



Quote of the Week:

“Many people die with their music still in them. Why is this so? Too often it is because they are always getting ready to live. Before they know it, time runs out.”

-- Oliver Wendell Holmes

THE VOICE

December 18, 2002

Volume 10, Issue 49

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NFB FILM CLUB EDMONTON

National Film Board

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COMMUNITY NETWORKS GROUP

Community Networks Group

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CLASSIFIEDS!

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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1.866.811.0070 (outside of Calgary)

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A Bug In Your Ear...

Merry Christmas and Happy Holidays to All!

I would like to wish you all a happy holiday season from The Voice for our last issue of 2002.

My thanks to all the writers who have contributed to keep the paper alive and well, and who have dedicated their time and energy to provide us with a wonderful and informative student paper.

I would also like to thank our readers for their insight, helpful suggestions, and wonderful comments. I would like to encourage more letters to the editor when you have comments regarding articles or Voice content.

I hope you all had a wonderful and productive year, and all the best in the year to come!

Tammy Moore
Editor of The Voice



ANNOUNCEMENT FROM THE AUSU PRESIDENT



December 15, 2002

On behalf of myself and the rest of AUSU Council, I would like to wish you and your loved ones the very best of the season.

We hope you have a pleasant and safe holiday, and may the New Year bring you another step closer to successfully reaching your goals and dreams!

See you in 2003!!

**Debbie Jabbour, President
Athabasca University Students' Union**





What Do Holidays Mean To An AU Student?

By Tamra Ross Low

Since becoming a full-time AU student in late 1998, I've had less time for Christmas than ever before. I'm not sure why that is – I study at home, on

my own time, and I can arrange breaks any time I want – but this year is no exception.

I thought I would be the ideal home-study student. I work well without supervision, I can be quite organized, and I have previous experience with home study from some high-school upgrading I took in the early nineties. Unfortunately, I'm my own worst enemy.

I do work well without supervision. In fact, I'm relentless. I get into something – anything – and I can go and go and go, until someone makes me stop or I nearly faint from hunger. I can't count how many research papers have been completed – research, outlining, writing, editing – in a single 15-hour crash session. Large papers, of 25 pages or more, are usually done in 2 or 3 days. And what's amazing is that I actually get better marks when I write in marathon sessions.

It's not a system I would recommend, but it works for me.

The problem with home study, I'm finding, is that there are no set hours, no one to tell you when to start and stop, and no real imperative to stick to a schedule. This leads, for many, to procrastination and inactivity. I fall prey to lethargy too, but what I've been surprised to find is that distance education can also lead to a sort of workaholic syndrome, where you never have a sense of having completed anything. Every assignment is just one of many for a given course, and every course is just one of many on the path to a degree, and the first degree is just the first step toward a higher degree, and there are always more courses that you can take to round out your learning... it never ends!

A university degree is a continuum. It goes on and on, for many years of your life. Time flies, but if you concentrate on how much time you spend studying, finishing may seem inconceivable.

At a regular U, I'd have a summer semester off, but with AU, I have been enrolled in courses non-stop for 3 years. I work mornings, afternoons, evenings, weekends - you name it. The concept of a day off is pretty hazy, although I do have many free hours. I just don't compile them into a single day. Some days I may only do an hour or less of school or students' union work, but it still isn't really a day off, is it?

I'm not saying that all I do is work – I can be pretty lazy – but I do find that once I get into the swing of work, I tend to keep going. Momentum is as indomitable as inertia.

Whoever posited that objects that are in motion tend to stay in motion, and objects that are at rest, tend to stay at rest, had no idea that he'd stumbled onto a defining characteristic of human psychology. Or at least, of mine.

If I get lazy and watch TV for a few afternoons, pretty soon I'm in a rut, and I have to flog myself to get going. On the other hand, if it spend several days working hard, I find I start jonesing for more work the second that I'm finally done. I think the rest of the students' union has probably had it with my manic 'gimme-work' periods. Fortunately, they don't occur all that often. Between study, writing articles, working with the union, cooking, housekeeping, caring for my pets, and trying to spend some time with my husband, I'm pretty much busy all the time.

There's another interesting conundrum: My husband works and studies at home as well. We're in the same house all the time, yet I sometimes find I miss him and notice that we've hardly spoken in days. I think we talked more when we worked out of the house. Two workaholics with two home offices do not make for much socialization. I think we talk more over instant messengers than in person these days. We are separated only by one 50' blue network cable, a small 8-port hub, another 25' of blue cable, 2 layers of sub-standard 1970's plank-board flooring, and 2 layers of berber, but it may as well be miles. Our gazes are always fixed in opposite directions, into the hearts and minds of our beloved PCs, which for each of us house our employment, education, and entertainment.

I'm not complaining. I love working at home, and I love working in general. Being with AU, AUSU and The Voice has given me opportunities to do many things that I love, and my work is as enjoyable to me as many entertainment options.

The problem with this 24/7 keep-busy schedule is that when holidays come around, I'm not really prepared to take the time off to get everything done. Most students have time off around Christmas, but for me, taking several days off just feels weird. I'm going to have to, though. I have gifts to wrap, things to buy, and a dinner for six to plan. So I've decided to schedule some time off for domestic stuff, over the next week, and in the coming year, I hope to find some strategies for working at home, but keeping work separate from the rest of life. I don't like how I feel guilty if I spend a day without doing any work.

Home offices are becoming the norm, and I bet that I'm not the only one who's having a hard time distinguishing work from life, and it is something I'm going to start researching. I'm sure many other distance education (DE) students have similar issues, and I look forward to sharing with you some of the strategies I learn for scheduling work and school without regular classes, hours of work, semesters, holidays, or a boss looking over the shoulder.

I hope our readers also take some time off to enjoy Christmas this year. Cherish the holidays if you are with family, because you never know when you will see them again. This will be my first Christmas since my mother died, and my father has come from Quebec to be with us for the first time in 6 years. Who knows where we will all be next year? I, for one, am taking nothing for granted any more.

My wisdom for the year: Anything can happen, everything will change, and the perfect time to make a change will never come along. Those who wait for a better time will wait forever.

Merry Christmas Everyone!

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.



From My Perspective: A new grading system

by Debbie Jabbour

AU is going to a new Alpha/4.0 grading scale for undergraduate studies, effective January 1, 2003. This is an important change; part of a province-wide project that

will see all four of our universities moving to a common scale. What does this mean for students?

Currently AU students are marked on a percent grade scale (0%-100%). University of Alberta uses a 9 point system, while the Universities of Calgary and Lethbridge use different versions of the 4 point alpha scale. This has created complex transfer situations when students move from one institution to another. It has even resulted in downgrading of marks, particularly when transferring from Athabasca University to the University of Alberta (this occurs with University of Lethbridge to U of A as well).

Obviously a better solution was desirable, so in 2000, the Universities Coordinating Committee, responding to an initiative by the Alberta Council on Admissions and Transfer, established the Common Grading Systems committee to identify a grading scale that was “academically sound, attuned to the needs of students, and readily recognized by other universities, professional licensing bodies, employers and the public”(1). The CGS Committee recommendation was to convert to the “4.0 grading scale that distinguishes between A and A+ in alpha but not on the 4.0 scale”(2). Not only will this facilitate within-province transfers, it is hoped that inter-provincial transfer arrangements and graduate school admissions will also be simplified, since most North American universities use the Alpha/4.0 scale.

