

THE VOICE MAGAZINE

May 25, 2005
Volume 13 Issue 21



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Conquering your fear

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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.

THE VOICE

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FROM MY PERSPECTIVE Time

Debbie Jabbour



I began this long weekend with a bit of apprehension -- on the one hand looking forward to having an extra day to get my work done, and on the other hand knowing that I don't really have an extra day -- I'm just spacing out my workload differently. A long weekend for me is not really a chance to have an extra day of relaxation and enjoyment. It's an extra day to get things done that have been placed on hold. The sheer magnitude of everything I had on my long weekend agenda was quite overwhelming. I decided to try to keep up as intense a pace as possible in hope of getting it all done.

Before the weekend even began, however, something happened that made me stop and reflect, something that brought me to tears and made me wonder about why our society has become so frenzied, so harried, so rushed. Early Friday morning, there was a horrific bus crash just north of Edmonton. Initially four men were killed, but over the next few days, two more men succumbed to injuries received in the crash. The men were workers coming home from Fort McMurray to Edmonton, likely looking forward to spending a long weekend away from the job with their families.

Having lived in Edmonton and been around the oil industry all my life, I know many people who work in Fort McMurray, an oilsands boomtown about a five-hour drive north of Edmonton. I've traveled there, performed there several times in my band, and members of my family have worked for the oil companies up there at times. It easily could have been one of them on that bus.

Thousands of workers travel that route each week, commuting to work at the huge Syncrude and Suncor plants. Fort McMurray is suffering boomtown overcrowding, with living space at a premium. It is common for workers to live in work camps for shifts of a week or more, returning home on weekends by bus or car. This particular bus, one of many on the highway that morning, was carrying 43 contract workers from the Syncrude Oilsands Expansion Project. The bus had left Fort McMurray late the previous evening, with workers eager to arrive home as early as possible to eke out every precious hour of the long weekend.

At about 12:45 a.m. on Friday morning, a little less than an hour from home, the bus encountered a roadblock near Gibbons. Police had closed the highway due to a vehicle rollover accident earlier, and in spite of the lateness of the hour, traffic was heavy. A long line-up of cars and buses waited for the Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP) to clear the road, and several had already turned back, hoping to find a faster alternate route to Edmonton. Reports say that workers on the bus, like most workers heading home for the weekend, often urged the bus driver to push on as quickly as possible. This occasion was no different, and frustrated at the delay, workers apparently pressured the driver to follow the lead of other buses, turn around and find another route. In the process of backing up the bus on the two-lane highway, the rear wheels became stuck in the soft shoulders of the deep ditch flanking the road, leaving the bus stranded and almost completely blocking both lanes across the highway.

Most of the workers got off the bus, and many stood behind the bus, on the passenger side, chatting and smoking. Some reportedly were attempting to help push the bus's rear wheels out of the ditch. An RCMP vehicle had been redirecting oncoming traffic in front of the blocked bus, but left for some reason. Suddenly the headlights of a tractor-trailer semi-truck came barreling down the highway, and those still on the bus realized in horror that the semi was not slowing down. Moments later the truck slammed into the side of the bus. The force of the collision sent the bus spinning, rolling over top of those standing behind the bus, throwing passengers and luggage through the windows. Four men were killed almost instantly, 25 men were injured. Two men died on the following day succumbing to their injuries.

During the next few days, investigators and first-hand eyewitness reports began to unravel the complete story of what happened. In seeking answers, many attempts have been made to identify a place to lay

blame. Some say the trucker should have seen the bus. Others say the bus didn't have appropriate flares and reflective triangles set out, even though it was completely lit up and should have been visible in the night sky. Some criticize the driver for having made a bad decision to turn around on the narrow highway. Others defend the driver, stating that several other buses had already successfully turned back. Some say the driver was simply responding to pressure from the passengers, who were extremely eager to get home. One veteran bus operator has verified this, saying that workers coming home from the oilsands on their time-off are notorious for putting "a lot of pressure on a driver in order to increase your speed, not get passed, to pass other vehicles ahead of you" (D'Aliesio and O'Donnell, May 23, 2005). This operator claims that intense pressure and harassment often gets drivers to the point where "you do something you wouldn't normally do" (Ibid.). There have also been some who fault the RCMP for leaving their post instead of continuing to warn oncoming drivers about the bus. Many are pointing to the accident as powerful evidence of the need to improve the condition of this busy commuter highway.

In between all the questions and finger pointing, however, only one thing remains certain. The accident occurred because the bus was trying to turn around. Whether this was due to pressure from the passengers or another motivating factor -- the bus was trying to turn around in an attempt to save time, to avoid having to wait on the highway, to get driver and passengers home as soon as possible. Ironically, this effort to save time has meant a loss of time forever for at least six men in the prime of their lives. In a rush to get a long weekend started, they will never again enjoy a long weekend; never again have time with their loved ones.

Every long weekend we hear news announcers make the same warning, asking drivers to take it slow, to take it easy on the commute home, so they will arrive safely. But every long weekend is marred by accidents like this one, not always on such a large scale, but tragic nonetheless. It's not confined to rushed long weekend driving either. People who are in a hurry cause accidents in many other ways too. I don't know how many times I've dropped something heavy, slammed a finger, bruised myself, or otherwise caused an injury simply because I was in a hurry. All my rushing then becomes a complete waste. By the time I've had to stop and deal with the damage I've inadvertently done to others or myself no time has been saved!

We have such an obsession with saving time. We're consumed with trying to maximize every moment we have, filling our lives with activities and rushing from one to another. Most of us are locked into a job, driven by financial need or a desire to have a certain quality of life to put in long hours through the week. We live for the weekend (or our days off, in the case of shift workers) and then we rush home to spend whatever little time is left with our family or on some enjoyable personal activity. There is always a sense of being rushed, of never having enough time to do the things we really want to do. Yet rushing never seems to buy us any extra time. Time is a precious commodity, one we never have sufficient quantities of.

