

THE VOICE

MAGAZINE

Vol 11 Issue 37
September 10, 2003

BC to Saskatchewan

Cultural differences within Canada

Internet Addicts

Could you be one?

BC on Fire

When it's close enough to be real

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

Sep 10, 2003

Volume 11, Issue 37

Welcome To The Voice PDF

The Voice has an interactive table of contents. Click on a story title or author name to jump to an article. Click the bottom-right corner of any page to return to the contents. Some ads and graphics are also links.

FEATURES

EDITORIAL PAGES

ARTICLES

BC VIS-À-VIS SASKATCHEWAN

Wayne E. Benedict

SUDS CONFERENCE - JULY 2003 - Part 3

Debbie Jabbour

BC ON FIRE

Rebecca Flann

INTERNET ADDICTS

Shannon Maguire

FROM MY PERSPECTIVE - Irritations

Debbie Jabbour

INVISIBLE WOMEN

Stacey Steele

FICTION FEATURE

POEMS BY

Barbara Godin

COLUMNS

AUSU THIS MONTH

FLICKS & FOLIOS - The Innocents

Laura Seymour

CANADIAN FEDWATCH!

Karl Low

DEAR SANDRA

NEWS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

AU PRESIDENT RECIEVES AWARD IN VERSAILLES

Tamra Ross Low

AUSU JOB POSTING: EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

SCHOLARSHIP NEWS

CONFERENCE CONNECTIONS

The Insider

FROM THE READERS

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

CLASSIFIEDS!



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.

The meeting of two personalities is like the contact of two chemical substances: if there is any reaction, both are transformed.

-- Carl Jung (1875 - 1961)

THE VOICE

c/o Athabasca University Students'
Union
2nd Floor, 10030-107th Street,
Edmonton, AB T5J 3E4
800.788.9041 ext. 3413

Editor In Chief Tamra Ross Low

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EDITORIAL PAGES

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THIS WEEK

BC VIS-À-VIS SASKATCHEWAN- Wayne's really started something this week. I've already responded in this week's editorial, now it's your turn!

SUDS CONFERENCE COVERAGE - Part 3 - AUSU's contribution

BC ON FIRE - Rebecca Flann lives near the fire zones, and has watched the evacuees flee their homes. To really understand the devastation, you need a first-hand point of view.

INTERNET ADDICTS - New criteria for determining if internet use is a problem for you.

WHAT IT'S LIKE IN ALBERTA

This week's editorial is in response to Wayne Benedict's article this week, *BC vis a vis Saskatchewan*, so you might want to read his first.

Wayne - who is quickly becoming the poster-boy for adult learning by being the first person I have ever heard of to be enrolled simultaneously in both a full time undergrad program and a full time masters program at different schools - has just moved to Saskatchewan after a lifetime spent in BC. He has noted some of the cultural and legal differences between the two provinces, and compiled them into a very entertaining list. He's asked for others to follow suit and compile lists of the cultural quirks in their own regions.

I had such fun putting together my list on Alberta that at Wayne's suggestion, I've made it this week's editorial. Now it's your turn... send your lists, or even just individual quirks, to me at voice@ausu.org and I'll print them in an upcoming Sounding Off column. Or, if you don't want to be printed, just send your lists to Wayne as he requested.

I can't wait to read about the idiosyncrasies of the places where you all live. Only at AU could we even have such a discussion! And hey, if anyone reading lives in Nunavut, I'd especially love to hear from you. I know far too little about our newest territory.

Anyway, here is my list. Oh, and if you live in Alberta and totally disagree with anything I said, remember, this is how I see it. Feel free to send in your own list. It would be interesting to see how perspectives differ. And really, read Wayne's list first, because mine refers to it quite a bit.

What it's like in Alberta....

- Liquor stores are individually owned - the provincial ones shut down years ago. Prices are the same all day. You can't buy liquor anywhere but a liquor store. Many deliver.
- We used to have two part drivers licenses, but they were good for 5 years. Now they are plastic. They have a bar code on them, but no one has ever witness it being used for anything and it does not correspond to your actual license number.
- Your license fee does not include any insurance. There is no provincial auto insurance and rates are really high.
- Alberta drivers suck [this may correlate to the really high insurance rates...]
- Everyone eats perogies, whether they are Ukrainian or not.
- Restaurants are smoke-free or smokers are in separate sections. They are phasing in laws to ban smoking in all public places. You can't smoke in a mall, any store, or an airport.
- You can legally turn right on a red light, after you stop.
- No one understands how to proceed through flashing yellow or flashing red lights, but all street lights go to this format when there is a fault in the system. Mayhem ensues.
- In Calgary, all streets are numbered and have a quadrant designation [i.e., 17th Avenue SE]. Streets go north-south and Avenues go east-west. There is a centre street and a centre avenue. From there, street and avenue numbers start at 1 and go up toward the outskirts of the city. Without a map, you can find any numbered street in Calgary. Once you have driven in Calgary, every other city is mystifying.
- Alberta is mountainous in places, flat in places, and heavily wooded in other places. The southern Alberta region around Drumheller is much like the terrain of Arizona, and the land is dotted with bizarre rock formations called HooDoos (<http://www.virtuallydrumheller.com/tour/hoodoos.htm>). It's like driving through the land that time forgot.
- Vulcan Alberta is the Trekkie mecca. Vulcan T-Shirts only come in red (<http://www.town.vulcan.ab.ca/>).
- Just about everyone loves professional wrestling, or, even if they hate it, they can at least name several wrestlers.
- We get hail the size of baseballs and flash blizzards in August. Average duration: 5 to 10 mins. Summer then resumes. You always take a jacket. We have hot summer days in December.
- The standard deposit when buying a house is 5% of the purchase price [10% recommended]. If you don't qualify for a mortgage, no problem - you can 'assume' the mortgage from someone else and the bank has no say.
- You are allowed to pay back any loan faster than your schedule by making extra payments any time you want. This law overrides conflicting loans terms of national companies.
- We have no provincial sales tax, but our prices are quite high on most things - especially food! [Compared to Quebec, anyway]. You constantly hear disparaging comments about how unfair it is that you don't have to pay taxes, and how it's because you don't pay sales tax that your health care system is crumbling. People get angry with you because you don't have sales tax.
- Everything is becoming deregulated. Gas and electricity costs have soared and are wildly unstable. Gas prices went so high 2 winters ago that our \$90 a month bill soared to \$275. Electricity is quickly following suit.
- If you go to the doctor, you will probably have to pay an out-of-pocket extra billing fee. \$20 - \$40 is average.
- You'll have to wait about a year to have a non-vital surgery. You have to pay for eye exams.

- If you get student loans from the Alberta government, you are eligible to have some of it [or even all of it] paid back by the government at the end of your study. It's called 'remission'. Remission is based on how much you borrowed each term. Remission rules!
- Many people are friendly, some are not.
- We have some of the hardest water in the world. Great to drink, but soap won't lather. Forget making shampoo horns. Our water has fluoride added.
- Alberta used to be mosquito free, but since they stopped spraying the borders, we have plenty. Alberta is virtually rat free and has been since 1950. It is illegal to own a pet rat in Alberta.
- I have never in my life seen a raccoon or a badger, but if you live on the outskirts of Calgary you can get red foxes, rabbits, squirrels [black, grey, red, or mixed] and deer in your yard. Oh, and skunks!
- Gophers are everywhere. Gopher killing is an organized sport. When you run over a gopher, other gophers run out to try to help him. Carnage ensues. You would be hard pressed to find someone who has not sprained an ankle by stepping in a gopher hole while running. Gophers love to eat petunias and pansies. Don't buy these if you live anywhere near a field.
- The tourists are the ones wearing bolo-ties.
- You can get punched in the mouth [or just get banned from the radio and record stores] for suggesting that people should not eat beef....

Tamra Ross Low
Editor in Chief

AUSU NEEDS NEW COUNCIL MEMBERS, AND AN EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR!: Read the AUSU This Month column in this issue for information on how to join council, or see the posting for the Executive Director job, also in this issue.

VOICE WRITING CONTEST NEEDS NON-FICTION ENTRIES

The response so far to the first Voice writing contest has been wonderful. Most of our entries, however, are in the fiction category! This is unexpected since the fiction category was added at the last minute and was not even part of the original contest plan.

I'm sure that the non-fiction entries are lagging behind because it takes time to formulate a reply to an essay question, but if you are interested in a shot at the \$300 in scholarship money, then trying out for the non-fiction category is a good bet!

C'mon, how hard can it be? Just tell me, in 1500 words or less, what you would do as President of AU? I know we have a lot of readers with strong opinions on this subject, so lets start hearing them!

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.



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 non-fiction 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 fiction 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, or may use excerpts from these entries at any time. 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.



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!



It's Sunday night again; deadline for me to submit my article to *The Voice* for this Wednesday's publication. I prefer not to leave things to the last minute, but often I work best under pressure. That feature of my personality will come in handy, as I will no doubt be relying upon it heavily over the next few years. I have just completed my first week of law school and I am now sitting in the University of Saskatchewan College Of Law Library. It is a state-of-the-art facility with innumerable legal texts and electronic reference facilities—new (computers) meets old (books). There is a wireless LAN to which my laptop is now connected and I can access the university network via 128 bit encrypted communication. I have a seamless

interface with the Internet through the university portal which enables me to "surf the Net" or pull pertinent cases from Quicklaw™ while typing lecture notes in the moot courtroom. Despite the workload, life is bliss.

There is no working slowly into this program of study, as the readings were piled on heavy from the first classes. As one of my professors put it, "Law is not a more difficult subject to study than any other discipline, just a lot more work doing it." I'll take him at his word. I have just finished four hours of briefing cases for my Tuesday Contract Law class and have several more cases to go. I'll fit that in tomorrow between classes and other homework... Tonight's work will conclude with my computer and the *Voice* readers. I'd like to publicly thank all of those well-wishers who have e-sent congratulatory messages to me and well-wishes to my family. In response, I can say that without Athabasca University and its cyber-culture of students and faculty, I would not (in fact, could not) be sitting here today.

