

THE VOICE

MAGAZINE

Vol 11 Issue 33
August 13, 2003

Nifty Fifty... Maybe

In praise of life as a mature student

A Day in the Park

An afternoon of enlightenment

Working the Rails

Wayne Benedict starts a new chapter

The first ever Voice writing contest!

Win scholarship dollars and become a published writer! Details inside...

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

THE VOICE

Aug 13, 2003

Volume 11, Issue 33

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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/>



We love to hear from you! Send your letters to voice@ausu.org, and please indicate if we may publish your letter in the Voice.

Have you ever observed that we pay much more attention to a wise passage when it is quoted than when we read it in the original author?

Philip G. Hamerton,
"The Intellectual Life"

THE VOICE

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University's *The Insider* for its
frequent contributions

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EDITORIAL PAGES

THIS WEEK

THREE NEW CONTRIBUTORS THIS ISSUE!

NIFTY FIFTY ... MAYBE - The first contribution from Barbara Godin, celebrating the joys of being a mature student...

A DAY IN THE PARK - Stacey Steele's first article, a recollection of a perspective-changing afternoon during a class trip to Quebec...

WORKING FOR THE RAILWAY - Wayne Benedict is working for the railway no more. Congratulations to Wayne on becoming a full time AU student!

FICTION FEATURE - Poetry from first time contributor Chantelle Cressman

AUGUST 10th Council Meeting, with Special Guest, AU President Dominique Abrioux

Like the title says, on August 10th AUSU had a regularly scheduled council meeting with a very special guest: none other than the president of Athabasca University.

Dr. Abrioux decided to attend the meeting and speak to councillors and attending students directly, as a response to council concerns that the current method for disseminating information on AU plans and policy to the students' union was insufficient. In the past, AU administration relied on a word-of-mouth system where an AUSU councillor or councillors - usually the president - were given information first-hand to share with the rest of council and the student body.

This method was problematic in that it placed the council members bearing that information in the difficult position of speaking for both the university and the students. It also meant that we were not able to quote any statements from the university, because anything we printed would in fact be the words of the relaying council member. I don't think I can be accused of divulging private council information if I also state that the old method of information sharing led to some serious inter-council conflict. This conflict has recently spilled over into the student forums and therefore can hardly be considered privileged information.

In my year on council, I only recall one very brief email from the AU president as the sum total of written information presented from AU to the council. The email in question was not intended for the larger student population as it was a preliminary comment on an issue to be decided at an upcoming meeting.

So, it is highly unusual for the AU President to address the student body in any format, despite the many publicists and forums for publication that AU has access to. The twice-yearly AU World is no longer being published and mailed to students, although when it was it rarely contained any policy-based information anyway. The AU website does run press releases, but these are largely limited to news about new programs, announcements on faculty achievements, and other public relations matters.

It is a great step forward, then, for the AU president to take the time to address students directly. However, it must be recognized that the topic of this landmark meeting made the presence of Dr. Abrioux [he likes students to address him as Dominique] imperative.

For those who have not been following recent Voice and AUSU forums discussions, you may not be aware that AU has requested that the Alberta Government allow AU to be exempt from the Alberta Education Policy's tuition cap, which regulates how much tuition may be raised each year. Further, AU has gone so far as to ask

the students' union - in essence, the entire student body that they represent - to support AU in this request. This is a highly unusual move, which has shocked many students and councillors as well. Due to the highly controversial nature of this most unusual proposal, the word-of-mouth nature of the request has led to more than the usual level of tension throughout council and even the student forums.

Many feel - and I agree - that if the university wants to directly request the support of the students on such an important manoeuvre, then the university should prepare a statement and directly address the students. As Voice editor, I have certainly been champing at the bit to receive some sort of written statement that I can print in our magazine, and any students who have questioned why the Voice has not printed any specific information about AU's plans have been absolutely correct to do so. The fact is, I can't print third party relays of AU statements - and by the same token, neither should council members. This has left many students in the dark as to exactly what AU's intentions are.

So, it was requested that AU prepare a proper statement, explaining to students why they should support AU on such an important matter. Dominique surprised us, however, by going one better and attending the meeting with a prepared statement and some supporting documentation. And while I don't necessarily agree with much of what Mr. Abrioux said, I commend this move, and I commend his assertion that in the future he will be making more statements to the student body directly.

When I heard of this meeting, I asked AUSU council if they would allow me to record the conversation so that I could do a thorough report for The Voice. I expected this request to be granted, and it was - pending the necessary permission of all attendees. I also requested to make Dr. Abrioux's speech available to students in mp3 format - and possibly as a written transcript - so that any student who could not attend the meeting could listen to his own words. I was not sure this request would be granted, but to my surprise AUSU was wholeheartedly in support of the idea and promised to ask Dr. Abrioux if he would allow this. As it turns out, he welcomed the idea.

So, within the next week the interview should be available on the AUSU website in mp3 format, and portions of the interview - or perhaps the whole thing - will be available as a transcript. This is the first time anything like this has been done, and it will represent a landmark step toward making the AUSU website truly interactive. In June of 2002, Debbie Jabbour, Shirley Barg, and myself presented a paper at the International Symposium for Educational Conferencing, titled *Bridging The Distance: Students' Perspectives On Virtual Communication In Distance Education* (<http://cde.athabasca.ca/ISEC2002/papers/barg.pdf>). In this paper, we discussed the underutilization of communications technology by the university, and talked about ways in which students' unions could bridge that gap by providing an enhanced level of technological interactivity through websites and teleconferencing. Debbie pointed out to me this week that by being able to present Dr. Abrioux's speech on the AUSU website, we are finally fulfilling that goal.

I had hoped to comment on the meeting in this issue of The Voice, but Dominique's speech ran for about an hour, plus a 20-30 minute question period, which was followed by the regular council meeting. So much information was presented, that I would be remiss if I merely touched on a few surface points. Next week, look for coverage of both the council meeting, and Dominique's speech, by which time the mp3 files should be ready, and the supporting documentation will be available online.

Regardless of whether attendees were swayed by Dr. Abrioux's plea for support, his willingness to speak directly to students indicates a new level of respect for students, and a move toward ending the less-desirable word-of-mouth system which was used to address students and council members in the past. Thank you to Dominique for his time and his willingness to be questioned by all attendees. I hope that in the months to come The Voice will have an opportunity to provide AU students with more direct statements from AU.

AUSU Survey on Tuition Deregulation at AU.

AU has asked the Alberta government for exemption from the cap which dictates how much tuition can be raised each year. So far, AU has not released a statement explaining the need for this change, but has communicated several reasons for this request to the Students' Union.

AUSU has created a small survey to assess student opinions on the move toward deregulated tuition for AU. You can access the survey, and read more information on this topic, here:
<http://www.ausu.org/tuitionsurvey/index.php>

All AU students are urged to voice their opinion on this very important matter.

The first Voice writing contest

See this issue for full details of the first Voice writing contest. Good luck to all entrants. Please ensure that you differentiate between items submitted for the contest, and those submitted for immediate publication!