I gave this a lot of thought over the long weekend. Thinking about the workers who had been hurrying home to spend time with their family, who will never again have time, I tried to really appreciate how I utilize my own time. I took the time to be with my family and I tried to spend a little time just for myself. Once again I made an effort to push away the guilty feelings regarding awaiting deadlines (not an easy task!) and tried to keep a healthy perspective. Of all our possessions, time is the most valuable, yet it is so easily lost.

Sed fugit interea, fugit irreparabile tempus

But meanwhile it is flying, irretrievable time is flying

- Virgil, *The Georgics* III, l. 284

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Some day in the not too distant future, we may be off to the ballot boxes again. Casting that vote is not something to be taken lightly; the outcome affects our entire country. Before we all head off yet again to the polls, perhaps an overview of the past election results may be helpful. Better yet, why not a general review of every federal election in the past 26 years?

Who's running the country?

1979 - A particularly bitter battle between the Liberal Party and the Progressive Conservative (PC) Party results in a PC-headed minority government led by Joe Clark despite the Liberals receiving a larger portion of the popular vote. The PCs win 136 seats with only 35.9% share of the popular vote. Pierre Trudeau leads the Liberal Party with 114 seats (40.1% share of the popular vote) and the New Democrat Party (NDP), led by Ed Broadbent, wins 26 seats with 17.9% of the popular vote. The Social Credit Party reaches an unusual high of six seats, all in Quebec.

1980 - Pierre Trudeau wins a majority government with 147 seats (44.3% of the popular vote), and Joe Clark's PCs form the Official Opposition with 103 seats (32.5% of the popular vote). Broadbent's NDP makes large gains across the country and wins 32 seats with 19.8% of the popular vote.

1984 - Brian Mulroney leads the PCs to a huge win with 211 seats and a 50% share of the popular vote. The Liberals come in second place with 40 seats (28.8% share of the popular vote), led by John Turner. The New Democrats remain at 19.8% of the popular vote, but win only 30 seats.

1988 - Particularly high voter turnout (76% of the registered electorate) gives Mulroney a second term, but a reduced majority. Turner's Liberals make gains to reach 32% of the popular vote and take 83 seats. The NDP, led for the last time by Ed Broadbent, continues to expand its voter base with 20.4% of the popular vote and a whopping 43 seats.

1993 - With a completely different political backdrop than its predecessor, this election is the first to include the Bloc Quebecois (BC), the Reform Party, and a drastically reduced Progressive Conservative Party. Kim Campbell had inherited the PC-headed Parliament from Mulroney, but failed miserably to keep up the party's influence and popularity. Reform bursts onto the scene led by Preston Manning and takes votes away from PC with their strong conservative views. Reform scores highly in western Canada, the BQ strikes a blow for French Canada and the PCs shrink into the background. Jean Chrétien makes his debut as the first Liberal Prime Minister in nearly 10 years with 41.3% of the vote and 177 seats. Lucien Bouchard and the Bloc Quebecois make up the Official Opposition (13.5% vote share, 54 seats); Audrey McLaughlin's NDP take an enormous thrashing with a mere 6.7% of the vote and only 9 seats. Kim Campbell holds onto 16% of the vote but only wins 2 seats in Parliament.

1997 - The Liberals win a majority Parliament for a second time, still headed by Jean Chrétien (38.5% vote share, 155 seats). The conservative vote is split between the PCs and Reform; Reform takes the Opposition spot with 60 seats and 19.4% vote share. PCs get 18.8% of the vote, but only take 20 seats. Support for the Bloc Quebecois falls after the defeated Separation Referendum in 1995, and the party wins 44 seats with 10.7% of the vote. The New Democrats rise again to win 21 seats with 11% of the vote.

2000 - Chrétien is Prime Minister yet again. His Liberals make the most of the continually fracturing conservative alternative and win 172 seats (40.8% of the vote). Another conservative metamorphosis results in the Canadian Reform Conservative Alliance Party, and they receive 25.5% of the popular vote (66 seats). Stockwell Day leads the formation of the Opposition Party. PC's support goes down to 12.2% (12 seats), and the Bloc votes stay the same, but the party wins fewer seats (38). The NDP are headed by Alexa McDonough and lose most of the gains previously won in '97. Her party receives 8.5% of the vote and 13 seats.

2004 - Last year's election resulted in a Liberal minority government, with Paul Martin acting as Prime Minister. Martin was given power before the election when Jean Chrétien retired prior to completion of his term, however Martin was not able to keep the Liberal Party as popular as had its former leader. The Liberals won 135 seats with 36.7% of the popular vote. In this election, the conservative electorate had a unified choice in the Conservative Party of Canada, after a merger between the Canadian Alliance and the

Progressive Conservatives. The new party received 29.6% of the vote share, under the leadership of Stephen Harper, and 99 seats. Gilles Duceppe strengthened the BQ and won an astounding 54 seats with 12.4% of the vote. Jack Layton played for another NDP comeback and received 15.7% of the popular vote along with 19 seats in Parliament. For the first time in a Canadian federal election, the Green Party, led by Jim Harris, received enough of the popular vote to run a federally-funded campaign next time around.

So there you have it -- an eternal struggle between Liberal Party and the Conservative Party of the day. It's clear that citizens of this country are somewhat stuck in the idea of two party politics. Though, I question if it is time for people to truly vote their conscience, instead of voting for the lesser of two evils?

