

THE VOICE MAGAZINE

December 9, 2005
Volume 13 Issue 48



100 years young!

The key to longevity

*The world's most prolific people
How much more could you be doing?*

*People Puzzles: Confidence
What is it, really?*

*Plus:
Lost & Found
International Newsdesk
Canadian FedWatch!
Dear Barb
The Good Life
Turning the Pages
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Chronicles of Cruiscin Lan*

and much more...

The Third Annual Voice Writing Contest - Details Inside



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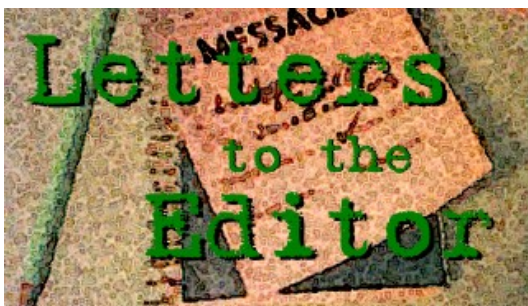
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We love to hear from you! Send your questions and comments to voice@ausu.org, and please indicate if we may publish your letter.

RE: *From Where I Sit - Utter Bloody Rudeness, December 2, v13 i 46*

Hi, this is just a quick appreciative comment re: Hazel Anaka's article. I always feel optimistic when I hear that others feel the same way I do about the seemingly epidemic lapse in social graces out there today. I think it's good to remember, though, that each of us has probably been guilty of rudeness from time to time without being aware of it - we can all get distracted and inwardly-focussed from time to time. I agree that it doesn't help to confront people directly over their rudeness, for a number of reasons: it doesn't help, it may get you a punch in the nose, and you may even have committed the same breach of etiquette earlier that day. Also, it's good to remember that the man who cut you off in traffic or didn't acknowledge the fact that you held the door open for him may have just found out he has a week to live. All in all, probably best to follow the dictum of being the change that you want to see in the world, and let karma do the rest. Cheers.

Bill Pollett

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FROM MY PERSPECTIVE

100 years young

Debbie Jabbour



100 is not a very large number if you are talking about money. It's not a large number if you are talking about size or weight or some other measurement. If you are talking about time, however, 100 can be an amazingly large number, particularly if you are using it in the context of 100 years. This past year Canada has celebrated 138 years of confederation, and two provinces, Alberta and Saskatchewan, celebrated a 100 year anniversary. When we read about things that happened 100 years ago, it is difficult to get a sense of reality, though. It seems so long ago--especially if we've only lived a fraction of that time, or even

if, like me, we've approached the mid-way mark.

This past year I've had the wonderful privilege to experience 100 years in a very special way. My grandfather has celebrated his 100th birthday! He is in excellent health, and seems like he could easily live another 100 years. But it's really difficult to comprehend what exactly it means to live that long.

When I asked him, at his birthday celebration, just how it felt to turn 100, he said, "the same as it did when I turned 80...and 60...and 40..." by then I was chiming in, because I knew exactly what he meant. It really doesn't change much. You feel the same inside. It's only the outside that shows the change.

As befitting this very special occasion, my grandfather had two birthday celebrations. The first was sponsored by the senior's residence where my grandfather lives, in conjunction with the Alberta government's centennial celebration. The local MLA was in attendance, as were virtually all the staff at the home, and almost all the building residents. Family members were few, however, just including my father, aunt and uncle, and my daughters and I. This was partly because the celebration was held during a weekday when others were at work, but also because my father's family is notoriously bad at communicating, and many of the family didn't even know the first celebration had occurred!

The second was geared toward family, and my uncle made a real effort to locate as many of our scattered family members as possible to attend. Sadly, however, there is a certain degree of estrangement, and even at the second celebration many of the family were conspicuous by their absence. I know our family is not alone in this estrangement, but it's sad, nonetheless. This was really brought home to me during the family party. When you live to be 100, you outlive several generations of family. My grandfather's siblings are all gone, as are most of his peers, and several have passed away of his children's generation. His first wife died long ago and even though he remarried (at the youthful age of 80 to his childhood sweetheart), his second wife has also passed. Of those who survive, children and grandchildren tend to scatter as they marry and create new and complex lives of their own. By the time it trickles down to the fourth and fifth generation, we have lost many connections.

Of the family members who did arrive, it was a bittersweet experience to re-connect with cousins I hadn't seen in over 30 years. On the one hand it was remarkable to realize how much we have in common, that familial thread of heredity that continues to connect us. My aunt, cousin and I all laughed when we realized that we all shared a particular trait of my grandmother's -- a tendency to bump into things and be covered with bruises without knowing how or where it had occurred! On the other hand, it was sad to realize how completely we've lost touch. Even though we all left the celebration with promises that we would call or write, we all knew that it was unlikely that this would occur.

An unusual family re-connect occurred quite unexpectedly at the first birthday celebration. The government MLA had arrived with two escorts. One of these, a middle-aged man, was in charge of taking pictures, and as he completed several family shots near our table, one of my daughters grabbed my arm. "Did you see his name tag?" she whispered, "I think he's related to us!" I made my way over to where he was

standing and confirmed the name on the tag. After a few moments of conversation, I confirmed that he was, indeed, a second cousin of mine on my mother's side! Although we had never met, at least one member of our family had been in touch with him recently, a young cousin and contemporary of my daughters who is working on family genealogy. We exchanged email addresses, both somewhat bemused at the unusual circumstance of this meeting.

The first celebration was impressive. The banquet room was packed with residents & residence directors, who clearly had great affection and respect for my grandfather. They had prepared an elaborate celebration, complete with song. Tears came to my eyes as an elderly choir of wrinkled, white-haired ladies encircled my grandfather and began to sing "Let me Call you Sweetheart" in their aged, trembling voices. It was a touching moment, as the tune was one I had chosen to play for my grandmother at her funeral some 25 years ago. I don't know why I chose it; some cellular memory must have identified it as a song that held special meaning for my grandparents. I remember sitting at the keyboard, my heart heavy with loss, unshed tears blurring the notes, yet determined to perform this final act of love for my grandmother. Then, as I began to play, I heard my grandfather's voice behind me in the chapel, whispering to my father, "where did she find that? How can I feel sad when hearing that song!" His words comforted me then, and brought a smile to my heart. As the ancient choir's voices quavered, I quietly sang along, and thought of my grandmother and the many wonderful years they had together. It is so rare that a married couple lives long enough to share many mutual anniversaries -- and far more common that one partner, like my grandfather, ends up alone in the twilight years of life. I saw tears twinkle in my grandfather's eyes as they sang, and I knew he was thinking of his beloved wife, gone these many years.