Read an Interview with Dominique Abrioux on the AU site:

This is not the statement on tuition deregulations for Distance Ed as mentioned in the editorial, but a promotional interview done by AU:

<http://www.athabascau.ca/frontpage/articles/DominiqueInterview.htm>

25 year celebration for Dominique

Dr. Abrioux celebrates 25 years with AU. Read coverage of the celebration here:

<http://www.athabascau.ca/frontpage/articles/25yearsDominique.htm>

Fiction Wanted

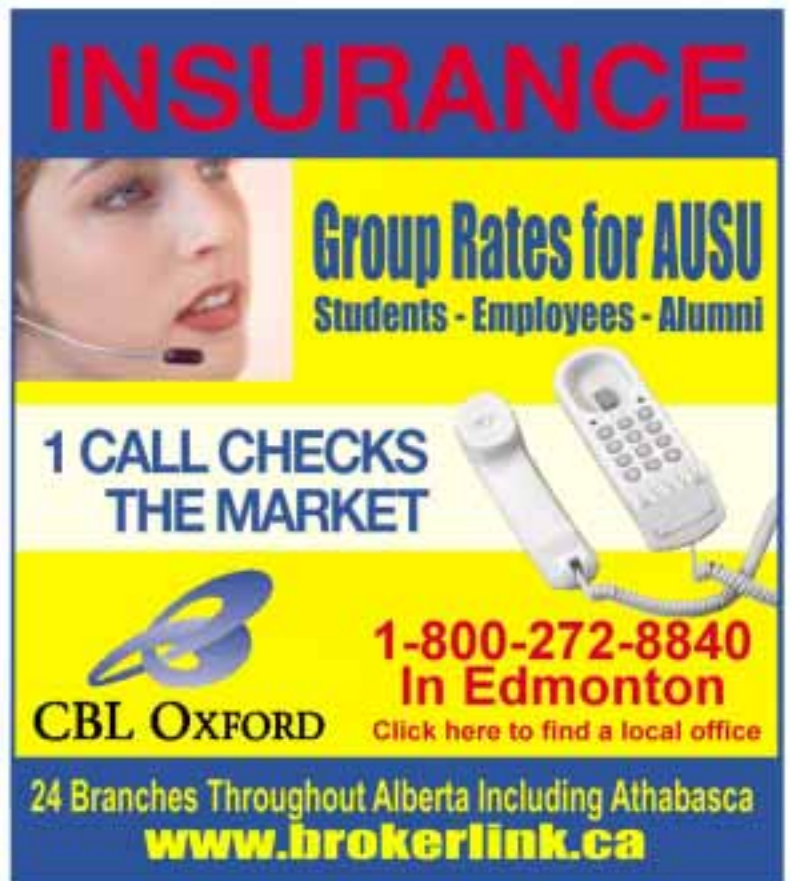
The Voice fiction feature has become popular, but submissions have been slow. Send us your best fiction today, and it might become our next feature.

Attention Budding Writers

The Voice needs some new Voices! We know you have plenty to say, so why not get paid for it. Send us a writing sample or article for submission and you might be published in an upcoming issue. It's fun, it's easy, and it pays. Contact voice@ausu.org for more details.

Link of interest

The AUSU Website has pages devoted to past convocations, as well as the last annual distinguished alumni presentation. Find these pages under the 'Graduation' link on the top, right-hand corner of <http://www.ausu.org/index.php>



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THE FIRST VOICE MAGAZINE WRITING CONTEST!

\$600 in scholarships to be awarded
\$300 each in the fiction and non-fiction categories

Write for The Voice and win money for your education.

The Voice is launching its very first writing contest, with categories for both fiction, and non fiction.

Non-Fiction: In 1500 words or less, tell us what you would do if you were the President of Athabasca University. Feel free to use research or statistics in your article [with proper citations], or write a creative opinion piece. Don't just write a critique of AU - tell us what you would do to make a difference and to make distance education even better!

Fiction: Free form - write a 1500 word or less fiction submission in any genre or any format. Short stories, poetry, a scene from a play, even a comic. Be creative!

Please read the contest rules and regulations and submission guidelines very carefully to ensure you are not disqualified. Good luck!

Rules and Regulations:

- Entrants must be students of Athabasca University. Student status will be confirmed with the AU registrar. Please ensure that the registrar has your current address and contact information.
- All entries become the property of The Voice. Winning entries will be published in an upcoming Voice issue. The Voice reserves the right to print non-winning entries at a rate of remuneration in accordance with current Voice freelance submission rates. The Voice may use information from non-fiction entries to create a composite article about what entrants would do as president of AU. No remuneration will be provided for such use.
- All decisions regarding this contest and the selection of winners remain with the judging panel and are final and binding.
- AU, AUSU, and Voice staff or council members are not eligible for the contest.
- Entries will be judged by a panel to be selected by the Voice Editor, and this panel may include: AU students, AU tutors, and/or AUSU council members. The panel will include at least 3 members.
- The Voice Editor will collect articles and oversee the judging, but will not be a judge.
- Entries must be original works which have not been printed or published elsewhere, and must not be course assignment papers or derivatives of.
- Entries must not contain any information that would make the identity of the author evident to judges. To insure fairness, all entries will be forwarded to the judging panel with a reference number attached, but no personally identifying information will be forwarded. The Voice Editor will keep the identity of the authors private until the contest closes. The Voice editor will keep a record of the authors of submissions, and will be the sole owner of this list.
- Entries will not be edited for grammar, spelling, or content, although The Voice Editor may black out any personally identifying information contained within the submission. Otherwise, entries will be forwarded to the judging panel, as is.
- **The deadline for submissions in both categories will be October 15, 2003. The winner will be announced by November 10, 2003. The Voice reserves the right to extend either deadline if necessary.**
- One grand prize winner will be selected in both the fiction and non-fiction categories. If no entries are received in one of the categories, the prize money will be returned to the Voice scholarship budget. Prizes will be awarded in the form of a cheque, payable in Canadian funds.
- The Voice reserves the right to add additional, secondary prizes.

- The Voice is not responsible for lost emails. The Voice editor will confirm receipt of all entries by email. Follow up if you do not receive a reply.
- All entrants agree to allow their name and city to be printed, along with their submission, should it be selected as a winning entry. No further remuneration will be paid to the contest winner when their entry is printed.
- Entrants will be asked to sign a standard Release and Indemnity form; each prize winner agrees to release the Sponsor and its agents from any liability in connection with the prizes awarded in this contest.
- Any entrant found to be tampering with the contest results, or attempting to influence any of the judging members, or using any forums or other public communications media to advise others of which entry is theirs will be disqualified; or if The Voice editor determines, at her sole discretion, that any other form of tampering has been attempted, that entrant will be disqualified.
- Where applicable, this contest is subject to all federal, provincial and municipal laws. Contest void where prohibited by law.

Submission Guidelines:

- Your submission must be an electronic file, sent as an attachment to email. Submissions sent as the body of an email will not be accepted. Contact voice@ausu.org if you require instructions on how to attach a file to an email.
- Submissions should be in Microsoft Word format [.doc], rich text format [.rtf] or plain text format [.txt]. If you use a Word Processor other than Word or work on a Mac computer, you can save a file in one of these alternate formats using the 'save as' function and selecting the desired format on the save menu. Contact The Voice editor if you require assistance in formatting your submission.
- All entries must be under 1500 words, due to judging time constraints. Length will be determined by the Word Count feature in Microsoft Word. Your References and Citations section will not be included in the word count.
- Entries should not include unnecessary formatting such as drop caps, graphics [unless the graphic is integral to the work], or unusual fonts. Times New Roman or Arial 12 point font are preferred. Entries must be text - scans of hand written or typed documents will not be accepted.
- All entries forwarded to the judging panel will be converted to the same file format, font style and font size.
- Submit your entry as an email attachment. The email should include the following information: Your full name, your AU student ID number, an email address and telephone number where we may contact you, your home address, the title of your entry, and whether you are submitting a fiction or non-fiction entry. Make sure non-fiction entries are based on the topic question detailed above. Fiction entries can be on any topic you like. Do not include your contact information within your article - but be sure to include a title. Your contact information and article will be coded, and filed separately.
- Entries will be judged on the following criteria:
 - Non Fiction entries: will be judged on originality, creativity, the plausibility of your suggestions, and how well your support your suggestions with data or argument. You will also be judged on the presentation of your article, including professionalism, proper spelling, grammar and syntax, and readability.
 - Fiction entries: will be judged on creativity, entertainment value, and the originality or your writing style. Regardless of the genre you choose, you will be judged on the effectiveness of your piece, and your technical writing skills.



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.

AUSU STUDENT GIFT PACKS NOW AVAILABLE



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

The packs are filled with AUSU logo items to help you study, relax, and learn more about AUSU.

Contact ausu@ausu.org to order your gift pack today!

