

THE VOICE

VOLUME 9 ISSUE 26

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www.ausu.org/voice



A Bug In Your Ear... LETTER TO THE EDITOR:

Tammy,

Derek made one very good point in his letter to the editor. I have this to add. In response to his letter of last week, I too have wondered why the University and the students' union make no use of our email addresses. I've been a student since 1998 and I have received exactly 0 emails from this school, despite the fact that I have been enrolled full time for 8 consecutive semesters. Talk about making me feel unwelcome! Sure, I hate spam mail as much as anyone, but if there is an election, the university has a change of policy, or if there will be an interruption in the website service, we should be notified.

Recently, the university changed its policy to allow enrolment in six courses. Maximum. No one was told - we had to find out when we tried to enrol for too many at once. There was an election, and no one knew. Only 46 people subscribe to the Voice! Why didn't I get an email when the Voice went electronic? I didn't know for over a year. Instead, I thought that the paper had been shut down. I'm angry that I missed out on so many issues. Sure, I could have checked the union site, but when I started with Athabasca, there was little activity there. Besides, I should not have to search for such basic, relevant student information, I should be told.

The latest project of the union is the photo ID cards. Again, no announcement was made. If we are all members of this union - and we all pay dues with our course fees, don't we? - Then should we not be kept up to date on union business? Most professional unions send out monthly newsletters and an annual report. An occasional email does not seem much to ask. I'm betting that very few people have asked for IDs so far, despite the fact that many may want one.

I agree that an email address is private and should not be abused, but as a student of this school, I expect to be notified of events and policy changes that are relevant to me. I certainly do not consider mail from my school to be junk mail! We should have been emailed a form to subscribe to the electronic Voice when the print version was discontinued. Why should we have to search around to find out our own student paper? I agree with Derek, that we should have received emailed copies of the voting ballots for the union positions, as well as being informed ahead of time of whom the candidates were.

I feel the blame here is on both the University and the students' union. You have neglected students by making no use of our email addresses, when this information is requested of us at our time of enrolment. It can be assumed, then, if we have provided the University with our email addresses, that we are receptive to receiving the occasional email. In fact, we may be counting on it. We all talk about student apathy, but what can we expect when the school and the union are just as apathetic toward us. I don't know what can be done to encourage the university to improve student communications. Clearly something should be done - we pay a lot of money for our courses and should be treated as an important facet of this institution, and we deserve more communication than a yearly flyer, which tries to sell us on new courses.

Much can be done, however, to improve the services of the union. After all, it is our union, and our needs should dictate how it operates. I suggest that the union send out a mass email advertising the Voice and telling people how they can subscribe. Maybe try sending out a student survey asking people if they know about the Voice, student ID cards, the recent council election, and other union services. I think the number of people who just don't know will surprise you. Send something! I think you will be surprised at the response. Many of us feel alone out there – how about dropping a note from time to time to let us know that our input is valued. Sure, we can always write to the union. But that only proves that you will listen to our concerns, not that you really want to hear them.

There is a big difference between informing people, and simply making information available.

Tamra Ross Low
Women's Studies and Psychology

Dear Tamra,

Just in response to your letter, based on what I understand (and this is still being confirmed); the Student's Union is not entitled to access to the Athabasca University directories of students contact information. The Voice 'Web-Guy' is having a difficult time himself, trying to get information (even though it was approved) to build a new list serve that would function off of the University database to send everyone with an e-mail account a copy of the Voice where it would then be at his or her discretion to subscribe. There are complications in re-writing privacy agreement acts, getting the legalities of such a mail-out for the Voice to be considered notice and not spamming, and concern for those who may be angry to know that their e-mail is being given out to strangers, as the Students' Union and The Voice people technically are. We are still working on it, but this has been a struggle and an objective since I began this position and The Voice went weekly (which was last October, we have just begun our 10th month of electronic weekly service). The big date for the launch of this was to be June 1st, and as I understand it, we are still wading in red tape. Another issue is that the University database does not use their e-mail addresses for the students, and therefore, mail addresses that have been on file since '95 are still in the system, and nothing has ever been updated. And I don't know very many people who have the same e-mail address as they did last year, much less from years ago, or whenever they happened to register with AU.

