

THE VOICE

MAGAZINE

10th ANNIVERSARY 1993 - 2003

Vol 11 Issue 19
May 07, 2003

10 Years as
The Voice of
AU Students

THE PAPER

A Look Back at the first issue
of THE VOICE

CITY CRITTERS

You don't have to leave the city to
find an abundance of wildlife

DO YOU KNOW THE CEMBALO?

Modern cruiseliners offer a wide
range of entertainment

Plus: Canadian FedWatch!, Dear Sandra,
From My Perspective, and news,
announcements and opportunities from
your university and beyond.

THE VOICE 1993 - 2003

May 07, 2003

Volume 11, Issue 19

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CLASSIFIEDS!



The Voice congratulates AUSU VP External Shirley Barg, who was recently elected Chair of the Council of Alberta University Students [CAUS].

AUSU has been a member of CAUS since 1993, and Shirley has been on the CAUS board since 2001. She is the first representative of AUSU to hold the position of CAUS chair.

CAUS represents students of Athabasca University, the University of Calgary, the University of Alberta, and the University of Lethbridge. For more information see the CAUS website at: <http://www.su.ucalgary.ca/caus/alpha/>

Quote Of The Week

1492. As children we were taught to memorize this year with pride and joy as the year people began living full and imaginative lives on the continent of North America.

Actually, people had been living full and imaginative lives on the continent of North America for hundreds of years before that. 1492 was simply the year sea pirates began to rob, cheat, and kill them.

Kurt Vonnegut: Breakfast of Champions

THE VOICE

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EDITORIAL PAGES

THIS WEEK

THE VOICE: 1993 - 2003 10 YEARS AS YOUR STUDENT NEWSPAPER

SPECIAL FEATURE: THE PAPER

Join us for a retrospective reading of the very first issue of The Voice, then known as The Paper. How much has changed, and how can a study of the past prepare us for the future?

SOUNDING OFF

Students share their exam stories.

NATURE NOTES: This summer, take some time to get to know some of the non-human inhabitants of our city. Read Zoe Dalton's *Critters In The City* to learn more...

SCIENCE, CHEMISTRY, RESEARCH AND AU STUDENTS: Debbie Jabbour gains a new perspective on the importance of research from attending the Annual Western Canadian Undergraduate Chemistry Conference in Regina, Saskatchewan

GENERATION DEBT: THE CAUS REPORT ON STUDENT FUNDING

Last week I received a copy of a report by the Council of Alberta University Students (CAUS) titled, *Generation Debt: An Investment in Education is an Investment in Alberta's Future*. This report was presented to the Alberta Members of the Legislative Assembly in April, and it represents the concerns of Post-Secondary students across the province.

Some of you may not be sure who CAUS is, and if so you are not alone. The organization has been around for several years, but has just begun making a significant impact in the past year. Your students' union (AUSU) is a member of CAUS [and has been for 10 years], and by extension all AU students are represented by the group. AUSU's own VP External Shirley Barg has been a member of the CAUS board for AU for two terms, and she provides AUSU with frequent updates on CAUS activities [note: Shirley was just elected CAUS chair. Congratulations Shirley!].

The recent CAUS report is the most extensive and cohesive report that I have seen so far, and it contains a wealth of information pertinent to Alberta's Post Secondary community. At 28 pages, the report is too long to reproduce in The Voice, but I will provide an overview of the information contained within.

Unfortunately the CAUS document, while providing extensive information on the university funding crisis and how it affects Alberta's post-secondary students, provides very scant information on specific challenges affecting Athabasca University and its students. In the first section, for example, on the Government Funding of Alberta's Universities, there is information detailing the funding issues of all three of Alberta's other universities, but no specific data on Athabasca's issues except where AU is encompassed under the umbrella of the Alberta Universities as a whole.

AU is, however, highlighted in the special issue briefings section of the document, in the form of a special report which I will comment on shortly.

Despite the lack of AU statistics, it is an informative document which paints a very clear picture of the desperate situation of Alberta's post-secondary students today. The length of the document is due to the abundance of evidence that education in Alberta is woefully under-funded, and the many ways in which the

Alberta universities are struggling to provide quality education and retain faculty despite the Alberta brain-drain exodus of academics to the United States, and the poor incentives offered to Alberta professors.

Following is an overview of some of the information contained in the CAUS document - my comments are italicized throughout...

CONTEXT FOR DISCUSSION

Government funding of Alberta's Universities

Among the facts presented in the report are the following:

- Provincial funding for all post-secondary institutions has gone up by 16% since 1996. However, this does not make up for the cuts in the early 90s. In fact, government expenditures on all post-secondary institutions have dropped 3% since 92-93. The per-student operating grant to the U of A has dropped by 29%. At the U of C, the per-student operating grant has dropped by 21%. Universities are educating more students with fewer resources. This is why class sizes have gone through the roof and quality of education is declining, as professors have less time to spend with students.
- Student contributions to U of C and U of A revenues have gone from 12% to 24% in the past decade.
- Tuition at the U of C has gone up 221% since 1991. At the U of A, it has gone up 215%. Compound inflation has been 22% over this time period.
- Alberta's universities are experiencing an enrolment crunch. The U of C has capped undergrad enrolment, and the U of A is scaling back new admissions. At the U of L, they are attempting to control the enrolment crunch by strictly enforcing all deadlines. Increases to the operating budget will help the university in dealing with this funding crunch.

The importance of the University's general operating budget

The information in this section refers mainly to infrastructure and building maintenance costs. It does not mention electronic infrastructure such as that used by AU, but funding shortfalls affect electronic infrastructure as well.

Tuition and Alberta's University Students

The information provided in this section is a bleak reminder of the astonishing increase in how much students' must pay for their educations, and why tuition amounts are likely to continue to increase. The reference to differential tuition refers to the practice of charging higher tuition for programs which are more costly to provide and/or which provide graduates with greater earning power. The idea is that if you become a medical doctor you will earn more than many grads once you enter the workforce, so you can therefore pay more for tuition.

- Government cuts to post-secondary have been made up by tuition revenue.
- The province of Alberta has seen the largest increase in tuition fees in Canada between 1991 and 2001. (Statistics Canada, The Daily August 27, 2001).
- Currently, Alberta has the third-highest undergraduate arts and science tuition in Canada
- High tuition can be directly correlated to decreased accessibility.
- According to Alberta Learning, 44% of recently graduated high school student cited high costs as their reason for not attending post-secondary education.
- In Canada, people from low-income backgrounds are 2.5 times less likely to attend university than people from high-income backgrounds.
- Differential tuition makes this situation even worse: Ontario universities have seen low-income participation decline by as much as 50% in programs where fees have been differentiated. The Universities of Calgary and Alberta differentiated the Faculties of Law and Medicine this year.
- With rising tuition, students cannot make enough in the summer to pay for their own education. They must borrow and go into debt.

Public and Stakeholder Perceptions on PSE funding and Tuition

- In a 2001 survey, 88% of U of A students indicated that tuition relief should be the top provincial priority. Tuition relief was ranked much higher than expansion of the loan program or more scholarships and bursaries.
- A 2000 Calgary survey reported that 78% of Calgarians believed the government should increase funding to the U of C.
- The Progressive Conservative Party of Alberta passed two resolutions at their last convention: one calling on government to address the issue of rising tuition fees, and the other to ensure accessibility for students of all socioeconomic backgrounds.
- The Alberta Student Loan Program is frequently cited as the answer to the post-secondary funding crisis. There are several problems with this approach:
 - Student loan programs cost a lot to administer – every dollar in student finance carries at least \$0.50 in administration costs with it. Why not invest this money directly into the system?
 - The living allowance under the ASLP is constantly eroded by rising tuition. If a student is receiving maximum student loans, they still only get \$730/month to live. As tuition goes up, the living allowance goes down.

In addition the report notes that the:

- Average debt for students with loans in Alberta is \$18,837. Differential tuition means students in Law and Medicine will be graduating with loans between \$70,000 and \$100,000.

