

THE VOICE MAGAZINE

October 14, 2005
Volume 13 Issue 40



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Funny money?

Plus:

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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

1200 10011 109th Street,
Edmonton, AB T5J 3S8
800.788.9041 ext. 2905

Publisher AU Students' Union
Editor In Chief Tamra Ross Low
Copy editor Jo-An Christiansen
News Contributor Lonita Fraser

Regular Contributors:
Debbie Jabbour, Karl Low, Katie Patrick, Hazel Anaka, Bill Pollett, Janice Behrens, Barbara Godin, Wanda Waterman
St. Louis, Zil-E-Huma Lodhi

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VOICE@AUSU.ORG

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Life in Germany: Part 1

The life of an AU Student, abroad...

John Buhler

Not long ago, the prospect of living in Europe for any extended length of time would have been out of the question for me. I worked full-time with the same company for the last 20 years, and settled into a more-or-less routine life. In April, this all changed when my wife learned that the German Academic Exchange Service (Deutsche Akademische Austausch Dienst - or DAAD) would provide her with five months of funding so that she could undertake doctoral research in Germany.

Angeles was going to Hamburg and Berlin and wanted me to go with her. Of course I wanted to go, but could I afford to? What exactly would I do with my time if I were to spend half a year there? After all, living somewhere for six months is not the same as being on a vacation. Furthermore, would my employer grant me a leave of absence? And as something of an afterthought, I wondered if it would be difficult to get a visitor's visa for my extended stay in Germany.

Some of my concerns were taken care of with relative ease. As I had already started taking a German class through the University of Alberta's Faculty of Extension, I decided that living in Germany would be a great opportunity to learn the language and immerse myself in the culture. Getting the time off from work, as it turned out, was the least of my problems.

German bureaucracy was another issue entirely. Fortunately for Angeles, her status with the DAAD meant that she should not have any problem getting a study visa. My case, of course, was different. I wasn't going there to study. I wasn't going there for reasons related to employment. As a Canadian, I had the option of remaining in Germany for up to three months without a visa, but I would need a visitor's visa for my extended stay. From the German Consulate in Vancouver, I learned that I could apply for a visa, but it would be good for only three months, which is the same period of time that I could stay in Germany without a visa! Instead, the consulate recommended that I apply for a visa *after* arriving in Germany, and told me to take documentation including a police criminal check, a bank statement to show that I had money to support myself, proof of medical insurance, and a letter from my doctor stating that I had no infectious diseases. I dutifully collected all of the required papers and prepared for life in Germany.

Our journey took us from Edmonton, through Chicago and Stockholm, and finally to Hamburg. At Hamburg Airport, we hired one of the typical cream-coloured Mercedes-Benz taxis. Our driver, a man named Said (*Say-eed*), discussed Germany's upcoming federal election as he drove. Meanwhile, Daniel Powter's "Bad Day" played over the radio. Here we were in Germany listening to a Canadian singer on Hamburg's "Energy 97: Hit music only!"

As Said drove, I wondered about our accommodations in Hamburg. The last time Angeles and I stayed in Germany, we had a small room over two bars in a Cologne hostel. At least one of the bars were blasting music all night long. We also had to share a bathroom, kitchen and laundry facilities that were in another house situated a twenty-minute walk away. Our home in Hamburg would be different, however. Said brought us to a student residence on a well-treed street. Hedges, chestnut, oak, and maple trees surrounded the red brick building. We soon learned that we had the good fortune to be located in "a very good neighbourhood."

The manager of our building showed us to our apartment. We would have our own bathroom and kitchen. Wow! Laundry facilities were just down the hall, and nearby was a common room with a television. Our new place was, based on our earlier experiences, heaven! Angeles and I were both jet lagged from our long journey. Angeles napped, but I thought that I should get a few groceries before the stores closed for the day, and discovered a Penny Market store not far away.

Among my purchases was a brand of German toilet paper that just happened to have an English name, "Happy End." It just seemed appropriate after our safe arrival in Hamburg.



Having been born after my parents had immigrated to Canada, I have had limited contact with the elderly and I plainly admit that the rare contact that I did have was never pleasant. The few occasions in which my parents persuaded me to volunteer with seniors were not what I would call "pleasurable" as they always consisted of elderly people complaining about being old. Quite frankly, I can't even say I enjoyed watching them remove their dentures to clean them, among other habits. The result was that as a young child, I was horrified at the prospect of "old age" and "aging".

I am not alone in experiencing such horror. One of the illuminating moments in Siddhartha Gautama's life (before he became the Buddha) was that he witnessed old age for the first time and was disturbed. His observation was that the coming of old age destroyed the prime of one's life and all the beauty, strength, and energy associated with youthfulness. And what was worse was that this "problem" would catch up to anyone who did not die prematurely.

The horror of witnessing poverty, sickness, old age, and death for the first time ultimately led to the establishment of the Four Noble Truths.

For those unfamiliar with Buddhist teaching, the first Noble Truth states that all that is associated with the individual is suffering. The second Noble Truth states that all suffering is caused by human desire, especially in wanting impermanent things to be permanent. Wishing to avoid old age, then, is high on the list of causes of human suffering.

Now, this conclusion may seem out of place considering that many oriental religious traditions insist on the reverence and even celebration of old age. The old are valued for their experience and appreciated for lives well lived. In fact, such high status is given to the elderly in all parts of the world except for modern-day North America: North Americans have developed the unfortunate tendency to set aside the elderly once they lose their autonomy and productivity. This is not to say that this is common practice or that it is exclusive to North America. All the same, it is undeniable that in North America, the elderly are generally viewed as burdens a society that puts great emphasis on fast-paced, efficient, and "beautiful" living.

This is where my enlightening experience comes in. Last summer I spent two months with the elderly in Europe, and I learned that old age is not limited to negatives--in fact, it has numerous, highly positive qualities. My grandparents, though old, are still full of life. One of my most vivid memories of my grandparents is their lively sense of humour. On the day of their 55th wedding anniversary, my grandpa was the first to get dressed up and get ready to go to mass, and my grandma enthusiastically complimented him by saying that he looked so good that all the 50 year olds would be checking him out. Who says that the fun ends when you get old?

My grandpa, who is deaf and has severe restrictions to his locomotion, rarely leaves home; yet anyone who has the fortune of communicating with him realizes that he has an unparalleled sense of humour. And, perhaps more importantly, he is full of valuable wisdom that comes from experience--he had fought in World War II, been married and had six kids, traveled the world, and now has great grandchildren. Few of my friends have that sort of experience and have as many good stories to tell as my grandpa does.