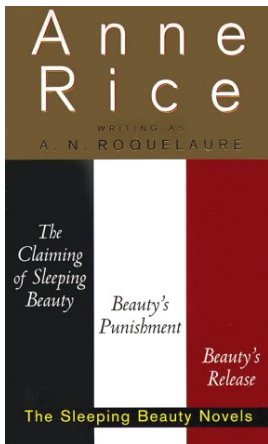
The good news is that although we don't have a lot of subscribers, we do get a fair number of hits. I have to be optimistic that this will only get better with time, and that word of mouth will do its job while we struggle to get our modern conveniences working...

Thanks for the letter. And may all of you write in, make opinions, and converse with your fellow students. This is your forum; use YOUR VOICE!

PRESS RELEASE

From: Student Services Committee, AUSU
TO: The Voice
Date: July 5, 2001
Re: Call for Proposals (Student Clubs)

The Student Services Committee of the Athabasca University Student's Union is issuing a Call for Proposals for the establishment and operation of Student Clubs. Approved proposals may receive annual funding for the club budget. For further information, please contact the Chairperson of the Student Services Committee, Mark Gueffroy, by email at mgueffroy@ausu.org!



The Sleeping Beauty Trilogy: The Claiming of Sleeping Beauty - Beauty's Punishment - Beauty's Release by Anne Rice

Review by Wayne Benedict

I acquired these books out of curiosity. I love Anne Rice's contemporary works and although I don't generally read erotic literature, I was compelled to sample Rice's early work. If I had read these books believing that the fictitious A N Roquelaure pseudonym was the author, I never would have made the connection-nor would I have purchased the books in the first place.

I enjoyed this trilogy on an entirely different level-and markedly less-than Rice's other works. I found that, due to several unbelievable aspects of the tale, I had to continuously remind myself of the "fairytale" nature of the story. The books are very loosely based on the Sleeping Beauty children's story but with an extreme adult twist. This work is definitely not for the closed-minded or the prudish reader, as much of the subject is based on mild bondage, sadism and masochism (BDSM). What I found myself enjoying more than the read itself was speculating on where Anne might have gleaned her inspiration for the superior/inferior erotic relationships between her characters. I'd say that one would have to be very adventurous to delve into these books and extremely determined to finish them.



FED WATCH

By Karl Low

In the Interest of Overcharging

As of July 1, Alberta gas rates dropped for people's heating bills. To be more specific, they've nearly been cut in half. It seems the gas company overcharged the people and businesses of Alberta during the winter, and have accumulated a bit of a surplus. By a bit of a surplus, I mean in the neighbourhood of 5.1 million dollars for AltaGas, and an undisclosed surplus for ATCO Gas.

It seems kind of funny that when winter started the gas companies came out with scare stories about how they wouldn't be able to pay their bills unless they raised the rates dramatically. So the Energy and Utilities Board gave them the go ahead. Now it seems that they over-estimated how high rates needed to be so they've applied to the EUB to drop them again.

Now, to be fair, plans are afoot to reimburse us the amount they overcharged us before, though I doubt this is a large consolation to those people who had to decide between food and heat over the winter. What I wonder though, is if the gas company has had all this money for a few months, do you think they'll be reimbursing the interest they've made on that money? Before you answer that one though, here's another little tidbit, while AltaGas will be issuing the rebate during July, ATCO (which services most of the actual people) has applied to have their rebate spread slowly over the rest of the year from October to January. The EUB has approved this, which must come as good news to Ronald Southern, CEO of ATCO, who just happens to have one of the [highest salaries](#) in the utility sector at over \$950,000.00. After all, now he has time to let that extra money you and I paid finish off a short-term investment.

The EUB release about this can be found [here](#).

Good News from the WTO

The World Trade Organization has ruled that export restraints are not an unfair subsidy to a market. The case came up in the context of the softwood lumber dispute between Canada and the U.S. The gist of the case is that the U.S. was trying to impose duties on Canadian lumber citing that our export restraints amounted to an unfair subsidy by unnaturally controlling the market.

