

# THE VOICE

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[www.ausu.org/voice](http://www.ausu.org/voice)

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## A Bug In Your Ear...

**1. PSYCHOLOGY CLUB.** Are you enrolled in the Psychology program? The Athabasca University Psychology Department and AUSU are in the process of collecting information to see who is interested in a Psychology Club, who is interested in organizing it, and what you might want out of such a club. We are looking for participants, volunteers to run the club, and ideas as to what its purpose should be. Some great suggestions have already been made, for example, an interactive forum for psychology students to chat online, with occasional guest 'speakers' on the forum. If you are interested and want to be part of the Club, please email [pennyh@athabascau.ca](mailto:pennyh@athabascau.ca).

**2. VOLUNTEERS????** As distance learning students at AU, we don't always have opportunities to get involved with the student body. AUSU is trying to change that, and have many ideas and events planned that will hopefully allow us a greater sense of unity, and contribute to a more positive student experience for all. Of course nothing great can be accomplished without many willing hands, and we have many students expressing interest in becoming involved in some way. What we need now is a student willing to act as Volunteer Coordinator. An honorarium will be provided.

If you have some free time you can devote to organizing our volunteers, please email a short bio to Debbie at: [djabbour@ausu.org](mailto:djabbour@ausu.org)

## LETTER TO THE EDITOR: Response to "Students Refused SFB Funding?"

In response to the article in the July 4<sup>th</sup> issue of The Voice by Tamra Ross Low, I would like to add a few comments. I believe that what Debbie may have been referring to is the monitoring that AU and the SFB will be doing in the future. In order to obtain additional funding (a second loan/grant), students will have to pass a minimum of 60% of their courses. If the students are unable to do so, the Student Financial Aid Officer must include a letter recommending that the SFB does not approve additional funding for the student.

For more information, I would suggest that you contact the Student Financial Aid Officer of Athabasca University at (800) 788-9041 ext. 6161.

Sincerely,  
Mark Gueffroy

## **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](mailto:mgueffroy@ausu.org)!



## **WOMEN'S ISSUES: POVERTY & SURVIVAL**

**By Tamra Ross Low**

As I have recently switched my major to the Women's Studies program, and as it has prompted me to do a lot of thinking about women's issues and feminine portrayal in the media, I thought I'd do a couple of articles a month on women's issues, interspersed with some personal reflections. This time I wanted to talk a bit about some little known factors in violence against women.

There is no doubt that economic exploitation and impoverishment is the most crucial issue facing women today. This will not be a universally accepted opinion, however, because many people believe that other, more disturbing issues – such as wife abuse, or the right to abortion – must be the focus of any fight for increased women's rights.

Nevertheless, it can be shown that the susceptibility of women to poverty in our country and around the world is the key factor which makes women vulnerable to abusive and controlling situations and which undermines women's positions on political issues. Therefore, until we can ensure that women have equal access to good jobs with adequate benefits we cannot help women to overcome the many other disadvantages and indignities which plague them.

Whenever anyone speaks about the subjugation of women, we envision the physically battered or emotionally abused wife. We ask, "Why don't these women just leave?" Certainly, if any man were in a situation where someone was abusing him or controlling his life he would fight back or get out. Unfortunately, too many people assume that women have the same choice, and the result is that those who stay are branded as weak, submissive, or masochistic. What many people do not realize,

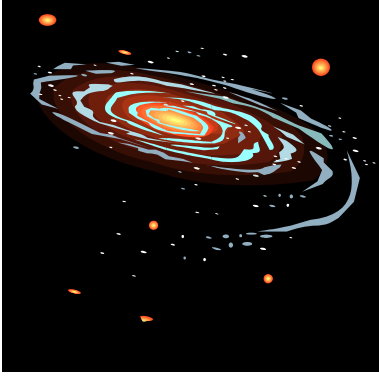
however, is the great financial disadvantages that many single women still face –particularly those with children.