It seemed like "alone" became the theme of the day at both his birthday celebrations. My grandfather is so alone, even when surrounded by family and friends. Every so often he would go over to the gift table, perusing the few carefully-chosen gifts he had received (what do you buy a man on his 100th birthday, after all?), and I would notice him, seemingly lost in thought.

At one point my youngest daughter came up to me and we watched him, together. She commented, "that's so sad". And it was, strangely. We were celebrating the fact that he was a healthy centenarian, our beloved grandfather, great grandfather and great great grandfather. Yet it was so sad that he was alone, the only one left of his generation. In reality, living to be 100 is an amazing accomplishment. But it is a very lonely one.

My grandfather took the opportunity to share some words of wisdom at both celebrations. He said, "many people have asked me how it is that I've managed to live so long. I can answer that in one word: smile." He went on, "Smile when you wake up in the morning. If you look out the window and it's raining, smile--farmers somewhere will be happy! When you have a good day, smile. When you have a bad day, smile and look forward to tomorrow. Smile at people you love. Smile at strangers. If people upset you, smile. Smile all the time. Smile every day and you will live a long time."

I believe my grandfather is right, and the scientists agree. A happy outlook on life is the key to longevity. It has worked for him. His positive attitude has kept him going through an incredible set of life circumstances, and it seems he's set to go for a while yet. In spite of any loneliness in his life, or the aches and pains of a body that is no longer the same age as his mind, he continues to smile every day.

It's a lesson I try to keep close to my heart. When things become too hard or discouraging, or when I feel like I can't cope with one more problem or endure one more heartache, I remember my grandfather's smile, the smile that has sustained him and empowered him to live 100 years!



A good work ethic is a lot like a sense of humour in that very few people in our society would admit to not having one. Courtesy of the workaholic, 24/7 mindset that is a lingering hangover from the early European colonizers of our country (for example, all those dour Scottish Presbyterians, fastidious Germans, and punctilious, stiff-upper lipped Brits) many of us are perpetually saddled with the idea that busyness (and business) is next to Godliness.

Fortunately, I suffer from a malingering malady that makes me more or less immune to this twaddle. In fact, as I'm freely willing to admit, I'm about as lethargic as a lobotomized house cat. This is why I am a freelance writer and middle-aged student, as opposed to a high caliber tycoon or real estate salesman. It also accounts for my extensive experience with six-dollar bottles of wine and homemade mac and cheese.

I do, however, enjoy hearing about the exploits of my more energetic, prolific and ambitious fellow human beings. What follows is a quick sampling of some of the more striking workaholics of the modern age.

Winston Churchill. Few politicians have ever reached the levels of stamina, ability and sheer energy displayed by Britain's wartime Prime Minister. Besides being a politician for 65 years, Churchill was a brilliant military strategist, an accomplished painter, and a respected historian. Sir Winston composed his own speeches and wrote voluminous biographical and historical works. Refuting the trite adage that "early to bed and early to rise makes a man healthy, wealthy and wise," Churchill was a heavy-drinking night owl who frequently worked until the wee hours of the morning. He lived to be ninety years old and kept up a relentless workload until the very end of his life.

Belgian mystery writer Georges Simenon was an amazingly prolific writer who would lock himself into a room and not emerge until he had completed a novel, some nine or ten days later. During the course of his career, he wrote some 400 novels. Half of the novels were authored under his own name of Simenon. While the rest were authored under a variety of pen names.

Although Simenon was also rumoured to have had as many as 10,000 lovers, he was a definite piker in this department compared with Genghis Khan. According to the National Geographic website (Mayell, H. (2003), DNA evidence points to the fact that some eight per cent of the men living in the region of the former Mongol empire may be distantly descended from this fierce 13th century warlord and silver tongued devil.

Completely at the other end of the productivity scale is Franny Crosby, the world's most prolific writer of hymns. All told, this blind composer wrote some 60,000 hymns under hundreds of pseudonyms. Crosby's hymns include "Safe in the Arms of Jesus," "Blessed Assurance," and "On the Banks Beyond the River."

A whole lot racier and shadier than Ms. Crosby was Aphra Behn. She was a playwright, novelist, notorious lover and reputed spy. Her eighteen full-length plays, including *The False Count*, *The Lucky Chance*, and *The Rover*, titillated and shocked seventeenth century audiences. She is known as the most prolific writer of the restoration period, with the exception of John Dryden.

At this point, I was going to fill you in on the world's most prolific inventor, painter, dental hygienist, etc., but I notice that it's nearly two o'clock in the afternoon -- time for my midday nap. Perhaps you could look the rest up for yourselves?

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Trussel's EclectiCity - <http://www.trussel.com/>



There is this misconception that abounds in regard to the tastes of women, that we like assholes. It's not true, you know. We don't like assholes at all. What women like is confidence and strength. Unfortunately, more often than not, both men and women interpret these traits to mean "asshole." This interpretation is either because the jerks of the world are the only people we see embracing anything we could interpret as "strong," or because we have such a limited way of looking at personality traits that we don't grasp the fact that a nice guy can be strong and confident, and not be an asshole.

But what is confidence? What is it that we classify this way? I know that when some hear the word "confident" they think of the sort of man who could sell ice cubes to the Inuit. To these people, then, it has a negative connotation, and that's unfortunate. This brand of confidence is not strength -- it is a put-on, a construct, a manipulation. This sort of confidence smacks of lies, of being led down the garden path, of overly loud voices that are not trustworthy, but are designed to sell you a cheap lie, at a price as over-inflated as the manner of speech.

Sometimes it's simpler to attempt to define something in terms of what it isn't, than it is. That said, I'm not sure I'd call it confidence, what these sorts of people display, the sort who could sell an ice cube to an Inuit. Brashness, bravado, boastfulness, bombast even, but confidence? No. Confidence is also not taking charge or control (control of other people, that is) because control does not always equal strength. Taking control is power, and that isn't the same sort of strength as the personal inner sort that exudes confidence. I do know that trying too hard to appear confident can, more often than not, make one seem just the opposite. One can also find ways to display confidence that don't involve arrogance or the sort of in-your-face tactics some of the above are wont to be party to. My feeling, at least, is that confidence is born of truth and strength, not out of a loud voice or being the bully.