The Social Effects of Student Debt

- Debt adversely affects recent graduates' ability to contribute to economic growth through investments, charitable donations, or even buying a car or a house.
- Student debt exacerbates the "brain drain." In Ontario, where medical school tuition has more than doubled, American health care companies are offering to pay off a portion of Ontario-trained medical students' debt in exchange for lucrative contracts in the US. Canadian taxpayers subsidize medical graduates' education, and the American public benefits.
- The Canadian and Alberta Medical Associations have indicated that high tuition prompts graduates to forgo a rural practice or general practitionership in favour of an urban specialization, due to the financial constraints of high student debt.

SPECIFIC RECOMMENDATIONS FOR GOVERNMENT ACTION

The following section represents the recommendations that CAUS has made to the provincial government on behalf of Alberta University Students.

Alberta Student Loan Program: Part-Time Earnings Exemption

- If students want to work in order to partially offset the costs of university, they may only earn \$225/month before their student loans are clawed back. Eliminating this claw-back is one way the government can help student finance their education without having to turn to taxpayers.

The Council of Alberta University Students is recommending that the Province of Alberta eliminate the cap on in-study earnings, so that Alberta university students can access as many sources of funds for their education as possible.

Alberta Student Loan Program: Parental Contribution Requirements

What this section fails to mention is that a growing number of post-secondary students are mature students - older adults with no parental ties, and often families of their own. The notion of parental

contribution becomes less relevant as the proportion of mature students becomes larger. As a married student in my thirties, I often feel ridiculous trying to explain to students' finance why my parents are unable to contribute to my education. The very notion of parental contributions assumes that post-secondary students are minors, and not fully responsible for their financial situation. The fact that this is rarely the case is another reason why the parental contribution clause of students' finance should be abolished...

- 85% of Alberta parents expect their students [sic] will attend post-secondary education, but only 25% actually save for it. If parents earn over \$50,000/year, students may not access student loans. It is often middle-class students who are looking to private credit in order to attend university because of parental contribution requirements.

The Council of Alberta University Students is recommending that the Province eliminate the parental contribution requirement. Short of the abolition of the parental contribution requirements, CAUS is recommending that the province reduce the parental contribution requirement to two years after high school. Further, short of abolition of the parental contribution requirement, it should be altered such that parents or primary caregivers who earn less than \$60,000 are exempted from the requirement.

Alberta Student Loan Program: Monthly Living Allowance under the ASLP

- The MSOL [***this acronym is undefined on the students' finance website, but the amount corresponds to the living allowance for single students***] is \$730/month. This constitutes a gross underestimate of the actual costs of living and attending university, as the amount allocated for rent, utilities, food, personal care and miscellaneous expenditures does not meet most students' actual costs of living in a university residence or maintaining another residence in the proximity of the university.

CAUS is recommending increases to the Monthly Living Allowance under the Student Loan Program. Specifically, CAUS is recommending:

- A monthly housing allowance – including utilities – that is increased to reflect the average cost of \$500/month, or the average cost of living in university residences, whichever is greater.
- A monthly transportation allowance to \$100/month, in order to reflect increasing transit and parking costs.
- A monthly food allowance of \$300/month.
- An increase to the personal care and miscellaneous monthly allowance to \$300/month, in order to accommodate telephone service and internet access.
- Yearly adjustments to the monthly living allowance in accordance with rising tuition and fees, rising utility costs, and average rents as calculated by the Canadian Housing and Mortgage Corporation.
- An increase of the total monthly living allowance to \$1100/month.
- Yearly consultations with the Student Finance Board in order to specifically discuss changes to the monthly living allowance and the real costs of education, including any move toward changing the monthly living allowance policy in favour of a “market basket” calculation.
- The total Monthly Living Allowance should thus be raised to \$1200/month [***This is a little confusing, as it's not clear if CAUS wants the living allowance raised to \$1100 a month, or \$1200 a month. In any case, they are asking for a significant increase of at least \$370 a month to reflect a more realistic living cost for Alberta students.***]

SPECIFIC ISSUE BRIEFINGS

Athabasca University's Funding and Future

The final item in the special issue briefings section of the document is devoted to Athabasca University. It begins...

Athabasca University is one of the most unique post-secondary institutions in Canada, possibly even North America. AU provides distance learning – an opportunity for students with diverse lifestyles, backgrounds, and places of residence to pursue a university education. Indeed, many Athabasca University students are part-time, allowing Canadians to educate themselves while also engaging in paid or unpaid work. Indeed, many AU students are women with children, who balance childcare and other family responsibilities with university studies. Moreover, numerous studies indicate that commuting distance and rural background constitute a barrier to accessing post-secondary education. Athabasca University overcomes these barriers, rendering Alberta one of the only provinces to address the problem of rural accessibility.

The report goes on to refute the notion that AU is merely an online university, but it also notes that AU is dramatically under funded compared to the other universities due to its reliance on technological infrastructure. Since the government does not count technological investments as infrastructure upgrades, AU receives significantly less infrastructure funding per student than the other universities, and yet is expected to deliver the same quality of education. AU also receives much less funding per student because the government only looks at student numbers in terms of full time student equivalents, while AU has a large proportion of part-time students.

The report expresses concern that the Ministry of Learning has proposed alleviating AU's funding woes by removing distance education courses from the 30% tuition cap legislation [which says that no more than 30% of the cost of delivering a course can come from tuition]. Removing this cap means that the prices of distance delivered courses can soar, and AU could charge as much as the market can bear. AUSU feels that "reliance on the benevolence of Alberta Learning or AU administrators constitutes a responsible tuition policy. Affordability and accessibility are undermined by ad hoc tuition policies. Moreover, as tuition increases, it starts to look increasingly like a user fee or a tax on public services. Taxes and user fees are regulated – the same should hold for tuition fees."

For more information see the CAUS website at: <http://www.su.ucalgary.ca/caus/alpha/whoarewe.html> I could not find the entire Generation Debt document online anywhere, but there is an overview of the information contained within on this website: <http://www.generationdebt.ca/>

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.

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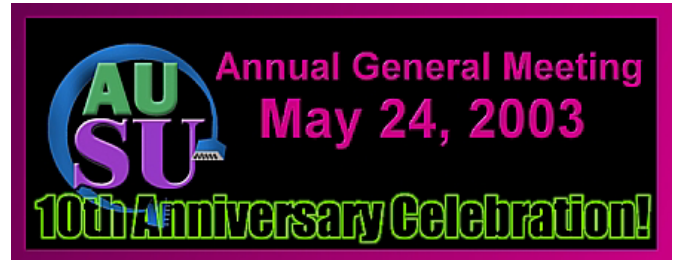
AUSU's 10th Anniversary AGM

What is it all about?

On May 24, 2003, AUSU will be hosting our 10th 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. The second is the approval of a new set of bylaws.

For more on the AUSU 10th Anniversary AGM and how you can attend [either in person, or via teleconference], see <http://www.ausu.org/agm>

AU STUDENT ESSAYS INSPIRING

In contrast to the students with poor writing skills there are a number of AU students who write very well and who demonstrate not just good critical thinking but considerable creativity. These students are often in our senior English courses. I have selected a number of their essays and posted them in the home pages of our English courses so that other students will have examples of the best essays which they can use both as inspiration and as models.

In order to read these essays click on the links below:

Here are some film and literature essays including critiques of Virginia Woolf, Vladimir Nabokov and Wayne Wang: <http://www.athabascau.ca/courses/engl/373/archives.html>

Here is a study of the Cyborg in Cyberpunk fiction and film: <http://www.athabascau.ca/courses/engl/491/machine1.html>

And now an analysis of Calgary poet, Claire Harris: http://www.athabascau.ca/cil/writers/harris_essay.html

Joseph Pivato
Center for Language and Literature Studies



Last week Debbie Jabbour wrote about her experiences taking AU exams, and I asked students to send me their exam stories.

I'm sure many of us have strange stories to tell about writing exams! I am currently working towards a Certificate in French language proficiency, so exams, especially in another language, can be unnerving.

During one of my final exams, about 10 minutes in, a fellow seated a row over from me sneezed several times, then proceeded to sniff every few minutes for the next 2 hours! I thought I would go nuts, but tried my best to concentrate.

During another exam, the lady seated next to me talked to herself (actually whispered, but equally annoying). I don't think she was doing French, otherwise I would have listened in!