These financial disadvantages can be broken down into several groups, many of which are outlined by Stephanie Seguino and Sandra S. Butler (Review Of Social Economy, Summer 1998 v56 n2 p190) in *To work or not to work: Is that the right question?:*

- I. While many women work full-time as homemakers or mothers, their work is not valued in the job marketplace and they enter the workforce in entry-level positions.
- II. Women's wages are still generally lower than men's are. This is attributable both to the tendency for women to receive lower pay for the same work, and for women to be relegated to lower skill/level prestige jobs.
- III. In the case of divorce, the children still most often go with the mother. Unfortunately, the cost and scarceness of child-care are serious limiting factors for women considering entering the work force. Often the cost of childcare takes up half or more of her pay. Mothers also need jobs with flexible hours.
- IV. Women's jobs are primarily located in the service and sales sectors, and rarely include benefits packages to cover prescriptions, health, or dental care. This is a significant problem for a woman with children, and is even worse if she or one of her children is sick or disabled.
- V. Because women are mostly relegated to the service or sales sectors, they are more likely to experience periods of unemployment than men. Additionally, part-time jobs generally do not include benefits, and they pay too little to support even one person.
- VI. Women have more reason to be concerned about their personal safety and the safety of their children and therefore have incentive to avoid living in the lowest cost areas, which may be nearer to some jobs.
- VII. While many divorced women or women with children have legal rights to spousal or child support payments, the men often refuse to pay. Such a woman has legal recourse, but she may not be able to afford representation. In addition, there are many loopholes that allow men to shirk payments, such as quitting a job as soon as the government starts to garnishee wages.

All of these limitations weigh heavily on a woman wishing to live independently. In many cases, women will choose to remain in abusive relationships because they fear trying to support themselves and their children on low wages without benefits packages. To understand this, try to imagine having a child diagnosed with a long-term illness, such as diabetes, or severe asthma, and not being able to afford to buy medication. In a case like this, often the only recourse is to quit work and go on welfare, which barely provides enough for a family to subsist.

To end the physical and sexual exploitation of women we must understand their economic exploitation first. Too often, the answer to spousal abuse is to provide more shelters, but without an assurance of economic stability, many women will never use these services. Our efforts to help abused women are admirable, but they are band-aid solutions that do not attack the root of the problem.



## Exceeding the Speed of Light? By Wayne Benedict

I have a mind problem that has been gnawing at me for some years now and I wonder if there isn't a physics aficionado who might be able to shed some light on it for me. My question is based on the theory of the Big Bang and an accelerating, expanding universe. An article (The Evolution of the Universe) appearing in the October 1994 issue of *Scientific American* magazine explained in part that "...very distant objects—radio galaxies and quasars--... appear to be moving away at greater than 90 percent of the speed of light. Contemporary views are that the speed of light is a barrier that cannot be exceeded. The universe is expanding out in all directions from the point of the Big Bang and galaxies are accelerating with time (some moving away at speeds approaching the speed of light). Since our world resides in one of those galaxies, are we not moving away from galaxies that are located on the far side of the point at which the Big Bang occurred at speeds greater than the speed of light in relation to our two points in space-time? If this were true, then we would never see those galaxies, as their light would never reach us.

Let me put it this way. Suppose that I were floating in space at the point where the Big Bang occurred. I look to my left and I see a galaxy receding from me at a speed greater than half of the speed of light. I look to my right and I see a different galaxy receding from me in the opposite direction at a speed greater than half of the speed of light. Now suppose that I am on a planet circling a star in one of the two galaxies—let's say Earth. Isn't our galaxy moving away from the other at a speed greater than that of the speed of light in relation to each other given that they are each exceeding half of the speed of light in opposite directions? And if this were possible, how would one ever be able to detect it given that the light from one galaxy would never reach the other?

