my defences.

Eating sweets may satisfy our cravings and give an instant energy rush, but then insulin is released to take care of the excess sugar and afterwards we end up feeling groggy and bitchy. In order to ward off these insatiable, undeniable cravings for sweets it is important not to let your blood sugar levels drop too low which means eating regularly; see there is a logical reason why we are supposed to eat breakfast after all. Try to fill up on high-fibre foods, which help to maintain blood sugar levels, and protein, which helps prevent sudden shifts in blood sugar levels.

I have found that I crave sugar the most when I am inactive, like when I'm typing away at my computer or sitting and reading a book. This is when I tend to be drawn to the Werther's candies left upstairs in a fancy bowl for company or that last slice of cake in the refrigerator. Now instead of reaching for candy or cake I try (sometimes I slip, I live four blocks away from a fabulous bakery) to only reach for sugar-free candies or Spitz (flavoured sunflower seeds). I'm still snacking, just in a healthier way.

You hear a lot in weight loss programs or magazines to keep a food journal. It sounds like a stupid, pointless thing to do, but if for one day you write down every piece of food that enters your mouth – from that spoon of sugar in your coffee to the M&M you found under your child's car seat while you were cleaning the van – you will be amazed at the amount and types of food you put in your body. Eating healthy meals and having regular nutritional snacks throughout the day will eventually help curb your sugar cravings.

There will be withdrawal though, and the first couple of days without your sugar fix will be complete hell! Fight through the pain and your energy, mood, immune system and the number on the scale will slowly improve.

*Sandra*

## References:

Sweet Dietary Success. *Oxygen*. January, 2003. No. 41 p. 66 & 67

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*This column is for entertainment only. Sandra is not a professional counsellor, but is an AU student who would like to give personal advice about school and life to her peers. Please forward your questions to Sandra care of [smoore@ausu.org](mailto:smoore@ausu.org)*

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## Origins and Understanding in a Hermeneutics of Suspicion

By b.e. hydomako

How to begin? This is a question that confronts me, here and now, as a particular author of a particular piece of writing, as I exist at a particular time, and in a particular space.

However, this is not my question alone, even if it is my own question, here and now: it is a question that any writer at any time must ask him or her self. Confronted with a blank page and the desire to relate something, a writer either asks this question directly, or has presupposed it by beginning somewhere.

The same can be said of interpretation. An interpretation begins somewhere, and in its beginning it presupposes the question of how it began; that is, the question of how to begin an interpretation is either explicitly formulated by stating its beginning assumptions, or else it is implicitly not formulated by ignoring its own assumptions and proceeding directly to its main body, which would be, like in a piece of writing, what it asserts, describes, relates, or otherwise puts forward. Put differently, an interpretation must have an origin, and this origin can either be directly acknowledged or systematically effaced. However, we can wonder to what extent the origin of an interpretation, whether explicit or implicit, is able to be justified as a firm foundation on which to begin; in other words, we can wonder if there is an origin in an absolute sense — an unbiased and neutral “view from nowhere” — or if there are merely places from which to begin, such that these places are not so much an origin, but more stations of arrival and departure that have come from somewhere and are already on the road to somewhere.

If we are to undertake a postmodern approach to hermeneutics, then we must adopt the latter over the former: there can be no absolute foundation upon which an interpretation is built beyond that which the interpretation presupposes; thus, each beginning is not an absolute origin, but a point on an already established trajectory. Put differently, and more in line with prospects that this has to do with understanding, we must take pains to be aware that the interpretation which guides our understanding is not absolute but relative to the presuppositions of our artificial and non-existent origin. In other words, a ‘hermeneutics of suspicion’ is the best position from which to undertake any interpretation.

There is a relation of necessity between understanding and interpretation — to understand something we must necessarily interpret the elements that make up the thing we are seeking to understand; however, a hermeneutics of suspicion makes us aware that, while interpretation is necessary for understanding, there is not a necessary interpretation. In other words, there are many possible interpretations, each of which create an understanding, but there is no singular interpretation that can be privileged above the rest. This result follows upon the recognition and admission that any understanding is premised upon a human existence, or on a collection of human existences, and any human being, or group of human beings, is limited and finite, particular to some place and time; thus, any understanding is itself limited and finite. In other words, there is always a different way to interpret something: there is always room for the other.

It is an affirmation and recognition of the other which gives rise to the necessity of interpretation. Confronted with the unknown and the alien, we seek to understand what is foreign by attempting to appropriate these strange and different elements into a pre-existing pattern of comprehension. However, our familiar patterns of comprehension are relative to our understanding, and as such, do not reflect an absolute measure of truth, but merely truth as it occurs by ways of our habit and conditioning, by means of our limited and finite being in the world. Thus, a hermeneutics of suspicion encourages us to acknowledge that our ways of interpretation are themselves open to question, that there is no pre-established definitive truth to our methods. In other words, a hermeneutics of suspicion allows us the opportunity to recognize that an interpretation begins with a

particular approach to that which it is to interpret; therefore, each specific interpretation will reveal or expose some sense or aspect of understanding while it will also conceal or exclude other senses or aspects of understanding. Put differently, we can recognize that a specific interpretation stems from a beginning which is not itself an absolute origin, which cannot be neutral and disinterested, but is merely a place to begin from, and thus, begins with assumptions and presuppositions. An interpretation, in beginning from a set of presuppositions and assumptions, will produce an understanding that stems from those same beginnings, and thus, will include only what those beginnings are prepared to allow and exclude what cannot be grasped or contained within what must be a finite and limited starting point.