In contrast, my grandma, about nine years younger than my grandpa, seems to be only 50 because of her energy level. When my grandma is not at home working in her garden or taking care of her great grandchildren, she is off to various meetings and visits and is quite literally always doing something. Certainly, she has her medical problems that come with old age, and she even has those dentures I dreaded, but I learned that what is more important is that she takes all the downsides of aging in stride and often jokes about them.

I went out for coffee once with my grandma and her "Siberaczki" (friends of hers that were likewise shipped off to Siberia during WWII) and they were all talking about the latest hip broken or what part of their husband's intestinal system failed the week before--but it was all taken in such light tone that it was as if I was with my friends chatting about the latest movie or what our boyfriend/husband did the week before.

This is what got me thinking. I came to the conclusion that yes, Buddha is right that old age slows down a lot of processes, making our lives a bit more painful and slower paced. But at the same time, it's the quality of life lived that determines how both young and old perceive old age. If I was stowed away in a home away from the people and things I love, I don't think I would be happy either, so I can't blame the seniors I visit these days for being bitter. Fortunately, the very structure of certain societies allow for graceful aging; societies in which seniors are encouraged to live autonomously and actively instead of being set aside and forgotten. The benefit of happy seniors is twofold and in many ways invaluable--we no longer need to fear aging, and the elderly can contribute back to society.

Buddha also taught that old age does not have to be the last tragic step before death, and death does not have to be frightening. Whichever tradition you follow, whether it be Buddhist, Christian, Jewish, or whatever, remember that these are the people--the elderly--who gave us the lives that we have today. Next time you have some time to spare on a weekend, I encourage you, visit a senior's home. You never know, you might learn something new. And you might make a friend.

LOONEYTOONS PART TWO

b.e. hydromako



... continued from last week.

Before we get back into the matter at hand, it might be worthy of reviewing where we were in Part One of this article (1).

We touched upon the idea that while money is not evil in-and-of itself, it can cause people to act in immoral ways. Certainly, there has been much humanitarian effort backed by large amounts of money over the years, and so we recognize that money can also be a good force, but we understand that--for whatever reasons--money does seem to motivate many sorts of crime.

Then we took a crack at a couple of sentiments often expressed in our Western society, which, while we hold in some way or an Other to be true, we demonstrated that both are certainly false. Put differently, we learned that we hold false beliefs about the relationship between money and our experience. Now, it seems to me that it is reasonable to assume that holding false beliefs about something--even if we know they are false beliefs--can often cause us to act in strange and irrational ways. To add fuel to this particular fire, we also touched upon the idea that the more intangible something is, something like time--or perhaps even

money--the more likely it is that we will attribute false beliefs to our experiences with it.

However, we wanted to get honest about language as it reflects money--this was the main drive--and, although we talked about space and time in Part One, the purpose was to show how some of our language regarding money, when evaluated literally, seems to turn out false. So, let's get back to language, and in doing so, answer the nagging question of why this article bears the title "Looneytoons."

Let's take four examples of what money is called in its respective country of origin and show something interesting about its naming. This might relate to the people of the country, and One might have to accept small generalizations over a country's people for the purposes of good humour only. If we can agree to that, then let's sally forth.

In France, money is called "francs." Sometimes some of the rest of the world looks on the French as rude or impolite or smug. Well, perhaps it's only that they are "frank", or "direct", in many ways that Other, perhaps more uptight cultures, are not. I mean, they must stay pretty loose with all that *vin* in their diets.

I feel your groans, so on to the UK.

Now the Brits refer to their currency as "pounds", and if we take a moment to reflect on the UK, then we see how this an appropriate name for money.

Britain has a political party called *Labour*, and, like the name implies, this party has come out of that very sort of action: people *labouring*. The thing about labouring is that most of us have had to "*pound* the pavement" to find a job. Moreover, there are often ample opportunities to get a job in some sort of *manual labour* position, whereby, for instance, we might come home feeling "pounded" from a day at the factory, a day shoveling asphalt, or perhaps a day spent cold-calling people who'd rather not be bothered in their own homes by salespeople. In short, "pounds" does seem to honestly fit with the labour often required to earn money.

I'll be making up this etymology, but I reckon it would not be too far off to say that "buck" as slang for "dollar" comes to us via our neighbours to the South--the good ole U S of A. If I am wrong about this origin, I'll gladly "eat crow" as the point is a general One about an *attitude* found in Western society.

Perhaps we've heard the phrase about "bucking the system," and if there's One thing that many people hold in the Western world, it's the opinion that the more money One has, the more likely it is One can "buck" the system. Indeed, if we look to Martha Stewart as an example, well she's got money, went to jail for committing a crime for the sake of money, and now she has her own version of The Apprentice. I can only speak for myself here, but I feel that if One can come back into the world from jail to be the star of what is reported to be a *popular TV show*, this sends the message that it is perfectly fine to "*buck* the system," and a person with money can obviously and readily do so.

ahem, OJ Simpson

Anyway, let's get to the point of the matter, which answers the riddle of the article's mysterious title, and illustrates why Canada is the most honest about how we name money.

As we have seen, money seems to enable One to do all sorts of crazy things. I have done my best to string a sort of *surreal* logic--but logic nonetheless--together to illustrate that how we name things might relate to how we think about things. Moreover, I have tried to use examples of how money is used to point toward why our world sometimes seems so crazy.

Here in Canada we have slang for our one and two dollar coins: 'loonies' and 'toonies'.

"SAY NO MORE!" (2).

References

1. Originally published in the Voice, v13 i39, available at <http://www.ausu.org/voice/articles/articledisplay.php?ART=4165>
2. Ending where we began, an Other quote from Monty Python, "Nudge Nudge."

FROM MY PERSPECTIVE Malaise and Self-Analysis

Debbie Jabbour



I haven't written for the *Voice* for a number of months now. It's not because I don't want to. Even after several years, it is still one of my most enjoyable activities. It's not because I don't have anything to write about, as I have a stack of reference articles and dozens of ideas. I want to write, but I haven't been able to.

It's not just writing for the *Voice* that is affected. I appear to have been struck by a general malaise. A stack of bills several months old covers my phone desk, mostly unopened. Partly-finished housework projects lurk around every corner. My list of flagged "must-respond" emails gets longer every day. I do everything possible to avoid

jobs that I know I must do. My "to-do" list has become a "didn't do" list. The weeds in my yard are knee-high, now buried under autumn leaves.