I have never lived outside of the borders of British Columbia in my life, although I have held residence in most regions of that Province. In the short week that I have lived in Saskatchewan, I've noted many cultural and legal differences between the two. Some of them I have found amusing and I thought you might as well:

- In Saskatchewan, the wine and beer stores have two prices on each product—a day price and a night price; the latter price typically being several dollars more than the former. BC has one price right up to closing time...
- In BC drivers licenses are good for five years and are a single plastic picture ID. In Saskatchewan drivers must renew their licenses yearly (and pay a \$25.00 fee each time) and they come in two parts—a plastic picture ID (retained for five years) and a paper license (replaced annually at renewal).
- Saskatchewan drivers are bad. BC drivers are bad.
- In BC restaurants are generally either smoke-free or they separate smoking and non-smoking patrons from each other in separately ventilated rooms. In Saskatchewan, everyone smokes while they eat out, whether they are holding a cigarette or not.
- BC is mountainous and beautiful. Saskatchewan is flat and beautiful.
- In BC the standard deposit when buying a house is \$1000; in Saskatchewan it is \$3000.
- In BC children's clothes and school supplies are tax-exempt; in Saskatchewan they are not.
- Provincial sales tax in BC is 7.5%; in Saskatchewan it is 6%.
- People in BC are friendly. People in Saskatchewan are friendly.
- In Saskatchewan you see the sun very early in the morning and very late into the evening; in BC it is usually occluded on one or more sides by mountains for the better part of the day.
- There are more wasps and grasshoppers in one square meter of Saskatchewan than in all of BC.

- In BC you infrequently find animals killed by traffic alongside the highway. In Saskatchewan road-kill is more frequent than mile posts.
- In BC you can find raccoons in your back yard. In Saskatchewan you can find badgers in your back yard.

I find it amazing that two provinces within the same great country can hold such diversity—culturally, geographically, and legally. And as we all know, Canada has ten provinces and three territories full of distinct people and things. Canada—"the distinct society." *Vive la différence!* I'd love to hear from you about interesting legal or cultural differences in your region of residence. Drop me a line at wayneben@sasktel.net

[ed. I've already taken up Wayne's challenge. You can find my list on Alberta quirks in the editorial. I'd love to get more lists from people across Canada, or even just individual quirks. I'll print them in an upcoming Sounding Off column. Or just reply to Wayne if you don't want to be published. Either way, it's your turn now!]

Wayne E. Benedict has a varied career history and strong links to the Canadian labour movement. He is working part-time toward his Bachelor of Human Resources and Labour Relations at Athabasca University. He is a fulltime first-year student of the University of Saskatchewan College of Law. 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@sasktel.net

Albertans are the highest earning graduates in the country; PEI in last place.

Tamra Ross Low

This week Alberta Learning released a report which compared provincial tuition rates and the average salary of post-secondary graduates according to their province of residence.

"The comparison shows post-secondary graduates earn more money over their lifetime, experience fewer and shorter periods of unemployment, and have improved health and overall life prospects compared to those with only a high school diploma. While these benefits hold true for graduates in all provinces, the comparison also shows that graduates in Alberta earn among the highest gross salaries in Canada and, when taxes and cost of living are factored in, enjoy the highest take-home pay in the country."

Albertans' tuition rates are in the middle of the pack with an average fee of \$4487 per year. The highest rates are in Nova Scotia (\$5557) while the lowest, by far, are in Quebec (an incredible \$1862 a year!).

Alberta grads with bachelor's degrees will earn more than \$46,000 a year - the second highest gross salary in Canada [after Ontario] and the highest in Canada once taxes and cost of living are taken into consideration. Diploma and certificate holders fare even better, with an adjusted salary of almost \$29,000, which is \$2000 more than the second-place earners in Ontario.

Alberta masters and doctorate holders earn more than those in any province in both gross and adjusted dollars. Ontario ranks a steady second place for all types of degrees, while British Columbia is more variable than most - standing at third place for certificate holders, sixth place for high school grads, masters and doctorate recipients, and seventh place for those with bachelors degrees. PEI's grads are the lowest earners.

Albertans have been enrolling in post-secondary education in droves. Alberta enrolment has been among the highest in Canada, with an increase of 4.5 per cent last year over the previous year.

"It is estimated that Alberta's publicly funded post-secondary institutions served more than 134,000 full-load equivalent students in the 2002-03 academic year, and there are currently more than 40,000 apprentices registered in Alberta - an increase of 50 per cent since 1997. "


<http://www.learning.gov.ab.ca/news/2003/September/nr-PostSecPays.asp>



SUDS CONFERENCE JULY, 2003


Debbie Jabbour

This article is part three in a report on the Student Union Development Symposium, held in British Columbia on the campus of UBC. To read the first two reports, see [The Voice August 17](#) and [September 3](#) issues. This report will conclude next week...




The following morning, sessions began with a talk on administrative lobbying by Dr. Piper, President and Vice-Chancellor, UBC. She encouraged students to not underestimate our ability to make a difference both individually and collectively, stating that we are the best advocates and spokespeople to make the case for quality and accessibility of education. Some of her suggestions for successful lobbying:


- there is no substitute for face to face dialogue.
- think strategically about who you want to see. The president is not necessarily the best person to approach first, since they take advice from others.
- rather than just going in and complaining, bring solutions and ways to work collectively to problem solve
- be focused and go in with only one thing rather than a "shopping list".
- be direct and don't get sidetracked. Even if the meeting is a half hour long, you have only 3 minutes to make your point!
- protests can be very effective if done thoughtfully - if you cross the line of safety, security and civility, your cause is finished.




Dr. Piper also stressed the importance of following up. If you do get what you want, follow up with a thank you - you are quick to complain so be quick to thank. She also commented about the effectiveness of partnerships, encouraging us to get "as many people singing from the same song sheet as possible." After some discussion on working respectfully with elected government officials, regardless of your personal opinion of these officials, Dr. Piper concluded that "lobbying is the fine line between being a pest and being thoughtful," adding that there is "nothing wrong with being nice about your issue."



The second morning session dealt with provincial lobbying, and included Johanne Galarneau from Dalhousie once again, along with Naeem Dato, President, McGill, and Shirley Barg, VP, AU. The focus of the discussion was how student union alliances in each province were structured and what types of things they had been lobbying for. Not all provinces have such groups, and in some, such as Ontario, provincial alliances are relatively new and in the formative stages.



Johanne commented on NSAC, which is Nova Scotia's provincial group. NSAC is in a difficult transitional period right now, and undergoing restructuring. She stated that they elect a chairperson, who cannot be a student union executive - the reasoning being that not only is being chairperson and an SU executive too much work, it also forces them to wear two hats, which can create conflicts.



Nova Scotia has several issues. In the previous day's session Johanne had already commented on the serious lack of consultation with students, something that

NSAC has been working with CFS to address. Other problems are the student debt relief program, administration of the millennium scholarship, and default rates on student loans. Defaults are tied into programs, and programs with high default rates are "designated," meaning students can no longer get student loan funding.

Johanne gave some suggestions about what not to do when lobbying provincially:

- Don't send mixed messages that divide the movement
- Stay away from politics and personal agendas
- Don't get the bureaucrats angry at you
- Don't throw a last minute campaign, do your groundwork
- Don't expect to get everything you want, be realistic.



AUSU's Shirley Barg

Nova Scotia has an upcoming provincial election, and NSAC is taking advantage of this to make PSE a campaign issue (the challenge is to remain non-partisan while doing this). Johanne concluded by stating that it is extremely important to get students informed and out to vote - since the government says, "why should we care about PSE when students don't vote?"

Naeem began his comments by noting that McGill was the only Quebec school in attendance, asking why that was the case. Although he didn't really answer that question, his comments about the nature of Quebec student unions, and the very different situation in that province, provided plenty of food for thought. Quebec has La Feuq (Fédération Étudiante Universitaire du Québec), a large, powerful student organization, that represents all but one school and all but three SU's. LF has twelve full time staff and two researchers, all of whom are funded by provincial government grants. The focus of LF and all student unions in the province is representation, not student services (these are outsourced), with about 90% of SU activities being political in nature. This political inclination could clearly be seen in Naeem's tips for effective political representation, which included:

- Have a unified voice. LF is consensus-based and represents common interests, with all members having influence on decisions.
- Be the voice of youth, not just education. Ask what is important to the people you are trying to convince. Broaden the scope of education to include all things that affect students.
- Find the decision makers
- Tap into youth wings (political party) and build coalitions so that they will lobby on your behalf.
- Research education, focus your time and money on educational issues. In Quebec they keep provincial tuition low and use international (and out-of-province) students as revenue generators.
- Affiliate with other groups. Our expertise is education, not other things (i.e. the environment). Stick to your own area but affiliate with groups that lobby for other things.

Naeem disagreed with Johanne in where to focus communications - he advocated thinking big rather than focusing on small victories. He mentioned being careful with issues that your membership is divided on, such as differential tuition. In Quebec they charge a hefty out-of-province fee in order to keep the in-province tuition low. French students love it, but others don't. Sovereignty is also an issue that divides students in Quebec, so they instead have to find and focus on common interests.



AUSU's Shirley Barg's turn to speak

What are the accomplishments of the politically-focused Quebec student groups? Tuition is the lowest in Canada, frozen at \$1665 per year for Quebec students. Student association rights are protected by Bill 32, a legislation that makes student unions the official voice of their constituency, with legal rights to collect fees and have membership list access, along with guaranteed representation on university bodies. Students also achieved the promise of a 400 million dollar reinvestment from the provincial government, and commitments on a law regarding ancillary fees. Naeem did note that a commission is currently reviewing education in Quebec, with "everything on the table," including Bill 32. This has further served to unite the student groups, and they are preparing

a worst case scenario in which the bill is revoked and the freeze lifted. I found his concluding comment quite revealing in terms of describing the very different student group atmosphere in Quebec. He stated that "if we don't get what we want, a mass mobilization is being planned across the province."