From this recognition it follows that we are in a better position to be open to a greater, broader, and deeper understanding if we neither fixate ourselves on a particular method of interpretation, nor privilege one possible interpretation over other possible interpretations. If we succumb to such fixation and privilege, then we fall into the trap of reductionism; that is, by adopting a fixed and privileged strategy to interpretation we will limit our understanding because we will always take any experience or phenomena and reduce it to what fits into our particular approach. We will always take any X and, through our privileged method of analysis, show how it is indeed Y.<sup>1</sup> Thus, in reduction, not only do we severely limit the possibilities of our understanding by framing what is to be understood in a way that is already familiar, established, and fixed, but we also deny any real occurrence of otherness through reducing the other to that which is already part of us. Put differently, the other is neither appreciated, nor recognized, and becomes, in a word, obliterated, under the severe constraints of the reductionist tendencies that are found in an approach to understanding that functions only under the operations of a singular interpretation. The way to avoid reductionist tendencies, and thus, to delimit our potential understanding, is to recognize that X *appears as* Y when viewed under the set of assumptions Z. Such a recognition is demanded by a hermeneutics of suspicion.

Thus, we move away from an idea of a universal hermeneutic, and back into, what is called regional hermeneutics. Where a universal hermeneutic attempted to make generalized claims about understanding and interpretation, and sought general laws by which understanding could be derived from interpretation, an interpretive program premised on regional hermeneutics recognizes the limitations of any singular approach to interpretation.

A result of such a move away from a universal hermeneutic is the recognition and appreciation for difference. Contradictory interpretations are no longer seen as a dichotomized situation where one interpretation must be correct or true, and the other incorrect or false. Rather, the interpretations are seen to complement one and other; that is, given the assumptions of the interpretations, we come to recognize that it is possible to have contradictory views, and one view does not necessarily require the negation of

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<sup>1</sup> And here we take the X to stand in for whatever phenomena that we might be applying our method to, say, for example, religion, and Y would be the result that religion *is*, on a Marxist analysis, a way to keep the proletariat sedated, or under a Freudian analysis, Y would be the result that religion *is* an infantile illusion, etc.

another view. Both views can be seen to benefit our understanding as each sheds a certain degree or slant of light upon that which is being interpreted. In other words, we gain a greater appreciation for the depth, complexity, and wonder of life by acknowledging that things can be seen from many different sides and from many different angles. Moreover, the more sides that we come to appreciate about a given thing, the more we will understand what that thing might actually be, or at least come to a greater understanding of our relation to it.

Approaching interpretation with a hermeneutics of suspicion appears to be the most appropriate way to strive to fulfill our capacity for possible understanding. We have seen how such an approach shuns the idea of a necessary interpretation, which in turn preserves and respects the other by avoiding absolutist claims of reductionist methodologies. This leads us into an opened approach where possible interpretations—even contrary interpretations—weave themselves into a tapestry of understanding that is always a work in progress and which is always obligated to reflect upon its own pattern and design.

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*b.e. hydomako is a grouchy old crank trapped in the body of a wet behind the ears goldfish in a tank that is full of too many piranhas (which is, well, any number of them really). The tank is also quite dirty, and getting more so everyday, but no one seems willing or able to clean the tank, or at least clean it in a way that is really effective. He would like to understand more about the relations that make up the existence of himself, the other fish, the tank, and what is beyond, but knows that this is a most difficult task—he is, after all, only a goldfish!*

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## Travelogues; A How-to

**By Lonita Fraser**

The benefit of travel is not simply the experience you have whilst doing it; the benefit is also the memories you take home from it. While most people simply carry along a camera for the purposes of capturing those memories, still others keep a travel journal of some sort. A picture may well be

worth a thousand words, but a written work carries more weight that is personal. A photograph shows only details of what you saw, but a journal details what you thought, felt, remembered, about that image; it allows you to remember more details that might otherwise fade as time passes. To provide a more full record of your travels, a combination of both these things would be optimal.

There are many benefits to keeping a travel journal, particularly a written one. It is cheaper than buying film that you later have to pay to develop. The tools of keeping a written journal are more portable and less prone to costly damage. It can be a more clear and detailed way to share your experiences with others. It gives you a place to doodle when you're stuck for something to do whilst stranded in the passenger lounge at Gatwick. My suggestion would be to get stranded in the passenger lounge at Frankfurt instead; the lounge seats are far more comfy.

The tools of the trade, so to speak, are few and relatively inexpensive: a notebook, a pen or pencil, postcards, bits and pieces, and something to carry them in.

## **No Rules**

The first rule of writing a travel journal is the same first rule for any journal; there are no rules. You write whatever you wish to write; however you wish to write it. You can write prose or poetry, compose a jingle, or even draw stick-person approximations of the people you meet on your journey. I do recommend, however, that whatever you write, you write it in a form and fashion that you can understand later. I don't know about you, but sometimes I can't read my own handwriting.

## **Write Here, Write Now**

The second rule of writing a travel journal is to write while you're there, if you can. This ensures that your impressions, feelings, opinions, and the details you most wish to remember are fresh in your mind. This is why I mentioned postcards in the list of suggested tools; because postcards are small, cheap, easy to store, and you buy them while you're on the spot of the site you want that visual memory of. In addition, because they do have a visual, they provide an excellent accompaniment to the written part of your memories. I kept my entire travel journal of my trip to England on the backs of postcards.

## **It's All In The Details**

The details you most wish to note are entirely up to you, but let me suggest a few things that might help to make your journal more informative, and more memory triggering (both for you, and others).