This decision also has implications for the future. We now have some control over multi-national companies entering Canada and trying to export our other natural resources such as water, live-stock, and mineral resources. In essence, it gives a country the power to say "That's not for sale."

More about this decision can be found [here](#).

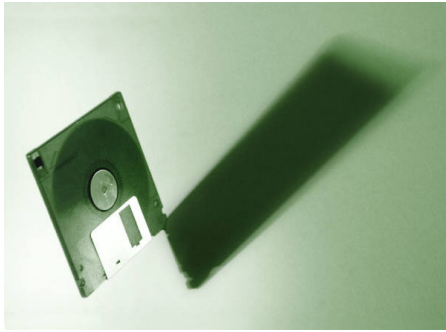
Missing the Point

The Ontario Government is proud to announce that they are [amending](#) the *Tenant Protection Act* so that people who are "involved in, or permitting, illegal drug activity" can be evicted with only 10 days notice instead of the original 20 days.

Of course, if you can prove someone is involved in illegal drug activity, couldn't you just have them arrested and not have to wait any time at all?

Most interestingly though, this change comes as part of the Ontario Government's "Red Tape Reduction Act, 2000." Somehow, reducing the notice time is supposed to reduce red tape? If anything, I can see it creating more, as before you could use the reduced notice wouldn't you have to prove the tenant was actually involved in the illegal drug activity?

Ah well, maybe it's just me.



CWYW-You need it

By A. Balay-Karperien

You did it. You held the deadline back with one hand while with the other hand you frantically put together a noteworthy, comprehensive, current, excellently organized, expertly formatted reference list of 137 citations...and then you found it it was supposed to be in APA format. The aneurysm popped and your academic career ended. Right? Or did you just choose “configure bibliography” in your Word-friendly software and watch the transformation on screen?

Some universities offer students use of CWYW, or “cite while you write” software. Amazing products, these programs let you format your citations and reformat them, back and forth to whatever in-text and end-of-document display options you choose. The software has standard predetermined formats, like APA or Harvard style, that can be updated or modified. And you don’t always have to type the actual references in yourself. Some programs let you download citations. In fact, you can even use the software for doing your research. It can be as easy as typing relevant words or author names in your document, choosing “get reference”, and having your computer present you with a list of abstracts to screen. You pick the one you’re looking for, and there it is in your paper, waiting to be automatically converted to a reference list. The software also lets you create your own databases of relevant information.

If you are interested in checking out a program, go to <http://www.risinc.com/>. The price might scare you, but more reasonable student pricing is available in some places. Having worked with and without the software, I think this kind of thing is an indispensable research tool that both decimates your typing and formatting time and increases the efficiency of your research time. The Information Desk at AU says no such software is available to students yet. But you never know. Maybe somebody will decide this is the right product for a world-leading, cutting edge institution to offer its students!



From my perspective: Reflections on being Canadian

By Debbie Jabbour

Another Canada Day has come and gone, and since being Canadian seems to require humility when it comes to displaying national pride, most of us will tuck away our proud flag waving shows of patriotism until next July 1. It has taken a beer company to inspire us, first with last year’s “I Am Joe and I Am Canadian” rant, and this year’s “I Am Canadian” chant, (in my opinion, a song that ranks right up there with “You Spin Me Round” and “Who Let the Dogs Out” for lack of creativity and ability to irritate). But regardless of its aesthetic value, the Chant has been adopted by the masses, and appears well on its way to becoming the closest thing we have to a national

Canadian song. Molson's has made us sit up and take notice, find a united voice, and start thinking about the things that make Canadians unique.

With "I Am Canadian" running endlessly through my head (and an empty beer can by my side!!!), I began to muse about what truly defines the Canadian spirit, reflecting on just when and how I first became aware of my "Canadian-ness".

I was brought up in a family that considered patriotism unimportant, even dangerous. During elementary and junior high, to me Canada simply represented an extremely boring Social Studies topic that teachers inflicted on us year after year. It was not until I left high school and began to travel that I started to have a true sense of nationality. Traveling in Central America, I soon realized the high value of my Canadian passport. My white skin and English language initially elicited suspicion and the disparaging label of "gringa". Revelation that I was Canadian, however, immediately transformed me into a welcome visitor, and I began to notice a distinction between Canadian and American behavior in foreign countries and the subsequent treatment meted out.

