

THE VOICE

MAGAZINE

Vol 12 Issue 1
January 7, 2004

AUSU

Down to 7 and moving on

My New Year's Resolution

Finding something to stick with

The Harried Student

appreciates Canada

New Column - World Wide Events Listings
find out what's happening on and off campus near you

Plus: From My Perspective, FedWatch!, Flicks & Folios, and news, announcements and opportunities from your university and beyond.

THE VOICE

Jan 7, 2004

Volume 12, Issue 01

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

Letter to the Editor, The Voice

In her December 10 article, "[Life at the Top](#)," (The Voice, Volume 11 Issue 50) AUSU President Debbie Jabbour wrote about a decision of Council with which she disagreed. Since the minutes of AUSU Council meetings are not yet posted on the AUSU web site, I'd like to present readers with some details about the discussion and subsequent decision.

In March of this year, the AUSU President told Council that AU had received some additional funding from the Alberta government and AU wanted to use these funds "in conjunction with a re-allocation of budget money that was intended to support multiple-course-takers" to reduce the out-of-province student fee charged to AU students living outside of Alberta. The President asked Council to direct her on how she should speak to it at the next Governing Council meeting.

In the above cited Voice article, students may get the perception that Council was unilaterally opposed to reducing fees for students and voted against it. That's not the case, however.

At our March 20 meeting when this question came forward, Council felt that if AU had extra funds to allocate, it should be used toward student services or fee reductions that would benefit all AU students, not just a particular segment of the student population. The following sentence is from the approved minutes of the March 20, 2003: "It was generally decided that AUSU will not agree to a selective reduction in out of province fees, however, will support a reduction of general fees that would benefit all AU students equally."

As elected representatives of AU students we try to always be cognizant of the fact that we're the voice for students across Canada, including those in Alberta.

Shirley Barg
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EDITORIAL PAGES

THIS WEEK

AUSU COUNCIL DOWN TO SEVEN AND MOVING ON - Shannon Maguire brings a student perspective to the recent upheavals in AUSU council.

MY NEW YEAR'S RESOLUTION - Barbara Godin has finally found something she can stick to all year round!

THE HARRIED STUDENT APPRECIATES CANADA - The Harried Student - who takes the concept of distance learning to its very extremes - returns with the world perspective on dear old Canada.

NEW COLUMN - The Voice Events Listings

This week The Voice launches a new column containing world wide listings for events of interest to students. Find out what's going on in your area, or submit items for inclusion in the column. These listings are one more way The Voice hopes to build a world-wide student community at AU. We also hope that by attending events at local venues, AU students can round out their educations and take advantage of the total university experience. This week the Events Listings appear both in the Features and News sections of The Voice. Starting next week, the column will appear only in the News section. New listings will be added as we become aware of them, and will run until the event has occurred.

Council reporters wanted

The Voice needs reporters who are able to write clear, critical and balanced reviews of what goes on at AUSU council meetings. Meetings take place about once a month, and may be attended by teleconference from almost anywhere in the world. Inquire with the Voice editor at voice@ausu.org if you would like more information on this opportunity.

Bill 43 is all but done

After months of discussion, frantic press scrums, government meetings, and student's organization campaigning, the final version of Alberta Education Bill 43, The Post Secondary Learning Act 2003, "has been given Royal Assent and will now likely be proclaimed in whole or in part by late January or early February" (Insider).

Like most legislation, this is a bill that means different things to different people. From the perspective of Athabasca University, benefits of the new bill mean that:

- AU can alter its Governance structure from a unicameral system (where "AU Governing Council is the ultimate authority on all matters...") to a bicameral system (where "Academic Council is responsible for all academic matters and Governing Council for strategy and finance").
- One more student member will be added to AU Governing Council.
- Tuition will be regulated through a cap [although student's organizations insist that the cap, which includes many provisions to allow tuition to increase beyond the upper limit, is similar to no cap at all].
- Colleges and technical institutes will have more opportunities to grant degrees, and colleges and private universities will no longer be limited to only granting undergraduate degrees.

(Adapted from The Insider)

The key to the new bill, according to AU, is flexibility, and making colleges and universities accountable to a quality assurance body when new programs are proposed (The Insider).

The Alberta government also sings the praises of their new education bill, which streamlines education legislation by combining several education regulatory acts (the Universities Act, the Colleges Act, the Technical Institutes Act and the Banff Centre Act) under a single bill for the first time. Alberta Learning states that the "Alberta Legislature has passed legislation that will give students better access to a greater diversity of post-secondary programs."

"The passing of this legislation means more access to degree opportunities and that means more choices for students," said Learning Minister Dr. Lyle Oberg. "This is especially important to rural students, who could potentially see more opportunities to study closer to home. This legislation is going to help our post-secondary education system enter a new era of accessibility" (Alberta Learning).

It could be argued that it would be much more cost-effective to increase access to distance learning for rural students, than to promote the building of more post-secondary infrastructure in rural areas. However, Dr. Oberg has stated that "there are a lot of people that do not necessarily want distance learning ... they would sooner have the learning in the classroom in the typical university environment" (Bill 43 Sends a Powerful Message). What is not clear is if this statement is based on a supposition of the Learning Minister, or actual research into the learning preferences of Albertans.

An unexpected benefit (for students) of the new Bill, and that it combines all of the post-secondary acts affecting Alberta colleges and universities, has been an increased and more cohesive student advocacy presence in the province. Due to concerns about this act, CAUS (the Council of Alberta University Students) and ACTISEC (the Alberta College and Technical Institute Students' Executive Council) have begun working together. This is a significant development as in the past, the two bodies worked independently and lobbied separately for changes to the acts affecting their member intuitions. While Alberta may be pleased to have simplified Post Secondary legislation under a single act, the government will now also have to work with a larger and more cohesive student interest group, and thus we see an end to the "divide and conquer" strategy that has allowed the government to alter education legislation with little effective opposition from students groups.

REFERENCES:

Alberta Learning. Passage of Bill 43 opens new doors for students. Online at:
<http://www.learning.gov.ab.ca/college/Bill43/>

AU Insider - December 23, 2003. The new law and Athabasca University. Stephen Murgatroyd, PhD. Online at:
<http://www.athabascau.ca/insider/2003/Dec23-03.htm>

Bill 43 Sends a Powerful Message. November 26, 2003. Tamra Ross Low. "Bill 43 sends a powerful message about Campus Alberta," says Minister Oberg *The Voice*, v11 i48. Online at:
<http://www.ausu.org/voice/search/searchdisplay.php?ART=2298>

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION:

Council of Alberta University Students - Deregulation Nation: <http://www.deregulationnation.com/>

ACTISEC - Alberta College and Technical Institute Students' Executive Council: <http://www.actisec.ca/>

Additional links on Bill 43: <http://www3.telus.net/DebateBill43/>

Tamra Ross Low - Editor in Chief



Last month the AUSU Council removed one Councillor for policy violations and accepted the resignation of another Councillor who was scheduled to defend a motion of removal that was brought against her. Since these events have already been covered in detail in the article Sad Day for AUSU Council (Low, Tamra Ross. One member resigns amidst allegations; another is removed under strange circumstances. v11 i51. 2003-12-17) I will not bore you with a lengthy review. There are several issues, however, that have arose on account of these events that have not been dealt with. These issues are:

1. Is the AUSU Council giving students enough information about their activities?
2. Does the AUSU Council need to change the policy that states that motions of reprimand and/or removal are private documents?
3. What is the impact of these events on the image of the AUSU Council?

An Informed Student Body

The events of last month were accompanied by suggestions that the AUSU Council was covering up acts of wrongdoing and conspiracies. The first instance of this took place when Sandra Moore placed the motion of removal that was brought against her in the AUSU discussion forum. In her post she stated that her goal in doing this was to publicize her defense to the allegations made against her in order to save her reputation. From the posts she has made it seems as though she did not feel that there was any other way to tell her side of the story because she believed that she would not receive a fair hearing with the Council. She also stated in the post that she wished to encourage other students to take an interest in what the Council was doing and to ask questions.

While these are admirable goals, some may say that her method of attempting to achieve them was questionable. First of all, if she had attended the council meeting to present her defense and was denied a fair opportunity to do so, then any student who was at the meeting or read the minutes would be able to see this. She would then be able to argue her points while pointing to an official public document and the students would have been provided with a discussion that would reveal the positions of all Councillors on the matter. This would be preferable to what we have now, which is only one person's word with no official evidence to support it in a post that is no longer accessible.

The document is no longer accessible because it was removed by the AUSU. The fact that the post was removed, along with comments made by Sandra in a later post suggesting that the AUSU might pull that post as well, may have led some people to believe that the council was in fact trying to hide the information from the students. In my opinion, this is not true. The AUSU removed the document because it revealed confidential information about AUSU employees, employment agreements and other AU students, and because it violated the posting guideline that states, *"Any postings that include attacks of a personal nature, statements that discriminate on the basis of race, sex, or sexual orientation, or are libelous or defamatory in any way will be deleted from the bulletin board and the username could be banned."* A complete list of the posting guidelines can be found at <http://www.ausu.org/forums/>. Furthermore, the fact that the information in the document was scheduled to be discussed at the Dec 14 Council meeting, which any student could attend, suggests that the Council was not attempting to hide the information.

