

# THE VOICE

## MAGAZINE

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# THE VOICE

April 30, 2003

Volume 11, Issue 18

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**We love hearing from you! Please continue sending your opinions, comments and ideas to [voice@ausu.org](mailto:voice@ausu.org).**

Dear Editor,

Re: Tutors – Emails

I sympathize with the students that feel ignored by their tutors! So I want to offer some unasked for advice!

A tutor once told me she received 100 emails in a single day and it was hard to go through them because many of them did not have coherent subject lines. With the fear of viruses and spams, she had to be careful about what she was opening, especially if she didn't know who it was from. I could not find any official university policy on email communication, but maybe it would make work easier and faster for the tutors if concise subject lines were used, for example:

**Subject: AU\_COMP123\_StudyGuide qs**  
or **Subject: AU\_PSYC231\_TME 7\_Attached**

As well, the body of the message could be in bulleted or numbered form rather than paragraph form, so that the tutor could type a response directly below each question, for example:

**1. What are Pavlovian dogs? (Ch.10, pg.88, Psych213 Textbook)**  
(Tutor's Response) >> **Pavlovian dogs are...**

Also, use plain text instead of Rich Text as this uses up less memory on the tutor's hard drive (and yours as well). I use this format and I usually get a response within 2 business days.

Sincerely,  
Nimra Ahmed - Athabasca University Student

Excellent advice! I'd add that coloured stationery, emoticons and signature files with poems won't impress your tutor. Compose your email just as you would a handwritten letter and use an email address that includes your name, not a nickname.

For a good primer on basic email etiquette, see this link:  
<http://www.iwillfollow.com/email.htm>

## THE VOICE

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**Editor In Chief** Tamra Ross Low

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**THE VOICE ONLINE:**  
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Hi Tamra:

I have suggestion regarding AU tutors and I will also give you a background for why I am asking this.

I have recently registered in my 3rd AU course and as usual I received a welcome letter from my tutor. What I found different in that letter was, she not only welcomed me and gave me the contact times but most importantly she gave me her educational and work experience overview. Previously, none of the tutors gave me any information about their educational and work background. It was my first experience with online university, so I didn't know who the tutors were until I read the article about AU tutors in The Voice.

Usually in conventional universities we have TA's - Teacher Assistants which are most of the time current graduate students. I had the same image about tutors too.

So, its good to know that "your tutors are persons with educational and strong work experience." I wonder if it is possible for all tutors to give us this type of information. I remember asking my previous tutor, was he a teacher at AU or a student? I guess my question made him little embarrassed and uneasy, He asked me if I was having any trouble following him. My answer was, "no, just curious." :)

Zil-E-Huma Lodhi

This letter is definitely food for thought!

I guess I was lucky, because my very first tutor sent me a letter detailing her work experience, and it turned out that she was also a professor at another university. So, I was quite well aware of the credentials of AU tutors. If I had not received this letter, I'm not sure what I would have thought. Your assumption that Tutors are like teaching assistants is a logical one. In a traditional university the instructors who have the time to talk to students one-on-one are usually TA's. It does not help that AU instructors are called 'tutors', which implies a lack of credentials [You can read my thoughts on this from a previous Voice issue [here](#) if you like. I heard that my article was printed and handed around at a tutor conference, so it's not only students who have this concern], and the course materials often make reference to a nameless 'course professor', which further supports the idea that tutors are nothing like professors.

I'm sure your tutor was pretty irked when you asked if he was a student, but maybe you weren't the first one to ask!

The stupid thing about this is, AU offers something that you can't get at most schools – significant one-on-one support from qualified and experienced university instructors – many of whom are full professors (I believe that the courses which use Call Center support instead of tutors are the exception). For all the time AU spends advertising its other benefits, such as flexible enrolment and that books are included with course fees, they have not done much to tell people about their terrific academic support. It seems foolish to pay to hire qualified professionals and then allow people to harbour the misconception that they are talking with TA's.

You are not the first to express surprise at your tutor's credentials, and I'm sure you won't be the last. Your letter might be good incentive for all tutors to make their introductory letters a little more informative!



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# EDITORIAL PAGES

## THIS WEEK

**From My Perspective:** Debbie Jabbour writes about her experiences with AU exams and talks about a stipulation for scheduling longer exams that you need to know about. Read the article, then send me your funny, frightening or just plain weird exam stories for a future Sounding Off column. Also read this week's **Dear Sandra** for more exam advice.

**Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome:** Zil-E-Huma Lodhi reports on the current status of SARS, what is being done to curb the disease, and how you can take steps to prevent infection.

**AU Honours Students:** This week we bring you the list of AU honours students for the term ending in December, 2002. Congratulations to everyone who made the list!

**Don't forget to contact AUSU to request your information booklet for the upcoming 10th Anniversary Annual General Meeting.**

## SNOWED IN

It came a little early this year. The biggest snow storm of the winter hit Calgary on April 16th. Usually it seems to come a week or two later – often just after the May long weekend.

There is nothing extraordinary about it – you could pretty much bank on it. Calgary rarely gets much snow in the winter. It stays up in the sky until we have a couple of summery-hot spring weeks, and then down it comes in a heavy, wet, and very sticky blanket. Down too come the power lines, phone line, tree branches, roof tiles, and anything else not capable of holding the accumulated weight of several layers of water laden white stuff.

Somehow people are still surprised each year by the "freak" occurrence of being snowed in in April or May. It makes for a lot of fun, watching the clueless neighbours carefully set out dozens of fresh, green bedding out plants each May long weekend, only to have to dig them out of the snow a week later. I imagine that the plant stores love it. They get to sell a second batch of stock each year to these yoyos who never learn. But, the snow came early this year, so I guess I'll miss my fun – although it is Calgary, and hail season is right around the corner.

This year's storm was pretty amazing, though. On Saturday we went out to shovel, and I was wading up to my thighs over the lawn to shake the snow out of my flatted lilac tree. Ok, I'm pretty short, but that's still deep! I did make a pretty keen snowman on the deck, though – another spring tradition.

This year most people were able to get their cars out with little trouble, and I only saw one get stuck. It was nothing like the storm of a few years ago, when none of us could get out for several days and neighbours with pick-up trucks were trolling the streets with cables and chains picking up a few dollars or some free beer for pulling out stuck cars. The guy next door really profited that year. He said he pulled out over a dozen in the space of an hour!

I feel bad for people when I see them rushing out first thing in the morning, trying to get their cars dug out, struggling to keep momentum through the deep snow drifts so they don't stop and become stuck. You can always tell the good Samaritans, their pants soaked with dirt and slush up to the thighs from standing behind spinning tires as they try to push hydroplaning vehicles through the muck. Some

people give up quickly and call in sick, while others brave the elements and persevere. Everyone is stressed, and praying that the snow will let up.

Everyone, that is, except for those of us lucky enough to be full-time Distance Ed students. We get to wake up, make a cup of hot chocolate, and watch the mayhem through our windows as we prepare for a day of study in our cozy homes. I recently heard some rather insulting comments from grad students who insisted that undergrad studies at AU are lonely and stressful – one even suggested that undergrads might need therapy after the ordeal of obtaining a DE degree.

I can only laugh at such comments, because what might be lonely for one person, is liberating for another. I never worry that the weather, car trouble, traffic accidents or even the common cold will prevent me from getting to school. I wake up in my place of study, and my books are always near. I don't have to skip class if I have an important appointment or if something comes up – I just study later, when I can fit it in.

I am especially pleased to be a part of AU given the recent outbreak of SARS, and the threat of so many other viruses. The simple fact is, people who spend a lot of time in large buildings with a lot of other people are at much higher risk. People I know who work in large corporations or who study in traditional schools, always seem to have one virus or another. I remember someone on a talk show once quipping that kindergarten ought to be called 'petri dish' because of the many viruses her young daughter brought home, and I could not agree more. It's true that DE students have to worry more about electronic viruses, but there are effective preventatives for those.

Those of us in AU are lucky. We have many students in SARS-affected areas, like Toronto, but this is no cause for concern. The city may be locked to outside visitors, but we continue to study together, and will be able to do so even if the situation worsens. And if the skies open up and drop another foot or two of snow on our heads, what do I care? I have my books, I have light, and I have enough things to keep me busy to last a lifetime. Lonely? Stressful?

Baloney.

