

The Voice

A Bug in Your Ear . . .



By the Numbers

by b.e. hydromako

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Many of us have a fear towards one of the foundational R's of our education. That "R," of course, is arithmetic. All too often some of us find a point in our scholastic journey where mathematics becomes an intimidating entity. As a result, we go through the rest of life with an aversion to this delightful subject of human ingenuity (or maybe it's discovery). Mathematics has many beautiful models of reality to offer us, and many of its expressions are helpful ways for us to see the bigger picture. However, to many of us this splendor of knowledge remains inaccessible. We continue to feel that it is somehow beyond us, and we will never understand it.

Granted, some of us are inclined to have an easier time with math, as opposed to those for whom logical thought is a difficult process in general; regardless, all of us have the capability to understand mathematics. It is likely that we become apprehensive towards this subject when we stop associating pictures with our operations: we begin to rely only on numbers and symbols. It is mathematics in this form that scares people, but it doesn't have to be this way.

Currently in our public schools we associate pictures with math (if memory serves me adequately) until about junior high. Until then we learn most of our operations through visual means: we see what it is like to add and subtract from groups of things, we picture pies being cut into fractions, and when we are younger we play with geometrical shapes (blocks, balls, etc.). It is later in our education when math becomes an abstract subject that leads away from reality. This accounts for the most common complaint from high school students, "When am I ever going to use this?"

As noted before, mathematical knowledge leads to a richer life. Our current methods of teaching math could be refined to keep it more "real;" that is, there are more ways to illustrate mathematics visually than merely strings of symbols. When we start learning about variables (x 's and y 's) we need to keep these equations tied with pictures, and every equation that has an answer has some sort of picture. There are lines and planes, and solids and spaces for anything we ever did in a high school math class, but all of it is kept secret from us until we get to the universities. There is no reason for this. After all, geometry is the world in which we live: the world is a physical model.

In Theory, It's Your University

By Darren L. Kereluk, Vice President-Student Academics AUSU



Oftentimes, the people running universities forget that they are supposed to be serving students and society as a whole. This cannot be done if tuition fees are raised to a point where students at Athabasca University have to make a choice between buying something special, such as food, for themselves and their family, or taking a course at AU. I fear very much that the choice is becoming more in favour of eating or paying the rent. I strongly believe that in order for people to get better jobs, and by extension, make better wages to meet expenses, they need a higher level of education, such as that provided by AU. Yet, with the rumours of significant tuition fee increases, I am concerned that my fellow students will not have the chance to increase their knowledge and education because of this rather heinous situation. Do you want to pay 8% more in tuition? I do not really think so. The purpose of this article is to hopefully try and get all of you to think about how you feel about the tuition that AU charges, and perhaps to contact people like me to express your feelings.

One of the things that I have been concerned with lately is the breakdown of expenses in the AU budget. While I think that we all recognise the fact that AU staff is entitled to salary increases, and that more academic staff is needed to meet increased student numbers at AU, I think that we would all like to know if there are any superfluous expenses that can be found that could be eliminated so as to reduce or eliminate the need for tuition fee increases. AUSU has sent a representative to the President's Budget Advisory Committee (BAC), but the strange thing is that she has been told not to share any information about the deliberations at BAC. Really, what does AU have to hide? Remember that in theory, AU is your university, but the old adage of theories rarely becoming reality applies at our favourite post secondary institution. YOU DESERVE BETTER! I have not been able to get a breakdown of expenses by activity at AU, so I cannot lend any credence to the calls for increased tuition. I am of the extremely firm position that if economies can be found within the existing expenditure structure at AU that they should be considered well before any consideration is given to increasing tuition, or any other fees, for that manner. My prime duty as your Vice President, Student Academics, at the Athabasca University Students' Union is to see that your interests are properly represented within the AU community. I eagerly take on this task with relish, keeping in mind that you all have better things to spend your money on (i.e.: food, child care, rent) than inflated rates of tuition. It is my goal, as it is of that of the rest of your AUSU executive and Council, to see that you are not gouged as it is comes to tuition. I do not want you to make the choice between eating and living expenses, and I will do everything in my power to see that you do not have to come to this rather sad point.

