

THE VOICE

MAGAZINE

Vol 11 Issue 26
June 25, 2003

MORE FROM CONVOCATION



Graduation Photo Feature

Part 2 of the grad photo album

AU's Perspective

Grad report from The Insider

Graduate Profiles



Plus:

Bill 43 - Another View

VR at Universal Studios

AUSU Moves

Plus: Canadian FedWatch!, Flicks & Folios, Dear Sandra, and news, announcements and opportunities from your university and beyond.

THE VOICE - CONVOCATION SPECIAL 2

Jun 25, 2003

Volume 11, Issue 26

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Quote of the Week

Say what you will about the sweet miracle of unquestioning faith, I consider a capacity for it terrifying and absolutely vile!

-- Kurt Vonnegut Jr.

THE VOICE

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Special thanks to Athabasca University's *The Insider* for its frequent contributions

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EDITORIAL PAGES

AU Improves access to Convocation Information, but forgets about AUSU!

In the past I have complained that AU has not used the technology at its disposal to help distance students feel a part of the AU community. In particular, AU could do much more to help graduates who are unable to attend convocation to experience the ceremonies as they happen. What I imagine AU could do is what many media outlets do: run live feeds via videoconference on their website - a technology that is now quite common, and which AU already has all of the equipment for.

In lieu of this, AU could have someone on the website all day, uploading information, pictures, and other "on the scene" updates. Students at home could even send messages to the grads, which grads could read on computers on the grounds. In this way, those at home would feel like they are part of the celebration and that they have some ability to interact. I don't think we can overestimate the importance of making the some 70% of grads who cannot make the trip to Athabasca feel included.

Personally I wish they would also consider holding a ceremony in Edmonton, so that busy grads don't have to make that long and arduous trip to boondocks. It's likely that a large percentage of those who don't attend convocation, stay home because getting to AU is so time consuming and difficult to arrange. I know whereof I speak! I once arranged a trip to take my husband to AU, and it was a nightmare! The bus only runs twice a day, and it does not stop at the university or hotel. If you arrive in the evening, nothing is open. I called in advance to ask about public transportation and was told that "the cab" has to be booked a day in advance!

Had my husband not been offered a ride from an AU faculty member, he'd have faced a 30 minute walk to the hotel in -50 Celsius weather. People have died from exposure in less time! Oh, and if you get to the hotel after nine, you can't get food because the kitchen is closed. You can't get there at a reasonable time in the morning, so you really have to get there the night before.

I imagine that during convocation week AU has extra transportation available and there are charter busses making the trip, plus it's held in summer, but you get the point. It's a trip I dread ever having to take, and for some people who can only get the weekend off work, getting across country and up to AU is pretty much impossible. Getting to Edmonton is quite easy. Maybe if AU had June ceremonies in Athabasca and December ceremonies in Edmonton? Just a thought...

But for those who can't make the trip, there are so many ways that technology could be used to make them feel included. This is not science fiction - it's a simple and common technology that even small media outlets utilize, and which - I reiterate - AU already has most of the equipment for. Some classes are already being video-conferenced by the MDE department as a matter of course.

So, once again I'm disappointed that AU missed out on an opportunity to bring AU students together across the country - and indeed the world - into a community event we all could share on the very same day.

That said, AU has improved access to convocation information this year - as you will see in this week's [i]News From AU[ei] column, which features convocation coverage. For one thing, this year AU videotaped the convocation ceremonies, and promises that the video coverage will be available soon. Whether they will be selling copies of tapes or making the coverage available online, I can't say, but it's a nice opportunity to view the ceremonies and I'm sure many will appreciate it.

Also this year AU has put the text of many of the speeches online, and you may read these transcripts through the links in the aforementioned article. For this I say, way to go AU!

What is disappointing, however, is that just like every other year, the AU coverage utterly fails to mention the significant financial contribution of your students' union to the convocation proceedings. They mention lunches and breakfasts, but not who provided them. I suspect that if some corporation - say Shell Oil, to pick one at random - paid for the luncheon, it would be titled the "Shell Oil Student Luncheon" and they would make sure

this was well publicized. Bizarrely, just like last year, AU's report features a picture of the caterers, leading to an impression that they donated services.

Last year AU created a really nice online convocation photo album which included the pancake breakfast and luncheon, but again failed to mention who provided it - leading to the impression that AU pays for all of these perks. Oddly, the caterers were featured in the photo album too. While I don't think this is an intentional omission, I do know that before my relationship with AUSU I thought the university was very generous for providing all of that food and entertainment to the grads.

In past years, many students have been totally unaware that AUSU - and not the University - has paid for the breakfast, luncheon, entertainment [although AU provides a bagpipe player], all of the grad gifts, plus gifts for the honorary grads. They did so this year too, so make sure you thank them if you enjoyed the spread! AUSU not only spends a significant portion of its yearly budget on convocation perks, but they also put in significant time and travel to be at convocation to greet and serve you.

Given how much is sponsored by AUSU, I would not look forward to attending a convocation where AUSU was not part of the planning. I don't know of any other student's union that funds so much of the grad ceremonies [correct me if I'm wrong, though], so AU is getting a great deal. Remember, AUSU money is student money - so you are paying for much of your own grad. AUSU makes sure your money is put to good use.

To be fair, AU did - for the first time - allow AUSU to give out grad gifts from on stage, and to present the honorary grad gifts during the ceremonies which is a step forward and one that was most appreciated by AUSU. Convocation, in terms of the experience of the graduates, is very much a collaboration between AU and AUSU, who work in tandem to provide an exceptional graduation ceremony which many students have said is superior than that of many other schools.

I feel that AU coverage and photo albums should reflect this collaboration, or at the very least, a public 'thank you' would be appropriate. After all, the AUSU contribution really helps AU's profile. When the students' union presents expensive gifts to the honorary grads, for example, AU - by extension - looks very good, and when grads walk off the stage with their own gifts, to eat a well prepared, free lunch, their perception of AU as a generous and classy institution is clearly enhanced.

By all reports, graduates had a wonderful time this year. For those who did attend, make sure to let both the university and the students' union know what you thought, and help ensure an exceptional experience for next year's grads too.

Tamra Ross Low
Editor in Chief



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AUSU COMMITTEES SEEK MEMBERS



AUSU Committees are looking for student members who can volunteer just a few hours a month to answer email or attend teleconferences. Anyone who wants to become more involved with AUSU Student Council can gain great experience and insight through committee work.

The External Committee, chaired by Shirley Barg, needs representatives from Atlantic Canada, Saskatchewan, Manitoba, and Northern Canada. Contact Shirley at sbarg@ausu.org if you would like to get involved, and help improve services to AU students in your area.

The Academic Committee was dormant for awhile, but now it's back up and running under chair Tamra Ross Low. We will be working on ways to help assess student satisfaction with AU's academic services, and need student input into how we should collect data, and what questions we should be asking. A past project of the Academic Committee was the Course and Program surveys on the AUSU website. If you want to have some input into our next project, contact Tamra at trosslow@ausu.org for more information.

Attention Artists

AUSU is seeking artwork for the cover of the 2003/04 student planner.

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CONVOCATION 2003

PHOTO SPECIAL - part 2

Text and Photos by Sandra Moore



Once outside of the doors they followed a Scottish piper and AU registrar Gilbert Perras carrying AU's ceremonial mace - which is symbolic of the traditional "talking stick" commonly used by many indigenous people to express the authority and power of the group. The procession moved down a long red carpet covered by white canopies from which enormous baskets of flowers are hung into the large red and white striped convocation tent. Filing down the long walkway into the tent, graduates searched for family members along the rows of chairs as proud moms, dads husbands, wives, daughters and sons rapidly snapped off photos of their loved ones as they proceeded past. Following the graduands were Governing Council members, academics, professional staff, tutors and guests, and finally the platform party, which consists of the "brass" at AU, the honorary doctorate recipient and the Chairman.