Alberta already has one of the most efficient systems of transfer credits, operated by the Alberta Council on Admissions and Transfer (ACAT)(3). ACAT is working with other organizations across Canada to examine articulation agreements between educational institutions, building on the premise that “credit transfer mechanisms are essential to lifelong learning and employability”(4). The Alberta Online Transfer Guide is a handy tool that allows Alberta students to easily verify course equivalents among all of the participating Alberta universities, colleges and technical schools (5). British Columbia also has an extensive transfer guide, but other provinces still have foundational work to do on such a system (6).

ACAT is also part of the Pan-Canadian Protocol on the Transferability of University courses, adopted in 1995 by the Council of Ministers of Education in Canada (CMEC). The goal of this Protocol was to ensure cross-Canada recognition and transferability of all post-secondary credits. Alberta’s universities and colleges were the first to affirm the Protocol in 1995, indicating that their practices already conformed to the Protocol (7). Most other provincial universities have followed suit. For students taking Athabasca University courses, the ease of transfer between institutions and provinces is an absolute necessity, and the change to a common grading system is another improvement to the process.

On the 4.0 scale, an A and an A+ both convert to a 4.0. This has given rise to concerns among students who feel that their “+” honorific will be lost. For example, a student transferring to the U of A under the old 9-point scale would receive a 9 with an A+, but only an 8 with an A. In some universities this is adjusted for by adding to the 4.0 scale and assigning a 4.3 to an A+. Alberta universities argued against doing this, since this could artificially inflate marks, and disadvantage students transferring to professional schools that do not mark higher than a 4.0. The U of A cites evidence that such inflation does occur, and that maintaining grading standards by keeping the 4.0 cap is a better way to proceed. A 4.3 “A+” is often rounded down to a 4.0, while an “A” would be rounded down to less than 4.0, so advantages to a 4.3 system are “minimal to non-existent”(8). The U of C points out that universities using the “fine GPA” will recalculate marks based on their own criteria. They are addressing this by allowing instructors to put the “+” on student transcripts to make external evaluators aware that a student’s work is outstanding (9).

On the other end of the scale, the D- has been eliminated, and a grade of D is considered minimum pass, with an F a fail. This will help alleviate problems that previously occurred between institutions where minimum pass grades were different. The U of A “9 to 4” site gives a very helpful explanation of how failing and minimum pass grades will be converted (8).

Athabasca University previously used a transfer equivalent scale that assessed a mark between 90-100% (A+) as equivalent to 4.0, with an 85-89% (A), equivalent to 3.8. With the new policy, effective January 1, 2003, Athabasca University will conform to the same scale as the other Alberta universities and A+ and A will now both be equivalent to 4.0.

The second part of the change involves the calculation of the Grade Point Average (GPA). At Athabasca University currently, a student's overall grade standing is currently calculated on a straight percentage/average basis. This means that student average is calculated by adding up total percentages from all courses, then dividing by the number of courses. Now the GPA will be calculated on the following weighted average:

$$\text{sum of (grade point} \times \text{credit hours)} / (\text{sum of credit hours}).$$

The formula and grade assignments are explained in detail in the Undergraduate Grading Policy, but an example of how GPA is calculated is given below (10). Grades will be calculated based on the following scale. To simplify this, I'm not listing the exact grade points for each percentage, but they are listed in detail in the AU Undergraduate Grading Policy (10). An example would be the percentage variance from 80-84, which would be calculated as 80=3.70; 81=3.76; 82=3.82; 83=3.88; 84=3.94.

PERCENTAGE	ALPHA GRADE	GRADE POINT
90-100	A+	4.0
85-89	A	4.0
80-84	A-	3.7
76-79	B+	3.3
73-75	B	3.0
70-72	B-	2.7
67-69	C+	2.3
64-66	C	2.0
60-63	C-	1.7
55-59	D+	1.3
50-54	D	1.0
0-49	F	0.0

If you take 5 courses, here is a rough example of how your GPA would be calculated (numbers are truncated, or shortened):

	Credit hrs	GRADE	Grade Point
Course #1	3	A	4
Course #2	3	B	3
Course #3	3	A	4
Course #4	3	C	2
Course #5	3	F	0
TOTAL	15		13

Sum of (grade point X credit hours)/(sum of credit hours) = weighted average (GPA)

$$\begin{array}{ccccc} \#1 & \#2 & \#3 & \#4 & \#5 \\ (4 \times 3 + 3 \times 3 + 4 \times 3 + 2 \times 3 + 0 \times 3) / 15 = 2.60 & \text{(weighted average)} \\ \text{GPA} = 2.60 \end{array}$$

The implementation of the new scales will take some time, and for a while grades will be listed in both formats. The start date for this conversion is January 1, 2003, and any undergraduate courses with start dates of January 1, 2003 and later will use the new scale. Those of us who are registered in courses with start dates prior to January 1, 2003, will still be graded the old way. Student transcripts for courses after January 1, 2003 will only display the Alpha grade and corresponding grade points. Student transcripts that include courses with start dates prior to January 1, 2003, will be modified to display the new alpha grades; the percentage grades for start dates prior to January 1, 2003; and the new Grade Point Average based on the 4.0 scale.

Instructors will also need to adjust to the new marking system. At the U of A, instructors are being oriented to the new system and encouraged to “separate marking and grading...using verbal descriptors (excellent, good, etc.) in evaluating the student performance and to assign the alpha grades accordingly (11). The new system, therefore, is much more than just a change of marks, it requires a change in how instructors and students think. It will be of benefit in reducing some of the subjectivity used in marking. On the other hand, students who work hard for individual percentage points may feel disadvantaged. It will take all of us some time to get used to the new system.

Overall the change will be of particular benefit to students at Athabasca University, since we rely so heavily on the ability to transfer courses easily. Implementation in Alberta is just a beginning - since all the provinces of Canada have agreed to work toward implementing the Pan Canadian Protocol, it is likely only a matter of time before other provinces follow suit and move toward a common grading system as well.

If you want further information on the background of the conversion to the 4.0 scale, the U of A 9 to 4 website is an excellent resource that offers a clear and coherent explanation of the process (8). I’d also encourage you to check out the ACAT website (3). It contains a great deal of interesting information on transfer patterns for universities in Alberta; and for Alberta students, the Online Transfer Guide is extremely helpful. For a detailed explanation of how Athabasca University will be implementing the change, see the Undergraduate Grading Policy (10). Don’t hesitate to ask questions as well – the Registrar’s Office will be happy to explain how it all works; the AUSU discussion forum has a topic thread on the new grading system; and you can email any of AUSU’s Council members for information.

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- (2) ACAT. Minutes of meeting March 28, 2001.

- (3) ACAT. Alberta Council on Admissions and Transfer
http://www.acat.gov.ab.ca/login/taars/public_site/index.asp
- (4) ACAT. Minutes of meeting March 25, 2002.
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- (6) ACAT. Minutes of meeting June 19, 2002.
- (7) Pan-Canadian Protocol on the Transferability of University Credits.
<http://www.cmec.ca/postsec/transferability.stm>
- (8) Nine to Four: New Letter Grades Coming in Fall 2003. University of Alberta.
<http://www.uofaweb.ualberta.ca/9to4>
- (9) Gazette, University of Calgary. U of C gets the plus sign.
http://www.fp.ucalgary.ca/unicomm/Gazette/April30_01/plus.htm
- (10) Undergraduate Grading Policy. Athabasca University.
<http://www.athabascau.ca/policy/registry/undergraduategradingpolicy2002.htm>
- (11) Office of the Registrar bulletins, Working from 9 to 4: Changing the grading scale, November 21, 2001. <http://www.uofaweb.ualberta.ca/9to4>

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.