Sue MacKenzie

When I was taking an accounting course, I and two other students started a small study group here in Edmonton. We would meet at a restaurant or someone's house to work through problems together and study for the exam. One evening we were talking about how the sense of smell could trigger very vivid memories. One of the group got the idea that if we studied with a scented candle burning it would help lock the information into our minds. The drawback, though, was that to unlock our supposedly vivid recollection of what we were reading, we would need to burn the same type of scented candle when we wrote the exam. We decided we'd each take a candle with us into the room when we wrote the exam.

The day of the exam I packed my candle and matches into my bag, and off I went to AU's Edmonton Learning Centre. When I explained what I wanted to do to the exam supervisor, she looked at me rather disbelievingly, but said I could burn the candle as long as no other student in the room objected to it. I later found out that my study partners chickened out and didn't take their candles to the exam room.

I can't confirm whether the scent unlocked my accounting-saturated brain cells, but I did pass the exam with a decent mark. However, I'm likely the only student to ever, quite literally, burn the proverbial flame of knowledge during an exam.

Shirley Barg

I encountered an psych exam that only had a handful of short answer questions that needed to be limited to 2 or 3 sentences. The questions had nothing to do with the quizzes, I could only answer

three of them. In order to have passed this test I would've need to memorize the entire text! Needless to say I failed the exam, and had to rewrite it again. I don't know yet if I passed. The rewrite was just as difficult as the original exam!

Sandra Moore

I wrote one exam where everyone seemed really stressed - the room was totally hushed and tension filled the air. People were hunched over their papers in deep concentration and you could have heard a pin drop. Then the guy up front nudged his desk forward, and the large plastic clock hanging high up on the partition wall dislodged and clattered down onto his desk! They guy shot back about 6 feet, and half the room jumped up and yelled! I nearly wet myself. I don't think anyone had much success concentrating after that.

Tamra Ross Low

Do you have an interesting exam story, or another story related to student life? Send it to voice@ausu.org.



Even the ones underwater. This giant kelp forest off the coast of B.C. is more diverse than a rainforest. Sadly, it's not protected from the harmful practices of industry. In fact, 99.99% of Canada's waters are unprotected. When will Canada start protecting our oceans? With your help, we'll get Ottawa to act now. Call **1.800.26.PANDA**.



NATURE NOTES:

FROM THE BACKYARD TO THE BIOSPHERE

by Zoe Dalton

CRITTERS IN THE CITY: URBAN WILDLIFE AND THEIR HUMAN FRIENDS



Of all the things we may associate with the city – good or bad – wildlife is not something that generally comes to mind. Culture, accessibility, nightlife; smog, noise and clamour: these are the things of the city, the images conjured up by the word ‘urban’. But to a select few people, every aspect of the urban environment is a clue to the ways in which wildlife has come to co-exist with humans in our most dense settlements. A ravine is not merely a place for a pleasant Sunday walk. It is a vital corridor along which urban wildlife can safely travel from one greenspace to another. It is a rare habitat for city animals otherwise relegated to human-dominated spaces such as open parks and backyards.

To the wildlife-savvy, a poorly-secured garbage can is not just an eyesore (or "nose-sore", as the case may be). Rather, it represents a call to the dinner table for wildlife that must take advantage of foraging opportunities when they arise. An old and worn verandah in need of a little TLC is not so much a charming example of architectural styles gone by as an outright invitation for urban critters to move right on in.

To the people involved in caring for those animals that fare poorly in the concrete jungle, the city also offers a million clues as to what can – and does – go wrong in human-wildlife interactions. Urban wildlife rehabilitation centres care for patients with a shocking array of ailments. Common at these centres is the kinglet, dazed and damaged after its collision with the windows of a downtown building – so deceptively disguised as sky to the hapless little bird. Too often do rehabbers treat a young raccoon with a beverage lid caught so tight round his wrist that circulation to the hand is all but completely cut off. From birds to mammals, butterflies to salamanders, urban wildlife live a precarious existence. What is one day food is the next a potentially fatal carrier of disease. What at first appears to be a perfect home – an attic with so small a hole as to protect one’s babies from any menacing predator – is soon transformed into a nightmare for both disturbed home-owner and for separated mother and baby wildlife when that perfect hole is blocked off.

To some, urban wildlife rehabilitation could seem an exercise in frustration. Is it not the elements of the city, the very structures and functions that make cities what they are, that lead to wildlife illness and injury? Does caring for these creatures not just represent an attempt to care for the few in an inevitably endless stream of the many injured, ill and orphaned wildlife that the city machine will churn out?

To those at the heart of caring for these animals, the answer is of a much more hopeful nature. Each problem has its solution, and each human-wildlife encounter can be transformed from a potentially negative experience into a wildlife rehabilitator’s dream: an *educational* experience. While the urban environment does pose an astonishingly long list of hazards for wildlife, it also represents a unique learning opportunity. Although the city may seem as far removed from wilderness as it is possible to be, the urban environment is in fact a forum in which much human-nature interaction takes place. And where there is interaction, there is an opportunity for learning.

Ask any urban wildlife rehabber his or her hopes for the future. To not find one more orphaned squirrel? To never again see an oiled waterbird, ill from preening not its natural waterproofing, but a toxic foreign substance? Surely, these hopes and many more would top the wish-list of any urban wildlife care specialist. But

more than this, beyond the practicalities of dealing with actual animal injuries and illness, is a goal that is more social science than veterinary science. To many, the primary aim of wildlife rehabilitation in urban areas is to transform the relationship between city dwellers of the human sort and those of the furred and feathered variety. It is hoped that by helping people to discover the ways in which our actions and choices negatively impact on urban wildlife, and by sharing the surprisingly simple ways of avoiding such impacts, urban wildlife rehabilitators will allow for the sharing of a settlement type more and more of us call home: the modern city.

For more information on wildlife rehabilitation – urban and otherwise – check out the following websites:

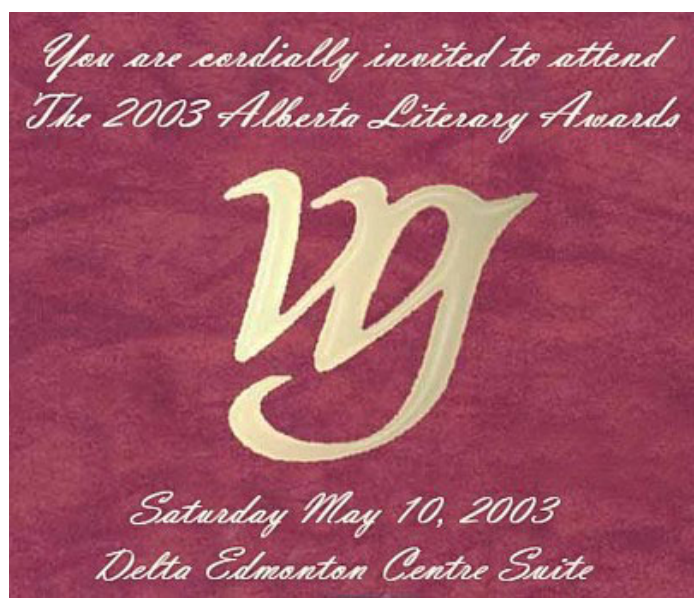
National Wildlife Rehabilitators Association: www.nwrawildlife.org

International Wildlife Rehabilitation Council: www.iwrc-online.org

Zoe Dalton is a graduate of York University's environmental science program, and is currently enjoying working towards a Master of Arts in Integrated Studies with Athabasca U. She can be reached for comments or questions at zk_dalton@hotmail.com.

2003 ALBERTA BOOK AWARDS!

www.writersguild.ab.ca



Saturday May 10, 2003 6:00 p.m. @ the Delta Edmonton Centre Suite Hotel
10222 - 102 Street, Edmonton - Tickets \$45

The Writers Guild of Alberta and The Book Publishers Association of Alberta invite you to attend a gala dinner honouring the best writers and books of last year @ the 2003 ALBERTA BOOK AWARDS... in tandem with the Grant MacEwan Literary Awards presented by Alberta Community Development.

MC: **Colin MacLean**

To purchase tickets or reserve a table, please call:

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C A U S
Council of Alberta University Students
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CAUS represents university students across Alberta. Visit the CAUS and the Tuition CAUSE websites to learn more about what CAUS is doing to keep Alberta tuitions affordable.