Think of your journal as a sort of time capsule, for that is precisely what it is. Think about what you want to store for later, and, more objectively, what might be important to store for later.

When you describe something, be detailed. What I mean by detail is not just an itemized list of something. Lists are wonderful things, but they carry no flavour. The detail and flavour are in what you say about the things on the list. When you write that you've done, seen, or eaten, a thing, also write about what you think and feel about it; write of how it does or doesn't reflect and represent the culture; and include surrounding details (physical and non).

Hand in hand with being detailed, is being observant. The big things, the landmarks and tourist traps, are all very important, but it is not just those things that make up a culture. The small everyday things are just as integral, and are often more interesting.

Compare and contrast. While trying to avoid a better or worse tone, try to describe how the place you are visiting is similar to, or different from, the place you live. Even if the details of similarities and differences are small, or seemingly insignificant, they can still carry a lot of weight. There is nothing like a lengthy trip abroad to educate you about your own culture, as well.

In the list of tools I mentioned bits and pieces. The bits and pieces I'm going to describe to you may relate more to a journal that is of a scrapbook nature, than one that is purely written; but, they're just as easily stored in a shoebox along with your postcards and written journal. These things are the memorabilia of your journey, the keepsakes, and can serve as wonderful physical props when you're telling the story of your travels. They can include restaurant menus, bus and train ticket stubs, maps, labels and packaging from products you purchased, placemats and beer mats, info booklets from visited spots, pressed flowers, shells, stones, local magazines and newspapers (even if they're not in your native tongue), tourist guides, flyers, posters, local currency and stamps, and any other of a million little things you can find just about anywhere you go.

As with any piece of personal writing, there really are no limits to what you can do with your journal. Whatever you think to do, do it. Don't let presuppositions about the nature of journals stop you from including any thing or any memory.

The biggest pitfalls to keeping a journal of any sort is this imagined rule of it needing to be formal, written in every day, or even containing correct spelling and grammar. Ignore those presuppositions. The only time they are at all important is when you're doing writing for a purpose other than that which is for personal satisfaction alone. The record of your journey is first, foremost, and what is most important, a record of your journey. It should reflect you, and be for you.

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*Lonita has been an AU student since early 2002, and is studying toward a Bachelor of General Studies in Arts & Science. She enjoys writing, creating websites, drinks far too much tea, and lives in hope of one day owning a plaid Cthulhu doll. The most exciting thing she's done so far in her lifetime is drive an F2000 racecar, and she's still trying to figure out how to top that experience. Her personal website can be found at <http://www.lonita.net> and what you can't find out about her through that, you can ask her via email: [lonita\\_anne@yahoo.ca](mailto:lonita_anne@yahoo.ca)*

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# AU Profiles:

## AU PROFILES

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The student/staff profile of those whose lives are involved with AU is a new column in The Voice. It is our hope that reading about those who are part of the make-up of what makes AU unique will draw our students closer together although we span countries and continents. We are a part of AU, and as such, we carry a common bond.

I hope you will enjoy reading about the students and staff at AU – and be inspired to participate in our new PROFILES column!

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### STUDENT:

**Patricia Boyle**

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Voice: What province and city/town do you live in?

**Patricia: Verdun (Montreal), Quebec**

Voice: Do you have a family/ kids/ pets?

**Patricia: No kids but three cats (Le Loup, Blackey, Charley)**



Voice: What are your hobbies / interests/ activities/ etc.

**Patricia: Reading, animal rescue, church activities, studying**

Voice: Can you tell us about the AU Courses you are taking at the moment, or a favourite course?

**Patricia: Presently I am taking PSYC395 (Forensic Psychology) as part of my BPA – Criminal Justice program.**

**My favourite course was CMNS311 (Media Law). The professor, Dr. Ellerman, is fantastic.**

Voice: How long have you been a student? (And where)

**Patricia: I have been a student all of my life. I trained as a nurse after graduating from high school then went back to get my B.A. (Psychology) at the University of Waterloo. After that, I took accounting and computer courses and switched careers to become a technical writer. I got my masters degree in Information Studies from McGill University in 1995. I then took a course from Acadia (Death and Dying). I have been at Athabasca University since 2000. I did take a Criminology course at Concordia University here in Montreal during the summer of 2001.**

Voice: What do you think of your courses/ the AU experience/ distance education?

**Patricia: I love my courses and Athabasca. I tried to take a course here in Montreal but after working all day, it was hard to drag myself to school and to concentrate. Plus I found that the course was not demanding – just learn by rote – no research work.**

Voice: Do you work? What do you do?

**Patricia: I do work. I am the senior technical writer for Abitibi-Consolidated Inc. in the IT Department. I write, edit, and proofread technical documents; I translate technical material from French to English; I administer databases; I create online Help system for in-house use; I act as a resource person.**

Voice: How (or) Is AU helping you towards a goal?

**Patricia: Personally, this degree will not satisfy any goal; it is purely for my own interests.**

Voice: What are your future goals?

**Patricia: I intend to remain a technical writer and database administrator; I love my work.**

Voice: Do you have any advice or words of wisdom for other students?

**Patricia: Distance education is not an easy road to a degree; in fact, based on my experience, it is much harder than attending regular university classes. The person must be self-disciplined, love to learn, be a very good researcher, and able to write well.**

Voice: Anything else we should know? Funny stories about the dog eating your laptop/ praise for your favourite tutor/ recommendations for a course....