## Got Fiction?

**The Voice publishes all forms of short fiction in all genres. Send your stories, poems, plays, other fictional works to [voice@ausu.org](mailto:voice@ausu.org).**

## Need incentive?

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**AUSU would like to congratulate the following students who made the December 2002 Honours List:**

STUDENT	PROGRAM	YEAR	ADDRESS
Baird, Joanne	BN	3	Grand Falls-Windsor, NL
Balaski, Beverly	BN	3	Regina, SK
Bech-Hansen, Angela	BADMN	2	Richmond Hill, ON
Benedict, Errol	UCIDHR	1	Prince George, BC
Benson, Todd	BSCCIS	2	Red Rock, ON
Blacklock, Lisa	BN	3	Cochrane, AB
Blais, Christine	BGS	1	Edmonton, AB
Blais, Lori	BADMN	1	Invermere, BC
Brittain, Rodney	BADMN	3	Ottawa, ON
Brown, William	BADMN	1	Canmore, AB
Cornick, Debra	BN	3	Belleville, ON
Derochie, Barbara	UCAACT	1	Calgary, AB
DeRose, Ramona	BADMN	2	Calgary, AB
Dobson, Rosemary	BN MRC	2	Calgary, AB
Failler, Adele	BADMN	1	Humboldt, SK
Fargey, Carie	BADMN	3	Edmonton, AB
Gamble, Nicolette	BGS	3	Regina, SK
Garside, Raphael	BGS	3	Lachine, QC
Harker, DeNai	BN	3	Magrath, AB
Hayes, Linda	BADM(PD)	3	Edmonton, AB
Henn, Doris	BGS	3	Calgary, AB
Jabbour, Debbie	BA4	3	Edmonton, AB
James, Darcie	BPA	4	Lethbridge, AB
Jezowski, Catherine	BSCCIS(PD)	2	Lloydminster, SK
Johnson, Herb	UCCIS	1	Corner Brook, NL
Kabyn, Tracy	BCOMM	1	St. Paul, AB
Kelly, Jane	BN	4	High River, AB
Kenwood, Cindy	BPA	3	Lethbridge, AB
Labonte, Merna	BCOMM	1	Fort Nelson, BC
Macrae-Shannon, Natalie	BN	3	Prince Rupert, BC
Marenholtz, Hedwig	BA4	1	Flatbush, AB
Mckague, Peggi-Ann	BN	3	Oak River, MB
McPherson, Tamara	BSCHS	1	Lac la Biche, AB
Medd, Jennifer	BADMN	3	Rimbey, AB
Miller, Jodi	BN	3	Nampa, ID USA
Miller, Paula	BN	4	Calgary, AB
Mortensen, Margaret	UCCIS	1	Saskatoon, SK
Near, Denise	BADMN(PD)	3	Barrie, ON
Patras, James	BSCCIS(PD)	3	Edmonton, AB
Patrick, Christina	BGS	3	Ann Arbor, MI USA
Pedrazzini, Sylvia	BA4	4	Rocky Mountain House, AB
Phillips, Dustin	BSCCIS	2	Shaunavon, SK
Piriyak, Edith	UCFLP	1	Kelowna, BC
Rogers, Christopher	BSCCIS	3	Edmonton, AB
Savoury, Daphne	BCOMM	1	St Anthony, NL
Schwindt, Marilyn	BMAN4(PD)	3	Edmonton, AB
Seever, Ron	UCACCT	1	High Prairie, AB

Simms, Beverly	BN	4	St. Anthony, NL
Squires, Andrew	BADMN	2	Tisdale, SK
Swedenski, Sidney	UCCIS	1	Rocanville, SK
Sylvestre, Lynda	BN	3	Bonnyville, AB
Szczepkowski, Isabel	BN	4	Saint Bruno, QC
Szeto, Jason	BSCCIS	1	Edmonton, AB
Taylor, Claudette	BN	4	Glance Bay, NS
Thomson, Laraine	BN	4	Calgary, AB
Tutinas, Magdalena	BN MRC	1	Calgary, AB
Tysowski, Lynda	BGS	3	Saskatoon, SK
Wagner, Cindy	BADMN	3	Calgary, AB
Yesufu, Adenike	UCCW	1	Edmonton, AB

*Office of the Registrar, March 2003*

## AUSU's 10<sup>th</sup> Anniversary AGM

### What is it all about?

On May 24, 2003, AUSU will be hosting our 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary Annual General Meeting in Edmonton. We hope many students will be in attendance. So you may be wondering, what is an AGM and why is this one special?

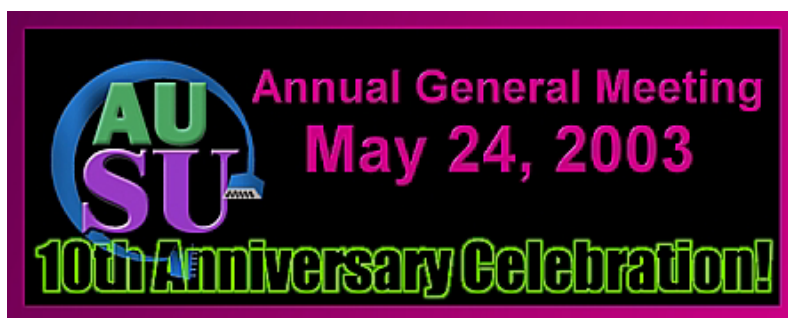
As an organization incorporated under Alberta's Societies Act\* we are required

by law to have an Annual General Meeting each year. This is done to make an accounting to our members, particularly regarding the financial statements for the previous fiscal year. It is also the only occasion, besides elections, where each student member of AUSU is allowed to vote.

This year students will be voting on two main items. The first is the adoption of the financial statements for the fiscal year 2001-2002. Students will have the opportunity to review the financial statements and ask questions of the VP Finance.

The second is the approval of a new set of bylaws. Bylaws are the foundation of any organization, and AUSU has been working with bylaws created when we first became an organization back in 1992. Although these were revised in 1996, many of the articles are outdated and no longer applicable to how we conduct our business. During the last few years, several attempts have been made to write new bylaws, but unfortunately each set was far too detailed and unwieldy and we kept ending up back at the "drawing board".

After doing some research into the whole bylaw process and examining the structure of our board, we decided that simplicity was the key. Our goal became to create a streamlined set of bylaws; one that covers only the basic, most important issues of board governance. The only things that should be defined in bylaws are items that we are not likely to change in the near future. All



other matters will be defined in policy. After many months of work by the legislative committee and AUSU Council, we finally have a proposed set of bylaws that will be on the agenda for the AGM. To view a pdf document of the proposed bylaws, click [here](#) [you will require the free Acrobat reader to use this file. See the Voice pdf archives page for information on obtaining this program.]



Student members of AUSU who are in attendance at the AGM will have the opportunity to discuss these bylaws, and amendments can be suggested before they are approved.

This AGM, of course, is of special interest since it represents our 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary. AUSU was incorporated in late 1992 by a group of students who worked alongside the university to create a student union that would be an independent advocate for students, and our first AGM was held in November 1993. Since its inception, AUSU has undergone many transitions and suffered many growing pains.

Our organization has had a sometimes turbulent history, but a very interesting one, and we will be presenting a brief history and overview of the first 10 years at the AGM.

Council reports are also a feature of the AGM. Each Council member will be presenting a report of their activities over the past year, along with their plans and goals for the future of AUSU. Students in attendance will have the opportunity to question Council members and offer suggestions regarding what they would like to see from their student union. You can check out the AGM reports from the 2000-2001 meeting, held in September of 2002, [here](#).

We are also very pleased to have AU President Dominique Abrioux, and AU Acting VP Academic, Judith Hughes, in attendance this year. Both Dominique and Judith were part of the AU community when AUSU was formed ten years ago, and they have provided invaluable support and guidance through the years. This is your opportunity to meet them both!

After the AGM, we will be holding an informal reception, including a light supper and cash bar, at which students will have an opportunity to socialize. Keep watching the [AGM page](#) as details are finalized regarding location and events planned.

Please join us for this very special 10<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Annual General Meeting!

Debbie Jabbour, President  
Athabasca University Students' Union

*\*AUSU is governed by the Societies' Act currently, rather than the Universities' Act. Neither Athabasca University nor the University of Lethbridge are part of the Universities' Act, but exist through a government Order in Council. AU has made application for inclusion in the Universities' Act, an important move which will place all four of Alberta's universities under the same regulations. This is expected to occur during the fall of 2003. At that time, AUSU's legal status will also be affected, since we will be included under the Universities' Act as well. Details on the Universities' Act are available at: <http://www.qp.gov.ab.ca/Documents/acts/U03.CFM>*

### NEWS ACROSS THE NATION...

*By Karl Low*



#### When Even The Bank Tells You To Spend More

The Toronto Dominion bank recently released a report praising Alberta as being the only region in Canada that has U.S. levels of wealth while preserving the Canadian-style quality of life. The report is not all wine and roses however, and points out that in order to continue this achievement in the Calgary-Edmonton corridor, certain challenges must be seen and met.