Oddly, there are still a couple of areas in which I'm managing to remain quite functional. My grad studies are on track and I've started my first practicum--I'm loving every minute! I've finally completed a couple of undergrad courses that were dragging on in extensions, and applied for my Career Counselling Certificate. The AU Graduate Student Association will soon be official and things are going well in that department. I'm finding time to babysit my new granddaughter and to spend time with my grandson. I'm keeping up with basic housework and even cooking the occasional full meal. But I still must nap daily to get even that much done, although my doctor tells me my health is on the mend.

What is wrong with me? I have a few theories. The most obvious is residual burnout. As regular readers know, I did a number on myself the last few years by overloading school, work, family, university, and volunteer projects. It seems logical that it will take some time to get to maximum health and functionality. Certainly, I can't underestimate the effects of graduate studies. It's hard work, and the workload can be overwhelming. At the end of summer session we had two major assignments to complete (each worth almost 50% of the final mark), and at least one fellow student had a complete meltdown. I came close, but got the work done. One of my professors suggested that all grad students are in the same boat, but I think AU students are different. Coping with a graduate workload while maintaining a job and family is not something most campus grad students do, and the pressure increases when you are middle-aged and facing a host of other mid-life stressors such as health issues, aging parents, grandchildren, finances, etc.

Another possibility is that my personality is working against me. I'm a perfectionist high-achiever. I watched an Oprah show once where she took her camera inside the home of a woman who appeared extremely "put-together" but who in fact was living in a disaster zone, a house so filthy that it had become a maggot-infested animal toilet. Oprah's psychologists said this woman had such high standards that if she couldn't meet them her alternative was to give up and do nothing at all. I won't argue with the psychologists. It seems plausible, but it doesn't quite fit me. My house is messy, but not uninhabitable, and I clean regularly. However, I may avoid certain tasks if I think I can't do them up to my personal high standards.

It is also possible that I've become so accustomed to living in a super-stressed condition that anything less leaves me disoriented. I've always known that I work best under pressure. If I have too much time to complete a project I have difficulty getting it done, yet under a tight deadline I can accomplish multiple tasks simultaneously. Stress activates and energizes me. In trying to reduce my stress and workload perhaps I've sabotaged myself. This is not to say I'm not still stressed. I recently completed a comprehensive stress test that mapped out each of my stress levels on a grid ranging from burnout to optimal performance (Essi Systems, 2005). My score flat-lined across the map below the burnout danger zone--not a good sign!

Disappointment may be another factor in removing motivation. There have been a few projects during the past year where the outcome was less than satisfactory. I've done a great deal of work for the university on behalf of students over the past few years. Although the majority of my colleagues and people I work with

let me know how much they value my contributions, there are still times when I feel undervalued and occasions when I've individuals who I respect deeply treated me with a lack of appreciation and respect, contributing to a sense of disappointment and discouragement, and causing me to become somewhat disillusioned. This is nothing new, and I should not let it bother me. Human nature is such, however, that the negativity of a few, and a single harmful act, can often obscure the positive. It is funny, though, to see how quickly paranoia can creep up and cause me to impugn less-than constructive motives to everyone. Being under stress also distorts one's viewpoint. Knowing this is one thing. Dealing with it is another.

One possibility that really worries me is that this malaise is related to an illness I thought I had beaten years ago--depression. Type "malaise" into a thesaurus and "depression" is the first synonym that comes up. Depression sneaks up on you, and often you don't know you are in trouble until it is too late. It's a battle I thought I had fought and won, even though I know the seriousness of the disease and the potential for relapse. A few weeks ago I had the opportunity to attend a marvellous conference arranged by the Canadian Mental Health Association. A key point that has remained with me is the ongoing need to bring mental illness to light, to stop hiding it, and to stop denying its impact. Even though we have made great strides in this regard, the majority of people still hesitate to admit that they have (or have had) this terrible illness. This is even true among health care professionals (or perhaps even more so). The stigma is huge, though as many as 10% of Canadians experience severe clinical depression at some point in their lives (with 1 in 5 lifetime prevalence of all forms of mental illness) (CMHA Toronto, 2005). Several speakers pointed out the importance of talking about our experiences so that individuals in the throes of depression know that a cure is possible, that depression can be beaten, and that sufferers can go on to live healthy, productive lives. We freely talk about cancer or heart disease, and give our support and understanding to individuals who are suffering these illnesses, yet depression remains a big secret. An individual can take sick leave for cancer treatment and return cured, embraced by the workplace. That same individual, who returns after suffering depression, is looked at with suspicion and fear, monitored closely in case they have a sudden relapse and let everyone down. We need to bring depression (and other mental illness) to light and remove the stigma by being willing to acknowledge our own experiences.

I've been musing about this notion, and I think it applies to other aspects of our personal history. Survivors of trauma, for example, can provide an incredible source of encouragement and strength to others, proof that survival is possible, that humans can get beyond even the most horrible of ordeals. They are a celebration of the resilient human spirit. As counselling students, we are confronted with the issue of what we call "disclosure," whether or not we should share our personal trauma experience with clients, and if so, how and when it is appropriate to do so. Feminist theory supports the importance of open disclosure, and increasingly, I'm finding myself drawn to the idea. I've seen how helpful shared experience can be, and it is one of the core philosophies underlying the effectiveness of group therapy. When we read about successful, greatly admired people who have suffered depression and managed to overcome it to accomplish great things (people like Jim Carrey, Winston Churchill, Bonnie Raitt, Mark Twain, and Thomas Edison) it makes us humble and more human. It makes us stronger, believing that if these people can experience such a terrible illness and still achieve incredible things, anything is possible.

Musing aside, if depression is underlying my malaise, at least I am dealing with a known entity that I've beaten before. The unknown malaise is infinitely more frightening, leading me to fear all kinds of potentially life-threatening ailments. I've been extremely conscious of my physical health since my heart attack scare, and it's easy to fall into hypochondria, perceiving any abnormal symptom as a potential coronary event. Whatever the reason for the malaise, there are a few things I know I can do to try to solve the problem. Self-analysis leading to insight is something I advocate and hope to teach my clients as a psychologist. The importance of self-analysis and the ability to gain personal insight is perhaps one of the most important things I've learned as a graduate student. Acknowledging the various possibilities is a starting point, akin to a physician making a diagnosis before prescribing relief. Perhaps by this writing I've taken the first step, and I can now begin to move forward once again!