EDMONTON EVENTS

Linda McQuaig on "Value versus Values"

September 6, 2003 (Free admission)
3:30 to 5:00 p.m. in the Muttart Hall
@ **Grant MacEwan College's Alberta College Campus**
10050 - MacDonald Drive - Infoline: 497-5616

On September 6, Grant MacEwan will proudly host The 2nd Annual Muttart Foundation Lecture. This year's address by Linda McQuaig, noted journalist, author of *All You Can Eat: Greed, Lust and the New Capitalism* and provocative speaker on politics and economics, promises to deliver very timely food for thought. Ms McQuaig's topic for this year's Muttart Lecture is "Value versus Values".

According to Ms. McQuaig, "Capitalism has always been about liberating greed, but the New Capitalism of the last two decades has pushed things dramatically further in unleashing greed from social constraints. For all our dizzying economic growth, we seem to have got things fundamentally backwards. We are allowing society to serve the interests of the economy, rather than insisting that the economy serve the interests of society." Ms. McQuaig's lecture will challenge us to consider what happens when emphasis is placed more on economic value than on value to the community.

This lecture is sponsored by the Muttart Foundation in cooperation with the Resource Centre for Voluntary Organizations & the Voluntary Sector Management Program. We invite everyone join us at this free public event.

To register, call the Resource Centre for Voluntary Organizations (RCVO) at 497-5616 or e-mail us at: robertsonl@macewan.ca

Courtesy of: The Community Networks Group © Tel/Fax: (780) 474-6058 / Cell: (780) 995-6819

To list events of interest to students anywhere in Canada, contact voice@ausu.org.



Barbara Godin

As I reluctantly approached my fiftieth birthday I wondered if turning fifty would really be as traumatic as I had heard. Fifty certainly did not feel or look like it did when I was thirty and looking ahead. However, the gray hair was real, as was the soft jaw line, among other things. Furthermore, I know I eat pretty well the same quantity of food as I have for as long as I can remember, but it is becoming more difficult to keep that "girlish figure." By the way, had someone turned up the heat? Maybe it was global warming, but everywhere I went I felt so much warmer than I used to, even to the point of spontaneously breaking out in a sweat with no effort.

Though being a grandmother fits in with the stereotypical fifty year old, or should I say "middle-ager," I am also working toward my university degree. This was not a common occurrence 20 years ago, but something that seems to be happening more frequently in the over forty age group. Perhaps this is the baby boomers' way of trying to catch up on what we missed, during the drug culture of our youth.

Against the urging of family and friends that I must have a party - a huge party, big celebration, rent a hall, go on a trip - April 6, came and went fairly inconspicuously. A small party with family and friends and I became a middle-age baby-boomer, joining so many of my cohorts already basking in the glow of acquired wisdom.

Though now only months into my new era, I do feel different. Hey I'm 50, I don't have to make excuses cause my waistline isn't like that of my 29-year-old daughter, or try to compete with the Susan Lucci's of daytime TV. I don't need surgery or botox. I'm proud of that wiry gray hair that sticks straight out as if having a mind of its own.

Most important, I don't feel I have to please everyone else, or aspire to make everyone like me. Nor do I have to put my dreams on hold while helping others carve their path in life. Now I can cultivate pleasing myself. I can give myself permission to fulfill my own dreams and strive to make the rest of my life happy. Becoming 50 allowed me the permission to finally accept myself without apologies. Turning 50 is all right!

Walter Gretzky, Stroke Survivor

**I'm alive today
because someone
knew the signs
of a stroke.**

Do you?



STROKE WARNING SIGNS

WEAKNESS
Sudden weakness, numbness or tingling in
the face, arm or leg

TROUBLE SPEAKING
Sudden temporary loss of speech or trouble
understanding speech

VISION PROBLEMS
Sudden loss of vision, particularly in one eye,
or double vision

HEADACHE
Sudden severe and unusual headache

DIZZINESS
Sudden loss of balance, especially with any
of the above signs

**Call 911
or your medical
emergency number
immediately.**



**1-888-HSF-INFO (1-888-473-4636)
www.heartandstroke.ca**



A DAY IN THE PARK

Stacey Steele

Sometimes an event happens in your youth and you don't know quite what to make of it until you've reached a certain level of hindsight and maturity. Or your view of the event changes through different eras of your life. Eleven years ago I was part of a conversation that only lasted around 45 minutes and seemed unusual at the time, but not profound. Eye opening, but not confusing. This conversation was all of those, even all these years later.

In my graduating year, the federal government sponsored a program where western high school students would have a week-long exchange with Quebec students. It was September 1992, months before the separation referendum (if you don't know what I'm talking about, look it up). Thus, our class traveled to a town just outside Montreal. For a small town girl, it was a culture shock. Beer was served at a particular fast food restaurant, I had my first taste of real poutine (before Burger King co-opted it), everybody seemed to smoke, I got to see a busker singing Elvis in French and the whole beauty and culture of the province was breathtaking. I still hope to return someday, as either a visitor or resident.

We did the usual tours, and eventually took a bus trip to Ottawa/Hull, mainly to see the parliament buildings. During some down-time that day, two other girls and I took a walk in a park overlooking the river and parliament buildings. We were young and naive, typical country girls. You have to understand that the town we lived in was small. Rural Saskatchewan considered us even more rural than them. Our graduating class was 11 students - the last "big" class to come out of that K-12 school.

As we were walking, we were stopped in our tracks by some sort of commotion. It took a few minutes to register what was going on. Two men with long, unwashed hair and a few months growth of beard were dancing and singing. Dancing and singing wearing dresses. I was curious and a little dumbfounded by the whole thing, so I walked up to them (a little hesitantly I must admit) and asked them what did they think they were doing. Both of the men had huge smiles, and one replied (while the other one continued dancing and singing unintelligibly), "We are protesting the objectification of women in our society. We must love everyone."

Ok, I thought, that sounds reasonable. Just then three young men, much more polished and sophisticated than us, joined our small group of girls. One struck up some small talk, and we complied. The two dancers then skipped over to us holding flowers, exclaiming how great young love was, gave the flowers to the boys to give to us, and then skipped off their merry way. We ended up losing track of the boys soon after, but came to the park later with our chaperoning teacher.

This is when it really began. Walking on the sidewalk, one the girls I was with saw a pie sitting on a park bench. A whole apple pie, obviously from a bakery still in the box. We passed it around not knowing what to make of it. When the pie was in my hands, I heard a good-natured male voice call out to my left, "I'll take that from you." No sooner had I heard him than another voice bellowed out from my right, "No, give it to me." They were about fifty feet on either side of me. Not knowing what to do, I set the pie in the middle of a sidewalk and said, "Race for it." So they did.

The man on my left was about eighteen to twenty years old, but maybe younger, it was hard to tell. He was obviously homeless, wearing a tattered leather jacket too warm for the weather, and very dirty jeans rolled up to reveal old army boots. He had short, blond curly hair and scraggly hairs on his chin, like he wasn't quite ready to grow a beard, but was trying. Later on I noticed angry looking scabs on the inside of his arms. At first I thought they were nasty mosquito bites (remember I was very small-town). Only after our talk did I realize what they were. His shaking hands belied the fact he hadn't had a fix in the required time.

The man on my right was the boy's polar opposite. Think of a cross between the movie version of Harry Potter's Hagrid and Santa Claus with the agelessness of a sage. His large face was covered by beard, and his hair was shoulder-length and unruly. He wore a plaid lumberjack coat and jeans. A big man, he seemed warm and friendly, just dirty. He won the race. His actions immediately after shocked us all a bit. He threw, not tossed, the pie into the nearest garbage can. "It's poisoned," he said.

Noticing the confusion on our face, he told us the RCMP plants these pies in the park, as a way of "taking care" of the homeless population. "Doesn't look good to have bums in our nation's capitol, does it?"

My teacher was appalled to say the least. She questioned him, and he answered. I think that's what started everything. I can't quite remember, but the next thing I knew we were all sitting on a park bench, with the younger male squatting beside me. I don't recall everything that was questioned or answered, the big man did most of the talking. Here is what I remember the most...