Canadian Fed Watch!

News Across The Nation...

December 18, 2002

By Karl Low

Saskatchewan Strategy Paying Off

The Provincial Government of Saskatchewan has begun to see results from its program of paying for health care students' education on the condition that the students work within Saskatchewan once they've graduated. Over 250 students [received](#) bursaries ranging

from \$2,500 to \$25,000, which means over 250 people have committed to providing needed health care services in rural Saskatchewan for a number of years.

In addition, the provincial government has set aside funding of almost four million dollars for the bursary for service program. This type of long-range thinking should be applauded and emulated by provincial governments nation-wide. Instead of devoting increasing resources to making a region more attractive to people with needed skills, Saskatchewan is devoting resources to creating more of those type of people, a strategy that winds up benefiting everybody in the long run as more doctors mean less difficulties getting medical treatment when we need it.

This is a far better answer than trying to create a privatized layer of public health care. Saskatchewan's strategy builds a bigger pie, while the best that Premier Klein of Alberta's strategy can do is make it possible to serve more with smaller pie pieces. Sooner or later though, no matter how filling a pie Klein has cooked up, it won't be able to satisfy everybody's needs.

Alberta Advertises Increase in Scholarships

The Alberta Provincial government has an announcement titled ["Scholarships increase to reward student excellence"](#). Unfortunately for Alberta Students, the title is misleading. The article is making reference to how the Heritage Scholarship Fund has had to be increased by two million dollars due to the large numbers of applications.

Unfortunately, the only thing that has really increased are the number of these scholarships that they are giving out. Our K-12 education is working very well to develop students excellently suited to go on post-secondary education.

The amount of each scholarship has not increased at all in at least ten years though. Comparing this to how tuition has risen over the same period shows that this scholarship, supposedly put in place to encourage students to reach their full potential, is actually worth less and less with each passing year. When I received the Heritage Scholarship it was almost enough to cover my full first year tuition, including textbooks and supplies. Today's students can barely cover a single semester's worth of courses.

If the Alberta government really wants to encourage students to reach their full potential, they should consider making it easier for students to take a full degree program by lowering tuition. After all, a single semester of a four-year program really isn't worth that much.

NORAD to Track Santa Claus

As it has every year since 1957, the North American Aerospace Defence Command, is getting ready to [escort Santa Claus](#) along his route across Canada and the United States.

Hopefully our friends to the South will keep the weapons off their planes while they do so. I hate to think of the [risks involved](#) otherwise.

For those who are interested in tracking Santa's route around the globe, you can follow everything from the site: <http://www.noradsanta.org/>. There you can also find fun things such as desktop wallpaper, information on Santa and his route, and Christmas music performed by the USAF Band of the Rockies, the USAF Band of Mid-America, and the Royal Canadian Artillery Bands which is all ready for download in MP3 format.

Merry Christmas!

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.



Canadian Labour: A Short History

Development and Growth of the Working Class and Working Class Militancy 1880-1920 – Noble and Holy Order of the Knights of Labour

By Wayne E. Benedict

Last week we began our adventure through Canadian labour history during the time between 1880 and 1920. We briefly explored the deplorable working conditions which women had to endure if they expected to enter the workforce, and the callous disregard of these conditions by the Royal Commission sent in to investigate. Children also suffered within our Canadian labour history; as the socio-economics of the working class were so poor, and with a lack of social assistance 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.

Capitalists during this time period were more-or-less synergetic in their actions both in industry and at the voting booths. Conversely labour was rife with hierarchical factions

whose interests were diverse and whose theoretical solutions to the myriad problems facing the working class were disparate. The labour organization with the most impact in the 1880s was the Noble and Holy Order of the Knights of Labour.

Unlike the elitist craft unions, the Knights encouraged organization of all of the working classes into one organization. The Knights made unparalleled gains for the labour movement during this decade, rallying diverse groups of workers—men, women, skilled, and unskilled—to join their cause of empowerment. They were not entirely inclusionary however, as they exhibited anti-oriental racism themselves.

The Holy Order attempted to concentrate the votes of the working class and thus gain representation for labour in Canadian politics. To this end, they ran candidates at the federal, provincial, and municipal levels. Although their successes were marginal at the federal and provincial levels, labour candidates received enough votes to jolt the old parties into realizing the potential collective strength of the working class in the voting booths, which garnered some accommodation from reigning politicians.

Labour candidates were far more successful in their attempts to win municipal offices. The number and frequency of strikes during this period attests to the working class realization that accommodation was an impotent strategy against the capitalists and that radical new forms of resistance were needed to further the position of labour under monopoly capitalism. The Knights of Labour was a movement that pushed for power in the political arena as well as on the work site through direct action. The rise of the Knights was strong and rapid but their decline was equally precipitous. After 1886 solidarity within the ranks of the Order dissolved due to philosophical and ideological differences. Skilled workers retreated and entrenched in the face of growing capitalist power, leaving women and unskilled workers to fall back into an unorganized state of occupational misery.

Next week: Racism and exclusion within our Canadian Labour History between 1880 and 1920.

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The Christmas Party

By Laura Seymour

The first thing I need to discuss is my shopping trip before I went to the party. I bought a lovely Poinsettia plant in an ivy hoop kind of thingee. The reason it is significant is the Feng Shui it awakens. The last time I had a poinsettia was about 5 years ago and it banged me upside the head with its results! You see the plant is red, it grows in the south and it awakens "fire", which is "fame".

Five years ago this plant brought in a phone call (which I still have on a cassette) from a Fox TV producer who wanted to know if I would like to be on a show to meet or beat the world record for belly dancing! And no, I didn't do it...it's five days long! Now that you have this background, I'll resume my story.

This year I was deliberating whether or not to go. Larry was pretty set on it for some unknown reason. Five years ago the party was dull, I wasn't feeling well, and I had nothing to wear. I was facing the same damn thing this year and I wasn't looking

forward to being in a room full of people who barely knew me and were dressed WAAAAAAAAAAAY better than I would be.

I schlepped over to do the grocery shopping in my usual drawstring pants and a crappy t-shirt. I came back and decided, “what the heck” and went into *Winners*. I looked at the evening gowns. I got stupid and picked dresses in size 3-4 and a 5-6. Last time I bought a dress that was my size...sigh. I won’t tell you the size I finally wore but suffice it to say I was astonished that it was the dress I was looking at about two months ago and that it was the last one in the store. Perfect fit!

I went out to dinner the night before the party for my birthday. Since I got to the restaurant almost a half an hour early I popped into the Bay and went up to “wigs”. I looked at those little hair thingees that you pin around your ponytail and found a flawless match for my colour. I bought it and hoped I knew what the hell I was doing with it! When I bought the festive dress I came home singing flippin’ Christmas carols! I then discovered another reason – a monthly reason – not to be in a party mood. Just an added repeat of five years ago.

I waited for Larry to be coiffed, wash his hair, face and slick himself up. I said, “tuxedo, Mister!” (He’d been planning on a “nice shirt”). I then started to dress. Wash hair, slap on goo to hold hair. Put on dress. Pile up hair on head, add hairpiece. Slap on make-up and throw on shoes...and hey! I can walk in them and I didn’t have to buy new ones! Shove everything known to man in tiny evening bag.

So we get on the *Handi-bus* and I swear the driver had a booze bottle open in the truck – it reeked – so I got nervous about the driver on top of everything else.