Being Canadian also became an integral part of my career as a musician. I was very much aware of the CRTC regulations that governed Canadian content on radio, and although I disliked the broadcast restrictions those regulations imposed in the early years, I later came to appreciate them as an important force in the development of our current formidable Canadian musical talent base.

I married a non-Canadian, and when he applied for Citizenship I became aware of how deeply many immigrants value the right to call themselves Canadian. I was amazed at the depth of Canadian knowledge required by applicants, and how hard they have to work to earn the citizenship we take for granted. The ceremony itself was stirring and emotional, people of all races and countries who were so proud to stand up and swear allegiance to their new home.

My awareness of being Canadian grew upon starting University. Many AU courses cover specific Canadian studies, and others have sections that deal with Canadian differences in government policies and legal status. In CMNS358, 'Popular Culture and the Media', the influence of American media on Canadians is examined. While researching my final paper for the course, I needed to identify Canadian-produced television shows and movies. What was most interesting and revealing to me was the extent to which these shows and movies go to present themselves as being American!

Yet Canada is quite resistant to American influence in certain areas. GLST308, 'The Americas', ignited my Canadian pride when I learned how the Canadian government refused to knuckle under to the U.S. embargo of Cuba, continuing to maintain diplomatic relations with Castro and acting in a 'peacekeeping' capacity for countries of the Organization of American States. I watched Pierre Trudeau's funeral with interest -- Castro's attendance as a welcome guest in Canada only months after the Elian Gonzalez anti-Cuba frenzy in the U.S.

It was at this point that it finally crystallized in my mind what defines Canada. In one word: RESPECT. We respect other countries, people and cultures. We respect the right of other countries to govern themselves as they choose, and we do not impose our version of democracy on them by force or intrigue if they disagree. We respect the beliefs and opinions of other cultures and welcome their diversity. When we visit other countries, we treat others as equals, and do not demand preferential treatment.

There are many other ways we demonstrate respect. We have chosen to abolish the death penalty as a measure of respect for life. We retain the monarchy, not out of necessity but largely as a gesture of respect. We respect the right to universal access to health care.

It is respect that keeps us from arrogant flag-waving - we are proud of our country but we don't need to rub it in anyone's face.

But although I am quite comfortable defining myself in these terms to the rest of the world, I am less confident in believing that this respect extends to fellow Canadians, especially when it comes to Government treatment of its citizens.

The Voice Advice Columnist has asked for comments on the "privilege of being Canadian". In a subsequent article I will comment on why I don't always feel privileged.

After this article was submitted, Edmonton was the scene of a shameful Canada Day riot that showed little 'respect' for anyone; a scene one reporter called 'a beer commercial gone bad'. The causes and the aftermath have been debated at length in the media, but the general feeling is that all parties involved, both perpetrators and law enforcement, contributed to the escalation of violence that night. While I believe this to be an isolated incident, it is indicative of some problems with attitudes towards law enforcement in Canada, a topic which I will explore next"

Centre for Science To all Athabasca University Physics Students

Thank you for choosing to study Physics with us. You are likely finding the course interesting but challenging, and our unique way of allowing you to do labs at home may have been a major factor in your choosing distance education Physics.

We would like to offer an extra level of service, and so are declaring the last four days of August, the 28th to 31st (Tuesday to Friday) to be Athabasca Physics Week at the Edmonton Learning Centre. We will offer free tutorial and laboratory help there (10030 107 St. Edmonton, second and third floors) from 9:00 to 4:30 each day of that week.

What can you expect? In addition to being able to get both one-on-one and group help on your physics problems, you can use the computer lab to work on reports. You could also expect to do, with some help, but mainly on your own or with partners, a number of 'home lab' exercises using Learning Centre computers. It would be realistic to expect to completely do the labs and writeups for a three-credit course (PHSY 200, 201, or 202) or to do the full set of labs for PHYS 274, but likely not to write up the full set. Please note that if you do lab writeups, they still must be submitted to your tutor and will be marked in the normal time frame (five days). If there is interest, we can attempt special labs as directed group exercises (and replace some of the standard labs with those for marking purposes).