After everyone was on stage, soloist Ida Edwards flawlessly performed the national anthem and the ceremonial mace was placed in its cradle of honor at center stage. The Chairman (of Governing Council), Robert Fulton welcomed everyone to convocation and gave a short speech on the accomplishments of AU. Next, he introduced special guest Al Wurfel, Mayor of the Town of Athabasca, who gave an impassionate, monotone speech welcoming the graduates and their families and encouraging them to come back for leisure some time. After the mayor, AU's President, Dominique Abrioux, raved about the reputation of AU and the work of its exceptional staff.

Once the speeches and formalities ended, the Bachelor of Arts graduates were called first to kneel down and have their hood placed upon their shoulders by the Registrar and then they proceeded to receive their degree from Dr. Abrioux. Next they were congratulated by the AU Governing Council Chair, as well as the BA Program Director.



As each student was called a short biography of the student was read aloud by VP-Alan Davis.

As I stated before, Alan takes the time to go over the pronunciation of each person's name before the ceremonies, and he sounded flawless even as he pronounced some 5 or 6 syllable names.

Some of the bios included heartfelt thanks to understanding family members and friends, while others described obstacles students overcame such as studying while fighting cancer. Some gave the audience an insight into the student's future goals.



The bios also gave the audience an insight to the current careers these individuals were in - some were CEO's of internet companies, some, to the groans of the audience, were Revenue Canada employees, one woman described herself as a "domestic technician" and I had to laugh to myself when I heard some male voice in my area state that that job sounded quite important.

Two students even attempted to "suck-up" to honorary degree recipient Vicki Gabereau by saying that now that they had free time they would be spending more time watching her show on television.



As the students finished their procession and headed back to their seats on stage they were presented with a gift from AUSU - a koskin, faux leather portfolio emblazoned with the words "Athabasca University Graduate 2003" and the AUSU logo.

After the final set of graduates from the Bachelor of Professional Arts left the stage, the Governor General's Gold Medal was awarded to Christina Marie Patrick, who unfortunately could not attend convocation.

Next up was a passionate, comedic, heart-felt graduate

address by Calgary native Ramona DeRose, a Bachelor of Administration Graduate. Holding back tears and clearing her throat at times Ramona spoke of admiration for the AU staff and jokingly stated that she came to Athabasca to yes graduate but also to confirm that Athabasca University really did exist [see last week's issue of *The Voice* for a transcript of Ramona's speech].





Finally, the Honorary Degree of Doctor of Letters was presented to Vicki Frances Gabereau by Dr. Jonathan Baggaley, Professor of Educational Technology in recognition of her outstanding contributions as a Canadian broadcaster and her ongoing dedication to promotion of the arts. For those of you who don't know of Vicki Gabereau, she is an incredible high-school dropout success-story. Her career began in 1974 when she ran unsuccessfully for mayor of Toronto; from there she moved into radio and became a well known personality ending up with a 2 hour CBC radio program in 1986. In the early 1990's she made the leap from radio to television with her straight forward, enlightening daily CTV talk show that bears her name. As Dr. Baggaley introduced her to the stage he commented that she now joins the ranks of Dr. Ruth, Dr. Laura and Dr. Phil as Dr. Vicki.

Vicki was very humble in accepting her award as her son Morgan beamed at her from his front row seat, yet it was evident to see how very proud she was. Her biggest regret, as listed on her website, was not attending university or college.

She began her speech by saying that as Dr. Baggaley described her it sounded so much better than she imagined. Dr. Gabereau continued on to say that 2 weeks before this event she had woken up on her 57th birthday and had still not graduated from high school. She comically went on to explain that she probably never would as she was the worst student in the world, confirming that to the audience by stating that she once received a mark of 2% in math. She said that her parents were in utter despair as to what to do with her academically, and if they could see her today up on this stage they would be extremely shocked.

She exclaimed that she was very proud to be receiving a doctorate from AU for 30 years of service in a career that was her education. When she started in broadcasting it was but a fluke. After trying just about every job known to man from scrubbing floors to driving a cab, to a stint in theatre school only to find out she was a failure as an actress, the only thing left to try was journalism. She claims that CBC let down their guard and she snuck in and was on the air before they had a chance to know what was happening. Her "education" in the broadcasting field brought some character shaping moments, such as the interview she did with Gordon Litty, a man involved in the US

Watergate scandal with a not-so-nice reputation. Vicki remembers jokingly asking this man "Are you armed, sir?" to which he replied "I only have a pencil in my hand which I could put through your brain." Vicki cattily replied back "Well, you wouldn't do that." To which Mr. Litty replied, "Only if you ask me a question I don't like."

Dr. Gabereau learned quickly that it was the questions people did not want to be asked that needed to be asked. She claims that the variety of jobs she worked in and her grammatically sensitive grandmother taught her to understand the power of language, which led to her success as someone who uses language to coerce others to tell their stories.



Dr. Gabereau urged students to take chances and do things they loved to do. "Don't postpone your life, live it." She commented that the graduating class of AU 2003 was not the 18-22 year old U of A graduates with ma's and pa's looking after them, AU grads were the ma's and pa's. She complimented the graduates by saying it was very emotional to listen to the hardships and obstacles they have overcome to graduate and she also complimented AU on the graduation experience.

Dr. Gabereau said she was very impressed with how personal convocation at AU seemed, whereas at most universities graduation is like a factory -

you get your degree handed to you and you are shuffled out the back door. She continued on to state that she is grateful and lucky to have taken a "stupid, bold" chance to get ahead when she decided to get into broadcasting. She comfortingly said, "If you want to do something, you can do it." After her speech Debbie Jabbour AUSU President, presented Dr. Gabereau with an engraved wooden photo album on behalf of the Students' Union.

And that's that, nearly 4 hours later, Chairman Robert Fulton thanked everyone for coming and said: "Members of the audience are requested to rise and remain at their seats until the platform party and the graduates have departed." The ceremonial mace was lifted from its stand by the Registrar; the piper began to play as he strode down the red carpet followed by the Registrar, AU President, and the other AU big shots on stage, Vicki Gabereau, Governing Council members, the Academics and finally the graduates. My favourite part of convocation was the "Honour Guard." Everyone from the stage (minus the graduates), and all the tutors lined up on either side of the red carpet outside the tent and clapped as the graduates passed through. It must be such a defining moment as these students are honoured by their teachers in this way.



As the procession left the tent, graduates bobbed their heads up and down through the crowd looking for their family members. Families rushed through the crowds to embrace the graduates and shared tears and laughter. Graduates posed with family members for photos, proudly displaying the parchment that officially adds some new initials after their names. And with that the rains came, heavy rains. People ran to their vehicles and off to celebrate at local restaurants, and convocation was over.

What do the former students do with their time now? Read books, watch movies, take a walk, or just veg out on the couch. They can now do all these things without guilt. No more books to lug around, no more late nights typing essays, UNLESS, of course they continue on to Master's programs, which seems to be what a lot of grads had in mind. Congratulations Grads!



Sandra Moore is an AUSU councillor, the head of the groups and clubs committee, a mother of two, and a full time AU psychology major. Somehow she finds time to also write for The voice.

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POST-SECONDARY LEARNING ACT, BILL 43 2003: THE THIN EDGE OF THE WEDGE?

By Wayne E. Benedict



I don't live in Alberta, but as a student of Athabasca University (AU) and a Canadian post-secondary student in general, I am interested in all educational regulations—especially those in Alberta. Recently I was made aware of the impending Bill 43 that will alter Alberta's educational regulations, if passed. The concerns that a fellow student of AU advanced to me were that:

- ✓ The Act would give the Alberta government the right to dissolve any student's union and appoint their own administrator until the next election.
- ✓ Some people feel that if this bill is accepted, then in the future a similar strategy could be used to allow the government to dissolve any union
- ✓ This law would mean that the government can dissolve a union even if the union membership [who, of course, pays the union fees] is happy with how it is being run, which is contrary to the whole idea of an employee [or student] run organization.