We arrive at five minutes to six. We are the first people there. Even the meet and greet big wigs haven’t shown up yet! The kitchen staff are gabbing at us to pass the time! It’s soooo quiet.

So, people show up over the next hour and a half and a few people stop over to say “hi.” Most of them I don’t know. Every time we suggest they join us, they have an excuse not to. I’m beginning to question whether I really bathed! I know Larry is fresh too! Sheesh. I get to the point where I silently look out the windows and say mentally, “I’d give

anything to be popular and in a positive way. What will it take?” I finally decide being a giant lottery winner just isn’t going to happen to us. We’re cursed or something.

My stomach is growling when they announce dinner is starting in five minutes. There are three of us at a table for eight! We are sitting with a lonely Chinese man who works down the hall from Larry. Surprisingly, that’s where things start to get really good. A young couple decides to ask if they can sit with us. They introduce themselves as Linda and Dave. Interestingly Linda is the company president’s right arm: she is his personal assistant. And as she is sitting down she asks me, “How are things going with this alternative therapy you were doing?” I’m thinking “she’s on top of who’s doing what!”

So we chit chat about Cranio and Reiki. We chat about the two articles in the *Herald* and the company not helping us. Apparently the president is very concerned about where money goes in charities. She told the president: "this is something that has a history to it and we should keep an eye on this." She didn't seem to be "slicking" me.

I was surprised. I stated concern about a company decision against helping Larry raise funds for an impressive treatment in the States. She seemed to be very attentive to my argument. She asked Larry how much the therapy program would cost. Larry responded about fifteen grand... a fortune to us. Her reaction was, "that's a drop in the bucket!" (I guess for a company it is!) I genuinely thanked her for bringing the subject up and said that after two articles in the local newspaper and not one phone call I didn't think anyone cared. She was quite adamant that she wanted to keep on top of this. I pointed out that the pictures of wild dolphins coming in from the sea and a big banner headline saying SPINAL INJURED MAN'S COMPANY HELPS HIM WALK AGAIN, could not possibly get a brush-off from the press. You had to watch her eyes to know she was truly listening. I **don't** make guarantees anything will change instantly from the treatment but an 80% success rate can't be found in traditional medicine. Man, I'm nursing my poinsettia heavily now!

Anyway, moments later there was an announcement from the podium that this year they forgot the bucket to draw for the door prizes...as a result they were opening up the floor for competition for the gifts! I was too busy yapping over the 'blah, blah' in the hall to hear the first announcement and the second one (flowers for a year) went the other side of the room. DRAT! That was what I wanted!

They came back to our side and I woke up. I saw a man get up and dance the most amazing Russian dance. He looked like a real pro!! I heard, "Any other competitors?" You see this coming? I jumped up, flung my napkin over my head and strutted up to the dance floor. A few "OOOOOOOO"s later I belly danced my way to a computer bag we didn't need!! Little did I know that this woke the whole place up!! All night people kept saying either, "congratulations" or slapping Larry on the back and saying, "You LUCKY bastard YOU!!!" It never ended. The receptionist who'd not spoken to me for a year suddenly said "way to go, Laura!!" I almost fell over at all this. I haven't had a night like this since I was princess of the formal in grade 8!!!

I have no idea if there are any photos of my dance. But we have one of us taken together.

I also danced with the charming president of the company. Larry had the guts, if you please, to tease him with, "I'm gonna give you \$#&* for not buying me cowboy boots in Texas!"

You had to see the nervous response of..."Uh uh...I'll buy you some boots!! What's...what's your size!!?" Too funny! How many people can joke around with a great company president?!

I told Linda that I was impressed that the man knew who Larry was and that I wasn't sure he knew his name!! You know...the little guy in the wheelchair. She assured me that the president works very hard to know people's names.

Anyway, I danced with a hunk or two and had a drunken dance with Larry. **The first time he's ever danced with me**—a seven-year wait!! This was a really BIG night!! Now if we could just find out the name of the country and western song we danced to and the artist. I've heard the chorus before... Is it the *Two-step Boogie*--the singer is belting out? Maybe he's saying, "Tube steak".... I dunno!!!

Well, by the time we got home it was just shy of eleven and we yapped and yapped about the amazing night. Thank you's to the company, and I'll bet joke or not the company president really will get Larry some boots in Texas! The company made the cover of MacLeans magazine on the *Top 100 Companies to Work For* issue, and they threw the party to make me convinced of the moniker.

Have a good holiday this year whatever you celebrate...and put a nice red poinsettia in the south for some extra fame energy!!

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).



THE VOICE – December 18, 2002

Dear Sandra,

Last week my best friend's father passed away after a brief fight with cancer. I want to be there for my friend in every way possible, but I don't know how to deal

with the delicate state she is in. She also has two children ages 5 and 7 whom I would like to help comfort. I don't want to say the wrong thing or make her even sadder; do you have any suggestions as to how I can support her through this time?

Confused Friend

Dear Confused Friend,

Everyone deals with grief in his or her own way. No matter how much preparation one is given, death always comes as a shock to the remaining family members. For close relatives, along with the shock and sadness of death come the mundane and unwelcome tasks of planning a funeral and settling the estate. Many times people are not given the opportunity to grieve until after the funeral.

It is important that you inform your friend that you are there to support her anytime she needs you, whether it be for someone to talk to, childcare, housework or funeral arrangements. Grief-stricken people need to discover that it is not the brave or grown-up thing to do to ignore grief and keep a "brave face". In fact, buried grief can lead to severe, debilitating problems for years afterward.

For human beings there is a "process" of grief which it is beneficial to understand, because successfully passing through these 5 stages of grief helps you. They are:

- Anger
- Accept that this situation has indeed happened
- Express your emotions as fully as possible, preferably with someone
- Re-adjust your life to the new circumstances that prevail
- Place the old days fondly in your heart, but live the new reality

Try to understand the above and help your friend by explaining it to her.

Children also have a deep need to grieve, and to have someone guide their grieving process. Regrettably, the adults in their lives are also grieving at the time when someone close has passed away, and are not at their best in paying attention to the young ones in their presence.

Help a child talk about and remember the person who passed away, be truthful; never lie to a child; remember special days that affect the child; hug with permission; make a child's world secure for grieving; and get out the crayons, pens, pencils, paint and chalk (children often express their feelings better in non-verbal ways).

The most important thing to remember is that everyone deals with grief in different ways. Some people cry, some people don't. Some people withdraw, some people don't. There is no set standard to grieving and no specific time limit.

Sandra

**I WANT TO HEAR FROM YOU!
TELL ME YOUR TROUBLES.
YOUR CONFIDENTIALITY IS ASSURED.**

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



Christmas Clichés and Contradictions

By b.e. hydromako

'Tis the season to be jolly, and thank God for that (or, if you're the type of person who is offended when someone tells you to have a Merry Christmas because you think they are, in some manner or

another, trying to ram their religion down your throat while at the same time slyly taking a dig at whatever faith you might happen to hold, then you, whoever you might be, can thank your own conception of divinity, or if you are an atheist, then simply thank your lucky stars instead of God)! I don't know about the rest of you out there in the world, but I sure am grateful to enjoy a little time off, and perhaps even fit some merriment in there somewhere—these last few months have been overly stressful and have been taxing my psyche to the breaking point.

I don't know if it is only me, but there seems to be a rising tide of anxiety going around these days. In fact, I saw a television special on depression a while ago, and it stated that the World Health Organization projected that by, I think it was, 2020 or maybe 2030, depression will be the second most common affliction behind heart disease. But enough

about present and future gloom and doom—let's get to the jolly good stuff! Righteo old bean!