The conversation turned to why they were on the streets. The big man (I don't remember any names being exchanged, but perhaps they were), started by telling us tales of his family. "There was no love there at all, kids were seen but not heard. We lived in a big house, had lots of money, but weren't allowed any sort of luxuries. They wouldn't even buy butter they were so cheap, wouldn't spend the extra couple cents for butter once in a while" (he seemed particularly upset about that issue, and came back to it a few times in the conversation). "I left years ago and won't go back."

The younger man had a typical story of being kicked out of the house at a young age, coming back, and then running away. He didn't say much the whole time. Maybe he saw us girls, only a year or two younger than him, and wondered how he ended up here, or maybe he was nervous, sitting in the park talking to us, worried the cops would stop. He was polite though, and contained an aura of innocence about him. Just very quiet. The big man on the other hand, was talkative and loud. This man was also the single best storyteller I have heard in my life. I'm sure many a campfire burning is missing his strong voice.

The big guy continued talking. "I have a degree in Literature from Laurentian University. Just because I live out here doesn't mean I'm illiterate." He clarified why he wasn't teaching, or holding down some sort of job with his education. "I will not be a part of the establishment, perpetrating crimes on society." He continued on this train of thought for a while.

His views, albeit controversial, were communicated articulately and showed his obvious intelligence. The questions wondered, but not asked, still hung in the air: Does he have a child wondering where his father has gone? Colleagues not knowing what to do with the boxes of his personal items, too guilty and confused to throw them out? A wife, melancholy at the sight of a dresser unused, a side of the closet empty?

We probably will never know the real story around this homelessness, but his conviction astounded me. What would the politicians sitting in their offices across from the river think if they found out a homeless man was talking a better talk than them, and sounding good too?

He regaled us with stories about being homeless. He led the gypsy life, he said. There was a network across the country of men and women living on the streets. They communicated through messages to transient friends passing through various towns. They knew of deaths and illnesses, which cities were safe, the best routes to travel. He said it was a quieter way of life, no hustle and bustle of early morning traffic, cell phones, and other trappings of technology.

We wondered, what about winter? It can't be safe. He replied there are some that won't leave the city. Some out of sentiment, some not wanting to leave the familiar, and some afraid their territory will be taken. Only a few last the winter. He spoke with disdain of these fellow "bums" that lack the resourcefulness to survive the winter. "What do you do?" we asked. "Go where it's warm," he smiled. "Most likely down south, or some of us have a five-star holiday courtesy of the provincial government." He stressed that he and his partner were not among those that committed some minor infraction that would get them just enough time in the correctional so that they could be out by spring.

He continued telling us about the life on the streets; we sat awed sometimes asking questions but mostly just listening. They lived the life of gypsies, he said. No rules, everyone looks out for everyone, using your wits to survive. He painted a romantic picture. I took a drag of my cigarette and got ready to butt it out under my shoe. "Wait," a quiet voice said, "I'll finish that for you." The boy looked up at me, then quickly looked down.

"Here just take one."

"No, that one's fine." Our eyes met for a millisecond, and I gave him the burning cigarette. He was embarrassed and humble, or was he desperate and ashamed. Whatever he felt, I knew he did not feel the same about street life as his larger-than-life comrade.

I returned my attention to the story telling. He was a poet, he said. Sometimes he writes them down, sometimes he memorizes them, but most of the time he improvises on the spot. He opened his mouth when another commotion started. The dancing, singing, peace-loving guys were back. They were doing somersaults and appeared to be mock wrestling on the grass. "Those guys are here all the time, they don't hurt anyone, but they're high as a kite. PCP is my guess." We were not surprised.

Then the poetry began. I can't for the life of me remember most of it. The one that struck me the most was a poem, written in the third person, highlighting the inequality of women in society (diplomacy was another of his talents, we were all female). He commanded an audience, even one as small as us. He knew when to pause for effect and how long. All the cadences were there, he took our unconscious cues and tuned his performance accordingly. We were all breathless. He ended each stanza with the line "because you're just a woman." He seemed to highlight all that was wrong with the treatment of women in all aspects of society. At the very last line he said quietly, but not softly, "because you're just a fucking woman." The use of the word fuck, didn't phase us at all or seem offensive, it was elegant in its simplicity.

We continued to chat, you know how time flies, then our teacher announced our departure with regrets. Nice to meet you's were exchanged. Then they walked off. The older man seemed more tired than his counterpart. His shuffle did not show any signs of the lumbering run we were greeted with. Did the long conversation tire him out? Or did he realize, in our good-byes, that we were heading to a home, a family, and comfort? Did he believe everything he had said about the carefree life he led, that he was street-smart enough to survive? Did he wonder if there would be one night his senses would fail him, and he would fail to see daylight? Did we exhaust him with our naiveté, and wide-eyed questions? Did he think of his family and how they weren't so bad after all? Or

maybe we were just another audience to scam, and he had to find something to eat before the day was done. I hope it was not the latter, but it could be.

So you see, I left this park eleven years ago, and I still have more questions than answers. I could take a social stance on homelessness and the societal ills that lead to it. I could study addiction, and counsel those who need help. I could donate more money, more blankets, more time and administer more help. Did this experience mean we should value what we have or leave what we don't value?

The men we met in the park that day were proud, they did not want us to pity them (I think I recall the older man refusing money from my teacher or one of the girls). Although homelessness and its causes are serious, we weren't talking with a social cause. Maybe he didn't need blankets or food, they could get that elsewhere, but four minds open to what he had to say. Maybe he needed respect, not for his survival methods or street machismo, but for his mind and stories. I will never forget that day and how I felt leaving that park. It feels much the same as now. Is it confusion or enlightenment? Awe or surprise? Maybe someday I will figure it out, but I don't think so.

AU Profiles:

Sandra Moore spoke with Audrey and Wendy at AU convocation...

AU GRADUATE PROFILE OF AUDREY COLEMAN

LIVES IN: AB

TRAVEL TIME TO ATHABASCA: 4 hours

PROGRAM COMPLETED: Bachelor Of Nursing

YEARS IT

TOOK TO COMPLETE: 12 years

FAVORITE COURSE: Nursing Informatics and Mathematics

LEAST FAVORITE COURSE: English

FAVORITE TUTOR: Ms. Broad

HIGHEST FINAL GRADE: 97

LOWEST FINAL GRADE: 76



When Audrey started her degree her 2 children were in high school and they supported her in many ways while she worked full-time and studied. For many years Audrey looked forward to the personal fulfillment of graduating and she encourages other students not to give up. "It is well worth the effort to finally complete all the courses and graduate." She now plans to continue working full time in an acute center in a small town and devote more time to her hobbies of sewing and knitting.

Congratulations Audrey Coleman, BN

AU GRADUATE PROFILE OF WENDY KLAUBERT

AGE: 40

LIVES IN: Calgary, AB

TRAVEL TIME TO ATHABASCA: 4.5 hours

PROGRAM COMPLETED: Bachelor Of Administration

YEARS IT TOOK TO COMPLETE: 4.5 Years

FAVORITE COURSE: Human Resource Management

LEAST FAVORITE COURSE: Microeconomics

FAVORITE TUTOR: On-line help (call center)

HIGHEST FINAL GRADE: 96

LOWEST FINAL GRADE: 56



Wendy traveled to Athabasca along with her husband Rudi (sans the two kids) to walk the red carpet to and achieve an accomplishment "like no other." I met up with Wendy and her husband as they arrived early in the convocation tent to ensure Rudi was able to get a front row seat (well, third row seat as the first two rows are reserved for "important" people like the President of AU's wife and other distinguished guests). When asked how her family adjusted, Rudi piped up to say that he took on more household duties, to which his wife agreed with praise for his assistance.

Wendy's advice to other students is to learn the fine art of juggling school with family, friends and work (Wendy should know how to do this, she worked full time while completing her degree in 4.5 years!) Wendy would like to now continue on her studies for her CMA.