As a labour leader and student of industrial relations, I decided to look into the proposed law myself in order to make my own judgment. The Bill had its first reading on May 12, 2003 and in order to become law, it will have to progress through several legislative steps: Second Reading; Committed; Report; Amended; Third Reading; Royal Assent; Commencement. The list of Alberta Acts that this Bill will amend is long indeed: Advanced Education Foundations Act, RSA 2000 cA-5; Agrolologists Act, RSA 2000 cA-13; Alberta Capital Finance Authority Act, SA 2003 cA-14.5; Alberta Municipal Financing Corporation Act, RSA 2000 cA-27; Apprenticeship and Industry Training Act, RSA 2000 cA-42; Arbitration Act, RSA 2000 cA-43; Banff Centre Act, RSA 2000 cB-1; Cemeteries Act, RSA 2000 cC-3; Colleges Act, RSA 2000 cC-19; Conflicts of Interest Act, RSA 2000 cC-23; Dental Disciplines Act, RSA 2000 cD-8; Fatality Inquiries Act, RSA 2000 cF-9; Financial Administration Act, RSA 2000 cF-12; Financial Statutes Amendment Act, 2003, SA 2003 c2 (if s153 is in force before January 1, 2004); Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act, RSA 2000 cF-25; Fuel Tax Act, RSA 2000 cF-28; Legal Profession Act, RSA 2000 cL-8; Municipal Government Act, RSA 2000 cM-26; Occupational Therapy Profession Act, RSA 2000 cO-3; Ombudsman Act, RSA 2000 cO-8; Pharmaceutical Profession Act, RSA 2000 cP-12; Post-secondary Learning Act, ss110-115; Professional and Occupational Associations Registration Act, RSA 2000 cP-26; Public Service Employee Relations Act, RSA 2000 cP-43; Public Trustee Act, RSA 2000 cP-44; Seniors Advisory Council for Alberta Act, RSA 2000 cS-6; Students Finance Act, RSA 2000 cS-23; Technical Institutes Act, RSA 2000 cT-3; Ultimate Heir Act, RSA 2000 cU-1; Universities Act, RSA 2000 cU-3.

For this discussion we are concerned with narrow aspects of the proposed Bill in order to answer three specific questions:

1. Will the law allow the Alberta government the right to dissolve any student's union and appoint their own administrator until the next election?
2. Will the law provide the government with a precedent that it can use to dissolve labour unions?
3. Will the law allow the government to dissolve a union even if the union membership, who pays membership fees, is happy with how it is being run?

Turning to the first question, there are two situations that arise wherein the proposed Act would allow for the dissolution of the students' association: when the post-secondary institution itself is closed; and where there is fiduciary irregularities found in the operation of the students' association. The first situation is covered in Section 102 of Bill 43:

Dissolution of public post-secondary institution

102(1) The Lieutenant Governor in Council may by order disestablish a public post-secondary institution and dissolve its board, effective on the date named in the order.

(2) An order under subsection (1) shall specify that the assets and liabilities and the rights and obligations of the dissolved board are transferred to and assumed by the Government or the board of a public post-secondary institution named in the order or both.

(3) Where under any

- a) Act, regulation or order,
- b) agreement, guarantee or other document made or entered into before the date of the order referred to in subsection (1), or
- c) mortgage, lease, instrument or caveat registered or recorded under the Land Titles Act or in the Metis Settlements Land Registry before the date of the order referred to in subsection (1),

any right, power, duty, liability or function was vested in or was to be exercised or performed by or on behalf of the dissolved board, that right, power, duty, liability or function is, after the date of the order referred to in subsection (1), vested in and may be exercised or performed by or on behalf of the Government or the board named in the order referred to in subsection (1), as the case may be.

(4) An order under subsection (1) made in respect of a university dissolves the senate of the university on the date specified in the order.

(5) An order under subsection (1) dissolves the academic staff association and the student organizations of the public post-secondary institution on the date specified in the order, and on that date the academic staff association ceases to represent the interests of the academic staff of the public post-secondary institution.

(6) When a senate, academic staff association or student organization is dissolved under this section, the assets and liabilities of the dissolved corporation must be dealt with in accordance with the regulations.

The second situation is covered in Section 97 of Bill 43:

Audit of student organizations

97(1) Each student organization of a public post-secondary institution shall, in accordance with the regulations, provide audited financial statements to the board and to the students of the public post-secondary institution.

(2) If, after a review of the audited financial statements provided under subsection (1), the board considers that the affairs of the student organization are being managed in an irregular manner, the board may request the Minister to appoint an investigator under section 99 to examine and inspect the affairs of the student organization.

(3) The students of a public post-secondary institution may, by a petition made in accordance with the regulations, require the board to make a request under subsection (2).

(4) After the investigator submits reports to the Minister under section 99(5), the Minister may terminate the terms of office of the members of the council of the student organization and may appoint an administrator to exercise the powers and perform the duties of the council until a new council is elected by the students association.

(5) The administrator shall be paid the remuneration and expenses that the Minister prescribes out of the funds of the student organization.

Through examining these two Sections in concert with legal principles, we can answer questions 1 and 3 *supra*. Interpreting statutes is not the same as interpreting collective agreements in that "unlike statutes where marginal headings are not part of the statute passed by the legislature, headings are part of the language agreed upon by the parties to the collective agreement, they can be considered as an aid to interpretation" (RE: Kenora, August 30, 1993). Conversely, marginal headings can not be used as an aid to interpretation in statutes. However, it is clear, even without their respective headings, that both sections' *raison d'être* are specific to their functions: the closing of the school, and pecuniary improprieties on the part of the students' association's governing council. In the former instance, all administrative bodies of the closing institution would be dissolved, including the students' association. In the latter case, the student council could only be dissolved "after a review of the audited financial statements [found] that the affairs of the student organization [were] being managed in an irregular manner." Common sense would dictate that if that were the case, the student union membership would *not* be happy with how its association was being run. Further, the appointed administrator could "exercise the powers and perform the duties of the council until a new council is elected by the students association." While the proposed Bill does not codify a time-limit in which elections would have to be held after the termination of the terms of office of the members of the council of the student organization, it is more likely that elections would be called right away, rather than the administrator acting as an autocratic dictator until the next *scheduled* elections.

In short, by my reading of Bill 43, the Minister could dissolve a students' union only under the two circumstances outlined *supra*. An administrator would be appointed only in circumstances in which monetary improprieties were found, and then only until elections could be held for new student advocates (an interim administrator would not be required if the educational institution itself were being dissolved). Most importantly, Bill 43 does not allow "the government the right to dissolve any student's union", but only the right to "terminate the terms of office of the members of the council of the student organization"— the governing body of the organization, not the organization itself.

Governmental legislation allows for students' organizations in the form in which they exist:

*Continuation of Universities
Act corporations*

126 (6) On the coming into force of this section, the corporations established or continued as students' unions under the Universities Act are continued, with the same name, as students associations of the respective universities under this Act, with the powers and duties of a students association of a university established under Part 4 of this Act.

However, the right of freedom of association is codified in the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms (Schedule B, Constitution Act, 1982):

Fundamental Freedoms

Fundamental freedoms

2. Everyone has the following fundamental freedoms:
 - a) freedom of conscience and religion;
 - b) freedom of thought, belief, opinion and expression, including freedom of the press and other media of communication;
 - c) freedom of peaceful assembly; and

d) freedom of association.

Which brings us to the second question that needs answering: will the law provide the government with a precedent that it can use to dissolve labour unions? As mentioned *supra*, Bill 43 does not provide the Minister the right to dissolve a student union -- only its governing body. That fact alone mitigates Bill 43's uses as a "thin edge of the wedge" for the purposes of union-busting. In fact, Canadian governments have already written *ad hoc* coercive legislation that would allow for the de-certification of unions as penalty measures -- taking away the union's right to represent, but not its actual existence. In fact, legislation that would actually dissolve a labour (or student) union would arguably be unconstitutional as contrary to section 2(d) of the Charter of Rights and Freedoms. The Supreme Court of Canada has found that section 2(d) does not include the right to strike or to collectively bargain (see the so-called "Labour Trilogy"); however, the right of workers (and presumably students) to associate is uncontested. This is a subject that is beyond the scope of this article.