As we noted, it's the Christmas season, and so, it's that time of year to be merry and cheery and full of good will (and likely, for many, of booze—don't forget the eggnog!). However, sometimes these things seem hard to keep up (even the drinking can be tedious); sometimes they can slip from the mind.

It can be hard to have good cheer and be merry when you are out hunting around for gifts for your friends and family. Lines can be long, stores can be crowded, sought for items can be out of stock, and the pressure to find that special someone the perfect gift can topple the strongest resolve to be jolly. But no matter, come Christmas day it is all worth it when you get up in the morning, run to the tree and see that Santa has brought you that lump of coal you deserve—wait, maybe that's only me. No really, watching someone open a gift that you gave them and have them light up in delight and surprise can be one of the most rewarding things about Christmas; something which sweeps away any traumatic experience that might have occurred in the procuring of the gift. Well, that, and you might get some neat loot of your own.

But of course, does the rampant and frenzied consumerism promoted by the apparent advertised requirements of extensive gift giving really capture the spirit of Christmas? Well some might want to say, "Hell, yeah! Bring on the gifts!" but others might be more inclined to say that it is the time spent with friends and family, and occasionally even coworkers at staff Christmas parties, which makes the holiday season what it truly is.

Yes, Christmas can be a time to rekindle bonds and reaffirm the love and compassion that we have for one and other. Then again, some of us might not have any friends, or at least, not want to spend too much time with the people we know, or we don't get along with our family, or there will be certain family members present at a gathering who don't get along, and OH MY GOD (or your favourite deity, or your lucky stars—no wait! that last one won't work in this context) CHRISTMAS IS RUINED FOR EVERYONE! And how hard must it be to be merry when Christmas is ruined for everyone? And how difficult it can sometimes be to try to be authentically happy when the pressure is on to get along. But no, the important part, even if there is the occasional stress, tension, or social faux-pas, is that we make a concerted effort to get along, to make the season bright, to see the tree tops glisten and hear children in the snow. Or something like that.

And for some of the men out there, well, chestnuts roasting on an open fire (and perhaps you can already see where I'm going with this one) has the potential to take on a whole different meaning if they happened to be inconsiderate enough to get their wife or girlfriend or significant other something that dips way below the line of thoughtful, appreciated, or otherwise appropriate. But we won't go too far into this one, because, after all, even the little drummer boy had no gift to bring other than the pa-rum-pa-pum-pum, and that was good enough for little baby Jesus (or your favourite deity or your lucky stars—no wait! none of that will work in this context either, will it?). Was that

sacrilegious or merely sacrilicious? And now you might not wonder why it is that Santa is going to be bringing me coal...

Yes, it's Christmas time. Carols play in every store, the stockings are hung by the chimney with care, the lights are bright on the Christmas tree (or, if you prefer, "Holiday tree," but don't try to pull that sort of shenanigan in Toronto), the streets glitter with light, and darn it all if the Christmas village isn't set up just so in the living room, with little Johnny sledding down that hill of cotton on his little sled. It's all so festive.

But silly jokes, wry or dry humour, and plain old goofing about aside, Christmas time can really be the most wonderful time of the year (and are you now waiting for some sort of punch line?). It is probably the one time of the year when most of us make a real and sincere effort to get along and to appreciate the presence and being of one and other. It is the time of year when many of us go about our affairs with an extra sense of appreciation for the people in our lives, and perhaps, for people we don't even know. We all tend to wish for peace on earth, it is a shame, however, that we can't seem to turn that wish into a reality.

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!



The Harried Student

Thesis

By Audrey Karperien

Unashamedly exhausted, after hoarsely whispering "It is done," he beseeched, "Why have you forsaken me?" and closed his eyes.

I was not without heart; I could feel his pain. I knew he needed me to acknowledge the honour he had won for himself, our family, our country. The gruelling ritual was finally over. Sole representative of Canada in a bitter

academic scenario, he had vanquished the scourge of studentship on Salisbury's plains, had faced and beaten the fiercest of the Celtic war gods, he who never dies, Thesis.

Grandly beating a 9:00 a.m. deadline, the brave Canadian had finished with Thesis with 2 hours to spare. He was luckier than some in slapping Thesis with 230 deadly paragraphs in time. This success he attributed to the powerful weaponry brought to the battle: namely, a Dell notebook having a really big backspace key. The Dell was critical in fashioning an arsenal of 230 sleep-deprived, unified thoughts—230 singeing topic sentences with supporting arguments—230 brave and bold yet neither trite nor awkwardly unbelievable insights. Bullets every one, and each a dire sacrifice, I knew.

I knew too that though Thesis was despatched and our man Canada had survived – had proven Alberta and AU admirable – comrades had fallen. I did not need to wait until years later when with eyes wide and in a hushed whisper he told his son of what he had seen during the 230 paragraphs with Thesis. I already knew the horrors. I was not surprised that Thesis had been harsh, had left in his deathlike grip several sorry sots, all stuck, regrettably entrapped in eternal run-on sentences, forever fused to their keyboards.

I even knew that some sad students had not made it past initiation. Men and women of many nations had been humbled by earlier rites of the British tutorial system. This is not the “Tutors R Us” kiddie show you might know from sweet, sweet AU, gentle reader. Oh no no no. This is the mysterious tutorial system erected by the same mysterious peoples who convinced Stonehenge to stand up. I mean the mysterious tutorial system wherein a tutorial's agenda is never its content yet always its test. I'm talking about the mysterious tutorial system wherein tutor is neither man nor beast, but evil essence...where grown men of many tribes and nations have for years been frightened by the unshorn, gaunt, white-maned principal tutor always on the couch in the staff lounge, perpetually reading a toner bottle, muttering over and over like a question “Mad cow” and randomly assigning marks to anyone who dares approach him. I mean the British tutorial system for which grown men bear memories especially of the haunting, haunted eyes of frightened Greek students pleading with British tutors whose ear drums are as unaffected as their upper lips; Greeks crying in vain that it is all English to them.

I knew that the Canadian had survived this and more and had returned, spent but worthy, to these meagre rented quarters built on the graves of knights of old. Breathing without assistance, he had returned at 7:00 am in the misty British morning. His hands and face were streaked red by so many felt markers. Dispassionate and used, a minute after the wheels had stopped turning and the latch had clicked, his nearly dead weight cracked the car door open.

As he waited, propped, a cascade of emptied shells falling from his pocket onto the drive rolled under the car, souvenirs of terror past. A moment after the last pen stopped its roll, he blessed their lost souls with a well-known friendly Albertan oath, and wedged first one black-booted leg then another 'twixt damnable right car door and frame. I was ignoring nothing; I was all too aware. From above I heard heavy, dragging feet follow each other—faithful dogs carrying the plasticine torso of a worn Canadian student body.

I knew his pain, his fatigue complete. Before I heard the key in the door below my window I sensed the bulk of spent self funnelled to a finger and directing itself at a scratched plastic button, conjuring a muffled yet highly offensive buzz like a secret call to his fairest love (me, obviously). Yet I did not move. Deep in the towers of our temporary rented home, beyond the mist, beyond the shade of Stonehenge, hidden from the brick halls of British academia and even farther from the Rockies and the drywall of Albertan academia, as the trill rang on I did not move. Unanswered, he slumped for an instant eternity, then resumed consciousness, searching his fist for his own key.