CAUS: <http://www.su.ucalgary.ca/caus/alpha/>
Tuition Cause: <http://tc.su.ualberta.ca/>

DO YOU KNOW THE CEMBALO?

By Laura Seymour



The last two weeks I've been on a "special assignment" for The Voice. My husband and I did a transatlantic crossing starting in Ft. Lauderdale, Florida and finished in Genoa, Italy. I've decided, since we're now broke, that I'd write a story to my fellow Athabasca University students to tell you about the entertainment value aboard the Royal Olympia cruise ship, Voyager.

I'm sure you're wondering about my article title and asking yourself, "what exactly *is* a cembalo?" The answer is that it's the unique instrument that Alexander Shura won a gold medal for playing in a recent European competition. He wasn't competing against other cembalists – each contestant played their particular instrument and Alexander floored the judges. His father is considered king of the cembalo and this young, good-looking 22-year-old is quickly catching up in recognition. His two shows in one evening were outstanding and the instrument is very unique. He played every style of music imaginable, from the Zorba the Greek movie theme to jazz and back to magnificent classical composers. The instrument looks like a cross between a piano and a drum. The strings are hit with padded drumsticks. Interestingly, Alexander was recently clocked at hitting the cembalo at 26 notes a *second*!

The pride of cruise director Sammi Coneen-Baker, is that she "never repeats a show." She means it. Each of the twelve nights there is a different program and they all tantalize you in some way. There are comics, dance shows, magicians, exquisite musicians who make your eyes tear up, and fun theme nights like Greek Night.

Let's peak at some of the other acts:

Bernard Reid is a comic-magician. He's loud and his humour just borders on "adult", but Bernard delivers. I don't know how he managed to do so much on the program. He did two separate shows one night and pulled off some cute things like cutting an audience member's tie to pieces and then somehow fixing it. Of course because he's also a comic he had to botch the fix up job a few times and then figure out how to finally deliver. It made us all laugh.

Later in the cruise he did demonstrations on how some of his tricks are done, but the tie trick is his specialty and he keeps the secret locked in tight. He's also been researching the life of Harry Houdini, the most famous magician of them all. All his research has opened a can of worms. Apparently the last man who wrote a book on Houdini just gathered all the press releases that Houdini himself put out and then compiled them. Apparently, the truth is hugely different. Houdini and his lovely "wife" lived a difficult life and were never legally married. With Houdini a Jew and she a Catholic, no one at that time would marry them and they were forced to say they were wed. Bernard has tracked down documents all over the world for more than 25 years and has done some amazing legwork.

Also on the program as a late addition was passenger, Naomi Ebba-Donner. Naomi is the author of *Color For Body and Soul*. Naomi introduced colour analysis in Scandinavia in 1983 and developed her own holistic approach to colour, linking it with life changes and spiritual development. Naomi speaks seven languages, has a background in fashion design, teaching and lecturing worldwide. She was the first woman elected to the Board of Junior Chamber International (JCI). She was also next to us in the dining room and is a class act as well as a photography buff by the looks of it. She was always colourfully dressed and had clear ideas of how to

help others with the use of colour. (Those of you remembering my article on how we as North Americans are so shy on colour may appreciate her writing even more- see www.colorforbodyandsoul.com for more info.)

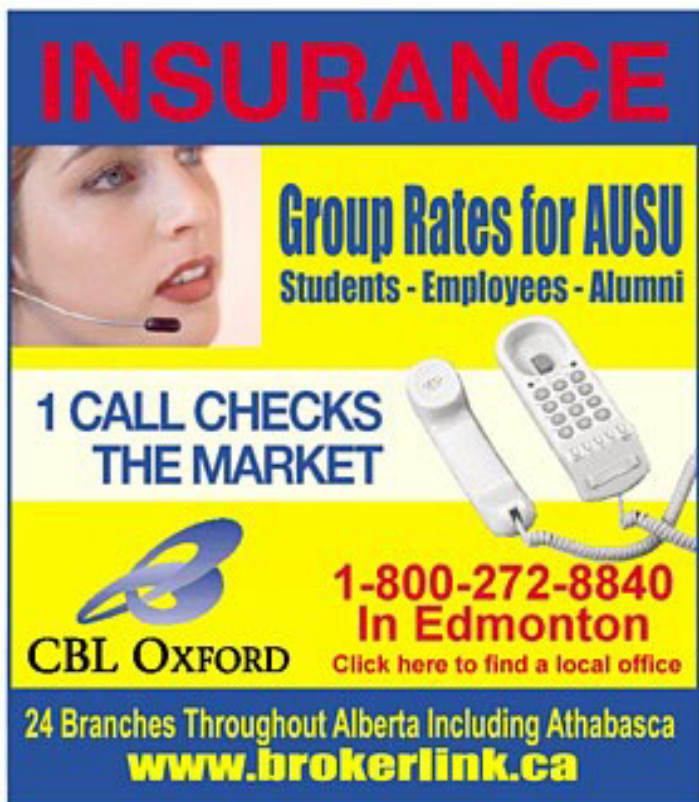
The dance and stage acts were colourful and energetic, including the Globe Dancers, who were adept at dancing without falling when the sea was lurching from side to side. I was SO nervous on those rough days at sea I would jokingly tell others that Tweety bird had flown into my mind and pulled that gag on Sylvester, where he holds up a drawing of a ship as he stands on the deck railing - "Da sea was wocking and wolling, wolling and wocking, up and down, down and up," Tweety would say, diving the drawing in time to his lisped words. Sylvester, of course, is duped from eating Tweety and grabs his mouth to run to the side of the ship! But, when the *Gilligan's Island* theme jumped in I knew it was time to sober up!

At one point Royal Olympia's Greek staff showed their immense sense of humour: They scheduled the Academy Award winning "My Big Fat Greek Wedding" (which Larry and I hadn't seen) and after the funny movie we suddenly understood why our waiters were SO concerned that we finish every bite on our plates!

To date, the entertainment on board the Royal Olympia has been the best I've seen. The diversity was amazing. Unfortunately, I could fill several columns with the information on the shows at sea, but I will have to trust that you have enough information to decide whether you will also go on a cruise. If the exotic ports and endless meals aren't enough to interest you (my thighs will never be the same!) then maybe the on-board shows will tantalize you! No worries, most ships have gyms to keep your body slimmer!

Happy Sailing!

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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The Paper

The Student Voice of the Athabasca University Community

Spring 1993

STUDENT FEES GO UP

Edith Dittman

Edmonton, AB

AU Governing Council on April 8 approved a budget that

ments in technology and innovations in its current delivery

changed students at other universities in Alberta, we are con-

for all Adult Canadians." In our current economic climate, with

Throughout the month of May, the voice will be celebrating its 10th year in publication. Each week I'll be delving into the archives to provide a retrospective of our paper, and by extension, the factors affecting AU students throughout the past decade. Many changes in school and government policy have taken place over this time period, and many things have stayed the same. The battle to convince the government to view distance education in the same light as traditional education rages on, while student services have declined and tuition fees have soared. As students, we can better understand where education is heading in the future, by taking a look at our past. This week I look at the first issue of *The Voice*, published in 1993...

In spring of 1993, the first issue of the Athabasca University students' newspaper was released, under the unassuming title: *The Paper*. Apparently the Students' Union (then known as the Students' Association - AUSA) had trouble coming up with a title, but the sub-title – *The Student Voice of the Athabasca University Community* – already contained the name that would grace the paper beginning with issue number two and continuing until today.

That first issue, in fact, contained a contest titled *Name the Newspaper*, which offered a one hundred dollar prize to the winning title suggestion. The contest had two winners, who were announced in the next issue. One – former journalist Nicholas Nickyforuk - said that he chose *The Voice* because "communication is always by voice, whether in print, electronic or other media." The second winner, Dawn Weigel, had a simpler explanation: "Everything she had read about the AUSA newspaper described it as the 'voice of the student' and she thought, 'How appropriate!'"

I suspect that the sub-title of the first issue probably prompted Nicholas' suggestion as well, but nevertheless, his explanation of why *The Voice* is a great name is perfect. This paper truly is your voice – nothing more, nothing less.