In conclusion, I don't believe that Bill 43 is the Pandora's Box that some students are under the impression that it could be. If you would like copies of any of the Bills or Acts mentioned in this article, email me at wayneben@telus.net and I will send you the requested document.

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.



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HELP SAVE CANADA MONEY; DON'T VOTE IN THE NEXT ELECTION!

By Trevor Siwak



When I heard that the Prime Minister wanted to eliminate large corporate donations to political parties, something happened. I felt something I can't say I had ever felt before: pride, pride in our Prime Minister, pride that he was willing to take a stand against the large corporations which sometimes use money to help manipulate the outcome of elections and then go running for handouts and special attention afterwards. The fact that he came up with this idea *after* he had benefited from the system is not lost on me, of course. But hey you know what they say, never look a gift Liberal in the mouth.

But then it happened, I let my guard down and I got blindsided. What looked like an attempt to even the political-funding-playing-field, turned out to be foreplay for what might become known as the most generous political reimbursement system in the free world; and the best part of it is, it won't require as much time and effort for the parties as the old brown nosing system did. On top of that, it could plausibly sour more voters and lower Canada's already pathetic average voter turnout. Mr. Prime Minister is so hell bent on pushing this through that he has even threatened to try to hold the Senate back from summer recess, until the bill is given senate approval.

What does the new election financing bill entail? First, a ban on *most* corporate and union donations; sounds good so far eh? However, we then move on to the second part; it will see each individual MP and riding candidate receive 60% of their election expenses reimbursed in the next election and 50% in following ones. The old reimbursement was only 22.5%. Lastly, it will also see each party receive \$1.75 ANNUALLY for each vote they receive, yes that's annually! That means \$1.75 for each vote every year for the four years until the next election. Just in case you are interested, if one applies the result of the 2000 election to this \$1.75 formula each party would be getting the following each year, not including the 60% election expense refund:

- Liberals: \$9.2 million
- Canadian Alliance: \$5.7 million
- Conservatives: \$2.7 million
- Bloc Quebecois: \$2.4 million
- NDP: \$1.9 million

Adding these reimbursements to the bill will cost 5 million more per year to taxpayers, on top of the original bill's estimated cost of \$120 million over four years. And these are not opposition figures either, these are figures from within the Liberal party itself, from a senior Winnipeg Liberal MP.

At first glance, one who doesn't care how the government spends our money, might think, great, it sounds fair and even. I mean the theory looks sound; each party gets compensated according to their vote, can't get much fairer than that can you? However the problem is, in the past, a poorly performing government may lose donations and henceforth the ability to run a good campaign, thereby losing the election as they rightfully should. Now, that same party will always have more money than even its closest competitor, therefore giving them an unfair advantage over the others (almost two times as much in the case of the last election) in the advertising and propaganda field that helps so many people make up their minds when they get to the ballot box. And guess what; they will not even have to work for it by hounding people for money, a process which is the most tedious and hated of all jobs in the political realm. But hey, now maybe those leaders' dinners won't have to be so darn pricey, and the common folk who can't afford \$300 a plate will actually get to see their country's leaders. Don't hold your breath, though.

Another thing that I feel I should point out to those 55% of you that care enough to peel yourselves from your couches and take 5 minutes to cast a ballot is this, your vote will now cost you \$7 per voting family member, remember it's \$1.75 per vote each year after an election ($\$1.75 \times 4$ years). Yes you will now essentially have to pay for your right to vote. Just because no one collects the money as you walk through the door, you will still pay for it through your taxes; look at it as kind of a hidden tax on voting. Voting tax, darn I knew there was something they hadn't taxed yet! What's next a recycling surcharge to recycle the ballots after they are counted?

At any rate, I can't think of a better place for that money to go then to the same people who can't seem to handle it wisely in the first place. On the bright side maybe now people will make a more conscious and careful effort about deciding who they will vote for. I mean its \$7! That can go a long way. I could buy a Happy Meal, a Slurpee, and still leave enough money to make a phone call. And that would go further to help and satisfy me than my present MP has. At least I get a toy with my happy meal; my MP has never given me any toys! Maybe I can use the money for the phone call to call and ask him if he has any. My guess is if enough people see it the way it is, paying to vote, our election turnout numbers from the past may actually start to look good.

So there it is! I have found a way to lower government spending and save the taxpayers money. It is simple - the less people who vote, the less money these guys will get, the less it will cost taxpayers, the more money we will save.

However, maybe it would be money better spent if we all paid the \$7 and sent these monkeys packing next year, look at it as a positive investment in the country.

Reference

Rubec, Stephanie. PM promises public cash for financing, *Ottawa Sun*; Thursday June 5, 2002. Online Edition.



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.



Last week I asked students to comment on the Mad Cow scare in Alberta:

Mad cow is the least thing I worry about being in my beef! One case does not necessarily lead to rampant wide-spread infections of all cattle, this could have been a dormant gene passed down many generations. We are a society that is quick to jump to opinions without first understanding the facts, case in point being the SARS "epidemic" supposedly sweeping Toronto.

Sandra Moore

I've researched Mad Cow - especially when writing an article about it last year. What I learned was terrifying, and I feel very strongly that Alberta and the rest of Canada must take an extremely aggressive stance toward stamping out the disease, so we can avoid the mistakes of Britain. The defiant way in which Albertans have run out to eat beef before knowing the extent of the problem, indicates that this will not occur, however.

That said, this isolated case now looks like a single, spontaneous mutation and there is probably little need for concern. It worries me, though, that infected cattle may still be used in feed for other animals, since this is exactly how the disease first spread from sheep.

I still feel safe eating our beef, but I am watching Alberta's actions very closely...

Editor

Recently the issue of homosexual marriages has come to the fore. Each province has taken its own stand, and here in Alberta Premier Klein insists that Alberta will use the notwithstanding clause to prevent the legalization of gay marriages in Alberta, if necessary. The governments have had their say, so tell us what you think: voice@ausu.org

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AUSU students can now order their student gift packs, free courtesy of your students' union.

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AUSU OFFICE MOVE

By Debbie Jabbour



Last fall the AUSU office in Edmonton received some unexpected news. The building where we have our office was for sale, and a buyer had purchased the mortgage, then foreclosed, evicting all the tenants with one month's notice. This included the Athabasca University Edmonton Learning Centre and our AUSU office. Although the university consulted with their lawyers, they were told that this was legal (regardless of how unethical).

The university immediately took action and managed to receive a delay of several months on the eviction. They then went into high gear, searching out alternative space locations in the vicinity. The timing was especially bad, since AU's ELC and the Centre for Innovative Management in St. Albert have been negotiating a merger during the next few years, possibly in the downtown Edmonton area. Various locations were looked at, keeping in mind the need to find a reasonably-priced location that could be office-ready in the very short time frame we were working with; and one where a long-term lease would not be required so that the original plans to combine ELC

and CIM could still be pursued.

AUSU's office space is donated to us by AU, and throughout the process they ensured that we would be kept informed of progress and consulted regarding our needs. For a while it looked like we would be moving a block over to the Baker Building, an older and much less desirable space than the current location. Finally, in March of this year, we received some good news. The buyers of the current building had agreed to continue AU's lease, but the increased cost per square foot would mean considerable downsizing would be required – the loss of almost 1/3 of the existing space. AUSU met with representatives from the office of the VP Academic to outline our minimum needs. In addition to sufficient space for several workstations, we pointed out that we require a visible presence for students, and that we maintain a full time staff person (as opposed to many of the AU offices which are used irregularly by commuting academic or tutorial staff). Finally, in April, we were advised that we would be given an office space on the second floor next to the computer lab. The computer lab would be downsized by about one-half to allow for our office, but this was easily justified given the low use the lab receives from students. The split gave AUSU the portion by the window, but it also means that we have to pass through the computer lab to reach the office.

