

# THE VOICE MAGAZINE

*Jun 15, 2005*  
*Volume 13 Issue 24*



## Convocation 2005

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*The Internet and Mental Illness*

*Common Law to Un-Common?*

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*and much more...*

*Congratulations Grads!*

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We love to hear from you! Send your questions and comments to [voice@ausu.org](mailto:voice@ausu.org), and please indicate if we may publish your letter.

## THE VOICE

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# Convocation 2005

Photos and interviews  
by Debbie Jabbour

*This year, more AU students graduated than ever in AU history. To accomodate the growing number of grads, yet maintain the AU convocation experience which includes the reading of a short bio for each grad, AU had to expand the services to include undergraduate ceremonies over three days.*

*Voice reporter Debbie Jabbour was on hand to interview the new grads and provide coverage of the proceedings. This feature is the first part of our Voice exclusive convocation coverage. Watch for more in the month-end issue.*

*As always, many of this year's grads were visting the main campus for the first time, and taking their first opportunity to meet with other AU students in their program. All followed their own path toward graduation, and many share their stories here...*

## **Catherine Feick**

### **Master Distance Education (MDE)**

Vancouver Island, B.C.

Pictured: Catherine, husband Max Stocker, daughter Laura Stocker (very proud of mom!), and friend Pam Quon (also in MDE).

Catherine has been working on her MDE from 2001-2004, and found it all very enjoyable. Although everyone warned her that "it's lonely," and she thought she would be all on her own, she didn't find that to be true. To her surprise, she was able to meet someone online and make friends at a distance, and she and Pam (who is also in MDE and scheduled to graduate next year), have been able to support each other.

For Catherine, earning the degree means a sense of personal accomplishment, something to use in her career and broaden her horizons. She noted that "distance education is the way of the future." Going in, Catherine had heard stereotypes that it would be easy, but in reality, she found the program superior to other forms of learning for the mature student (although she thought it might not be the same for a young student right out of high school).

Catherine plans to be involved in developing DE programs at the university college where she works, particularly for English as a 2<sup>nd</sup> language. When asked for some memorable moments at AU, she said, "my husband cooked and my daughter let me use the computer and telephone!"

Congratulations, Catherine!







**Vivian Brown, BPA (Human Services Major)**

Almonte, Ontario

Pictured: Vivian Brown with her twin sister Verla Wilson

Vivian has been working on her degree since 2001 and says she feels really good to be at convocation! She chose AU because the human services degree appealed to her and she wanted to work from home. The block transfer and prior learning assessment (PLAR) credits offered by AU were also deciding factors. Last year, Vivian had the opportunity to attend a PLAR conference in Ontario, where she met other students and faculty and made presentations in support of the PLAR process.

Vivian liked AU because of the critical thinking aspect of her studies, and her favourite course was HSRV322, human services policies. She commented on the wonderful personal attention you get at AU—on campus you barely get to say hello to your prof, but at AU you get to know them. This was something she didn't expect, given the distance format, and she wanted to recognize in particular her "great tutor Jane Arscott."

In her bio, Vivian noted that she had challenged her daughter to see who would get a degree first—and Vivian won! She currently works as an educational assistant with autistic children, and now that she has a degree, hopes for opportunities to study the topic further. Well done, Vivian!

**James Tobin, BAdmin**

Kingston, ON

Pictured: James, with wife Christine.

James and his wife Christine were wandering around campus taking pictures before the ceremony and they asked me if I would take one of them together—they were both very impressed with how everything was run and loved the beautiful university setting! James and Christine have three children, ages 11, 9, 5, and although they didn't come along, they are very impressed with dad.

James learned about the program through word of mouth at his job at the Goodyear tire plant and has been working at his diploma for about 6 years. The degree will open doors, and gives him a sense of accomplishment.

As a mature student, he appreciated the choices offered at AU, and found it a good learning experience. His last course—Business Admin 404—was his favourite as it tied in all the other courses. He was able to use the information he learned in a job interview, and it felt really good. He now plans to take the CGA program for advanced standing.

James seems to have found the secret of balance, as he told me he was able to take time out to watch TV, do lots of camping, and spend time with his kids. Christine also works full-time, but between the two of them, they found they were able to work things out very well—they just had to be organized. James found this balance very important, as suggests taking time to clear your mind if you want to be successful in your studies. His advice to other students, "finish what you start and don't give up." Well done, James!



**Kathy Luke, Master of Health Studies (MHS)**

Brampton, Ontario

Picture: Kathy Luke, Joyce Fenuta (friend & fellow MHS graduate) and Joyce's daughter Angelise.

I caught up with Kathy right after the ceremony and she agreed to a brief interview before they all went for class pictures. Kathy works in a hospital in Toronto and travelled here from Brampton with her husband. She wanted Joyce with her in the picture because they had become friends during the program and this connection was very important to success in her studies.

For Kathy, her degree means personal achievement. It will open doors and bring new opportunities. She enjoyed the experience of completing the program over the last 3 1/2 years, although there were difficult times, particularly towards the end when she loaded up on courses in order to finish in time to graduate. She said, "at the time you are doing it, you think it will never end! But it does—and then you feel some nostalgia when it is all over"

Congratulations to both Kathy and Joyce!



**Rema Wright, BPA (Criminal Justice Program - 4 year)**

Edmonton, AB

Pictured: Rema Wright, daughter Sherry Wright, and Sister-in-law, Geraldine Mapp.

Rema is a registered social worker working full-time in child protection, but she found that she needed a degree. AU fit very well into her schedule, as she had 4 teenagers at home while she was studying and with distance learning could do homework in the evenings.

For Rema, her degree means that "dreams do come true." She said, "I thought I couldn't do it, but, it's reachable—and the feeling of accomplishment really feels good."

One of her best memories was learning about human rights (her favourite course was on the Charter of Rights), and she really liked her instructor, Nand Narine, who was very caring and approachable. Her least favourite course was aboriginal justice law, learning about treaties. When I asked about plans for the future, Rema responded, "get a big raise!" She does plan to stay in her current job at Hobbema child welfare, but hopes to move into management. She also looks forward to quiet evenings at home with her husband and children. Rema says; "the best part of this was that there were students of all ages, not all young." Congratulations, Rema!