When asked what her thoughts were on the convocation experience she said the day had just begun but that the alumni dinner the previous night had been cramped and way too warm.

Congratulations Wendy Klaubert, B Admin.

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.



THE VOICE FICTION FEATURE

Poetry by, Chantelle Cressman



The Oblivion

The moon was an orange globe
as it sailed its burden of clouds
over the spearhead silhouettes of treetops
as it followed us along
this ribbon of pavement that divides fields
into patchwork
(the road we travel being a thread
in the oblivion of open pastures)

In the warmth of the speeding car
you spoke
and grinned
in your manner of joking
that suggests
there is business beneath the play
and there will be no mercy here
(The idea is love but the meaning is hate)
and as you continued
I smiled to acknowledge the humour
remembering that humour covers our shame
but mocks our dignity

The ancient hands of winter branches
reached open towards the sky
awaiting the answers of Spring
their plea for disclosure
a star
in the oblivion of endless galaxies

Time Travel

As children we wish to mimic time travel
to undo our own passage
across a pathway stepping backwards
heel-over-toe

We expect the wind of our footfalls
to rush back into our bodies like a wave
the surge of our blood reversing
our fingertips light with a buoyant flood

But instead our footprints double over themselves
as if we have trampled this soft earth twice
in the same direction

The impressions of our soles
do not dissolve into the smoothness
of wet clay returning to uniformity

once transformed this energy does not retreat

Instead the earth remembers the suction
of our skin's slippery touch
its own quick surrender to our weight
giving no allowance for erasure

Like time a distance traveled
is infinite in its existence
indefinite in its beginning





I began my railway career in April 1988 when I hired onto CP Rail in Cranbrook, BC as a trainperson (termed *trainman* in those days). I worked for CP Rail as a trainperson/yard-person for several years until qualifying as a conductor/yard-foreman in January 1992. In May 1993 I was offered a position as trainperson at BC Rail and it so happened that CP Rail was offering incentive severance packages to its running trades employees at the time. I took a buyout from CP Rail on a Friday and began working for BC Rail the following Monday. Nine months later, I had been accepted into the locomotive engineers' training program and started my classes in January 1994. I was qualified as a locomotive engineer in May 1994 and have worked in that capacity ever since.

I can't count how many people have commented to me, upon learning what I do for a living, that they had always dreamed of driving trains. I have had physicians and lawyers confide their childhood dreams of becoming locomotive engineers to me, much as others always wanted to be members of the police or fire services.

My father was a life-long railroader, although he was in management and not a member of the running trades. Throughout my youth he would comment that I should become a locomotive engineer based on the fact that he handed out many of their paycheques and knew that they made a very reasonable wage. Despite that, I never had any aspirations of working for a railroad. Actually, I never had any clear occupational goals at all. In hindsight, I suffered from what has been termed *career drift*—the "phenomenon of entering jobs, occupations, and careers with little attention to planning" (Falkenberg, Stone, & Meltz, 1999, pp. 263-264). Although I enjoyed many intrinsic rewards from the jobs that I performed throughout my late teens and early twenties, the extrinsic job rewards left much to be desired—low pay, few benefits, job insecurity, and frequent layoffs. By early 1988 I was fed-up with those factors and it was then that I heeded my father's advice to apply to the railway as a trainperson. "Railway jobs are typically well-paid with good benefits and rail workers enjoy increased job security with accrued seniority" is what he frequently told me.

I had no idea whatsoever what a trainperson's job entailed when I applied for the position, but when I was selected for an interview I began the process of *anticipatory socialization*, which has been described thus: "people develop an idealistic image of what it is like to work in a particular occupation. Such images are usually unrealistic, emphasizing the positive aspects of the work and ignoring its negative features" (Falkenberg, Stone, & Meltz, 1999, p. 208). I imagined a secure, well-paid career composed of riding trains and waving to passers-by as I rolled by them on sunny afternoons.

It was soon after I was actually hired by CP Rail that I began to experience reality shock, discovering that the realities of working for a railway are very different from my pre-employment expectations. The downside of railroading has many facets and a few of them include: 24/7 on call for many junior employees; senior employees enjoy a pseudo-schedule only, knowing the days that they will work, but not the exact times; frequent layoffs of junior employees; coercive managerial tactics that contribute to a psychologically poisonous us-versus-them mentality between labour and management (at CP Rail I used to joke that after putting prospective employees through rigorous pre-employment screening, management immediately began trying to gather evidence to dismiss those same employees the day after they were hired); seemingly endless hours of grueling and life-shortening night work; poor and worsening health and safety conditions; and I could go on and on.

There comes a time when money is no longer the overriding factor in a person's work. It took me about ten years of railroading to overcome my instrumental work perspective, but once I did I came to the realization that I was entirely mismatched to my occupation. At that point I began to search for more intrinsically satisfying rewards which I was not finding in my work as a locomotive engineer. I began to get involved in the labour movement and took up university education which supported my Union work. In the very first article that I wrote for the Voice, I discussed my feelings toward my job: "after performing this job for six months I found it to be boring and intellectually deadening" (see The Voice, Vol. 9, No. 6).

I am absolutely determined to educate myself for a mid-life career change to acquire a job which I will find more intellectually challenging and suited to my personality and attributes. My wife and I have previously discussed my returning to school fulltime in order to speed-up this process and it just happens that BC Rail is now offering incentive severance packages to qualified locomotive engineers. Now is the time for me to depart from the railway industry. On Friday August 8, 2003, I worked my last shift as a locomotive engineer. After twenty years of continuous employment, one might expect that I would experience anxiety over such a move, but I can tell you that I feel as if a thousand tons has been lifted from my shoulders. I feel like that happiest person in British Columbia and I am ready to dig into my scholastic studies with renewed vigor. Only time will tell if my decision is financially sound; however, there is no doubt that, psychologically speaking, severing my employment relationship with the railway is the right thing for me. I hereby declare myself to be a fulltime Athabasca University student.

References

Falkenberg, L., Stone, T. & Meltz, N. (1999). *Human resource management in Canada* (4th ed.). Toronto, Ontario, Canada: Harcourt Brace & Company.

Wayne E. Benedict has a varied career history and strong links to the Canadian labour movement. He is working toward his Bachelor of Human Resources and Labour Relations at Athabasca University. For a more detailed writer bio, see *The Voice* writers' feature page, at: <http://www.ausu.org/voice/authors/authorfull.php?ID=7>. If you would like to send article-feedback to Wayne, he can be reached at wayneben@telus.net.



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.

FROM MY PERSPECTIVE

Festivals and Commercialization in Edmonton

Debbie Jabbour



Edmonton bills itself as "festival city", and rightly so. Of our numerous summer festivals, the main ones are: Klondike Days, Jazz Festival, Heritage Days, Fringe Festival and the Folk Festival, but there are many other smaller ones such as the Cariwest, Bluesfest, Taste of Edmonton, International Film Festival, Street Performers, and the Blueberry Bluegrass & Country Music Festival that highlight summer in Edmonton. Of all of these festivals, Heritage Days is, to me, Edmonton's crown jewel.

This is not to say the others are any less stellar. Edmonton's Fringe

festival is a celebration of theatre, a two week event that turns our trendy Whyte Avenue into a mecca of the arts, with plays ranging from Shakespeare to new works by upcoming young playwrights. Whyte Avenue is filled with street artists, art sellers, performers, and everything wild and weird takes over for the duration of the festival.

Edmonton's Folk Festival is also a beloved event that brings Gallagher Hill alive with the sounds of music for three days, in a river valley setting that provides a perfect natural amphitheatre. Tickets are always sold out long in advance, and up until two years ago, attendees participated in a "run" for the best seats - the moment gates opened, normally staid and well-behaved Edmontonians, after waiting hours in line, would gather up their tents, coolers and blankets, and make a run towards the main stage to stake out the spot that would become a temporary three-day home. Even though it often rains during the beginning of August, folk fest attendees are never daunted - sitting the rain and mud seems to be an important part of the experience!