One of the challenges it mentions early on is a possible shortage of labour in the future. The report goes on to say how this shortage of labour is a danger because of the low numbers of Alberta high school students that are going on to post-secondary.

When the banks are telling you, "You know, you should probably be spending more money," it might be good advice to listen. Of course, Premier Klein's response to this in the Edmonton Journal is that there simply needs to be more job-directed training. Not post-secondary though, as he specifically says "Certainly it's something that has been identified by industry as a whole, and that is the need to get more trained people -- not necessarily degreed people -- but trained people." Because, after all, a post-secondary education has this nasty habit of teaching people to be more critical of what they read or hear, and that would make Mr. Klein's job a lot more difficult, wouldn't it?

#### Meanwhile In Manitoba

The Province of Manitoba has just released their 2003 budget. Like other provincial budgets I've briefly looked at in this column, and unlike Alberta's budget, Manitoba seems to realize that easy access to education is a good investment. In Manitoba's case, this translates to university tuitions being held to 10% below what they were in 1999.

Were AU to be able to offer fees of 10% below the 1999 levels and we would only be paying \$335 dollars per three credit course instead of the over 500 dollars that the same course will cost us in just a few short months. What makes this hurt even more is that this is Manitoba doing this. When you hear about the economic power-houses in Canada, you tend to hear about Alberta, Ontario, and maybe Quebec. So why is it that Manitoba can afford to do this, while Alberta, with year after year of surplus budgets, cannot?

The answer of course, lies with our politicians. Somehow, each election time, a lot of people vote for the Progressive Conservatives and Premier Klein. Why, I really don't know. I am hoping that perhaps one of those supposedly thousands of voters could explain this to me. What possessed you, when you were at the ballot box, to vote for a government that seems to only have one gear: hide the money?

The latest hiding spot for the money is of course the much hyped "sustainability fund". This is to supposedly shield us from the sudden shortfalls in the budget that the Provincial Government has to unfortunately deal with every time contract negotiations roll around. Shortfalls that luckily seem to vanish when it comes time to decide whether our MLA's should receive wage hikes.

## SARS Stuff

You have most likely heard the uproar when the World Health Organization listed Toronto as a place to avoid due to risk of SARS, and how loudly the governments have complained about that ruling, but when you look at the statistics, you can understand why.

In the latest SARS report you can compare the rates in Canada to rates in other countries. Canada's infection-death ratio is one of the worst ratios across the entire globe. With the exception of countries that have had less than ten probable cases, Canada's death ratio for SARS is the highest hovering at about 10% of probable cases. In comparison, China, the most heavily infected country, looks to have a death rate of less than half of that.

Since it seems that your chances of dying from SARS are worse in Toronto than anywhere else in the world, it certainly makes sense to me to warn people to be careful about going there. Of course, this is not helped when the nursing staff starts to quit due to the pressures of working with the disease. If the health care system is that fragile in Ontario that such a small outbreak (and really, when you look at the number of people in Toronto compared to the numbers infected, it's small) can start making the nurses quit, we need some serious investigation into exactly what is going on.

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

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## ATTENTION PSYCHOLOGY STUDENTS



Every Monday from 9:30 - 10:30 AM MST and Wednesday from 7-8 PM MST the Athabasca University Psychology Students' Society gets together to chat about issues pertaining to the world of psychology at AU.

To Join the chat, go to the AUPSS website, accessible through: <http://www.ausu.org/clubs/index.php> [you must be logged in to AUSU] and select the discussion forum link, from there click on Psychology at the top written in blue and choose the General Psychology Chat. NOTE: You need to be registered in a psychology course to access the AU psych discussions.

Hope to see you there!

**Sandra Moore**  
**Athabasca University Psychology Students' Society**



[www.ausu.org/clubs/aupss](http://www.ausu.org/clubs/aupss)

*AU Psychology Students' Society*

# From My Perspective

## WRITING EXAMS

*By Debbie Jabbour*



I'm doing a lot of last-minute cramming these days, since I'm trying to finish up my courses in time to meet the graduation deadline. This also means I have been writing a lot of exams in a short period of time.

Last month I had an unusual problem occur when I went to book an exam for Spanish 300. I was told that since this exam was allotted 3 1/2 hours, there were only certain days that the ELC could accommodate this. Although I was calling well in advance of the 15-day deadline, this restriction would mean I could only write the

exam on Tuesdays, and the only available Tuesday was the following week. I was "reprimanded" by the person on the phone, since I was supposed to have known this already from my course materials, and since I'd been a student for a long time I should know better.

Although I have been a student for a long time, I learn new things about my university daily, and this was something I'd never heard of before. I was certain that although my course materials said the exam was 3 1/2 hours, there was nothing stated about only being able to write an exam longer than 3 hours at the ELC on certain days. I explained this, and we managed to sort it out and the exam was booked. Subsequently I checked through my course materials and online in the exam information centre and confirmed that there was nothing stated anywhere regarding this restriction. I brought the matter to the attention of VP Alan Davis, and I've been advised that this will be adjusted so that students are made aware of this restriction.

However, this got me thinking about the whole exams process. This is not hard to do, since I have written two exams last month and three this past week! The very notion of a 3 1/2 hour exam was a strange one to me. Although most of my exams have ranged from 2 to 3 hours allotted time, I've rarely used my full allotment, often finishing well under 2 hours. I don't do well with exams, and although I consistently maintain good marks in my coursework itself, I rarely do as well on the exam portion. I don't suffer exam anxiety, I just seem to experience a semi-complete loss of memory the moment I enter the exam room. Staying longer in the room does not improve my memory, so I write my answers as quickly as possible and get it over with. If the exam is multiple choice, I try to resist the impulse to go back and "second guess," going with my "first instinct" instead – otherwise I'm guaranteed to change a right answer to a wrong one! But where I have the most trouble is with exams that consist primarily of essays and long written answers. Unfortunately, most of the psych courses I've taken are of that type, and I've even had a few communications studies exams that are comprised completely of essays – each expected to be four or five pages in length.

It's not particularly the content of the essay or long answer that gives me difficulty – it's the fact that I'm required to handwrite these answers continuously over the space of several hours. Due to injuries sustained in two motor vehicle accidents some years ago, I have great difficulty with my upper back and wrist. I generally avoid handwriting because I can only manage to do it for a few minutes before my hand starts to cramp. In an exam situation this means I get about fifteen minutes into my first essay and my wrist starts to seize up, my arm becomes numb and painful, and my fingers stiffen. As soon as I feel this coming on, I start to write as quickly as possible – trying to get maximum words onto the page to meet the minimum word count before I'm unable to write at all. Of course this means that my handwriting, horrible at best, rapidly deteriorates as I go along. I pity the tutor who has to decipher my exam essays – many of them look like they've been written in some hitherto-unknown form of hieroglyphics!

Aside from my handwriting difficulties, even just the logistics of an exam of that length are quite daunting. At my work, employees are all required to receive a 15 minute break within any four hour shift, and I'm sure most employment situations are similar. No doubt a 3 1/2 hour exam tests other parts of a student's anatomy besides the brain! Students are sometimes allowed to leave the room to use the washroom, but this is not a preferred option – not only is it disruptive, it sometimes raises suspicions among the invigilators that you are potentially "up to no good" (in fact most universities do not allow exam bathroom breaks). Even just sitting for a period of that length can be difficult, and standing up to do some callisthenics in the middle of an exam is not exactly acceptable exam behaviour either. I often reach the point where I am simply tired of being seated in the exam room – and hurry up and finish the exam just to get out of there.

And of course there is the parking situation. At both the Edmonton and Calgary Learning Centres (ELC and CLC), parking is difficult to find and expensive. I've had occasions where I've written my exam with one eye on the clock, fully expecting a parking ticket if I spend more than 2 hours in the exam room. In some areas of Canada AU students are required to pay invigilators by the hour – meaning longer exams are more costly. Students with young children may have to factor in child care into their exam cost as well. Worrying about parking and money adds to the exam stress.

As it turned out, I didn't need 3 1/2 hours for my Spanish exam. The invigilator kindly offered to stay for an extra half hour if I needed the time, but as usual I was out of the room in less than 2 hours. I was quite interested to discover that there are 16 AU courses that have exams that are 3 1/2 hours in length! (see the Exam Request Form link below).