AUSU VP and CAUS Chair Shirley Barg brought the panel discussion to a close. She began by announcing that she had a new bed partner her husband didn't know about. As she elaborated, offering that his first name was Bill, I could see puzzled looks around the room, wondering why she would be sharing details of her indiscretion with us. She then announced that Bill's last name was 43, prompting loud groans and laughter! Shirley explained that Bill 43 was the main issue facing our provincial student groups and encouraged all present to ask questions of any of the Alberta representatives at SUDS, since the bill will have implications for all student unions across Canada. Alberta was well-represented at the conference, with student union executives from U of A, U of C, Grant McEwan, SAIT, and Mount Royal (and Athabasca, of course).

Shirley proceeded to give an overview of CAUS (the Council of Alberta University Students), explaining that it had been in existence since 1986, with grad student associations affiliated up until four years ago. She mentioned the composition; two large universities, one small, and one unique (AU); and spoke about some of the previous problems that resulted when the CAUS office was located in the school of the chair, leading to this year's restructuring and transition to developing their own office. She offered the following lobbying tips:

- Have solid policy. Know the policy, the rationale, all factors involved.
- Know the political environment. Know the appropriate government contact and the strength of the minister, and which MLA's hold power. She cautioned that what works in one province may not work in another. She also suggested working with the opposition, lobbying those who may be next in line, and those with portfolios other than education. Shirley also commented on the importance of knowing which province yours aligns itself with, noting that Alberta is similar to Quebec in disliking "meddling from the feds," such as dedicated transfer payments.
- Develop government contacts, and a relationship with the non-elected bureaucrats.
- Meet with elected officials. Treat the session like a sales meeting, sell the message in the context of how it will help their constituencies. For example, student financial aid in rural areas has different implications. Always be respectful and professional, with a positive, non-combative attitude. Watch for social events where you can meet with officials.
- Be well-prepared with supporting documents. Don't just talk problems, offer solutions, ways to find common ground. Focus on only one or two issues, and follow through.

- Lobby beyond government. Include students and the public, develop alliances with other groups and work for a unified message. Use the media, but remember that media attention is not always government attention.

Shirley concluded by reminding everyone that results don't happen overnight, but that it is important to believe you can make a difference.

In the question period that followed, there was quite a bit of discussion on the best way to form alliances without diluting the message. Some disagreed with Shirley's comparison to a sales meeting, insisting that education is not a product to sell, and that we should be reminding the government that education is a right, an investment.



Shirley is also chair of the Council of Alberta University Students [CAUS]

A concern was brought up about the situation in Quebec. If we students at the conference were talking about a united front, what about Quebec's wariness regarding federal initiatives and desire to keep education provincial? Naeem acknowledged the concern, stating that Quebec is a different culture - a more political, socialist one. Overall we want the same thing, but the key is finding out how to go about getting it. Even within Quebec, issues are different for francophones and anglophones. He added that for the rest of the country to move forward in education, Quebec will have to step back - therefore we must find an agreed-upon goal to alleviate their fear. From a western standpoint, I found this notion rather troubling. The differences in Quebec already affect AU students, in that they are not eligible for provincial student loans to attend AU. Naeem's discussion shed a great deal of light on why things are different in Quebec, but it raised a lot of questions with no easy answers.

In the afternoon session, Ian Boyko (chair of the Canadian Federation of Students [CFS]) and Robert South (Government relations officer for the Canadian Alliance of Student Associations [CASA]) again led the forum, this time regarding federal government lobbying. Ian began by referring to the importance of being familiar with what the government is thinking, through a document called "Knowledge Matters," something Robert also encouraged. Ian then gave a brief overview of the CFS and services it provides. He reminded us that a lot of people are making demands for finite dollars, so it is important to be organized. He claimed that the CFS is highly effective, noting that in November of 2000 the CFS was cited in the media more than any other group. Among issues the CFS is working on: grad student research funding; millennium scholarship improvements; better provincial/federal cooperation; and federal transfer payments. The latter is something that is undergoing change due to the pressures on how health care payments are allocated, and the CFS is looking at how to use this change to improve education payments. He concluded by reiterating the need for a united student voice.

Robert took over, providing some basic principles about lobbying. Most of what he listed had already been suggested by previous speakers, including the importance of following up and saying thank you. He spoke of the realities of what the government can do, pointing out that one-fourth of tax money services the debt, another third goes to the provinces, and the rest is spent on federal programs, 95% of which maintains current programs such as the CBC. For students to get a share of the small amount left we need to develop a strategy - "if you don't know where you are going you will end up somewhere else."

Robert detailed the different government departments and places to approach when lobbying. He reinforced Shirley's comment on talking to the opposition, adding that doing so will "lessen the negative response opposition parties will have if the government implements your agenda." He also cautioned everyone to remember that our purpose is to get results for students, not to raise our own political profile.

Robert also touched on the government position on WTO and FTAA. Although the government says they will maintain and regulate trade policy with Canadian interests first, not allowing access to PSE, it is worrisome nonetheless, and students should be keeping a close eye on the matter. The issue of transfer payments came up again, with Robert commenting that the feds want to take credit for money spent and do not like transfer payments without accountability.

I left that day's sessions thinking about the issue of federal government funding. This is an important topic for AU. As we increasingly grow in other areas of Canada, it would make sense for us to lobby the federal government for more funding as Canada's Open University. At the same time I had to agree with Shirley's comment about Alberta not liking the idea of dedicated transfer payments from the feds - we saw Klein's response on dedicated health care transfer payments! On the other hand, it does seem that the Alberta government wants to be free of responsibility to fund AU - so perhaps federal lobbying is the answer. If so, what role could we play as student representatives?

Next week: The conference conclusion.

SUDS 2003 (Student Union Development Symposium)

<http://www.ams.ubc.ca/suds2003/>

Knowledge Matters: Achieving excellence:

<http://www.hrdc-drhc.gc.ca/sp-ps/sl-ca/home.shtml>

La Feuq (Fédération Étudiante Universitaire du Québec)

<http://www.feuv.qc.ca>

Canadian Federation of Students (CFS):

www.cfs-fcee.ca

<http://www.cfsontario.ca>

www.cfs.bc.ca

Canadian Alliance of Student Associations (CASA):

www.casa.ca

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.

C A U S
Council of Alberta University Students
Athabasca • Calgary • Alberta • Lethbridge

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 awoke to the valley filled with smoke again. Above this haze is a bright and beckoning blue sky. You can see it above the haze today, the smoke is hanging low. Other days you see it through holes in the smoke. On bad days, you don't know what the weather would really be like, if the smoke wasn't there. It's hard to be happy about great weather anyway, when we all know that what we really need is a week of rain -- and not just a little bit of rain or sun showers, but soaking, pelting, pouring rain.

My experience of this summer's forest fires has been limited. I am not an evacuee. My house is actually well away from any imminent danger, but we are certainly not unaware of the many fires that surround us. Everyone is talking about it. The radio reported fire press conferences hourly. The news and newspapers update us with the latest statistics and measurements. For most of us, however, reading about the fire and seeing it are two different things. It was certainly that way for me. I live on a hill and from my house, I can see down the valleys that make up Kamloops, B.C. Often these valleys have been filled with smoke. We have been able to see certain fires on the mountains across the valley from us. During the day, they looked like tufts of smoke and at night, they reminded me of camp fires scattered across the mountain, although I am quite sure I have never had a camp fire that big. When the town of Barrier was evacuated, because of the McLure fire, we could see the huge pillow of smoke that amounted to that town on fire. These sights were not horrendous, certainly the papers showed worse images, but they served as simple reminders that hundreds of people's homes, pets, and lives are threatened. So far, no one I know has been affected by evacuations, but with hundreds evacuated within the province you know they are out there, many still waiting to see if they have homes left and some already aware their homes are gone.

My closest experience with the fires happened last week, when I went with friends to a lake, west of the city. Around noon we drove away from town, east on Highway 1, and we could see a cloud of smoke above the hilltops, further on down the road. We knew this was the McGillivray Lake fire. As we drove closer, the fire became visible from the highway. The highway follows the South Thompson River and the fire was on the hills of the opposite riverbanks. It seemed the river was basically the only thing that separated the highways from the fire. I had no idea it was so close to the road. It was startling. Helicopters dipped down, filled buckets, which we estimated to be the size of small cars, with river water and rose back up to douse out the flames. Only days before I had driven this same stretch of road. My parents had rented a cabin only minutes down the water. Many of the trees that sprinkled the hillside were now charred and the area was punctuated with black smoke. Where my parents had vacationed would now be very smoky. We counted six helicopters fighting the flames as we passed. It was an astounding and powerful sight.

We passed the fires and got on with our day. It was a good day for us. Between 9:30 and 10:00 p.m. we passed the McGillivray Lake fire again, on our way home. Miles before we approached we could see a red orange glow in the sky above the hillside. As we approached we saw the lights of police cars, swirling around in the darkness. Police officers barricaded roads leading off the highway to houses. No one was allowed in. People driving on those roads were only allowed out. They were evacuating the area. The flames from the fire were visible in the dark. Trees stood out, flaming orange in embers. There appeared to be nothing more than patches of flame scattered across the mountainsides as far as we could see down the road. They looked nothing like camp fires.

We began to notice there was more traffic on the road and we quickly realized we were traveling with the evacuees. We immediately felt guilty. First of all, they certainly don't need any extra traffic, or "gawkers" at

times like these. Secondly, we were traveling home, to our safe houses, from our day of fun, while these people had been forced to leave their homes, uncertain that they would have homes to return to. Mini-vans loaded with personal possessions marched down the highway. Cars pulling tent trailers, that you assumed were also loaded with things people couldn't stand to lose, drove slowly with their hazard lights on all the way into town.