The Council was then brought into question again when Nicholas Palamarchuk, the councillor who was recently removed due to policy violations, posted a message in the discussion forum indicating that the Council was covering up conspiracies and that he would reveal more information to us shortly. This was a very dangerous accusation that could result in the Council being viewed with suspicion and doubt. Unfortunately, Nicholas failed to specify what and/or who he was talking about and he has failed so far to return and provide us with the

extra information he had promised. I for one will not put much stock into such a vague accusation unless and until he does return with more information and evidence.

The end result is that several allegations have been made against the Council, but from what I can see we have not been provided with enough information and solid evidence to form a conclusive opinion of our own.

Nevertheless, these events have likely increased the awareness and interest of students in how much information the Council is presenting to them. The quality and the timeliness of information presented by the Council to students could be better. The students need to be more informed not only about the negative things happening in the Council, but also about all of the good things they are doing and the new programs they are starting. According to Debbie Jabbour, President of the Council, the recent events have made her realize that changes do have to be made in the Council's policies and practices. The Council will be working on improving access to information in the future. Some of the initiatives being implemented by the Council include:

1. Placing the minutes of Council meetings in the student only area of the AUSU website.
2. Assigning the preparation of agenda packages for Council meetings to the AUSU's new Executive Director. This would alleviate the workload of the Council and hopefully result in the packages being made available more quickly to students who will be attending the meeting.
3. Investigating the possibility of forming a Judicial Committee.

The President also expressed some concerns she has with the disclosure of detailed information about the wrongful acts of Councillors. First of all, she believes that such information should not be presented on the main AUSU website because it is accessible to the entire Internet community. She believes that it would be unfair to place such information in a place where it will show up in Internet searches for the entire world to view. Debbie's opinions on placing information on the internet can be found in more detail in the article [From My Perspective: Privacy and The Internet](#) (Jabbour, Debbie. v11 i40. 2003-11-01).

She also believes that when a member is removed the only information that needs to be disclosed is the fact that the member was removed and what policy violations they committed. In her opinion, putting too much focus on negative events and all the details involved results in wasting time and overshadowing other positive things that the council is doing. The Council ends up spending its time defending against and explaining every little detail when they could be doing more productive work. There are also legal implications to consider since allegations sometimes contain comments that could be considered libelous or slanderous. According to Debbie, the whole matter of how many details should be released "...can be a difficult and sensitive matter."

Tamra Ross Low, the editor of the Voice, is also attempting to ensure that students know what is going on in the Student Council. So far she has been keeping us informed of major events in her editorials. In order to get more coverage of Council activities she is now advertising for students to attend Council meetings and write articles about what was covered. Hopefully, many students will respond her ad and start writing articles about the Council.

Private vs. Public Documents

When a motion of removal and/or reprimand is brought against an AUSU Councillor it is a private document under Council policy. The individual is given at least two weeks to prepare a defense to the allegations against them, which will be presented at a Council meeting. The individual is innocent until proven guilty and sometimes people are found innocent. According to the President of the Council "...it would not be fair to the individual involved to have the allegations made public before they had the opportunity to defend themselves." Of course if the motion is passed then the students are informed about the decision. However, the resignation of Sandra Moore before the motion of removal against her could be considered raised serious questions about this

process. It is obvious that Sandra was not attempting to avoid a finding of wrongdoing on her part. If she was it would certainly be counterproductive to that goal to post the allegations against her on the discussion forum and admit to being wrong on some decisions she made. It did, however, demonstrate that if another Councillor in the future did wish to avoid having his/her policy violations made public he/she could simply resign before the motion was considered. The President of the Council has confirmed that this can happen and that it has already happened in the past. The recent events have made the Council realize that this can no longer be allowed to happen and that policy changes need to be made. The Council has agreed that even if a Councillor resigns they still need to discuss the motion of reprimand and/or removal and have it noted in the minutes.

The Image of Student Council

Students should be confident that their Student Council is an ethical body that is making good use of student funds and keeping students informed of the positive and negative aspects of Council activities. Lately, we have been hearing more negative than positive news about the Council and that is likely to erode the confidence that students have in them. However, according to the President the "...AUSU Council has had an unusually high level of conflicts throughout its history." She believes that one of the problems is the difficulty of running a Council at a distance education University where a lot of the Councillors are not in direct contact with each other. Certainly, as distance education students we can appreciate the unique obstacles that our Student Council has to deal with. The President also believes that some of the problems were being caused by the fact that many Councillors were not being held responsible for policy violations. She is, however, very happy with the current Council and the work they have done together, as you can see from her statement below:

I'd like to think that students aren't highly critical of us because they see a Council that is working hard on their behalf, in spite of any perceived flaws. I'm very proud of what this group has accomplished, and I do not want to see the recent events detract from the good we've done. I believe we dealt with both these Councillors properly, fairly, and according to policy. Students have been notified that this occurred, and that should be the end of the matter. I'd like to move on and continue the positive work we've been doing.

The Council has been doing positive work, but that work has received less attention lately. Some of this work, including the Student Mentor Program and Student Coffee Groups, is briefly mentioned in the article "Sad Day for AUSU Council", and on the AUSU website. The Council has also shown itself to be responsive in recognizing that changes need to be made in light of recent events. Although, there may be problems from time to time we cannot let those problems drag our attention away from the fact that this Council has been doing good work and that they are working hard to fix the problems that do arise. One Councillor has resigned and another has been removed, but there are still seven Councillors moving on and working on our behalf. You should not be afraid to contact any of them with your questions, concerns or ideas.

2003 Tuition and Education Amounts Certificate

Update from Athabasca University Financial Services...

Athabasca University Financial Services is pleased to announce that the official 2003 Tuition and Education Tax Credit Certificate (T2202A) forms will be made available on-line to all eligible students.

The forms will not be mailed out and instead are on-line in printable format for all students to access. Please visit AU's web site at:

www.athabascau.ca

for further details on obtaining your tuition and education tax credit information for your 2003 tax return.

FIRST IT WAS ELECTRICITY
THEN IT WAS NATURAL GAS

NOW THEY'RE COMING FOR EDUCATION

a bill 43 policy
ALBERTA'S STUDENTS ARE GOING TO PAY

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The ALBERTA POST-SECONDARY STUDENT ALLIANCE comprised of CAUS and ACTISEC presents a campaign to STOP BILL 43 AND THE DEREGULATION OF TUITION IN ALBERTA. The education deregulation experiences of Ontario and British Columbia have seriously COMPROMISED ACCESSIBILITY. Suffering over 180 000 ALBERTA STUDENTS. Co-starring an UNDERFUNDED EDUCATION SYSTEM and a SURPLUS RICH, EDUCATION POOR ALBERTA GOVERNMENT.

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RESTRICTED ACCESS TO ALBERTA'S POST-SECONDARY EDUCATION SYSTEM

Only students who can afford to pay exorbitant tuition fees will be admitted. Graduate degrees images of shattered
lenses and doors and thousands of qualified and motivated students being left behind.

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New Year's day is traditionally seen as a new beginning, giving us an opportunity to change bad habits or to improve our lifestyle. For example, we can aim to overcome shyness, become more assertive - ask for that raise, become more social, more tolerant of others, less judgmental, any number of choices are available to us. Perhaps New Year's gives us the belief that at least for one day, we are able to choose the course of our lives from this day forward. I read somewhere that the average person makes one and a half New Year's resolutions each year. The most common resolutions are losing weight, exercising more and quitting smoking. How successful these one and a half resolutions ultimately are, is anybody's guess.

What will my New Year's resolution be for this year? I think I'll try choosing something that I can stick with, maybe that way I will feel better about myself at the end of the year, and I'll feel that I really did accomplish something.

Let me see...quit smoking, no...been there done that. Losing weight? Okay let's be realistic, am I really going to stick to a diet or exercise plan, and do I really need or want to lose weight? After all I don't look too bad, for my age that is. Okay two down, what else? Perhaps being less frivolous with my spending. I guess I do shop more than I need to, but is this something I can live with..."not shopping." But what about that special party? I'll have to buy a new dress. What about my spring wardrobe? Of course I have to have new clothes, or at least a new bathing suit. Naw, that's not a good resolution, I'd only be setting myself up for failure. Keeping with this theme, maybe I should contribute more to my RRSP, after all "they" keep telling us we haven't saved enough for retirement. Okay maybe I can contribute monthly, but can I afford it? What about living now? What if I don't live to retirement, then I will have deprived myself for nothing. Maybe I need to give this one a little more thought.

On the more practical side, I could resolve to finally organize my closets and kitchen cupboards, followed by a huge garage sale. That's a plan - the money from the garage sale could go into my RRSP. Okay, I can feel the stress building already. When will I have the time to do this? I know it will take longer than one day, after all I have five closets and umpteen kitchen cupboards. I check out the calendar... no, not this week, forget February, maybe in March. It would have to be done before summer, cause that's when camping starts. In September I plan on taking another course, so that will keep me pretty busy until Christmas. Oh well, maybe that's not a good resolution. On to the next one.

There's got to be something I know I can commit to doing. How about learning something new? Well I do take courses and I am already working toward my degree, could I really commit to doing more than that... I don't think so. Okay what else... can't think of anything.

After much thought I think I've finally found one I can stick to. My New Year's resolution for 2004 will be to become a more tolerant and accepting individual, beginning with myself and my limited ability to actualize my New Year's resolutions.