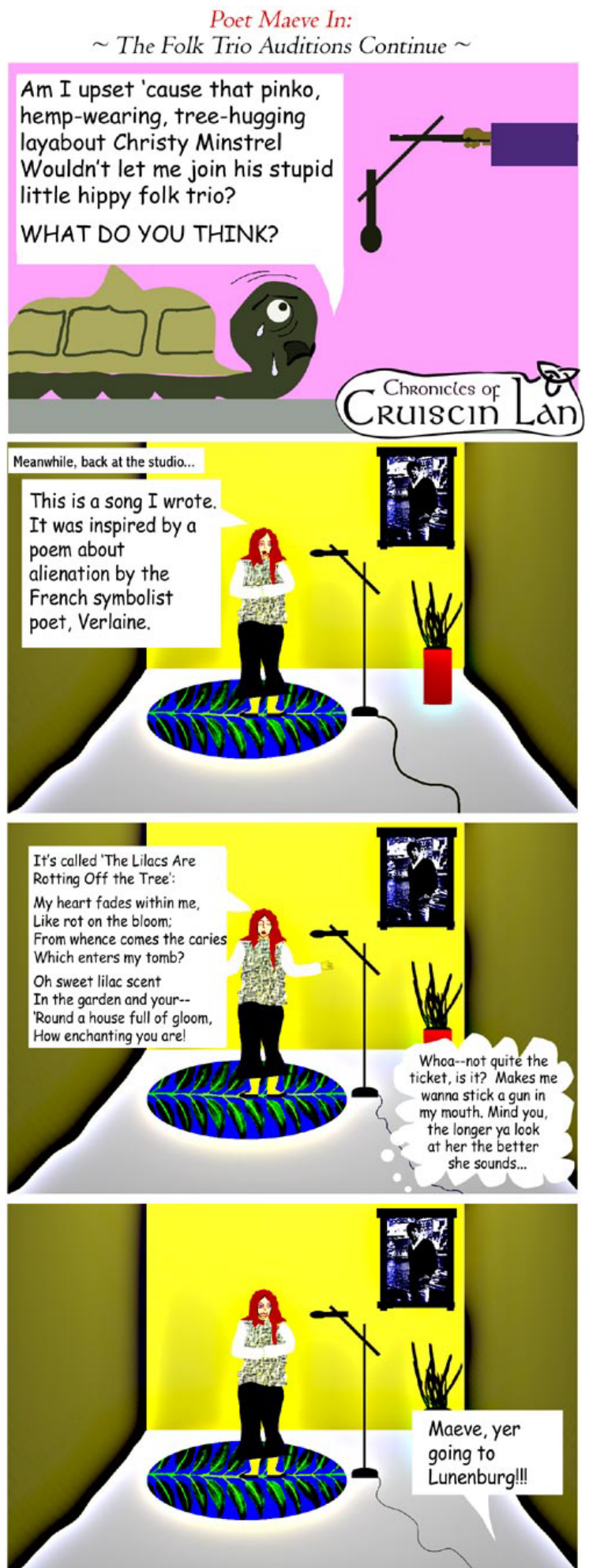
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The *Dear Barb* column is on hiatus this week. Look for more new columns from Barb beginning in the June 1st Edition of The Voice. In the meantime, Barb would love you to send more questions for upcoming columns to

her email box at:
dearbarb.voice@ausu.org.



Don't Talk Me Your Talk

by Carole E Trainor



Yes, we are all angry about the kind of "democratic" culture that leaves so many of us feeling angry and powerless. Yes, we know what we must do (most of the time, anyway). So we do it. We act. One day we just do it. We get angry and heady and wordy. We write words -- lots and lots and lots of words.

Of course we tidy them up before we send them (little sparrows from the nest). We need to tidy the mess of our initial wordy outcry because that's what you do with jargon (that's what you *can* do). It was a little overblown in the beginning, perhaps -- a little emotional -- a head full of burdocks. What

you really wanted to say comes only after hours of stringent editing. That's what you really wanted to say.

You hope I read it and that I concur -- the point got made. You have much to say, you say. Well, then, so do I! Let us demand to be heard! We have been silenced long enough! "This is an outcry!" We want to be respected (and for good reason). In order to be respected, we need to carefully word our words in such a way that the message, which is the entire point (we hope) of most of our wordy words, will not be mistaken for something it is not. We need to carefully word words in such a way that we will not be mistaken for something we are not. This is all so daunting; so mundane, but how crucial and necessary to the outcome of our literary labours? We see nothing political in this.

We choose our jargon with care. We must it if it is not to choose us! We choose the most valued; the most esteemed of jargon. We will be heard! Over the masses, our one or two or eight thousand righteous, solitary voices will be heard! We see nothing political in this. We wonder, at times, why those with other ways of thinking and talking never seem to learn how to get themselves heard. We feel so sorry (this is an apology). We mean it. We see nothing political in this.

We use appropriate words. We double check meanings. We choose carefully (there are a lot of things at stake). We choose potent words, strong words. Words that drop like bombs. Words that do the job. We want to be taken with great seriousness (please let our words have weight and height - depth and breadth... Let the crowds go "ah...").

We talk like we've already eaten (We have just left the table [all of us]). We talk like, of course, we will have enough protein for supper tonight. We talk like, of course, there is enough energy left over to think and talk and drop a few bombs. We talk like we have the freedom to do as we choose, except when it comes to bombs (most of us don't enjoy bombs). We do things because we *can* in a democratic world (it is our right and our view). Our jargon is the proof that we canso... (See? We've forgotten already that too many people won't get enough protein at supper tonight -- that jargon is not protein - or freedom. Not necessarily).

We want to be heard. We hate bombs. We hate violence. We hate hegemonic masculinity. We hate that wealthy white men still dominate, and that small girls and boys of every colour continue to get raped and killed. We hate that racism and classism still run rampant here in the civilized world. We will write about it. We will use proper jargon. Damn good jargon. Jargon that delivers. We like it when our jargon delivers. It packs a punch. We like our jargon punchy; we like it to be delivered on time, and we like our pizza with pepperoni and our red meat rare (We would much prefer it if we were the ones doing the punching; if we were the ones doing the paying, doing the eating etc, but whatever... we are open).

We read newspapers. Cardboard soldiers getting set up and shot down with jargon. It's tantalizing. It's exciting. It's civilized warfare. An informed cock fight (I hope we win. I hope we win!). Our jargon is commodity. It's the rich man's silver and gold (Live and lust for language, and you'll swim in a sea of coins [an octopus's garden] Let the crowd go "ah...").

Often, we don't know how to say it ourselves, but we swear that we will know it when we hear it. We know it when our jargon rings true. It makes us weak at the knees if it rings really true, deeply true. I heard once that the jargon some poor people talk is terrible and direct (I say this hoping to speak deeply and truly). "Too quickly to the point," was what I heard said about this, once... A dirty blade, perhaps. Dull, but very blunt (to the point). I once heard a poor person, herself, say that people who can't read or write, rarely do (for years, my sole focus was on the contradiction in logic in this poor person's crazy assertion - the faultiness of her grammar).