If someone feels that they have an answer to this question, I can be reached by email at [wayneben@telus.net](mailto:wayneben@telus.net)



## FED WATCH

By Karl Low

### When Bigger is not Better

The Canadian Transportation Agency is holding a [hearing](#) here in Calgary to look into whether obesity actually counts as a disability. It seems that that three people have complained about Air Canada's policy of charging 1.5 times the normal rate if a person is so obese that one seat just isn't big enough for them.

Now I understand that obesity can stem from a variety of factors, and for some people it isn't that easy to control, but I'm afraid I have to side with Air Canada on this one. After all, they call it a "seat" sale – so if you take up more than one, you should have to pay more than one. I tend to think these people are

getting a bit of a 'disability' break already in that Air Canada doesn't charge them for the full two seats; after all, they certainly can't sell that second seat to someone else.

As for whether it's a disability or not, I just don't think so. We live in a society with an abundance of information on what is a healthy diet and with endless opportunities to exercise. We also have access to psychotherapy resources to address the root causes of obesity. I'm not saying that it's pleasant, and I'm certainly not saying that it's easy, but a disability? Disability by its very nature means something beyond a person's control. Obesity simply isn't. Look at old Jared on the Subway commercials.

### **FTAA Draft Documents Released**

The Free Trade Agreement of the Americas have finally released their [draft documents](#) so that people can actually get a look at them. I've taken a look myself and for the most part what they show is that any agreement will be a while off yet. With disagreements between such small things as "All member nations" and "The members", I don't foresee any real agreement happening soon.

Still, this is a large step, and one that Canada has been urging for quite some time. Combine this with the Minister of International Trade's [recent statements](#) that NAFTA's Chapter 11 rules for dispute resolution haven't been good for the people of the countries involved (as opposed to the companies) and I'm starting to think he might actually be getting the point. That's good news for all of us.

### **Alberta Participating in Climate Change Conference**

Normally I'm pretty disparaging about Alberta's commitment to actually doing something about climate change, however I have to admit that in this [news release](#) they do raise some good points about Kyoto's viability, especially with the United States pulling out of it. The way I see it, Kyoto's main strength was that it was global, as a number of its provisions weren't the best. With that benefit taken out of it by the U.S., there's a desperate need for some other agreement to be decided upon.

Some people say that the climate change may well be a normal thing to do with the earth's orbit, but my feeling on the matter is why risk it? Why not implement controllable hardships on production our standard of living now than suffer the uncontrollable hardships that will come if it turns out that climate change isn't a natural phenomenon and we haven't done anything about it?

### **Alberta's "eerie" Tornadoes**

Finally, I usually try to avoid touching the regular news media stories, since if you want to know about them you can watch the regular news, right? But this one just got to me. With the recent tornado that touched down near Caroline, the mainstream news media was all over themselves calling it an eerie coincidence with the one that struck almost exactly one year earlier at Pine Lake, only an hour's drive away.

Haven't these people heard of something called a tornado season? There's nothing eerie about it. At a certain time of year, certain places are prone to seeing a tornado. Nobody calls it an eerie coincidence when a tornado touches down in Kansas. The only thing I find eerie about it is the uncanny ability of a Tornado to home in on a trailer park.



## **From my perspective: Respect and the Police**

**By Debbie Jabbour**

Respect was certainly not in evidence on Edmonton's Whyte Avenue this Canada Day when drunk and unruly rioters smashed windows and trashed businesses along the street. Many theories have been proposed as to why such an event occurred, and blame has been directed at virtually everyone - from the rioters, to beer companies, to Whyte Avenue bars, to the Canada Day Celebrations, to Edmonton City Council, to the police. Assigning blame, however, does not address the fundamental reason it happened – which in my opinion was a lack of respect. There was no respect for the businesses who were damaged, nor was there respect for this city and fellow Canadians. Most importantly, there was no respect for the police who were attempting to quell the riot.