We drove the rest of the way surrounded by the evacuees. It was almost 11:00 by the time I was home and ready for bed. I imagined that many of the evacuees were still checking into the fire shelter, paying for hotels, or settling into friend's houses. Many were likely answering numerous questions from their children and trying to get a proper night's sleep. And these are the good worries. I was grateful to have my own bed to sleep in.

Since that day, the news on the fires surrounding Kamloops have improved. The town of Kelowna faced the next wild fire situation. Still, today, smoke lingers in the air at my house. I do not pretend to know what evacuating my home is like and to the friends and family that you know or to anyone who has, I respect your courage and wish you, your home to return to.

International Adult Learners' Week, September 7-13, 2003.

"Communities across Alberta are promoting lifelong learning during the second annual International Adult Learners' Week, a worldwide event organized by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO). This year's theme is a world of possibilities through learning. To celebrate, communities across Alberta have organized a variety of events to encourage adults to explore learning opportunities."

For a full listing of events taking place in Alberta, see: <http://www.learning.gov.ab.ca/AdultLearnWeek/events.asp>

Below is a list of selected events...

Athabasca

Words Work Literacy Program - (780) 675-6456
2nd annual Festival of Learning
September 27, 2003
9:30 AM to 3:00 PM
Athabasca University (1 University Drive, Athabasca)

Bonnyville

Bonnyville Community Learning Council - (780) 826-2150
Annual Community Awareness and Registration Night
Thursday, September 11, 2003
6 to 8:30 PM
Bonnyville Agriplex

Brooks

Global Friendship Immigration Centre - 403-362-6115
Information Table
September 9-11
Lakeside Packers

Open house

All week
9:30 AM to 5:30 PM
Global Friendship Immigration Centre

Volunteer recruitment

September 12-13
Friday, September 12 from 3 to 8 PM and Saturday, September 13 from 1 - 4 PM
Cassils Center Mall

Calgary

Calgary Immigrant Aid Society - (403) 265-1120
Brown Bag Lunch session highlighting the Homecare Attendant Training Program for Immigrants
Wednesday, September 10
12 to 1 PM
Mosaic Centre of the Calgary Immigrant Aid Society (#540, 910 - 7 Avenue SW)
<http://www.calgaryimmigrantaid.ca/>

Calgary Immigrant Aid Society - (403) 265-1120
Community Access Program (CAP) Computers Promotion
Friday, September 12
11:45 AM to 1 PM
Calgary Immigrant Aid Society (#1200, 910 - 7 Avenue SW)
<http://www.calgaryimmigrantaid.ca/>

Crowsnest Pass

Crowsnest Pass Adult Education Association - Crowsnest Pass Adult Literacy Program
(403)562-2853
THIS AND THAT- Recipes and Stories From Near and Far
Crowsnest Pass Adult Literacy Program
Box 103, Blairmore, AB T0K 0E0

Drayton Valley

Powerhouse Community Learning - (780) 542-3373
Community Registration Night, Hearts and Hands Quilt Guild Open House
Wednesday, September 10 - 7 to 9 PM
Emmaus Lutheran Church, DV
www.powerhouselearning.ca

Edmonton

Edmonton Mennonite Centre for Newcomers
In class discussions of adult learning
All week
Various times and locations (not public events)

Edmonton Mennonite Centre for Newcomers - 423-9520
Newcomers Toastmasters Club (hosted at EMCN)
September 12
12 to 1 PM

University of Alberta, Faculty of Extension - 780-492-3093
Courses in Residential Interiors start all week

University of Alberta, Faculty of Extension - 780-492-3093
Art Exhibit
September 6 - September 24, 2003
Extension Centre Gallery exhibit

Edson

Edson and District Community Learning Society
or the Edson Literacy office at (780) 723-3630
Edson and District Community Learning Society Thirtieth
Anniversary Contest

Fox Creek

Fox Creek Adult Education Program and Write Start Literacy
Program
(780) 622-3758

Grande Cache

Grande Cache Community Adult Learning Council
(780) 827-5544
Display at the Registration Roundup
Thursday, September 11, 2003
4 to 7 PM
Rec Centre

Lacombe

County of Lacombe Lifelong Learning Association
403-782-7955
Active Living Fair
Wednesday, September 10

4 to 7:30 PM
Lacombe Memorial Centre

Lethbridge

Lethbridge Lifelong Learning Association
30th Anniversary Celebrations
Display
Sept. 8 - 12
City Hall and the Lethbridge Public Library
Lethbridge Lifelong Learning Association
Lethbridge Lifelong Learning Fair
Sept. 20
Park Place Mall

Lloydminster

Lloydminster Learning Council Association - (780) 875-5763
Showcase Partnership with the Lloydminster Chamber of
Commerce and promote Business Week Kick-off Breakfast
October 21, 200
8:00 am
location TBA

Rimbey

Ponoka/Rimbey Adult Learning Council and the County of
Ponoka Literacy Society
Display
Rimbey Municipal Library

Taber

Taber & District Adult Literacy Program - (403) 223-1146
Read-A-Thon
September 8- September 30
St Pats School

Vegreville

VegMin Learning Network - (780) 632-7920
Various events all week.

Vulcan

Vulcan County Adult Learning Council - (403) 485-3109
30th Anniversary Fall Course Calendar release and Registration
September 11, 2003
www.telusplanet.net/public/cvalearn

For more information on adult learners week, visit Alberta Learning's web site at:
<http://www.learning.gov.ab.ca/news/2003/September/nr-IntAdultLrnWeek.asp>.
Events are taking place across Alberta.



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AUSU THIS MONTH

IMPORTANT NOTICE TO STUDENTS:

AUSU Council currently has three positions open, that we are seeking to fill for the final six months of the current term. In accordance with our bylaws and policies, Council can appoint students to fill these positions by a majority vote. Any interested student is invited to submit an application to president@ausu.org, including the following:

- a current resume
- program enrolled in at AU and student I.D. number
- a brief letter detailing your reasons for wanting to join Council.

All applications will be considered equally, but preference will be given to students who have already actively participated in AUSU Council meetings and committees. There is no guarantee that any or all of these positions will be filled. Deadline for applications is September 12/03. For further information, please contact president@ausu.org



AUSU JOB POSTING

See the News section of this paper for the job posting for the position of AUSU Executive Director. This posting can also be found on the AUSU website at <http://www.ausu.org/jobposting/index.php>

AUSU IN PERSON DISCUSSION GROUPS

AUSU in-person discussion groups in Calgary, Edmonton, and Medicine Hat would like to invite students to join them in casual, coffee shop get togethers to discuss life as an AU student.

Getting together physically with fellow AU students adds to your university experience. Other students will be able to understand and relate to the joys and frustrations of distance learning. It's also a way to stay abreast of information relating to AU and the Athabasca University Students' Union.

To take part in the **Calgary** group please contact JODY at jwaddle@telusplanet.net.

To take part in the **Edmonton** areas discussion group, contact RYAN at nicepilotdude@yahoo.ca.

To take part in the **Medicine Hat** group, contact STACEY at jackenna96@telusplanet.net.

Anyone interested in starting up a group in your area (anywhere in Canada, from small towns to major centres) please contact SANDRA at smoore@ausu.org.

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**

Mondays at

8:00 PM

Councillor Karl Low

More chat times to be posted soon...

FEATURED TUTOR ON THE AUSU WEB SITE

Kim Vaughan

Psychology

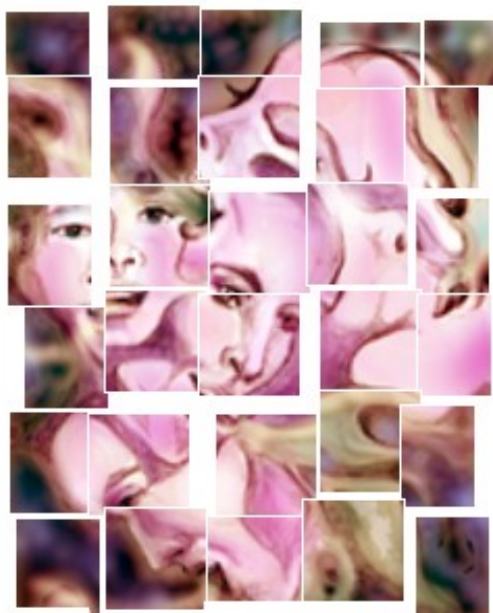
Kim Vaughan is a tutor in Psychology, currently teaching three courses: Child Development (Psychology 228), Developmental Psychology (Psychology 323), and Psychology and the Mass Media (Psychology 315). Kim has been with Athabasca since 2000...

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



NEEDED – VOLUNTEER MENTORS FOR NEW STUDENTS

Do you remember your first few months at AU? Do you remember all the questions you had and the confusions you encountered? Every month at AU there are close to 1500 new registrations and these new students will be in the same boat you were once in. How about helping these students out by offering to be an AUSU mentor? AUSU mentors are “experienced” AU students who are willing to provide a little guidance and support to new AU students. If you are interested in participating in this new venture of AUSU's or if you'd like more information please contact Sandra Moore at smoore@ausu.org



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.

THE VOICE FICTION FEATURE

Poems by Barbara Godin

Brief Encounter

*Cradled in my arms
You struggle to be close.
Joy fills my being
As I look at your face.
My heart swells with pride
As you take your first step.*

*I hold back the tears
As you rush off to school.
I feel overwhelmed
As you accept your award.
I squeeze to hang on
As you struggle to be free.*

*Pain tugs at my heart
As you walk out the door.
Sadness, hope, resolve
You are gone.*

Love Is

*Eyes that shine
A voice that soothes,
Arms that surround
Warmth that encompasses
A connection within
An invisible string,
Unspoken words
That keep me near.*

Motherhood

*"Mom do you remember when...?"
How could I forget.
Each second, each day
Forever ready to be relived.
The joy overflowing
The pain unimportant.
A tear fills the eye
Love fills the heart.*

Betrayal

*Roaming hands
Familiar hands
Touching secret places.
Probing fingers,
Stop! Stop!
Hushed voices
Distant footsteps
Pounding hearts.*

Evergreen

*Year after year I watch you
Grow stronger, taller, more beautiful.
Your steady branches
Stretching to the heavens.
Your roots anchored
Deep in the earth.
Summer heat intolerant
Yet you stand tall.
Autumn brings transition
Though not for you.
Howling winter winds
Threaten your stature,
But you persist for the promise of spring*

The Voice buys fiction in all forms and genres. Contact voice@ausu.org for more information. Or, you may wish to submit your fiction for the Voice Writing Contest. See this issue for details and submission guidelines.