Rejection is the only thing you can count on.

And here I thought I only had death and taxes.

I have just spent \$135 to attend a conference where the only thing I learned was that rejection is a sure thing. I attended the *Get Publishing Conference* at Grant MacEwan College in Edmonton. I listened to Ann Douglas, author of 27 books, and Barbara Dacks, owner, publisher and editor of *Legacy* magazine, among other "published" authors and people in-the-know. I loved hearing these people tell their stories. They all shared bits of their somewhat typical, but unique life stories.

I'm not sure if I expected them to speak in iambic pentameter or what, but when they sounded like reassuringly normal, un-intimidating people, I found great hope and inspiration.

It made absolutely no sense to me, then, when I arrived home and mentally replayed the weekend in my head, but the only thing I could think of was the sting of rejection. They weren't mean to me. I hadn't pitched any heartfelt ideas that had been brushed aside by their artistic authority or snobbery. Rejection was simply the only thing that the speakers had in common. Rejection was the message each of them emphasized. *Get used to it*, they all seemed to toss around like it was wind on the Prairies or rain in Vancouver.

Suddenly, rejection loomed before me. The speakers hadn't been intimidating but their collective aftermath certainly was. How will I ever deal with all the rejection I am sure to get? My thoughts leapt to visions of me hunched over my computer typing madly for days, pouring my heart and soul into each piece only to have them return -- REJECTED. The horror!

Soon, rejection seemed to pop up like dandelions on a spring lawn. I couldn't stop thinking about it. Nothing would ever be good enough. *Tried, but rejected* seemed like a horrible place to be. I saw a man wearing one of those *No Fear* t-shirts that said "Second place is the first loser." I thought those shirts went out of fashion years ago. What made that man pick that shirt and walk right by me today? Was he in on it? What did he know that I didn't?

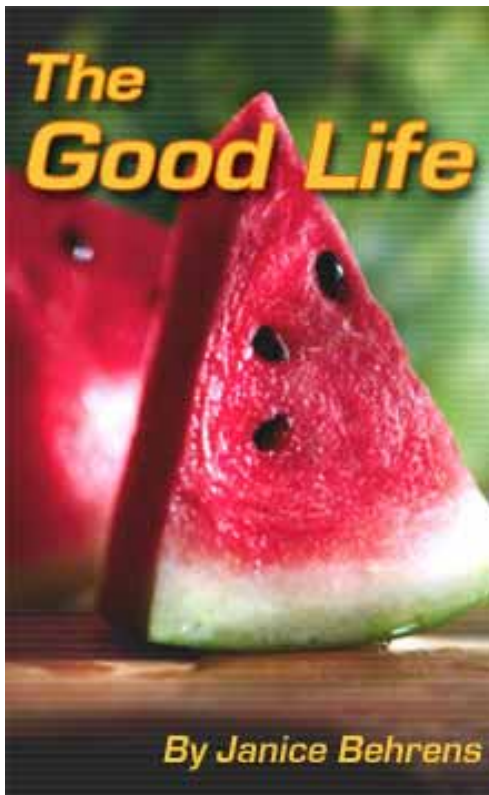
"You can't finish if you don't start."

That's what my neighbour had taped to his computer when he was writing his master's thesis. Was that what I would have to resort to? Would my walls soon be littered with sappy motivational messages? Would I have to soldier onward never knowing when the enemy would relinquish control?

Yes, of course I would, I thought snapping to my senses. I would have to be persistent. We all do. I realized that there was one other thing these successful people had in common. They had all beaten rejection. And so, hope was restored. I am reverted to my optimistic, motivationally charged post-conference self.

I am ready to be rejected!

Well, at least I can sleep easy having been reminded that rejection can be beat, that's it's not so bad. And in case I forget, I just have to look to the right of my computer screen where a little note from Thomas Edison reads, "I have not failed, I have only found 10,000 ways that won't work." A little perspective never hurts.



Why Teachers Matter

A few weeks ago, just before the recent B.C. provincial election, I was at a dinner party and the discussion turned to the severe funding cutbacks that the current government has inflicted upon our educational system. As a result of these provincial cuts over the last four years, teachers have been laid off, class sizes have increased, and school programs and special needs assistance have been scaled back. Many of the people in attendance agreed that all of this has had the result of making the already difficult role of teaching our children even more challenging and frustrating. One man, though, felt that teachers are overpaid for what they do, and have too little accountability. He claimed that many of them only go into the profession to have their summers free, and the protection of a union job. Furthermore, he claimed, teaching is really just "glorified babysitting." Granted, this may have been an extreme statement, but I do believe that his words express a sentiment that is all too commonplace in our society. As I said in my column last week, I believe that we, as a society, have an appalling lack of concern for our children, a lack of concern that is reflected in the way we fund our schools, and the lack of respect we display toward teachers.

Over the years I have known quite a few elementary and high school teachers as friends and acquaintances. Like everybody else, they sometimes are frustrated with their jobs -- particularly when they are hamstrung by bureaucratic interference and political maneuvering, and faced with apathetic and/or belligerent parents. Nonetheless, without exception, they have been caring, dedicated educators, with a passion for their chosen profession and a profound sense of the responsibility that is entrusted to them.

From my discussions with these teachers, I have come to understand that there is a vital duality of purpose within our school system. One half of this duality involves the students' connection to society. In the school and classroom, students acquire the practical skills and knowledge to function within and enrich the variety of workplace, social and further educational environments that they will encounter. In this sense, the role of the teacher is to teach our children to think logically and analytically, to cooperate as part of a group, to express ideas in a cogent and effective way, and to take an active interest in the workings of the world.

The other half of this duality involves the child's connection to the self. It is a vital aspect of a child's educational development that he or she gain self-knowledge -- the understanding that will enable him or her to tap into individual gifts and strengths and lead a creative, fulfilled life. Under the guidance of a good teacher, a child is encouraged to develop personal values and a positive self-image, and is challenged and inspired to take personal chances and explore her own identity. Every child in the classroom has something special to contribute, a unique voice that should be discovered, developed and listened to.