I heard an expression once, one that seemed to sum up personal strength and confidence: "owning oneself." This, to me, speaks of someone who knows themselves very well, and is honest with themselves about this knowledge; it does not mean that they are strong all the time, happy all the time, or live without any weakness or doubt. I think it all boils down to a certain sense of trust in the self. You trust who you are, how you'll feel, what you'll do, and are in little doubt as to how you deal with unknowns. You trust that you'll be able to handle whatever comes your way, and if you can't, you at least trust that you can find out how. In fact, I'd say that it's very indicative of the confident that they embrace the unknown, because they like the challenges it brings. Embracing the unknown is not the same as thrill seeking. Someone who looks for danger purposely is flirting with something other than confidence.

If I were to try to pick out someone who could, in at least a superficial fashion, embody confidence to me, it would probably be the actor Gregory Peck on screen. To me, he always seemed so solid up there, so sure of himself and certain of who he was and what he was doing. I don't believe he ever felt neurotic about himself or the people around him, or what the world was going to do him. I think that's one word that, for me, sums up the confident man: "solid." Solidity and owning oneself carry a sense of cohesiveness, wholeness, and a sense that this person isn't going to fly apart at the seams at the first sign of danger. They feel "safe," but not in the sense of a lack of danger. They are a safe harbour where you could find shelter if you needed it. (To be clear, "safe" does not mean "passionless" either and by passion I don't mean sexual lust.)

I got a little off-track there, didn't I? But I think I've addressed the misconception. No, women do not like assholes. We like strength, confidence, wholeness, solidity, and maybe a touch of danger (presented in the unknown) now and then. Unless a woman is a particular kind of person, I can assure you that she's not out looking for someone who's going to treat her like crap.



TURNING THE PAGES

Elizabeth Cousar

This week, I did a lot of homework. A lot of it was research for a paper on the development of technology, so I happened to come across an interesting non-fiction work by William Shatner entitled *I'm Working on That: A Trek from Science Fiction to Science Fact*.

Shatner, best known as Captain Kirk from the original television series *Star Trek*, is emphatically not a scientist, yet this book takes on the challenge of describing many cutting-edge technologies and the theories behind them. Many of the scientists

he interviews were kids in the late 1960s when *Star Trek* was on the air. They were inspired to improve the world and its technologies by the futuristic science they saw on their TV screens.

If you, like Shatner, know absolutely nothing about science, you may find this book interesting and informative. He often repeats throughout the book that he does not understand technology, is not a scientist, and doesn't understand the theories that he explains (though the book was reviewed by the scientists he interviewed for accuracy). If you have any knowledge of science (for example, if you've ever read an issue of *Scientific American* or *Discover* magazine) you may find this text horribly oversimplifies some pretty complex theories and ideas. It's rather like reading your son's or daughter's grade four science text in that it's accurate, mostly, as far as it goes, but it doesn't go far enough.

Personally, I found the book condescending. Its constant repetition of the theme "I don't get this, and so you won't either, but here are the broad outlines of the idea" was insulting in the extreme. It does touch on some interesting science, though not in nearly enough detail. Shatner's constant references to his days in the captain's chair on the Enterprise seemed cute at the beginning of the book, but by the end of it, I was thinking "enough already!" I was even such a Trekker in my teenage years that I was a member of a fan club (Star Trek Winnipeg) and held a "commission" as a lieutenant aboard a fictional starship. If I found it tiresome, how must non-fans of *Star Trek* feel?

To be fair, Shatner's television program *How William Shatner Changed the World* aired November 13, 2005 on the Discovery Channel. The show presented most of this same information in a much more appropriate way. Most of the condescension in the book came across as cute, funny, and approachable in a more visual medium, though the surface-level analysis still made me cringe.

I wouldn't recommend this book, unless you dropped out of high school in grade nine and for some reason want to learn about what's happening at JPL and other high-end labs. If you stuck out grade eleven science courses, you probably know more about what's going on in the high-tech world than Shatner does.

To each his own, there's probably an audience for this book out there someplace. But I'm not it.

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CANADIAN FED WATCH!

NEWS ACROSS THE NATION...

By Karl Low



Elections!

So, as expected, the opposition party's motion of non-confidence came up in Parliament. The opposition parties all voted in favour. The next general election has been scheduled for January 23, 2006, not quite a year and a half after the last election. Predictions abound, with the idea of another Liberal minority being the most popular, though with more or less seats being hard to predict. A few people even think that there may be a Conservative minority government after it's all said and done.

It doesn't matter a lot to me. I'm in a riding that votes staunchly Conservative every year, so my vote is not going to make a difference in this election. That said, on January 23rd, my vote will still be going into the polls. Why? Because one of the last things Jean Chrétien did was to create a bill that stops corporate and union donations to political parties. The bill provided that every party with a certain percentage of the vote would get a sum of money for each and every vote they receive. So, while my vote may not have any effect this election, it might have an effect for the next one. That's something that we all need to remember, our votes now count for two elections, not just one. So think long and hard on your vote. Consider who you're voting for. Are they really the people you want to be giving money to?

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Alberta Centennial Scholarship for Canadians

The Alberta Government is taking some of its surplus windfall, and, just in time for a federal election, is giving 25 students from each province \$2,005 dollars toward study in a Canadian institution. This recognition for students outside of Alberta is an encouraging sign, as it lends more weight to the idea that Alberta should also fund its universities not just on the number of Alberta students attending, but rather on the number of Canadian students attending. Currently, the legislation requires that Alberta tuition fees make up no more than 30 percent of the operating costs of a university. If it is more than that the university cannot raise tuition more than the Consumer Price Index (CPI) plus two percent. (Why it should be allowed to raise tuition more than the CPI is a question I've always wondered, but nobody's been able to provide me with an answer.)

For several years now, AU's tuition income has covered about half of its operating costs, but tuition fees have still increased well beyond the CPI plus two percent range. The trick is that since the Alberta government only counts the tuition from Alberta citizens, AU has managed to claim that it was under that 30 percent cap. If, however, Alberta starts recognizing out of province students as valid and important to Alberta's economy, it stands to reason that they might also recognize the tuition contribution from all of an institution's students, not just the Alberta ones. When that happens, in order to keep AU operating, the Alberta government will have to reconsider what it gives to the institution. Since more money for AU translates to better service, more tutors, more courses, and more distance-enabling technology for AU, it means better things for all of us.

