

THE VOICE

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www.ausu.org/voice



A Bug In Your Ear...

LETTER TO THE EDITOR:

You know, it's kind of funny how people get defensive when they have got themselves in hot water. In the latest rumblings at AUSU, it seems that I have got one person in particular very upset, but in my mind, who cares? I am more concerned about seeing the average student get some benefits out of his or her students' union fees, rather than use my office for personal gain as some current members are doing. Because of the incessant whining and personal attacks of one VP in particular, I resigned my position as VP-Academic to preserve my health, and to pay penance to the student body for my many mistakes. In my case, though, I did not make a complete jerk of myself in Athabasca, like one Executive did, thereby causing AUSU trouble. One of your current representatives has done this, yet he is still collecting his honorarium, and yet more funds, and not been reprimanded by Council.

One of the old policies that we followed in AUSU when I was on Council was that all Councillors and Executives would not be paid for writing articles for the Voice. Yet, even before the formal separation of the Voice from the operations of AUSU, Council suddenly changed its mind and decided to grant themselves the privilege of getting paid for Voice articles; I guess that they need the money worse than you do. With regard to the political columns that are being written in the Voice, I noticed that there is one person who is not on Council that is writing some very insightful articles. In the beginning, when the editor, Tammy Moore, was asking for volunteers for this task, I threw my name in the hat because I was not sure that there would be any volunteers. Tammy replied that she had volunteers, and if I still wanted to get involved, I would have to submit a copy of my writing to "one of the powers that be." Since I prefer to write short articles on various topics, I left it to "the powers that be" to figure out who her political writers would be. Imagine my surprise when I read the Voice one time, to see the nom de plume of an Executive member that is now a political writer, getting paid (I am told) \$ 100 a month for such an endeavour. So much for AUSU's policy that states members of Council "...shall not use their position to secure special privileges, favours, or exemptions for themselves or any other person." I would like to point out that Tammy Moore is a very decent and honourable person and has not been involved in these unscrupulous affairs.

Having read some of the documents of the AUSU, it appears that they cannot even figure out the concept of planning contracts. Telus was contracted to do work on the AUSU website at a rather exorbitant price, but another person came along who offered to do the work for a much more

reasonable price. Unfortunately, YOU through your students' union fees may have to pay 15% to get out of the contract with Telus. Couldn't your "great leaders" have figured out to go with the lower priced contract in the first place? I guess not, but when you are not spending your own money, who cares? I do, and I gave up my job for my errors.

I noticed that AUSU is seeking volunteers. It is a great concept, but when I mention my experience, it might give you second thoughts. First, I was asked to work on the Legislative Committee to help overhaul the Bylaws. The Chairperson got quite irate when I suggested that the duties of the President be changed to include the words that "The President be required to lobby the Athabasca University Governing Council for additional student representation." She did not like that one bit, and an argument ensued. As people who are paying a sizeable amount of tuition to AU, don't you think that you should have more say on Governing Council about the operation of the University? I think so, but apparently your Students' Union thinks otherwise. Normally, volunteers who have worked on a project get some kind of stipend-WHICH I DO NOT WANT-or at least a note of thanks in the minutes of Council or by a letter sent in the mail. I received none of these things—I guess that AUSU does not like me anymore. I was offered two volunteer positions, given certain promises and duties to follow and lo and behold, Council changed the whole rules of the game without consulting me or even apologizing. Keep this in mind when AUSU asks you to volunteer.

In its latest quest to reward itself, Council has come up with some "special ideas." I should point out at this time that one of the members of Council who boycotted last year's Council retreat suddenly showed up at this one—I guess the fact that I wasn't there helped. In any case, one of the motions passed reads as follows:

"MOTION 070701.04

BIRT each council member be permitted to expense a set amount for cellphone expenses without (emphasis added) a copy of the bill each month. The amount is to be:

\$ 80.00 President

\$ 60.00 Executives

\$ 20.00 Chairs of Committees

\$ 10.00 Council Members

N. Greenfield/K. Getta—Carried (Unanimously)"

Does it seem reasonable to you that your money be spent to support somebody else's cellphone use, when it is highly unlikely that all of the amount will be used for AUSU business? I remember two members of Council complaining to me about using the cheapest way possible to do my duties, yet they have proven themselves to be hypocrites by voting for this nonsense? Haven't they heard of payphones?

According to AUSU's policies "...it is imperative that public office not be used for personal gains?" Clearly, Council has violated this maxim and should resign forthwith

If I would have tried to do a thing like Council has done here, I would have been thrown out right away, yet these people have the nerve to hold on to their well paying jobs and grab more of your money. At least I took the honourable way out and resigned? Yet, this group just hangs on and debates about giving Executives a credit card with a \$ 500 limit, ostensibly for "approved" expenses."

Yes, to people on Council, it might seem like I have an axe to grind, which I guess is partially true. Yet, when I see the nonsense that they have been pulling off with regard to YOUR student

union fees, I feel as though I should say something. I will be filing a formal complaint with the University to make sure that AUSU gets its house in order, so that your student union fees are spent on serving YOU.