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THE VOICE FICTION FEATURE



The Jump

Rebecca Brewer

A girl stands on the shore of a lake.

"I can think of a million reasons not to do it. Last summer, when my little brother Joshua was nine, he pushed me in because I was taking so long. It was annoying him. My mom was reading her book on the beach, and she kept telling me to just jump in before someone pushed me in. What a dumb thing to say. Obviously Joshua thinks it's hilarious and does it. Dad made him say sorry, but secretly I think Dad was glad Josh got me in. He didn't see what the big deal was. But the thing is, it's a cold lake and there's weeds at the bottom that slime against your legs. I was happy playing Frisbee in the shallow water. But stupid Josh got hot and decided to go in.

And it's cold today. We just got back from groceries and mom thinks I'm in the hammock reading Archie's, but I wanted to come down here and see if I couldn't just go in myself. I'm not a baby. I probably should have asked first, but I didn't want anybody here bothering me. Besides I'm a really good swimmer. I raced Lily in her pool yesterday, and I don't want to brag, but I beat her by a full 30 seconds.

The worst part is getting out. Eventually, I'll have to get out, and the wind will come up, and the sun will go behind that cloud at just the wrong time, and I'll freeze.

Fine, I'll just put my toe in and then decide. Five minutes ago, when I was walking down here, I said to myself I would just dive right in, head first, like that old lady this morning. But I knew I'd do this. She walked out of her back door, towel strung around her neck, and marched on down her dock and dove in. She didn't hesitate for a moment. And I know it was cold, because when she surfaced, she let out that little yelp we all make when we first feel the touch of cold water, when it hits your lungs. But it didn't stop her, not her. She left the comfort of her warm bed to get into the freezing cold lake. She just did it. Just jumped, like the no-big-deal that it is.

If I just stand here, the water lapping up against my shins, it's not so bad. I'm glad Josh isn't here to see me still standing here.

I'm taking too long. Mom will check on me or she'll see me standing here and be mad I didn't tell her where I was.

Why am I *standing* here? This is so like me. Just to wait here. Just to stand here and wait, undecided, waiting. So what then? I won't go. I don't have to. I'll go back. Oh, just jump in! Swim! It's just water! I can't stand here my whole life, squeezing sand between my toes, feel the water getting colder, to talk myself out of not goi-



This monthly column features news and issues affecting gays and lesbians in Canada and around the world.

Both houses, the state Senate and the Legislature in California passed a historic bill legalizing same sex marriage... except Governor Schwarzenegger, who veto'd the bill.

- <http://tinyurl.com/dmnkx>
-

The first country in the world to ban same-sex marriage on a "federal" level in their constitution is Uganda. President Yoweri Museveni signed the constitutional amendment into law. It specifies that same-sex marriages are illegal, not just providing a definition for marriage in the country.

- <http://tinyurl.com/bvnwd>
-

Civil Unions became law in Connecticut on midnight, Saturday, October 1. However, not all gay couples are celebrating this legislative first. The state is the first to pass such a law without being required to by the courts. Many believe this to be a second class compromise.

- <http://tinyurl.com/avtog>
-

The Vatican is banning gay priests. On a recommendation approved by the Pope, gay priests, even those who are celibate, are no longer welcome in the Roman Catholic faith. Many who oppose it believe it will cause great harm to the Church.

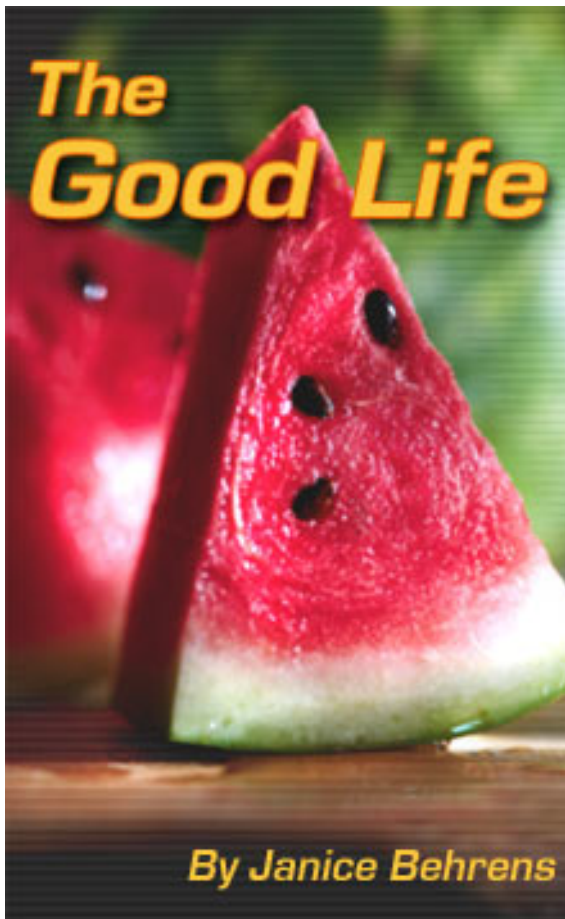
- <http://tinyurl.com/9ja8x>
-

"I am a strong Catholic," Prime Minister Paul Martin told a gathering of reporters. The Vatican is discussing refusing sacraments such as holy communion to those politicians who pass laws that violate church law. The Prime Minister stands by his decision to legalize same-sex marriage.

- <http://tinyurl.com/7vxfp>
-

Quote of the Month

"After 30 years of feeling married in our hearts and living our lives as if we're married, accepting a status that's not marriage is very insulting, there's no greater love than what Carol and I have shared for 30 years."



Autumn Mushroom Hunting

Since I have lived in British Columbia, one of the things that has become synonymous with Fall for me is walking through rain saturated forests in search of wild mushrooms. This annual autumnal ritual is something that my husband introduced me to on a weekend trip to the West Coast of Vancouver Island. After fifteen years have passed, I still remember the taste of those delicate-flavoured chanterelles stirred in with cream sauce and poured over the top of pasta.

As micophiles know full well, the lavish downpours that accompany Fall, especially on the West Coast, bring out an incredible floor-level banquet waiting to be harvested and enjoyed. However, picking and eating wild mushrooms is not something you want to try unless you are absolutely certain you know what to look for. You should know that many of the fungi you come across are absolutely deadly to ingest, and unfortunately they can smell and even taste delicious. You won't know that anything is wrong until the toxins kick in!