*Are you a new AU graduate who would like to tell your story to The Voice? If so, write [voice@ausu.org](mailto:voice@ausu.org) for information on how you can be featured in the Graduate Profiles column. All participants will receive a free Voice mug. (For those featured in this issue, send me your address to get your mug! Thanks to everyone who participated.)*

*Watch for the end of June issue of The Voice for more convocation coverage, including photos from the grounds, more interviews, and Debbie Jabbour's perspective on this year's ceremony.*



## FROM MY PERSPECTIVE

# Internet Use and Mental Health Problems

*Debbie Jabbour*



Some members of the AU community have speculated on whether a higher proportion of students with mental illness choose the distance learning option. It seems intuitive that individuals with mental illness may have difficulty functioning well in a traditional classroom setting, and would therefore find an online learning format attractive. Certainly it is likely that AU would be a good alternative for many students with disabilities who find the challenges of physical attendance in a classroom prohibitive, and this would include individuals with

psychological disorders. I found it interesting, therefore, to read that researchers now suggest there may well be a relationship between mental illness and Internet use, although the proposition is somewhat chicken-and-egg.

The Canadian Journal of Psychiatry has published a study in support of a growing body of evidence that the "interactive and dynamic nature of the Internet... is associated with serious handicaps to the personalities of people who overuse it" (MacLeod, 2005). In referencing Internet addiction, researchers at Korea's Dong-A University College of Medicine and Harvard Medical School list adverse psychiatric symptoms that include hostility, obsessive-compulsiveness, paranoia, depression, irritability, anxiety, phobias, and somatization.

The researchers conclude that the Internet may be a "tonic for people with inner conflicts. Students with such traits may use the Internet to counteract psychological distress rooted in their personality" (MacLeod, 2005). A previous study also suggested that high Internet use is associated with individuals who have poor coping skills, poor social relationships and poor self-image.

The question remains, of course, whether these adverse psychiatric conditions are a consequence of excessive Internet use, or whether the reverse is true.

Of course, Internet addiction is much different than the heavy Internet use required by Athabasca University students, and the study was focused on the relationship between addiction personality and virtual gaming, chat rooms, news groups and music downloading components of the Internet rather than academia. It is interesting to speculate, nonetheless, on what the relationship may entail and whether there is some relevance for AU students. If students with mental illness are attracted to this form of learning, university counsellors, course developers and administrators need to be aware of the implications and be prepared to support the special needs of these students. On the other hand, if heavy Internet use is contributing to mental health problems among our university students, a different solution is merited.

There has been a defined need for some time at AU to provide greater support for students with disabilities, particularly those who are dealing with debilitating mental illness. Part of the difficulty lies with the continued stigma attached to mental illness, as the university relies on self-report and many students hesitate to admit to a problem. But there continues to be a gap between understanding the needs of this population and being able and willing to accommodate

them. It might be a simple thing like allowing a student who is housebound because of agoraphobia to write an exam in his or her home, or helping a student with panic disorder get through an exam without being obligated to sit in a large classroom of other students, or allowing a medical exception for a course extension for a student who is undergoing a severe depressive episode -- yet often the logistics of doing so are prohibitive. AU does try to accommodate these students, but there is a great need for improvement. There may even be implications that are yet to be considered. For example, if AU does have a higher proportion of students with mental illness, how does this impact the advisor-student or tutor-student relationship? What if a student has an anti-social personality disorder, exhibiting symptoms like hostility and paranoia, and this leads to confrontational episodes with someone at the university? Would a charge of non-academic misconduct be viewed as less serious if the student's mental illness was a contributing factor? What about a student with obsessive-compulsive disorder who submits a 100-page detailed paper - do the tutors have sufficient understanding to see the underlying cause, or is a failing mark the first order of the day? A student with somatization disorder may complain of numerous physical ailments with no obvious physical cause -- what happens if this student is repeatedly seeking extensions or giving excuses for late assignments? Do the course advisor or learning services staff lose patience with this student, or do they have sufficient knowledge of the disorder to be able to understand and help? It seems apparent that students with poor coping skills and psychological problems could run afoul of the university system in multiple ways.

The question of whether Internet use may contribute to mental health problems is a different one. Aside from the obvious one -- stress of studies -- AU students may well be susceptible to developing all kinds of the Internet-use related psychological disorders listed in the research study. I've certainly encountered a version of obsessive-compulsiveness in my studies. How often do you start out researching one course topic and end up still surfing the Internet hours later, caught up in a totally unrelated topic? Or get a particular idea or course concept in your head and can't stop trying to find just one more piece of information or research that might help you with that one paragraph in your assignment?

What about the anti-social personality traits? At Convocation I heard many comments from students who said they had given up their social life for the duration of their studies. I wonder what happens to our social selves year after year, as we remain locked away inside our computer room, focused on the screen... it seems likely that development of symptoms of "paranoia, depression, irritability, impulsiveness, anxiety, phobias and self-centeredness" (MacLeod, 2005) could easily be the outcome. Would this occur if our study focus was in a classroom among other people? Possibly; if an individual was already predisposed in that direction. It does seem likely, however, that the isolation of distance studies may be a catalyst, and if this is combined with other anti-social aspects of the Internet, AU students may well be susceptible to developing these types of mental health problems.

Too, there is the danger of developing Internet addiction. The researchers posed the question whether "adverse psychiatric conditions are a consequence of excessive Internet use or do they precede it, and does a person's personality predispose them to Internet addiction?" (MacLeod, 2005). If students with adverse psychiatric conditions are attracted to the online learning environment, does this also mean they have a personality that may predispose them to Internet addiction? I've heard some stories about both students and staff who have become involved in potentially damaging activities on the Internet. This happens in all organizations, of course, but I can't help but wonder if we at AU have a higher incidence of Internet addiction by nature of our mandated higher use.



I have far more questions than answers at this point, but I think it's an area that bears watching. At the very least, it re-emphasizes the need for students to find a balance, and to not neglect the social aspects of their lives outside the computer room.

MacLeod, I (2005). High Internet use linked to mental health problems: Researchers ponder whether web draws people in distress. Ottawa Citizen, June 15, 2005. CanWest news service: <http://www.canada.com/edmonton/edmontonjournal/news/story.html?id=5952f40e-b5fe-4803-8141-0e700fa67e60>

Canadian Journal of Psychiatry, Vol 50, no.7, June, 2005. <http://www.cpa-apc.org/Publications/cjpHome.asp>

## Cover Letter

*El-ahrairah Jones*

Dear potential employer,

Thank you for taking the time to review my résumé and employment application.