In any case, we look forward to welcoming you for all or part of Athabasca Physics Week. We do require that you register in advance by contacting Rob Carmichael at 481-3704 (Edmonton) or 800-788-9041, xt.-6276, or at robertc@athabascau.ca, and you must let us know whether you will be bringing your own set of home lab equipment borrowed from the library. To a limited extent, we can help you find accommodation if you are coming from out of town.

See you soon!

Martin Connors, Ph.D
Assistant Professor, Course Coordinator for Physics



ENLIGHTENING INFORMATION:

COUNSELLING SERVICES AT ATHABASCA UNIVERSITY

The student life is not an easy one, particularly for AU students who are often working full- or part-time and/or trying to raise a family while squeezing out blocks of study time where possible. AU recognizes the challenges facing its students and provides a variety of support services through its counsellors - Julia McDonald, Julia Nielsen, and Ken Dickson, as well as through its other Student Services areas.

When students have been out of school for many years or even decades, the return to formal learning can be confusing and overwhelming at times. Counselling Services has a number of Study Skills resources, which it makes available through AUSU. Students can also book an appointment with a counsellor to work through specific difficulties they are experiencing in their studies. This can be done by contacting Rhonda Guay or Monica Wolanuk in the Counselling Services intake unit either by phone (1-800-788-9041, extension 6723), by e-mail (counselling@athabascau.ca), or by using the Online Counselling Appointment Form on the AU Student Services web site (<http://www.athabascau.ca/html/services/counselling/apptForm.htm>).

In addition to helping students strengthen their study skills, counsellor also offer learning support in exam preparation, reducing exam anxiety, time management, overcoming procrastination and other areas of a student's life that may be interfering with greater academic success.

Proper alignment between program choice and career aspiration is important if a student is to maintain a strong sense of purpose and motivation in their studies. Career interest exploration and testing, career vision re-evaluation, appropriate program choice, and occupational information and awareness are other areas where AU's counsellors can assist students in a more rewarding AU experience.

The problems that students run into often become more difficult to resolve successfully because students do not access the learning support services available to them while there is still enough time remaining. Counselling Services is raising its profile through articles like this so students will have a greater chance of academic success by using our services as soon as the need arises. Don't ignore the

problems that obstruct your academic progress. Such problems typically do not go away. Rather, they tend to get worse as less and less time remains to resolve them or learn new skills to overcome them. Call us as soon as you recognize that our learning support services could benefit you.

So, check out the Counselling Services web site at

<http://www.athabascau.ca/html/services/advise/conserv.html> or contact us by phone or e-mail if we can assist you in achieving greater academic success, because your success is our goal.

Phone: 1-800-788-9041, extension 6723

E-mail: counselling@athabascau.ca

APPLY TO JOIN THE STUDENT SERVICES COMMITTEE OF AUSU OR ONE OF IT'S SUB-COMMITTEES! The Student Services Committee, and four of it's sub-committees, are currently seeking volunteers for Committee Member positions. Positions may also be available on the other AUSU committees. For further information, please contact the Student Services Committee Chairperson, Mark Gueffroy, by email at mgueffroy@ausu.org, or contact the Edmonton office of AUSU at (800) 788-9041 ext. 3413.

WHAT MAKES BEING CANADIAN A PRIVILEGE? PRIME MINISTER JEAN CHRETIEN RECENTLY WAS QUOTED AS SAYING, 'BEING A CANADIAN IS A PRIVILEGE!' WHAT MAKES BEING CANADIAN A PRIVILEGE FOR YOU?

Please send your response to advice75@hotmail.com and your answer may be included in a future article in The Voice!"

**GOT PROBLEMS? NEED ADVICE?
LOOKING FOR AN HONEST OPINION?**

Send your comment, question, or concern to The Voice's Advice Columnist at advice75@hotmail.com

WRITE FOR THE VOICE!

Fill on our online application at www.ausu.org/voice/write.html or contact Tammy Moore at tmoore@ausu.org.