Respect, of course, is a two-way street, and must be earned, as the cliché goes. I watched televised footage of the riot, and certain images stood out. A young man was walking along the sidewalk, followed by several police officers with plastic riot shields. One officer ran forward and roughly shoved the young man with his shield. The young man stumbled, quickly looked behind, and began to walk faster. The officer was not satisfied and ran forward and pushed him yet again. A young girl was trying to get away from the street to her nearby apartment when she was grabbed by police officers and tossed around, leaving her with bruises up and down her arms. Two brothers who were also trying to get out of the riot were attacked by police officers, one was slammed to the pavement and handcuffed, although he claimed to have had no part in the melee. We had dinner the next day at a Whyte Avenue Restaurant, and our waiter confirmed these stories, since he too was caught trying to get to his car and was roughly prevented by police. While certainly in a riot situation the police cannot easily determine who is guilty, it seems to me that many officers involved were inciting rioters by being unnecessarily aggressive - you push people around and the human tendency is to fight back.

But more than police aggression was involved. Why did these young rioters not respect the law and the police presence in the first place? Let me share a few observations with you, that I believe may explain why many young people do not respect the police in this country.

Last week I was waiting for my daughter outside the coffee shop where she works, when an event caught my eye in my rear view mirror. At the strip mall across the street, two police cars were parked in front of the liquor store, and two officers were holding a young man. As I watched, they handcuffed him behind his back. One officer then drove away. The remaining officer began to walk down the street and the young man followed him. They crossed the street (stopping traffic), then proceeded down the block, the officer still leading while the young man in handcuffs followed behind. I was disturbed by this and called the local station to ask if this was common practice. Is not a person who is arrested presumed innocent until he appears in court and is proven guilty? Why then would he be paraded around a busy street in handcuffs? The police response was that I should be glad to see someone punished for their crime, and that this young man 'probably' had admitted to a B&E down the street, so the officer was simply escorting him there to follow up, and that I should not feel concerned for the young man's humiliation since he deserved it. I'm sorry but I can't agree. Making a public spectacle of someone who has not yet had their opportunity to prove their innocence or guilt is a lack of respect for basic human rights.

As we were discussing this incident, my daughter told me another story. Several police officers are regulars in the coffee shop, and they are treated to half-price on everything as a measure of respect. About a month back, the mother of one of the young employees stopped by to see if her daughter needed some supper, since she goes to work straight from school. She offered to bring back some food from the McDonald's down the street for both her daughter & another employee. As she was leaving, two police officers also finished their coffee and left, accompanied by warm, friendly goodbyes from the two young employees. She got into her car and drove away, followed by the police. She had driven only a few blocks when the police put on their flashers and pulled her over. Turns out her plate was expired, due to an oversight on her part (she was in the middle of a messy divorce and mundane matters were not receiving full attention). She explained that she was just going to pick up supper for her daughter, and asked the officers to please give her a break, and let her go home and deal with the registration the next day. The police refused, and not only did they write her a ticket, they called a tow truck. Again she pleaded with them - could they not at least give her a break on the tow and escort her home themselves? Not a chance. These officers don't give breaks, they just receive them. The young coffee shop employees subsequently found it extremely difficult to continue to smile while they poured these officers their half-price coffee. Following the letter of the law was more important than showing some basic human decency and mutual respect.

These are private stories I have heard, but there are countless public ones that also give a pretty good indicator of why people are losing respect for the police. Recently in Edmonton, an unmarked police car speeding down Yellowhead trail hit a car turning left at an intersection, cutting it in two, and severely injuring two little boys riding in the back, one of whom later died. These officers were not speeding to respond to an emergency, nor did they have their lights flashing, they were just speeding because they could get away with it. These same two officers were also allegedly involved in an incident a few weeks previously where an agitated schizophrenic man was pepper-sprayed and arrested so aggressively that he died in the process.

Within the court system, police often show little respect as well. Recently an Edmonton court threw two cases out after it came to light that the police used excessive psychological bullying and abuse to extract a confession, one a woman whose two year old died of a morphine overdose, the other a man they suspected of having beaten his child to death. In both cases a confession was extracted – yet both turned out to be innocent. Of course this is nothing new, police tactics that psychologically abuse a suspected wrongdoer with lies and bullying in an interview are common knowledge. They even have an acceptable name for it, the "Reid Technique". Personally I find the idea that police can extract from an innocent person a confession of wrongdoing in this manner quite chilling.