As you can see from my past work experience, I have devoted many years of my life to unfulfilling, uninspiring and low-paying jobs, so I should have no difficulty adjusting to the conditions of your workplace. Over the years, I have become adept at hiding my feelings of contempt for a variety of incompetent, ineffectual, and bullying *superiors*. I am confident that you will be satisfied with the way that I am able to swallow my pride and feelings of humiliation in order to remain your employee.

Please rest assured that, although I have heart, soul, imagination, humour, love, joy, compassion and boundless human potential within me, I will never allow these distractions and imperfections to enter into the reliable performance of my duties. I am well aware that they would only undermine the process of dehumanization that is so important to maintaining order within a hierarchical corporate structure such as your organization.

Should I be fortunate enough to be the successful candidate for this position, I will immediately begin the process of racking-up large amounts of consumer debt for so-called *luxury items* that I neither need nor can afford and that will relentlessly divert me away from the realization of my true potential. In this way, you can be certain that I will live in constant fear of being fired by you. Any notions I have of quitting my dead-end job will remain completely unrealistic.

On my off-duty hours, I will numb my mind and soul through a combination of television, consumer magazines, Hollywood films, alcohol, prescription drugs, and home electronics. I will believe every word that the various mass-market media tell me about how worthless I am, how lucky I am to be employed by you, and how useless it is to dream of changing myself or the world around me. Wrapped up in a state of fear and self-loathing, I will attempt to mask these feelings and add some sense of drama and relevance to my life by joining with my coworkers in a variety of predictable workplace activities, such as spying, gossiping, backstabbing, fawning, and flirting.

I will do all of this because it is what I have been programmed to do from kindergarten onward. More importantly, I will do it because my children need to be fed and because I need to have a roof over my head. I will do it because when you are born poor, marginalized and powerless, there are simply no other options open to you. I will do it because society, as you have engineered it, leaves me no choice but to live pay cheque to pay cheque. There is no other hope for me today and the future, apparently, is yours.

## TAO TALK

Lonita Fraser

A gentleman known as Lao Tzu fathered Taoism, a philosophy from the East. Little is known of Lao Tzu beyond his book of writings entitled *Tao Te Ching* [Book of the Way and its Power] that he is famous for. According to legend, he was born about 604 B.C.E. (making him a contemporary of Confucius). He was a palace archivist and secretary for the court of Zhou at Louyang. As the story goes, when he chose to leave society behind, the keeper of the mountain pass that Lao Tzu was entering asked him to write his wisdom down. The result of this exercise was the aforementioned *Tao-te Ching*. His wisdom was later elaborated upon and modified by Chuang Tzu, a government official who lived 369 to 286 B.C.E. Many people have come to understand Taoism through Lao Tzu's writings and Chuang Tzu's broad interpretation. Taoism is a radical departure from the philosophical and religious traditions we in the West are more familiar with. Western society has a far different perspective of the concepts of language and the duty and place of human beings in the world. In contrast to the perspective of Westerners, Taoism embraces a holistic view of the universe and all that inhabits it.

Taoism refers to a set of ancient Chinese metaphysical understandings. It advocates the concept that all things stem from the same place, from one essence, one *ultimate* -- the *Tao*. Since all of nature emerges from one place, all natural things are part of one whole. The bad and good, ocean and sky, and light and dark all unify in Taoism. Chuang Tzu describes this concept as a person who is able to "embrace the ten thousand things and roll them into one" (Chuang Tzu). He is referring to a person who's able to understand the unifying force and interconnectedness of all things. According to Taoism, all things and all that happens are matters of change and circumstance stemming from one source. Although some persons consider Taoism a religion, I counter that it really isn't. In my understanding, Taoism is a philosophy that can be compatible with most religions if so desired, however it can stand on its own.

To understand a new concept, we often use the mental process of contrasting the new concept with its opposite. In some fashion, opposites are necessary in order for other things to exist. Opposites also serve to assist us in developing an understanding. It's partly because of this that we can't divorce one thing from another thing. The idea that all things are a part of the same whole can be extended to connote that nothing is unacceptable. The concepts of good and evil, as we in the West understand them, don't really exist according to Taoism.

We humans generally like to name and label things, thereby differentiating one thing from another. We depend on these labels and labels to distinguish things and to hopefully assist us in effectively communicating these differentiations to others. We use these basic concepts as building blocks to achieve comprehension. Yet, as useful as these concepts and the associated terminology may be, Taoists teach that such concepts and language are actually a trap and can distract us from understanding.

This inability to fully understand is a problem that occurs on multiple levels. One example of this problem is evident when two different groups of people, groups that may be disparate from one another, use the same word to denote two different things or approaches to the same thing. The word *Tao*, for example, means *way*, but does not mean the same thing in all philosophies and religions that use the concept. For Confucians, *Tao* is the achievement of a life properly conducted. This is a life of morality, ritual adherence, and respect for one's elders. They understand *Tao* as the culmination and fulfillment of *something*. In contrast, Taoists understand *Tao* as more than this; it is, quite simply, *everything*. *Tao*, for the Taoist, is the foundation of everything: nature, people, and the entire universe. To Taoists, humans are also the result of the *Tao*. In contrast, Confucians perceive that *Tao* is the result of us. The aim of the Taoist's view of *Tao* is to have everyone realize that we are all a part of the same universe. In essence, we are all in it together -- humans, animals, trees, air, and even that bottle of Advil that may be on your bedside table.

The opening line of Lao Tzu's famous collection of writings points out yet another difficulty that exists in regards to language use. "The Tao that can be told (named, spoken) is not the eternal Tao" (Tzu Lao, 1988). Words are not enough. Words are inadequate and misleading in attempting to describe something such as the concept of the *ultimate*. Consider how you describe one person to another. We can dish up a seemingly bottomless well of information about that person, but in the end, no matter how much detail is put forth, there will always be something missing. The description will be inadequate and misleading. Perhaps understanding is unique, something that can only be experienced by one person and not another. The

understanding may be a unique impression that only one soul can have. Its essentialness, it can be argued, cannot be put into adequate description for the benefit of others. Perhaps that elusive *something* is a detail that's slipped our minds or something we never even knew. In any event, whatever description is given, it is inadequate for the provision of sufficient understanding. The description will be misleading, since missing information results in misleading assumptions.