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Cheap Loans for Universities

The Ontario provincial government has enacted legislation that will allow universities to take out cheap loans to help build or renew infrastructure. Costs that are eligible under the loan program are those for renewing and renovating academic teaching facilities, research facilities, student residences, daycare facilities, and recreation and sport facilities. The Ontario government is hailing this as a wonderful thing, but it seems it isn't asking the question of why are these measures needed?

Maybe the Ontario government is happy about it, but it strikes me as sort of disgraceful that the government has decided that it should make money off of Ontario universities having been so under-funded for years that now they need to take out loans to make sure that things such as daycare facilities and classrooms are usable for students. In my opinion, the government should have paid for those things in the first place if they truly think an educated populace is important.

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Montreal Says 'No'!

Mandy Gardner

It's the topic of the millennium: Climate change. The earth is getting hotter and it looks like big industry is at least partially to blame. Smokestacks, exhaust pipes and cute red-brick chimneys are pouring out greenhouse gases that trap heat and warm the planet - hurricanes, droughts and rising sea-levels are just the beginning of a permanent shift in our climate unless we change our ways. We've already ratified Kyoto, so what's next?

Well, actually *implementing* Kyoto to the full degree would be helpful. As of yet Canada does not have a long-term plan for dealing with greenhouse gases. We've simply ridden a wave of praise since adopting the Kyoto Protocol in 2002, without formally introducing a method of dealing with the issue. Other countries are behaving in a similar way, unfortunately. British Prime Minister Tony Blair has admitted that a full-

out adoption of the Kyoto Protocol would damage Britain's economy. US President George Bush refuses outright to even ratify Kyoto or any similar agreement, despite the fact that the US is the number one producer of greenhouse gases in the world.

This Saturday (Dec. 3), thousands of demonstrators in Montreal said 'No!' to the continued lack of policy implementation world-wide concerning climate change. They marched to show their support for a significant reduction in greenhouse gases, and to try to gain the support of poorer countries like China, India and Brazil. Such countries are currently experiencing economical growth and would struggle under environmental restrictions - George Bush has said this influenced his decision not to adopt Kyoto. Nevertheless, Montreal demonstrators hope that they can persuade members of these countries to get on board and pressure their respective governments to co-operate for the sake of world climate. The purpose of the UN meeting reflects that of the thousands marching in Montreal: To entice more countries to join Kyoto and to set policies that will extend past the Kyoto 'due date' of 2012. The Summit wraps up this Friday (Dec. 9).

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Requiem For a Friend

It didn't look good, to say the least. My ancient, steam-driven iMac stubbornly refused to boot up. Its inner workings making a sort of grinding, creaking sound, like the cars of an antique and soon-to-be condemned rollercoaster labouriously inching their way to the top of the ride's first hill. Perhaps it was my imagination, but I thought I could detect a faint smell of burning insulation emanating from the CPU. Every sign seemed to indicate that my trusty cyber-relic was heading towards the light, well on down the information highway to a hard-drive heaven.

Of course it was my fault. I had waited far too long to replace the infernal contraption. Highly sophisticated carbon dating techniques had determined that the approximate age of the whirring, whining machine is somewhere in the neighbourhood of eight years old, which in normal time makes it essentially an artifact from the late Mesozoic era. Obviously, it had been living on borrowed time for far too long, and I knew it. With a sort of Thelma-and-Louise-like recklessness, though, I had continued to use it, only very spasmodically backing up my important files -- a clear case of Luddite technological death wish.

The repair clerk at the computer store seemed likely to verify my lay diagnosis. As I placed the machine on the counter top in front of him, and blew the dust from the top of it, he asked me how

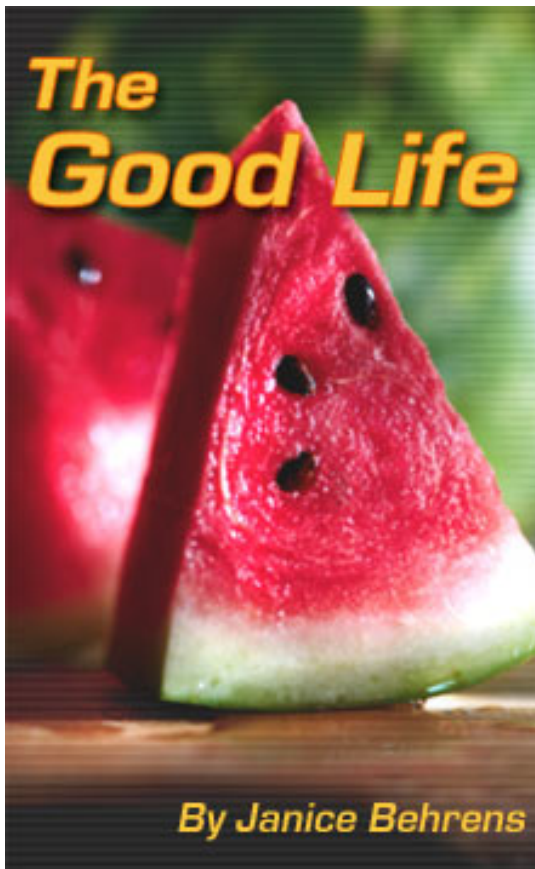
old it was. When I told him, it seemed to ignite his scientific curiosity. I imagine he would have had the same expression on his face if I had presented him with a fragment of papyrus or a lump of fossilized pteranodon guano. "Leave it with us for a few days," he said, "we'll see what we can do." I knew in my heart he was just breaking it to me gently.

That night I went back home and began planning a little memorial service for my old electronic friend, the glittering rectangular muse who had been there for me through so many sleepless nights, and had wordlessly suffered through so much purple prose and questionable grammar. I thought something tasteful and appropriately archaic would be in order. Perhaps, a candlelit ceremony involving lute, zither and harpsichord is appropriate. A simple eulogy composed in Early Modern English.

When the repair shop phoned me a few days later, I was fully prepared for the solemn voice on the other end of the line to begin with "We did everything we could..." To my surprise, though, she told me that they had actually been able to bring the thing back to life. I gather, from the repair bill, that the procedure was a long and painfully complicated one, involving several transplants and teams of specialists flown in from Geneva to work around the clock. It didn't matter. To have my old friend back was worth any price. "Don't get too excited, though," she cautioned, "we think the hard drive is about to pack it in on you at any time."