Initially we had been told the move would occur in the first week of May, and we began the long packing process with that date in mind. We were barely into the second week of April, however, when we were told that the move date had been moved up – and we were to be out the very next week!

For the rest of that week, we began an intense packing session. The bulk of the work fell on Carla, our administrative assistant, but the AUSU executive also did as much as they could. Towards the last few days we hired temporary packing help to ensure the job would be completed in time. Any of you who have ever





moved know what a painful process it can be. There is, however, one advantage – you finally clean out some of those stagnant closets full of stuff that has been sitting there for years, serving no purpose! Our office was no different, and we were shocked (and sometimes amused) at what we found. Returned mail from four and five years ago, income tax application forms almost a decade old, broken coffee-makers and office equipment, stacks of long-expired coupons, boxes of five-year old junk mail – just to mention a few! For a while we tossed more than we packed, yet we still managed to fill dozens of boxes.

When moving day finally came, AU sent the movers and quickly emptied the office. For several hours everything sat in the exam waiting area, since they were still holding an exam in the computer lab and we could not enter our office. Finally the door was opened and everything was brought in – we now had an office that consisted of nothing but a room full of boxes!

At this point it was late in the day and we decided to leave and tackle the mess in the morning. Carla had done a wonderful job of organizing the packing, so it was not hard to find the urgent essentials. However there was one significant problem that prevented us from unpacking. Several years previously an AUSU executive member had purchased two very large executive desks for the office. They were the type you find in a spacious penthouse office – with a highly-paid executive leaning back on his leather chair, with his feet up on the edge. Not only were they completely unsuitable for a working office like ours, they were so large that two of them seemed to take up almost half the new space! To top that off, we discovered the day before the move that our administrative assistant's complete work station had been on loan from AU, and they had taken it back! So before we could proceed we had two urgent tasks. First, get rid of the giant executive desks. This took much longer than expected, but finally we managed to sell them at an extremely reasonable price to a deserving non-profit organization. Second, to purchase new, useful office work desks. This part was relatively easy...until it came to the job of putting together the new office furniture.



No doubt many of you have done the do-it-yourself furniture assembly route, where you spend hours trying to figure out the funny diagrams and foreign-language instructions. Once you get half the piece built, you discover you forgot a section and have to disassemble the whole mess. Even once you've achieved success, there are always several important-looking bolts and screws left over, leaving you wondering what you did wrong and when it is going to fall apart on you! After several days of struggle, the furniture was "ready" - less a few broken parts and missing pieces on re-order!

By this time the 10th Anniversary AGM was almost upon us, and although it was only a few days away we still had no functional photocopier, printer or fax. Important historical papers were buried under boxes, and only one computer was working. We were beginning to despair that we would not be ready on time. In spite of putting in several 18-hour work days to get things organized, we were still rushing to put AGM report booklets together an hour before the meeting. We managed to be ready for the meeting, but the office was still a long way from useable.

During the last few weeks we've managed to get all the office equipment in place and functional, and most of the important unpacking is done. However we will likely still be emptying boxes for some time to come. Given that the new lease is only for two years – we may well still be partially packed when it comes time to move again!



Walter Gretzky, Stroke Survivor

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the face, arm or leg

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understanding speech

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or double vision

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

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

AU Profiles:

AU GRADUATE PROFILE: LYNDA MOSS

Sandra Moore spoke with Lynda on convocation day:

AGE: 47

LIVES IN: Flatrock, Newfoundland

TRAVEL TIME TO ATHABASCA: 8 hours by plane and car

PROGRAM COMPLETED: Bachelor of Arts

YEARS IT TOOK TO COMPLETE: 6

FAVORITE COURSE: Psychology of Aesthetics

LEAST FAVORITE COURSE: Philosophy

FAVORITE TUTOR: Bonnie Ryan-Fisher, Dale Linskoy

HIGHEST FINAL GRADE: 90

LOWEST FINAL GRADE: 75



As I wandered through AU's halls looking for graduates to interview, AU staff eagerly told me that I had to interview Lynda because she was such a bubbly, friendly person. I would have never guessed that Lynda was 47, she was very eager and excited to get the opportunity to portray her AU experience to the rest of her fellow AU students, and the staff was right about what a great personality she has. When asked about her thoughts on the AU convocation she said she felt like "Cinderella at the Ball." Lynda was joined in Athabasca by her sister that she had not seen in 25 years and her son Scott, a roofer, who left a job in Winnipeg unfinished in order to make it to Athabasca in time to see his mother graduate. Lynda says her family has been so supportive of her obtaining her degree. They sacrificed a lot of her time, but they "gained the ability to endure their own adversity and develop commitment to their goals." Obtaining this degree has "opened the door to a brave new world" and Lynda now plans to go on to get a Master's degree in Counselling Psychology. She has already been accepted into the program at Vermont College in the United States. Her advice to those of you still trudging along towards those initials after your name is, "stand shoulder-to-shoulder together and work into the future proudly."

Congratulation Lynda Moss, BA!

Look for more grad profiles in upcoming Voice issues. If you are an AU grad and you were not interviewed on convocation day, contact voice@ausu.org to be a part of AU profiles.

As always, we are seeking undergrads, tutors and staff for profiles as well.



Flesh Gordon Meets The Cosmic Cheerleaders Movie Review

By Laura Seymour



Before I start I want to defend my reasons for choosing this film - it's hilariously bad (films like this have websites dedicated to them!), but at the same time it's got such clever mixed media and creative nonsense I thought I'd risk my reputation to review it. (Do I *have* a reputation?!)

Other write-ups about this film are mean. One site says, this film "makes the first one look like Star Wars." I didn't even know there was a first one. All I know is the Space Channel was showing this funny film at a reasonable hour and I didn't have anything else to watch. I took a gander. Well, I'll be honest the actors are bad enough to be porn stars! Seeing as I know nothing about who's who in the porn industry I couldn't tell you if these are actors are from that crowd or not.

The lines are pretty klutziy delivered – there are no Meryl Streeps or Charlton Hestons here! As a matter of fact, I couldn't tell you who anyone is! I can say however, that the stop-action "creatures" are well done and that someone knows their way around animation. I ought to know, I took a course here in Calgary and found out how mind-numbingly tough it is to make a creature walk!

Well, anyway, if you don't mind some women's breasts popping in for most of the film and some pretty crass humor at about the mid point I actually recommend having an afternoon roar over how bad this film is! Part of the fun is that it's intentionally (I hope!) stupid!

Here's a little taste of the plot...

When actor Flesh Gordon is kidnapped by the Cosmic Cheerleaders to save their people from the evil genius who invented the Impotence Radiation beam (ahem! I'm NOT making this up!), Flesh's gorgeous girlfriend runs to her old pal, Dr. Flexy Jerkoff for his help. Dr. Jerkoff - a somewhat inept medical doctor (he blew up a woman's breasts) - happens to have a conveniently parked flying saucer out in his backyard. When called upon, he leaps into the craft and using copulating chicken power (sheesh!) he flies to chase down Flesh and the evil doers who have tried to spirit him away to another galaxy.

Ok....ummmm blame the writers Doug Frisby and Howard Ziehm for the plot line and names, not me!!

Anyway, before you yell, "porn," just let me defend the film for a second. First, I know that porn films have people having sex. Well, there is innuendo from Flesh and the gang but no one strips off and does the act in front of us. Plus, porn's don't have a plot. This does... although I wouldn't want to put it on my resume and go call on Al Pacino! So no, I'd call it a sex romp.

This 1989/1990/1991 (I've read three years it supposedly came out!) film is bottom (oops another pun) of the barrel in acting talent. It has very capable, even talented behind the scenes people wasting their energies in a nonsense sex romp.

The sets are well done if not elaborate. The costumes are acceptable, if not downright well made. The claymation creatures are worthy of the great Ray Harryhausen, the special effects pioneer, himself! I'm pretty tough on what's good in the animation front... I could tear apart Mortal Kombat 2, and I can tell you that this silly film does better in creature animation than MK2 did.