**Patricia: No funny stories.**

**Recommendations: any course taught by Brian Whitelaw. He is a demanding professor but you really learn a lot. Plus, of course, anything taught by Dr. Ellerman.**

**Thanks to the Library staff for their swift response to my numerous requests for books.**

Voice: If you have a picture of your self in a jpeg or gif format you would like to include, please do so!

**Patricia: No picture of myself but I have attached a picture of my three babies – my cats.**

Good Luck to you in the future, Patricia – And thank-you for taking the time to volunteer to be a part of AU Profiles!

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**Anyone interested in being featured in AU Profiles should email Tammy Moore, Editor of The Voice at [voice@ausu.org](mailto:voice@ausu.org) My thanks for your participation and readership!**

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**University Of Calgary  
Department Of Neuroscience Competition 2003**



**ANNOUNCING**  
University of Calgary  
Department of Neuroscience

***National Graduate Studies  
Competition 2003***

We will be awarding trips to Calgary for  
the top students interested in visiting  
the Department of Neuroscience.  
Successful applicants will be awarded an  
all-expense-paid trip March 5 – 9, 2003  
to tour the department and meet  
potential graduate supervisors.

***Competition closes January 17, 2003***

For information visit:  
[www.acs.ucalgary.ca/~neuro/recruit.html](http://www.acs.ucalgary.ca/~neuro/recruit.html)

The Department of Neuroscience at the University of Calgary is holding a second National Neuroscience Competition to identify students to fly to Calgary for an all-expense-paid trip for 4 days in March 2003 to visit with group members.

We are interested in meeting with undergraduate students taking courses relevant to neuroscience as well as graduate students and postdoctoral trainees.

For more information, please see:

<http://www.acs.ucalgary.ca/~neuro/recruit.html>



## **Free Health Benefits for Children in Low-income Families**

**From information provided by  
Alberta Human Resources and  
Employment**

**THE VOICE December 11, 2002**

The Alberta Child Health Benefit (ACHB) provides children in low-income families with free:

- Dental care
- Prescription drugs
- Eyewear
- Emergency ambulance services
- Essential diabetic supplies

More families are now eligible for coverage through the ACHB because of increased income eligibility levels, which took effect July 1, 2002. These income levels are associated with the number of children in the family:

- 1 child for family net income of \$ 22,397
- 2 children, \$ 24,397
- 3 children, \$ 26,397
- 4 children, \$ 28,397
- more than 4 children, add \$ 2,000 for each additional child

Enrolment in the ACHB is free. Eligibility for the program is based on the family's net income from their previous year's Income Tax Notice of Assessment (line 236). Once their applications are approved, qualifying families receive ACHB benefit cards that allow them to access approved services and products directly from service providers at no cost.

### **To get an application form:**

1-877-4MY-KIDS

1-877-469-5437

[www.gov.ab.ca/hre/achb](http://www.gov.ab.ca/hre/achb)



## **Notice to AU graduate students and those considering entering graduate studies at AU:**

Athabasca University Students' Union is in the process of establishing an AU Graduate Students' Association.

Here's a sampling of benefits of belonging to a Graduate Students' Association:

- **Graduate student representation on University Committees**
- **University and government advocacy and lobbying**
- **Affiliation with provincial and national graduate students' organizations**
- **Assistance with university/student dispute resolution**
- **Information source**
- **Networking**

For more information contact:

**Shirley Barg, Vice-President**

**Athabasca University Students' Union**

**Email: [sbarg@ausu.org](mailto:sbarg@ausu.org) or call 1-800-9041 ext. 3413**

**Edmonton local number: 497-7000**

**Calgary local number: 298-2905**



## **AUSU SPEAKS: Fall Session Provided By AUSU**

AUSU met on the evening of September 16th for the last regular council meeting of the 2001/2002 fiscal year. Finances and our preliminary budget for the upcoming fiscal year were the main topics of discussion, and we laid the groundwork for some exciting new scholarships and student awards. Also under discussion

was the possibility of selling AUSU promotional items in the future.

The most important topic of the evening was our upcoming AGM. For those who do not already know, the 2002 AGM will take place on September 28, 2002 at 1:00 PM MST, and all students are welcome. You may attend in person at the Edmonton AUSU offices, located at #306, 10030-107th Street, Edmonton, AB, or you may attend via teleconference from any location, worldwide. Call our office at 1-800-788-9041, extension 3413, or email [ausu@ausu.org](mailto:ausu@ausu.org) for more information. Please reserve your spot as soon as possible, so that we know how many attendees to plan for. We'd love to see you there.

Also on the table this week was a proposal for new scholarships and student awards, which was approved by all councillors. Information about these awards will be available on our website as soon as we hammer out the last of the fine details. The details will be posted on the AUSU Services page.

The fate of the AUSU Handbook/Planner is still up in the air. We want to be able to give students items that will be useful to them in their studies, but we need to be certain that the handbook is the best choice before we commit to having more printed. Student input so far has indicated that a smaller planner might be more useful, while other suggestions have included wall calendars, desk calendars, and other items. So far, however, we have had only a few responses to our survey, and we require more.

Please check out the [AUSU discussion forums](#) on our website and select the Handbook/Planner Survey topic to download the survey file or to comment in the open forum. Alternatively, you may mail your comments to [dkereluk@ausu.org](mailto:dkereluk@ausu.org). We'd like to know what might be useful to you, what items you have received from other students' unions that you have used and enjoyed, and if you have any opinions on the old format of the AUSU Handbook.