Klondike Days used to be a celebration of our history, a festival that brought Edmonton's downtown alive with ten days of free entertainment, a nostalgic journey with people dressed in garments from the gold rush days.

All three of these festivals have fallen victim to change, unfortunately, and it's not always good. The Fringe Festival is now being held under the watchful "big brother" eye of Edmonton police, who have mounted cameras throughout the avenue to film every festival goer in action. This is supposedly in response to the infamous Whyte Avenue Canada Day riots of two years ago, a measure to maintain crowd control, but many Edmontonians, including myself, consider this a gross and unnecessary invasion of privacy. I always loved attending the Fringe, but my enjoyment will be lessened this year by the presence of these cameras watching and filming my every move.

Klondike Days has been completely ruined by our city council, who several years ago decided that they should try to make it a generic festival that was more like the Calgary Stampede. Downtown entertainment was cut to a minimum, people were encouraged to "dress down" rather than "dress up", and what used to be a nostalgic walk into the past has become a half-hearted sort-of party that no one feels like attending anymore. Even the

wonderful Sunday promenade that used to see Edmonton's downtown streets shut down while continuous entertainment ran on a dozen stages has become a thing of the past. I didn't even bother attending K-Days this year - there was nothing left to see.

The Folk Music festival still retains most of its original flavour, even though the "run" for seats has been eliminated. It boasts an impressive line-up of entertainment every year, and crowds are still sell-out. So far the Folk Fest has adapted well to change.

Heritage Days, however, now stands to be the next festival that is ruined by our city. This year saw the implementation of a major change to what I consider Edmonton's signature festival, a change that corporatized Heritage Days.

Heritage Days is a celebration of what Canada is all about. For three days, virtually every cultural group you can think of (anywhere from 50-70 groups) sets up a tent in Edmonton's Hawrelak Park. Under that tent, each group provides a sample of indigenous food, art, culture, dance, and music. Admission is free, and the park fills with hundreds of thousands of people each day. Food is cooked on outdoor grills, and each pavilion is a unique little world unto itself, where you go to experience the food, crafts and entertainment of fellow Canadians who are of different ethnic origins. In an afternoon you can travel from Egypt to England, from Spain to Sri Lanka, from Peru to Pakistan, from Nigeria to Nicaragua.

This year, for the first time, the Kurdish pavilion allowed this displaced ethnic group without a country to share their cultural traditions. According to the Heritage Days website, the festival presents a "celebration of Canada's renowned multicultural spirit in an atmosphere of tolerance" during which time local cultural associations "look beyond centuries-old disagreements to co-exist peacefully for three days in the idyllic setting of Edmonton's River Valley" and share their unique cultural traditions. This is an understatement that inadequately describes the wonderful unity and celebration of culture that occurs during Heritage Days.

Although I had attended Heritage Days right from the early days of its conception in the mid-1970's, I first became involved as a participant in 1988. My daughters are of Spanish heritage, and had been taking flamenco classes, resulting in an invitation from Edmonton's Spanish Association to dance on the Spanish pavilion stage during Heritage Days. We did this for several years, and each year, a tall, elegant Spanish woman named Fifi, always invited us to join the association. I finally took her up on her offer in the summer of 1990, the same year I remarried.

My husband was very supportive of our membership, even though he was of Lebanese descent, and we soon became actively involved. I was elected to the board as treasurer, and the following year my husband was also elected as a board member.

We developed some wonderful friendships with others of the Spanish association. It was an eclectic mix. Our daughters danced with a young girl whose father was from Argentina, her mother from Spain; and another young girl whose parents were both from Chile. We enjoyed many dinners together, where I learned how to make paella, calamari, and other Spanish dishes, and our different cultures met on a common ground, where origins did not matter.

For several years while we sat on the board of the Spanish Association, we participated in Heritage days as pavilion workers. Some cultural groups viewed earnings from Heritage Days as a way to fund events throughout the year, but the Spanish association was very small. We just saw the event as a chance to showcase Spanish culture, and we didn't worry much about how much money we made. In fact, most years we barely broke even, and the surplus was used to treat all the workers to a trip to the mountains. During the years my husband and I were involved we tried to build up some reserves to fund a Spanish association building of some kind, a central place to meet. We never managed to earn enough, however.

But we had so much fun at Heritage Days! Our pavilion would be alive with members of Edmonton's Spanish community and friends, as we hawked a taste of Spain - paella, pepitos (marinated bbq pork), sangria, and patatas bravas. The barbeque would be sizzling with the tantalizing aroma of the pepitos as the dancers performed, and we would all be dancing behind the counter as well, clapping along and shouting supportive olé's. The conclusion of the dance show was always a lively rumba during which audience members were invited onstage and everyone got up to dance.

At the end of each very long day we would all be happily exhausted - but not too tired to enjoy our own impromptu flamenco party. A guitar player would provide the background music while everyone improvised in a dance, the cooks would fry up a special seafood-filled worker's paella, and we'd share a glass of "real" sangria (with wine), or a "sombra y sol" (Spanish drink that combines brandy with licorice liquor) as we finally relaxed together.

One year we tried an innovative new concept - "taste Spain for a dollar", in which we provided small samples of all the traditional foods for just a loonie. People loved it, and our pavilion was the most popular on site that year. Many pavilions tried a system of ticketing to keep track of sales, but it was not always successful, being clumsy and slow, and generally we found it easiest to just work with cash. Hand over your loonie and get a plate of food. It was a casual and spontaneous atmosphere that marked the spirit of the festival itself. Heritage Days was built on volunteers and sharing, and it was not intended to be a money-maker.

With any group, of course, change occurs and sometimes there are conflicts. We, and many of our friends, discontinued our active participation with the Spanish association when new members joined who felt that people of non-Spanish descent should not be on the board. It was ironic that these kinds of attitudes should have interfered with what brings Edmontonians together in a celebration of cultural differences, and it saddened me.

However, we continued to enjoy the offerings of the Spanish pavilion each year at Heritage Days, and the friendships we had made endured. This year, however, the Spanish pavilion did not participate in Heritage Days, nor did several of the other founding groups such as Germany, France, Scotland and Japan. Why? Edmonton is now commercializing the festival. Several years of severe rainy weather had hindered attendance, resulting in financial difficulties for the festival organization. Each pavilion pays a fee to participate, but then are free to sell their product and collect the proceeds.

During the past few years the festival organization has implemented several measures to improve their financial situation, for example, a corporate sponsorship with Coke that saw pavilions obligated to purchase their soft drinks from the festival at a much higher rate, reducing any profit on resale. This year, however, festival organizers took it a step further and implemented a ticketing system. Instead of buying your food directly from each pavilion, festival goers now have to buy tickets at 85 cents each, of which 10 cents goes to the Heritage festival. In protest, eight of the founding pavilions withdrew their participation this year, including the Spanish pavilion.

Why are these tickets a problem? For pavilions like Spain, they were already simply breaking even, and the charges for rentals and things like pop purchase had already squeezed out what small profit could be made. The spontaneity has been destroyed - a key element to food sales is catching someone's attention as they walk by, and once they've gone they don't usually return, their dollar spent at another pavilion. The odd 85 cent amount resulted in long, slow line ups to purchase tickets, with many complaining that the amount was confusing and resulted in delays for providing change.

For most pavilions food items required four or five tickets, resulting in a price increase. Where in previous years, for example, a beverage would have been \$1.00, it now became \$1.70 (two tickets). Price gouging on ice

cream was rampant, with vendors selling a popsicle for \$2.55 (three tickets). For some strange reason, the organizers also chose to cut off ticket sales before the pavilions themselves closed - resulting in many complaints from people wanting to purchase food late in the day and being unable to do so without a ticket.

The need to raise money also resulted in anomalies such as Second Cup being invited to participate as a sponsor and having the largest, most central tent - the most common comment I heard from people was that they didn't know Second Cup was a country!