Anyway, the chicken scene with Flesh Gordon about three quarters through the film is just too funny. If you are willing to "go with the flow" and not moan it's really quite cute! I'd have to say it's one of the best scenes in the whole flick. That's really kind of a shame.

The Hyper Chicken drive is just a silly spoof... the game of codball is a tribute to the "actors" who actually pulled off a good game of ummmm... well codball (and no we see no parts of any of the men).

As a final note, the only thing fun about the scene in the intestines (ick) is the singing group, "Smoky Pile and the Constipations," although the G Spot Café has a passable comic telling jokes. The film makes a valiant recovery toward the end (start watching again after Flesh rescues his girlfriend), and the final battle with the evil guy puts Flesh in with a well-made and operated "black spider." I really couldn't tell you if she was a widow or not!

When the evil guy makes a call to his very overweight wife (the queen of the planet) he uses the local Frigid Bell service! The evil guy also has some character development - he panics when he finds out that his wife is being ummmm...well – satisfied by Flesh Gordon. Again, they show nothing. But suddenly his real affection for her comes out. This character stuff is probably an accident as no one else does any developing through this!

Sound effects are sparingly used and are well chosen. Some of them actually sell a moment.

This film will never make it to the Oscars. I don't think the "series" will ever sell off the store shelves, but I do think the producers had a creative idea and just decided that with the low budget they had they required nudity to sell it at all. Heck, Hollywood's been running on that theory for eons. Maybe they're right, I dunno that's a huge debate. I just think with better performances (such as people not raising their voices an octave above normal), and less nudity they would have had a much better shot at getting a more general audience. But then the fun of the film would be gone... and so the debate continues.

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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EXPERIENCING VIRTUAL REALITY

Universal's *Back To The Future* ride engages the senses

By Shahzadi Bahtti



Screenshot from Universal Studios - Florida website

Virtual reality is a computer-generated environment that appears and feels like a real one. In his book *Adventures in Artificial Life*, Walnum describes virtual reality (VR) as "a new way to communicate through computers. Instead of communicating using text and static pictures, as is typical with computers, VR communicates with as many of the human senses as possible.

VR means taking people inside the communication channel, instead of leaving them outside looking in" (pp. 127). It is quiet fascinating to experience virtual reality, as it allows the creators of the artificial environment to fool our sensory system and play with our minds to great extents. I would like to shed some light upon one of my favourite VR experiences.

Being a Digital Media student, I have always been interested in watching IMAX movies and playing VR games in arcades. I have also been on every virtual ride at all of the theme parks that I have visited. Recently, I had the opportunity to visit one of the best theme parks in the world, Universal Studios. It was indeed a great experience of both a virtual, and 3-dimensional world. I had the opportunity to see rides such as Twister, Men In Black, E.T., and best of all, the Back To The Future ride. All these rides are based on popular Hollywood movies.

Back To The Future was one of the best rides I have ever experienced. For many people, this is the ride that made Universal Studios, Florida famous. This ride is a "bone-jarring, stomach-churning, thrill-a-second rocket ride through time and space" (Michael Supinski, <http://ift.i8.com>). According to Tom Williams, President & Chief Executive Officer of Universal Studios Escape, "Back To The Future-The Ride brings together the most dynamic motion-based experience possible by combining sophisticated hydraulics, multi-channel sound, live effects and a groundbreaking OMNIMAX film to create a total sensory impact experience never before achieved in any media or studio attraction." All the high-tech special effects give the illusion of time travel during the ride itself.

As you enter the ride, you instantly feel like you are in the "Institute of Technology" as you enter a room, which illustrates footage of what is currently going on at the institute. Doctor Brown, from the movie, is speaking to you via a television screen and preparing you for your journey on the 8-passenger DeLorean automobile. Biff, the enemy, punches the camera and locks up Doctor Brown in his laboratory, steals one of the DeLoreans, and zooms away. The only way to save the institute, according to Doctor Brown, is to send you to get Biff. Hence, the passengers start loading the DeLorean to go "Back to the Future."

Your DeLorean leans back and you shoot off into the year 2015. During the ride, you dodge cars and veer away from signs, and your car moves from left to right, up and down as you are looking at the big screen in front of you. It feels as if you are really traveling through time. After passing several signs and walkways, blasting through tree branches, you crash through the clock tower and travel back to an underground cave.

Unexpectedly, your engine dies and you are about to fall directly into the ground towards a canyon river. The small screen inside the DeLorean shows the engine status and it is flashing FAILURE! At the last second, however, the engine kicks in and you shoot backwards and back in time to where Biff is, at a large volcano. A

foggy atmosphere is created within the room through the use of a fog machine. You feel like you are really driving through fog as you search for Biff. You later encounter a dinosaur that hits Biff and breaks his "flux capacitor." Once you have escaped being swallowed by the dinosaur, you chase after Biff to where he is about to land in lava after the dinosaur's tail hits him. You then travel back to the Institute, crashing through the door, where Biff is surrounded by security guards who bring down the car. Doctor Brown thanks you and the gates of the vehicle open and he commands you to hurry and leave, thereby ending the ride.

Overall, the ride provides you with an opportunity to experience virtual reality first-hand. It involves almost all of the senses: sight, through the big IMAX screen which shows you where you are traveling; touch, by means of the movement of the vehicle as you are sitting in it and traveling through time; hearing, as you can hear all the sound effects and voices throughout the journey; and smell and taste as the fog is created in the room around you. Hence, we see that virtual reality can also fool our sensory system, as we perceive what is in front of us to be real when it is not.



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For more information see: <http://www.sweb.cz/isfir2003/index.html>



Alberta Relents?

The Alberta Government might be starting to get the message. Over the past week, additional funding has been announced for the post-secondary system. 30 million dollars has been allocated to Alberta Learning's post-secondary institutions to be used for operating costs and maintenance. That money has to cover all the post-secondary institutions in Alberta, from the universities to apprenticeship training and small colleges. This means that it probably will not put a dent in tuition, it should still give the institutions some needed breathing space so that they can at least continue to run effectively.

In addition, the government is further supplying an extra 40 million in directed funding to open access to high demand programs such as apprenticeship training and health care. As a province that has been promoting "Life-long learning" for many years, it is great to see the Alberta government finally start to put some money, rather than its foot, where its mouth is.

Not being one to see a silver-lining without the cloud underneath it, however, I will point out that this still does very little to address the problems of growing tuition. None of this money is directed at increasing enrolment into post-secondary, rather it helps universities to cope with the current demand. Since cost is still the primary reason given by Alberta high-school graduates who've decided not to attend post-secondary, it is time that a government that is supposedly committed to a knowledge economy demonstrate some knowledge of what is going on around them.

What is really amazing is that the Statistics Canada recently released a report showing that Alberta is the province with the largest local and provincial surpluses of all the provinces in Canada. Yet it is other provinces (such as Manitoba) where post-secondary tuition is coming down, and it is Alberta where the post-secondary funding increases were less than the rate of inflation.

Cross Border Poetry

The Ontario Government has announced \$10,000 in scholarships to provide for three poets from Ontario to attend the Banff Centre for the Arts. This is a good thing in a number of ways, not only is it showing an attention to studies that benefit more than just the bottom line, it is also showing an increased flexibility on the part of the Province of Ontario to look at institutions outside of Ontario as providing a benefit for them.

This can only mean good things in the future for Athabasca University, as one of the problems distance education still faces is a reluctance of provincial governments to recognize and fund institutions of other provinces. For instance, the provincial student finance program in Quebec does not recognize Athabasca University as an institution that they can provide funding for as it is not within the province.

This step by the Ontario government, the likes of which I haven't heard of before, is a good sign that at least one Provincial Government is realizing there are some things that can be done outside the province as well.

It can only be to the benefit of Canadians if all provinces were to realize that distance education not only offers an education at a (comparatively) reasonable cost, but also offers the additional benefit of still having the student in the province and supporting the local provincial economy while they study, as well as when they graduate.