As mushroom expert Michael W. Beug explains, one particularly noxious species is *amanita muscaria*. "Because it is abundant, large and beautiful with a pleasant taste," he explains, "many people eat *Amanita muscaria* each year...in error and wind up experiencing intoxication, nausea, muscle spasms, staggering, vomiting and diarrhea usually followed soon by a deep coma-like sleep and recovery within 24 hours" (Beug, 2005).

Fortunately, there is a wealth of information out there, such as well-illustrated pocket book guides and web sites, to help you differentiate the delicious from the deadly. Even so, however, many of the species look very similar to the untrained eye, so it's best not to take any chances. I certainly don't advocate my husband's approach, which involves taking a nibble of any species that he has not seen before, waiting a day or so, and then (assuming there no ill-effects) tossing them liberally into his food. As he points out, so far he's still alive, but it's probably not the soundest technique. The best bet, by far, would be to take along somebody with lots of experience as a guide.

If you don't fancy taking the gamble of picking the mushrooms yourself, there's a selection of the morsels waiting for you at the local produce store. Try picking up a bag or two of morels, porcini, matsutake, Portobello, shiitake, or lobster varieties, any of which work well in omelettes, stir fries, mushroom and potato soup, or a thousand and one other recipes.

Happy (and safe) hunting!

Reference

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AUSU THIS MONTH



"A Learning Alberta"

Recently, the Alberta Government announced a comprehensive review of the Alberta post-secondary education system. Many discussion documents were placed online, and all stakeholders were invited to respond and make suggestions on how the post-secondary system can be improved. The students of the four universities of Alberta have responded through a document drafted by CAUS -- the Council of Alberta University Students --, which represents the students' unions of all four institutions.

Additionally, AUSU has drafted its own response, specifically addressing the needs of the diverse AU student body. You can read our response by downloading the PDF file from the link on the front page of the AUSU web site

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.

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>

AUSU 2005/06
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Alberta Sends Hunters after CWD Infected Deer

Two more cases of wild deer have been found to be infected with Chronic Wasting Disease, or CWD, near the Saskatchewan border (<http://www.gov.ab.ca/acn/200510/18840C10A54A7-951A-46E4-82DEF28FAAF1FC5E.html>). CWD is a type of disease in the same line as BSE or Mad Cow Disease, although the Alberta government is very strongly trying to put out the message that the two are not the same thing (<http://www3.gov.ab.ca/srd/fw/diseases/CWD/index.html>).

In order to deal with the additional cases, the Alberta Government has authorized a larger number of hunting licenses for the area, and is recommending that hunters turn in their kills to the provincial government for examination.

What this means, though, is that the Alberta Government is relying on hunters to kill animals which the World Health Organization recommends they do not eat, and wants them to deliver the heads for examination to the Alberta Fish & Wildlife department. Now so far as I'm aware, hunters typically hunt because they either want the meat, a trophy, or both. Yet the World Health Organization is saying they shouldn't use the meat, and the Alberta Government wants the trophies.

In other words, this program is basically just for those people who like to go into the woods and shoot things. Do we really want to be encouraging that?

Federal Government Legislates Surplus Spending

Until recently, the federal Government was required by legislation to take any unanticipated surpluses and devote them to paying off the national debt. Last week, however, Finance Minister Ralph Goodale introduced legislation that would divide any such surplus into thirds. One third of the surplus would go to providing one-time tax relief, a second third of the surplus could be assigned to government priority programs, and the last third is still to be devoted to taking care of the national debt (<http://news.gc.ca/cfmx/view/en/index.jsp?articleid=173439>).

This is particularly useful for a federal government that it looking toward an election in the early spring. Imagine the goodwill the government can generate for itself by giving all families a significant tax break right as people are filling out their tax forms. In addition, this will enable the federal government to provide extra money to post-secondary education, health care, affordable housing, and foreign aid--in other words, all of the hot-button issues that people have been talking about lately.

Not that I'm complaining about this. After all, a surplus is our money so it really should come back to us, it's just always amusing how it seems to get stuck somewhere between the elections but always manages to be found right around the time that Canadians will be going to the polls.

The more elections I live through, the more obvious this becomes. If only we could have elections every year.

Canadian Teens Trading High Art

Who knew that Canadian teens were so cultured? It seems that some of the pictures that a number of teens have been collecting and trading amongst themselves are now being recognized as modern art.

Which pictures? Why none other than the ones available on cigarette packages. The Museum of Modern Art in New York is preparing an exhibit on things that were made to aid comfort, safety, and relief from

stressful or dangerous situations, and the Canadian warning pictures on cigarette packages are to be included (<http://news.gc.ca/cfmx/view/en/index.jsp?articleid=173479>).

According to the federal Health Minister, Ujjal Dosanjh, these pictures were the world's first pictorial health warnings. So now those pictures of the cancerous lung and damaged heart will be recognized as the bastions of Canadian culture that they truly are.

To be honest, I think our government should have declined this dubious honour. Do we really need to add any sort of prestige or mystique to purchasing cigarettes, especially in a time where provincial governments are lining up to sue the manufacturers over not revealing the dangers that these pictures were designed to reveal?



Wait and See

So I'm twenty-three years old, every inch the tragic romantic, and my Guardian Angel just kicks open my door one night and comes in with a suitcase in each hand. True story. First thing she does, she goes to the fridge and opens a cold beer, then takes out a tub of leftover chicken. She puts her feet up on the coffee table, and fishes the remote out from between the cushions of the hide-a-bed. There's nothing but talk shows and werewolf movies on at this hour. So she mimes putting a finger down her throat and gagging, and flicks off the TV. She checks out my record collection, and tosses all of my Joy Division and mopey singer-songwriter stuff out of an open window. She puts on some Aretha Franklin and Barry White. Standing at my window, I watch record albums falling like huge, multicoloured snowflakes onto the traffic nineteen storeys below.

She shows me Polaroid pictures of her goldfish and a cat named Pamplemousse. We get drunk. She asks me to wash her hair and rub her feet while she's having a bath. Her feet have callouses and smell a bit like cheese.

She finds my stepladder in the closet and puts glow-in-the-dark stars all over my bedroom ceiling. She snaps her fingers and a celestial orchestra begins to play. I had always imagined, I don't know, harps maybe, or trumpets. These guys sound like the house

band at The Cotton Club. She teaches me how to rumba with her hands on my hips, and how to juggle pomegranates, four at a time.