It's not just lengthy exams that can be problematic. Take, for example, the exam for Humanities 289: History of Popular Music - Blues to Big Bands. This exam requires listening to pieces of music and identifying the composer, performer, time period and style. When you enter the exam you are given a portable tape recorder. However, when writing at the ELC or CLC, you are in a large room filled with others writing exams. The room is generally very quiet, except for the scratching of pencils on paper, nervous movement in seats, and the occasional desperate sigh. But there you are with a pair of headphones and a recorder. Not only are you aware of the noise of the music leaching into the room from the headphones - each time you stop and rewind there is a loud click and whir. With every loud click, you can feel everyone in the exam room shift in irritation at being distracted by your noisy intrusion.

Then there is the occasional student who panics only a few minutes into the exam and packs up and leaves. I find this very distracting, since I am left wondering what exam he/she was writing and just what was so horrible about it that motivated the students' abrupt departure. On the other end, I've been the last person in the room writing the exam – and this leaves you wondering whether you are extremely slow, or just not as sharp as everyone else. I'm sure it usually just means that they were writing shorter exams – but when you are in that room your thoughts can easily become rather distorted.

Unfortunately most of us have to put up with this – unless you are a "special" AU student like Alberta Premier Ralph Klein. The last time he wrote an exam at the ELC, he was given a private room, and his bodyguard stood watch outside!

AU does make some accommodations for students with special needs who may need alternate arrangements to write exams. Students with disabilities can sometimes even arrange to write exams in their home. I've had it suggested to me that I should request an option to write my exams on the computer to alleviate my handwriting difficulties. However, accommodations for special needs are still not adequate for every situation.

Writing exams is stressful business, regardless of how and where they are written. AU recognizes this, and there are some excellent materials available online on reducing exam anxiety. But these only address part of the

problem. Students who don't have the option of writing at the ELC or CLC must find their own location to write exams. AU provides a list of possible locations, but students are not limited to these (see the exam invigilator network below). I've heard that some of these locations can be problematic and the environment may be less than ideal. Some are noisy, or don't have comfortable writing areas, and sometimes AU students are treated as unwelcome outsiders. In addition, costs can range from nothing to \$40-\$50 dollars or more to write exams in some places.

I've seen pictures of students writing exams at the U of A, thousands of desks in one gigantic gymnasium, with invigilators walking the aisles. For the most part, too, we have freedom to book our exams at our convenience, as opposed to campus-based universities where students get them all in the space of a few days. So I guess we don't have it that bad at AU! However things can always improve, and I'd encourage anyone with a comment on any exams issue to express it on the AUSU discussion forums or contact the AUSU office.

At the outset I noted that in spite of being a student for a long time, I'm still learning new things about the university. One thing I learned this past month was that if you need to get your marks in a hurry, AU will accommodate you. It took me several emails & phone calls before I finally found the answer on rush marking, but here it is:

- First, contact your tutor and let them know you need to meet the graduation deadline with all marks in by May 5, 2003\*. Ask what they require of you to ensure assignments can be marked and returned in time. Ask if they mark the final exam, and if so, get permission to have the exam sent directly to them.
- Contact the course secretary (your tutor usually can provide this name, or obtain it through the course coordinator) and advise that you will need a "rush" placed on your exam marking.
- Go to the post office and purchase a pre-paid Express Post envelope. Fill in your tutor's address, but do not put a return address (the exam cannot go to you). Do not choose the option of requiring a signature, since this means the tutor will need to be home and sign for the exam which could delay the process. Take this envelope with you when you go to write the exam and give it to the invigilator.

\*applicable to 2003 graduation year only. Students can also seek rush marking for other situations.

For more exam information check out:

Exam request form:

<https://auburn.cs.athabascau.ca/forms/examreq.htm>

Exam info from online calendar:

<http://www.athabascau.ca/calendar/02/eval7.html>

Exam invigilator network & list of approved invigilators

<http://www.athabascau.ca/html/depts/registry/invignet.htm>

**Debbie's article reminded me of many of my own exam writing experiences – which range from infuriating to hilarious. We all do strange things when we are nervous! Do you have any funny, frightening, or just plain strange exam stories? Send them to [voice@ausu.org](mailto:voice@ausu.org) for a future Sounding Off column. [ed]**



# THE CHALLENGES FACING LABOUR UNIONS TODAY

*By Wayne E. Benedict*



The challenges facing Canada's labour unions are vast and diverse. They include: the diminution of labour rights (embodied in labour legislation) by states; increased state coercion in the form of back-to-work legislation, imposed settlements, wage controls, restriction or elimination of the right to strike, etc.; employer attacks both at the bargaining table and in the frontier of control; negative public opinion manufactured through rightwing controlled media; globalization of trade; membership apathy; lack of working-class self-realization; corporate reengineering; public sector privatization; lack of effective working-class political representation; and membership declines as technology supplants human labour. These issues must be debated amongst Canada's labour unions and their federations in order to either mount concerted, effective counterattacks, to adjust to new realities, or

some combination of the two. I will attempt to contribute to this debate by offering my perspective on the fore mentioned challenges and what should be done about them if Canada's labour movement is to maintain, if not increase, its ability to effectively represent its members in the employment relationship as well as in Canadian society in general.

## **The State**

Since the end of the so-called "post-war compromise" in the mid-1970s, Canadian states have been moving away from using government as a strong third party industrial relations intermediary between capital and labour. Palmer (1992) describes the situation thus: "[In the mid-1970s] Keynesianism was dead; the Fordist regime of accumulation and its attendant class relations had run their course. In the fallout from this process Canadian workers were to see their institutions, their standards of living, and their social place undermined and denigrated in an onslaught of state-directed, employer-endorsed attacks".

These trends, in many cases, have gone beyond deregulation and the reduction of legislated labour rights as many states have vigorously interjected themselves as obvious enemies of labour—acting to weaken unions and subjugate workers. Here in British Columbia the previous NDP government (a supposedly labour friendly party, in power from 1991 to 2001) consistently used its coercive powers against public sector employees by setting up the Public Sector Employers' Council (PSEC) which imposed seven years of wage controls well below the rate of inflation (2%, 2%, 0%, 0%, 0%, 0%, 2.5% & 2.5%), effectively disabling public sector collective bargaining. It also enacted back-to-work legislation numerous times against its own employees, effectively eliminating unions' strike power. The successor Liberal government, having been in power for less than a year, has moved to crush organized labour in this province. So far they have: removed the right to strike from BC teachers; arbitrarily legislated collective agreements for nurses and teachers (as opposed to appointing an interest arbitrator); and rewritten WCB regulations to make it markedly more difficult for workers to collect on claims. The liberal government has also announced plans to rewrite both the Employment Standard Act and the BC Labour Code to the detriment of BC's unionized and unorganized workers and is breaking legally binding contracts through the use of its dictatorial majority legislative power (one example is its legislation quashing a binding arbitration between the BC Doctors and the BC government).

The foregoing is an example of one Canadian jurisdiction that has historically been known as one of the strongholds of labour in Canada (Palmer, 1992 & Heron, 1996). Many jurisdictions across Canada showcase equal or even more severe attacks against labour by the applicable state (Ontario & Alberta). Obviously the neo-conservatism exhibited by Canada's contemporary states does not bode well for its unions. Unions are finding

that their right to strike—already restricted to the open period of the collective agreement by the quid pro quo which replaced the right to mid-term strike with the less-than-effective compulsory grievance arbitration system (Benedict, 2002)—is being severely restricted or made all but useless through back-to-work legislation. Without the right to strike, collective bargaining becomes an unbalanced exercise in futility as the employer is aware of the union's fettered ability to back up its demands with the withdrawal of labour. Unions' effectiveness at organizing new members is also being curtailed as states revise labour codes, minimizing the union's chances of a successful organizing drive; thus, it appears as though Canadian states are actively attempting to limit or reduce unionization densities in Canada (Heron, 1996). Finally, Canadian governments have contributed to a vast increase in the supply of labour by dropping protectionist trade and capital mobility laws through "free" trade deals such as the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA). Capital can use its abilities to disinvest, relocate, and search out sites with cheap, exploitable labour markets in order to exact concessions from unions at the bargaining table.