The same principle underlies the previous quotation with there being no words out there that adequately describe the *ultimate*. Whatever words I'm using here, for example, don't really amount to a hill of beans. I could spew forth until I'm blue in the face about the *Tao*, but in the end it's still not the *Tao*. If that explanation seems inadequate, well sorry but it's supposed to be. It can't be anything else. That is the nature of the *Tao*. I can't tell you what it is -- no one can. Actually, no one even should tell you. In the end, you will have to understand the concept in your own unique way.

Labels and descriptions are a trap and a distraction; even the process of labelling itself is a snare. Not only do the descriptions and labels themselves fall short of sufficiency, but a person can also get caught up in the process of labelling. The labeller could become lost in trying to find just the *right* words or enough words to provide a description that they find satisfying. This process of naming and the inadequacy of names distracts us from comprehending what we are trying to describe. The weakness of the understanding is particular evident when a listener might have a different understanding of the labels used by the person offering the description.

Chuang Tzu advocated the abandoning of words. This is one of the most significant Taoist concepts, one whose significance is very apparent when put into context with the inadequacy of language. For Chuang Tzu, what is most important is that a person must experience the *Tao* directly, not depending on anything that might have been used to describe it. In fact, one could not directly experience the *Tao* at all if one merely depends on descriptors. The *Tao* must be *felt* to be *known*. "Words exist because of meaning. Once you've gotten the meaning, you can forget the words." (Chuang Tzu)  
"More words count less." (Tao Te Ching)

Language is just one of the things that can impede our connection with, and understanding of, the *Tao*, as the interconnectedness of all things. Language is understood by many as the one thing that sets us apart from all other creatures, the one thing that truly defines what being *human* is. But perhaps, as Lao Tzu and Chuang Tzu both seem to be telling us, it is also the one thing that keeps us from realizing our connection with the *Tao*, and our *sameness* with all of the rest of creation. The one thing we tend to most depend on is perhaps the one thing we most need to abandon in order to really comprehend what's around us.

The tenets of Taoism that I personally take most to heart are that we should be prudent, patient, detached, and allow nature to take its course (particularly without undue interference from us). By *detached*, I don't mean you should be unfeeling or aloof, instead I mean not allowing undue passions to unduly control or distort your thinking. The idea that *this too shall pass* has become dear to me and it is a concept that is very harmonious with Taoism. I no longer sweat the small stuff. Being detached, for me, has meant realizing that flying off my nut about things is largely a waste of energy that could be better put to other uses. I realize now that most things really aren't worth getting into a fit about.

Taoism extends beyond this inadequate description of my understanding. If you're interested in further journeys along this way, you might want to pick up a copy of Lao Tzu's *Tao Te Ching*. You may also wish to learn about Zen, as there are many concepts Zen shares with Taoism. You may wish to explore the DailyZen website (<http://www.dailyzen.com>). The following Wikipedia articles are also great starting points on your quest for understanding:

- Taoism (<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Taoism>),
- Zen (<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Zen>), and
- Buddhism (<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Buddhism>).

#### Reference

- Tzu, Lao (1988). *Tao-te ching*. Translated by Stephen Mitchell. 1<sup>st</sup> edition. New York: HarperCollins.
- Chaung Tzu (1996). *Basic Writings*. Translated by Burton Watson, 1996. New York: Columbia University Press.





"So is it different being married?" she asks smiling as she lifts pieces of my hair and snips at them.

I'm at the hairdresser's. It's raining and cold outside. My husband sits at the front waiting patiently for me. We've been married almost a year. My hairdresser makes small talk with me. It's part of her job, really. But I'm annoyed. I can feel her sneer. It's slight and she's a nice person, but I feel it. She's my age, single, living on her in downtown Vancouver and comparing my life to hers, if only a little.

So, is it different being married than it was when we simply (gasp) lived together? The gasp is for my grandma. It bothered her that I didn't marry sooner. Grandma's lucky I married at all. My hairdresser is not alone. It seems marriage's stock is falling as fast as the divorce rate rises. According to Anne Kingston in her book, *The Meaning of Wife*, the unmarried woman is "the fastest growing demographic." A thirty-year old woman was "three times more likely to be single at thirty than she was in the 1970's." For whatever reason, women are putting marriage off.

And most of the time any outpouring of public affection causing cringing. Superstar Tom Cruise has become the latest punch line in the world of Hollywood romance. His recent professions of love leave us nauseated or amused, but not fooled. We're more likely to believe Oprah Winfrey, Martha Stewart, or Cameron Diaz, celebrities who have all spoken out against marriage. Candace Bushnell and *Sex and the City* glorified being single, as have countless other TV shows and novels.

So can I blame the divorce rate and contemporary opinions on marriage for making me feel like such a traitor when I signed my "new" name for the first time? I'm all for equal rights. I appreciate the suffragists. I vote. I don't cook every night, nor do I do all the cleaning or laundry. That would simply be too "housewife," and I won't go there. Taking his name was a choice, a difficult choice, but I'm glad I did it. Just don't ask me to tell you why. I can give you more reasons why I shouldn't have. When pressed on the issue, I feel I need to defend my decision. I sputter, "Well, I wanted to, and it's nice to all have the same name. You know, if we had kids or something..."

My hairdresser continues cutting my hair. She tells me she has a friend who got married last summer.

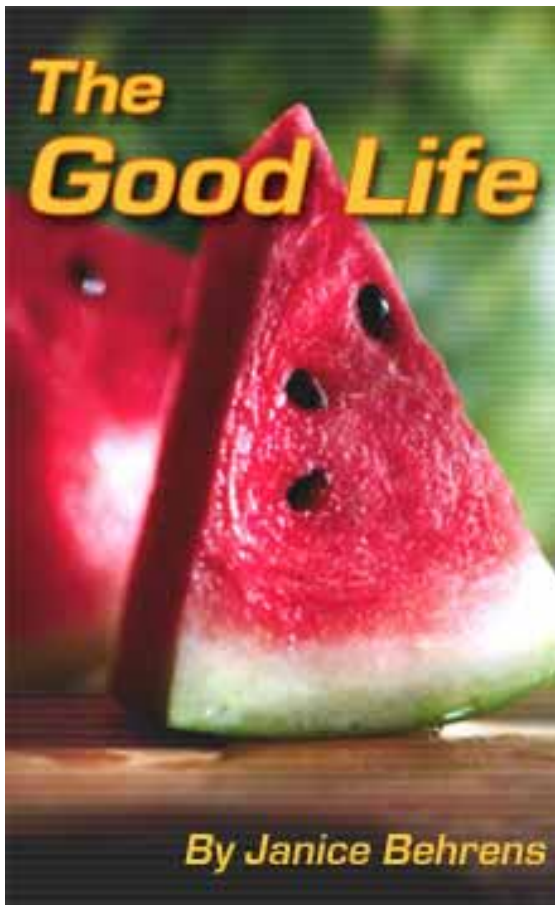
"She seemed too independent to get married, but she's still independent and she's really happy," she says, surprised marriage, independence and happiness are possible to discuss in the same breath.