The educational journey, then, is both outward and inward -- a means of discovering the world and the self, and the connection between the two. It is only when both aspects of this duality are realized that a child is being truly and adequately served by the educational system. Whenever this balance is achieved, the result is an education that contributes to the individual's ability to experience the richness of life with a sense of connection and joy. Anything less than a commitment to achieving this with every child who moves through the system is a breach of a very important contract of trust between society and children. By ensuring that this contract is fulfilled, we can help ensure a brighter future for humanity. It is for these reasons that the talented men and women who teach our children deserve our utmost support, respect, and the working conditions that will allow them to succeed.

CANADIAN FED WATCH!

NEWS ACROSS THE NATION...

By Karl Low



The Grits Remain

It was all over the news recently: Belinda Stronach "crossed the floor" of the Parliament to become a member of the official government caucus. The Prime Minister released a statement about the move, calling it "gutsy" and, of course, saying he was proud to have her on his team.

For AU students, what is interesting is that Belinda Stronach has become the new Minister of Human Resources and Skills Development. This is as close to a Minister of Education that the federal government has, so her views on post-secondary education could have a large effect on federal government policy in this area. The Canadian Alliance of Student Associations (CASA) has responded with a press release calling for the new Minister to establish a Pan-Canadian Accord to address the shortcomings in the post-secondary education system.

For those unaware, Ms. Stonach was President and CEO of Magna International, the firm that sponsors those "If I Were Prime Minister" essay contests, so she's had exposure to a lot of ideas from post-secondary students from all over Canada. If we're lucky, a lot of students wrote about the benefits that subsidizing tuition can bring to the country and she'll have remembered this.

The importance of this move in political circles, however, is that it gave the liberal government enough votes to remain in power, if only just barely. I'm not sure if this is a good thing or not. While I certainly don't want the conservatives making any gains, I think that the parties that really stood to gain by this election were those that have a real plan for post-secondary education in the future -- the NDP and the Greens. Now we'll never know.

Not that the whole struggle is over. Now that the budget's been approved as a whole, apparently each little part of is also has to be approved in another confidence motion, as the liberal party tries to work out exactly how it's going to implement the programs that the budget has called for. With three independents still remaining in Parliament at this time, any one of those smaller votes could bring up a snap election. It's going to be an interesting year.

The Report is in - School is Good For You

Statistics Canada has released a report showing that adding extra years of compulsory schooling has a wealth of benefits, both for the individual and society. By looking at the results from 1920 to 1990, researchers were able to determine that increasing the compulsory amount of schooling decreases unemployment, raises income, and lowers the risk of becoming working-poor.

The study found correspondences for each additional year of schooling that was required. This is something that a new Human Resources Minister can look at. With unemployment and the number of working poor still being problems in this country, perhaps it makes sense to ensure that all students get at least an extra year of schooling. When you consider that we have moved from an industrial age to an information age it may make some sense to also change how children are schooled to reflect the new economy and job market.

Finally, Some Vision

The Alberta Government is closing its spring sitting of the Alberta Legislature. Passed this sitting were some 40 bills, including the Access to the Future Act. This Act expands current endowment programs by 1.5 billion dollars and opens up another 3 billion dollars for new endowments. The Advanced Education Minister and Government House Leader has said, "The future of Alberta requires a strong post-secondary education system that will give Alberta the highly skilled workers it needs. In this session, we created foundations for a 21st century post-secondary system that will provide a sustainable future for this province."

Maybe they're finally realizing that if you want to compete in a global economy that relies primarily on information to create value, you need people who know how to best handle that information. Funding post-secondary education isn't a good idea just because I'm taking it. Funding post-secondary education is a good idea because it benefits the all of society in the long run. I've often said that we never get away from paying for anybody, all we do is change where the funding comes from. If we don't provide social support, we pay for increased policing. If we don't provide post-secondary education, we pay for it in increased social supports.

The government describes this release saying "Vision for higher learning will define Alberta's second century," so it sounds like they are beginning to understand that this is a long-term project. We can't expect to just give a funding boost to post-secondary education once and hope to coast on that funding for the long-term. No, higher learning is a continual commitment. Fortunately, it is a commitment that provides many dividends for the societies that make it.

AUSU THIS MONTH



AUSU Course Evaluations

Would you like to know what your fellow students have thought of an AU course? If so, you are not alone. Many students find the input of their peers invaluable when selecting courses or a program of study. AU students may not have cafeterias and hallways in which to share this knowledge, but AUSU has provided an alternative: AUSU Course and Program Evaluation surveys. Accessible through the "Course Evaluations" link on the right side of the top bar of AUSU.org, these surveys ask a series of questions about AUSU courses and programs. Each student may rate each course or program only once, to ensure the validity of the results, so you must be logged in to access a survey form. Anyone, however, may view the results. If you haven't already, please rate some courses you have taken so that others may benefit from your experience. Note: these surveys are not the same as the ones that AU distributes with their course manuals. No AU staff or faculty member has access to the AUSU website, nor can they determine who has filled out a survey. Your anonymity is assured.

AUSU Discussion Forums and Chat

Looking for a way to interact with fellow students? Check out the AUSU discussion forums and chatroom, accessible through the top menu bar of AUSU.org. The forums contain many sections to address a wide variety of student interests. You'll find the most students in the General Student Chat section, but you may also wish to use one of the province or city-specific forums to speak with AU students in your local area.

The AUSU Office has Moved

The Edmonton Learning Centre, which not only houses a number of AU services such as invigilation rooms and student advisors, but also the corporate offices of AUSU and The Voice, has moved to a new location in downtown Edmonton. The phone numbers and email addresses at the ELC remain the same. Watch AUSU.org for some photos of our new office once we get everything unpacked! Our new mailing address is: Athabasca University Students' Union, Peace Hills Trust Tower, 1200, 10011 109 St., Edmonton, AB T5J 3S8

AUSU Needs Volunteer Mentors

AUSU needs volunteer mentors to help new students adjust to AU and distance education. If you're an experienced AU student interested in being matched to a new student, please email ausu@ausu.org for an application form. The mentor program is designed to help new students succeed with distance learning. If you're a new student and would like to be matched to one of our mentors please fill out the application form at this address: <http://www.ausu.org/services/mentorsforms.php>



My Week in Music

Monday

We have a poltergeist in our house who randomly shuts lights on and off, hides batteries and undeveloped film, and changes stations on the clock radio. On any given day, I wake up listening to The Red Hot Chili Peppers or The Five Tops. This morning Kate Bush is weaving her way in and out of my dreams, singing about Cathy and Heathcliff.