The next morning, she sends me to the store. When I get back, she shows me how to make eggs benedict the way they do on the celestial plane, and those perfect sort of hash browns that are all crispy on the outside but fluffy in the middle. We mop up egg yolk with golden brown toast, and she tells me why my habit of painkillers and vodka is not such a good idea. She tells me that in three months I'll fall in love in a train station in Manitoba, and that my heart will be broken something fourteen more times in the next three years. She tells me about the family that's waiting for me somewhere in the future, in one of those multiple realities that angels and physicists like to talk about.

I tell her I'm not sure that I believe in guardian angels, and that it's only the middle of September, a bit early for that whole Frank Capra thing, and anyways, I don't even believe in God. "It's all about choices," she says, popping open another beer. "And even you should know that angels are only another word for 'just wait-and-see'."



Dear Barb:

Hi, I read your column all of the time. I'm a 24-year-old student in my last year of university. I was involved in a lot of sports in high school and began working-out regularly to keep myself in shape. At that time, I worked-out a couple of times a week. Through the years my work-outs have increased, now I work-out daily usually for one to two hours at a time. If I miss one day of working-out I feel awful, almost physically ill. I'm starting to wonder if I'm working-out too much. My friends keep telling me I'm addicted. I don't think I am. I just really enjoy working-out. Is it possible to work-out too much?

*Thanks Barb
Rita in Comox BC*

Hi Rita. I commend you for your self-discipline. Working-out regularly requires a commitment that most people find difficult to maintain, but you have been able to do so for all of these years.

There are various reasons why people work-out. Some people work-out to lose weight, others to maintain their weight, and some individuals exercise for the health benefits. How often you work-out will depend on what your goals are. Your physician and/or your personal trainer can help you to determine what you ultimately want to achieve from exercising.

Your age, weight and gender are also considerations when determining how much exercise you require. Some research indicates 30 minutes three to four times a week is enough to reap the health benefits of regular exercise. Obviously if you are trying to lose weight you require more frequent and higher intensity work-outs. As well, in order to lose weight you will need to burn more calories than you are taking in.

In answer to your question, is it possible to exercise too much, after doing some research I learned that it is possible to over do it when exercising. You may have a problem when you no longer choose to exercise, but rather feel a compulsion to. Working-out when you are ill or injured, or planning your life around your work-outs, are warning signs that your exercising may be out of control. Your friends may be right in saying that you are "addicted." In addition, often individuals who exercise compulsively may also have an eating disorder such as anorexia nervosa or bulimia.

The following are some behaviours to watch for that may indicate you have a problem in this area.

- Feeling that the need to exercise is more important than attending a significant social or family event.
- Feeling guilty or depressed when you don't work-out.
- Feeling withdrawal symptoms when you are unable to exercise due to circumstances beyond your control.
- Choosing to ignore the concerns of your friends and family in regards to your exercising.

An excellent web site that provides additional information on this topic is Mama's Health.com (www.mamashealth.com/fitness).

Good luck Rita and I hope I have been able to help sort this out for you.

Women You Should Know

Compiled by Barbara Godin

Emily Carr (1871-1945) became known as one of Canada's most recognized artists. Emily was born on December 13, 1871 in Victoria, British Columbia. She was the youngest of five sisters. After the death of her parents, Emily went to study art at the California School of Design in San Francisco.

Emily continued studying art in Paris and London, before returning to Vancouver, British Columbia to teach art to children. Carr found artistic inspiration in the landscapes and villages of her homeland of British Columbia. As well, she was greatly influenced by her meeting with the well-known Group of Seven artists. However, Carr's paintings did not receive national recognition until much later when she was age 57. During the ensuing years her greatest works were created.

At the age of seventy, Emily was hospitalized and advised by her doctor to slow down. At this point, her interests shifted from painting to writing. While hospitalized, Emily wrote *Klee Wyck* for which she received the Governor General's Award in Literature in 1941. Emily Carr died in Victoria BC on March 2, 1945 in her seventy-fourth year.

Source for additional information

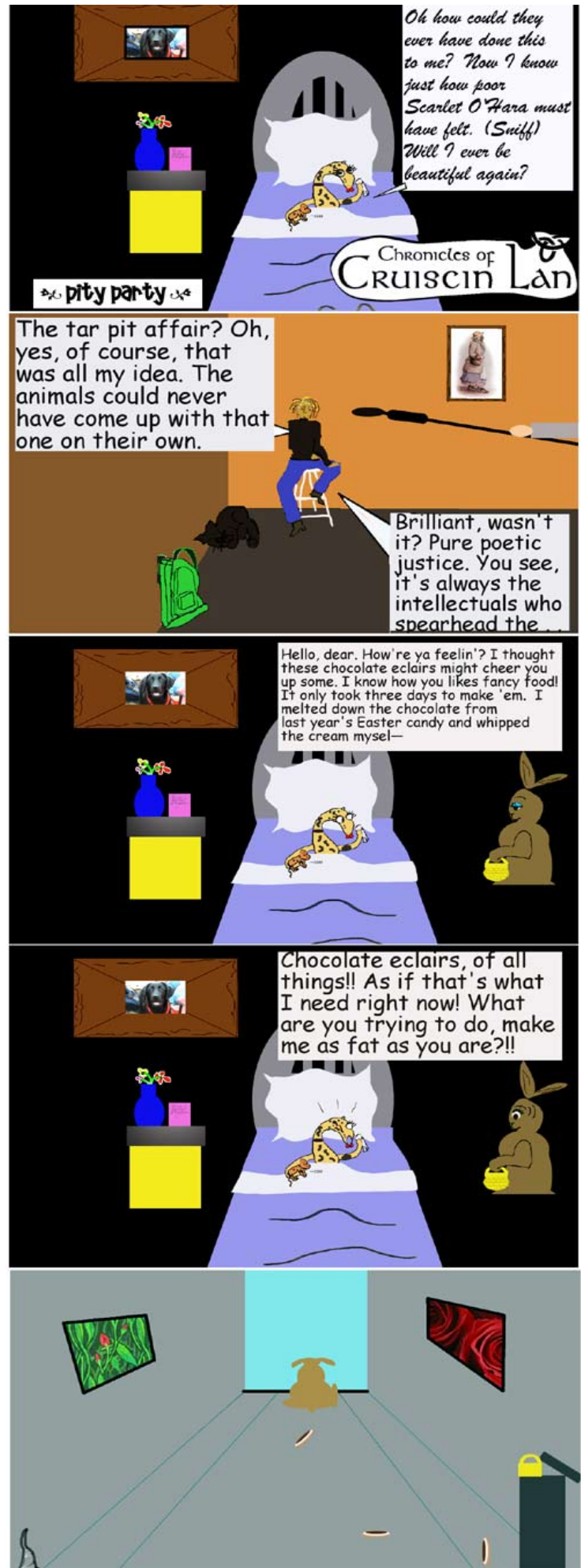
Emily Carr: At Home and At Work -
<http://collections.ic.gc.ca/EmilyCarrHomeWork/index.htm>

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Loose Lips



From Where I Sit

Hazel Anaka

Do you know any cranky, old people? Perhaps intimately? Maybe you're related to one? Or work with one? Maybe, heaven forbid, you are one.