Again, it seems she's not alone in her assumptions. New findings from a study by Statistics Canada were published in the Province newspaper ("Marriage not vital for happiness: single, June 8, 2005) stating that many people don't view marriage as necessary to happiness. The study claims that people who don't see marriage as tied to their happiness are the same people who don't expect to get married. They are older, less educated and have lower incomes. It seems there is a marrying kind, and I'm it -- under the average age of marriage, 28, with a good income and an education ("Marriage not vital for happiness: single", June 8, 2005). It doesn't sound so bad, but being categorized makes me feel defensive. Perhaps that's why I'm hesitant to answer the question.

"So do you find it different? Being married?" She asks again. I glance at my groom as he sits with his elbows on his knees and studies his shoes with interest. "Yes," I say. "I find it different."

I smile. Take it or leave it.

Grindlay, Lora. "Marriage not vital for happiness: Singles." *The Province*. June 8, 2005, A7.  
Kingston, Anne. "The Meaning of Wife." Toronto, Ontario: Harper Collins, 2004.



## Some Warm Weather Thoughts

In keeping with my scattered, spring-fevered mind this week, here is a collection of odds and sods insights, with the general theme of enjoying the upcoming brilliant spring and summer weather:

>> If you have the space to do it, try line-drying your clothes outdoors on sunny days. The natural sunlight will increase the intensity of your whites and brighten your colours. There is nothing like the smell of the fresh breeze trapped in your sheets to lull you off to a good night's sleep.

>> Turn off the television set, put down the magazine or newspaper, and read a good book instead, preferably outside in a hammock or lawn chair. Who cares whether it's a Giller Prize nominee, simply a good mystery or even a smut-filled bit of escapism? The things that pass for *reality* in the mass-market media are greatly over rated. Do you really care whom Brad Pitt is dating and who was the last survivor kicked off of the island?

>> Spend at least as much time and energy finding some good company to enjoy lunch or dinner with as compared

to the time and energy spent worrying about what or where to eat.

>> Have more spur-of-the-moment picnics. Last week, my spouse and I decided at seven o'clock at night to haul our canoe down to the beach for an evening paddle. By eight o'clock we were eating cold chicken legs and melba toast, surrounded by about twenty curious seals. Magic is something that you can't always plan.

>> Throw a tropical summer solstice party, complete with tiki torches, Mai Tais and cheesy music. I don't know why. More importantly, I don't know why not.

>> Commit yourself to some form of higher education this summer. I'm talking about learning something really useful and life affirming, like how to dance the Samba, how to cook French pastries, or how to knit Norwegian-style sweaters that will be ready by the fall.

>> Unless you have some pressing health concern, don't waste time and energy worrying about your waistline or the way that you look in a bikini. If you feel like it, throw a steak on the barbecue and share a butterscotch sundae with your child. Get your cholesterol checked regularly, but remember that high blood pressure and chronic unhappiness are far worse for you than a bit of extra fat. Swim, walk, bicycle, scooter, rollerblade, skateboard, sail, windsurf, golf, play tennis and run through sprinklers whenever you can. Try to have fish, chicken or grilled vegetables for dinner more often than you have burgers and hot dogs. Have fast food rarely or not at all. Don't worry, life is good and as long as you don't take yourself too seriously, you'll be all right!

## Click on This SILVER SCREEN

Lonita Fraser

### The All-Time Top 100 Voices in the Movies

<http://www.filmcritic.com/misc/emporium.nsf/95a45e26914c25ff862562bb006a85f2/48d7cbcbf391da3588257004007237cc>

I am in no way surprised by who's at number one. Are you, punk?

### Movie Primers

<http://www.greencine.com/static/primers/index.jsp>

Get your film geek on with these little primers on films, genres, and other related stuff. Sound cool at the next party, but beware, if you're at that party with me and use the word "postmodern" in any even halfway serious manner, I'll beat you with hot buttered popcorn.

### 100 Second Film Festival

<http://100second.ltc.org/>

"The 100 second film festival is the festival for everybody. What do we mean? First off, at 100 seconds - anybody can create a video and participate. There are no restrictions on theme or subject matter - whatever you have in mind - you can do it! Secondly, all the entries we receive will be published to the web and catalogued so that you can hand pick your own favorites and screen a 100 second festival in your community. By using a Creative Commons license this festival can go anywhere."

### Film Scripts

<http://home.online.no/~bhundlan/scripts/>

There's a very curious collection of films here.

### 10 best rock movies ever made

<http://www.dailybreeze.com/rave/articles/1448507.html>

Awww, no Rock'n'Roll High School? The old punk in me is saddened.

### Silent Film Still Archive

<http://home.comcast.net/~silentfilm/home.htm>

The silence of stills from the silent film era. A lovely collection.