We often read about situations in the U.S. and elsewhere where police aggression and brutality incite riots, but the stories are getting closer to home. Protestors of the Summit of the Americas in Quebec allegedly had their rights violated by police who used excessive force in an abusive manner. And of course we have Whyte Avenue, a situation currently under review, but one where I have no doubt similar allegations will surface. In addition, police have now seized media videos of the riot in order to charge more people, seriously compromising the impartiality and safety of reporters. To this we can add photo radar - Edmonton's Police Department's biggest cash cow - and an invasion of privacy that is impossible to fight in court.

Alberta's Police Act is currently under review, and one of the topics being discussed is establishment of an independent agency to investigate allegations of misconduct against officers. Perhaps the Police Act review should also look at police training in the area of respect. The police are hired by Canadian citizens to serve as protection, are given special powers, and are accountable to the public for how they

use these powers. Without a healthy respect for the public they serve, police become free to use these powers in an abusive manner. One may argue that police who abuse their authority are in the minority. However, the fact that this abuse exists and is tolerated by our government is a major factor in the negative attitudes many young people have towards the police.

Mutual respect will go a long way towards preventing another incident like the shameful Canada Day riot. If the police wish to be respected, they must start demonstrating respect in return.

## **Alberta takes over financing of provincial student loans**

*Alberta Learning Press Release*

**Edmonton...** The Government of Alberta will take over responsibility for the financing of all Alberta Student Loans issued after July 31, 2001 – when the province's current risk-share agreement with the Canadian Imperial Bank of Commerce (CIBC) expires.

"Right across the country, the banks are saying that they are no longer interested in financing student loans," said Minister of Learning Dr. Lyle Oberg. "It is in the best interest of students and taxpayers that we proceed with a move to direct financing now. Our priority continues to be ensuring that service to students is not compromised and remains timely. In the longer-term, this move will open the doors to further harmonization between the federal and provincial student loan programs resulting in an even more user-friendly system for students." Alberta has contracted EDULINX Canada Corporation to administer the loans. The province will provide funding and continue to manage the program. Alberta Learning will also continue processing the loan applications and determining student eligibility.

The province anticipates that it will issue approximately \$100 million in loans to more than 40,000 students this coming year. Starting August 1, EDULINX will distribute funds, administer the loans and collect repayments on behalf of the province at no additional cost to Albertans. Student loans negotiated before August 1 will remain with their existing financial institutions.

As part of their contract to serve Alberta's students EDULINX will be on major campuses across the province this fall to process Alberta Student Loans. Students will also be able have their loans processed through participating [Canada Post Outlets](#).

"This change is largely behind the scenes. The source of funding for our student loans is changing, the way the program works isn't," said Oberg. "The only difference for students is that they will deal with a contracted service provider instead of a bank to have their loans processed."

Alberta already has one of the most comprehensive and flexible student finance systems in the country. The move to direct financing follows on a number of recent enhancements to the system including the addition of the Alberta Student Loan Relief Program earlier this year.

This program automatically limits the amount owing on a student's Alberta Student Loan in their first and final years of study.

For more information on Alberta's student financial assistance programs visit [www.alis.gov.ab.ca](http://www.alis.gov.ab.ca)

## **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 28<sup>th</sup> to 31<sup>st</sup> (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](mailto: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 AU

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](mailto: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, counsellors 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](mailto: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](mailto: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](mailto: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](mailto:advice75@hotmail.com)

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**WRITE FOR THE VOICE!**

Fill on our online application at [www.ausu.org/voice/write.html](http://www.ausu.org/voice/write.html) or contact Tammy Moore at [tmoore@ausu.org](mailto:tmoore@ausu.org).