The important thing, though, is that my coal-fired techno-sidekick had been saved, at least temporarily; long enough for me to create some back-up CDs. And, even more importantly, I've learned an important lesson about leaving things too long. Time to start saving my pennies and doing some research into acquiring a replacement.

Come to think of it, though, it does seem to be working even better now than it did when I first bought it. Perhaps I'll be able to squeeze another decade or so out of it...



The Kind of Christmas We Have Is Up To Us

I was listening to a radio station on my way home from work a few days ago as they played recorded phone-in comments from listeners who were offering their take on the commercialization of Christmas. The call that struck me the most was from a woman who claimed that all of the cheap gimmicky tawdriness of the season had completely ruined Christmas for her. She said that all she really wants to do at this time of the year is hide away somewhere until the whole mess just passes her by.

Although her feelings may be a bit extreme, perhaps brought on by all of the emotional, financial and time pressures associated with the season, nearly all of us have, from time to time, experienced similar feelings of disillusionment.

Most of us have had the feeling that Christmas has been robbed of its spiritual meaning, and reduced to a seemingly endless parade of advertisements leading up to a day of sometimes joyless material excess. Somehow, we believe that Christmas hasn't always been like this. Somewhere in the past there was a "golden age" of Christmas, during which spiritual values and family-centered traditions held sway over cheap commercialization.

Perhaps, though, it is ourselves that are to blame for the degradation of Christmas. It may be true too that advertising has reached an unprecedented frenzy, but it is up to us as to whether we buy into this message. It is always easy and convenient to blame others, or some faceless all-powerful social force, for putting us in the state we're in. Ultimately, though, all this does is rob us of our power to control our own lives. In truth, every time we complain about the commercialization of Christmas, or spend hours in a line-up to buy the latest toy or gadget, we are contributing to the very thing we are complaining about.

It is up to us, each and every one of us who celebrate the season, to decide how best to keep Christmas. Do you think it's become too materialistic? Great, then don't buy as much. Instead of shopping for CDs, video games, or clothes, use your time and money to spend more time with your friends and relatives over the next few weeks. Cook them brunch, take them to a choir concert, or invite them over for a night of playing board games or watching a favourite video.

Perhaps you should consider giving to charities on behalf of the adults on your list, or opting out of those work and family gift exchanges that have become such a routine and thankless experience for many of us. Consider sending a long hand-written letter to the people you care about, instead of a generic and expensive card. If you believe Christmas should be about celebrating spirituality, then spend more time at church. If you believe it should be about family, food, traditions, and music, there is nothing stopping any of us from making these things front and center in our lives. It just means breaking free of the usual expectations.

AUSU THIS MONTH



AUSU Job Posting - Chief Returning Officer

Deadline - January 17th

The Athabasca University Students' Union (AUSU) represents AU students and their interests. The Union strives for a fair and accessible election process for members to the Students' Council. To this end, AUSU is seeking a student to fulfill the role of Chief Returning Officer (CRO) for the 2006 AUSU General Elections.

Position Duties and Responsibilities

The CRO's responsibilities, as outlined in AUSU policy, include arranging to receive, collect, and maintain ballots in a secure location, overseeing the counting of ballots with two (2) Scrutineers on March 17, 2006, notifying candidates of the results, and conducting the appeal process as required. Please include a recent resume and your AU student ID number along with a letter indicating your intent to apply for this position.

Selection Criteria

- Applicant must be currently registered as an AU student.
- Applicant must be bondable.
- Applicant must have strong organizational and logistical abilities.
- Applicant must be able to analyze and apply policy to ensure a fair election process.
- The CRO will be ineligible to run for council in the 2006.
- Familiarity with Microsoft Excel is an asset.
- Candidates must be able to operate out of the AUSU head office located in Edmonton, AB.

Remuneration - \$500 stipend

Apply to: AUSU, Peace Hills Trust Tower, 1200 10011 109th Street, Edmonton, AB, T5J 3E4 - Phone: (800) 788-9041 extension 2905

E-mail: communications@ausu.org

AUSU Course Evaluations

Would you like to know what 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. Students 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 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 2005/06
student
Handbook/Planner

18 months
of planner
pages!

Free
and mailed right to your door
Order yours today!



THE THIRD ANNUAL VOICE MAGAZINE WRITING CONTEST!

**\$1000 in scholarships to be awarded
\$500 each in the fiction and non-fiction
categories**

Write for *The Voice* and win money for your education.

The Voice is launching its third annual writing contest, with categories for both **fiction** and **non-fiction**.

Non-Fiction: In 1500 words or less, write about any issue affecting the environment. You may write about issues in your local area, or global ones. You may focus on the human aspects of environmental change, or the impact on the earth. Feel free to use research or statistics in your article [with proper citations], or write a creative opinion piece.

Fiction: Free form - write a 1500 word or less fiction submission in any genre or any format. Short stories, poetry, a scene from a play, even a comic. Be creative!

Please read the contest rules and regulations and submission guidelines very carefully to ensure you are not disqualified. It's free to enter. **The length limits are firm and all entries that go beyond these limits will be disqualified.** Good luck!

Rules and Regulations:

- Entrants must be AU students. Student status will be confirmed with the AU registrar. Please ensure that the registrar has your current address and contact information.
- Winning entries will be published in The Voice. The Voice reserves the right to print non-winning entries at a rate of remuneration in accordance with current Voice freelance submission rates. The Voice may use portions of non winning non-fiction entries in a composite about students' perspectives on the environment without providing remuneration.
- All decisions regarding this contest and the selection of winners remain with the judging panel and are final.
- AU, AUSU, and Voice staff and AUSU Council members are not eligible for the contest.
- Entries will be judged by a panel to be selected by the Voice Editor, and this panel may include: AU students, AU tutors, and/or AUSU council members. The panel will include at least 3 members.
- The Voice Editor will collect articles and oversee the judging, but will not be a judge.
- Entries must be original works which have not been printed or published elsewhere, and must not be course assignment papers or derivatives of.
- Entries must not contain any information that would make the identity of the author evident to judges. To ensure fairness, all entries will be forwarded to the judging panel with a reference number attached, but no personally identifying information will be forwarded. The Voice Editor will keep the identity of the authors private until the contest closes. The Voice editor will keep a record of the authors of submissions, and will be the sole owner of this list.
- Entries will not be edited for grammar, spelling, or content, although The Voice Editor may black out any personally identifying information contained within the submission. Otherwise, entries will be forwarded to the judging panel, as is, with the exception that all entries will be converted to use the same file format, margins, font size and font style to ensure that all entries are equally readable.
- **The deadline for submissions in both categories will be December 20, 2005. The winner will be announced by February 15, 2006. The Voice reserves the right to extend either deadline if necessary.**
- One grand prize winner will be selected in both the fiction and non-fiction categories. If no entries are received in one of the categories, the prize money will be returned to the Voice scholarship budget. Prizes will be awarded in the form of a cheque, payable in Canadian funds.
- The Voice reserves the right to add additional, secondary prizes.
- The Voice is not responsible for lost emails. The Voice editor will confirm receipt of all entries by email. Please follow up if you do not receive a reply in two business days.
- All entrants agree to allow their name and city of residence to be printed, along with their submission, should it be selected as a winning entry. No further remuneration - beyond the contest prize - will be paid to the contest winner when their entry is printed.
- Entrants will be asked to sign a standard Release and Indemnity form; each prize winner agrees to release the Sponsor and its agents from any liability in connection with the prizes awarded in this contest.