My favourite festival is in danger of being ruined by the "need" to turn it into a commercial money-maker. Many in Edmonton agree, and although we recognize the need to have funding to survive, hopefully the festival organizers will look at other funding options next year instead of the ticket system. Most importantly, I hope that those pavilions who abstained from participation this year will return. In particular, I know the Heritage festival is diminished by the loss of the Spanish pavilion.

The profound influence the Spanish pavilion had on Heritage Days can be seen on their website, and on an Edmonton postcard series, both of which feature our flamenco dancers. A festival that makes such a significant contribution to the celebration of our Canadian multiculturalism should not be allowed to become just another commercial venture.

REFERENCES

Heritage Days website: <http://www.heritage-festival.com/home/index.php>

Heritage Festival less for loss of pavilions: Way must be found to restore the mosaic of multiculturalism. Paul Simons, *Edmonton Journal*:

<http://www.canada.com/edmonton/edmontonjournal/archives/story.asp?id=81DE92C0-5DE2-470A-9623-6AAD9C7DDA88>



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AUSU THIS MONTH

SURVEY ON AU's PROPOSED REMOVAL FROM THE TUITION CAP

How do you feel about AU being removed from the tuition cap?

Athabasca University, like other universities and colleges in the province, currently falls under Alberta's tuition fee policy that enforces a ceiling on allowable tuition increases. **AU has asked the Alberta government for exemption from the tuition fee policy.** If passed, tuition increases for undergraduate courses at AU will no longer be regulated by specific government controls.

To find out how students feel about this proposed change, AUSU has placed a short survey on the AUSU web site at: <http://www.ausu.org/tuitionsurvey/index.php>. More information can also be found on this page. To learn more about this issue, students are encouraged to visit the AUSU discussion forums [accessible from the "Message Forums" link on the AUSU front page] and to browse the past several issues of The Voice.

Please take a minute to fill out this simple survey, to ensure that the students' union is representing you.



CHAT WITH AUSU ONLINE

If you have a question for AUSU, or would like to get to know your council, drop by the chat-room [accessible through the 'Message Forums' option on the AUSU home page www.ausu.org. You will need an AUSU web site account.] during one of our chat times and talk live with AUSU council members or your Voice editor. **All times are MST**

Wednesday, August 13	7:30 PM	Councillor, Sandra
Saturday, August 16th	5:00 PM	Councillor, Karl
Wednesday, August 20th	3:00 PM	Karl
Friday, August 22nd	12:00 PM	Voice Editor, Tamra
Sunday, August 31	3:00 PM	Sandra

More chat times to be posted soon...

FEATURED TUTOR ON THE AUSU WEB SITE

Audrey O'Brien

French Language and Literature

Audrey O'Brien has been working as a tutor of French language and literature courses at Athabasca university since 1997 and on August 1st will begin a full time position as Academic Coordinator...

Read more at: <http://www.ausu.org/tutor/index.php>



AUSU COMMITTEE SEEKS 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 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, 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.

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Shoot Your Mouth Off

The Government of Canada is beginning a consultation process on the new Firearms Program. So, if you have a yearning to tell the government just what you think should be done about firearms, this would be the opportunity. The consultation covers everything from gun shows and firearm import/export laws to things such as ammunition control, fees, and shooting ranges.

My opinion is fairly normal among Canadians, I think. I see the regulation and control of firearm sales and especially importation as a good thing. But there are still some strange restrictions that I do not understand, such as

tasers being on the prohibited weapons list.

The argument I've heard for this is that since tasers are non-fatal, if they were not prohibited, we'd see much higher use of them. My thinking is that I'd rather see five stores robbed using a taser than one robbery that ends in a fatal gunshot wound.

For those of you who are like me, and prefer firearms be strictly regulated, before dismissing the site, remember that gun advocates have some very strong organizations behind them – organizations that will no doubt suggest to their members that their comments could help their cause. It's up to us to provide some balance for that.

Another Round of Research

The Provincial Government of Ontario is announcing an investment of 8.7 million into cancer research. The money is being divided up into 19 research projects, with typically about half a million dollars being invested in each one. When looking through the list of projects however, it seems that something isn't quite right.

As an example, the project that will receive the most money, \$848,644, is described as the following:

William Mackillop, Queen's University

Clinical trials have demonstrated that radiotherapy combined with chemotherapy is the most effective treatment for certain locally advanced cancers arising in the lungs, and the head and neck region. This research project will determine whether these findings are routinely applied in the treatment of patients in Ontario today, and lead to strategies to ensure that research discoveries benefit the maximum number of patients in the future.

When the largest single chunk of money isn't going to research a new cure, but rather just to see if the ways we already know are effective are actually being used we really have to wonder about how effective this research is likely to be.

I find this hard to understand. Don't the various hospitals and such keep records of the treatments they do? Surely so, because they have to bill the government. And if they do, what more would this research project take than a few phone calls?

At the same time, one of the smallest research grants (\$387,792) goes to a project described as the following:

Jean Gariepy, University Health Network / University of Toronto

By modifying a powerful bacterial toxin, Dr. Gariepy will create new proteins that can bind and selectively destroy cancer cells. This protein template can be modified to create millions of similar, but distinctive, proteins that will function as "mini-toxins." This research will determine what functions can be added to this protein template in order to create powerful guided agents that can target cancer cells.

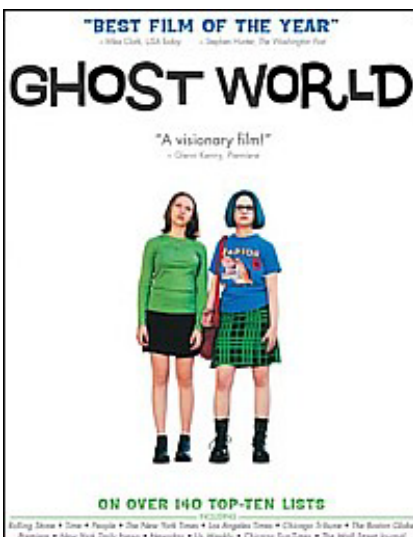
Now, I have absolutely no idea when it comes to fighting cancer what the best tactic is, but it certainly seems to me that research actually looking for a new means of fighting cancer should be given more money than research on an administrative issue with current procedures.

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.



GHOST WORLD (2001)
Film Review

By Laura Seymour



Do you ever get into watching those funny little films you just know are never going to have the big names? Sometimes called "art house," these little gems have actors that you recognize, but aren't multi-million-bucks-a-role actors. Instead, these films have wonderful character actors like Steve Buscemi, who plays Seymour in *Ghost World*.

This is a film I found to be touching for a number of reasons. It paints a world that I think so many of us can relate to.

The film was released in 2001 and is now showing on the Movie Central movie channels. Interestingly, around that time Steve was in New York and, as a former New York firefighter of four years, grabbed his old gear and helped dig out after the September 11th tragedy. But in this film, he's just a loveable cranky guy who just can't seem to score, and who doesn't "have anything in common with 99% of humanity." He hates modern music and

collects ancient 78 rpm records. CDs are a horror to him. He sucks hugely at conversation with the opposite sex and knows he's "a geek" to others.

A lovely young girl, Enid, played by Thora Birch, discovers Seymour. At first she thinks he's just this eccentric guy, but slowly comes to want him in her life. She hasn't done anything for herself in life -- hasn't discovered

what makes herself tick. Some part of her wants to blow the city and go out and live somewhere else in the world. Since Enid's home life isn't the way she wants it and school is now a final chapter, she starts to express herself to Seymour after helping herself to a bottle of champagne in his fridge. Seymour has been putting up with a pretty blonde woman who has nothing in common with him; so he finally lets himself get swept off his feet by the young girl. Except after a hot night in his apartment, she decides to go into hiding and becomes even more confused about what to do.

Enid's girlfriend, Rebecca, played by Scarlett Johansson has been waiting for Enid to make a decision on getting a job and even which apartment they'll chose to move into. Since Enid is just as much a creative outcast as Seymour, she fails miserably at a local theatre job. (This is eerily familiar to me!)