Tuesday

I'm supposed to be working on a website, but a friend of mine drops by with a joint, a bowl full of homemade hummus and a CD of Klezmer music that he found at the thrift shop. We spend the afternoon arguing about politics and Bill Murray and playing darts.

Wednesday

Apparently three o'clock in the morning is not the best time to complete an overdue work assignment, even if you've had six cups of coffee since dinner time. The fluorescent light in the kitchen buzzes like an insect. The Pogues sound great on

headphones, though.

Thursday

We've been running behind all day. Burnt toast, overheated radiator, tuna straight from the can for lunch. Somebody was humming *Moon River* in the doctor's office, and it's stuck inside my head, like chewing stale gum for hours on end.

Friday

Moroccan lamb stew simmering slowly on the stove. Janice is picking up a bottle of wine on her way home. The cat is weaving between my legs, and I'm dancing in the kitchen to *No Woman No Cry* with my daughter sitting on my shoulders. Okay.

Saturday

The girl playing the guitar on the six a.m. ferry has long blonde hair and a pork pie hat. She sings *Morning Has Broken* and *Solsbury Hill*. A heron lands on the railing. A voice on the intercom announces that there's a whale off the starboard side, but by the time we get there it's disappeared.

Sunday

The weekend at the cottage hasn't turned out as planned. Rain is hissing off the metal roof with the sound of a thousand snakes frying in a wok; canoes have upturned just above the high tide line. There are four of us gathered around the kitchen table drinking *Alexander Keith's* and playing *Trivial Pursuit* (Barney Miller. Sea of Tranquility. Babe Ruth.). Our friends' marriage is in trouble, and they've been fighting all afternoon. The boom box has a kitchen knife stuck in it to hold down the *play* button. Janice found a copy of Talking Head's *Fear of Music* on top of the fridge. *Heaven...heaven is a place...a place where nothing...nothing ever happens.*

This column focuses on a wide range of issues affecting post-secondary students. Students are encouraged to submit suggestions and educational topics they are concerned about, or personal experiences with courses or university situations they feel other students should know about. If suggest a topic or a course alert for taking notes, contact voice@ausu.org, attn: Debbie Jabbour



UNIVERSITY PRESIDENTS COLLABORATE

Debbie Jabbour

Once again, Alberta's four universities have joined together in a unique collaboration -- this time to say thank you. In the May 20, 2005 edition of several Alberta newspapers' "Letters to the Editor" section, Athabasca University president Dominique Abrioux, along with Roderick Fraser, Harvey Weingarten, and William Cade, as presidents and vice-chancellors of the University of Alberta, Calgary and Lethbridge, respectively, commended the Alberta government for the biggest funding increase in more than 20 years. As part of the government's promised 20-year plan for a "high quality of life for all Albertans," post-secondary education will see an 18 percent increase in base funding, new infrastructure money, funding for additional spaces, and more scholarship and bursary funds.

In the letter, the four presidents summarize some of the initiatives that the promised funding will make possible and it truly sounds exciting, including recruitment of more high-calibre professors, more support for grad students, renewed infrastructure, better research facilities, improved access and affordability for students, and a chance for more Albertans to "realize their educational ambitions and their career dreams" (Edmonton Journal, May 20, 2005).

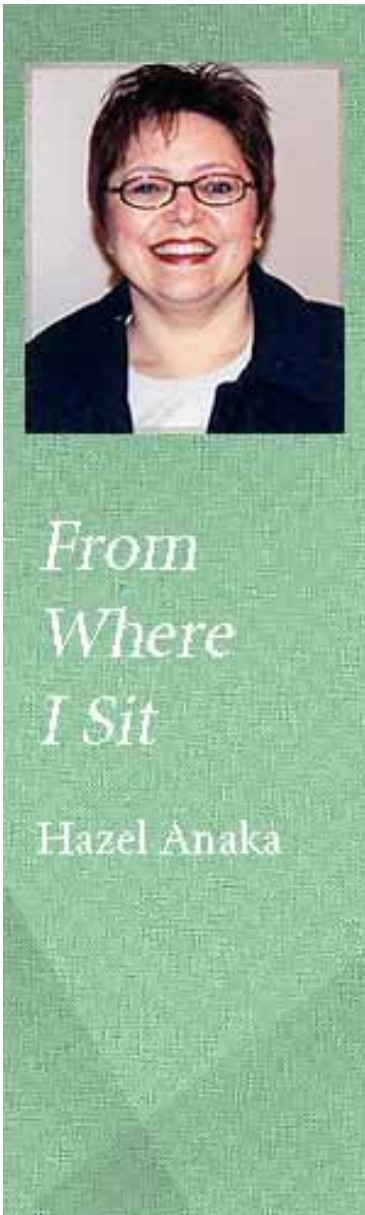
Student groups are generally the most vocal stakeholders in protesting tuition hikes and complaining about the weakening status of post-secondary education. It is important to speak up and complain when necessary, but it is also important not to forget to say thank you. It's good to see our university presidents take the lead in this regard. Hopefully our government will continue to merit our thanks as the complete 20-year plan continues to unfold.

Reference

- Abrioux, D., Cade, W.H., Fraser, R.D., and Weingarten, H.P. (2005, May 20). Universities grateful for biggest funding increase in more than 20 years. *Edmonton Journal*, Letters to the Editor, p. A17. Retrieved May 22, 2005, from <http://www.canada.com/edmonton/edmontonjournal/news/letters/story.html?id=dd85dcb3-9773-443b-b231-21c22d0321f7>

Women You Should Know

This column is on hiatus for this week. Look for more women to be featured starting in June...



Rest in Peace

As I struggle to come to grips with the death of yet another friend, I am confused. How can we prepare ourselves for death? How can we delay its approach? How can we live to our fullest potential?