I was ignoring nothing. For part of the long buzzing I was silently deferring to what I knew had been done, but for most of it I was unable to move. And I silently honoured every plod up the stairs, nodding solemnly for every creak as he gently eased his academic warrior self onto folds of cool, thick, white cotton comforter and fell asleep with his boots on.

I wasn't ignoring him. I could feel the scars of his ended battle. I heard the return of the perpetual student. I had not forsaken him; nor had I been to bed. Academia is our religion. He worships in the halls of ancient British educational institutes; I in our home, wherever our home may be, wherever we set up the Shrine of Gigabyte.

This life leaves us sleepless, ringing our own doorbell, deferring to each other, and jetlagged by the academic distances we travel every day. But we do it. I was expecting him to work all night to conquer the enemy/meet his deadline; he, likewise, might have expected to pass by me at the computer as I was when he left last night after putting his heirs to bed. No, I was not ignoring him, would never ignore him. I was deep in battle myself. Honour, shorter lived than ever he might have imagined, needed constant renewal. There, in our supposed haven from the busy leftover Celtic world about us, mysterious Thesis was far from defeated. Thesis was back and had me in a death grip.



ENLIGHTENING INFORMATION!

WRITE FOR THE VOICE!

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



Bison: The Other Red Meat?

Worth a Second Look

By Teresa Neuman

According to the Canadian Bison Association, “bison is back.” This majestic animal, once nearly extinct, is again popular with consumers because of its flavourful and healthy meat. In 2001, Reader’s Digest named bison as the fourth most nutritious food product for women, and chefs like Bobby Flay feature bison on menus in their restaurants.

Described by the National Bison Association as “the largest land animal in North America since the ice age,” the bison is easily identifiable by its thick fur, shoulder hump, and sharp horns. Originating in Eurasia, scientists believe that bison crossed the Bering Strait land bridge arriving in North America, where two subspecies, the plains bison and the wood bison, survive today. A third subspecies, the European Wisent, is almost extinct and is mostly found in parks and zoos.

Bison once roamed North America in large herds, numbering at one point approximately 60 million animals, and was a source of food, clothing and fuel to North American indigenous peoples. Between 1800 and 1889, the bison population was reduced to 1500 animals as settlers and hunters systematically eliminated bison from the North American landscape. Due to the progressive thinking of conservationists and ranchers, the first bison protection refuges were established in Montana. Today, between public and privately owned herds in the US and Canada, the bison population in North America has grown to approximately 350,000 animals.

North American bison belong to the family *Bovidae*, in the order of *Artiodactyla*, along with cattle, musk ox, big horn sheep and the Rocky Mountain goat. There are three subspecies of the North American bison: the plains bison is classified as *Bison bison bison*, the wood bison as *Bison bison athabasca*, and the European Wisent as *Bison bonasus*. Scientists prefer to identify the animal by its proper scientific classification, “bison”, but the public tends to identify the animal as “buffalo.” A 2001 survey conducted by the Canadian Bison Association measured the preferences of consumers regarding bison products and marketing, showed that 69.9 percent of consumers felt that the term “buffalo” is more recognizable, while 30.1 percent identified with the term “bison.”

Most people refer to bison by the term “buffalo”; but “buffalo” is not the correct term for the North American animal. Related to the bison, buffalo are wild or domesticated oxen

native to Africa and Asia, of the family *Bovidae*, subfamily *Bovinae*. Subspecies of the buffalo include the cape buffalo of Africa (*syncerus caffer*) and the water buffalo of Asia (*Bubalus bubalis*).

The National Bison Association cites Albert Rorabacher's book, [The American Bison in Transition](#), for introduction of the term "buffalo" into North American vernacular. During the seventeenth century, French explorers in North America referred to the new species they encountered as "les boeufs," meaning oxen or beeves. When the English arrived later, they changed the pronunciation to "la buff." The name grew distorted as "buffle," "buffler," "buffillo," and, eventually, "buffalo."

The bison has a certain mystique attached to it and is synonymous with images of the North American frontier. The Canadian Bison Association consumer survey also tested how consumers identify with the bison. The survey showed that 66 percent of respondents identify the bison with North American heritage, 40 percent with game meat, 38 percent as luxury meat, and 11.5 percent associated bison with being an endangered species. The Canadian Bison Association notes that BC salmon, Atlantic lobster, maple syrup and a few other products are the only other foods that is so uniquely identified with Canadian heritage.

Bison meat is increasing in popularity and has moved out of the realm of gourmet dining. Today, bison is available in grocery stores and butcher and specialty meat shops and is available in a variety of cuts including ribs, roasts and steaks. Many consumers find that bison meat tastes sweeter than beef, and has richer flavour.

Bison has less fat than other meats including beef, chicken, pork and lamb, making it a popular choice for healthy dining. The Canadian Nutrient File 2001 compares bison meat to other cooked lean meats. At the top of the chart, 100 grams of bison meat has 2.2 grams of fat compared to beef at 9.38 grams of fat and skinless chicken at 7.41 grams of fat. The same source shows that bison meat has fewer calories, less cholesterol and more iron per 100 gram serving, compared to other meats.

Cooking methods for bison are similar to those for beef, but due to bison's low fat content it requires special attention while cooking to ensure that it doesn't dry out. The Canadian Bison Association recommends using lower cooking temperatures and a meat thermometer to monitor the internal temperatures to avoid overcooking. Bison meat is deeper in colour than beef and lacks the marbling of fat that beef has, causing it to cook faster than other meats. In beef, the fat acts as an insulator, which slows the cooking of the meat. The rich flavour of bison meat means that less salt and fewer spices are required to flavour the meat during cooking.

Following are 2 recipes from the [Canadian Bison Association website](#) that showcase bison's unique flavour:

Savory bison roast

Crust mixture:

- 1/2 cup (125 ml) Dijon mustard
- 1 cup (250 ml) honey mustard
- 10 cloves garlic, chopped fine
- 2 lb. (900 g) sirloin tip of bison
- 3 tbsp. (45 ml) fresh sage, chopped (or 15 ml dry)
- 3 tbsp. (45 ml) fresh oregano, chopped
- 1 tsp. (5 ml) black peppercorns, cracked

Sear the roast on a broiler or in a hot pan. Season with salt and pepper and a little paprika. Top with savoury crust mixture. Roast in a 300 degree F (150 degree C) oven until it has reached an internal temperature of 140 degrees F (60 degrees C). Let the roast rest for 10 minutes before slicing. While roast is resting, prepare a jus or gravy from the drippings.

– Provided by the Alberta Bison Association

Prairie fire buffalo burgers

- 1 1/2 lbs. (675 g) ground bison
- 1/2 cup (125 ml) onion, finally chopped
- 1 medium jalapeno pepper, finely chopped
- 1 clove garlic, finely chopped
- 1/2 cup (125 ml) rolled oats
- 1 egg
- 1 tsp. (5 ml) salt
- 1 tsp. (5 ml) pepper

Mix all of the ingredients together. Shape into patties about half inch thick. Brush grill with vegetable oil. Grill patties about 4 inches from coals, turning once, until they are done to taste (4 to 5 minutes on each side for medium). Serve with hot chilli sauce.

To broil burgers: Set oven control to broil. Place patties on rack in the broiler pan. Broil with the tops about 3 inches from the heat, turning once, until done. (Broil 4 to 5 minutes for medium.)

--Provided by the Saskatchewan Bison Association

More recipes and information about bison can be found on the [Canadian Bison Association website](#), in the consumer edition of the association's publication, *Smoke Signals* (May 2002 edition) or on the websites listed below.