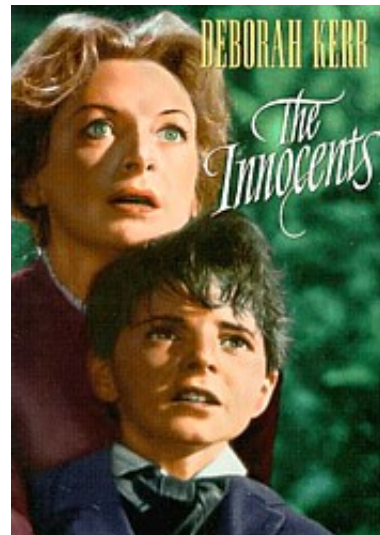
The Innocents Film Review

By Laura Seymour

This incredible film is a remarkable version of Henry James's *The Turn of the Screw*. The 1961 production is in inky black and white and is still one of the most effective ghost stories ever filmed.

I'd never seen the film but I'm wild about Pamela Franklin's work so I poked my nose in for the hot summer afternoon. Originally this film was promoted as the first truly "adult" chiller in film, because of its portrayal of the Freudian anxiety that fuels the story. It did a good job although some of it may seem tame by today's standards. Nevertheless, the psychological world of fear and dark secrets grabs you from the first moments of the film. It then clouds the boundary between reality and imagination.

This is one of the best performances I've ever seen from Scottish-born Deborah Kerr. As Miss Giddons, she plays a devout but somewhat uptight spinster who accepts a position of governess for two orphaned children. Their uncle (played by British screen great Michael Redgrave) is forthcoming about having no interest in being tied down by two "brats." So Miss Giddons arrives at Bly House. It is a lavish yet shadowy estate. She finds young Flora (played by an incredibly young Pamela Franklin) and her brother Miles (Martin Stephens, also in 1960's *Village of the Damned*) living with a good-natured housekeeper (played well by Meg Jenkins). The children have lost one governess but nobody is willing to tell the new governess what happened. As she's very curious it continues to be an unanswered question.



Bly House seems to be an ideal place to raise children, except for the odd voices Miss Giddons hears! As she starts to imagine or uncover the truth about the former (dead) groundskeeper and the previous governess, she begins to imagine or find that her young charges are being controlled by a devious plot of the ghostly visitors. The governess isn't sure what's going on until she too sees a specter in the lake. The question of Miss Giddons imbalance is left hanging and never truly tackled by anyone. Her questions to the children are ignored and they firmly deny seeing any ghosts about them. The far away looks in their eyes are the only "proof" she has that the children are seeing the ghosts.

Ghostly images show up in mostly fleeting glimpses, and the outstanding Cinemascope photography of Freddie Francis is assisted by his use of special filters to subtly darken the edges of the screen. This makes Bly House a picturesque mansion during the day, but a terrifying dark web by night. Sound effects and music are used to make you stay connected to this film, even if you don't like old black and white films. Director Jack Clayton, took a good script by William Archibald and Truman Capote, and kept a logical pace to emphasize the reality of the fears in James's story. The result is a masterful film — it reminds me of another Pamela Franklin film that hasn't played in ages, 1973 British project, *The Legend of Hell House* – but that's another review! (catch that one for the late Roddy McDowell's most subtle performance and best work).

The period costumes and magnificent settings are a huge help in making *The Innocents* gel for the viewer. It is much better than some of Hollywood's recreation of books (such as the dreadful Allan Quatermain movies!) The film really creates a world in a past century where life seemed so much simpler. But then it tackles the extreme repression that these people had to live with. Without actually bringing in a character to fully explain

the sexual repression that poor Miss Giddons experienced we see the tension in her eyes. We clearly understand the loss of privacy as she is forced to sleep in her little charge's room. I also don't remember any time off for the woman.

Kerr gives an outstanding performance and the final kiss and shriek at the end are beautifully executed. Unfortunately I find myself wondering what the author intended for the reason of the child's death. I then wonder what happened to dear Miss Giddons.

If you get a chance to watch this lovely film, do. I hope you find it to be the excellent work I did. I caught the film on Canada's Learning Channel. Meanwhile, I'm going to finish one book I'm reading, cough up a review and then go find *The Turn of the Screw*.

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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TRAVEL CUTS

INTERNET ADDICTS

Shannon Maguire



The internet has become so important and widely used in our society today that some people are beginning to spend extraordinarily large amounts of their time online. People are using the internet for activities such as school, work, games, banking, social interaction and much more. It seems that the internet is an amazing system capable of satisfying almost any need. But is there such a thing as spending too much time on the internet and can this be unhealthy?

For a system that is used for so much there is amazingly little known about the nature and psychological implications of internet addiction (Spears). That is why Dr. Nathan A. Shapira of the Evelyn F. & William L. McKnight Brain Institute of the University of Florida embarked on a study of internet addiction that was recently published in the *Journal of Depression and Anxiety*. According to Dr. Shapira the purpose of his study was to obtain criteria that could be used to diagnose individuals with problematic internet use and identify appropriate subjects for future studies.

CNN and Tom Spears of The Ottawa Citizen summed up the method and results of Dr. Shapira's study, which involved face-to-face evaluations of two groups of people; one group consisted of 20 volunteers with admitted problems with internet usage and the other group consisted of 17 college students selected at random. His study revealed that the people with internet usage problems spent more than 30 hours a week on the internet. They also used the internet for recreational purposes ten times more than they used it for more productive activities such as work and they had an average of five other psychiatric disorders such as bipolar disorder, depression or alcohol abuse (Spears; CNN). Dr. Shapira also put forth five factors that may be used to determine if someone is likely to have an internet addiction. He sums up these criteria with the acronym MOUSE:

More than intended time spent online
Other responsibilities neglected
Unsuccessful attempts to cut down
Significant relationship discord because of use
Excessive thoughts or anxiety when not online

Hopefully, Dr. Shapira's study will be followed up on by other scientists because there are still a lot of unanswered questions. Psychiatrists are still not sure exactly why some people use the internet more than others, what the long term effects of internet addiction are and whether or not it should be classified as a psychiatric disorder itself or just a side effect of other psychiatric disorders (Spears; CNN).

As a student attending an online university, where most of my academic interactions will involve the internet, I would be very interested in seeing this line of research continued. I know through personal experience how easy it is to get carried away on the internet and lose track of time. I do not fit all of the MOUSE criteria and I do not consider my internet usage to be excessive or unhealthy, but I do see how it could be easy to become addicted. It would be very useful to know why and how certain people develop internet addictions so that precautions can be taken to prevent it.

Sources:

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FROM MY PERSPECTIVE

Irritations!

By Debbie Jabbour



During the last month I've been keeping a daily log book which details my mental and emotional state (for the reason why I'm keeping the log book, see next week's Voice). This has been a very interesting and educational effort. However, I've noticed this past week that my level of irritability and anxiety has increased, becoming a daily occurrence. A fairly high level of irritability and frustration isn't something recent, in fact I've been feeling quite stressed and irritated for months now. I've identified a few obvious reasons for this. My job with the addictions help line was one, and after I quit, my irritation was somewhat relieved - although it gave rise to other causes of frustration such as financial worries. The behaviour of a colleague is another source of

trouble - since this individual, for some unknown reason, appears determined to make my life as difficult and stress-filled as possible. General frustration at feeling overworked and under-appreciated is yet another reason. But these are all things that have been ongoing for months, and don't adequately explain why my irritability level has increased during the last week.

I've come to the conclusion that it must have something to do with things going on around me that I've read about in the paper and seen on the news. Regardless of the source, being in a constant state of irritation is exhausting, time consuming and counter-productive. I probably can't do much about most of my sources of irritation and stress, but I've decided to use this week's column to vent, in the hopes that it might at least make me feel better! So here's some of the news stories that I've found irritating during this past week.

News story #1: Extremely wealthy soon-to-be Prime Minister Paul Martin is accused of creating a large tax loophole for the rich. This is not the first time. Why is this irritating? Several years ago Revenue Canada audited my self-employed musician business, deciding that it was not a valid venture since I did not make a profit for several years in a row (I can hear all the musicians out there laughing themselves silly at the thought of making a profit in the music business). They disallowed years of tax returns and demanded repayment of back taxes. Acting on some bad legal advice, my partner and I fought the case all the way to tax court. Of course we learned that "you can't fight city hall," and not only did we lose, we were assessed court costs of \$2000 each to pay the taxman's lawyer. I soon found out that when it comes to collecting taxes owed, the taxman is more aggressive than *Soprano's*-style leg-breaking mafia money-lenders. In desperation I finally wrote Finance Minister Paul Martin a letter, throwing myself on his mercy, begging him to use the income tax fairness provision to forgive me the money owing. Although it was only a few thousand dollars, as a full-time student and single parent, it represented a lot of money to me. Mr. Martin wrote back to advise me that he could not interfere with a decision made by Revenue Canada's tax court. I guess you only get taxes forgiven if you are already part of the rich man's club or if you happen to be former privacy commissioner George Radwanski.