- Entrants found tampering with the contest results, or attempting to influence any of the judges members, or using any forums or other public communications media to advise others of which entry is theirs will be disqualified; or if The Voice editor determines, at her sole discretion, that any other form of tampering has been attempted, that entrant will be disqualified.
- No preference will be given to regular Voice writers. Entries will not identify the writer as a regular Voice contributor when sent to the judging panel.
- This contest is subject to all federal, provincial and municipal laws. Contest void where prohibited.

Submission Guidelines:

- Your submission must be an electronic file attached to an email. Submissions sent as the body of an email will not be accepted. Contact voice@ausu.org if you require instructions on how to attach a file to an email.
- Submissions should be in Microsoft Word format [.doc], rich text format [.rtf] or plain text format [.txt]. If you use a Word Processor other than Word or work on a Mac computer, you can save a file in one of these alternate formats using the 'save as' function and selecting the desired format on the save menu. Contact The Voice editor if you require assistance in formatting your submission. Users of older Macs may have to send entries in HTML format.
- Each entrant may submit one entry to each of the two categories
- All entries must be under 1500 words due to judging time constraints. Length will be determined by the Word Count feature in Microsoft Word. Your References and Citations section will not be included in the word count. References should be formatted consistently according to a standardized publishing style guide, such as the American Psychological Association (APA) or the MLA press style.
- Entries should not include unnecessary formatting such as drop caps, graphics [unless the graphic is integral to the work], or unusual fonts. Entries must be text - scans of hand written or typed documents will not be accepted.
- The email should include the following information: Your full name, AU student ID number, email address, telephone number, mailing address, the title of your entry, and whether you are submitting to the fiction or non-fiction category. Make sure non-fiction entries are based on the topic question detailed above. Fiction entries can be on any topic you like. Do not include your contact information within your article - but be sure to include a title.
- Entries will be judged on the following criteria:
- **Non Fiction entries:** will be judged on originality, creativity, accuracy, and how well your support your assertions with data or argument. You will also be judged on the presentation of your article, including professionalism, proper spelling, grammar and syntax, and readability. You may write in journalistic style or essay format.
- **Fiction entries:** will be judged on creativity, entertainment value, and the originality or your writing style. Regardless of the genre you choose, you will be judged on the effectiveness of your piece and your technical writing skills.

Contact voice@ausu.org if you have any questions.





Dear Barb: I feel a little awkward writing to you. I am a 25-year-old man and I've just met a wonderful woman. I think she may be the one for me. My problem is that I have led a fairly promiscuous life up to this point. I have experimented sexually, and I'm concerned about AIDS. I haven't been tested, but I'm afraid to become sexually intimate with this new girl just in case. I'm not sure what, if any symptoms I should be looking for, or should I just get tested anyway?

Thanks

Zack - Orillia

I don't receive many questions from males, so I really appreciate it when I do. If you have led a promiscuous lifestyle I would definitely suggest you get tested for human immunodeficiency virus (HIV) and other STD (sexually transmitted diseases). Also, I think you should tell your new friend about your previous lifestyle and your plans to be tested. These are things she should know. Likewise, it's a good idea for her to be tested if she has any reason to believe she may have been exposed to HIV or STDs.

Unfortunately, because there are no obvious symptoms to indicate you have become infected with HIV, the average span of time between being infected until receiving an acquired immunodeficiency syndrome (AIDS) diagnosis is ten years. That's ten

years when individuals could be having unprotected sex and passing the virus on to others.

HIV infection is on the increase. The first reported case of AIDS in Canada was in 1982. In 2003, estimates indicate there were at least 20,000 people diagnosed with AIDS in Canada. However, the number of people who are HIV positive was reported to be 56,000 in 2002. Therefore indicating an increase in the number of AIDS diagnoses is inevitable. I'm sure most people know how HIV is transmitted, but I will recap for the benefit of some who may have had their head in the sand for the last 20 or so years.

HIV is passed from one person to another through unprotected sex, needle sharing, and pregnancy (from an HIV positive mother to her unborn child).

As stated above, a person can be HIV positive and not have any symptoms for years. This explains the escalation of infected individuals. During the period between infection and full-blown AIDS, a person may experience an unusually high number of infections because the virus is compromising their immune system. A combination of frequent colds, fever, tiredness, nausea, sore throats and swollen glands over an extended period of time, in addition to high-risk behaviour, may suggest HIV testing is warranted.

I think it is important that you discuss your situation with your physician. He/she is in a better position to advise you on what to do if you test positive for HIV. There have been great strides in the treatment for HIV positive individuals. In fact many new drugs have allowed individuals to be reasonably healthy for many years before their condition develops into AIDS. I hope this information has been helpful Zack.

E-mail your questions to advice.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.

No Comment



*From
Where
I Sit*
Hazel Anaka

We've been led to believe that making judgments is a bad thing. Pat Allen (2005) in her book entitled *Art is a Spiritual Path* offers a new way to look at things. Allen runs an art program in her US studio. Artists undertake a two-part process. Part one is creation. Part two is what she calls witnessing.

Each artist discusses their creation and its process. The challenge and the rule is "don't verbalize." No questions or criticism are allowed. Not even compliments or signs of approval and encouragement are allowed. Both criticism and compliments can "be a form of violation" that impacts "their own internal wisdom and guidance."