These contemporary trends of state interference and/or inaction will not be easy for unions to combat. In order to do so, workers and their organizations need to have a strong voice in government. Unions must reinvigorate their memberships to act politically within the organization, and more importantly, at the three levels of Canadian government in order to run and elect labour candidates where possible or lobby for labour friendly policies and legislation where not. It is equally important for unions to take the lead in educating the working public to politicize in a synergistic fashion. In the meantime, capital will continue to take advantage of the present employer-friendly state of affairs until the pendulum swings again through political action or class-based hegemonic challenge.

## Capital

Craig Heron (1996) points out that "in 1975 the Canadian state had begun to recast the country's industrial-relations regime. Politicians and state officials were no longer willing to let collective bargaining between unions and employers take its own course. State policies first limited how much workers could demand from their employers and then cut the ground out from under union negotiators by deliberately stimulating mass unemployment. In addition, legislatures sent strikers back to work with increasing regularity, and in many cases altered their labour codes to weaken union organizing and bargaining permanently." Employers, successful in their governmental lobbying for more favourable labour laws and less restrictive trade agreements over the past 25 years, are taking full advantage of those windfalls now. Employers know that today's unions are embattled, defensive organizations existing in unfavourable economic conditions with little or no support from government and minimal sympathy or support from the Canadian public. Backed by this knowledge, they have consistently and repeatedly demanded concessions from unions and backed up those demands with threats of disinvestment, relocation, or operational closure—carrying those threats out in many instances.

Employers, on the offensive at the bargaining table, are also pushing for "labour flexibility" in the frontier of control through processes (restructuring, reengineering, privatization, contracting-out, etc.) that are ultimately detrimental to workers — i.e., speed-up, job losses, jobs moved from secure permanent full-time with benefits to insecure temporary part-time and no benefits, etc. James Laxer (1999) has told how "everywhere in the industrialized world, business is pushing for what it calls a more 'flexible labour market.' The term sounds innocuous, even forward looking. It is actually a euphemism for a series of changes highly advantageous to business and disadvantageous to labour." Godard (1994) explains flexible employment relationships as those exhibiting: temporary and part-time vis-à-vis permanent fulltime; fewer benefits; contracted out; and pay schemes contingent upon profit levels.

Public sector unions are much worse off than those in the private sector, as the employers that they deal with are the very governments that enact the laws which govern the relationship between them. Once again, the present situation in British Columbia illustrates this point succinctly with the Liberals restricting/removing the right of its employees to strike, discarding collective bargaining and resorting to the legislature in order to impose

contract settlements, and quashing legal contracts that don't suit its needs. The present BC government's attitude and actions toward its employees are reminiscent of the pre-WWII period and I fear that that is where the social relations of production are headed globally unless the working-class wakes up and unites in defence of the hard-won gains that were made during the "post-war compromise" period.

Palmer (1992) notes that sociologist Bob Russell "has studied 663 cases of labour-capital conflict in the years 1915-24...he finds that strike activity that actually pushed beyond the legally defined boundaries of the [labour legislation] was the only strategy that offered labour any chance of success, with roughly 80 per cent of all labour victories secured by such means." It is clear that the rules of the industrial relations "game" are unjust and becoming progressively more skewed against labour. I feel that unions and all workers need to resort to the tactics of their forefathers through direct actions designed to challenge the hegemony of state and employer. When the "rules" leave little or no power in the hands of labour, it is time for labour to disregard those rules and take back the *a priori* power that belongs to it—the withdrawal of its labour. In addition to the political partisanship mentioned in the preceding section, I believe that unions must become willing to lead their memberships in acts of radical defiance when faced with obviously inequitable laws that leave them impotent if they are to break the present cycle of regression. In order to have any chance at success in these endeavours, it is imperative that rank-and-file members are informed, educated, and motivated to act synergistically in defence of their rights and those of their organizations.

## Labour

Some of the internal problems that unions face today are membership apathy, issue ignorance, lack of working-class self-awareness, ideological divisions, nonpartisanship, inter-organizational disputes (raiding, sectionalism, antipathy, unilingualism), and intra-organizational internecine political infighting. These enemies of collectivism must be quelled before any effective actions—direct or political—can be successfully undertaken on a provincial or national scale. The cure for most of these internal organizational woes is the same: education - of the executive, the rank-and-file, and the entire wage and salary earning class.

Jeffery Taylor (2001), in referring to the state of membership education of Canadian Congress of Labour (CCL) affiliates circa 1944, states that "the general educational level of most workers was low, which left them ill-equipped to understand the society in which they lived or to respond to the anti-worker and anti-labour propaganda they faced from business, the media, and the business supported political parties." Although the general level of education of the average worker today is undoubtedly higher than that of the average worker in 1944, I am afraid that the labour movement has failed to effectively educate the rank-and-file, the working public, and even the majority of union officers about the harsh realities of renewed conservatism and its effects on the unionized and unorganized labour relationship. Godard (1994) points out that neo-conservative government policies are those that attempt to reshape (or dismantle) the postwar system, such as: privatization; deregulation; reduction of trade barriers; massive cuts to government spending; high interest rates; high unemployment; and the weakening of labour unions and collective bargaining. Even more importantly, many workers are oblivious to class differences within capitalist society and a general lack of working-class self-awareness permeates Canadian unions and society in general, fettering the ability of the largest segment of Canadian society to chart its own destiny.

Unfortunately, the labour movement is still plagued by political and ideological sectionalisms that have been with us since the nineteenth century. Organizationally, industrial/craft unionism and international/national unionism vie for power. Politically, workers and their unions are a diffuse lot, espousing allegiance to labourism, social democracy, communism, liberalism, syndicalism, individualism, non-partisanship and amazingly, even conservatism. The challenges facing the labour movement demand synergy in education as well as action but these deep-rooted divisions within our ranks may preclude such unity into the foreseeable future. A further problem facing Canadian unions is that of maintaining, if not increasing, membership rates. In an era where technological change, reengineering, systematic disinvestment, and poor public image is placing

considerable downward pressure on union membership densities, it is more important than ever that unions strive to add to their numbers. This substantial task must be accomplished through the education of the public by utilizing the popular media, as effectively as the pro-business/anti-labour forces do, in order to bring to light the vital role that collectivism plays for the Canadian working-class; and by discovering effective means with which to successfully organize in the illusive and vast service sector.

**The Challenges Facing Labour Unions Today will conclude next week, with a discussion of how public opinion, globalization, and modern technology influence unions' power.**

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## SEVERE ACUTE RESPIRATORY SYNDROME (SARS)

*By Zil-E-Huma Lodhi*



As if the world didn't have enough to worry about, SARS (Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome) has stunned the people across continents. So far, 14 deaths have been reported in Canada and all victims have been those who have traveled to Asia or who came in direct contact with SARS cases at home or in the hospital (Health Canada).

As of April 21, 2003, "Health Canada has received reports of 316 probable or suspect cases of severe acute respiratory syndrome (SARS) in Canada."

To combat this frightening disease, scientists world wide are working to learn more about the virus which causes it, and to develop an effective treatment.

### Physiology of the SARS Causative Agent:

(Adapted from *Time Magazine*).

The pathology lab of the University of Hong Kong is one of the few places in the world where researchers are using powerful transmission electron microscopes to observe the SARS virus. This SARS agent is a small particle of protein-encrusted RNA, which under 100,000 times magnification looks like "fuzzy little balls," made up of tiny hooks poking out of spherical body. This particular characteristic helps classify the pathogen as a member of the coronavirus family. It is unusual for a coronavirus to cause anything more serious than a

cold, but the SARS virus has somehow mutated into a deadly infectious agent. It is as yet unknown how or why this occurred.

## The Origin of SARS

It is believed that SARS originated in the Guangdong province of China. In early March, Hong Kong health officials became suspicious when patient after patient started to show up with a high fever, dry cough, muscle soreness and a mild sore throat. Within a week, the patients developed signs of adult respiratory distress syndrome and had to be hooked up to ventilator support.

Hong Kong is located near the agricultural zones of south-eastern China, where farm animals and the human population live in close proximity and illnesses like influenza routinely jump from animals to humans. Alert to this fact, Hong Kong officials found out that of the first 45 people to contract SARS most had contact with employees of the Hospital in Hong Kong. Those people in turn had contact with a smaller circle who treated or visited a patient from Guangdong province, originally diagnosed with nonspecific fever. Hong Kong quickly notified the World Health Organization (WHO) and began trying to contain SARS and find a cure (*Time Magazine*).