Martin linked to tax break for the rich:

<http://www.shawnhoward.ca/media.asp?ID=158>

<http://www.canada.com/edmonton/edmontonjournal/archives/story.asp?id=DB20FF6F-6110-4660-9BF8-38464D1FF6CF>

Crusader fights against wealthy family tax break:

http://www.canoe.com/CNEWSFeatures0103/07_wpg-cp.html

Auditor general to probe Radwanski's tax break:

http://www.cbc.ca/stories/2003/06/25/radwanski_debt030625

News story #2: Courtesy of Ralph Klein's government, Albertans can look forward to natural gas rebates this winter to offset our extremely high heating bills. Why is this irritating? The program will cost the government

1 billion, and rather than benefiting only those who truly need the assistance, these rebates go to everyone, rich and poor. This announcement brought back memories of a long, cold winter a few years ago when I was forced to keep my thermostat at minimum and wear layers of clothing due to heating bills that had tripled. Ralph gave gas rebates that year too, sending \$300 cheques to every Albertan over the age of 16, based on whether they had filed an income tax return. The money was sent via the income tax department, meaning that I didn't get my rebate, since the tax man appropriated it for taxes owing (see news story #1). The government says this time they will not be generating work for cheque printers and Canada Post, but will instead give money directly to the gas company with the intent of lowering our bills - leaving many to wonder just 'who' is getting the benefit. With an election likely coming up next year, I guess the government hopes Albertans will be fooled by this blatant vote-purchase attempt.

Blanket rebates policy unwise:

<http://www.canada.com/edmonton/edmontonjournal/archives/story.asp?id=C1A786B9-ACAD-495E-8DC8-6F78D3FE0E62>

Klein confident of third term:

<http://www.canoe.ca/CNEWS2000Review/alberta-cp.html>

Alberta personal tax rebate plan:

<http://www.rmcdonald.com/rebate1.htm>

News story #3: School is back in session in Alberta, and classrooms from kindergarten up are reportedly overflowing, with more than 30 students per class in some cases. Teacher lay-offs and budget cuts are blamed. Why is this irritating? Teachers threatened a strike last year, and eventually received an arbitrated raise of 14%. The government says there is no money to pay these wages. But they have \$1 billion to give in gas rebates (see news story #2)?

Supersized classes no treat for children hungry for knowledge

<http://www.canada.com/edmonton/edmontonjournal/archives/story.asp?id=7136EE6D-6F26-4508-A0C0-DD78DCDC00A3>

News story #4: University classes are back in session in Alberta, along with tuition increases, differential tuition, and increased entrance requirements. Universities are turning away students. Students in Grade 12 are facing intense pressure, knowing they stand no chance of getting into university next year unless their marks are over 80 percent. Why is this irritating? \$1 billion for gas rebates (see news story #2 and #3).

Time to knuckle down and get good grades:

<http://www.canada.com/edmonton/edmontonjournal/archives/story.asp?id=9B979ACA-B87B-4350-8A26-7B022F7C686E>

News story #5: In Calgary, police dogs are left inside a car in 30 degree weather with the car running and air conditioning on while the officer is inside the station doing paperwork. The air conditioning fails and starts blowing hot air, causing the dogs to have heart attacks. Two die. In addition to being terribly sad, why is this irritating? According to the police, leaving the dogs in the police cruiser with the motor running and air conditioning on is department policy, and this officer did nothing wrong. Several weeks earlier an ordinary citizen took a group of abandoned puppies to the dog pound. It was also 30 degrees, and the puppies almost died enroute due to the heat in the vehicle. This ordinary citizen ended up facing animal cruelty charges. The Calgary police advisor tells people "never leave your vehicle running and unattended" and several parents in Edmonton were arrested and charged during the summer for leaving their children inside a hot car. I have many questions about this event, starting with: Where is the common sense? What kind of asinine policy allows a police officer to burn up public money by leaving a vehicle running for hours with the air conditioning on? And what would have been the police response had it been an "ordinary citizen" who had left their dogs unattended in a running vehicle for hours while they sat in their office doing paperwork?

Calgary police say clogged radiator led to death of police dog and family pet:

<http://www.canoe.ca/WesternTicker/CANOE-wire.Police-Dogs-Heat.html>

Two Calgary police dogs die in hot cruiser:

<http://web.theglobeandmail.com/servlet/story/RTGAM.20030901.wdogs0902/BNStory/National/>

Calgary Police Service Police Advisor:

<http://www.gov.calgary.ab.ca/police/news/advisor-2001spring.html>

News story #6: The Alberta government, along with several other provinces, is reviewing insurance rates in an attempt to stem excessive increases and stop discrimination against young drivers with clean records. A review committee consisting of insurance company representatives and government agents insist that the problem of high insurance rates is caused by fraudulent claims consisting of "hard-to-prove soft tissue injuries." They blame accident-injury lawyers and insist that the solution is to cap payouts for pain and suffering and to limit amounts therapists can charge for treatment. Why is this irritating? As an individual who suffered a "hard-to-prove soft tissue injury" ten years ago that has left me permanently crippled and facing a life-time of increasing pain and loss of mobility, I can vouch for the fact that no amount of insurance settlement money for pain and suffering would be sufficient compensation for what I have gone through. And as much as I distrust the legal profession (see news story #1), if I had not obtained the services of a lawyer, the insurance company might have intimidated me into accepting even less compensation than the small amount I eventually did receive.

Auto insurance review flawed:

<http://www.dailyheraldtribune.com/letters/letters0812.html>

Alberta Tory breaks ranks to blast gov't:

<http://cnews.canoe.ca/CNEWS/Politics/2003/08/20/164979-cp.html>

High auto insurance rates due to fraud: rate caps will not solve problem of rising number of dishonest claimants:

Lorne Gunter, *Edmonton Journal*, Opinion Section, September 7/03.

Proposed insurance changes protested:

<http://www.reddeeradvocate.com/editorials/rad29CF7.htm>

Soft tissue injury suits on way out?

<http://www.herald.ns.ca/stories/2003/08/22/fCanada187.raw.html>

News story #7: 20/20 News Magazine profiles a family whose first child died of "bubble-boy" syndrome, a lack of immunity to fight disease. The parents were tested and advised that both carried the genetic trait for the disease, so chances of subsequent children being born with the syndrome were extremely high. Rather than ensuring no further pregnancies, the couple "accidentally" found themselves parents of twin boys - one of whom had bubble-boy syndrome. The program followed his progress through a series of experimental treatments with stem cells that not only saved the child's life, but may eventually allow him to live relatively normally, without being confined to a "bubble." Why was this irritating? It was a moving, touching story of a brave little boy, but it brought up several ethical questions. Watching the suffering of this toddler as he struggled for survival through invasive medical treatments and chemotherapy, I could not help but question the responsibility of a parent who knowingly brought a child into the world to face this. Medical costs to save this child were close to \$1 million dollars. The parents are unable to pay and the show did not indicate who was being left with the tab. I could not help but wonder - \$1 million dollars could have a significant impact on the lives of many children - how could it be justifiable to spend this to save the life of only one child?

Toddler battles 'Bubble Boy' Syndrome:

http://www.abcnews.go.com/sections/2020/Living/2020_masonwilliams030829.html

I could go on, since there were many more news stories that proved to be sources of irritation to me. Venting helps, but it's not enough. Sometimes its hard to understand the world around us, why people behave as they do and why so many injustices occur. The crux of the matter is, what do we, as individuals, choose to do about it? I plan on looking for constructive ways to deal with these irritations, and a place to start is by raising awareness and letting the government know what I think. Staying silent when we see an injustice or when something irritates us should not be an option. However, as I mentioned at the outset - irritations can wear a person out. So now that I have vented, I think I'll take a break and NOT watch the news!

CANADIAN FED WATCH!

NEWS ACROSS THE NATION...

By Karl Low



Canada Student Loans – A Fading Hope

The Office of the Superintendent of Financial Institutions (OSFI) the organization that supervises and regulates all the banks in Canada, has released a report [\[in PDF format\]](#) investigating the future of the Canada Student Loans Program. In short, as difficult as it is now, it looks as though things may get worse.

The reports findings are really not that surprising to anybody who has actually looked at the trends in tuition and student loans, but we can hope they will serve as a wake-up call to the Minister of Finance and all other government officials who claim to be for equally accessible education.

To begin with, the report presents us with the knowledge that 58% of students will be forced to take advantage of the student loans program, up from the 42% of students that do today. While this is somewhat of an indictment of the current trends in tuition, it does not seem to be that severe of a problem. After all, this still means that almost half the students will not rely on student loans.

The problem becomes more clear when we see that though Statistics Canada has shown that student tuitions are rising faster than inflation (see last week's article), this report shows that if the government continues on its current course, the maximum amount of student funding available per student will be rising at a rate slower than inflation. With an average annual increase in cost of 1.7% in the maximum loans available, the OSFI reports that in constant 2003 dollars, this change is actually a decrease of 0.9% annually.

The picture gets grimmer, however, when we see that the number of students who are at the loan limit rises from 45% to 84%. To get an idea of the real meaning of these numbers, consider that in any group of 25 students who are taking student loans, these numbers mean that only four of them will be able to afford their entire education. The other 21 will have maxed out their loans already. Clearly, if things continue on in this state, the dream of an accessible education for all will actually become a pipe-dream, nothing more.

International Adult Learners Week

This week is International Adult Learners Week as announced by UNESCO, [the Human Resources Department of Canada](#), and various provinces. It also marks the Canadian start of the "United Nations Literacy Decade." In Alberta, there are a number of [events](#) that a person can attend to help celebrate the occasion, including one at Athabasca University on the 27th of September.

It's hard to not find it a little ironic that a week celebrating adult learners is happening so close to Statistics Canada's tuition report, and the OSFI report on Canada Student Loans. If the trends from both of those reports continue, we'll have to change the name of this to International Wealthy Learners Week.

In any event though, if you're one of the many adult students attending AU, take a momentary break from your studies to celebrate. You're ahead of the curve already, and our government wants more people to be like you. Now doesn't that just give you a warm fuzzy feeling inside?

Ontario to the Polls

The Ontario Provincial government has announced the next general election will be held on October the 2nd. This is a great time for people to bring issues to the government's awareness, as politicians have to at least pay lip service to anything we say, and the words "My vote is riding on this..." never holds more value than during campaign season.