Allen believes "we all make judgments all the time; if we are mindful, we notice them, let them drift away, and then move on to the next thought." She's discovered "every judgment I have about another person tells me something about myself -- what I require or what I am resisting."

So too in real life. We all make judgments on everything all the time. It's so human a response that it's become an unconscious process. From judging superficial things like our favourite news anchor's new hairdo to biggies like our doctor's skill level, we all do it. We all have voiced opinions or passed judgments on the interest rate paid on savings accounts, the price of fuel, the suitability of our kid's boyfriend or girlfriend, the attentiveness of our spouse, the drinking habits of a relative, the farming practices of a neighbour, the intelligence quotient of the boss, the relevance of Sunday's sermon and so on and so on.

We all do it. And anyone who says otherwise just isn't being very forthright. But, hey that's just my opinion.

The decision is whether or not we choose to express these judgments (either positive or negative) or keep them to ourselves. If we share them, the question of intention and motive enters the debate. Do we share with those we truly love and care about? Do we share to hurt? Do we share to make ourselves look better, smarter? Do we share to save someone grief and heartache? Do we

share to affirm actions we approve of?

My own challenge is to better identify those open to an honest give and take of opinion as distinguished from those who aren't open. Some individuals lead lives of example, others of warning. I can learn from both types. The only way I know is by asking questions, sharing ideas, and debating issues.

Could either you or I get through even one day of not verbalizing the hundreds of judgments we make? The world would likely fall silent. It would be an interesting experiment, from where I sit.

Reference

Allen, P.B. (2005). *Art Is a Spiritual Path*. Shambhala Publications.

* Reprinted with permission

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



All Alberta children to receive educational grants

Debbie Jabbour

The Alberta government has just passed an amendment to previous legislation, making all Alberta students eligible for \$100 Alberta Centennial Education Savings Plan grants. This grant was originally intended as a centennial gift to all babies born in 2005 and beyond, with each receiving an initial \$500, then \$100 grants in their RESP's at age 8, 11, and 14. Now all Alberta children will be eligible for the grants when they reach those age groups, although it appears that only babies born in 2005 and beyond will receive the initial \$500 grant.

To access the funds, parents must apply for a Social Insurance Number for their child and open an RESP, depositing at least \$100 before applying for the grant. The program is expected to begin April 1 of 2006, with no end date. More information is available to parents at: www.advancededucation.gov.ab.ca/aces.

Although this initiative does not help current university students, the government hopes it will help to promote a culture of "saving for education" among parents and improve advantages for young Albertans.

All Alberta students now eligible for centennial education plan grants: Edmonton Journal, December 6, 2005, Canada.com: <http://www.canada.com/edmontonjournal/news/story.html?id=09e33b47-b813-4f4f-8900-cf7de92eea37>

Alberta Government Centennial RESP information: <http://www.advancededucation.gov.ab.ca/aces/>

Race to help women in rural Alberta

Canadian Death Race, an extreme racing event in which racers journey over three different mountain summits, cross a river in a raft, and run part of the course in the dark, takes place in Grande Cache Alberta each August. The race promotes tourism and helps the town to raise funds in a number of ways. Last year AU student Kimberlea Anderson ran in support of the Eagle Women's Emergency Shelter, and had this to say about her experience:

I ran my first race last August long weekend. Of course I picked the hardest one: The Canadian Death Race which takes place each year in Grande Cache, Alberta. My reasoning was that if I knew I could do it--I wouldn't want to. I completed 58 km before I timed out in the third leg. I am 45-year-old student of AU and have never done anything like this in my life, but in the end one of the hardest, most gruelling physical things to do became one of the most positive life experiences I have been blessed with. I ran in support of the Eagle Women's Emergency Shelter, though the fundraising wasn't as successful as I had hoped. The flooding in this area caused damage to more than the shelter and many families and individuals had other priorities.

This year I am part of a team that will run for the Shelter, plus our children will run the kids' race (5 km). We have two 15-year-olds, two 13-year-olds, three 6-year-olds and hopefully one 3-year-old. We all hope to do amazing things this year.

Check the websites of both the Canadian Death Race and The Shelter if you would like more information. The Shelter is accepting pledges/donations if any readers care to give. The people of Grande Cache are truly an amazing group, and this is an event that accomplishes more than they will ever know.

Canadian Death Race - <http://www.canadiandeathrace.com/>

Eagle Women's Emergency Shelter, Black Diamond, AB - <http://eagle.shelternet.ca/library/SNetCore.cfm>

SCHOLARSHIPS & AWARDS

Contributed by Zil-E-Huma Lodhi

Ritchie-Jennings Memorial Scholarship

Value: \$1,000

Application Deadline: May 13

Description: Must be currently enrolled in full-time studies at the undergraduate or graduate level at an accredited four-year college or university. Declared major in accounting or criminal justice, with interest in becoming Certified Fraud Examiners

Submit maximum 500 word essay on specified topic. Transcripts and letters of recommendation are required.

Association of Certified Fraud Examiners (ACFE)

Web Site: <http://www.cfenet.com/services/scholarships.asp>

Gloria Landis Memorial Bursary

Value: \$1,000

Application Deadline: June 15

Description: For residents of Ontario at least 25 years of age with a learning disability, entering first year at a post-secondary or accredited vocational institute program as a mature student. Must not have attended school full-time for three or more years. Must submit 400-600 word essay on topic of learning disabilities. Submit letters of reference, proof of learning disability, proof of residency and acceptance into a post-secondary institution.