Yet Still Short-Sighted

On the other hand, the Ontario Government is also crowing (yet again) about how they have managed to handle the double cohort (grades 12 and 13) of their high-schools. Over 100,000 high-school students applied to Ontario universities, and over 70,000 were admitted, maintaining their provincial average of 70% of applicants. To handle this huge influx of students, over 1.7 billion dollars was spent in building 35 new facilities, and one new university.

Dianne Cunningham, Minister of Training, Colleges and Universities, goes on to state how "The investments we have made in postsecondary education have met our commitment to provide a place for every willing and qualified student in the double cohort year. The new facilities and faculty will benefit students for years to come."

That would be for about 4 – 6 years to come. The amount of time it takes for all those students to get through the system and graduate.

Does anybody care to guess what will happen to all that extra space after that?

Going to University in 2008 in Ontario looks to me as if it will be a very lonely experience. I imagine a lot of empty halls and empty classrooms.

Now imagine what would have happened if instead of being used to build so many places to sit, that even half of that money had been used to fund students choosing distance education. With 1.7 billion dollars available, Ontario could have simply bought Athabasca University wholesale – it already moved once, back in 1984 – and used distance education for their entire double-cohort with little difficulty and with the ability to scale it back after the double-cohort had finished their degrees.

Of course, 2008 is well past the next election period, which is probably why the Ontario government didn't think about it.

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.





Dear Sandra,

Please help! Summer is coming and my kids (ages 7 & 10) will be home for two whole months. How am I going to get any studying done? I need to keep them out of my hair. I've been so used to my 8 hours of peace a day that I now don't know how I'll cope.

Afraid of her own children in Ontario

Dear Afraid,

Every parent dreads summer holidays. Either you have to have them home 24 hours a day for two months listening constantly to "I'm bored" or "He's bugging me" OR you have to find somewhere for them to go.

I highly recommend camp. For a whole week a group of teenagers entertain your child with fun and educational activities, and the bonus is they are gone that whole week!! The down part is that camp usually only lasts a week. There are such a variety of camps now; when I was younger the only option was church camp. My family was not religious but we all went to the Baptist camp and the Lutheran camp.

Now depending on where you live you can attend everything from adventure camps to Harry Potter camps. If your children, or you for that matter, are not ready to spend a week apart with people they hardly know, day camp is another option. YMCA's, gymnastic organizations, libraries, sports organizations, music clubs, zoos, museums and churches put on week long day camps similar to your regular 8 hour school day filled with interesting activities and tons of other kids for your children to socialize with. A downfall to any type of camp is they usually cost money, anywhere from \$5 a week to \$150 a week. If cost is an issue, ask if they offer subsidies.

Your children (and you) probably won't be so lucky as to get to spend every week of their summer in a fun day camp, so when they are at home try some of these ideas:

1. Have them put on a play. Encourage them to recruit the neighbourhood kids to participate. Have them write the script, make the costumes, build the props, cast the actors and finally prepare for the performance. There will probably be a couple arguments you'll have to break yourself away from your books to mediate, but the kids will learn to work together and will be sooo proud of their final performance. Have all the children invite their families and neighbours to attend the play.
2. Christmas in July. To ease up on the stress of December, start shopping and making crafts now. When the kids are complaining of boredom, give them some craft materials and put them to work. To work on handwriting skills have them address the envelopes for your Christmas cards and labels for the gifts. Of course in order to do this you need to be a cheap person like me who stocks up on Christmas items AFTER Christmas when they go on sale. You could even give them authority to plan a half-way to

Christmas party, where little trinkets from the dollar store are exchanged and you have turkey sandwiches.

3. Journaling. After helping your child study all year for weekly spelling tests, keep their spelling skills sharp by doing family journals. Buy or make journals for the family and sit down and do entries in them together. These also turn out to be great keepsakes and the perfect way for a child to remember what they did all summer when teachers ask them that in September.
4. Have them become entrepreneurs. Who doesn't remember selling Kool-aid on their corner or in their drive way as a kid? Kids don't have to sell just Kool-aid; they can make up candy bags, small crafts or even an art show in their back yard for family, friends and neighbours. Children learn counting skills and the value of money.
5. Be Crazy. Give them crazy ideas that make them ask "Are you sure you are ok with us doing that"? Take some tempera paint and let them cover your sidewalk or driveway with foot prints, give them instructions for crazy science experiments (now is the time to let them get messy when it's warm enough for the hose to clean them off). Let them paint old tables or chairs anyway they want or tie-dye old shirts or towels.
6. Make sure you have a sprinkler and a pool, or even better, a slip and slide. These are inexpensive items that can keep kids busy for hours. I'm amazed at how many times my 7 year old daughter and friends can run through our sprinkler. It sometimes feels like I'm watching dogs chase their tails.

Just remember summer with the kids is like childbirth, you just need to keep telling yourself that it has to end sometime. Here's hoping you have a peaceful summer!

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



Are you an artist?

**AUSU supports
the arts!**

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

The works of art must:

- be created by an AU student
- have a value range \$0-\$500
- be accessible or easily transportable to Alberta

If you are an artist of any kind who creates a product you feel we would be able to use for such a purpose, contact:

Debbie Jabbour
[djabbour@ausu.org].

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

NEWS FROM AU

Contributed by *The Insider*

New Global and Social Analysis website



Learn more on-line about the Governance Law and Management Degree available at Athabasca University by browsing the new virtual home pages for the Governance, Law and Management (GLM) and Public Administration degree programs

The new site is located at: <http://bpa-governance.athabascau.ca/contents/index1.html>

AU's existence confirmed at June 13 and 14 Convocation ceremonies



"I admit I traveled to convocation not only to receive my degree, but to confirm that Athabasca University exists," Bachelor of Administration graduate Ramona DeRose joked with fellow graduates, family and friends in her Address by a Graduate at Athabasca University's Undergraduate Convocation ceremony, June 14.

DeRose was one of the degree program graduates who traveled to Athabasca last weekend to see for themselves that the institution does indeed exist, to participate in the Convocation ceremony, and to meet the professors, tutors and classmates who have played such an integral part in their education and lives. Seven hundred and sixty-three students graduated from their respective degree programs this year, and over 300 of them took in ceremonies, luncheons, pancake breakfasts, and other events in AU's biggest event of the year.

In her speech, DeRose reflected on how much distance learning can seem a lonely experience, yet it takes many people in order for one person to earn a degree. She shared her memory of a moment with her son that happened while she sat working on an Economics course. He asked why she bothered to go to school, and DeRose turned the question back to him, asking why he practiced soccer. "Because I want to get better," he replied.

"Me too," she responded.

"Although we are celebrating the end of our days as undergraduates," DeRose continued, "we must recognize that the commitment to learning, and the desire to become what we are capable of becoming is our true achievement. For it is in the striving that we learn, and in the struggle for knowledge that we reveal our true potential."

Parts of her address echoed the words of her graduate counterpart, Bill Robinson, the Master of Arts – Integrated Studies student who delivered the Address by a Graduate at Friday's ceremony. He reflected on the path that he and his fellow distance learners have shared over the past few years of their lives.

"As many of you will attest, I have developed what I feel are very close bonds with many other students and staff in the program," Robinson said. "I believe that these relationships are built on the shared challenges and successes we all face as we work our way through the various Graduate programs. I cannot tell you the pride I have felt when I witnessed one AU student offering advice and assistance to another when things may not have been going well.

"Tragically, I lost my father during the later part of my degree program," he continued. "However the support I was shown from the other students and professor was truly outstanding."

Edmonton construction giant Robert Stollery attended the graduate Convocation ceremony, June 13, to accept an Honourary Doctor of Laws. In his address, Stollery encouraged graduates to examine their own definition of success, and he imparted a message of the importance of lifelong learning, and the role of volunteering in creating the kind of world we all want to live in.

"You must look to the future with enthusiasm and confidence," Stollery urged grads. "Work hard and smart and remember that old Eskimo proverb, 'Only the lead dog sees the landscape.'"