English 475

literature and hypertext

COURSE INTRODUCTION: ENGL 475... A Cyborg Experience

Katie Patrick

Prior to my review of English 475, I'd like to include the following article about the course written by M. Redi:

The Student as Cyborg

If you are a cyborg and don't know it does that still make you a cyborg?

The best place to explore this question is in Athabasca's course, Literature and Hypertext, one of the only courses of its kind on the planet. Called English 475, it studies how new digital technology is changing the way we read, write, think, do research, study and even foster relationships. We all use computers, cell phones, CDs, wireless devices and DVDs without giving them a second thought. This technology has become an extension of our bodies, our senses, our minds, our memories, possibly even part of who we are. Our daily dependence on all the new media makes us cyborgs.

What is the relationship between literature and hypertext? One expression of digital technology is hypertext, the interlinking of often diverse texts on the computer screen.

This instantaneous linking affects the way we read, not just the screen but also the printed page. We see literary texts in a different way, in a sense, we create a new literature.

Literacy is a basic skill we all need to function in our world, however, this now also includes computer literacy. Our computer is a common tool we use, but it is also a tool which changes us. It changes us in obvious ways: we can work faster and do more, we can travel less and still personally and daily reach more people than our parents could ever dream of contacting. But this new technology is also changing us in subtle ways which we do not entirely understand. What is our new relationship with the machine?

We can write using the computer, but our written communications are no longer just print since this is a visual and dynamic medium. Are we changing the way we write and think?

English 475: Literature and Hypertext, examines these and many other questions which affect not only students but also their families. Can cyborgs have families?

Star Trek is here. One of the texts on this course is entitled, *Hamlet on the Holodeck*. It seems that the great tradition of English literature has found a home in cyberspace. More correctly it is many homes since there are literature sites all over the world. And the Canadian Writers site at Athabasca University is part of a huge network.

English 475: Literature and Hypertext has a web page, of course, which you are invited to explore. If you need more information you can contact Prof. Joseph Pivato, the coordinator for English 475. Be careful, he will probably also talk to you about his favourite courses, Comparative Canadian Literature. It seems cyborgs can still retain a strong interest in books and literature.

For links go to: <http://www.athabascau.ca/courses/engl/475/>

Course Introduction: ENGL 475... A Cyborg Experience

Katie Patrick

Well, has the cyborg idea caught your imagination? Or do you need a bit more information before delving into the realm of literature and hypertext? If this is the case, stay tuned below....

ENGL 475 delves deeply into the discovery of the various facets of the relationship between literature and hypertext, completing this in three exciting parts. Each part focuses on hypertext from a unique perspective; for instance, the first part of the course deals with its artistic significance and expression. The second part of the course examines hypertext from a political point of view, with a peek into its social and linguistic aspects as well. This section also shows the "function, effects, and value" of hypertext as seen in the media. The last and final section, "hypertext and literary studies", offers, as its name implies, a detailed practical study of hypertext and literature and its accompanying text—author—reader relationship. While studying in these 3 detailed units, you will cover intriguing topics such as "archival text", "the multiform story", "interactivity, cyberculture...and technology" as well as a variety of applicable narratives, including those visually- and game-related. These are discovered using a variety of course materials, including online articles that complement a great reading file. Check out the brand new ENGL 475 course website at: <http://www.athabascau.ca/courses/engl/475/home.html>

Unlike the traditional Athabasca University course, Literature and Hypertext (ENGL 475) can be considered a semi-paced course, while still being offered through independent study. You will be given a generous 19 week schedule to complete the course, which ensures you will be able to finish it on time.

Another technologically exciting feature of ENGL 475 is its Discussion Board. Using this online Discussion Board enables ENGL 475 students across the world to be able to communicate and discuss course-related issues. Not only will you be able to digitally meet your peers in cyberspace, but you will certainly strengthen your Literature and Hypertext (ENGL 475) learning experience by participating in the class discussions and debates. You will find that the Discussion Board is a real highlight of the course!

A 3-credit course in the Humanities area, Literature and Hypertext (ENGL 475) has certain prerequisites required before registering. Two general first year English courses are required (such as ENGL 211 and 212), as well as one senior level English course (such as one of ENGL 325, 335, 336, 373, 381, or 423). Your course grades for Literature and Hypertext are evaluated through 4 means; 3 course assignments, worth 30% each, make up the bulk of the grade, and the remaining 10% is awarded for Discussion Board participation. To read through the course syllabi, visit: <http://www.athabascau.ca/html/syllabi/engl/engl475.htm>

Has your heart skipped a beat while reading this course introduction? If so, it means that ENGL 475 (Literature and Hypertext) is for you! Register today for an exciting learning experience tomorrow!

Missing out on all the deals?

www.ausu.org/services

Get an AU ID card, today!



The image shows a sample Athabasca University ID card. It includes the university's name, a student's name (Jane O. Blumenthal), a photo of the student, and the Athabasca University logo.



I'm an Albertan through and through. I know it now because, here in the Mojave desert where cows as I know them can't take the heat, I just tasted some cheese and asked my husband if he thought it tasted like the cheese back home. Yes, the cheese back home. That not so famous orange, or perhaps you like to say yellow, Alberta cheese every Albertan grows up with and just assumes is the same the world over.

Now, you might be saying "Do you mean cheddar?", but I didn't say cheddar, for the very important reason that Cheddar is a gorge. Really, it's a rocky gorge in England, driving distance from Salisbury, as in the steak. Cheddar is a cheese that was originally made there, perhaps not exactly in the gorge but somewhere thereabouts, and that people now imitate the world over. As they do the steak. Although I should point out that what is called Salisbury steak in Britain is what

Albertan's would wear around their waist, cinched with a really big silver buckle and carved all over with whooping cowboy curly things. But anyway, to get back to the cheese thing, cheddar as we know it in Alberta is what I meant. Good old imitation cheddar Alberta cheese. That's what I was yearning for here in the desert.

Of course the cheese I was comparing to the cheese of my early life experience was not Mojave desert cheese, but Wisconsin cheese. This is for the reason I noted earlier, that cows never stay here very long, and the additional reason that there are laws preventing cheese-deprived Albertans from milking desert mammals, such as, in particular, the laws of fear and physics that prevent me from ever being in a position to milk coyotes or gophers. And this Wisconsin cheese really was as good as Alberta cheese.

Now you may be thinking, who is this person to imagine there really exists on the global scene such a thing as Alberta cheese or Alberta beef? I am but a lowly student trotting the globe in the interest of my education. And I am learning things on the side that I feel must be shared with my compatriots, with not just Albertans but all Canadians. I have learned, for instance, in addition to the point that Alberta cheese and Alberta beef are bovine bounty, also that Canadian lobster rocks. In a Japanese restaurant in the heart of an ancient British cathedral city (which happened to be Salisbury again), I was served the delectable and exotic "Canadian lobster". Honest. We asked for the best in the house, which caught the attention of the chef, who came out to personally assure us that this was their finest imported lobster—their finest, most exotic, good old Canadian lobster.

I found, too, that we have worthy wheat. While in England, I put aside my studies for a weekend and decided to bake and make gravy and do all manner of things with my cooker (oven). Applying my excellent knowledge of biochemistry so that I might achieve this dream, I sought, at the grocery shop some flour. I looked for that familiar English icon, Robin Hood, but oddly, he was nowhere to be found in the shops of jolly old England. No, instead I looked and, with a shake of my head for good measure, saw on the shelves of the Safeway (yes, it really was a Safeway) bags and bags of "Strong Canadian Flour". There it was, my own dear flour, grown along the highway, stored in an elevator, ground and shoved into a teeny little sac, in pursuit of me across the ocean and coyly disguised under a mysterious alias.

We are famous for more than our food, though. There is also the "Hearty Canadian Grass Seed" that Brits pay more for. This is especially odd to me, because grass grows in England whether you want it to or not. It grows, as does everything else, on the asphalt, for goodness sake. The year I was there, it rained so much I didn't even have to unpack my Canadian Tire garden hose. Which, to get back to the desert scene out my back door this year, is not at all what has happened here. My hose has been unravelled an exceptionally large proportion of the time here in the scorching heat. In fact, if you want to have a lawn here at all you need an underground sprinkler that automatically turns on every hour to put out the brush fire. Which brings me to the last point worth sharing about world famous Canadian goods we all just take for granted. I hear, although perhaps its just rumour, that somebody down here has a real penchant for Hearty Canadian Water, and has a funky plan to annex Hudson Bay.

ARTICLE REVIEW

Shazadi Bhatti

Orality, Literacy, Modern Media, by Walter Ong

To be human, is to analyze. As human beings, we have a tendency to ponder new ideas and concepts on a regular basis. Such curiosity notes back to the days of primary orality. In Walter Ong's article, "Orality, Literacy, and Modern Media," we learn about the difference between the oral culture and the written culture. He also teaches us about the differences and similarities between primary and secondary orality.

To begin with, a primary orality culture is one with no knowledge of writing, or even the possibility of writing. In a primary culture, the expression "to look up something" has no meaning whatsoever. Their words are sounds which they can only "call" or "recall" as they have nowhere to "look" for them. To grasp the concept of what a primary culture is, Ong reflects upon the nature of sound. Compared to other human sensations, sound has a special relation to time. "It is not simply perishable but essentially evanescent, and it is sensed as evanescent" (p.61). None of our other senses can resist such a holding action or stabilization. Understanding the psychodynamic of an oral culture was virtually non-existent in 1923.