Yours in academia,
Darren L. Kereluk (my REAL name)

Dear Darren,

In regards to council members getting paid for their contributions to the Voice – I worked very long and hard to get rid of that stupid rule which says, in essence, that if you care enough about your school to run for office, your opinions as a student are no longer valid. I see very little connection between the student writing for the paper and the student who plays politics. Spending Saturday mornings on teleconference council meetings for your monthly honorarium is hardly related to writing a book review you wish to share with the student body and collecting \$20.00 for your efforts. The two are not related in either duty or reward. If council members were required to write an article for the Voice each month as part of their duties, I can understand you getting bitchy if I was slipping them cash on the side. However, this is not the case, and a council member who chooses to use their time and energy to contribute to the Voice is not only free to do so, but more than welcome to payment for their contributions. Council members may write as students and submit for publication, the same as any of the other students may. Granted, I don't want all of this pointing fingers and blaming everyone for what's going wrong in council (hard news, yes –whinging sessions, no)– which is why we have a representative from council who emails me all press releases which the council decides to submit, and any individual articles must be submitted as the student or individual.

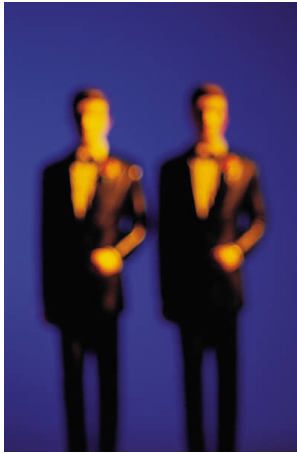
I understand that you had a difficult time in council, and now you are angry and want someone to pay. Well, okay, you want one council member in particular to pay, as I understand, since none of my other council-related writers are being slapped with the glove of self-righteous injustice. Just to get the record straight, I have several members of council who write regularly; Mark Gueffroy, Norm Greenfield, and Debbie Jabbour are all members of council, and have written for me for free (while the 'law' was in effect), as well as after they were able to be paid for their contributions (as it was my pleasure to do so). I have writers who work directly for the University, writers who no longer work for the University, and a handful (four, to be exact, for those of you thinking I'm stretching one into a handful) of writers who prefer not to write under their own name, and all are students with voices, opinions, thoughts and ideas. The fact that they submit and write well is what gets their articles in the paper. The articles being written are not going against any of my personal ethics regarding the necessity of respect regarding fellow students, so (with the exception of the copyright infringement act), I don't care if you want to write as Micky Mouse as long as you have something to say, and are going to make a decent job of writing it up.

Now, as for a council member holding the news position. See above.

I am not giving out favours to people by 'allowing' them to write for the Voice. As many of you will remember, I spent months trying to find anyone at all to submit. I want talented writers. I want interested people. I want opinions, ideas, conflicts, issues and concerns to be shared with your peers. I don't want the Voice to be used to fling doo-doo at past grudges.

Cell phone bills, however, are an interesting topic for discussion... Feel free to elaborate, and fill us all in.

Sincerely, Tammy Moore



...From my soapbox: Gay Rights

By Derek Broughton

CBC Newsworld recently commissioned a Leger poll about gay rights. Apparently 76% of Canadians believe that gays should have the same rights as everybody else. However, only 53.5% believe gays should be able to adopt children.

Am I just dense, or does this not make any sense? Gays should have all the same rights as everybody else, except that they shouldn't have some of the rights that everybody else has? Frankly, I can more easily accept the neolithic attitudes of the 24% of Canadians who don't think gays should be treated like people, than the attitude of the similar number of people who think that equality can be selective.

For that 22.5% of you out there who can't grasp the concept of equality, I provide a small lesson. The rest of you can skip to the next article with a sense of smug superiority.

Surely, if you have loving caring parents it's got to be better for a child than being raised in an orphanage. Can it matter that both parents are of the same sex? Nobody has (in my memory) suggested that single parents should lose their children because they can't provide the balanced parenting of both a father and mother.

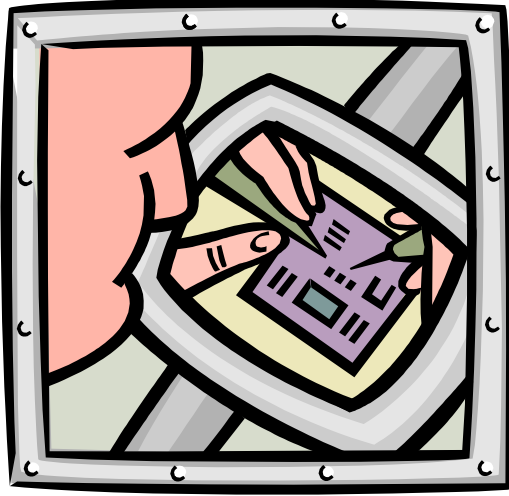
So this must have to do with the nature of homosexuality and the fear held by 22.5% of Canadians that if we let gays adopt they'll somehow produce more homosexuals. I won't attempt to argue whether one is born gay, or becomes gay at some later stage in life (the old nature versus nurture argument), I'll just demonstrate how little it matters.