I am asking you, as students that are forced to pay higher tuition in order to gain a better education, to write me, and university administration, with regard to AU's revenues and expenditures. Tell your fellow AU students about this very serious matter, and get them involved too. As much as you are able, please tell me about your struggles with meeting your living expenses, and how this relates to your ability to pay tuition. If you are having a difficult time deciding whether or not to take courses because of their cost, please let me know. Always remember that I will act in your best interests, and I sincerely would appreciate any input that you can give me. My email addresses are: vp_internal@ausu.org or dlkereluk@sk.sympatico.ca I look forward to hearing from you.

Free Weights vs. Machines

By McInain D. Swift,

ISSA-CFT, ISSA-SWM



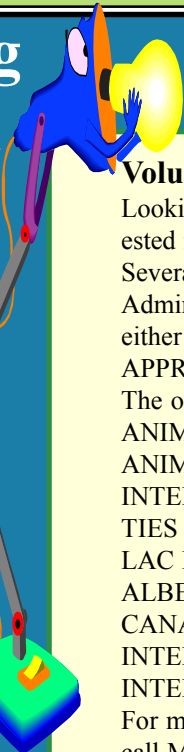
In this article, I will discuss the benefits and drawbacks between the two most common methods of resistance training: machines and free-weights. Machines include devices that supply resistance through gravity by means of a weight stack, friction, fluid resistance, elasticity, and electronically controlled devices. Free-weights primarily include dumbbells and barbells.

Free weights offer some great benefits over those offered by machines. The major boon offered by free-weights is "whole body" training, that is, many free-weight exercises are performed in a standing position. This requires the body to use many more muscles in the execution as opposed to a machine; therefore, weight-bearing exercises such as squats or standing dumbbell presses help promote bone growth—important for preventing osteoporosis. Free-weights also offer the advantage of simulating "real-life" activities. The muscles of the body must work in concert to stabilize and move the weight during the exercise thereby conditioning balance and coordination. Another distinct advantage of machines is that they "fit" everyone. Most machines are built with the average male in mind and therefore may not conform to everyone's body—the seat is too high, handles are too far apart, etc.

Machines, however, are simpler to use because they require less skill to operate and therefore are often the first choice for novice weight trainers. Machines are also generally safer in the hands of an inexperienced lifter; the chance of dropping or becoming pinned under the weight is greatly reduced. Machines offer the advantage of convenience, that is, they are quick to set up and adjusting the resistance is often as easy as moving a selector pin to a different position as opposed to piling weights onto a bar.

Free-weights should comprise the bulk of your training programs. Free-weight exercises stimulate more muscle, work to improve neuromuscular control, and the movements are more natural and complete (if you are new to resistance training you should seek the help of a qualified fitness trainer for instruction of free-weight exercises—DO NOT LEARN FROM A BOOK!). Machines may be used periodically for variation, and should be used last in the workout, for example, perform a set of squats or lunges then move to the leg extension machine. REFERENCES: National Strength and Conditioning Association. Essentials of Strength Training and Conditioning 2nd Edition. Eds. Thomas R. Baechle and Roger W. Earle. Hong Kong: Human Kinetics, 2000.

Enlightening Information



POSITION AVAILABLE ON THE AUSU EXECUTIVE BOARD

Athabasca University Student's Union is currently taking nominations for the election of the position of VICE PRESIDENT EXTERNAL. If you are interested, you can obtain a nomination form by contacting the AUSU via email at: clynch@ausu.org

Volunteers and Career Developers Needed!

Looking to gain some experience in Administration or related fields? Interested in improving your community and society? Several Organizations are in desperate need of Volunteer Board Members and Administrative Assistants. Meetings of the Board Directors will be held either online or by conference-calling (telephone). YOUR HELP WOULD BE APPRECIATED!