Given the overall aging demographic and proliferation of baby boomers, it's not surprising if you can name some. They are in our churches, our volunteer organizations, and our family get-togethers. They may be running farms or businesses. They may still be making huge contributions to society.

The stereotypical image of a little old lady or grumpy old man is fodder for comedians, cartoonists, actors and authors. You know what I mean. They have a knack for unabashed outspokenness, withering criticism, inexplicable pre-conceived notions, unsolicited advice, and unfortunately, often bigotry and prejudice. Think about Sophia from *Golden Girls* in her cardigan, over-sized glasses, clutching her handbag. Think about all the zingers she hurled at daughter Dorothy, Blanche and Rose. The storyline blamed a stroke on Ma's sharp tongue and lack of judgment.

Turns out there just might be something to it. I always thought the increasing candidness and tell-it-like-it-is is a by-product of aging. With age comes the realization that the days of pussyfooting around the obvious truth are over. Adios to political correctness. They have the understanding that there are fewer days ahead of them than there are behind them. The days of playing games and staying silent are over. I see it as freeing and look forward to the day I can get away with it myself. Though of course, my words would be wise and nurturing not mean and hurtful. Right!

New research out of Australia seems to indicate the area of brain function that governs the appropriateness of personal questions or conversation topics diminishes with age. Researcher von Hippel (University of New South Wales, 2005) tested two groups of people. One group of test subjects was 18 to 25 years old, while the other was 65 to 93. Each group was asked whether they would discuss personal questions with friends in a public place. Questions included talking about hemorrhoids, personal family problems and, worst of all, weight gain.

"The older we get, the less our brain is able to identify times and places where personal questions are out of place," said von Hippel in a CanWest News Service story (Spear, 2005). Young people are also more likely to forgive these sorts of questions than older people, who are quick to take offence.

So, what does it all mean to you and me? Does this awareness that it's a brain function not mean spiritedness make it easier to accept? Does the prospect of the next family gathering still strike fear into your heart? Can you think of strategies to defuse unpleasant situations? Can you explain this to your children who may be confused and dismayed by the obvious change in behaviour from their elders? Can we all watch for warning signs in our own behaviour? My eyes are opened, from where I sit.

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This column focuses on issues affecting post-secondary students. Readers are encouraged to submit suggestions for topics they are concerned about, or personal experiences with courses or university situations other students should know about. Contact voice@ausu.org, attn: Debbie Jabbour



COLLEGE TEACHERS PAID TO STAY HOME

Debbie Jabbour

During recent weeks, more than 150 college teachers in Quebec have been paid a full salary to stay at home or work part-time. These teachers no longer have work, and refuse to take a job at a different college. The college institutions serve Quebec's sparsely populated regions, and although the Quebec Education Department, predicting a decline in students, advocates the need for mobility of personnel; because of their collective agreement, teachers do not have to work at a college more than 50 kilometres away from where they live.

This has been a topic of dissention in recent education sector negotiations, with teachers rejecting the government's offer, which would have obligated them to work at any location within their school board. Teachers staying home earn an average of \$57,489 yearly for a full-time job, with the cost to taxpayers reaching \$3 million a year.

Teacher's unions, on the other hand, appear to see the debate as part of a bigger issue, in which they accuse the Charest government of trying to "disintegrate college education" (CanWest, 2005) by refusing to meet just demands of teachers.

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Tuition Idea Makes Sense

Hancock proposal met with optimism by students

Edmonton, AB, Council of Alberta University Students - Advanced Education Minister Dave Hancock is floating the idea of having the government pay for students' tuition in their first two years of university or college. Alberta's students, who currently pay the second highest tuition in the country, have been looking to the government's review of the post-secondary system to come up with a better system of making the system more affordable. "It is the best idea I have heard from the review," says Jen Smith, CAUS Chair. "Our current system is unaffordable and many Albertans are having enormous trouble dealing with the costs. The key change needed is to make the system more affordable while ensuring universities will have the resources to do their job."

Alberta Advanced Education's annual report released just last week highlighted these areas of concern, noting Alberta's low rate of participation per capita in our post-secondary system and the dramatic drop in Albertans who find the system affordable. Three years ago 75% of people polled found the system within the means of most Albertans, a number that has plummeted to 46% last year. Minister Hancock also suggested he is looking at deregulating tuition, an idea students said will not work. "Deregulating tuition could make the sky the limit to tuition in Alberta - we could see fees over \$10,000 like in the United States, said Smith. "Albertans do not want another 298% hike over 10 years."

The Council of Alberta University Students (CAUS) represents the interests of over 90,000 Alberta university students across Alberta.



Searching for Internships

Lonita Fraser

INTERNSHIP

Professional Internships in Vancouver and Toronto Canada

Term: Throughout the year

Length of Position: 12-24 weeks

Experience Required: no

Participants Travel to Canada Independently

Typically Participants Work Independently

Typically The Application Process Time Is 6 weeks

The InterNeX internship exchange is a program managed by WAYNE communications that arranges tailored internship placements for international candidates in accordance with the requirements of partner educational institutions in Canada and abroad. WAYNE communications combines 25 years of Human Resources and educational consulting and has placed over 200 candidates into over 100 positions in Canada over the last 6 years.