Recently, a motivational speaker reminded delegates at a conference that I attended that God's question to each of us will be "What did you do with the time and talent I gave you?" Will you respond with a long or short report? Will the explanations, excuses and disclaimers take longer than your listing of deeds?

These are some of the questions running through my mind as I ponder Wanda's life and death. Wanda was a co-worker of mine for just over a year, so I didn't know her extremely well. Like all of us, I believe Wanda had the usual mix of joy and sorrow, challenges and triumphs. Some days she was buoyant and bubbly, and on other days she was profoundly sad and silent.

Her proudest accomplishment was losing over 150 pounds. I never knew the overweight Wanda, though she did show me pictures. She was within a mere two pounds of her goal weight just before Christmas. The excitement was palpable to all of us as she brought in a pair of her old fat pants and revelled in the significance of what she was accomplishing. She hoped to get onto the *Oprah Show* with her story. I loved to watch her preen. With a new hair colour and style, funky new glasses, bold coloured clothing, and lots of jewellery, Wanda was enjoying her new body. I admired her courage and determination as she stayed strong in the face of the smorgasbord that often appeared in our lunchroom. I admired the fact that she went to the gym at 6:00 a.m. to get the exercise routine done before work.

Just as important as the changes she was making to her exterior was the work she was doing on her interior. She still had her share of problems, but she was working hard to honour herself. When I last saw her in February she was still looking, at age 38, for a man who would treat her as she deserved to be treated. I had become one of her confidants. My heart broke for her as she suffered pain and betrayal from a particular man in her life.

Her and I talked about what her ideal job would be. Though never a mother, she loved children. She hoped to take some courses and pursue an aide position in one of Vegreville's elementary schools.

Though Wanda had a generous heart and bubbly nature, sometimes her interactions with others didn't go well. When one such an encounter brought me to tears, a prompt and heartfelt apology got us back on track. We cried some more, we hugged and we vowed not to let some careless words on her part spoil our relationship. I am so glad today that we parted on good terms. Rest in peace, dear Wanda. You deserve it, from where I sit.



Searching for Internships

Lonita Fraser

SOUND AND MUSIC RECORDING / MIDI

Recording Arts Canada [Toronto and Montreal Campuses]

111 Peter Street Suite 708, Toronto, ON M5V 2H1 ph: 416-977-5074 - fax: 416-977-8945

Dates: September and March

Internship types: Comm (Radio, TV, & Film), Music and Technology.

Qualifications / skills needed:

A minimum 80% gpa and a 95% attendance record must be maintained to qualify for the optional co-op program.

Description: Recording Arts Canada is a unique school that offers students an opportunity to learn and work in a creative and progressive environment. By studying in one of the best equipped audio schools you will learn the skills and technologies audio, music and multimedia production professional use everyday. Our internationally renowned facilities feature classic Neve recording consoles as centre pieces. Neve consoles of this vintage are considered the most distinguished consoles ever built. As a result; our students work in studio facilities that have hosted many internationally acclaimed artists including Grammy and Juno award winners. At Recording Arts Canada we provide sophisticated technology, quality theoretical instruction, and extensive practical activity within a small group format so that our students graduate as skilled and employable professionals.

Highlights: The optional co-op program places students in professional situations during their enrolment or immediately upon successful completion of our diploma program. Our co-op partners include recording studios, jingle production houses, radio and television broadcasters, theatre and staging companies, industrial video production companies, live sound reinforcement companies and post production facilities. Our co-op program provides students with the opportunity to develop skills in real production situations, demonstrate their ability to a potential employer, and establish a professional relationship with industry contacts.

Languages required: English and French

Application process involves: In-Person Interview when feasible, letters of reference, phone interview, resume, transcript, written application.

Typically the application process time is 8 - 10 weeks

Post services include: Alumni Network; Job and Internship Network

PHARMACEUTICAL RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT

Toronto Institute of Pharmaceutical Technology

55 Town Centre Court, Suite 200, Toronto, ON M1P 4X4 ph: 416-296-1478 - fax: 416-296-7077

Dates: Inquire for specific dates

Internship types: Pharmaceuticals, Technology and Development

Qualifications / skills needed: Completion of Pharmaceutical Research and Development Diploma. Prerequisite for admission into Pharmaceutical R&D program: Minimum Canadian B.Sc. (or equivalent)

Program duration: Approx. 52 Weeks

The Pharmaceutical Research & Development Technology Diploma is an intensive post-graduate program for individuals with a science degree. The program is the foundation of all innovative pharmaceutical drug development. The current trends in the drug industry are towards re-formulation of existing drugs to improve their performance as well as designing and developing new drug products. The curriculum is structured to provide the skills required to undertake formulation development in the pharmaceutical industry. It also provides an in-depth understanding of pharmaceutical drug design, bio pharmaceuticals and manufacturing techniques. The program imparts advanced skills in:

- Pharmaceutical formulation
- Drug analysis
- Experimental design
- Process development
- Manufacturing technology

This program consists of three modules: Foundation Module. The foundation module is designed to provide students an in-depth knowledge of applied pharmaceutical sciences, bio pharmaceuticals, pharmacokinetics and regulatory affairs. Novel concepts in leading edge industrial pharmaceutical research, applied statistics and experimental design are a major component of the module.

Core Module. The core module focuses on practical training in pharmaceutical experimental design, formulation technology and manufacturing techniques. Hands-on experience is acquired through team-based projects, in compliance with GMP and GLP, in our state-of-the-art research laboratories and manufacturing plant. Analytical techniques, problem solving, protocol and technical writing skills are acquired throughout the module.

Advanced Module. The advanced module provides an opportunity to engage in independent drug development and research projects. The focus is on drug delivery, dosage form design, process development and scale-up technology.

Examination. Written, oral and practical examinations are mandatory at the end of the foundation and core modules. In the advanced module, assessment is based on dissertation and viva-voce. In addition, the overall grade is also based on continuous assessments encompassing GMP and GLP compliance, pharmaceutical documentation skills and interim quizzes.

The Pharmaceutical Research & Development Technology Diploma is awarded upon successful completion of all three modules. Work of exceptional quality may be considered for publication in pharmaceutical-oriented journals.