The organizations NEEDING your assistance are:
ANIMAL ADVOCATE SOCIETY OF ALBERTA
ANIMAL ADVOCATE SOCIETY OF CANADA
INTERNATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF ANIMAL ASSISTANCE SOCIETIES

LAC LA BICHE ASSOCIATION OF NON-PROFIT ORGANIZATION.
ALBERTA ASSOCIATION OF NON-PROFIT ORGANIZATION.
CANADA ASSOCIATION OF NON-PROFIT ORGANIZATION.
INTERNATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF NON-PROFIT ORGANIZATION.
INTERNATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF VOLUNTEERS

For more information, please contact volunteeropportunities@alberta.com or call Mark Gueffroy (780) 623-9488 or (780)623-1632

Here in Ontario

by Cathy Tekatch



Just this past December, here in Ontario, the controversial Harris government passed much protested legislation called the *Post-secondary Education Choice and Excellence Act, 2000*. "This Act will help to give students more opportunities for a high-quality education and ensure that they will have innovative and flexible choices," says the press release.

The Globe and Mail called the legislation "a decision oddly late in coming, and sadly opposed by some."

One of the intents of this legislation is to encourage private (Read: no Ontario government funding available) innovative universities to set up shop in Ontario. Athabasca University made an appearance at the public hearings on the bill.

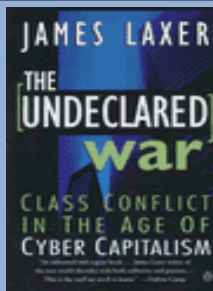
Innovative learning methods are what make Athabasca University unique, and they have 30 years experience doing it. Learning-centered and *not* teaching-centered methods are what Ontario (and the rest of the world) needs.

Just imagine if all post-secondary learners in Canada, or even all in the English speaking world were to use Athabasca learning materials and Athabasca learning centres. Economies of scale could bring the cost to tuition payers and taxpayers way, way down, and would make the heated debate over "who should pay for post-secondary education" almost a non-issue. On-campus learning centres would be more cost effective to operate because of increased usage, and the silly, expensive and not always honest efforts that university PR departments put into building their reputations in order to compete with other universities for students, and to get high ratings in MacLeans magazine, would be unnecessary.

What a wonderful world it would be.

The Undeclared War: Class Conflicts in the Age of Cyber Capitalism by Author James Laxer

Review by Wayne E. Benedict



This is the first book of Laxer's that I have read and I was very impressed. He has a way of making complex political issues easy to read and understand. Laxer outlines the brutal realities that are facing the wage/salary earning class by pointing out obvious signs that anyone can see if one is able to look past the barrage of neo-conservative propaganda that bombards the minds of western citizens. Times are truly grim for the lower classes (95% of us) in the western world and Laxer vividly shows us how these conditions are being forced on the vast majority of people who are living in a globalized economy run by huge multinational corporations, banks, and super-rich individuals. The realities in the book made me sorrowful, angry, and uncertain about the future of workers and their families but Laxer does offer a small glimmer of hope in the final chapter of "Undeclared War".

As Vice President of the Canadian Union of Transportation Employees Local 1, I will recommend this book to our members and any working-class person who has the stomach to face the dismal realities of capitalism without conscience.

Athabasca University Student Profile



Mark Allen Conrad Gueffroy is a 16-year old student of Athabasca University, and is enrolled in the University Certificate in Administration undergraduate program. His favorite course in this program was Legal Studies 369, and he enjoyed it because "it was easy, interesting, and fun."

Mr. Gueffroy plans to continue at Athabasca University in the BAdmin. program with a concentration in Management. He is a graduate of the Portage College Emergency Medical Responder program, and is considering a career in one of the following fields: administration (Administrative Assistant or Executive Director), law, para-medicine (Paramedic), animal health technology, or veterinary medicine.