Secretly, Enid isn't sure she'll agree to move in with Rebecca or not, but they've been friends for eons so she stays quiet.

Teri Garr gives a "different" style of performance as Enid's dad's girlfriend. When dad and his girlfriend decide to move in together at the end of the summer, that's all too much for poor Enid. She sobs her way through the night, settles her feelings with her girlfriend and Seymour, and packs up to get on a bus.

As a lovely little touch, a regular character pops up throughout the film, sitting on a nearby bus bench. He sits there in his lovely business suit, convinced the bus will show up, day after day. The bus bench carries a sign saying, NOT IN SERVICE, but stubbornly our man continues to wait for the bus to leave town. Of course, if you can guess he gets the bus, and so Enid catches the next one.

This film is based on a comic book of the same name. I must be missing some very interesting comics!

One of the film's producers is John Malkovich, and after seeing *Being John Malkovich* I really believe this is his kind of film. It is just as quirky and yet has just as much delight and wonder to it.

This film has a great many touches that make us aware we are all, in some way, not connected to the odd world around us. As a result we get closer to our characters and enjoy the results. Except one thing, I feel sorry for Seymour at the end—he really was sweet and I think he should have gotten the girl!

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. (Psync).





Dear Sandra,

After a hard day of studying and surviving the heat outside, all I want to do is sit on the couch and veg to watch a good show. Problem is, all that's on TV lately is reruns. Any suggestions for some good summer movie rentals?

B. from Alberta

Dear B.,

I think I've got a few suggestions for good summer movie rentals:

The Life of David Gale is an excellent movie to watch if you are a drama lover who enjoys a good twist at the end of a movie. Kate Winslet stars as a journalist who is asked by death row inmate David Gale (played by Kevin Spacey) to tell, for the first time, his story. His story details the events leading to his incarceration for the rape and murder of his colleague (played by Laura Linney). What makes the story so interesting is that David Gale and his colleague were advocates for an organization called Death Watch which fought valiantly for the end to Capital Punishment. I must admit that the only other movie I have seen with Kate Winslet was *Titanic* and her acting ability in that movie was awful, but in the Life of David Gale her performance is awesome.

Phone Booth starring Colin Farrell is another good drama/thriller. I admit I had reservations about watching a movie that took place almost entirely in a phone booth, but this movie moved quickly and kept me interested. I don't know how to explain this movie without giving it away so just trust me and watch it!

How to Lose a Guy in Ten Days is a romantic comedy that is not really intended to be stimulating. If you don't want to think or have to interpret a movie, I'd choose this one. Kate Hudson stars as an advice columnist for a woman's magazine who takes on writing an article about how to lose a guy in ten days. She sets out to find a guy and do everything possible to lose him in a little more than a week to show the readers what not to do to keep a guy (though I'm sure no self-respecting woman would do half the things she does in this movie). Her prey turns out to be Matthew McConaughey's character that in a bid to show his co-workers that he can get any girl to fall in love with him in ten days chooses Kate Hudson's character. The two are forced to stay together for ten days with one desperately trying to drive the other away and the other desperately trying to stay.

Just Married is a movie that revolves around the question: What do you get when a high-society girl marries a low-income down-to-earth kind of guy? You get a hilarious movie! This movie follows a young couple (Brittany Murphy and Ashton Kutcher) through the perils and hijinks of their wedding and the honeymoon that follows in Europe. If you just want to laugh and laugh, rent this one!

Well those are the four movies I'd recommend! I'm a student too, so I don't have all that much time to watch to movies (only because I'm busy procrastinating, watching Canadian Idol, and dealing with two kids home for the summer!) Enjoy what's left of 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



First Jump Course Training – Traditional Instructor Assisted Deployment (IAD)



Instructor Assisted First Jump training is a traditional approach for most first-time skydivers.

During a 5 to 6 hour ground training program, your Canadian Sport Parachute Association certified instructors will train you in areas of your skydive including equipment and parachute, aircraft procedures, exiting the aircraft, the skydive, canopy control and landing. You will learn enough information about the equipment to feel confident about how it works and how to assess problem situations in the unlikely event that they occur. All your questions will be answered while you have an opportunity to practice what you've learned prior to your skydive.

Once geared up, you will board the aircraft for your flight to 3500 feet with your instructor. On jumprun, the pilot will open the door allowing your instructor to carefully "spot" your exit point. Now, it's up to you! As you climb out of the aircraft, your instructor is right there beside you, ready to deploy your parachute activation system.

Look up! GO!!!!

As you arch your body on leaving the aircraft, you will see the plane and your instructor watching as your parachute begins to open. From the sound of rushing wind past your ears, to the peaceful silence of the parachute ride, you hear your heart pounding from the excitement of your first skydive! Within a few more seconds, you'll hear the voice of another instructor strategically positioned at the landing area, as he/she guides you to a safe landing.

Afterwards, you will review your jump on video from our 3 cameras with your instructor who will document the details in your own personal logbook and review your options should you wish to continue with this incredible sport. Your logbook is a record of your accomplishment along with a brief review of the First Jump Course and should be carried with you to this, or any other Drop Zone.

Edmonton Skydive Centre is the leader in First Jump and subsequent training programs since 1970. We use only modern equipment, and safety is our first concern. Our instructors are Certified and Trained by CSPA (Canadian Sport Parachute Association) and 3M NCCP (Coaching association of Canada) .

Courses are usually conducted Saturdays and Sundays throughout the year, with registration at 8:30 am The course starting promptly at 9:00 am. Courses run regardless of weather. Students can expect to jump later the same day (weather permitting). Prepare for your "Ultimate Experience... Your First Skydive!"

See the AUSU Opportunities (<http://www.ausu.org/opportunities/index.php#esc>) page for a sign up sheet and brochure, or visit www.edmontonskydive.com 780-444-JUMP (5867).

SCHOLARSHIPS & AWARDS

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



Athabasca University Awards and Scholarship Information

The Office of the Registrar would like to advise students of pending deadlines for scholarships and awards:

Award Name: Syncrude Aboriginal Scholarship

Value: \$2,500

Program: Various - see website

Basic Criteria: 1st year student preferred but other years may apply

Application Deadline: August 31

Award Name: Alberta Blue Cross 50th Anniversary Scholarship

Value: \$375

Program: Bachelor of Nursing

Basic Criteria: Highest GPA in last two courses

Application Deadline: September 30

Award Name: Persons Case Scholarship

Value: \$1,000 to \$5,000

Program: All programs are eligible

Basic Criteria: Female; Full-time; Resident of Alberta

Application Deadline: September 30

Award Name: Bursary Program for Indigenous Students

Value: \$Varies

Program: School of Business programs

Basic Criteria: Students of Indigenous Heritage

Application Deadline: On-going, contact Paulette Windsor at 1-800-788-9042, ext. 6149

For more information on the specific criteria for these awards, please visit the AU website at:
<http://www.athabascau.ca/html/depts/registry/studawrd.htm>

Applications for these awards can be obtained by calling the Office of the Registrar at 1-780-675-6705 or by email at awardsinfo@athabascau.ca.

NATIVE WOMEN'S ASSOCIATION OF CANADA AWARD

Value: \$1000

DEADLINE: September 28, 2003

Administrator: SIAST Wascana Campus

Notes: Must demonstrate a commitment to improving the situation of native women politically, culturally, and economically. Provide a letter of nomination from a NWAC PTMA.

Contact Information:

Sherry Reiger
4500 Wascana Parkway PO Box 556
Regina, Saskatchewan S4P 3A3

Phone: 306-798-4282
Fax: 306-798-8113
Web Site: <http://www.siastr.sk.ca>
E-mail: welte@siastr.sk.ca

CONFERENCE CONNECTIONS

Contributed By AU's *The Insider*



- **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

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.

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

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800.788.9041 ext. 3413

Editor In Chief Tamra Ross Low

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