Who is this program for

- University students requiring a practicum for graduation
- Professionals seeking to upgrade their marketable skills
- Executives looking for a North American experience
- High School graduates looking for practical experience

Highlights

- Highly specialized placements dependent upon language ability, industry sector, candidate expectations, educational and professional background.
- Placements in all sectors and for all majors
- Most placements accredited with universities and professional associations
- Guaranteed placement in industry sector
- Program includes preparatory orientation program in city of placement of a minimum of 4 weeks
- Package includes accommodation, full-board, tuition, full support and placement guarantee

Qualifications / Requirements

See internship website, listed below

Application Process Involves

- Letters of Reference
- Other
- Phone Interview
- Resume
- Transcript
- Written Application

Go to the following URL to contact the appropriate party about this internship

<http://www.internabroad.com/sendmail.cfm?clientID=10829&listingID=21964>

This information was gathered from Intern Abroad <http://www.internabroad.com/>

SCHOLARSHIPS & AWARDS

Contributed by Zil-E-Huma Lodhi

AU AWARDS DEADLINES EXTENDED

The deadlines on two AU offered awards, the **Alberta Women's Science Network Undergraduate Scholarship in Science and Computing Science** and the **Harold Cardinal Prize** have been extended until December 1st.

Also extended, until October 15th (hurry!), are the **Frank and Agnes Cardinal Neheiywak Bursary** and the **First Peoples Technology Bursary**. Details of some of these awards are below. See the AU Awards page for more AU awards: <http://www.athabascau.ca/registrar/studawrds.php>

Harold Cardinal Prize

Donor: Athabasca University

Value: First Place: \$3000 Second Place: \$1500 Third Place: \$500

Number: Three

Awarded to current AU undergraduate program or collaborative students in their 1st, 2nd, or 3rd year of study who exhibit a commitment to Indigenous rights, a history of advocacy for Aboriginal people, and contributions to community, law, politics or government as they pertain to Aboriginal people. Applicants must be in good academic standing. Students are only eligible to receive this award once. Recipients must be of Aboriginal descent as defined by their Indigenous nation of origin. While proof of ancestry is not required, proof of community acceptance and participation should be addressed in the application. Apply by submitting a letter of application and an essay (2500-3000 words) on the topic The Preservation of Aboriginal and Treaty Rights to the Office Of The Registrar. (Original works and essays formally submitted for coursework are considered eligible for submission.) The annual deadline is October 15.

First Peoples Technology Bursary

Donor: Athabasca University

Value: Up to \$1250

Number: Eight

Awarded to current AU undergraduate program or collaboration program students in their 1st, 2nd, or 3rd year of study who are in good academic standing, who have demonstrated a financial need, and who possess identified technological obstacles to continuing academic study at Athabasca University. Recipients must be of Aboriginal descent as defined by their Indigenous nation of origin. While proof of ancestry is not required, proof of community acceptance and participation should be addressed in the application. Apply by submitting an up-to-date resume and letter of application outlining your qualifications to the Office of the Registrar. There is no application deadline for this bursary. Funding will be disbursed as required.

Frank and Agnes Cardinal Neheiywak Bursary

Donor: Athabasca University, and friends of Frank and Agnes Cardinal

Value: \$500 Number: One

Awarded annually to self-identifying Indigenous students enrolled in at least one AU course who are faced with circumstances which necessitate a financial expenditure without which, completion of their studies is impossible. Apply in writing by submitting a letter outlining their economic crisis. There is no application deadline for this award. Students may apply year round - when they meet the economic crisis criteria. Letters of application should be sent to: The Indigenous Education Awards Committee, c/o the Centre for World Indigenous Knowledge and Research, #1200, 10011 - 109 Street, Edmonton, AB T5J 3S8, Email: indigenous@athabascau.ca



DEVELOPING SUCCESS FOR YOUTH

October 19 - 21, 2005

Springfield, MO, USA

<http://www.drury.edu/dsy>

The thematic conference strands will address the development of the whole child through educational reforms; policy development; collaborative cultures; multi-dimensional educational practices; strategic, visionary planning; innovative curricula and learning experiences; and the interconnectedness of the mind, body, and soul.

TEACHING KIDS NOT CURRICULUM

October 21, 2005 - Winnipeg, Manitoba

http://ca.geocities.com/mastars_mtssag

This conference will focus on such topic areas as:

Solving the Puzzle of Boys' Under-achievement: academic achievement of boys, discuss some of its potential causes, and explore characteristics of programs that are demonstrating success at helping our boys achieve in school.

Kids Without Choices: This presentation will focus on those students who experience school failure through no fault of their own. Common undiagnosed psychological disorders such as Mood Disorder, Oppositional Defiant Disorder(ODD) and Conduct Disorder, as well as childhood anxiety will be summarized.

Meanness in the Digital Age: In this presentation, Jane Tallim will address the challenge of how we can make young people feel accountable online and how we can help them consider the implications of their online behaviour.

GIRLS 2005! CHANGING THE CULTURE FOR GIRLS

October 27 - 28, 2005 - Tampa, Florida, USA

<http://www.opheliaproject.org/>

This conference is for adults who want to create lasting community change while developing the full potential of all girls; to explore cutting-edge research in girls' issues and best practices in girls' programming for families, organizations, schools, and communities.

WIPCE 2005

Nov 27-Dec 1, 2005 - Hamilton, New Zealand

<http://www.wipce2005.com/>

Te Wananga o Aotearoa is dedicated to promoting inspirational ideas and practices from Indigenous communities that can be applied on an international scale. It is pleased to host this world renowned gathering of indigenous educators, researchers and students. The 2005 conference is an opportunity for honou[red]ing this session on indigenous issues at the current creates an occasion for bringing interesting and innovative ideas that evoke inspiration and pride as indigenous peoples.

SECOND INTERNATIONAL VERNACULAR COLLOQUIUM

October 26 - 29, 2005 - Puebla, Mexico

<http://www.ipsonet.org/vernacular/2005>

A conference intended to explore the distinction between formalized reasoning and vernacular reasoning. Topics include areas such as Anthropology, sociology, archaeology, gender, tourism and travel, culture wars, photography, psychology, North American Indigenous Populations, ethno-botany, medicinal practices, ecology, Chicano and Chicana issues, Mexican History, art and architecture, the drug problem, linguistics, folklore, poetry and literature readings, music and performance, dance, film and television, food, computers, education, urban issues.

Contributed By AU's *The Insider*

- 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 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.

THE VOICE

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Regular Columnists: Janice Behrens, Wanda Waterman St. Louis, Debbie Jabbour, Karl Low,
Katie Patrick, Hazel Anaka, Bill Pollett, Barbara Godin

Contributors to listings columns: Zil-E-Huma Lodhi, Lonita Fraser

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