The people of primary cultures consider words to have magical power. Since the oral culture lacked text, their sustained thoughts were tied to communication. Hence, in order to solve effectively the problem of retaining and retrieving coherent thoughts, it was compulsory to think in mnemonic patterns. The primary people believed that thoughts must come in "heavily rhythmic, balanced patterns, in repetition or antitheses, in alliterations and assonances, in epithetic and other formulary expressions..." (p.62).

Ong goes on to explain the relation of primary culture to Greek literacy as it was delivered in 'quasi-philosophical material' in prescribed verse forms. According to Ong, formulas aided in the implementation of rhythmic discourse and acted as mnemonic aids in their own rights, as the set expressions circulated through the mouths and ears of all individuals.

Hence, thinking is done in the same manner as organizing experience intellectually because in an oral culture, expression is intellectualized mnemonically. Ong then compares the sense of hearing to other senses such as taste, smell, sight, and touch. He provides examples to help the reader follow through. For instance, to look at the surroundings in a room, one has to rotate his or her head but the sound is coming to one's ear from all directions. Hence, "this centering effect of sound is what high-fidelity sound reproduction exploits with intense sophistication" (p.64).

At the end, Ong compares primary culture to secondary culture. Secondary orality is brought by television, radio, telephone, and other electronic technologies. The more premeditated self-conscious orality is based on writing and print. People in secondary orality are group minded, self-conscious, and programmatically individuals. However, some elderly people today may remember or recall what primary orality was like, unlike the younger generation which only hears about it. Thus, in this modern day and age, we are provided with very minimal detail of the oral life style and thought structure from which oratory originated.

Ong has provided us with a very clear explanation of primary orality. The various examples help the reader grasp a better understanding of the issues discussed. The comparison and contrast he makes of primary and secondary culture is also interesting to examine. As Ong writes, a man's word is his bond in a primary oral culture. For instance, the verbal act of swearing to something is indeed the same as signing a contract these days.

It is also interesting to note Ong's comparison of all the senses to that of sound. He contrasts sound to taste, smell, touch, and sight. Ong speaks about our sense of touch by writing about how to discover whether a box is empty or full by just touching it. One would have to make a hole in the box and feel what is inside with his or her finger, which means that 'the box is to that extent open, to that extent less interior' (p.64). On the other

hand, without violating the interiority of the box, one can register hearing. He writes: "I can rap a box to find whether it is empty or full..." (p.64). This clearly shows the creative thinking process Ong goes through to make such a comparison.

To help the reader flow through his article smoothly, Ong has divided his paper in a very professional manner. He provides us with an introduction and overview at the beginning. Then, he has utilized subheadings such as: 'Mnemonics and Formulas', 'The Interiority of Sound', and 'Secondary Orality'. At the end, Ong also provides us with a bibliography, which may be helpful for those individuals who wish to learn more about Primitive Orality or other related topics.

Overall, Ong's article "Orality, Literacy, and Modern Media" is written with thorough research into the topic. He has provided the reader with a very clear understanding of what the primary orality culture is and how it is related to our modern media. The author has also used many examples throughout his piece to help the reader get a better picture of the ideas he is explaining. The article is also very well written and organized in such a manner that the reader will be able to make connections from one topic to another very easily. This article is recommended for anyone interested in learning about the primary oral culture, the sense of sound, or literacy in general.

REFERENCE

Ong, Walter. Orality, Literacy, Modern Media. (pp 60-79). Reproduced in *Communication in History, Technology, Culture, Society*. (1999) by David Crowley & Paul Heyer. US: Addison Wesley Longman Inc.

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In previous articles I have made a few comparisons between distance education and on-campus studies. I have found that each method has inherent advantages and disadvantages. A recent incident at the University of Saskatchewan has highlighted an important aspect of home-based distance education such as that available through Athabasca University.

On November 28, 2003, between the hours of 22:30 and 23:30, a twenty-two year old female student suffered a violent sexual assault on-campus. The incident occurred in one of the women's washrooms in the Arts building. That Building is separated from the College of Law where I attend classes by only the Commerce Building and I walk through both every day to procure a coffee from the Kiosk.

The horrible event took place late on a Friday night so most of the university students didn't hear about it until the following Monday. Unfortunately, most found out through the notoriously unreliable "grape-vine" because the university failed to announce anything to the university community until 14:09 that Monday when an email was sent out from security services warning of an "alleged assault". The communiqué failed to reveal the sexual nature of the assault or its level of violence, and the students were left guessing as to what exactly had happened. More than a few students have expressed their anger at the University for its failure to more rapidly and effectively inform the university community so that vulnerable people could take preventative measures against reoccurrence.

The front page of the December 20, 2003 edition of the *Saskatoon Star Phoenix* newspaper had an article on the assault. The University of Saskatchewan President Peter MacKinnon (<http://www.usask.ca/president>) was quoted as stating that "[t]hose kinds of incidents are very rare on the U of S (campus)... Years go by without incidents like that *becoming known*" (emphasis added).

I've seen no evidence showing that the U of S suffers greater or fewer sexual assaults than other Canadian University campuses. But there is empirical evidence that shows that sexual assaults are extremely underreported crimes in Canada. According to Statistics Canada, only 10% of all sexual assaults are reported to police (<http://www.voyageur.ca/~ksac/myths.htm>). According to the University of Alberta Health Center: "After the age of 18, one out of every four women and one out of ten men will be sexually assaulted. The majority of sexual assault victims are between the ages of 17 and 24. More than 80% of rapes that occur on university and college campuses are committed by someone the victim knows, and 50% occur on dates. Many of these assaults happen during the first eight weeks of classes. 15% to 30% of women at university report experiencing acquaintance rape. Among university students, studies most commonly estimate that between one in six women and one in four women will be a victim of sexual assault during her university career" (http://www.ualberta.ca/dept/health/public_html/healthinfo/sacan.htm#def).

The same *Star Phoenix* article cited *supra* also detailed a sexual assault that occurred to a teenaged girl in the summer of 2003. She was working on-campus at the University of Saskatchewan in the middle of the day when the attack occurred. Given the abovementioned statistics, it is likely that these two reported incidents amount to an approximation of merely 10% of the sexual assaults actually occurring at the University of Saskatchewan; and a similar number of cases per capita are likely occurring at every university campus in Canada. Like any business, universities are likely to downplay their negatives and promote the positive aspects of their campuses. This is especially true as competition increases between universities to attract the best and brightest students to their programs. However; with an issue such as sexual assault, the priority must be the safety of the students and incidents of assaults that are reported should be communicated to the university community rapidly and candidly.

Returning to the opening topic of this article, students of Athabasca University who study in the comfort of their own homes should not take for granted the fact that they need not worry about being assaulted while at, or on their way to or from, a conventional university campus.



There is a well-known saying, "be careful what you wish for, you might get it." I certainly learned the wisdom of that over Christmas. In discussing my level of personal stress in my last Voice article before the holidays I said, "perhaps if I can sleep for a week at Christmas I'll recover!" Prophetic words, indeed. Since Christmas day I've been down with the flu, barely able to drag myself out of bed. Once again my physical body has made a decision for me - either slow down and rest or you'll have it forced upon you!

Prior to getting sick, however, I did have a wonderful Christmas with my daughters and friends, and I hope the same was true for my fellow AU students and Voice readers.

In looking towards the new year, I'm increasingly realizing that I must stop trying to be a superwoman who can do it all. It's difficult to shake that attitude, though. I think it's something I have in common with many AU students who are starting our university studies and careers later in life. I find myself constantly adding up the number of productive years I still have left, calculating how many of my dreams and goals I will be able to cram into the years

that remain. It's silly, really, but I can't seem to help myself. I still feel that somehow I've not really done enough in my life up until now, and that I have to work extra hard to make up for all the lost opportunities.

Some people subscribe to the notion that if they had a chance to do things all over again they would have done things very differently, and that their lives would somehow be better. I don't like to think that way. I've always felt that even if I had a chance to do things all over again, I'd probably make similar choices that would simply be alternative routes to the same ultimate goal. For example, I've always wanted to work in the field of psychology/psychiatry from the time I was young.

When I first started university eight years ago, for a while initially I felt resentful that I had not made the choice to go to university when I was younger. Then I started to think out what might have happened, and where I might have ended up, had I entered university at age 17 when I graduated high school.

At 17 I was somewhat idealistic and rather opinionated - biased towards the way I had been brought up and stuck in the belief system ingrained in me by my family. Going to university would have meant rebelling against that belief system - something I was not quite ready to do at that age. If I had, I probably would have done a double major at university, music and psychology. But I would not have gone on to a career in psychology at the time because it did not fit into the family belief system. It would simply have been a means to an end - which would have been a well-paying job. I was not ready to understand the complexities of human nature and how I fit in, nor was I ready to embrace the study of psychology with the passion required.

More importantly, I did not have the benefit of experience. Had I gone to university then, I would have postponed one of the most important educational experiences of my life - living in Central America. That experience led to my first marriage and birth of my daughters. I say postponed, because I believe I would have traveled regardless - however, the order in which these events occurred would have been different.

I also had another type of opportunity at age 17 that I rejected. I was offered a job as a keyboard player with a band that was going on a world tour. First they were booked in Japan for a house gig that would last for several months. But again, my family belief system interfered and I chose not to go. I was not in the right emotional or mental state of mind to have taken advantage of such an opportunity at that time. I've had regrets, of course, for losing out on what could have been a marvelous educational experience. But making that choice would have altered my path, and the outcome might not have worked to my overall advantage.