Speaking of student input, we are pleased to say that since the first issue of the AUSU newsletter started arriving in students' mailboxes, we have had many entries for the contest, and a significant increase in Voice readers and users of the AUSU forums. For all of you who just checked out AUSU for the first time this month - welcome!

Finally, back to business matters, AUSU council has approved the proposed preliminary budget for the upcoming fiscal year, and we are very pleased to announce that our expenditures for the 2001/2002 fiscal year will remain within budget for that period.

Many new projects have been initiated since the new council took over in March, and we're very excited about the coming year. Expect a summary of our work so far to appear in the Voice or on the AUSU website very soon.





## **NEWS FROM THE AGM**

### **Provided By AUSU Council**

The 9<sup>th</sup> Annual General Meeting of AUSU was held this past Saturday, September 28 at 1:00 P.M. Eleven students were in attendance, nine in person and two via teleconference. Quorum was satisfied and the meeting could proceed. In the President's welcome, Debbie Jabbour commented that the low attendance should not be taken as an indicator of apathy, but rather one that speaks to the reality of the lives of Athabasca University Students. Many may be interested in participating in student affairs, but few can manage to find the time to do so. Debbie also spoke of the uniqueness of AU students, and the importance of having a good relationship with the university administration.

Judith Hughes, Athabasca University Vice President External and Student Affairs, brought a welcome from AU and seconded Debbie's words about the importance of collaboration and cooperation between the university and the students' union. Many changes are occurring within our university, and development of strong alumni is a first step towards strengthening the image of AU and finding alternate forms of fundraising to benefit the university. By working collaboratively, AU and AUSU can also have a more effective voice in lobbying the government for policy changes that recognize that AU is different and should not be considered under the same funding policies as other universities. Current policies do not recognize our technological infrastructure and open entrance policy, and the result is that AU must rely for the main part on tuition fees rather than government funding to maintain operations.

Activity reports were presented. It was recognized that most of the current group of Council members were not part of the 2000/2001 fiscal year, and did not have input into the financial statements presented. However, Council wanted members to know a bit more about us, and let everyone know what we've been up to recently and what is being planned for the future, so each Councillor submitted an activity report.

The financial statements were presented. Treasurer Gurpreet Dulai explained that an operational deficit had been incurred due to the reprint of the student diaries. Steps have been taken to ensure this type of problem won't re-occur, and during the 2001-2002 fiscal year, the deficit will be recovered. He also explained that increased convocation costs were a deliberate move intended to raise AUSU profile and provide greater graduation support during the most important event of the year. Overall AUSU began the 2001/2002 fiscal year in a financially healthy position.

Once those in attendance approved the financial statements, and an auditor appointed for the upcoming fiscal year, the floor was opened to general discussion and questions. Several Council members spoke about their experience of being on Council during this

past year, and how positive and educational it has been. Darren Kereluk, who along with Gurpreet Dulai, are the only Council members who had any significant presence during 2000/2001; Derek spoke of how different the experience has been this past year from the one he had when on Council previously. Even though disagreements occasionally occur, this group has been able to resolve things without entering into the type of conflict that tore the previous Council apart. Others on Council agreed that the atmosphere among this group has been always positive. Even when there is disagreement on how to proceed, the attitude is to discuss it and move on - move forward whether or not there is 100% consensus on issues.

Debbie Jabbour brought the meeting to a conclusion by thanking everyone on Council, volunteers and staff for their participation in making this last year such an enjoyable venture. She noted that in future years, other Council groups may look back at what we do and wonder "what were they thinking?", and that although we may make mistakes, we are all working with good intentions to improve the student experience for all AU students. The upcoming spring AGM will be a celebration of the 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary of AUSU, and plans are already underway to make it a very special meeting.

The 2001 Annual Report is available to any AU student who wishes to obtain a copy, and we encourage you to do so. You can request one by calling 1-800-788-9041, extension 3413 (local to Edmonton 497-7000); or by email to [ausu@ausu.org](mailto:ausu@ausu.org). Please include your full name and AU student ID, as well as a mailing address. Indicate whether you prefer a hard copy mailout or a pdf copy by email (include your email address).

Thank you to everyone who showed an interest in the 2000/2001 AGM. We look forward to seeing you next spring for our tenth anniversary AGM!

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## Conference Connections

Contributed By AU's *The Insider*

- **CASE District VIII** - March 8-11, 2003 - Coeur d'Alene, Idaho - "Connect in Coeur d'Alene." Details: <http://www.connectincda.com>



- **AMTEC (Association of Media & Technology in Education in Canada)** - "E-convergence: Education, Media & Technology" - May 25-28, 2003, Montreal, Quebec. Call For Papers deadline is Dec. 15, 2002. Details: <http://www.amtec.ca>
  - **ICDE World Conference** - 21st annual - June 1-5, 2003 - Hong Kong. Deadline for abstract submission is Aug. 1, 2002. Details: <http://www.ouhk.edu.hk/HK2003>
  - **CADE** - June 7-11, 2003 - St. John's NF
  - **International Studies Association and the Central and East European International Studies Association (ISA/CEEISA)** - June 26-28, 2003 - "The Global Tensions and Their Challenges to Governance of the International Community" conference at Central European University in Budapest, Hungary.
- 



## Beyond The Headlines Contributed by The Community Networks Group

As you know, every month we highlight the work of an Alberta-based NGO (non-governmental organization) working locally or internationally on human development activities. In previous issues of **Beyond the Headlines** we have featured organizations such as *HumanServe International*, *Change for Children*, *Cause Canada*, *Rainbow of Hope*, *RAFIKI Friends of Rwanda*, *Sombrilla*,

*Friends of Nepal*, *Transgenus International* and *Sphere*.