Learning Disabilities Association of Ontario (LDAO)

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

Helen Basset Commemorative Student Scholarship

Value: \$1,000 (4)

Application Deadline: July 29

Description: For Aboriginal women under 31 years of age who are pursuing post-secondary studies with a demonstrated commitment to improving the situation of Aboriginal women in Canada. Submit short essay on goals and plans to contribute to society. Financial need required. Must submit proof of age, Aboriginal descent and post-secondary registration, transcripts, letter of reference, statement of financial need and budget breakdown. For further information, please visit the website posted below

Native Women's Association of Canada (NWAC) / L'Association des femmes autochtones du Canada (AFAC)

Web Site: [http:// www.nwac-hq.org](http://www.nwac-hq.org)

Steven Huesing Scholarship

Value: \$500

Application Deadline: July 31

Description: Enrolled in a Canadian post-secondary institution in a health informatics or health care information management program. Must be of sound academic standing. Submit maximum 500 word description of achievements in health informatics. Transcripts, proof of enrolment and personal letter are required. For further information, please visit the website posted below

COACH: Canada's Health Informatics Association

Web Site: <http://www.coachorg.com/default.asp?id=627>



Voice Events Listings

On and off campus events worldwide

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

alberta

Have a Heart for Hospice Holiday Campaign

December 01 - December 23, 2005

Calgary 11:00 AM-1:00 PM - Eau Claire Market

catherine.bell@hospicecalgary.com

<http://www.hospicecalgary.com>

The Holidays can be a special time for sharing memories and thinking about those we love. This year, Hospice Calgary invites you to dedicate a heart and place it on the Tree of Love at Eau Claire Market from Dec 1 - 23 between 11:00 A. M - 1:00 P.M.

british columbia

CAROL SHIPS DINNER CRUISES

December 01 - 23 - Vancouver, BC

6:00 PM - 10:00 PM - Range from \$49.95 to \$59.95

Ticket Outlets www.VancouverCruises.com

604-681-2915 - gary@vancouvercruises.com

We'll join the many ships in the Carol Ships Parade and enjoy a Traditional Christmas Buffet!!

WHISTLER FILM FESTIVAL

December 01 - 04 - Whistler, BC

9:00 AM - 9:00 PM - Single tickets - \$9

Alex@whistlerfilmfestival.com

<http://www.whistlerfilmfestival.com>

Saskatchewan

CREELMAN DINNER THEATRE

November 22 - December 04, 2005

Creelman, SK - 5:30 PM - 10:30 PM

Creelman Community Complex

\$25.00 per person - with 30 ticket limit

Ticket Outlets - Creelman Community Complex

eliford@hotmail.com

11TH ANNUAL THEATRE SASKATCHEWAN DINNER THEATRE

December 09 - 10 - Regina, SK - 6:00 PM - 11:00 PM

Regina Performing Arts Centre

1 - 15 people - Early Bird \$29.00 per person

16 or more people - Early Bird \$27.00 per person

Tickets - Regina Performing Arts Centre @ 779-2277

(306) 352-0797

info@theatresaskatchewan.com

<http://www.theatresaskatchewan.com>

The play is a Comedy by Pat Cook named "You Can't Get There From Here"

manitoba

CHRISTMAS AT THE TAYLORS

Winnipeg , Manitoba - Nov 25 - Jan 04, 2006

75,000 plus Christmas lights on an Interactive site plus a chance to ride a 1/8 scale train through the illuminated bush. For event information: Telephone: (204) 837-1305 Fax: (204) 786-5082

iceman@swedenfreezer.com

www.swedenfreezer.com/avr/

quebec

SNOWBOARD JAMBOREE

December 15 - 18, 2005

Lac-Beauport, QC

Le Relais Ski Resort

418-827-1122

info@snowjamboree.com

<http://www.snowjamboree.com>

maritimes

FESTIVAL OF TREES

December 09 -11 - Liverpool, NS

Liverpool Lion's Hall

aalangille@eastlink.ca

Come and view and bid on beautifully themed Christmas Trees, bid on a wonderful array of silent auction items, enjoy homemade cookies, hot apple cider and warm gingerbread with whipped cream. Santa will make a visit and you can vote on your favourite tree for the people's choice award. We will also have a raffle which includes trees and local art. Dec 9 - 6:00 pm - 8:00 PM; Dec 10 - 11:00 am - 8:00 pm; Dec 11 - 11:00 am - 3:00 pm.

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

Conference Connections

BECK MEETS FREUD? COGNITIVE THERAPY IN DEPTH

December 1 - 2 2005 - Toronto, Ont.

<http://leadingedgeseminars.org/pretzer1.htm>

Participants will develop an understanding of cognitive therapy's approach to issues that are often seen as the domain of psychodynamic therapies, including the complexities of the therapeutic relationship, resistance to change, trauma, and other family of origin issues, and dealing with dreams, fantasies, and imagery. Participants will learn how to modify cognitive-behavioural approaches in order to apply them more effectively when profound issues complicate therapy. Participants will be able to identify cognitive-behavioural interventions that are particularly useful in making deep and lasting changes and to apply them within their own approach to psychotherapy.

You will learn:

- Cognitive therapy's perspective on transference, countertransference, and other complexities of the therapeutic relationship
- Ways to structure treatment in order to minimize resistance, increase motivation for change, and maximize treatment adherence
- How to modify cognitive-behavioural therapy to better address long-standing interpersonal and intrapersonal problems
- Methods for identifying family of origin issues and addressing them within short and long-term therapy
- Techniques for using dreams, fantasy, and imagery
- Methods for accomplishing deep change and minimizing the risk of relapse

ENTREPRENEURING WOMEN SEMINAR

December 13, 2005 - Garden Grove, CA, USA

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

8am-4:30pm

\$79, RSVP by Nov 21st

includes continental breakfast (7:30am), buffet lunch, and entry to "after-seminar" mixer.

\$125 after Nov 21st or at the door

Topics include: business mistakes to avoid (and ways to fix them), finding funding, getting out of debt, insurance & investments, marketing techniques and more - all relevant and immediately useful. Get the tips, techniques and tools

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.

needed to succeed. We will also have a session for those interested in "finding the right entrepreneur job or franchise".

WALKING THE WALK: CREATIVE TOOLS FOR TRANSFORMING COMPASSION FATIGUE

December 5, 2005 - Toronto, Ont.

<http://leadingedgeseminars.org/cf1.htm>

You will learn:

- About the complexities of compassion fatigue and vicarious trauma
- To identify personal triggers and contributing factors
- To evaluate self-care and target areas for prevention and healing
- To create a personalized strategic plan for identifying and treating compassion fatigue



Prairie Universities Biological Symposium
40th Anniversary Conference
BY students FOR students

University of Calgary
Feb 23-25, 2006
Registration \$22, Banquet \$20

Banquet at the Calgary Zoo
Guest speaker: Dr. Robert Barclay

SUBMIT YOUR ABSTRACTS NOW!
Deadline: Jan 10, 2006

Registration & information:
<http://homepages.ucalgary.ca/~pubs/>

classifieds

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

AU Student in Canada seeking thirty-something Alberta pen-pal to correspond with about school and life.
Contact voice@ausu.org for contact information.

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THE VOICE

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