### The Math in the Movies Page

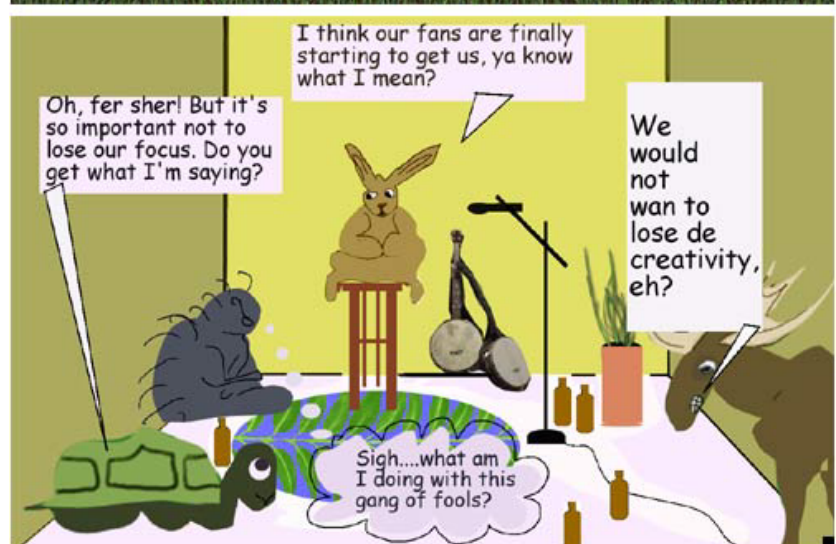
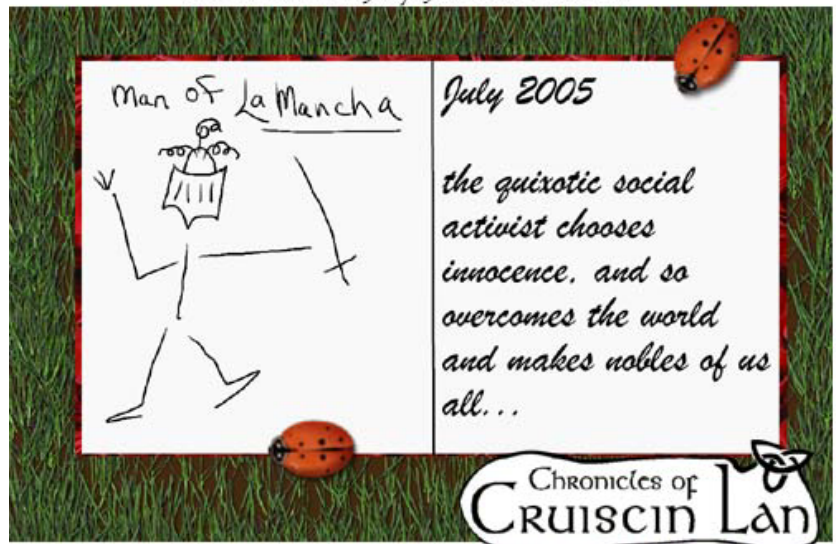
<http://world.std.com/%7Ereinhold/dir/mathmovies.html>

A guide to major motion pictures with scenes of real mathematics - and there's way more there than Pi, A Beautiful Mind, and Good Will Hunting.

### Guess the Movie

[http://hub.noblehost.com/modules.php?name=Movie\\_Game](http://hub.noblehost.com/modules.php?name=Movie_Game)

Bodies removed, only the clothing and scene remain. Can you guess what films these stills are from?







*Dear Barb,*

*My sister is getting married next month and I can't stand her fiancé. I feel really bad about this, but I just don't care for him at all. He has never done anything to my sister or me specifically. I just find him very arrogant and at times he seems to be demeaning to my sister. This seems to bother me more than it does her. I love my sister very much and I don't want to cause problems between us. How can I overcome these feelings and be more accepting of my soon to be brother-in-law?*

*Paul in St. John's, New Brunswick*

Hi Paul, thanks for writing. It's good to hear from a man once in a while.

I think you've partly answered your own question. You need to be more accepting of your future brother-in-law. Remember, this is your sister's choice -- not yours. I don't know if you are married, but if you are, how would you feel if your sister wasn't accepting of your wife? I'm sure that would hurt your feelings

very much.

You need to try to find common things that you can talk about or do together with your sister's fiancé. Perhaps you both enjoy golf or bowling, or share an interest in carpentry or car racing.

Even though you find this man arrogant, sometimes arrogance is a cover-up for a deep-seated insecurity. You will never know if this is the case, unless you put forth the effort to find out.

There must be something in this fellow that your sister sees that makes her to want to marry him. Perhaps, you can also try to spend time with them as a couple. Participating in activities that you all enjoy will make him feel more relaxed with you. As a result, he may drop the exterior persona of arrogance, thus providing you the opportunity to see the person your sister fell in love with.

On the other hand, if he becomes abusive to your sister and you see that she is hurting, you may need to discuss this with her. However, if this situation arises there is only so much you can only do. Your sister is an adult, and has to live her own life and make her own choices. It is important to always be available for your sister, let her know she has someone to turn to.

Good luck Paul, and I hope I was able to help with your dilemma.

*E-mail your questions to [dearbarb.voice@ausu.org](mailto:dearbarb.voice@ausu.org). Some submissions may be edited for length or to protect confidentiality: your real name and location will never be printed. This column is for entertainment only. The author is not a professional counsellor and this column is not intended to take the place of professional advice.*

# 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](mailto: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>



## Test Results

There was a time in my early twenties when I was convinced I was dying. There were unexplained bouts of dizziness while walking the dog, cruel pounding headaches in the middle of the night, and flashing lights in my head. I visited specialists, wore wired goggles, and stared at holographs and blobs of light. I was sealed inside an MRI (magnetic resonance imaging) tube, with my eyes closed as I listened to the rattling, pinging sound like the creaking metal-fatigue groans of an antique submarine.

Before my final appointment with the specialist, I took my clothes to the laundromat. As though they might contain some clue to my immediate future, I read the horoscope in the *West Ender*, scanned the shared accommodation ads, examined the lost cat posters, and perused a *National Geographic* magazine. In the magazine, there were pictures of naked bushmen and an article about the Butterfly Effect. An idea began swimming around like a big fish in the pools of my consciousness. The idea was that somehow there is a vast intelligence behind things, something that connects all things -- tornadoes and oranges, the Great Lakes and broken umbrellas.

When I was eight or nine, Sheila McNulty dared me to eat seven green potato chips. My reward was that she would let me watch her pee plus give me her dog-eared copy of *Asterix*. That night, I lay in bed wondering how long the poison would take before reaching my brain, whether it would be sudden like rattlesnake venom or little-by-little like the cells that ate my mother. During the nights, I laid in the dark muttering prayers and waiting for the angels or the mermaids to come and fetch me away to travel down a long tunnel of light. During the days, I drank every glass of lemonade as though it might be my last and paid special attention to the taste of blackberries warmed by the sun.

Years and years later, wandering through the streets the morning before picking-up my negative medical test results, I remember thinking how wonderful it seemed that all these people should just be busily getting on with their lives -- drinking coffee at outdoor tables, planning future vacations, eating plums, balancing babies on their hips, etc.

I remember thinking, "I don't want to leave this behind. Not any of it." Every ordinary action, like changing a light bulb and scooping dog poop into a plastic bag, seemed filled with significance. I felt empowered by a feeling of vibrant charge.