On this issue we have two groups deserving your attention. They are the Fireweed Institute and the Sahakarini Inter-World Education & Development Association ...

### 1. The Fireweed Institute

The Fireweed Institute is an educational institute dedicated to helping people find ways of working and living that are less stressful, more meaningful, and contribute positively to the Earth and the human family.

The mission of the Fireweed Institute is to use transformative learning to inspire and support people as they pioneer sustainable ways of working and living. We engage in this mission as a way to imagine and help create a just and sustainable world. The educational programs include long and short courses, workshops, and presentations that explore different aspects of sustainable living and working. Contact us at:

Fireweed Institute  
Box 186 - #14, 9977 - 178 St.  
Edmonton, AB > Tel: 433-1830  
e-mail: [info@fireweedinstitute.org](mailto:info@fireweedinstitute.org)  
website: [www.fireweedinstitute.org](http://www.fireweedinstitute.org)

## **2. The Sahakarini Inter-World Education and Development Association**

Sahakarini Inter-World Education and Development Association exists to promote, encourage and assist international aid and development and to assist, encourage and foster development education activity. Sahakarini is currently working in health and education with partners in Haiti, Brazil, India, Uganda, and Zimbabwe. For more information about our projects, contact us at:

Sahakarini Inter-World Education & Development Association  
P.O. Box 1685, Camrose AB T4V 1X6  
Tel. (403) 672-5465 / Fax (403) 672-0967  
E-mail: [sahakari@telusplanet.net](mailto:sahakari@telusplanet.net)



## **SCHOLARSHIP NEWS**

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### **Kinsmen and Kinettes Bursary - Hal Rogers Endowment Fund**

**Value:** \$1000

**Application Deadline: February 1**

#### **Description:**

- Canadian citizens or permanent residents
- Must be full-time students in the upcoming school year at a recognized post-secondary institution

- Selection is based on demonstrated high ideals and qualities of citizenship
- Recipients must not have previously received a bursary from the Hal Rogers Endowment Fund
- Applicants WILL NOT be eligible for consideration if the application form is mailed directly to the Kinsmen & Kinette Clubs of Canada without receiving prior endorsement from a Kinsmen, Kinette or Kin club

**Instructions:**

- Application forms must be submitted to a Kinsmen, Kinette, or Kin Club closest to the applicant's permanent residence
- For further information about application procedures, please contact the administrator listed below or visit [www.kinclubs.ca](http://www.kinclubs.ca)

**Contact Information:**

Kinsmen and Kinettes Bursary Program  
Kinsmen and Kinette Clubs of Canada  
1920 Hal Rogers Drive, P.O. Box KIN  
Cambridge, Ontario  
Canada

N3H 5C6

Phone: 519-653-1920

Phone 2: 1-800-742-5546 ext.215

Fax: 1-800-742-5546

**Web Site:** [www.carville.com/kinclubstest/href1.htm](http://www.carville.com/kinclubstest/href1.htm)

**Email Address:** [bzak@kinclubs.ca](mailto:bzak@kinclubs.ca)

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## **Michael Luchkovich Scholarships for Career Development**

**Value:** Not specified

**Application Deadline: December 1, April 1 and August 1**

**Description:**

- Residents of Alberta
- Present full-time employee pursuing further training
- Minimum full-time work history of 3 years

- Program of study may be up to six months of full-time study or up to one year of part-time study

A semester of study towards an undergraduate degree or diploma program will normally not be considered

**Instructions:**

- Application deadlines are December 1, April 1 and August 1
- For further information please visit

**Contact Information:**

Alberta Heritage Scholarship Fund  
9940-106 Street, 9th Floor, Box 28000, Stn. Main,  
Edmonton, Alberta  
Canada  
T5J 4R4

**Web Site:** [www.alberta-learning.ab.ca/scholarships/info.asp](http://www.alberta-learning.ab.ca/scholarships/info.asp)

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## **COMMENTARY AND FEEDBACK!**

### **LETTERS TO THE EDITOR**

Thanks to all of you who have been providing us with such great feedback on The Voice. Please continue providing your opinions, comments and support; any submissions can be sent to [tmoore@ausu.org](mailto:tmoore@ausu.org)

**\*\*PLEASE REMEMBER ALL LETTERS TO THE EDITOR INTENDED FOR PUBLICATION MUST BE MARKED “FOR PUBLICATION”.**

Accepted letters to the editor have not been edited, nor do they necessarily reflect the opinions of The Voice staff, AUSU, or Athabasca University.

Tammy Moore

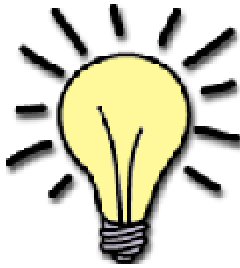
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Dear Readers,

I have received a number of email asking for printable editions of the current Voice. The current issue is always included in the list of PDF Archives (link from the cover page) or they can be found on the internal pages under "Download PDF Version of The Voice" at the bottom of the right hand index list.

Thank-you for your readership and support!