## What are the symptoms of SARS?

As of March 24th, 2003, SARS has been reported in thirteen countries. The main symptoms of SARS are:

- high fever ( $> 38^{\circ}$  Celsius)
- dry cough
- shortness of breath.
- SARS may be associated with other symptoms, including headache, muscular stiffness, loss of appetite, malaise, confusion, rash and diarrhoea (WHO).

## How do you catch SARS?

Most of the reported SARS cases seem to have been transferred through direct, close contact with infected persons. When people cough, they send droplets of fluid into the air, which other people inhale. Patients are therefore placed in an isolation to reduce the spread of the virus, and for the same reason health care workers and visitors wear masks, aprons and gloves when in close contact with the suspected or infected patient. You can protect yourself by frequently washing your hands, and by avoiding touching your eyes, nose or mouth. If you suspect of any of SARS symptoms contact your local health authorities. The City of Toronto public health website says that "Frequent handwashing is the most important way to prevent the spread of infection" and they have prepared a document detailing why this step is so important, and how to properly wash your hands to ensure the removal of any infectious agent.

## Preventive strategies:

The WHO has cautioned travelers to be aware of the SARS symptoms and to take preventive measures if they must travel to effected areas like China or Japan. If persons suspect themselves to be a SARS carrier they should contact the health authorities immediately not only to curb the virus in their own system, but also to further contain the spread. With treatment, most people who contract the virus will survive.

As a world wide collective effort, WHO will continue to monitor possible and suspected cases of SARS with the collaboration of countries who have reported SARS cases. It is also working with its partners to coordinate efforts to improve the accuracy of SARS diagnosis and to advise physicians on how to best treat the infection. The public can obtain information about new outbreaks as well as new developments from the WHO web page at: <http://www.who.int/en/>

According to WHO, "As of April 22, 2003, a cumulative total of 3947 probable cases with 228 deaths have been reported to WHO from 25 countries. The 11 new deaths were reported in China (6) and Hong Kong SAR (5)." WHO has also recently issued a travel warning asking that people avoid the Toronto area for a period of three weeks, although Toronto insists that the disease is contained.

### **Treatment:**

At this time, no drug seems to effectively treat SARS. The recovery of infected patients depends upon the exposure to, and pathogenicity of the virus - i.e., how deadly the virus is. SARS is considered to be less infectious than the flu or the common cold. The incubation period for SARS – that is, time it takes for the virus to develop in a host body - ranges from 2 to 5 days. Due to its initially speedy spread, people at first linked SARS with bioterrorism but authorities have since dismissed this idea.

### **Summary of Key Health Canada Activities :**

Health Canada is continuing 24 hour surveillance of SARS outbreaks in Canada. It is collaborating and coordinating efforts within each province and territory through groups of experts in infection control, and through treatment guidelines and public health measures.

Health authorities also working with WHO staff of SARS Emergency Response Centers and also in WHO headquarters in Geneva.

For additional information on SARS, the public can contact Health Canada's information line at: 1-800-454-8302.

### **Conclusion:**

According to Doctor Donald Low, chief Microbiologist at Mount Sinai Hospital Toronto, "This is a lot like the early days of HIV." There is such fear that all of this may seem like an overreaction to a disease that is not as fatal as Russian Flu of 1889-90 which claimed 250,000 lives in Europe. West Nile Virus is more deadly than SARS and measles is more infectious. The fear of SARS has a lot to do with the human psyche. We fear the unknown, and SARS tops the charts as something we know very little about - for example we do not know how long a victim has been contagious by the time symptoms appear or if a vaccine will ever be available (Time Magazine).

### **References and sources of further information:**

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- World Health Organization: Update 36 - Situation in Singapore and China: [http://www.who.int/csr/sarsarchive/2003\\_04\\_22/en/](http://www.who.int/csr/sarsarchive/2003_04_22/en/)

### **Prevention:**

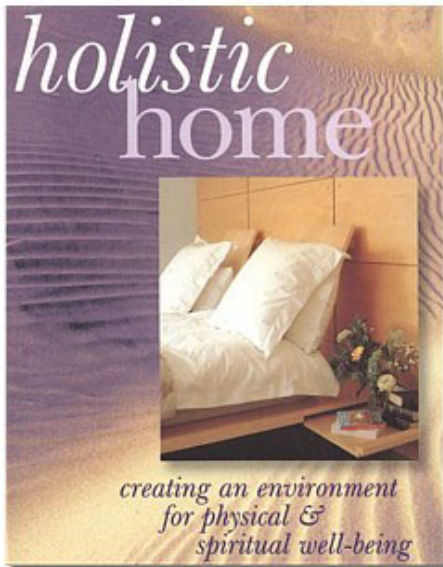
- City of Toronto SARS Prevention: Handwashing [http://www.city.toronto.on.ca/health/sars/sars\\_handwashing.htm](http://www.city.toronto.on.ca/health/sars/sars_handwashing.htm)
- City of Toronto SARS Prevention: Disinfecting [http://www.city.toronto.on.ca/health/sars/sars\\_disinfecting.htm](http://www.city.toronto.on.ca/health/sars/sars_disinfecting.htm)



## HOLISTIC HOME

### A Book Review

*By Laura Seymour*



Very rarely do I ever purchase what I call "feel good" books. They are often expensive and the content is mostly glitz. *Holistic Home*, however, described on the front cover as a book for "creating an environment for physical and spiritual well-being" delivers just that and is my exception in the purchasing books department. This 1998 Sterling publication (New York) has long been a book I can't bear to part with.

Author Joanna Trevelyan is without an author's biography in the book but according to one web site, she "has worked as a health journalist and writer for 17 years. She has been deputy editor of *Nursing Times* and editor of *The Midwives' Journal*. She has written eight health books, including *Care of the Mother and Newborn* for the midwifery profession" [1].

There are many thing that I like about this book..

First, I like the well-planned and well-shot photographs. Nothing is more annoying to me than an overly crisp and phony appearance to a photo when I'm thinking about my home. I don't feel comfortable with a home that doesn't say, "mellow", or "warm." What's the point if you are looking at a place you don't want to relax in?

In most of the photos the main source of light appears to be natural sunlight. That may be a clever photographer's trick, but it works. The photos also reflect a number of design styles, not just one or two. When I see many books on the home they appear to follow one approach, for instance, "contemporary." I like looking at the rustic, the Oriental, the contemporary and the different feelings they evoke. One day when I pick up the book I like to spend most of my time with rustic, another I am drawn to the Oriental. I appreciate the options. Happily, at every flip of the page there is at least one photo.

Second, there are many practical tips for how to make your home smell and look good, inside and out. Natural scents are discussed. Garden ideas are explored. The full scope of the home is looked at.

Third, "natural" seems to be the focus. There is a huge selection of photos with natural materials. In a day and age when we are seeing more and more warnings about common building materials like formaldehyde, I really respect the use of wood, tile and natural cottons. Each picture looks cozy. This continues with the theme of the natural use of light. This shows a well-planned approach on how to handle the content!

Last, *you* are included in the home. The home is never a home without people. Naturopathy, homeopathy, aromatherapy and neck and shoulder massage are lightly discussed. Baths and the different ways to enjoy a bath are shown. In a world of break-neck pace to get through a day it's really quite nice to see someone lauding

baths. I always love a good soak. Unfortunately, I talk to so many people who only shower! How do they unwind? Now that I think about it these shower people appear to be endlessly on the go.

For those of you interested in Feng Shui, the ancient Chinese art of placement, you will enjoy getting a look at the book. The content focuses on the ancient art with suggestions for good bed positions and proper colors for every room.

*Holistic Home* really comes over as a book that packs in so much information. A nice treat when our student dollar is so precious.

When I get bummed out or lost for inspiration I pick up this lovely book and start to thumb through the pages.

If you'll excuse me, all this talk about how lovely the book is reminds me I haven't had a good thumb through this in ages. I'm going to run a hot bath and use natural candlelight to look at the pictures and ...mellow out.

[1] Source of Author information: <http://www.creativepub.com/prBabyPlan.cfm>

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

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## ARE YOU GRADUATING THIS JUNE?



**I want to feature graduating AU students for the profiles section in May and June. If you are graduating this year, write to me and I will send you a profile form to fill out or we can arrange for a more in-depth interview. Remember how hard it was when you started at distance education? Well here is your chance to share your wisdom with new students.**

**Also, if you plan to attend graduation in Athabasca, consider taking some photos to send along to the Voice. Many AU students can't make it to their convocation, so let's give them something that will help them feel like they were there. Anecdotes are welcome too. Photos used in my grad feature will be paid for! Write me for details.**

**Missing out on all the deals?**

[www.ausu.org/services](http://www.ausu.org/services)

**Get an AU ID card, today!**





Dear Sandra,

**Exams are coming up for me at the end of the month and I am STRESSED! So stressed in fact, that I cannot get to sleep at night! Any suggestions?**

**Jittery & Tired in Strathmore, AB**

Dear Jittery & Tired,

I hope my advice helps you because the most important thing to do when preparing to take a test (besides studying of course) is to get an adequate amount of sleep before the exam.