So if you're an Athabasca University student in Ontario, now is the time to ask your provincial government why they are not helping you fund your education like they do for students who are going to traditional universities. This is the best time to ask them whether they think money in the education budget is better spent on bricks or on giving students an actual education. Now is the time to ask them about helping your university to set up invigilation centres where you can write your exams for free.

Most of all, it's the time to ask them what they're willing to do for your vote.

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.

INVISIBLE WOMEN

Stacey Steele



In Canada we are educated about racism. There are laws protecting minorities and Canada is a role-model in international human rights issues. We are a multicultural and sensitive society who believe in equal rights for all, fairness and understanding, right?

Can you tell me who Eva Tasup, Calinda Waterhen, and Shelly Napope are? How about Yvonne Johnson? Helen Betty Osbourne? I'm sure not many can. How about squaw, chief, brave, Pocahontas, redskin or Indian? I'm sure almost all of you can tell me what those names mean.

The discrimination against North America's First Nations people is rampant. You can see it in the justice system and all levels of government, through the abuses brought on by residential schools (the last one closed in 1996), through media and entertainment (either by culture co-opting or stereotyping), sports teams (would Atlanta rename themselves as the "Crackers"?), and mainstream North American misconceptions. But perhaps the lowest rung on the ladder of society is the Native woman.

In the fall of 2001, in the quiet farming community of Tisdale, Saskatchewan, a twelve year old girl was gang raped by three men in their mid twenties. In May of 2003, one of the men, Dean Edmundson was found guilty of sexual assault after three days of jury deliberations. He was not taken into custody and was free until sentencing in June. His lawyer, Hugh Harradance, expressed disappointment over the verdict. On June 27, 2003 the other two accused, Jeffrey Kindrat and Jeffrey Brown were found not guilty. Defence lawyers described the girl as a sexual aggressor who consented to the encounter and suggested she didn't tell the truth in court (Globe and Mail). Shocking isn't it? Outside of Saskatchewan, this story garnered very little publicity. In fact my local paper only gave it a few inches near the last page. The little girl was Native and her attackers were Caucasian.

Although the obvious question is in everyone's minds I will say it anyway: would the outcome have been different if the victims' and attackers' races were reversed?

There are some questions to ask about this trial. Why were there no aboriginal jurors? In fact the jury was comprised mainly of white males. Why was the girl's history of abuse brought into evidence? And most appalling why would the jury accept Jeffrey Kindrat and Jeffrey Brown's explanation that they gave her beer and then had consensual sex with her, although the child stated that they offered her a ride in a truck, plied her with alcohol and then raped her? The systematic stereotyping and victimization of native women was crystal clear in this case.

What about in February, 2001 when two aboriginal sisters (Corrine McKeown and Dorreen Leclair) were stabbed to death in their own home. Very sad, but it happens I suppose. But does it still just happen when 911 is called five times over a period of eight hours?

The following details come from a CBC News report (October 29, 2002) that detail the events from that evening:

The first call: The first time the women phone 911, the call is disconnected. When the operator phones back, one of the women says someone had been shot. Police are dispatched to the address, but Dunlop [the attacker] gives a fake name and McKeown makes no complaint.

The second call: The women are instructed to phone the police directly.

The third call: The women report McKeown has been stabbed by a man violating a restraining order. The operator tells them to solve the problem themselves, and says they are partly to blame.

The fourth call: It's harder to understand the sisters, although one can be heard saying "please help me." The operator promises to send police, but no car is dispatched

The fifth and final call: When a 911 operator answers, faint sounds from one or both of the sisters are drowned out by barking dogs. The operator hangs up and dials the house. William Dunlop answers the phone and tries to convince the operator everything is fine. It is now believed that both women are dying, or dead, while he talks. The operator sends a car to the house, but the sisters succumb to their stab wounds before police arrive.

The sisters lived in Winnipeg's north end, an area with a large aboriginal population. Some critics argue that this would not have happened if the calls were made from a more affluent neighborhood. It is also interesting to note that McKeown had a restraining order against Dunlop (an ex-boyfriend) that was supposed to be backed up with zero tolerance protection.

Who are Eva Tasup, Calinda Waterhen, Mary Jane Serloin and Shelley Napope? They are the victims of John Martin Crawford. In 1981, in Lethbridge, Alberta, he killed Mary Jane Serloin when he was 19. Her murder was vicious, with bite marks scarring her body. Crawford was charged with manslaughter and was given a sentence of ten years. In 1996 he was convicted of the rape and murders of Eva Tasup, Calinda Waterhen, and Shelley Napope and sentenced to life in prison. He had murdered four women and is the suspect in many other missing women/murder cases. At the time of his conviction, in the ranks of Canadian serial killers, only Clifford Olsen outranked him in the number of lives taken.

Calinda Waterhen, Mary Jane Serloin and Shelley Napope all had families who loved them. In fact, their families had reported them missing to the police and received no answers until the women's naked bodies were found outside Saskatoon. So why would the second ranked serial killer in Canada get no attention from the

media? Outside of Saskatchewan, the story garnered very little attention, and eventually became forgotten in that province too. Warren Goulding's book *Just Another Indian- A Serial Killer and Canada's Indifference* tells the story and offers insight into why the media and public at large has paid little attention to these murders. As for the book's title, Mary Jane Serloun's sister commented to Goulding that "It seems any time a Native is murdered it isn't a major case. It's just another dead Indian."

Yvonne Johnson is the only Native woman in Canada to be convicted of first degree murder. She was sentenced to life in prison with no chance of parole for twenty-five years. In giving her that sentence the justice system has her ranked with Paul Bernardo, Larry Fisher, and the aforementioned Clifford Olsen. Yvonne Johnson was charged in 1989 with her part in the beating death of Charles Swark, an alleged pedophile, in Wetaskiwin, Alberta. Along with her sentencing in 1991, her common law husband, Dwayne Wenger, received a sentence of ten years and another man, Ernest Jensen, the same sentence of ten years for their involvement in the beating.

Why is it that John Martin Crawford, just eight years earlier received a manslaughter charge and was sentenced to ten years for the brutal rape and murder of Mary Jane Serloun while Yvonne Johnson will be in prison until she is 52 years old (if granted parole), long after her children have grown up? A man died, that is the main tragedy, but another overlooked tragedy is that Johnson received a grossly unequal sentence compared to her co-accused. Her book, *Stolen Life- The Journey of a Cree Woman*, written along with Governor General Award winning author Rudy Wiebe, highlights the life of a woman whose stature in society was prearranged even before she was born.

Nineteen year old Helen Betty Osbourne was abducted and brutally raped in 1971, near The Pas, Manitoba. The RCMP officers assigned to the case had concluded that four men were responsible, Dwayne Archie Johnston, James Robert Paul Houghton, Lee Scott Colgan and Norman Bernard Manger, though it wasn't until 1987 that Dwayne Johnston was charged with her death. The other three men went free. It took sixteen years to bring some sort of justice for the Osbourne family. The story of the investigation and the town that covered up her death was made into a movie in 1991 called *Conspiracy of Silence*, in one of the rare instances any media has paid proper attention to the victimization of First Nations women.

So are we an enlightened, accepting society? If media outlets gauge their stories on the public's appetite, then why aren't they reporting on these gross injustices? It could be that the media and society at large are no better than hate groups such as the KKK. We hear what we want to hear, and ignore the voices that are striving to be heard. In not giving these stories and issues the coverage they deserve media outlets are breeding ignorance and fostering violence.

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<http://www.cbc.ca/news/indepth/firstnations/winnipeg911.html>

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<http://www.globeandmail.com/servlet/story/RTGAM.20030627.wrpe0627/BNStory/National/>





Dear Sandra,

One thing that I have always been conscious of was that my degree might not be on-par with other degrees that are taken at an actual campus. Sometimes I feel that an employer may see the correspondence degree as a less-than-par or a cereal -box degree and not give me the same chances. This has troubled me for years and I always seem to be justifying why correspondence is OK.

I wonder if others feel the same way. I (personally) feel a bit inadequate next to a management student from say the U of A. I know that I am getting a good education, but I always wonder how employers view the correspondence degree program.

Anonymous in Alberta

Dear AA,

I remember when I first began looking into studies at AU. I had vaguely heard of AU, but equated its credibility with that of those certificate-granting institutions that advertise in coupon packages (you know the kind, you choose a degree, lick it, stick it and mail it away). However, I spent an insane amount of time researching the AU website and asking AU advisors and students that I knew for some information on the validity of an AU degree before I finally took the leap and began a 4 year BA program.

I'm now half-way through my degree and have no doubts whatsoever about its validity. Twice now I have had the privilege to attend AU convocation. During the ceremonies, as each graduate takes the stage, the speaker announces what degree this graduate completed and their current (or projected) employment status. Many of these newly graduated individuals are employed with reputable companies. If most already have jobs when they are accepting their diplomas, what does that tell you?

However, I wanted to get some cold hard facts for verification, so I asked Dr. Judith Hughes, VP Academic at AU, for some statistics. When I forwarded your question to her she was eager to help as she feels this is an opportunity to clear up any misconceptions students may have about AU. One important issue she wanted to address was the use of the word "correspondence."

"This word is incorrect and serves to reinforce the very misconception that this student wishes to resolve. In fact, online and distance education represents an advancement in the teaching/learning dynamic ... one that builds on the true Socratic method (in which Socrates mentored a student one-on-one, engaging and challenging the student). One could argue that on-campus experiences, with hundreds of students in a large lecture theatre actually render the student more anonymous than does distance education."

This is an excellent point from Dr. Hughes. Our education AU should always be referred to as on-line or distance education and not "correspondence." The latter term implies that we have no contact with an instructor, when the opposite is true. Many of my traditional university friends envy the fact that I have such a close relationship with my tutors. In fact, one friend was astonished to learn that I was given the home phone

number, email and street address of my tutor, because she never was privy to any of this personal information from her professors.