Tammy Moore



## ENLIGHTENING INFORMATION!

### WRITE FOR THE VOICE!

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

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## **An African Christmas @ Murungo Ano Penga African Gallery**

**Dec. 14, 2002 / 6-10 p.m.**

The High Street, 12505 - 102 Ave. , Edmonton  
(Below Starbucks)

Tickets: \$10.00

You are invited to our special African Christmas in support of the **Harare Street Kids Association of Zimbabwe**. Join us for viewing & sales of our newly arrived and magnificent collection of African Wildlife Heritage Collection. Part of all proceeds from this evening event will go to the *Harare Street*

*Kids Association*, a non-profit NGO working with troubled kids in Zimbabwe. Music & entertainment by the **Okoto Dancers** and complimentary wine and food from The **Wine Cellar** and **Gourmet Goodies**.

Please **RSVP** by Wednesday December 11 at: Infoline: 433-5504 or [murungo@telusplanet.net](mailto:murungo@telusplanet.net)

We are also taking donations for the Edmonton Food Bank .

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## **'Vibrant Communities Initiative'** [www.vibrantcommunities.ca](http://www.vibrantcommunities.ca)

### **Contributed by The Community Networks Group**

Canada is a country of countless opportunities. We have exceptional health, education and social programs, a robust economy and a quality of life that is envied around the world. It's hard to think of Canada as a "poor" country. And yet more than 16%

of us live in poverty. It's a grim fact that has cast a shadow over Canadian life for more than two decades. But we believe all Canadians can and should share our good fortune.

**The Vibrant Communities Initiative** is a community-driven effort to reduce poverty in Canada by creating partnerships that make use of our most valuable assets: people, organizations, businesses and governments. It's a unique approach to poverty reduction that will allow communities to learn from, and help, each other.

Vibrant Communities will link up to 15 communities from British Columbia to Newfoundland in a collective effort to test the most effective ways to reduce poverty at the grassroots level. Vibrant Communities will share its lessons learned with communities across the country so that others can build on what we know does and does not work in community-based poverty reduction.

The **Edmonton Metropolitan** area, Canada's Gateway to the North, has over 940,000 residents. The city's economy is strengthened through its role as service centre to Alberta's oil industry, commercial services to agriculture, government, and post secondary institutions. Approximately 21.3% of Edmontonians had incomes under

Statistics Canada's Low Income Cut-Off rate in 1995...

For more information about Vibrant Communities, please visit our web site:  
**[www.vibrantcommunities.ca](http://www.vibrantcommunities.ca)**, (or) in Edmonton contact:

City of Edmonton Innovative Services  
Jenny Kain @ 944-5512

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## **AU News From Academic Council**

**Contributed by The Insider**

**Academic Council passed the following Action Items at its Nov. 6th meeting:**

- Step II & III approval of a Master of Nursing program (open for applications on April 1, 2003 with courses beginning Sept. 1, 2003)
- Regulation changes to the Master of Health Studies program (effective Sept. 1, 2003)
- Step II approval for the Environmental Studies program (includes a concentration within the BA and a University Certificate program)
- Credentials awarded to the graduands in the Advanced Graduate Diploma in Management

Approval given for the three new centres with the School of Business: Centre for Accounting and Taxation; Centre for Finance, Management, and the Economy; and Centre for Marketing and Organization

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## **CHANGES TO THE UNDERGRAD GRADING POLICY AT AU!**

This is to advise you of an important change in the undergraduate Grading Policy at Athabasca University.

Athabasca University has approved a new Alpha/4.0 grading scale for undergraduate studies effective January 1, 2003. The grades that students achieve will be stated, on transcripts and in student records, as alpha grades on a scale from A to F. Grade averages will be expressed as Grade Point Averages using the 4.0 grading scale.

These changes in grading scale are part of a province-wide initiative in Alberta.

Undergraduate courses that began before January 2003 will be graded using the percentage grading scale.

For a complete statement of this Athabasca University policy please go to:

<http://www.athabascau.ca/policy/registry/gradingpolicy2002.htm>

**If you have questions please contact me.**

**Bruce Dawson**  
**Assistant Registrar, Registration Services**  
**Athabasca University**  
**1 University Drive**  
**Athabasca, AB T9S 3A3**  
**Phone 780-675-6147, Fax 780-675-6174**

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## COMMUNITY ANNOUNCEMENTS

### Contributed By The Community Networks Group

#### AWARENESS PROGRAMS SOCIETY OF ALBERTA

**Volunteers Needed and Invited to Help**

**Infoline: 924-3432**

We are a volunteer, registered non-profit society which has been serving the work of Wanjiku Kironyo in Kenya for seventeen years. Wanjiku works in the slum communities with the women and street kids, handicapped children and youth groups.

Our chairperson, Rosalind Shepherd, is leaving for Africa and we need someone to help us to hold the work together while she is gone. Our Board consists of ten people, who work on various aspects of the work. We need someone who has space for a small office, and the skills to be hub of the wheel for a meaningful and satisfying international project for AIDS orphans. If you are a people-person who enjoys office work, has a little spare time and spare room, phone us at 924-3432, or e-mail us at [rozshep@oanet.com](mailto:rozshep@oanet.com).



### [The Barcelona Forum 2004](#)

**Contributed By The Community Networks Group**

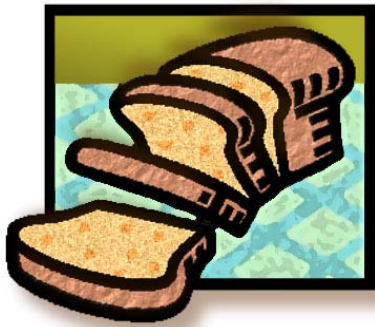
The first **Universal Forum of Cultures** is a new international event which will bring thousands of people to **Barcelona** from all over the world in 2004. The Forum's principal aim is to contribute to a renewal of thought and attitudes, providing a new platform for moving towards a new coexistence without conflict and in a world fit for living in.