I've thought a lot about the title of our paper lately. A few weeks ago I became aware of a situation in the United States, where the publishing giant *The Village Voice* has taken legal action against small papers that uses the word "Voice" in their title. We're safe, so far, because we are in Canada, but nevertheless I have taken a keen interest in this case of journalistic bullying since speaking with Fran Reichenbach, editor of small L.A. community newspaper, *The Beachwood Voice*. Her unfortunate case [and if you want to know more, you can read Alexander Zaitchik's scathing article *Flower Power* in the *New York Press*, Vol 16, Iss 17 - 4-23-2003], led me to think about the title of our paper, and its meaning.

The Village Voice has tried to claim that the word "voice" is easily and immediately identifiable with their product, but Mr. Zaitchik finds their logic to be suspect. The very fact that the Village Voice has been in court repeatedly, attacking Voice after Voice after Voice, indicates that the word is in fact generic to small newspapers, and not an identifiable trademark of any one paper.

The word is generic for good reason. Small papers – such as those produced by communities, universities, and other smaller groups, serve similar purposes. They provide a forum in which their members can express their thoughts, feelings and ideas, and where readers can gain a greater understanding of the issues effecting others in their group.

A small newspaper literally *is* the Voice of its readers, just as our Voice is the expressive tool of the students of Athabasca University. The name is simple, but it is also perfect.

A few weeks ago the name of the Voice was changed from The Voice Newspaper, to The Voice Magazine. We made the change to reflect the unique nature of our online community, and the role that our publication plays in bringing that community together. We are not a newspaper – though we initially set out to be. Newspapers report - on events, happenings, and things to come: magazines explore, expound, and expand on what has been reported. That is what we do, and hence the change in name. At no time, though, did anyone suggested changing the word Voice to anything else because the purpose of the paper has never changed.

So the first issue of the Athabasca University students' publication came about because AU students needed a forum where issues affecting all students could be addressed. Following is just some of what I learned from reading the first issue:

TUITION SOARS AND THE UBIQUITOUS PREMIER RALPH OFFERS SOME ADVICE

In 1993 AU students endured a whopping 15% hike in tuition and fees, in response to a government funding increase of 0% for that year. The article does not say what the tuition rates were before or after the increase, but it does note that the 15% increase was lower than "those charged [to] students at other universities in Alberta.

In a related article, reprinted from the University of Alberta's Gateway, Premier Ralph Klein was quoted as saying that University Presidents should cut their salaries by several percent in keeping with the recessionary pace of Alberta's economy. Klein further said that University Presidents, Hospital presidents and school board superintendents "for the most part, especially in the big cities, make a lot more money that I as Premier of this province could ever hope to make..." There is no indication if the president of AU, or any other Alberta university, took a pay cut at Klein's suggestion.

It is startling to realize that Mr. Klein has been leading this province throughout the entire 10 year period that The Voice [and AUSU] has been in existence, and that massive funding cuts for post-secondary education are a significant part of his legacy...

INTEREST FREE GRACE PERIOD IN PERIL

Also in 1993, the six month interest free grace period at the end of study for student loans recipients was about to be discontinued by the Canadian Government. This grace period still exists, however [and has just been increased to one year for Manitoba residents - see *FedWatch!*, this issue for more information], so clearly the decision was overturned at the last minute, or the grace period was reintroduced at a later date. Nevertheless, the fact that the government had strongly considered removing this benefit sheds some light on just how precarious the position of student loans recipients is...

AUSA NOW AUSU

The Athabasca University Students' Association council consisted of 11 members in 1993, with a 3 member executive – this differs from today's composition of a total of 9 members, and 3 executives. The 1993 council's greater numbers did little to prevent internal strife, however. The first issue of *The Paper* reports that due to "philosophical differences" between the executive and the remainder of council, all three executive members handed in their resignations and a new executive was chosen. Nevertheless, 1993 was clearly a busy year for AUSA, as it was also the year that council became full members of The Council Of Alberta University Students [CAUS], of which AUSU is still a member...

THE TUTOR'S VOICE

Tutors had more input into the early Voice. In fact, one article – *Tutors Protest New Instructor Positions* – was written by AU Women's Studies tutor Cathy Cavanaugh. In her article, Cathy says that tutors "opposed the administration's decision to eliminate toll-free telephone access last year since we knew that this created a hardship for some students."

We have the tutors to thank, then for the toll-free phone access that we still enjoy today! I have to admit, I'm astonished that AU wanted to remove this access at all, since it is the only means by which students can discuss matters with their tutors. Clearly telephone and internet access at AU take the place of physical infrastructure at other schools, and to remove free phone access is tantamount to charging students rent for a seat in a lecture hall after they have already paid for their course! It is fortunate that we have The Voice archives as a source of information about past university decisions, so that we can be reminded of how important it is to continue to fight for maximum value for our tuition dollars ...

SOME THINGS NEVER CHANGE...

In 1993, AUSA recognized that students of "open and distance post-secondary education ... often face unique barriers while in pursuit of their educational goals." The union said that they would strive, "through a system of consultation and representation ... to campaign for a fair deal for students in terms of funding and tuition fees, access to education, and quality of education." To further this cause, AUSA requested positions on committees of the Students' Finance Board. The battle to ensure that mature and distance learners are adequately represented among post-secondary students continues today...

OTHER BITS

:: The 1993 honorary degree recipients were country singer Ian Tyson, and nursing leader Helen Sabin. They were awarded their honorary doctorates at what was AU's 16th annual convocation.

:: Courses could only be extended for a period of three months, and extension requests had to be made a full month before the end date of the course [today, AU is very close to going back to the system of requiring a full month's notice. You can help keep our current extension policy – which allows extensions right up until the last day of the course – by making sure that you extend early if you know in advance that you will need to do so.].

:: Even in 1993, students were confused about how to find all the information they needed in the AU Calendar [today, the AU website is another point of confusion], and a column in *The Paper* entitled *Did You Know?* was introduced to provide information on AU policy. In the first column we learn that "If you are withdrawing from a course and you don't fill out a 'withdrawal request form' ... the university has to give you a failing mark as your final grade in the course." The column invited students to write in with their questions or concerns, to be answered in a future edition.

NEWS ACROSS THE NATION...

By Karl Low



Manitoba Students get Free Extension

The Provincial Government of Manitoba has announced that it will be doubling the interest free period of student loans from six months to a full year. When combined with their recent budget that keeps tuition at 10% below 1999 levels, it seems like going to Manitoba to take your education might work out to be a good deal.

While the effects of this probably won't serve to encourage a lot more students to pursue a post-secondary education, for those who have already made the decision, this is welcome assistance. That extra interest free period will help many students be able to find work before their payments come due, and may even allow

them to get themselves better set up to afford the payments once they do come around.

Manitoba is also taking steps to ensure that this benefit for students also benefits the province as well. The requirement to receive the extra six months of interest free time is that the student must be living in Manitoba as well. By taking the long view Manitoba is working to ensure that as competition for graduate students and faculty increases they already have a steady supply guaranteed from their own population.

Now that's the way to steady growth.

Jason Lang Scholarship Helping a Record Number

The Jason Lang Scholarship was established in the memory of Jason Lang, a 17 year old high school student who was killed in a school shooting. The Alberta Heritage Scholarship Fund manages the scholarship. This year, the eligibility list for the scholarship was expanded to include post-secondary students in their third year of studies. Each award is worth \$1000, and more than 8,500 students received the award this year.

Unfortunately for Athabasca University students, most of us are not eligible. Not only do you need to be maintaining an 80% average over the past year, you need to be enrolled for 80% of a full course load (or 4 courses) in the coming year, and you need to be a resident of Alberta. So it seems that AU students get short shrift by the Alberta government, but this is nothing new.

A look at Alberta Learning's financial papers from 2002 show us that AU received less than 10% of the funding that the University of Calgary did, yet with that managed to serve 23,000 students, as opposed to the University of Calgary's 28,000 students. It seems strange to me that the Alberta government continues to treat AU as a second class university, even though we can apparently operate cheaper and are closer to the mandate of "life-long learning" that the government so espouses than the other universities in the Province.

Hopefully AU President Dominique Abrioux will take some of that extra 7.3% he's going to be charging us and put it into developing an effective lobbying strategy with the Alberta government. Because, quite frankly, the current one stinks.