First, make sure you wind down slowly at the same time every night. Have a warm bath with a cup of Sleepy Time Tea (just about every tea company has a type of sleepy time tea available in any grocery store) or milk. Then get into bed and use deep muscle relaxation to help ease the tension out of your body and mind. I use the following steps with my seven-year-old daughter to help her get to sleep on nights when she is too wound up:

1. Lie down and remove all distractions (noise, light, etc.)
2. Take a few minutes to get your breath regular, breathe deeply in and out through your nose. Try to make the length of the breaths match.
3. Keep your eyes closed through the entire relaxation process.
4. Begin with your toes - clench them to the count of 5 and slowly release them to the count of 5. Do this for all parts of your body all the way up to your face and scalp.
5. By this time you body should feel very heavy and almost non-existent.
6. Imagine yourself somewhere you love to be. For example, the beach. Imagine yourself alone on a deserted beach, hear the relaxing lapping of the waves, feel the heat of the sun beating on your face, smell the clean fresh air.
7. Enjoy the solitude of your special place and drift off to dream.

If this doesn't work I would recommend talking to your doctor about prescription short-term sleeping pills. Learn to relax, school is stressful yes, but it shouldn't rule your life and affect your health. To ease up on some of the tension and anxiety you are building up daily by cramming and worrying, take breaks in the day for "you" time. Have a long bath, go for a walk, do some yoga, anything but stare at your books. Little breaks will bring you back to study more refreshed and alert and help to ease the tensions inside of you. Good luck on your exams! Sweet Dreams,

*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](mailto:smoore@ausu.org)*



## PREVENTING DEPRESSION IN CHILDREN ALLEVIATES ADULT CONDITION

Researchers at McGill University have found that "prevention of depression in childhood is the best way to thwart the condition in adulthood." John Abela, the McGill psychology professor who conducted the study, finds that "children are currently experiencing pessimism, sadness and depression at an unprecedented rate," and that "depression is not age defined or exclusive to adults. By the time they're 14 years old, up to nine percent of children have already experienced at least one episode of severe depression."

"Abela's study, conducted with the help of 35 undergraduate and graduate students, was the first of its kind to:

- Examine children's beliefs about themselves, the world, and the future and the consequences of these beliefs on emotional well-being over a 14-month period using diagnostic interviews, multiple assessments of depressive symptoms, and sophisticated assessments of stress.
- Investigate whether children whose parents have a history of depression possess more pessimistic beliefs about themselves, the world and the future - compared to children whose parents do not have a history of depression.

It was also one of the first studies to show that pessimistic styles of thinking bring about vulnerability to depression even in younger children (i.e. 6-10 years of age).

For more information on this study, see the official press release at:

<http://www.mcgill.ca/releases/2003/april/depression/>

## ALBERTA RESEARCHERS WELCOME THE WORLD AT COMPUTER LANGUAGE LEARNING CONFERENCE IN BANFF

*University of Calgary Press Release*

**Calgary (April 22, 2003)** - Researchers at the University of Calgary are preparing to share their

work with hundreds of international scholars at the world's largest conference on computer-assisted language learning (CALL).

WorldCALL 2003, hosted by the University of Calgary and the University of Alberta in Banff on May 6 to 10, will welcome 300 researchers from over 46 countries. It will feature hundreds of studies into the uses of computers and new media technologies to help people learn a new language.

Opening speakers will be Dr. Lyle Oberg, Minister of Learning for Alberta and Dyane Adam, the Federal Official Languages Commissioner.

"We have been preparing this event for the last two years, and many people have been involved," says Dr. Martin Beaudoin, Chair of the local organizing committee and professor at Faculté Saint-Jean. "It has created a lot of visibility for the U of A and the U of C."

Dr. Brian Gill, Associate Chair of the local organizing committee and Associate Director of the Language Research Centre at U of C, points out that the Internet has completely changed the way languages can be learned... Having over 65% of Alberta households connected to the Internet puts our province in the forefront of developments in this area.

Dr. Grace Wiebe with the University of Alberta provides the global context: "We are proud that the second WorldCALL conference is being held in Alberta..."

University of Calgary researchers, principally from the Language Research Centre and the Faculty of Education will present findings on the following:

- Developing cyber-literacy in French immersion
- Learning Classical Japanese online
- Using visual tools and concept mapping to support second language learning
- Developing hybrid language courses, with both online and classroom components

In all, over 200 research presentations will be featured. WorldCALL is a consortium of more than seven international and continental associations dedicated to advancing the science of computer assisted language learning.

For more information see: [www.worldcall2003.org](http://www.worldcall2003.org)

The Entire press release is available at: <http://www.ucalgary.ca/news/april03/call.html>

# CAPITAL CAMPAIGN: WHAT'S COMING FOR AUTISM

## CALGARY AREA FUNDRAISING EVENTS

AMANDA LYN BALDWIN

If you live in Calgary you've likely heard or seen information posted by Society for Treatment of Autism: radio spots, brochures, posters on the sides of Calgary's buses and bus stops, as well as all kinds of interviews and media coverage. This has been part of the communication objective that Society for Treatment of Autism had set in place during the last year. This communication objective is/was the preview for Capital Campaign.

In the last few years the increase in demand for treatment services (specifically for autism) has been colossal and it will continue to grow. This escalation has placed a strain on the services offered by Society for Treatment of Autism. For example, past growth has forced different portions of the society to operate out of multiple offices spread throughout the city of Calgary. The solution to this problem: more expansion.

Through expansion, Society for Treatment of Autism [STA] will be able to consolidate Services into one large building allowing for all employees to work as a more effective treatment team. The larger building will house offices and classrooms as well as locker rooms and gym equipment for the staff. As well, additional therapy and sensory equipment for the kids will be more accessible. The official Launch of Capital Campaign is May 2003. It is hoped that construction will begin within a year, and will take a year to complete: the goal is for the building to be completed in 2005.

Expansion will not only be through construction. STA hopes to expand their services to include more diagnostic capabilities as well as an enhancement in adult services (which are presently quite minimal). With a spending goal of three million dollars, the facility will better support both clients and employees. But where this budget come from? Since the government only provides enough money to keep STA operating, additional funding must be obtained through a fundraising drive: Capital Campaign. The drive includes many events ranging from press conferences to wine tasting. The most recent event was held in February at "The Garage."

STA even has a sponsor: Mark Knoll is one of Canada's speed skating champions. His accomplishments include being a member of the '98 Olympic Team, 13th in the 5000m at the World Single Distances Championships 2000, and having a national record in the 5000m at the 2001 World Cup. Mark's brother is diagnosed with autism.

There are many ways that you too, can help. Contact Isabelle Martin (Fund Development Officer) anytime at (403) 258-5529 to find **ways you can help**. All kinds of donations of both money and time (volunteering) are needed. You can also help the Society for Treatment of Autism by attending one of the fundraising events listed below:

### ❖ Legends Alive Concert

May 22, 2003, 7:30pm

Saddledome

Call (403) 531-6157 for Tickets (\$15 -\$20)

### ❖ Groovy Garden Party/Auction

June 19, 2003

Bow Valley Square

Contact Isabelle Martin: (403) 258-5529

### ❖ Annual Fireman's Ball

June 7, 2003

\$100.00 per ticket

Contact Isabelle Martin: (403) 258-5529

### ❖ 3<sup>rd</sup> Ann. Wine Tasting

October 18, 2003

Art Space Art Gallery

\$75.00 per ticket

Contact Isabelle Martin: (403) 258-5529

Society For Treatment Of Autism: <http://www.sta-ab.com>

# SCHOLARSHIPS & AWARDS

For scholarships available through the Athabasca University Student's Union, see the AUSU website at [www.ausu.org](http://www.ausu.org)



## ATHABASCA UNIVERSITY MILDRED ROWE WESTON MEMORIAL SCHOLARSHIP

**Value:** \$600

**DEADLINE:** OCTOBER 31, 2003

**Administrator:** Athabasca University

**Notes:** Available to Alberta students with an academic standing of 80% or more. Must have completed between three and five courses at Athabasca within the last year. Open to graduates of an Alberta secondary school who have not previously attended a post-secondary institution. Based on academic achievement. Contact for more information.