Mark is also considerably involved in his local and international community, through his volunteer positions with several organizations. He is the Secretary/Treasurer of the Animal Advocate Society of Alberta, the Animal Advocate Society of Canada, and the International Association of Animal Assistance Societies. He is the Executive Director of the Lac La Biche Association of Non-Profit Organizations, the Alberta Association of Non-Profit Organizations, the Canadian Association of Non-Profit Organizations, and the International Association of Non-Profit Organizations.

Mark has also ventured into the administration field, and owns and manages several companies in the Lac La Biche, Alberta area, including: Boyle Advertising Services, Lakeland Business Services, Lakeland Internet Directories, Lakeland Massage and Intervention, Lakeland Publishing Enterprises, and Lakeland Training Consultants. Oh, and did I mention he writes for THE VOICE?

STUDENT PROFILE is a weekly publication of THE VOICE. If you are interested in having yourself profiled in THE VOICE, please contact MARK GUEFFROY by e-mail at advice75@hotmail.com or by phone at (780) 623-9488.

Speaking My Mind

a column by Mark A.C. Gueffroy



Today's society is preoccupied with defending the rights of those discriminated against. Universities have entire Doctorate programs devoted to the study of cultures that have endured decades of discrimination. However, there is one group of people that do not normally receive recognition as victims of discrimination.

Police officers defend the rights of the citizens that they have sworn to protect and assist victims of crime, as well as attempt to prevent criminal actions from being committed. In return for their hard work and the risks of their job, they are disliked and even hated. This is the purest form of discrimination.

Discrimination usually results from a lack of knowledge about the subject of a person's discrimination. Discrimination usually results from ignorance, and continues because a person is too proud to admit that they are ignorant or that they are capable of discriminating. Every person does not understand something, and each person discriminates against at least one thing or person. I challenge you to discover the subject(s) of your discrimination and learn about it. Ask one of your local RCMP officers to join you for coffee, and ask them about the challenges of their job and why they enjoy it. Become a person who judges based on facts, not opinions based on unfounded accusations or stereotypes. And the next time you see a police officer, tell them that you appreciate them.

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Do You want to write for The Voice?

Fill on our online application at www.ausu.org or contact Tammy Moore at 1-800-788-9041 ext 2905 on Fridays between 8:30 and 4:30 MST. You can also email voice@ausu.org.

Wild Flowers, the Mountains and You!



Explore the beauty of flowering plants in a stunning mountain setting.

- Study wild and not-so-wild flowers and their non-flowering relatives like ferns and conifers.
- Take a closer look at asters and aspens, orchids and onions, sages and sedges, and many others.
- Learn how to use identification manuals and make a permanent collection of plants for your own reference.
- Enjoy walking in the mountains and learning about flowering plants while earning three university credits.

BIOL 321: Wild Flowers (plant taxonomy) is a home-study course with a compulsory 9-day field component. The course runs between **1 May and 31 August 2001** (no extensions) with the field workshop between **29 June and 8 July**. The field part of the course is held at a research station in the Kananaskis area of Alberta (half way between Calgary and Banff). The course professor is Dr. Lochan Bakshi who has many years of experience in this field of study. During the workshop, students will spend a considerable time in the field examining naturally growing plants in several habitats in the Rocky Mountains and also in their home locations.

Cost: tuition, books and hand lens is \$444 for residents of Alberta, \$514 for Canadians living outside of Alberta plus about \$350 for board and room

Pre-requisites: 6 credits in university-level biology

Contact: Dr. Robert Holmberg, Centre for Science, Athabasca University, Athabasca, Alberta, T9S 3A3 **Telephone:** (780) 675-6203 **Fax:** (780) 675-6186 **E-mail:** robert@athabascau.ca

We require a minimum of 12 students and enrollments are limited to 19 students, so enroll now!

The Voice


The Voice is the newspaper of the Athabasca University Students' Union. Ideas, suggestions, and submissions are welcomed. The Editor retains the right to edit any submissions for length and content. The views expressed in this newspaper are not necessarily those of the

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 Athabasca University
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