Ontario Says It's Ready

The Ontario Provincial Government is announcing that the preparations for the double cohort are complete and are sufficient to the task. More than 70,000 students have been accepted to post-secondary institutions in Ontario, or about 68% of the total number of students that applied. This figure is in line with previous years and the Ontario government is justifiably proud of itself for making it happen.

The question is, what is going to happen in four years or so when the double cohort graduates from college? Are plans in place to ensure that all this extra room will be well used by encouraging larger numbers of students to attend through lowering tuition? Or will they just be wasted – mute, empty monuments to a government not forward thinking enough to realize the benefits of encouraging distance education?

Still I do have to give credit where credit is due. The Ontario Government put a lot of effort into making sure that the double cohort has the same chances as previous years for a post-secondary education and that is a task well done.

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.



WRITE FOR THE VOICE!

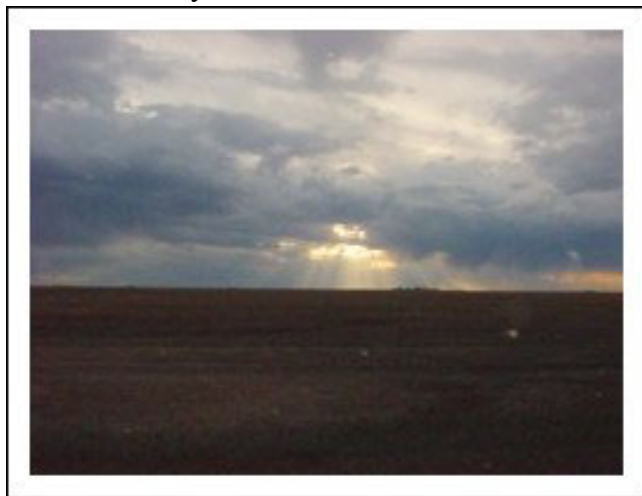
Contact The Voice editor at voice@ausu.org for details on writing for The Voice. Provide a sample selection of writing and preferred genre.

Science, Chemistry, Research, and AU Students

By Debbie Jabbour

This last weekend I had the opportunity to attend an unusual conference. Unusual for me, since most of the conferences I attend are sponsored by groups addressing general education issues. This weekend, however, I attended the 17th Annual Western Canadian Undergraduate Chemistry Conference in Regina, Saskatchewan. Although it did not contain the word “education” in the title, I learned far more, in many ways, than I’ve learned at any of the “Educational” conferences I’ve attended in the last few years, and I’d like to share some important points I took home with me since I believe they are highly relevant for all AU students.

The WCUCC Conference was subtitled, “Reward your Miracle”. It was hosted by the University of Regina, and is an undergraduate chemistry research conference at which chemistry students across Western Canada have the opportunity to present original research to a jury of academics and peers. Some 45 original research projects were presented, and awards were given in ten categories; with chemistry students from the Universities of Alberta, Calgary, British Columbia (Uvic, UBC, UNBC), Saskatchewan and Manitoba in attendance, along with several smaller University Colleges from each province. My attendance at this conference came as a result of an invitation from one of my daughters, my second eldest. She is graduating this year with an honours degree in chemistry from Concordia University College, and she was going to be presenting her original research project at the conference.



Like many AU students, time with my family has taken second place to my struggle to achieve my dream of a degree, and my involvement with the student union means I am rarely able to spend quality time with my daughters. This has been particularly true during these last few months, during which time I’ve been covering the duties of other executive members.



When my daughter invited me to attend this conference with her to share in her achievement, I was unsure if I’d even be able to manage it, since I was trying to complete courses to meet graduation deadlines, plus I had a CAUS changeover meeting scheduled for the weekend. After some consideration, I decided to go along, even though it meant an 8 hour drive there and a 10 hour drive back within the space of 3 days (I planned to go directly to the CAUS meeting in Nordegg right after). As it turned out, the conference was not just a chance to celebrate my daughter’s achievement, but it was also invaluable to my work on AUSU Council.

At AU we don’t have many opportunities to get involved in research projects, and yet research is integral to our studies, particularly if we are planning on continuing on to masters’ studies. AU offers a science degree, and at one point I was considering pursuing a BSc at AU. AU’s Martin Connors holds a research chair in science, astronomy, and the university is expanding into subjects covering various areas of science. This conference was an exciting opportunity to see undergrad students have a chance to present their original research at an

international level, something that would be wonderful to see AU students involved in. In addition, it was a chance to mingle with academics and students who are working hard to see their education become something beyond just a degree – a chance to make their mark on the world!

The drive to Regina was as tiring as expected, and I was unimpressed with the city itself. In all fairness, I only really saw the downtown and university areas, but what I saw was deserted and seedy, garbage-strewn and nondescript. The university itself is in a pretty location by a lake, but it is a small, very plain campus. The people, however, were cheerful, hospitable and very helpful; and the conference organizers tried very hard to make it a worthwhile experience.

Because I had registered late for the conference, I was unable to obtain accommodation at the university itself, and we spent the first few hours after arriving in search of a hotel that was half decent – finally settling on the Holiday Inn a few blocks from the big Regina Casino. At registration, I was given a complete program, and after reading the first few pages, I felt like I was attempting to read a foreign language. On the first day we would hear about, “Synthesis of poly-hexafluoropropylene oxide propyl alcohol: A precursor to insulated triarylphosphines” (Friesen & Beukema, Trinity Western University); “Novel dibenzo phenazine based discotic liquid crystals: trends relating electronic nature of substituents with ability to form a mesophase” (Jones & Williams, Simon Fraser University); and “Multiple insertions of xylyl isonitrile into organometallic complexes of scandium and yttrium supported by a bulky salicylaldimine ligand” (Phillips, Emslie, Piers & Parvez, University of Calgary); to mention a few.



Things got even more interesting the next day with presentations such as, “Synthesis of flavonoids, chromones and related oxygen heterocycles using cyclizations of acetylenic sulfones (Sorbetti & Back, University of Calgary); “Crystallization and structure determination of thioredoxin 2 from helicobacter pylori (Filson & Sanders, University of Saskatchewan) and “Neutral and cationic organoaluminum complexes utilizing a novel chelating amido-phosphinimine Ancillary Ligand (Welch & Peirs, University of Calgary). Some of these presentations were, surprisingly, somewhat boring even for my scientist daughter! There were a few I actually understood – for example “chemometric analysis of wines for

resveratrol utilizing solid-phase microextraction and gas chromatography/mass spectrometry (Bleakley & Donkor, University College of Cariboo, Kamloops)...well at least I understood the ***wine*** part!!

I also had a very interesting discussion with J. Ng from the Department of Chemistry at the U of A, regarding her poster presentation entitled, “Linking first year chemistry to research”. She explained how the U of A is recognizing the importance of making students aware of the importance of research right from the first year. All too often research is seen as a 4th year endeavour, and many students enter the sciences without having a clue as to the relationship between research and their studies. I saw a strong link here to AU. We often enter our studies without really have a sense of where we are going or where we will end up. A first year program of some type that encourages awareness of opportunities, one that helps students to understand the relevance of the courses they are taking, is something we should find ways to implement, and this conference strengthened my resolve in that regard.

But it was not the actual topics being discussed that made an impact. It was the concept of the conference itself, the notion of research, the people involved, and some of the supplementary activities included that really made this conference something beyond the ordinary. We had the chance to tour the RCMP Forensics Lab, *enjoyed* a steak fondue, and I had the opportunity to converse with professors from several of the participating universities, learning even more about the importance of research itself, and how students can best take advantage of opportunities. I discovered some interesting and important ideas about how students should approach the very study of science.

WCUCC Conference: <http://www.chem.ualberta.ca/WCUCC.htm>

Next week: part two

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.

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



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Debbie Jabbour
[djabbour@ausu.org].

Supply a description of the object, a picture if you have it, and its market value.

THE CHALLENGES FACING LABOUR UNIONS TODAY

Conclusion

By Wayne E. Benedict



For part one of this article, see the April 30th edition of *The Voice* [v11 i18].

Public Opinion

Public opinion regarding unions is at an all-time low. Pick up any newspaper and in the opinion pages you will find anti-union letters and columns. The most shocking thing about this fact is that the majority of the writers of these opinions are working people. Members of the public who are ignorant of what unions really embody proclaim that unions have outlived their usefulness. Exploited non-union workers launch diatribes against "greedy unions", and even unionized workers who owe their standards of living to the union spout the rhetoric of the right-wing.