Dr. Hughes adds that employers and graduate schools are becoming increasingly aware of the quality of AU students because these students have demonstrated a discipline and independence that other graduates sometimes lack. Studying from home, on your own schedule, takes an extreme amount of dedication, independence and organization, showing employers that besides being an intelligent, knowledgeable graduate you are a responsible, self-disciplined person (well, for most people).

AU is also a full member of the Association of Universities and Colleges of Canada and the International Council for Open and Distance Education. AU students are given transfer credit at sister institutions and our grads are welcome in graduate programs at many other schools.

Ok, now for the facts (courtesy of Dr. Hughes, NOTE: these are Alberta Learning Statistics, not AU statistics):

Alberta Learning conducted a survey of "the class of 2000" - Two Years After Graduation... for all Alberta Universities and University/colleges. ... some findings for AU (Class of 2000):

- labour force participation = 97%
- almost 9 in 10 working grads agreed that their program was "worth the financial cost"
- one quarter were already enrolled in a graduate program
- 84% reported that their job and their program were related "overall"
- 88% reported job-program fit in terms of general skills and abilities
- 91% were satisfied with course relevance

In addition to surveying graduates, Alberta Learning also surveys current students. Alberta Learning conducts satisfaction surveys with students from all universities and university colleges in the province and publishes the results. AU receives these results along with student satisfaction scores for AU as compared to the Alberta average scores. Some selected figures:

- satisfied with overall educational experience - AU = 92%; provincial average = 79%
- improve yourself generally - AU = 93%; provincial average = 83%
- would choose the same institution - AU = 93%; provincial average = 83%
- clear course objectives - AU = 91%; provincial average = 82%
- interesting presentation- AU= 83%; provincial average = 62%
- fosters effective writing - AU = 84%; provincial average = 73%

These statistics show two things: 1) We have boring post-secondary institutions in Alberta (see interesting presentation provincial average) and 2) AU exceeds the provincial average for all these points and doesn't fall below a B!

I encourage you to investigate more of the AU website on your own, visit the AUSU student discussion board to connect with other current students, talk to the AU Alumni Society and if need be contact AU or AUSU directly. Staff and council members are always eager to help address students' concerns. **My thanks to Dr. Hughes for her assistance with answering this question.**

Reference

Athabasca University: The "class of 2000" Two Years After Graduation [results from the 2002 Alberta Universities and University Colleges' Graduate Employment Survey, Marianne Sorenson, Nov. 2002

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

AU PRESIDENT RECEIVES AWARD IN VERSAILLES *Tamra Ross Low*

This week Athabasca University will be recognized internationally through the achievements of President, Dominique Abrioux. In a ceremony in Versailles France, Dr. Abrioux will receive an honorary Doctor of The University award from the Senate of the Open University [UK] in recognition of his work in areas of special educational concern to the University.

The September 13th ceremony is "the only Open University ceremony held outside of the UK ... attended both by UK and European graduands...This latest recognition follows the 'Honorary Fellow of COL Award' [Dr. Abrioux] received earlier this year from the Commonwealth of Learning for his contribution to distance education" (Insider).

While this award is a great honor for Dr. Abrioux, he stresses that it is just as great an honor for Athabasca University. When asked to comment on his award, he had this to say:

For me, a distance educator, an honorary degree from The Open University represents the highest form of recognition that I could ever have hoped for (and certainly never expected). The Open University, after all, is simply the best open university world-wide, and as such they are primarily responsible for the positive status that open and distance learning now enjoys.

While I am personally very honored by this award, I believe that the honor is one that is being bestowed on our university. I consider my honorary degree as being a testimonial to Athabasca University's incredible accomplishments during the past decade and its evolving national and international leadership in distance and online education. I see myself as the team captain, accepting the award on behalf of all my colleagues who have collectively demonstrated dedication and commitment in fulfilling our institutional mission.

Dominique Abrioux's tenure as 'Team Captain' has been a time of enormous change and growth for AU - a fact which is recognized in the Open University notice of honorary degree recipients:

A pioneer in open and distance learning, Dr Abrioux has been with Athabasca University, Canada, for 25 years and was appointed its President in 1995. Under his leadership, the university – Canada's open university – has more than doubled its student complement. It now has 26,000 adult learners in 65 countries. He has held a number of positions with international open education organisations.

One of these organizations is "the Board of Management of the Alberta Economic Development Authority (AEDA)" where Dr. Abrioux has been asked to serve "as a member of the Labour Force Committee" (Insider).

This award also reciprocates the Honorary Doctor of Letters which AU bestowed on the Open University's Sir John Daniel at the June 13, 1998 convocation. Daniels - a one time AU "staff member, a student, and a drop out" - spoke of Dr. Abrioux in his acceptance speech:

"I am very proud to have spotted his immense talent early and asked him to start AU's language programme. When I saw that with a racket in his hand he was even more ferociously competitive than Sam Smith I knew he would go far. You are extraordinarily fortunate that he is now guiding the destinies of AU with Marie-Louise to support him" (Daniels).

Dr. Abrioux's term as AU president will end in 2005, although he says he doesn't "have any plans to leave AU" and he hopes "to end [his] career here doing academic work and contributing in any way deemed meaningful" (In the words of the President). He continues to work with the AU Center for Language and Literature and to tutor one AU French course.

REFERENCES

Dominique Abrioux, Profile: <http://www.athabascau.ca/presoff/staff/abrioux/abrioux2.htm>
Insider (Jan 24, 2003). President to Receive Honorary Award. <http://www.athabascau.ca/insider/2003/Jan24-03.htm>
Sesame (2003). Honorary Graduates 2003. Online at: http://www3.open.ac.uk/events/6/2003331_49376_o1.pdf
Sir John Daniel's Acceptance Speech, AU, June 1998. Online at: <http://www.open.ac.uk/vcs-speeches/Athabas.html>
In the words of the President: Interview: <http://www.athabascau.ca/frontpage/articles/DominiqueInterview.htm>

ATHABASCA UNIVERSITY STUDENTS' UNION

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

JOB POSTING



The Athabasca University Students' Union (AUSU), is seeking a creative and self-motivated individual to fill the position of Executive Director. AUSU is a non-traditional students' organization representing approximately 26,000 distance education students from across Canada and internationally. The AUSU office is based in downtown Edmonton, and under the guidance of a nine-member elected Council, provides services at a distance to Athabasca University students including: advocacy, representation, communication, student clubs, and scholarships & bursaries.

Under the direction of the AUSU president, and working closely with the executive committee; the Executive Director will provide support to the AUSU Council team in achieving our vision. Working within established policies and guidelines, the Executive Director will oversee AUSU activities through liaison between staff, students, the university and AUSU Council. While primarily responsible for overall administration and management of the AUSU office and its services, the position encompasses a wide variety of duties, including (but not limited to): research, basic website maintenance, bookkeeping, external representation, preparation of reports and news releases, records maintenance, and policy development. The successful candidate will possess multiple and diverse skills, and will be willing to grow and develop this new position to best meet the needs and goals of our unique student organization.

The position will be of interest to highly motivated, enthusiastic individuals who are seeking a unique employment opportunity that will allow personal growth and skill development in all aspects of organizational management within a dynamic student service environment.

Executive Director position requirements include:

- An undergraduate degree in administration, arts, finance, or the equivalent.
- Excellent organizational, presentation, interpersonal, problem solving, and team building skills
- Basic accounting skills in a computerized environment
- Ability to understand and interpret legislation and policy
- Competency in research and Internet search tools
- Adaptable and flexible; an independent self-starter who is ready to learn and meet new challenges.
- Excellent written and verbal communication skills
- Accuracy and attention to detail
- Experience in providing leadership and coordination in a team environment
- Awareness of post secondary education issues
- Computer aptitude and proficiency in Windows, MS Office, and Internet-based computer environments.

Previous experience in board management in a post secondary educational environment or non-profit organization would be an asset. The position requires flexible work hours.

Starting salary is \$30,000 plus a benefit package.

Preference will be given to an Athabasca University student or alumnus.
Athabasca University Students' Union is an equal opportunity employer.

For further information regarding this position, contact Debbie Jabbour, President, at 780-497-3413 or email president@ausu.org

Competition closes September 23, 2003. Letters of application, accompanied by resume and three references should be sent by mail, courier, or email to:

Debbie Jabbour, President
Athabasca University Students' Union
2nd Flr, North Tower
10030 – 107 Street
Edmonton AB T5J 3E4

Email as .doc attachments to president@ausu.org.

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: 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.

EDULINX EDUCATION AWARD

Value: \$500

DEADLINE: October 31, 2003

Administrator: EDULINX

Notes: To enter, go to www.edulinx.ca/en/contest.html, proceed to the contest area and then correctly answer the survey questions (for help on what the answers are, see www.edulinx.ca) and complete the contest registration form.

Contact Information:

EDULINX

2 Robert Speck Parkway, Suite 1600

Mississauga, Ontario L4Z 1H8

Web Site: <http://www.edulinx.ca/en/contest.html>



CONFERENCE CONNECTIONS

Contributed By AU's *The Insider*

- **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]

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.

ATTENTION PSYCHOLOGY STUDENTS



Every Monday from 9:30 AM MST and Wednesday from 7 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

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



CLASSIFIEDS:

AU students are eligible for free classifieds (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.

Edmonton and Area AU students are holding their inaugural face-to-face get together and you're invited. It will be a casual social mixer and a way to connect with fellow students.

Meet other students in your program, make new friends, have a coffee, find study buddies and find out what's going on at AU and the SU.

If you would like to take part in the Edmonton and Area get together, contact RYAN for info at: nicepilotdude@yahoo.ca

THE VOICE

c/o Athabasca University Students' Union
2nd Floor, 10030-107th Street, Edmonton, AB T5J 3E4
800.788.9041 ext. 3413

Editor In Chief Tamra Ross Low

THE VOICE ONLINE: WWW.AUSU.ORG/VOICE

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