I've spent a long time trying to get that feeling back.



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](mailto:voice@ausu.org), attn: Debbie Jabbour



### ACADEMIC JOURNAL HOLDS JOKE CONTEST

Debbie Jabbour

In an effort to increase readership and popularize the discipline of philosophy in schools, the Canadian Philosophical Association (CPA) held a joke contest for its newsletter, *The Bulletin* -- a journal published for and by the nation's "weightiest thinkers" (Boswell, 2005). In response to complaints that nobody was reading *The Bulletin*, the CPA formed an Official Joke Committee (OJC) to review entries. The OJC consisted of 8 members from universities across Canada, with a mandate to "assess the submitted jokes according to a procedure that will be arbitrarily chosen by the committee, possibly with the help of international experts." Out of the eighteen submissions received, four winners

were chosen. One of the winners was called, "Kant Joke":

Student: "I find Kant incredibly difficult. Can you help me?"

Professor: "Yes, of course. The first thing to remember is that Kant is not difficult in himself, but is only phenomenally difficult."

Another runner-up was a joint entry from Toronto's York University, entitled, "How Philosophers Do It." The joke is quite lengthy, including about 50 items like, "Cartesians do it methodically," "Marxists struggle," "Heracliteans can't do it twice," with the punchline, "Solipsists do it by themselves. In fact they do it of themselves, and for themselves as well: they are the only democrats in the world"

The *Bulletin* is entitled "perspicuity," meaning clearness and lucidity.

Boswell, R. (2005). How many philosophers does it take to screw up a punchline? Academic journal strives to boost sagging circulation with joke contest. *Edmonton Journal*, June 15, 2005. Canada.com News:

<http://www.canada.com/edmonton/edmontonjournal/news/story.html?id=03070c91-a4b5-4174-a1ab-9a091d58a66f>

Canadian Philosophical Association: <http://www.acpcpa.ca/>

#### More Philosopher jokes

<http://www.as.miami.edu/phi/jokes.htm> - <http://www.joblatino.com/jokes/philosop.html>

<http://philo.zm3.net/fun/Jokes.html> - <http://consc.net/phil-humor.html>

## Women You Should Know

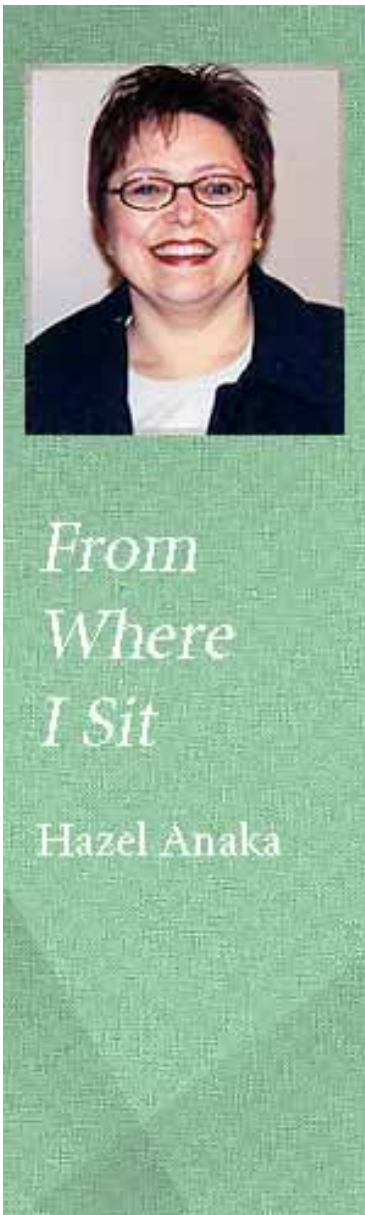
Olive Ann Beech (1903-1993)

**Olive Ann Beech** is recognized as the *First Lady of Aviation*. In 1932, Olive and her husband Walter co-founded Beech Aircraft Corporation. At its inception, Beech Aircraft created the Stagger-wing Biplane, which included characteristics that were considered unattainable at that time. The biplane had the interior of a luxury automobile and maintained a speed of 200 miles per hour. The biplane was capable of a landing speed of no higher than 60 miles per hour and a non-stop range of 1,000 miles. Beech Aircraft was to eventually grow from a mere 10 employees to 10,000. After Walters's death in 1950, Olive took over the leadership of the company as its president and chairman of the board. Her deliberate and planned approach earned her a reputation as a genius of the business world. She held the leadership position for 20 years, during which time the company's sales tripled. Beech Aircraft supplied products for NASA's Gemini, Apollo and space shuttle programs. Following her retirement, Olive held a position on the board of directors until her death in 1993.

#### Source for additional information

Wichita State University Libraries, Department of Special Collections (n.d.). Olive Ann and Walter H. Beech: Partners in Aviation. Retrieved May 30, 2005, from <http://specialcollections.wichita.edu/exhibits/beech/exhibita.html>.

Compiled by Barbara Godin



## Clean Slate

Beginning on New Year's eve afternoon and continuing on to the next day, Roy and I finally tackled the laminate flooring job that's been hanging over us for months. No champagne, no dance, no party, no midnight kiss (we've both been under the weather for some time and really didn't need to swap bacteria).

In honour of the facelift, we opted to replace the awful reddy-orange stained mahogany baseboards and casings *circa* 1962 with pre-primed wider profile pine ones. It was during the somewhat mindless, yet meditative, painting of these wood pieces that I began thinking about the new year.

I wasn't thinking resolutions. Heaven forbid! I'm too old and pragmatic to believe that those arbitrary, date-specific, and life-altering decisions are anything but doomed to failure for most people. Don't get me wrong, people can and do make concrete changes to improve their life and health. But the time has to be right, the motivation and support in place, and the reward well in sight.

What I was thinking was that I'd just be content to start 2005 with a clean slate. No baggage or unfinished business from the past.

What better way to begin a new year than to apologize, here and now, to anyone I may have hurt? I truly try never to deliberately hurt anyone, yet unconsciously and inadvertently, I probably have. It may even be a crime of omission rather than commission. I know I haven't spent as much time as I should have calling, writing to or visiting those I care about. So if I've seemed busy, pre-occupied, in a hurry or absent altogether, forgive me. I've taken concrete steps to give me more disposable time very soon. Though I'll always be busy and engrossed in countless projects, expect to see and hear more of me.