The path I did choose led to me living in Central America, marrying and having children. This is something I will never regret, since the combination of choices and their timing resulted in four wonderful daughters who have enriched my life immeasurably. The path I chose also led me to making an essential personal change that has impacted my life profoundly - giving me the ability and strength to challenge and reject the belief system I had been raised with. Without the particular combination of choices and the resulting consequences, I might have never broken free. I needed to go through those experiences to make that personal change. Had I not reached that point, it is possible I may not have gone back to university even yet.

I guess what I'm trying to say is that we should never regret any of the time we've spent in the past, regardless of what we have done and the apparent "rightness" or "wrongness" of our choices. Everything in life, every experience, is an important piece of the completed whole that makes us who we are. Things happen for a reason. I may be graduating late in life, but I've now got the benefit of an amazing and diverse life experience that has given me a true appreciation for the field of psychology.

This has been brought home to me during my studies in PSYC 205, Career Development, and portfolio development. One of the most revealing assignments of the course is the first one, in which you are asked to prepare a "personal history timeline," including significant events and experiences of your adult life. The course manual suggests including "jobs, volunteer work, special training, travel, raising children, books read, hobbies, personal encounters, or formal education and training." I started the process with the events of my final year of high school, and found myself taking a long (and sometimes painful) walk through memory lane. It was a slow process, and I would often need to leave the assignment for a while, and come back after I had jogged my memory for yet another important event long forgotten.

The assignment did not just involve listing the events, it also required finding the significance of each. I took each of the timeline experiences and related them to what I had learned from the experience, and how it contributes to the skills and abilities I bring to my chosen field. When I worked for the city planning department back in 1976, how could I have known that the skills I acquired typing land titles and planning documents would come in handy when I needed to know how to write and interpret student council policies? Or when I sewed flamenco costumes for 60 dancers fifteen years ago, how could I have known that these skills would translate into being able to manage large projects and groups of people? Even negative events could be translated into something of value. My experience of being injured in a car accident helped me learn about different treatment options, how insurance companies and injury lawyers work, and gave me a sympathetic understanding of the issue of chronic pain.

The important part of the whole exercise, of course, is that you equate everything you've done into what you learned from it, and how those skills are of value to you in your career now. The timeline process really helped me appreciate the importance of everything I've done in my life, and helped me to get a perspective on not being resentful because of the choices I've made. These choices have given me an efficient set of tools that I would not have had otherwise, and I believe they will come in very handy as a psychologist.

Another valuable assignment in the course is that of identifying career and educational goals, then explaining how these will be achieved. I came up with ten goals that are important to me, along with a realistic set of steps I must take to get there. This assignment took me back to some of that discouraging thinking - calculating how many more years I have left to actually accomplish everything I want to. I was forced to take a hard look at my goals and do some prioritizing. About that time I had a dream.

In another article, I'll expand a bit more on my philosophy about dreams, but suffice it to say that I believe in listening to my dreams. I'm fortunate to have intense, highly detailed dreams that are often highly prophetic, and this one was no different. Voice readers are aware that I'm expecting my first grandchild in a few weeks. In this dream, the baby was already born, walking and talking to me. I barely recognized the child, and kept asking my daughter how come the baby was already this old? I was very disturbed, realizing that I had missed a large section of the baby's life. Then the child began to talk to me, calling me "Debbie". There were many other elements to the dream, and after I woke up I reflected on what it meant. The message seemed very clear - if you are too busy trying to achieve your personal goals, you may miss out on seeing your grandchild grow, and you may remain a stranger to that child.

So I re-thought my future yet again. I looked at the many experiences I had been through in my life, and the choices I did not make. I looked at the choices I did make and what I had learned from them. I looked at my goals for the future and the choices I hope to make. And I realized that things will balance out. I may not get to the end result within the time frame I had hoped for, and the end result may look somewhat different from the way I envision it today. But along the way, there will be more experiences that I will add to my personal timeline, experiences that will be important contributors to my ultimate success.

This past year I've allowed far too many negatives to interfere with my life, and this year I plan to focus on the positives instead. A few days before the Christmas holidays began, I made the decision to drop back my Master's studies to three years instead of two. It will take another bite out of the "years I have left", but I'm going to look at the positives. The extra year, or two, that it will take me before I have my PhD, will give me time to enjoy my family more. Time, perhaps, to start listening to my physical body when it says, "slow down and rest." A few other things still require some adjustment in my life, and I will have to make yet more difficult choices in the months to come. Whatever happens, I will try to view each slow down as a positive, rather than a negative step backward.

"Be careful what you wish for" is a thought I will keep at the back of my head. The achievement of my goals and dreams is something worth making sacrifices for. But some sacrifices should never be made, and I hope I can always maintain the right balance.

By the time this article is published, I will already be in the first week of my Masters of Counselling program. I'm excited and more than a little apprehensive. Next week I'll share with readers my new perspective as a Masters student.

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.



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CANADIAN FED WATCH!

NEWS ACROSS THE NATION...

By Karl Low



The Priorities of Privatization

Albertans will see a nice rebate on their gas bills over the next month or so as the provincial government's rebate program has kicked into gear. What this means is that the price of gas rose to over \$5.50/GJ. In fact, it soared to over \$7.50/GJ, and so rebates of \$2.50/GJ kicked in, lowering the price for Alberta consumers.

Except the price really hasn't gone down for Alberta consumers at all. Instead, it's just coming out of government funds, which means it's coming out of money that otherwise would have been used for other things, such as paying off the debt, better education, health, or social services, or even filling up the government's sustainability fund (which otherwise will have to be filled up from those other areas I mentioned). So in the short term, while it makes everybody's winter gas bills a little less hairy, in the long term all it does is benefit the people who run the gas companies and the government that de-regulated them so that prices could climb as high as they have. The rest of us are still paying for it, except now we pay for it at tax time.

A more honest way to go about this would be to either let the people suffer with high-cost gas and take the inevitable public back-lash that would come from doing that, or admit that the government made a mistake when it decided to privatize a required service without a proper plan for sponsoring competition, and re-regulate. The method they're going about now is simply dishonest. The government is refusing to admit it made a mistake in privatizing the gas industry, but does not want Alberta citizens to be able to see how bad the mistake is – so they try to hide it with a rebate program to cushion the blow.

So just how bad a mistake is it? When you consider that the government estimates the rebate program will cost \$50 million each and every month it's in effect – and that's at the lowest level – it seems to be a fairly costly one. That \$50 million a month figure is at the \$1.50 rebate rate, however. Because of what the gas price is sitting at now, the rebate is \$2.50/month. Some quick math shows us that we could be looking at a cost of around \$83 million per month. That means that every month, more than the entire budget of AU, including their current government contribution and tuition combined, will be given to the gas companies to pay for the provincial government's privatization mistake.

So which do you think this government has a priority on? Education? Or covering its butt?

'Tis the Taxing Time of Year

No less than three provinces have recently announced changes to their taxation: Alberta, Manitoba, and Nova Scotia. What's interesting about this is the variety of ways in which the taxes are being adjusted. In Alberta, for instance, the adjustment is a bit of legislation that makes the basic personal exemption amount climb by an amount equivalent to inflation since its last adjustment. For an Albertan, this means that the first \$14,337 they earn is non-taxable.

Of course, what this also means is that Albertans have had no real tax reduction, even though the government likes to announce it as such. Instead, we're just keeping up with inflation. Still, when you compare this to how it was before, it seems a much better system. Notable about this system is that it actually benefits everybody equally, and if you think about the nature of inflation and income disparity, may even work to benefit people

with lower incomes more than it does those with higher incomes, as the higher incomes have been rising faster than inflation, while the lower incomes have been rising at a slower pace.

In Nova Scotia, they're taking a more traditional tack of lowering the general tax rate by 10%. This seems like a fair solution at first, but when you remember that the taxation system is progressive, what this means is that higher incomes actually see a much higher reduction in the amount they have to pay. For example, the average family of four with a single wage earner making \$40,000 in Nova Scotia will save \$276 on their taxes. If that same person was instead making \$60,000, an increase of 50%, he would save \$550 on his taxes – almost doubling the savings.

Manitoba, on the other hand, is just reducing the middle tax bracket by 0.9% and instead applying most of their tax cuts on the corporate side of things. Interestingly though, they are also taking steps to get that money back through the justice system, with the fines for many offences sky-rocketing. Passing a stopped school bus, for example, will jump from a fine of \$180 to a fine of \$530, while fines for speeding have doubled. In a way it stands to reason – if you break the law, you're directly causing an unwanted expense to society, so should expect to have to shoulder more than the average load of the tax burden.

Ideally, we'd look at a combination of the best of all of these systems. Perhaps indexing tax exemptions to inflation and moving the costs of undesired behaviours on to the people doing them. Of course, making smokers pay for their own cancer treatments probably wouldn't fly.

AUSU Job Posting

Chief Returning Officer



The Athabasca University Students' Union (AUSU) represents AU students and their interests. The Union strives for a fair and accessible election process for members to the Students' Council. To this end, AUSU is seeking a student to fulfill the role of Chief Returning Officer (CRO) for the 2004 AUSU General Elections.