**Contact Information:**

Office of the Registrar, 1 University Drive  
Athabasca, AB T9S 3A3

Phone: (780) 675-6249

Fax: (780) 675-6174

Toll Free: (800) 788-9041

Web Site: <http://http://www.athabascau.ca/html/depts/registry/studawrd.htm>

E-mail: [auinfo@athabascau.ca](mailto:auinfo@athabascau.ca)

## CIBC ACHIEVERS

**Value:** n/s

**DEADLINE:** n/s

**Administrator:** National Aboriginal Achievement Foundation

**Notes:** Awarded to aboriginal students who have distinguished themselves in their studying field and who are committed to the pursuit of excellence.

**Contact Information:**

National Aboriginal Achievement Foundation  
70 Yorkville Avenue, Suite 33A  
Toronto, Ontario M5R 1B9

Phone: (416) 926-0775

Fax: (416) 926-7554

Toll Free: (800) 329-9780

Web Site: <http://www.naaf.ca>

E-mail: [naaf@istar.ca](mailto:naaf@istar.ca)

## AS PRIME MINISTER AWARDS

Students interested in trying out for this year's As Prime Minister Awards will want to check out the Live internet form on May 14, 2003, at 7:30 EST. Join Robin Rix, national winner of the 2002 **As Prime Minister Awards**, as he shares his application experience, the excitement of attending the national judging program along with 49 other semifinalists and what it's like to be a Magna As Prime Minister Awards national winner.

# CONFERENCE CONNECTIONS

Contributed By AU's *The Insider*



- **CU Expo** - Community-University Institute for Social Research - "Partnerships, Policy & Progress" - May 8-10, 2003, Saskatoon, SK. Details: <http://www.usask.ca/cuisr/cuexpo>
- **Distance Education Technology Symposium (DETS-03)** - sponsored by the Centre for Distance Education - May 15-17, 2003 - Edmonton, Crowne Plaza Chateau Lacombe. Details: <http://cde.athabasca.ca/DET/2003/> or contact Pat Fahy.
- **AMTEC (Association of Media & Technology in Education in Canada)** - "E-convergence: Education, Media & Technology" - May 25-28, 2003, Montreal, PQ. Details: <http://www.amtec.ca>
- **ICDE World Conference** - 21st annual - June 1-5, 2003 - Hong Kong. Details: <http://www.ouhk.edu.hk/HK2003>
- **CADE** - June 7-11, 2003 - St. John's, NF. Details: <http://www.cade-aced2003.ca/>
- **"Women and Leadership in Higher Education: How Thick is the Glass Ceiling?"** - International Conference - June 12-14, 2003 - Monterrey, Nuevo León, Mexico. Details: [http://www.swaac.ca/Prof\\_Dev.htm](http://www.swaac.ca/Prof_Dev.htm) or <http://www.swaac.ca/Regional.htm>
- **Distance Teaching & Learning Conference:** - 19th annual - "Working Smarter - Building on Success" - Aug. 13-15, 2003 - Madison, Wisconsin. Details: <http://www.uwex.edu/disted/conference>
- **AU Learning Services Conference** - October 3 & 4, 2003 - Edmonton, Crowne Plaza Chateau Lacombe. Details to follow.

## OTHER CONFERENCES

- **Teaching In A Digital Age** - the impact of new communication technologies on teaching and pedagogy. l'Université de Montréal. <http://profetic.org:16080/coll2003/> [French only]
- **China Conference 2003** - Edinburgh July 2003. China Conference Info welcomes people from the commercial and educational sector involved in E-Learning, Distance Learning, Training, HR, IT Training, Localisation, ICT or Knowledge Management, to this world first international event. China represents the biggest target market for these sectors ever and is still largely untapped.

Entering the Chinese market place is a complex move. This conference provides a forum on exchange of market information not only on product and service requirements, but on specialist market entrance requirements. If you are working in any of these sectors you should seriously consider entering this event in your diary. The conference will be patronised by professionals from, China, the USA, Europe and Australia and represents the largest collective gathering of these specialists centred around the Chinese market ever!

Go to the website for more information: <http://www.chinaconferenceinfo.com>

**Know of an educational conference that is not on this list? Contact [voice@ausu.org](mailto:voice@ausu.org) with the details and we'll list it in Conference Connections.**

# Community Networks Group

To suggest listings for events, conferences, or opportunities in your area, contact [voice@ausu.org](mailto:voice@ausu.org).

## May Week Edmonton Labour Arts Festival!

April 28 - May 10, 2003

[www.mayweek.ab.ca](http://www.mayweek.ab.ca) / Info: 471-1940

**Opening Night:** April 28 International Day of Mourning Ceremony at Edmonton City Hall 7:00 p.m.

See [www.mayweek.ab.ca](http://www.mayweek.ab.ca) for a listing of events.

Hotline: 471-1940

## SPICE PRODUCTIONS PRESENTS: "A JOURNEY INTO LAS AMERICAS"

performed by Vancouver's Award winning Latin American Folkloric Ballet: Grupo America and featuring dancers from BAFOCHI of Chile & Amalia Hernandez folkloric Ballet of Mexico! Join us in a virtual tour of Latin America's finest music, dance and traditional dresses, with special performances from Mexico, Colombia, Chile, Brazil and Cuba.

**Friday May 2, 2003** \*Show starts at 7:00 p.m. Tickets: \$20.00 - Provincial Museum of Alberta Auditorium, 12845 - 102 Avenue - Info: 953-2468 / e-mail: [jizquierdo@albchem.com](mailto:jizquierdo@albchem.com)

\*show includes an intermission - food and refreshments will be sold to raise money for local non-profit organizations. Tickets can be purchased by calling 953-2468 or at the following locations:

- Paraiso Tropical - 9136 - 118 Avenue
- Africa Restaurant - 10807 - 106 Avenue
- La Tapa Restaurant - 10523 - 99 Avenue
- Acajutla Restaurant - 107 Ave. 114 St.
- Edmonton Hispanic Bilingual Association (Wednesday nights)
- Our Lady of Guadalupe Church (Sundays) 111 Ave. - 113 St.
- Changing Together: Centre for Immigrant Women 10010-107 A Avenue
- Latin Corner Dance Studios: La Boheme Sunday evenings
- Salsa on Sundays: Integration Place Sunday evenings
- Spice Productions: 3920 - 131 Avenue - Tel: 953-2468

Tickets will also be available (if not Sold out) at the Museum the day of the Show. General Seating applies on a first come first serve basis.

**PS.** Following the show there will be a Party and Bonus Performance featuring "Grupo America" and local dancers from Various Salsa Schools, at the AFRICA Restaurant & Bar 10807 - 106 Avenue. No Cover charge for those with a ticket stub from the show. Salsero Night happens every second Friday at the Africa with the next night slated for May 2nd. It's a great place to practice and socialize with your instructors and dancemates. Music starts at 9:00 p.m. Cover charge is \$5.

## The Edmonton Interfaith Centre for Education & Action

invites you to attend a Special Dinner honouring, the Right Honourable David Kilgour, P.C., M.P. Member for Edmonton South East ... and a celebration of the Centre's 10 Years!

Sunday, May 4, 2003 > 6:00 p.m.  
FANTASYLAND HOTEL @ West Edmonton Mall  
Cocktails, Multicultural Entertainment & Celebration!  
Tickets - \$50 / Charitable Donation Receipt for \$25

For further information, tickets or to reserve a table please call:

Netta 454-7109 • Don 466-2757 • Interfaith Centre - 413-6159

Join us in celebration of the Centre's 10 Years of work promoting Interfaith dialogues through our City Hall Prayers for the International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination; Jewish - Christian & Muslim Community Dialogues; Eastern Religion Seminars...

Courtesy of: The Community Networks Group ©  
Tel/Fax: 474-6058 / Cell: 995-6819



## CLASSIFIEDS:

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### CLASSIFIED SPACE:

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

Classified ads should be submitted to the editor at [voice@ausu.org](mailto:voice@ausu.org) with 'CLASSIFIED AD' listed in the subject title.

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

## THE VOICE

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c/o Athabasca University Students' Union  
#306, 10030-107th Street, Edmonton, AB T5J 3E4  
800.788.9041 ext. 3413

**Editor In Chief** Tamra Ross Low

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***THE VOICE ONLINE: [WWW.AUSU.ORG/VOICE](http://WWW.AUSU.ORG/VOICE)***

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