Why, when workers are under attack as they've not been since the pre-war era and collective worker action is needed as never before, are working-class people turning their backs on unions? The answer is right-wing propaganda distributed through mass media. The public, including workers, is fed a steady diet of business friendly, anti-union messages everywhere that they turn in contemporary society. TV, newspapers, magazines, advertising; are all geared toward affecting public opinion.

Herman & Chomsky (1988), in their seminal work *Manufacturing Consent*, speak to the issue thus: "...the workings of the media...serve to mobilize support for the special interests that dominate the state and private activity, and... their choices, emphasis, and omissions can often be understood best, and with striking clarity and insight, by analyzing [the media] in such terms." Public support, and therefore, positive public opinion, is essential if organized labour is to advance its causes. Workers cannot be organized in any sector if the workers are against the union, and labour friendly governments will not be elected if the public overwhelmingly believes in right-wing ideology. In fact, nearly everything that labour desires relies on a measure of positive public opinion. Unions need to learn how to get the truth about organized labour into the public consciousness in the same effective manner that those on the right have utilized to obscure it—namely mass media.

Globalization

With the globalization of world trade, corporations are able to force competition between workers of different regions and countries by threatening or carrying out systematic disinvestment, moving operations from areas with strong labour, safety, and environmental regulations to areas with substandard conditions and cheap, exploitable labour markets. Globalization gives corporations access to the rich western markets in order to sell their products without obliging them to employ workers of the applicable country in return. The lowering of trade barriers (tariffs, taxes, etc.) allowing "free" trade among more countries around the globe combined with increased capital mobility allowing corporations disinvestment and relocation options, is driving the workers of western developed nations to lower their wages, benefits, and conditions in order to compete for jobs with exploited workers from newly industrialized countries (NICs).

Laxer (1999) states "It was during [the severe recession of the early 1990s] that the first effects of the Canada-U.S. Free Trade Agreement (FTA), which came into effect in 1989, were felt in the permanent loss of many Canadian manufacturing jobs." The only way that I see Canadian workers regaining those jobs is for workers to install a federal government that will reinstate trade protections requiring corporations to locate operations in

Canada and employ Canadians if they wish to sell their products within our markets. An example of this theory was the Canada-U.S. Auto Pact that ensured that cars sold to Canadians were made by Canadians (White, 1987).

Unfortunately, the genie may have escaped from the bottle permanently as it is unclear whether any government would have the power needed in order to reinstate trade barriers. The NDP government of Ontario in the early 1990s discovered the nearly insurmountable difficulties when it attempted to fulfill one of its main election promises—that of replacing private automobile insurance with a publicly administered system. The Free Trade Agreement ensured that the Ontario government would have been liable for billions of dollars in compensation to American insurance companies had it gone through with its plans. Bruce Campbell (1992) summed up the result thus: "... [the] beleaguered Ontario government, weakened by a free trade-driven restructuring process that has seen large scale exodus of production facilities, the loss of hundreds of thousands of manufacturing jobs, the erosion of its tax base and growth of its deficit, admitted defeat announcing that it was reneging on its promise to the Ontario voters..."

If one admits that globalization of trade is irreversible, then organized labour should concentrate on improving the wages and conditions of workers globally in order to eliminate cheap competition in the global labour market; thus, raising the standards and conditions for workers of underdeveloped countries rather than having those conditions forced down for the workers of developed nations in order to compete for jobs. Either way, globalization of trade is a massive challenge for Canadian organized labour to overcome.

Technology

Jeremy Rifkin (1996) paints a grim picture for workers of the near future with the following quote: "Now, for the first time, human labour is being systematically eliminated from the production process. Within less than a century, 'mass' work in the market sector is likely to be phased out in virtually all of the industrialized nations of the world. A new generation of sophisticated information and communication technologies is being hurried into a wide variety of work situations. Intelligent machines are replacing human beings in countless tasks, forcing millions of blue and white collar workers into unemployment lines, or worse still, breadlines ... It is estimated that each robot replaces four jobs in the economy, and if in constant use twenty-four hours a day, will pay for itself in just one year". I am being personally affected by technological change as my position -- locomotive engineer -- is largely being replaced by a computer in yard operations. I would venture that very few Canadians are left untouched by the third industrial revolution, as they or someone they know loses their job to a technology.

So what can unions do to combat the loss of jobs to technological change? The formation of a movement of neo-Luddites, rampaging across the globe destroying the offensive machinery is unlikely to come to pass. Therefore, workers and unions must adapt in order to survive. There is little consensus and much debate among pundits on what society has in store for the excess workers that rapidly increased productivity through technology brings. Rifkin (1996) puts his hopes in a vastly expanded third sector that exists alongside the private and public sectors -- the volunteer sector. Others hope that the service sector will supply enough jobs to absorb workers who no longer hold primary and secondary jobs, or that the hours of work should be reduced so that the available work is shared more evenly throughout society. Godard (1994) examines employee ownership of the means of production as a promising alternative to Fordism. I don't believe that there are any easy answers to the problem of massive unemployment due to technological advancements. Organized labour must debate and study the situation in order to best react to one of the greatest threats to societal stability.

Conclusion

Canadian unions face many of the same problems today as were plaguing them in the last century. They include: an increasing inequity in wealth, income, and opportunities; greater than 50% of Canada's workers do

not enjoy the rights and protections associated with collective bargaining; a union's power to win terms, conditions, rights, and protections varies considerably depending on its strike power; continuing racial and sexual discrimination; structural inequalities in the labour market; poor health and safety standards or lack of employer regulatory compliance; the authoritarian structure of the employment relationship; and the fact that the very structures and values of the capitalist system lead to an impoverished life experience for workers (Godard, 1994). In addition to the "old" problems, today's unions have a barrage of "new" challenges to meet, including: employer pressure to accept wage and benefit concessions; employer pressure to eliminate work rules and entitlements that regulate the relationship between workers and management; union power weakened by economic conditions; union power weakened by governments; worker and union uncertainty regarding the future; stagnation (or shrinkage) of union density; globalization of trade (NAFTA); corporate disinvestments; high unemployment levels; fiscal crises caused by growing government debt; a large number of workers facing wage and benefit cuts or layoffs; stagnant (or shrinking) real wage and benefit levels; and secure, primary labour sector jobs being replaced by insecure secondary and tertiary labour sector jobs or none at all (Godard, 1994).

I feel that the challenges facing unions today are indeed monumental. That is not to say, however, that they are insurmountable. Unions and the working-class as a whole must unite and work together to meet these challenges and the key to that occurrence is education; the education of union leaderships, the education of rank-and-file union memberships, and the education of the working public (the largest and potentially most powerful political segment of the public). All workers need to be made aware of the precarious situation in which we find ourselves in the contemporary neo-conservative era, of the need for worker political partisanship in order to install worker friendly governments or to lobby for positive change of those that are not, of the need to radicalize in order to mount effective class-based challenges to the hegemonic status quo, and of the need to expand worker collectivism through organizing with novel methods and in untapped sectors of the labour market. Education, politicization, and direct actions are the potential tools that workers and their unions can utilize in order to turn the industrial relations tide. Further, with capital thinking and acting globally, organized labour must do so as well.

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Wayne E. Benedict is a Locomotive Engineer at BC Rail and President of the National, Automobile, Aerospace, Transportation and General Workers Union of Canada (CAW) Local 110. He is working toward his Bachelor of Human Resources and Labour Relations at Athabasca University.



Dear Sandra,

As a new AU student my life has been pretty busy. I'm *always* studying and that means my wife has had to pick up a lot of the slack. She is an amazing woman, wife and mother and this year I would like to get her an amazing Mother's Day present to say just how much I appreciate all that she has done to support me in my studies. Any suggestions?

Grateful Husband in Calgary, AB

Dear Grateful Husband,

With Mother's Day fast approaching (May 11th for all of you who forgot) you don't have much time left, but sometimes the best presents don't need much time to prepare.