The first Universal Forum of Cultures will take place in 2004 in **Barcelona**. It opens on the **9<sup>th</sup> of May**, Europe Day, and closes on the **26<sup>th</sup> of September**, coinciding with the local festivities of La Mercè, the city's patron saint. The Forum will last 141 days!

The [Barcelona Forum 2004](#) is co-organized by the Barcelona City Council, the Catalan autonomous Government and the Spanish Government, with **UNESCO** as the main partner. The Agenda for this major gathering is based on the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the working principles of the United Nations.

In agreement with Unesco, the **Barcelona Forum 2004** is structured around three core themes: **cultural diversity, sustainable development and conditions for peace**. Join us at the Barcelona Forum 2004 as move forward towards a world that is sustainable and more humane.

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## **Breaking Bread... For Women In Afghanistan Contributed By The Community Networks Group**

*Breaking Bread... For Women in Afghanistan* is a volunteer fundraising project to support much needed education projects for Afghan women and girls. You can participate in this unique cross-Canada fundraising initiative by **Hosting a Pot Luck Dinner** with nine of your friends.

As Host you are asked to invite your friends to your home, request that they bring a dish to share for dinner and ask each participant to donate \$75 towards education in Afghanistan. Each Pot Luck Dinner will raise \$750 (tax receipts available) and will pay the salary of a teacher for one year in Afghanistan.

Do some good... Become a host for "Breaking Bread" -- enjoy the company of your friends, some excellent food and share the opportunities to participate in facilitating REAL CHANGE for Afghan women and girls...

For more information on **How to Host the Pot Luck Dinner**, please call:  
1-416-366-2516 or e-mail: [info@breakingbreadforwomen.com](mailto:info@breakingbreadforwomen.com) (or) visit:  
<http://www.breakingbreadforwomen.com>

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**when  
People  
need an ally ...**

**Your donation  
of reuseable  
clothing helps  
support the  
Association's  
efforts**



 **CANADIAN  
DIABETES  
ASSOCIATION** | **ASSOCIATION  
CANADIENNE  
DU DIABÈTE**

- Luggage
- Sporting Goods

Canadian Diabetes Association  
403.509.0070  
403.509-0072 (fax)  
1.866.811.0070 (outside of Calgary)  
[Email Us!](mailto:info@diabetes.ca)  
[www.diabetes.ca](http://www.diabetes.ca)

## What We Do

Canadian Diabetes Association (CDA) is a non-profit, charitable organization with over 150 branches across Canada. CDA volunteers and staff work directly with people with diabetes and their families at the grass roots level.

The CDA Collections Program collects clothing and reusable household items as an entrepreneurial fundraising venture. The funds raised from this program assist in promoting diabetes research, education, service and advocacy.

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## What We Accept

We gladly accept donations of:

- Clothing
- Linens
- Toys
- Small Appliances
- Jewellery
- Shoes



## **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](mailto: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](mailto:tmoore@ausu.org) for details on writing for The Voice, providing a sample selection of writing and preferred genre.



## **‘Learning is Learning’:**

### **Challenge for Credit Option Exists for AU Students**

Many students may not be aware that AU recognizes prior learning and encourages students to use the challenge for credit process if they feel they have knowledge or expertise in a particular subject area.

The process is not easy, but it is not insurmountable, and it can save the cost and time of taking a course if prior knowledge exists.

“We want to raise students’ awareness about the option and let them know that they don’t need to re-learn material or spend money on a course they don’t really need to take,” said Joan Fraser, director of the Centre for Learning Accreditation.

“Learning is learning and a student shouldn’t be penalized if that learning was not done within the confines of bricks and mortar,” she said, adding that those students with significant life or work force experience are typically those who pursue the challenge option.

Challenge for Credit is handled by the Registrar’s Office. Students are encouraged to check the course description to see if a challenge is permitted for the course they are interested in. If so, then the student must investigate a number of things prior to deciding whether to proceed.

First, and most important, the student should discuss the matter with the course coordinator. The coordinator will be able to give a better idea of the depth of the materials covered in the course, and the student’s chance for success should he/she opt to challenge.

The AU calendar outlines the challenge steps, notably completing the Challenge for Credit Application and accessing the course materials, which further allows the student to review the materials and determine if the challenge is viable. There is a non-refundable challenge for credit fee (check the web site for the current fee), but it should be noted that no withdrawal is allowed once the application has been completed.

“It (the challenge for credit) is something that’s there for you – use it,” Fraser said.

Anyone with questions about the process is encouraged to call Joan Fraser at (780) 675-6481 or check AU’s website at [www.athabascau.ca](http://www.athabascau.ca).





## **CLASSIFIEDS:**

**PUBLISHED IN THE VOICE** December 11, 2002

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### **CLASSIFIED SPACE:**

Students of AU may print classifieds in The Voice free of charge (maximum three per issue) as long as they are not representing a company or product.

Classified ads must follow the direct guidelines and ethics stated in the Voice Policy and should be submitted to the editor at [voice@ausu.org](mailto:voice@ausu.org) with 'CLASSIFIED AD' listed in the subject title.

The Editor reserves the right to refuse any classified information at her discretion. Thank-you.

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## **FOR SALE**

Ghetto blaster: CD player, duo tape deck, AF/FM radio, removable AC plug, or battery power (needs 6 C). \$ 70.00 Call (403) 201- 4299 between 9 am - 9 pm only.

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