Author Julia Cameron and others write about this very thing. The need for writers, artists and others in creative pursuits to pull away, focus, and sequester themselves in order to do their work. We walk a fine line trying to balance our need for human contact and interaction with the need for quiet contemplation and execution of our ideas.

I wish I could say that I had something miraculous to unveil. Unfortunately I've gotten bogged down just plain working too much at my day job. That's about to change. I will begin, yet again, to try to order my life in such a way that I fulfill what I believe to be my life's purpose and yet not lose myself in the process. I *need* to reclaim the time and energy to read, paint, write, and complete more Athabasca University courses. I *want* time to go for lunch with friends, blow a day in Edmonton, start and finish projects, rejoin groups where my membership has lapsed, take a nap or escape with Roy.

But first things first -- first the clean slate. That's a good way to begin a new year from where I sit.

*\*Reprinted with permission*



# Searching for Internships

**Lonita Fraser**

## The Hansard Scholars Programme London, England

[http://www.hansardsociety.org.uk/programmes/study\\_programme](http://www.hansardsociety.org.uk/programmes/study_programme)

Autumn: Sep - Dec

Internships in the British political system with placements with an MP in the House of Commons, a Peer in the House of Lords, a parliamentary clerk, or other political organisations that could involve work with think tanks, human rights groups, campaign groups, lobbyists, law firms, research organisations, or policy makers. Three days a week are spent in the internship placement, and take two lecture courses designed to provide background knowledge for the internship experience. You will also work on a research project of your choice. The programme includes guest lecturers concentrating on topics of importance to UK politics.

Fees include registration and tuition at the London School of Economics, entitling you to membership at the British Library of Political Science, an LSE email account, use of the LSE IT facilities, Student Union membership, and access to all student facilities, as well as other facilities offered by other colleges of the University of London.

Each semester also includes a number of cultural events and excursions including theatre trips and political study visits to Oxford and Edinburgh. The four-day Edinburgh visit includes a tour of the Scottish Parliament and lectures on Scottish law and politics from a number of high profile speakers. Scholars will have the opportunity to debate current issues surrounding Europe and international politics.

A total of 15 credits are awarded on successful completion of the Programme.

### Qualifications

- The Hansard Scholars Programme is open to both undergraduates and graduates. A minimum GPA of 3.0 is required.
- Previous experience in British politics is not necessary.
- Candidates should display genuine interest in politics, enthusiasm, and the necessary integrity to work at all levels of Government and Parliament, as well as other British political organisations.

Cost in US\$ - \$10,000 - \$12,000

### Cost Includes

The Programme fees are 6,350 (British pounds sterling) and include: all tuition at the LSE and registration, accommodation, a London travelcard (for unlimited travel in central London), political study visits to Edinburgh and Oxford and cultural trips.

### Application Process:

- Letters of Reference
- Resume
- Transcript
- Written Application

### Post Services Include:

- Alumni Network

## SCHOLARSHIPS & AWARDS

*Contributed by Zil-E-Huma Lodhi*

### Canadian Marketing Association (CMA) Student RSVP Awards

Value: \$500, CMA membership, Strategy Magazine profile and subscription

Application Deadline: Varies

Applicant must be attending any Canadian college or university in business, marketing, commerce, advertising or design.

Applicant must not be currently employed in a marketing-related position. Must submit marketing or creative campaign based on selected case study.

Applicant must be coached by professor / instructor.

Deadlines are June 9, June 30 and July 21

Entrance fees vary depending on time submission

For further information please visit the website posted below

Contact: Canadian Marketing Association (CMA)

Web Site: [www.the-cma.org/awards/welcome.html](http://www.the-cma.org/awards/welcome.html)

### Michael Luchkovich Scholarships for Career Development

Administrator: Alberta Scholarship Programs

Award Amount: \$2,000.00

Must have been working full-time in Alberta for a minimum of three years. Program of study may be up to six months of full-time study or up to one year of part-time study.

Deadlines are December 1st, April 1st and August 1st.

Contact: Alberta Scholarship Program

9940 - 106 Street, 9th Floor, P.O. Box 28000, Station Main, Edmonton, Alberta T5J 4R4

Phone: (780) 427-8640

Fax: (780) 422-4516

Web Site: <http://www.alberta-learning.ab.ca/scholarships>

E-mail: [heritage@gov.ab.ca](mailto:heritage@gov.ab.ca)

Application Address: <http://www.alis.gov.ab.ca/scholarships/forms.asp>





**The 2005 Society for Arts In Healthcare  
Conference - No Borders: pARTners in HEALTHcare**

June 22, 2005 - June 25, 2005  
Edmonton, Alberta  
<http://www.thesah.org/annual>

**Universal Village: Livable Communities in the 21st  
Century**

June 15, 2005 - Washington, DC, USA  
<http://www.aarp.org/livable>

**2005 Hawaii International Conference on Sciences**

June 18, 2005 - June 20, 2005 - Honolulu  
<http://www.hicsciences.org>

**Cultures of eBay**

August 24, 2005 - August 25, 2005 - Colchester,  
England  
<http://www.essex.ac.uk/chimera/culturesofebay.html>

**Canadian Science Writers' Assoc. 34th Annual  
Conference**

18 to 21 June 2005 - Jasper, Alberta, Canada  
<http://www.sciencewriters.ca/>

**Murder In The Grove**

10 to 11 June 2005 - Boise, Idaho, United States  
<http://www.murderinthegrove.com>

**5th Annual Country Schoolhouse Conference**

20 to 22 June 2005 - Barbourville, Kentucky, United  
States  
<http://public.unionky.edu/countryschoolconference>

**Sexual Rights and Moral Panics**

21 to 24 June 2005 - San Francisco, California, United  
States  
<http://iasscs.sfsu.edu>

**Society for Historians of American Foreign  
Relations Conference**

22 June 2005 - College Park, Maryland, United States  
<http://www.shafr.org/cfp.htm>

**10th International D.H. Lawrence Conference**

26 June 2005 - Santa Fe, New Mexico, United States  
<http://www.wsu.edu/~hydev/dhl/dhlsna.htm>

**2005 Government & Health Technologies Forum**

August 30-31, 2005 - Ottawa, ON  
<http://gov.wowgao.com>

**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/>.

**Know of a conference that is not on this list? Contact [voice@ausu.org](mailto: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](mailto: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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## THE VOICE ONLINE: [WWW.AUSU.ORG/VOICE](http://WWW.AUSU.ORG/VOICE)

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