Position Duties and Responsibilities

The CRO's responsibilities, as outlined in AUSU policy, include arranging to receive, collect, and maintain ballots in a secure location, overseeing the counting of ballots with two (2) Scrutineers on March 21, 2004, notifying candidates of the results, and conducting the appeal process as required. The CRO reports to the Executive Director of AUSU and AUSU Students' Council.

Selection Criteria

- Applicants must be currently registered as an AU student.
- Applicants must be bondable.
- Applicants must have strong organizational and logistical abilities.
- Applicants must be able to analyze and apply policy to ensure a fair election process.
- Candidates in the 2004 AUSU General Election are ineligible for this competition.
- Candidates must be able to operate out of the AUSU head office located in Edmonton, AB.

Remuneration

\$500 stipend

Application Deadline

Saturday, January 17, 2004.

Apply to:

AUSU, 2nd floor North Tower, 10030 – 107 Street, Edmonton, AB, T5J 3E4
Phone: (780) 497-3413 or toll free 1-800-788-9041 ext. 3413
E-mail: ausu@ausu.org

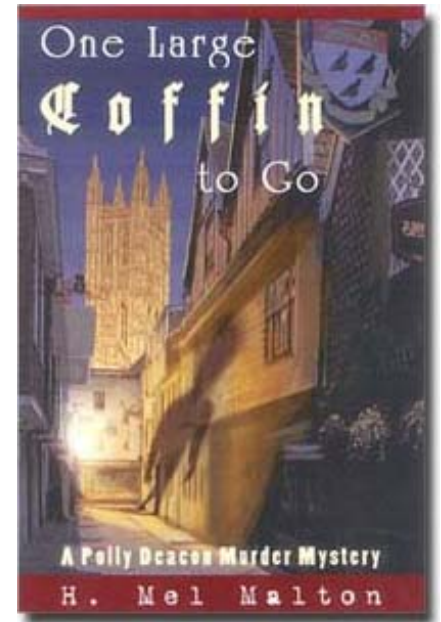


One Large Coffin To Go Book Review

By Laura Seymour

At last I have found and read H. Mel Malton's latest Polly Deacon book. Those of you who read my column may recall my review of Mel's book series and a personal interview with her from last year's columns. This is the latest book and it is both true to form and a pile of departures rolled up in one.

As the *Carol Burnett Show* used to crack, "When last we left Canoga Falls..." Polly Deacon had discovered she was pregnant courtesy of a drunken night on an IKEA couch with on-again-off-again "boyfriend" Mark Becker. At the end of Mel's last book Polly was trying to decide what to do about this pickle of a problem. Real life single gal Mel has done a great job of weaving pregnancy, career, scenic travel and a murder together in this latest writing job. In *One Large Coffin To Go*, Polly gets an idea to apply for a bursary to travel to England and present at a puppetry conference. She has no idea if she'll get a bursary but gives it the old puppeteer try ... and of course she succeeds or there'd be no reason for my mentioning it in my review!



Mark Becker, the not terribly proud papa, is being his usual annoying self -- just enough for the reader to want to hire a special effects artist to let them reach into the book and smuck Mark upside the noggin'.

Lesser attention is given this time 'round to the farm and the local life Polly usually lives, although an incident with a young teenager and his "homework assignment" is too funny to miss!

When Polly winds up "selected for a random security search" at the Toronto Airport a bit of reality is thrown into this wildly funny book. Most of us are annoyed at many of the anal security measures we are forced to endure these days and it appears that Mel is on the same list of passengers muttering, "Tsk," in line. Ultimately, the search of Polly's puppets and person yields nothing and Polly goes on to the plane -- a nervous traveler (Anyone who knows Mel will know she's able to discuss this phenomenon at length...she's a nervous flyer).

Jolly old England is described beautifully. As a Canadian my favorite complaint about the British is echoed in the book -- the inevitable, "Are you American?" Polly grits her teeth and corrects the British as politely as possible (Me? I'm inclined to say -- "No-- you're Australian aren't you!").

Polly's method for handling the endless cell phone calls on the train to the conference is a solid laugh. I know exactly what she means with the comment about constantly hearing the fellow travelers say, "I'm on the *trine*." I hear the Canadian version on the local transit every day.

In England Polly meets up with a local Canadian and the high-tech expectations of the conference official, as well as the guy who's constantly trying to steal her puppet case. In a superb case of denial, Polly is finally attacked in a deep, dark and historic basement, but not before a look-alike woman is murdered ... and her unborn child too. It is the most disturbing murder in Mel's series yet.

Finally Polly is forced to meet up with the rotten nogoodnik and try to reason with him, but the fellow Canadian is trying to talk some sense into her...in his temporary British bed.

Does the plea to the bad guy work? Does her low-tech presentation turn out all right at the conference despite the bad guy showing up? As if I'M going to tell you! Ha! Read *One Large Coffin To Go* and find out yourself. Have a laugh to start the new year.... school's tough.

In the meantime I'll tell Mel you're on the way to the bookstore and wish her a Happy New Year. Happy New Year to you too.

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).



Here's Your Chance to Get Involved!

AUSU Elections 2004

Dear AU Student:

Have you wondered how you could get involved with your Students' Union? Have you wanted to play a role in shaping the experience of AU students? Here is your chance! It is election time again for the Athabasca University Students' Union (AUSU). Elections will be held on March 20, 2004 so get to your post office or computer and send in your nomination for AUSU council today. Send nominations by e-mail to president@ausu.org or mail to the AUSU office at 10030 - 107 Street, 2nd floor, Edmonton, Alberta, T5J 3E4 Attention: President. For further information, call 1-800-788-9041 ext. 3413.

Anyone submitting a nomination must be a registered student of AU at the time of the nomination as well as at the close of the election and must remain a student at AU throughout his/her term on council. Students, as defined by the AUSU by-laws, are those who are currently enrolled in an AU course, or who have completed a course within the past six months. If course extensions have been purchased, the revised end date is used to calculate student status.

As stated in the AUSU By-Laws, "Any Active Member in good standing may submit to the Council a self-nomination together with the individual's written consent to act, if elected" (Article 11_Elections, Section 2-Nominations).

"Member in good standing" means an individual who is a member of the AUSU in any of the categories of membership prescribed in the By-Laws, has paid all fees, and has not been subject to disciplinary action from the University or the AUSU.

Students must submit their name, student I.D. number, address and/or e-mail address, and the individual's written consent to act along with their nomination. Deadline for self-nominations/nominations is January 17, 2004.

All self-nominations/nominations will be acknowledged after the closing date. Nominees will be given an opportunity to withdraw their name from the list of nominees provided their notice of withdrawal is received by the last day of January, 2004.

Debbie Jabbour, President - Athabasca University Students' Union

AUSU THIS MONTH



AUSU IN PERSON DISCUSSION GROUPS

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.

See the Coffee Groups web page on the AUSU site, at <http://www.ausu.org/coffee> for a list of groups.

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

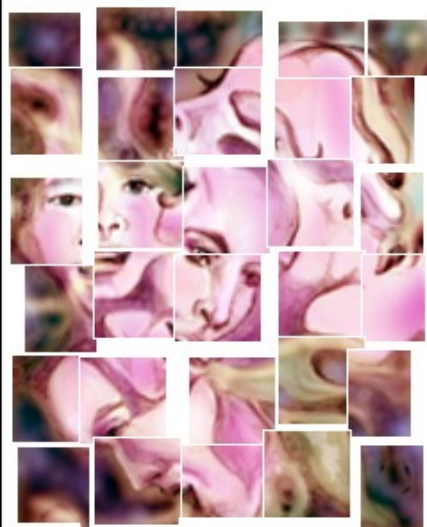
NEEDED – VOLUNTEER MENTORS FOR NEW STUDENTS

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 Stacey Steele at ssteele@ausu.org

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.] **Times are MST**

Mondays at 8:00 PM Councillor Karl Low



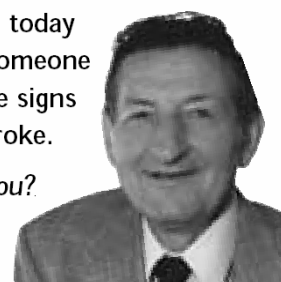
WRITE FOR THE VOICE!

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

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



Canadian Virtual University

Lonita Fraser

As an Athabasca University student, you are well aware of distance education, its convenience, and its value. AU is not alone in offering distance education. More and more, other schools are offering distance programs and individual courses to students throughout Canada and the world. The difficulty for the student is finding the schools and the programs they need. Canadian Virtual University (CVU) makes this process easier by providing a network of participating universities across Canada who are offering a wide variety of courses and programs to a growing number of distance students. Those courses and programs can be completed - as with any AU course - from wherever the student happens to reside.

Offering a growing list of over 250 programs and 2000 courses (many offered completely over the Internet, and over 300 are offered in French), the CVU is a veritable candystore of learning. It can enrich the learning of an AU student, or indeed any student, by providing access to courses not offered by their host schools. This network of universities currently includes Athabasca University, British Columbia Open University, Laurentian University, Memorial University of Newfoundland, Royal Roads University, Télé-université du Québec, Université de Moncton, University College of Cape Breton, The University of Manitoba, and University of New Brunswick.

Enrolling in a program via CVU gives a student access to courses from all the participating universities, without having to fill out extra enrolment forms or having to pay for the sometimes required Letter of Permission and Visiting Student Applications. The student can take any courses from the catalogue they wish, as each school is committed to allowing transfer credits, so long as those courses fulfill the program requirements. Programs on the CVU website can be browsed, sorted by level (certificate, diploma, bachelors, masters, noncredit), by providing university, or by subject area; and courses may be browsed the same way. Both sections offer a search function in case you're looking for something specific. The CVU website also provides access to the course catalogues of individual universities, and a form you can fill out in order to enrol at a host university.