The Canadian Bison Association and the provincial bison associations provide bison resources for the public and can provide information including where to purchase bison meat, recipes for preparing bison and nutritional information about bison products.

Bison on the web:

The Canadian Bison Association: <http://www.bisoncentral.com/cba/index.html>

National Bison Association: <http://www.bisoncentral.com>

Alberta Bison Association: <http://www.bisoncentre.com/ABA/>

Saskatchewan Bison Association: <http://www.saskbison.com/>

University Of Calgary Neuroscience Competition 2003

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>



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Hamilton By Lonita Fraser

If I were to tell you about the city I live in, what would I say? I'd say it's a town built on work; a town built on industry; a town built on the grit of people who either didn't want to, or couldn't, deal with building the city of Toronto (our neighbour by one hour to the north-westerly direction).

I could mention the Mafia, the shipping, the steel industry, and Tim Horton's. I could mention punk rock, jocks, and Hess Village on a summer evening.

I could talk about the east end, the west end, Rosedale, Parkdale, Westdale, Jamesville, and the hundred other little communities that make up this city. A city large enough to have its own university, four major hospitals (with two whole MRI units now, yay them), and home to one of the best airshows this side of... well, airshows.

I could tell you how there are more doughnut shops per capita in Hamilton than any other city in Canada (possibly even North America), and I could tell you about the night I saw a cop run a red to get into one of them. I could even tell you about the all-night euchre parties with friends, and the sing-a-longs that nearly got us booted out of one of them... for good.

I could tell you about the escarpment that we all like to call a mountain, or how you don't have to be Jesus to walk on water in Hamilton Harbour (hey, really - we have t-shirts with that on it!). I could tell you how the view coming into Hamilton from the Skyway Bridge is so ugly, not because of the industry by the lake, but because we want to keep the Torontonians out.

I could tell you what it was like to have my high school graduation ceremony in the Cathedral Of Christ The King (all Catholic high schools in Hamilton do that). I could describe to you what it's like to go skulking through the Hunter Street train tunnel (it's really not a task for the faint of heart, trust me; especially not when you hear a train coming and barely make it out before it brushes by only inches from your skin). I could even tell you what it's like to sit on the mountain brow on a night when the sky is lit by fireworks.

I could talk about the Festival Of Friends, Earthday, the Winona Peach Festival, the Dundas Cactus Festival, the Strawberry Festival (where they serve ice-cream and strawberries out front of city hall), the festival they have down at the harbour front every

summer, or the Canada Day concerts in Gage Park. They don't call Southern Ontario the "festival region" for nothing!

I could talk about how we are home to what might possibly be the last surviving decent independent record label and distribution company (that would be Sonic Unyun, for those keeping score at home; now home to Frank Black's music, amongst others). I could mention how Bela Lugosi and David Byrne once lived here, or the time we stretched a silver mylar ribbon from Stoney Creek's city hall to Hamilton's city hall.

I could tell you what it was like to hang out with the pseudo-goth punky skinhead downtown street kids in the late 80's, and what it was like to be friends with the sort of person who'd walk through the downtown dressed as Jesus during the annual Jehovah's Witnesses convention. I can even tell you precisely how long it takes to get from the corner of King and Nash to McMaster by city bus (hey, they're going your way).

I could tell you how we're perfectly situated and perfectly sized. We're not too big and not too small, and smack in-between Niagara Falls and Toronto. The weather is decent during the winter (we escaped the snow belt by half an hour). I can even mention the fact that our one peep show offers a seniors discount.

I could tell you many things, but I think what I'd tell you first and foremost, is that it has become my home. I am a part of it, and it is a part of me; and if I never make that move to England, I can see myself spending the rest of my life here, contentedly.

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 hopes of one day owning a plaid Cthulhu doll. The most exciting thing she's done so far in her lifetime is driven 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

AU Profiles:

AU PROFILES

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 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!



AU STUDENT:

Wayne E Benedict

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

Wayne: Prince George, British Columbia

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

Wayne: I am married with two children, 6 & 4, and two dogs, a Newfoundland and a small cross.

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

Wayne: I like to hunt, read, write, compute, learn & practice industrial relations.

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

Wayne: I am presently taking Introduction to Human Resources (ORGB386), Labour Relations and the Law (IDRL320), & Writing in Organizations (ADMN233). My favourite courses have been Collective Bargaining, Labour Relations and the Law, & Rights at Work: Grievance Arbitration.

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

Wayne: I have been taking courses through AU on an ad hoc basis since 1996.

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

Wayne: I love distance education through AU. The autonomy and flexibility that the course-contract system provides to me is indispensable to my familial and occupational situation. I attained my high-school diploma through distance education so I was, and am, entirely comfortable with self-study. There have been very few wrinkles in my relationship with the university and those have been dealt with to my satisfaction.

Voice: Do you work? What do you do?

Wayne: Yes; I am a locomotive engineer and president of the Canadian Union of Transportation Employees Local 1. I divide my fulltime work between the two. Acting for the latter, I perform various functions such as: worker advocacy; WCB appeals; Grievance Arbitration; Collective Bargaining; instructing; etc. I also write a weekly column for the Voice.

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

Wayne: I will finish the Certificate in Industrial Relations and Human Resources in the next month or so and plan to either finish the Bachelor of Human Resources program through AU & eventually attend Queens University for its Master of Industrial Relations program; or, attempt to enter the University of Victoria law program as a mature student. I really haven't decided which route to go, but AU is laying the foundation for my educational future.

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

Wayne: Time will pass, and life goes on, whether you take courses or not, so you might as well set an educational goal for yourself and try to achieve it. When you turn around twice and several years have passed, there could be a parchment hanging on your wall.

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

Wayne: Many of my life's humorous antic-dotes are contained in the archives of the Voice. I have yet to work with a tutor that has not impressed me. If I had to choose one course to recommend, it would be Introduction to Statistics (MATH215); everyone could apply the knowledge gained through it to many aspects of life.

Thanks, Wayne, both for taking the time to do the survey, as well as for writing such wonderful material for us for the past few years! We appreciate your hard work and dedication and look forward to reading more from you in the future. All the best to you!

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



WRITE FOR THE VOICE!

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



School of Business Wins Award

Contributed by The Insider

AU's list of honours continues to grow: the School of Business has been recognized with an E-Business Leadership Award.

Awards were presented Nov. 28 in Edmonton to eight Alberta companies, communities and not-for-profit organizations that have demonstrated

leadership and success in electronic commerce, learning, community support and other innovative ways of using the Internet.

Singled out in the Learning category was AU's School of Business for its e-commerce/e-class initiative. Learning Minister Lyle Oberg presented AU's award to School of Business chair David Annand and Houda Trabelsi, E-Commerce academic coordinator (shown above, with the award).

Awards spokesperson Bob Gardiner said that AU was chosen "because of the growth of the institution through distance learning and the expansion using web-based tools and solutions." He said that the level of impact on the community was significant, particularly because of the number of students with access to the Internet and the number of programs available. He noted, "AU was selected due to the general good web design and high degree of functionality."

Chair David Annand acknowledged the School of Business staff who worked hard to make the award possible.

Information about the award is available: <http://www.albertaawards.com/>

Congratulations to everyone involved.



Scholarships Increase to Reward Student Excellence

Contributed by Sylvia Schubert

Alberta Learning, Communications Dept.

Edmonton... Outstanding student achievement in Alberta is paying off.