In putting together an amazing present for your wife, money and materialistic things should not be your main priority. Expressing your emotions to show your gratitude will mean more to her than any bauble or jewel. To really see the tears flow from your wife's eyes on Mother's Day give her a gift from the heart. Spend an evening composing a letter to her that expresses your gratitude and your undying love for her. Many men have a hard time expressing emotions to their spouses, and many wives haven't heard an expression of undying love from their spouse since before their wedding. With this letter your wife can read it over and over again and be reassured that you actually do have feelings.

Start off Mother's Day with breakfast in bed. On the tray include the letter and a coupon for a day free from work and stress. You can give up one Sunday of studying to indulge your wife, right? After her breakfast you can give her a morning at the "family-run" spa. Run her a warm bubble bath; complete with candles and aroma, maybe even a glass of champagne and orange juice. After her bath, give her a pedicure. If you are not brave enough to try to paint her toes, just a foot massage will do! Next let her lounge around on the couch with one of her favourite magazines (that you have bought for her) while you and your children clean the house. Make her lunch and do the dishes. Afterward, present her with an afternoon to herself, rent her that girly movie she has been dying to see, pop her some popcorn, leave a box of Kleenex beside her and take the kids out for the afternoon. Return home, with flowers, and have her prepare herself for a meal out, with or without children (book a babysitter now if you don't plan to take the children). Then after dinner bring her home and let **her** have the remote for the entire evening.

All the effort you put into this day will really show your wife how much you love her and that you are willing to take the time to cater to her on her special day. An emotionally expressive gift like this, an entire day to be catered to, will mean more to her than a pair of earrings she'll never wear or a box of chocolates from your quick jaunt to Wal-Mart the day before.

Happy Mother's Day Ladies!

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

SHABAB RECONSTRUCTION PROJECT

A youth initiative for Palestine

<http://www.ungdomsstyrelsen.se/wordfiler/internationalt/SHABAB.doc>

The Project statement

The joint initiative of ZAJEL Youth Exchange Program, An-Najah National University, Nablus and SCI-Germany is a pilot project, which takes place in form of two international Workcamps in the summer 2003.

Manual work of international and local volunteers supports the reconstruction of the youth institutions in Nablus. Common cultural activities with the youth of the clubs and centers attempt to create a platform for dialogue between the different cultures.

The idea of this project results from a screening, which took place in Nablus in September 2002. Representatives of SCI-Germany and ZAJEL Youth Exchange Program consulted several youth institutions and identified reconstruction of the facilities and activities for emotional release and educational empowerment as the urgent need of the youth in Nablus.

The vision

The vision of SHABAB reconstruction project is to contribute to the sustainable development of the Palestinian youth by addressing their needs.

Therefore, we, ZAJEL Youth Exchange Program and SCI-Germany, work united:

- to assist in the reconstruction of youth institutions through joint voluntary work of Palestinian and international youth;
- to initiate intercultural learning between the different cultures in order to promote understanding and respect between the youth of the Oriental and Occidental culture;
- to dismantle and minimize prejudices and misperceptions about the different cultures through workshops on history, society, religion and cultural activities;
- to influence the local community in its most diverse spheres, such as environmental protection, education, health, and promotion of peace;
- to raise awareness about the situation of Palestinian youth and their environment;

Objectives

The project aims to contribute to the reconstruction of youth in Nablus by organizing international Workcamps in summer 2003.

Costs:

Volunteers have to afford their flights tickets, and we are working hard to get some donations for their accommodation, which is \$150.

For more information, see the project description and application document, available online at: <http://www.ungdomsstyrelsen.se/wordfiler/internationalt/SHABAB.doc>

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

❖ 3rd 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



MICHAEL LUCHKOVICH SCHOLARSHIPS FOR CAREER DEVELOPMENT

Value: \$3000

DEADLINE: n/s

Administrator: Alberta Scholarship Programs

Notes: Must have been working full-time in Alberta for a minimum of three years. Program of study may be up to six months of full-time study or up to one year of part-time study. Deadlines are December 1st, April 1st and August 1st. See the Web site for more details.

Contact Information:

Alberta Scholarship Program
9940 - 106 Street, 9th Floor, P.O. Box 28000, Station Main
Edmonton, Alberta T5J 4R4

Phone: (780) 427-8640

Fax: (780) 422-4516

Web Site: <http://www.alberta-learning.ab.ca/scholarships>

E-mail: heritage@gov.ab.ca

Application Address: <http://www.alis.gov.ab.ca/scholarships/forms.asp>

NATIONAL ABORIGINAL SPECIAL YOUTH ACHIEVEMENT AWARDS

Value: \$10,000

DEADLINE: n/s

Administrator: National Aboriginal Achievement Foundation

Notes: Any Aboriginal or Canadian may nominate individuals of 15 to 24 years of age of First Nations, Inuit or Métis heritage who have demonstrated outstanding achievement. Include two support letters and a resumé or biographical equivalent with application. Contact for info.

Contact Information:

National Aboriginal Achievement Awards Secretariat
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: naaa@naaf.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 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 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.

A BENEFIT PREMIERE OF: WINGED MIGRATION

A film by *Jacques Perrin*

Sunday May 11th / 1:00 p.m. & 3:00 p.m. @ Garneau Theatre, 8712 - 109 Street

All Box Office will go to Jack's Kids

'For eighty-million years birds have ruled the skies, seas, earth. Each spring, they fly vast distances. Each fall, they fly the same route back. This film is the result of 4 years following their amazing odysseys, in the northern hemisphere and then the south; species by species, flying over seas - continents.' - Jacques Perrin, Director

About Jack's Kids - Kosovo Kids In Need ...

An EPS detective, along with two other officers who are stationed in Kosovo are initiating a fund raising effort to help children in need in that war torn country. The Emergency Services Credit Union is helping to make this possible by setting up an account to accept donations. The officers involved are Detective Jack Kraus of the EPS, Dave Zack (Comox RCMP) and Burt VEENENDAAL (Ontario Provincial Police).

The money raised through the "Jack's Kids In Kosovo" campaign would be used to buy food, clothing, school supplies and play ground equipment among other things. The children they would be assisting live in Kosovo (Podujevo, Pristina & Gracanica). Emergency Services Credit Union launched the effort by making the first donation, a cheque for \$500. Once funding is received, the officers will endeavour to have these funds reach as many Kosovo children as possible.

Anyone interested in making donations can do so by visiting one of the branches of Emergency Services Credit Union (14909 - 121 A Ave., or 10104 - 111 Ave.) and contacting Dianne Brown (455-9500) or by mailing a cheque made payable to "Jack's Kids In Kosovo" to:

Emergency Services Credit Union: 14909 - 121 A Avenue, Edmonton Alberta, T5V 1P3

The preceding information is also available on the EPS website: <http://www.police.edmonton.ab.ca/media.htm>

PS. Jack Kraus is available for interviews. Contact Dean P. at **421-3551**.

PPS. Special thanks to Sony Pictures Classics: <http://www.sonyclassics.com>

Thank you!

'The New Christian Activism' - A National Conference on Christian Faith & Canadian Social Issues

May 23, 2003 @ Senate Chamber, Old Arts Building University of Alberta Campus 8:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m.
Infoline: **473-4011** / e-mail: ivictor@interbaun.com

Presenters: Rev. Wendy Ainsworth, Dr. Willi Braun, Mr. Larry Derkach, Mr. Jim Edwards, Mr. Jim Gurnett, Dr. Tim Hartnagel, Rev. Fr. James Holland, Mr. David Jennings, Mr. Sam Kolias, Rev. Coleen Lynch, Rev. Don Mayne, Dr. Bob McKeon, Mr. Howard McLean, Dr. Bruce Miller, Ms. Kathleen Quinn, Rev. Ted Randal, Mr. William Turner, Dr. Henry Victor, Mr. Bruno Wall, Dr. Randi Warne, Dr. Earle Waugh, Dr. Johannes Wolfart ...

Organized by: Religious Studies, U. of A.

Sponsored by: Religious Studies - Dimic Research Institute University of Alberta, Members of Edmonton's Business & Charitable Communities.

Registration fee is \$30.00 (includes coffee & light lunch). Bursaries available. Registration deadline is May 20th, 2003. For further information please contact:

Dr. Henry Victor 473-4011 e-mail: ivictor@interbaun.com



CLASSIFIEDS:

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 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

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

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