The CVU does not grant degrees, diplomas, or certificates itself, though; that will be granted by one of the universities connected with the CVU, the student's host school. You needn't have any worry about the acceptability of your degree, as "all partners are chartered under provincial legislation and are members of the Association of Universities and Colleges of Canada, you can be confident that you will earn a recognized credential that will be recognized by other post-secondary institutions and by employers around the world" (CVU F.A.Q.).

Learners worldwide are welcome to enrol into a program or individual course via the CVU, but the student should be aware that each Canadian university has its own policy regarding fees for non-residents, so some courses may be more costly than others. The CVU provides links to the regulations of each participating university regarding fees for non-residents and residents alike, so finding what you need to know is easy. The CVU also provides information regarding prior learning and work assessment, in case the student wishes to use previously gained knowledge towards their chosen degree.

Distance education has been described as "education without barriers", and the CVU makes that education easier by linking those dedicated to providing accessible and quality education to all who seek a flexible learning environment tailored to individual needs.

CVU main site: <http://www.cvu-uvc.ca/>

CVU FAQ: <http://www.cvu-uvc.ca/faqs.html>

SCHOLARSHIPS & AWARDS

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



MENSA CANADA SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAMME

Value: \$1000

Deadline: January 31, 2004

Administrator: MENSA Canada Scholarship Programme

Notes: Awarded to students enrolled full-time in a Canadian post-secondary institution on January 31, 2004.

Candidates must write a 250-word essay, in English or French, describing their career plans, goals and the means undertaken to reach them. Applications are accepted only by email. Please consult the Web site for details.

Contact Information:

Mensa Canada Scholarship Programme

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

Application Address: <http://www.mensacanada.ca>

QUEEN ELIZABETH II SILVER JUBILEE ENDOWMENT FUND FOR STUDY IN A SECOND OFFICIAL LANGUAGE PROGRAM

Value: \$5000

Deadline: March 28, 2004

Administrator: Association of Universities and Colleges of Canada (AUCC)

Notes: Candidates must be Canadian citizens or permanent residents and be enrolled in the second or third year of their first undergraduate university program.

Candidates attending a Quebec institution can be in their first year of a first undergraduate program.

Contact Information:

Canadian Awards Program

Association of Universities and Colleges of Canada

350 Albert Street, Suite 600

Ottawa, Ontario K1R 1B1

Phone: (613) 563-1236

Web Site:

http://www.aucc.ca/programs/scholarships/index_e.htm

E-mail: awards@aucc.ca

An anti-smoking advertisement. At the top, a red circle contains the text "Want to STOP smoking?". Below this, a lit cigarette is shown with smoke rising from it. The smoke forms a series of red dots that lead down to a red telephone receiver. The text "It's easier with HELP." is written in a large, bold font. At the bottom, a red banner contains the text "Smoker's Help Line 1-866-33AADAC". Logos for AADAC and Alberta Health Services are at the bottom right.

Want to **STOP** smoking?

It's easier with **HELP.**

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

AADAC
Alberta Addict and Drug Abuse Centre
In partnership with the Government of Alberta

alberta
HEALTH FIRST

www.aadac.com



Voice Events Listings

On and off campus events worldwide

To list events taking place in your area, e-mail voice@ausu.org with the word "events" in the subject line.

REGINA, SK InFringement Festival

From February 6-14, 2004 a festival of student-directed and produced one-act plays known as the InFringement Festival will take place at the University of Regina. For more information, see the U Regina events calendar: www.uregina.ca/cgi-bin/WebEvent3.05/cals/webevent.cgi

WOLFFVILLE, NS Visual Journaling: A Creative Transformation

Sponsored through Acadia University, there will be a workshop entitled "Visual Journaling: A Creative Transformation - Art Making" with Jamie Pratt and Judith Leidl. It takes place Sunday, January 25th from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. at the Wolfville Lion's Club located at 36 Elm Street in Wolfville, Nova Scotia. No experience is necessary. This course is for adults as well as young adults. Enrollment is limited. The fee is \$90.00 including materials as well as HST. Call: Judith Leidl (902) 542-2772 for more information Or send e-mail to: morielfineart@ns.sympatico.ca

SUDBURY, ON World's best mountain films set to unleash adrenalin Start Time: 15:00 - Ending Time: 19:00

On Thursday, Jan 15, at 7 p.m., several of the best movies presented at this year's Banff Mountain Film Festival will be shown at Laurentian University's Fraser Auditorium. Outdoor-oriented trade booths will be on display at 6 p.m. in the building's lobby. Tickets are \$12 in advance and \$14 at the door and may be purchased at Laurentian's Department of Active Living, Rocks, Kwik Way (on Lasalle Blvd), and The Outside Store. This event is hosted by the University's Outdoor Adventure Leadership Program. For information, please call Mr. Stephen Ritchie, interim coordinator of LU's Outdoor Adventure Leadership Program, at (705)675-1151, ext. 1046 or e-mail Msritchie@laurentian.ca.
<http://www.laurentian.ca/modules.php?name=Calendar&op=modload&file=index&type=view&eid=89>

CALGARY, AB SF and Social Change Symposium

Futurevision is a unique gathering designed to bring writers, readers and critics of SF (speculative fiction) together to debate just how much science fiction and fantasy has contributed to social change. We have Robert J Sawyer, Candace Jane Dorsey, Timothy J. Anderson on board. We're looking forward to you joining us February 6-7, 2004. <http://www.mtroyal.ab.ca/events/sf/>

CHARLOTTETOWN, PEI Women in Leadership Panel

The Women in Leadership Panel Presentation profiles Canada's regional female leaders. Successful women from a variety of industries will share their personal tales from the trenches and provide insight on leading a prosperous career. Designed to inform and inspire, members of this panel share their journeys to success with women who are embarking on their career paths. This event takes place January, 28th 2004 from 4:30 p.m. to 6 p.m. in the Student Centre (Main Hall) of the University of Prince Edward Island. You can contact David Mossman at (250) 386-8500 or mdave@womeninleadership.ca for more information. <http://www.upei.ca/cgi-new/view.cgi?id=1487>

FREDERICTON, NB Ann Ireland Reads *Exile*

On Monday, January 19th, 2004 at 7 p.m., Ann Ireland will be reading from "Exile" at the University of New Brunswick's (Fredericton) Faculty-Staff Lounge, WCL Building. Admission is free.
<http://www.unb.ca/news/event-details.cgi?id=820>

FREDERICTON, NB George Elliott Clarke Reads *George and Rue*

On Friday, Feb 27 at 7 p.m., George Elliott Clarke will be reading from "George and Rue: A Novel in Blackened English" at the University of New Brunswick's (Fredericton) Ganong Hall Lecture Theatre. Free Admission.
<http://www.unb.ca/news/event-details.cgi?id=822>

TORONTO, ON **Kodak Lectures**

The Kodak Lectures is an ongoing international lecture series programmed by the School of Image Arts at Ryerson University in Toronto. Since 1975, a veritable who's who from the world of image making has graced the stage at Ryerson, including Dutch photographer and video artist Rineke Dijkstra, Canadian "cyborg" Steven Mann, German artists Bernd and Hilla Becher, and Oscar-nominated Canadian filmmaker Atom Egoyan. You may contact Robert Burley at (416) 979-5167 for more information. A list of the presenters can be found via their website. <http://www.ryerson.ca/news/events/imagesandideas/>

BURNABY, BC **Teaching in Japan**

Simon Fraser University (Burnaby, B.C. campus) presents "Teaching in Japan", a three hour workshop providing an overview of teaching in Japan. Bring your questions and be better prepared for your upcoming experience, or come to explore. This event takes place February 7th, 2004 from 9:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. at the Harbour Centre Campus, 515 West Hastings St., Vancouver. Fees for this workshop range from \$50 to \$120. Telephone 604-291-5117 or email japanese@sfu.ca for more information. <https://my.sfu.ca/cgi-bin/WebObjects/mySFU.woa/3/wo/WYyTpus7WmcJEbi9kdPtt0/5.0.7.3.11>

PETERBOROUGH, ON **Christian Bok**

Christian Bok will be reading in the Writers Reading Series on Wednesday, January 14 2004 at 8:00 pm in The Pit at Lady Eaton College. This event sponsored by Trent University.

PETERBOROUGH, ON **Jane Urquhart**

Jane Urquhart will be reading in the Writers Reading Series on Wednesday, January 21 2004 at 8:00 pm in the Dining Hall, Scott House, Traill College. This event sponsored by Trent University.

PETERBOROUGH, ON **Rooke Lecture Series**

The ROOKE Lecture Series presents Leonard Conolly, speaking on A Doll's House, at the Peterborough Public Library on January 29th, 2004. Leonard Conolly, Professor of English Literature at Trent University, is an expert on drama and a noted Shaw scholar. He has published numerous works on drama, including Bernard Shaw and Barry Jackson.