Description: Students who are at the final stages of their program and have excelled in all aspects of their training may apply for an internship. These opportunities allow selected students to gain additional experience through working with staff and faculty on one of the many unique projects undertaken at the Institute.

Highlights:

1. To gain Canadian working experience within a pharmaceutical industry setting.
2. Graduates of this program are qualified for a career as a:
 - Formulation Technologist
 - Drug Research Scientist
 - Process Development Technician
 - Analytical Research & Development Technician
 - Technical Writer

Language required: English; This internship is a paid position; Application process involves: In-person interview when feasible, transcript, written application.

Typically the application process time is 1 month

Post services include: Alumni Network; Job and Internship Network

SCHOLARSHIPS & AWARDS

Contributed by Zil-E-Huma Lodhi

GREAT CANADIAN SCHOLARSHIP

From the Rockies to the Maritimes, from the great lakes and rivers to the great white north, studentawards.com wants to celebrate all that's great about Canada, especially our country's most promising students. That's why we're kicking off our third annual Great Canadian Scholarship program! To thank you and all the studentawards.com members who have been loyal supporters, we've created four new \$1,500 scholarships for 2005 - one for each region of the country.

To get started, all you have to do is pick your region and apply today: This contest is open to all studentawards.com members - residents of Canada only. The Great Canadian Scholarship Awards end May 31, 2005 11:59 p.m. (EST).

<http://www.studentawards.com>

THE SERBIAN EDUCATIONAL FOUNDATION OF ONTARIO SCHOLARSHIP

Please carefully read the eligibility criteria. Some restrictions apply.

Deadline : June 1, 2005

Applicants must be studying and living in Ontario.

Candidates must be of Serbian descent.

Candidates must be enrolled in an undergraduate program at an Ontario University on a full time basis.

Students must have successfully completed at least one year of a first undergraduate degree program.

Students must have a minimum average of 70% in their last two academic years.

Applicants must be Canadian citizens or permanent residents of Canada.

Value : \$1,000 CND

Application form and guidelines are available in Word format (.doc)

For more information : Please visit the Serbian Business Association website at

www.SerbianBusinessAssociation.com or contact the Association of Universities and College of Canada at awards@aucc.

IMPERIAL TOBACCO CANADA LIMITED SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM FOR DISABLED STUDENTS

Value: \$5,000

Number of Awards: 10

Application Deadline: June 1

For:

Canadian citizens or permanent residents

Candidates must be entering or currently enrolled in their first undergraduate degree program

Students with disabilities that affect the ability to perform activities necessary to participate fully in post-secondary learning.

Award may be tenable at any Canadian degree-granting institution or community college (under the College-University transfer system)

For further information, please visit the website posted below

Association of Universities and Colleges of Canada (AUCC) / Association des Universités et Collèges du Canada (AUCC)

Web Site: www.aucc.ca/programs/index_e.html



THE ART OF LEADERSHIP CONFERENCE - LEADERSHIP FOR THE 21ST CENTURY

May 25, 2005 - May 26, 2005 - London, UK - <http://www.caol.info/conference05.htm>

Reservations Hotline - 0845 331 3402

Previous models for leadership training are no longer appropriate for the 21st Century. The Centre for Arts & Organisational Leadership recognises that we are all more business literate and aware than at any time in the past and, even at local level, are faced with ever increasing competition. We have instant access to more information than previous generations could have dreamed of, that wealth of data can create confusion. It is time for a new paradigm, for new models and new approaches to leadership and leadership practices, to ensure that you remain at the cutting edge of your sector.

The Conference will showcase expert international speakers who are all leaders in their fields of expertise. However, you will not just listen to a sage on a stage. You will be offered demonstrations, workshops and showcases. You will be challenged to adjust your vision to the way that the arts are perceived ... no longer as entertainment or relaxation but, as dynamic tools for change, for education and for success. You will discover how to convert that new vision into a set of powerful, practical strategies to create qualified and quantified improvements within your organisation. Delegates will come from the broadest spectrum of enterprise, including Government Agencies, Local Authorities, The National Health Service, Global Corporations and Entrepreneurial Manufacturing and Service Businesses and academic institutions.

Contributed By AU's *The Insider*

- **iCORE (Informatics Circle of Research Excellence) Summit - Aug. 2005 -Banff.**
The second annual iCORE Banff Informatics Summit will bring together leading information and communications technology (ICT) researchers for three days. The field of informatics encompasses computer science, electrical and computer engineering, physics and mathematics. (403) 210-5335. <http://www.icore.ca/>.
- **Sheldon Chumir Foundation for Ethics in Leadership Symposium - Oct. or Nov. 2005, Calgary.**
The Chumir Foundation promotes an active, involved citizenry and principled leadership. (403) 244-6666. <http://www.chumirethicsfoundation.ca/>.
- **InfraEDUCA 2004 - June 25-27 - Pragati Maidan, New Delhi -** The exhibition will be synergetic platform showcasing recent developments in Basic & Primary Education, Higher Education, Coaching Institutes, Specialized Courses, Vocational Training & Career Prospects, Distance Learning Systems, International Universities and Programs, E-Learning Tools and Educational Kits, Computer Education, Government Schemes and Programs etc. Details: <http://www.friendzexhibitions.com/infraeduca2004/index.htm>.
- **PISTA '04 - July 21-25 - Orlando, Florida -** Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) are transforming our societies, therefore papers about research results, solutions and problems of the applications of ICT in Politics and Society are highly encouraged. Details: <http://www.confinf.org/Pista04/website/default.asp>
- **EDUTEX Bangladesh 2004 - July 28 - 30 - Dhaka, Bangladesh.** EDUTEX Bangladesh 2004 is the platform for you to promote your Institutions and services and to recruit students in Bangladesh. Details: <http://www.expam.com/bangladesh/>

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.

classifieds

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

AU SPORTS CLUB SEEKS NEW EXECUTIVE The AU Sports Club is looking for AU students who are interested in serving on the AUSC executive. All that is required is a few hours a week to respond to emails, add new members to the discussion forum, and locate information to update the website or forum sections. Being on a club executive is a great way to meet other AU students!

THE VOICE

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