"Indeed today's graduates not only have the ability to lead, you have the responsibility to lead. Rather than complain about the acts of government and corporations, get involved in any way you can, and you can have a part in building the kind of Canada you, and your children want to live in."

Canadian broadcasting star Vicki Gabereau lent levity to the June 14 undergraduate ceremony as she accepted a Doctor of Letters. She charmed the audience with her description of her own struggle with education – including a high school mathematics mark of 2 per cent – and discussed the education her life has delivered.

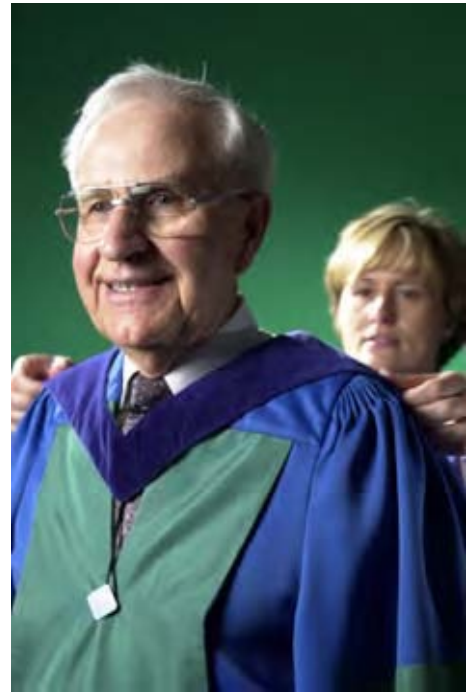
Governing Council Chair Robert Fulton started reaching for a pen and application form when Gabereau asked, "Can I enroll?"

In his address, AU president Dr. Dominique Abrioux congratulated the graduates on their accomplishments, outlined the most recent accomplishments, and urged the AU community to continue striving to improve.



"Athabasca University cannot afford to rest on its laurels and to be satisfied with past accomplishments," Abrioux said on Friday. "We must accelerate our transformation into the electronic learning environment, and use this as an opportunity to continually improve upon the quality of the learning and the services we provide to our students.

"We must further develop our international reputation for excellence in research and



distance and online education,” he continued, “for without such a reputation our domestic market will be at risk, as will be the added value associated with an Athabasca University degree that today’s graduands have worked so hard to earn.”

Balbinder Atwal, a Bachelor of Nursing graduate who came looking forward to meeting her professors and tutors reported she won’t forget her first real graduation event.

“I think it’s very important for me and my children to see that this is the result of hard work,” she said. “And it is a celebration for your hard work. It’s the beginning of good things. It’s a closure in that you’ve finished your studies, but it opens a lot of doors. Education is really important in a person’s life.”

Miss the ceremonies? The proceedings were taped this year and will be available for viewing at a later date. You can also read the complete Convocation speeches by clicking on the below.

Dominique Abrioux

- [Undergraduate ceremony](#)
- [Graduate ceremony](#)

Robert Fulton – (Still in Transcription Department)

Graduate speeches

- Bill Robinson (Still in Transcription Department)
- [Ramona DeRose](#)

Honourary degree recipients

- [Robert Stollery](#)
- Vicki Gabereau (Still in Transcription Department)



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.



SCHOLARSHIPS & AWARDS

For scholarships available through the Athabasca University Student's Union, see the AUSU website at www.ausu.org



FELLOWSHIPS FOR FULL-TIME STUDIES IN FRENCH (300)

Value: \$1000

DEADLINE: November 15, 2003

Administrator: Alberta Scholarship Programs

Notes: Applicants must be plan to enrol full-time in a post-secondary program of at least one semester in length. At least three courses per semester must be taught in French. Based on academic achievement during the previous academic year. 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>

WEYERHAEUSER ABORIGINAL SCHOLARSHIP

Value: \$1000

DEADLINE: n/s

Administrator: n/s

Notes: Awarded to aboriginal students who are pursuing careers in business and science.

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

Want to **STOP** smoking?

It's easier with **HELP.**

Smoker's Help Line **1-866-33AADAC**

AADAC
Alberta Aboriginal Development Association
www.aadac.com

alberta
HEALTH FIRST

CONFERENCE CONNECTIONS

Contributed By AU's *The Insider*



- **LIDC** - The Second Annual Summer Institute on eLearning in Higher Education - June 16- 20, 2003 - Vancouver, BC. Details: LIDC website.
- **FAC** - June 19 & 20, 2003 - Pomona, CA. Call for Proposals and Registration material are available at <http://www.iats.com>.
- **FLC Developers' Institute** - June 20 - 22, 2003 - Pomona, CA. Call for Proposals and Registration material are available at <http://www.iats.com>.
- **ED-MEDIA** - "World Conference on Educational Multimedia, Hypermedia and Telecommunications" - June 23 - 28, 2003 - Honolulu, Hawaii. Details: <http://www.aace.org/conf/edmedia/default.htm>
- **IASTED** - "International Conference on Computers and Advanced Technology" - June 30 - July 2, 2003 - Rhodes, Greece. Details: <http://www.iasted.org/conferences/2003/greece/cate.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

- **CAPDHHE [Canadian Association for the Prevention of Discrimination and Harassment in Higher Education]** - To be held in Calgary, October 29 - November 1, 2003. <http://www.capdhhe.org/conference2/index.htm>
- **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!

For more information:

<http://www.chinaconferenceinfo.com>

Summer Symposium on Health Ethics

Wednesday 6 August 2003
Stollery Executive Development Centre
Business Building, University of Alberta
11211 Saskatchewan Drive
Edmonton, Alberta

The John Dossetor Health Ethics Centre (JDHEC) invites you to attend a one-day symposium on health ethics. This course will offer a series of presentations by JDHEC Faculty that will challenge you to examine and explore the essential place of ethics in health care practice.

Sign Up for:

Full Day Symposium: \$100 + GST
Student/Limited Income \$ 50 + GST for students
Price Includes Lunch

Who should attend?

- Health care professionals
- Administrators
- Students in health sciences, law and humanities
- Ethics committee members

Speakers:

Worried, troubled or anxious? It may be moral distress: Wendy Austin, RN, PhD

An exploration of the distress arising when moral choices in healthcare practice are thwarted by constraints.

Ethics in the Trenches: Paul Byrne, MB, ChB, FRCPC

This session will focus on the practical aspects of clinical ethics consultation and education.

"So you want to do research..." : Glenn Griener, PhD

The main principles of research ethics and their application to projects from clinical trials to chart reviews.

Bodies Here, There, and Everywhere: Barbara Russell, PhD, MBA

Philosophers and ethicists debate how our bodies impact our individuality and humanity. This session will focus on insights and ideas from this debate that are relevant to providing care for people.

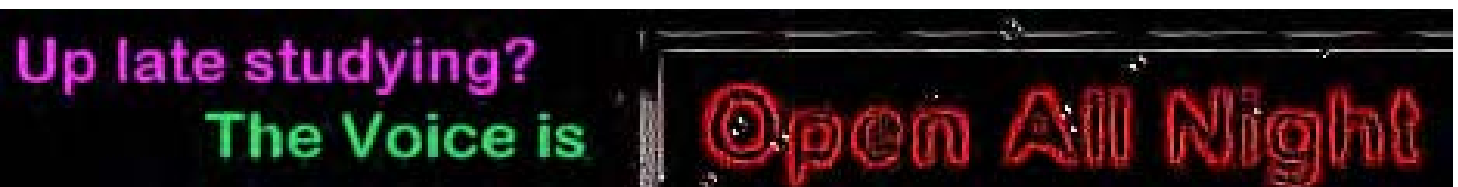
From a Glint in the Eye to Bringing Up Baby: Ethics and Reproduction: Laura Shanner, PhD

Explores the implications of family relationships in assisted reproduction and pregnancy management.

For more information:

Website www.ualberta.ca/bioethics
Email Dossetor.Centre@ualberta.ca
Phone 780-492-6676

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.





CLASSIFIEDS:

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
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800.788.9041 ext. 3413

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