LOS ANGELES, CA **The Karma of Questioning: Buddhist Studies in the Form of Philosophy**

Taking the Buddhist concept of karma as the exemplary issue, this talk will address the question of how critical philosophical questioning might be practiced within the context of Buddhist Studies. The presenter, Dale Wright, is a Professor of Religious Studies and Asian Studies at Occidental College. He teaches in the areas of Buddhist Studies, History of Religions, and Philosophy of Religion. The event, Sponsored by the Center for Buddhist Studies, Asia Institute, takes place February 27th, 2004 from 3 p.m. to 4:30 p.m. at UCLA (243 Royce Hall, Los Angeles, CA). <http://www.international.ucla.edu/buddhist/showevent.asp?eventid=1175>

BERKELEY, CA **Emotions in Art and the Brain**

The conference "Emotions in Art and the Brain", takes place January 10, 2004, from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m., Gund Auditorium, Berkeley Art Museum (2625 Durant Avenue). Presented by UC Berkeley's Minerva Foundation and the Institute of Neuroesthetics (London), the third International Conference on Neuroesthetics will consider a very slippery topic: emotions in art and the brain. Speakers from around the world will discuss the brain, emotion and aesthetic judgements; steps toward an evolutionary psychology of emotion; transformation through art and neurological coincidence; the neurobiology of creativity and emotion; and more.

The conference is open to the general public, but seating is limited and registration (free) is required. Visit the website to register. <http://plaisir.berkeley.edu/index.htm>

To list events taking place in your area, e-mail voice@ausu.org with the word "events" in the subject line.



JOURNEYMEN 2004 SYMPOSIUM

Jan 16-17

On January 16-17 2004, the University of Guelph will host the JourneyMen 2004 Symposium. The Department of Family Relations and Applied Nutrition and Counselling Services hosts this two-day symposium focusing on "Exploring Paths of Masculinity." For more information on the symposium, or to register, call 824-4120, Ext. 53244 or send e-mail to <mailto:mmensprog@uoguelph.ca>. For a brochure about the symposium and an application form, visit <http://www.counselling.uoguelph.ca/counselling/update/smalljourneymenbrochure.pdf>

TRANSPORTABLE ENVIRONMENTS 2004: 3rd International Conference on Portable Architecture and Design

April

Ryerson University in Toronto, will host the international academic conference; Transportable Environments. This will be the third in a series of conferences concerning portable architecture, buildings, landscape and design. It is being organized and co-chaired by Associate Professor Filiz Klassen of the School of Interior Design, Ryerson University and Professor Robert Kronenburg of the University of Liverpool, School of Architecture and Building Engineering, UK. The event takes place during April 2004, at the Eaton Auditorium, Rogers Communications Centre on 80 Gould. Contact Filiz Klassen at (416) 979-5000, ext. 6937 for more information.

<http://www.ryerson.ca/portable/>

NARRATIVE MATTERS 2004

May 20-May 23

Organized by faculty and students from St. Thomas University and the University of New Brunswick, and featuring an array of keynote addresses and pre-conference workshops, Narrative Matters 2004 will take place from May 20 to May 23, 2004, at the Sheraton Hotel in Fredericton, New Brunswick, Canada. The conference is a unique experience in which theorists and practitioners, researchers and students from a variety of backgrounds and disciplines will have the opportunity to enjoy conversation and together explore the importance of narrative - or story - in countless aspects of human life.

<http://www.stu.ca/conf/narrative/>

WITHINSIGHT 2004

Jan 21-24

January 21-24, 2004 - Ottawa, Ontario. Details: "A four day forum for the discussion and exploration of prominent Canadian issues based on an interactive format of communication with current Canadian leaders. Open to post-secondary students from all across Canada and from all disciplines. Applications are due by November 3rd."

http://www.withinsight.ca/en_site/index.html

CUTC 2004 (Canadian Undergraduate Technology Conference) Delta Toronto East Hotel

Jan 22-24

The Canadian Undergraduate Technology Conference (CUTC) is about technology, innovative ideas, and the people who turn these ideas into reality. The Canadian Undergraduate Technology Conference was started in 2000 by a few visionary students from the University of Waterloo, and is now in its fifth year and continues to be organized exclusively by university students from across Canada.

The last four conferences sold out, each bringing together approximately 500 students from 20

universities across Canada from every aspect of technology. The three-day conference features hands-on workshops and seminars featuring leading speakers from industry and academia. Filled with events such as ThinkTank, TechExpo, CareerExpo, TechPanel, TechShops and TechTours, all of this is made possible by the generous support of our past sponsors, including Bell Canada, Redknee, Microsoft Canada and IBM Canada Ltd.

We are excited to announce that Glenn Edens, Vice President of Research and Director of Sun Labs, will be a keynote speaker for CUTC 2004. Other speakers include David Kirk, Chief Scientist and VP of Architecture at NVIDIA, who will give a glimpse of future graphics technologies and explore the factors that make inventors out of engineers, and Ray Mowling, past president of Monsanto and currently the Executive Director for the Council for Biotechnology Information, who will be speaking about genetically modified foods.

For more information, visit our website at <http://www.cutc.ca> or contact info@cutc.ca.

ideaCity

Jun 16-18

ideaCity, a "meeting of minds", is an annual conference held in Toronto, Ontario. It brings together some of the most interesting and fascinating personalities of our time, for three days of stimulating conversation, performances, thought-provoking ideas, and other social events.

The conference is not centred around any one discipline or industry, and there are no keynote or panel discussions. In fact, scripted speeches are forbidden; as the website states: "Everyone is in on the common narrative." Rather than the usual Q&A sessions after a speaker has completed their talk or performance, the conference has adopted the practice of long breaks between sessions (and nightly parties) that invite conversation between speakers, performers, and attendees.

This year's presenters are:

Michael Adams - (President and CEO, Environics, Author, Sex in the Snow)

Henry Aubin - (Investigative Journalist, Author, The Rescue of Jerusalem)

Robert Bateman - (Artist, Naturalist)

Jane Bunnett - (Modern Jazz Musician)

Ken Finkleman - (Writer, Director, Producer; The Newsroom)

Richard Greenblatt and Ted Dykstra - (2 Pianos, 4 Hands.)

Derek Hatfield - (Sailor, "Around the World Alone" yacht race)

John Ince - (Lawyer, Advocate for a more sexually 'healthy' culture)

Robert Kennedy Jr. - (Defender of the Environment, Lawyer, Author)

Laura Kipnis - (Cultural Theorist and Author Against Love: A Polemic)

Anita Kunz - (Editorial Cartoonist, Rolling Stone, The New Yorker)

Mers Kutt - (Inventor of the world's first personal computer)

Sook-Yin Lee - (Musician, Actor, Filmmaker)

James Lockyer - (Lawyer; Association in Defence of the Wrongly Convicted)

Joseph MacInnis - (Physician, Scientist, Businessman, Deep-sea diver, Author, Environmentalist)

Lewis MacKenzie - (Commander, UN Peacekeeping Mission to 'Sector Sarajevo'; Author)

Gabor Mate - (Physician, Author, When the Body Says No: The Cost of Hidden Stress)

Jaymie Matthews - (Astrophysicist, Mission Scientist, The MOST project)

Paul Moller - (Founder, Moller International; inventor of the Skycar)

Terry Mosher - (Political Cartoonist, The Montreal Gazette; Cartoon Editor, Maclean's)

Robert Munsch - (International Best-Selling Children's Author)

Cleo Paskal - (Travel Writer, The National Post; Producer, Channel 4; Contributor, The Independent)

Irene Pepperberg - (MIT Media Lab; Expert, Animal-Human Communications (Grey Parrots))
Lola Rasminsky - (Avenue Road Arts School Founder; Advocate for Arts Education)
George Rizzanyi - (Guitar Craftsmen to the Stars)
Harry Rosen - (Founder, Harry Rosen Inc.)
Eva Vertes - (Scientist, Researcher, student at Princeton; made a significant Alzheimer's discovery at the age of 15.)
Paul Wells - (National Affairs Columnist (and 'Back Page' occupant), Maclean's).

"In an age that seems to swing wildly between wide-eyed optimism and dire pessimism, perhaps our greatest challenge is to sustain a capacity for idealism. ideaCity is one small effort to establish a forum for the high ground of ideas and idealism." (ideaCity website)

This year's conference takes place from June 16th to the 18th in Toronto, Ontario. For more information regarding the conference, contact jenniferm@citytv.com or call 416 591 7400 x2475, or visit the conference website at <http://www.ideacityonline.com/>

Provided by Lonita Fraser

Contributed By AU's *The Insider*

- **LEARNTEC 2004** - Feb. 10 - 13 - Karlsruhe, Germany - 12th European Conference and Specialist Trade Fair for Educational and Informational Technology.
Details: <http://www.learntec.de>
- **ICDE 2004** - Feb. 18 - 21 - Hong Kong - 21st ICDE World Conference on Open Learning and Distance Education. Details: <http://www.ouhk.edu.hk/hk2004/>

Know of a conference that is not on this list? Contact voice@ausu.org with the details and we'll list it in Conference Connections.

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classifieds

Classifieds are free for AU students! Contact voice@ausu.org for more information.

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RED DEER COFFEE GROUPS

Red Deer Athabasca University students meet at the Chapter's Starbucks on the last Thursday of every month. From 8 pm to 9 pm, the goal is to share ideas that will help us all be successful AU students and collectively resolve our specific issues. Contact Ryan, lowrystcol@hotmail.com

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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Contact *The Voice* at: **VOICE@AUSU.ORG**

To receive weekly email reminders as each issue is posted, see the 'subscribe' link on *The Voice* front page

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