The Government of Alberta is responding to an increase in academic excellence by boosting the maximum amount available for Heritage Scholarships from \$20 million to \$22 million. The increase was necessary in large part due to an eight-per-cent increase in the number of eligible applicants for the Alexander Rutherford Scholarships.

This year, approximately 8,400 students will be awarded a Rutherford Scholarship worth up to \$2,500, an increase of almost 700 students over the previous year.

"The increase in eligible Rutherford recipients is a true testament to the hard work of students in Alberta," said Minister of Learning, Dr. Lyle Oberg. "The Alberta Heritage Scholarship Fund was designed to encourage excellence by recognizing outstanding achievement, and we will continue to ensure students are rewarded for their hard work and dedication to learning."

The change to the Alberta Heritage Scholarship Regulation was made through an Order-In-Council.

The Alberta Heritage Scholarship Fund Endowment Program was created in 1980 to reward outstanding Albertans and encourage them to reach their full potential. Through Alberta Heritage Scholarships, Alberta Learning administers more than 40 scholarships and bursaries, providing financial assistance to almost 10,000 students a year.

The Alexander Rutherford Scholarships are awarded on the basis of achieving an 80 per cent average on five designated subjects in Grades, 10, 11 and 12. Applicants must be residents of Alberta who plan to enrol or are enrolled in a full-time post-secondary program of at least one semester in length. For more information on the Alexander Rutherford Scholarship and for applications, visit www.alis.gov.ab.ca.



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



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 or call 1-800-9041 ext. 3413

Edmonton local number: 497-7000

Calgary local number: 298-2905



AUSU SPEAKS: Winter Session Provided By AUSU

News from the November 28, 2002 council meeting

AUSU met on November 28th, 2002, for a regularly scheduled council meeting. Items on the table for discussion included the post-secondary coalition to fight tuition increases and government under-funding (headed by CAUS), the CAUS media campaign to raise

awareness about tuition increases, the development of an AUSU External Committee, and the status of the AUSU Handbook/Planner.

On November 17th, the Council of Alberta University Students [CAUS], through the initiative of University of Alberta SU, organized a provincial education coalition meeting. In attendance were leaders of provincial organizations that are stakeholders in the cause of fair tuition and adequate funding of post-secondary education in Alberta. Attendees were urged to support CAUS in their fight to maintain affordable university tuition for Alberta students.

A motion was introduced at the AUSU council meeting, to the effect that AUSU should "participate in the provincial education coalition to further our cause of not permitting distance education to be exempt from the tuition cap, and to aid in persuading the government to adequately fund all public post-secondary institutions in the province."

The motion was passed, and we look forward to supporting CAUS in this important action.

A second motion asked that AUSU assist CAUS by contributing funds toward the CAUS media campaign to raise public awareness of the cost of post-secondary education and the critical under-funding of post-secondary education in Alberta. The media campaign has consisted of newspaper advertisements in the Edmonton Journal, the Edmonton Sun, the Lethbridge Herald, and various rural newspapers.

Some of the CAUS ads can be viewed at:
<http://tc.su.ualberta.ca/education/explanation.htm>

To aid in raising public awareness, CAUS members hosted public forums at the University of Alberta and the University of Lethbridge. AUSU participated in both forums. The University of Calgary Students' Union will host the third CAUS public tuition forum in March.

In support of the public awareness campaign, AUSU voted to contribute \$1,000 toward the media costs. Additionally, to address the need for more AUSU involvement in external activities, such as the CAUS initiatives and programs to gain student discounts in various programs and activities, AUSU has developed the new External Committee.

Students are invited to volunteer for this important new committee, and anyone interested should contact committee chair, AUSU VP Shirley Barg, at sbarg@ausu.org. The purpose of the Committee is to plan and implement activities that relate to AUSU's external relationships for the betterment of Athabasca University students.

Finally, AUSU has decided not to produce a student handbook/planner this year. We apologize to those students who have asked for a planner already, but after long deliberation, we have determined that the current format of the planner is not effective, and that we can increase the usefulness of this item by redesigning it in a smaller format. The old handbook/planner, which has been produced for many years, was only moderately popular, and we feel that we may be able to provide students with other items

that may be more useful. Current plans are to redesign the planner and offer it in an improved, compact format next year. Until then, an alternative student gift package is in the works. When items are available, it will be posted on the AUSU website and in the Voice.

In other news, membership on the AUSU forums continues to grow, students are beginning to fill out the new course surveys on the AUSU website, there has been increased interest in forming AUSU student groups and clubs, and submissions to the Voice continue to rise. Overall we are experiencing greater interest and involvement from AU students, and hope to see this trend continue next year.

AUSU would like to wish a very Merry Christmas, all of our members, and we look forward to serving you in 2003!



NEWS FROM THE AGM

Provided By AUSU Council

The 9th 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 10th 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. 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!



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.



Are you an Artist? AUSU supports the arts!

AUSU is interested in purchasing original works of art from students for 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.



SCHOLARSHIP NEWS

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

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

Email Address: bzak@kinclubs.ca

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



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

****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

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



NFB Film Club Edmonton

www.nfb.ca

Upcoming **free** screening of Canadian documentaries - feature films co-sponsored with the Edmonton Public Library & CBC Radio One

Showing @ the Milner Library Theatre downtown,
7 Churchill SQ. Time: 7-9 p.m.

January 14: To My Birthmother

Directed by Beverly Shaffer / Produced by Beverly Shaffer & Mark Zannis

Delvin into the past can be risky business, especially for someone who's been adopted. When Marie Klaassen went looking for her birthmother, she discovered that trying to locate her would take perseverance and guts, and that succeeding in the search was not the end, but another beginning. This video diary recounts Marie's personal journey to find the woman who gave her life. It's a fascinating story of a reunion fraught with suspense, humour and humanity.

February 04: The Journey of Lesra Martin ...

Directed by Cheryl Foggo / Produced by Selwyn Jacob

Lesra Martin was poor, illiterate and struggling in Brooklyn, NY, when a chance encounter with a group of Canadians shattered his world. Raised in the chaos of the inner city and given a fresh start in Canada, Lesra become a hero when he helped bring justice to wrongfully imprisoned American boxer Rubin "Hurricane" Carter. Finding the courage to charge his own life, Lesra is now a lawyer and motivational speaker. This film brings together intimate interviews with Lesra, his family and friends. From his home in BC to a poignant return to the streets of his childhood, Lesra reflects on the event that altered his life.



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 e-mail address below if you have any questions or concerns.

Dean Caplan
Instructional Media Analyst
Dept. of Educational Media Development
Athabasca University
deanc@athabascau.ca



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.



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



'Vibrant Communities Initiative'

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**, (or) in Edmonton contact:

City of Edmonton Innovative Services
Jenny Kain @ 944-5512



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.



The Barcelona Forum 2004

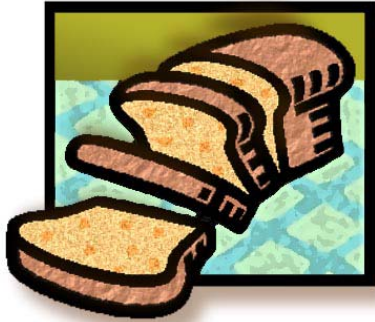
**Contributed By The
Community Networks Group**

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 **9th of May**, Europe Day, and closes on the **26th 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.



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 (or) visit: <http://www.breakingbreadforwomen.com>



‘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.



CLASSIFIEDS:

PUBLISHED IN THE VOICE

December 11, 2002

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 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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