If we were to assume that people are born gay, then what can be the problem with letting gays adopt? It's not as if the sexual orientation of the parents could have an effect on the child. The same situation arises if we assume homosexuality somehow develops at a later time, but the child is adopted at an old enough age that gender identity is fixed.

Therefore, what you people are scared of is that somehow gays will get hold of young, still impressionable, children and turn them gay. I have one simple thing to say to you: Most gays in North America grew up with both a father and a mother. Perhaps, then, if we wanted to reduce the number of gays in future society, we should stop allowing heterosexuals to adopt.

By this point you may have guessed I'm hopping mad about this poll. Perhaps that's a good reason for avoiding polls. I realize that this is a subject that generates more than a little fervor on all sides, so I'll say right now I won't be accepting email from anybody who wants to quote a Christian religious basis for discriminating against gays. If you think there's a GOSPEL injunction against homosexuality, you don't know your bible. If you think there's an OLD Testament injunction, you haven't read your NEW testament, and if you're relying on St. Paul, well, I'm sorry.

Otherwise, if you agree with me, write. If you disagree with me, write louder!
I can be reached at dbroughton@bigfoot.com.



The Futurenet

By Audrey Balay-Karperien

“Networking” means a lot of different things to a lot of different people. To vast numbers of coastal folk, for instance, it’s all about fishing and supper. To the corporate and the chic, it’s all about your people and my people. But to the technologically embroiled, it’s a virtual way of life. I’m not talking about ancient dial-up technology. Not your run of the mill LAN or Ethernet. Not even high-speed access and the Microsoft Network. I’m talking about the latest real-time academic nets in which you just might find yourself soon entangled.

This net thing started simply, with file transfer protocols, email, and telnets. It evolved into increasingly interactive chat groups, blossomed into a mesh of multifarious archive/search and presentation technologies, and has now, as a product of itself, spawned virtual laboratory nets. Surpassing video-conferencing, online discussion groups, and virtual white boards at NetMeetings, these blends of rapidly advancing technology are the most exciting webs of learning and discovery yet.

At Iowa State University, for example, sophisticated imaging, computer, and communications technology lets materials engineering students independently and simultaneously probe and work on 3d images of surfaces such as microchips. At Mount Allison in Nova Scotia (<http://www.mta.ca/~jehrman/wcdetail.htm>), a combination of web cam, digital imaging program, and chat program lets users the world over link up to explore samples under a single scanning tunnelling microscope in near or real time. But it goes beyond sharing images and data. At the Argonne National Laboratory (near Chicago, if you wondered) the “Telepresence” e-lab project is being developed to provide “live video imaging and remote control of unique scientific instrumentation for collaborative research and teaching” (<http://www.amc.anl.gov/docs/anl/TPM/TPMHomePage.html>).

In one of the most exciting, if not fantastic, instances of these “collaboratories” (as they are starting to be called), at a recent neurology conference, Dr. Garnette Sutherland of the University of Calgary presented a lecture on his view of neuro-surgery to come. Dr. Sutherland, a visionary who works with intra-operative magnetic resonance imaging, proposed that the day is not that far off when high-resolution, real-time imaging and transmission coupled with really remote control of robotic operating instruments will permit surgeons to perform surgery at a distance (from the beaches of Tahiti, for example, where net working really is a matter of supper).



No Fuss, No Muss, No Bother... Just use it, and throw it away! By Tamra Ross Low

This morning I was watching a Marketplace report on over-packaging and the initiative the federal government is considering to combat the problem. The plan, based on an already successful European model, is to charge manufacturers for the collecting, sorting, and recycling of product packaging. It is believed that this will encourage companies to use as little packaging as possible. Apparently, this system has been very successful in Europe and Japan.

I am not convinced that it will work as well here, however. Sure, manufacturers are always looking for ways to reduce production costs, but their main objective is still to sell products. Unfortunately, Americans and Canadians are in love with packaging. I am not convinced that Europeans are as enamoured with it.

In the fifties and sixties there was a convenience craze. Products were marketed based on their disposability. The TV dinner was introduced, and a selling feature was that it left no dishes or pots and pans to clean up later. Convenience foods became the rage, as did paper plates, plastic cutlery, disposable diapers, and cardboard milk cartons (no more washing out milk bottles to get your deposit back!).

But we now know how dangerous this kind of thinking is, right? The modern North American is supposed to cringe at the thought of products that you use once and throw away. Any manufacturer using disposability as a selling feature for their products would be on the receiving end of a whole lot of consumer outrage, right? Hardly. I was shocked several months ago when they introduced the new Swiffer broom - a classic 1950's disposable product if there ever was one. Until now, you bought a broom and owned it for years, but no more! Swiffer has figured out how to keep gouging your pocket book each and every month. This broom is useless without the disposable cleaning cloths. The newer product, the Swiffer Wet Jet also requires constant refills of liquid cleanser as well.

I was sure the Swiffer would bomb. Surely people would be offended by a product that produced constant waste and required the endless purchase of heavily packaged refills. Surely a normal broom is pretty convenient already. Sadly, however, Swiffer is one of the best-selling new products on the market. Other archaic marketing techniques are still working as well. Remember when Whisk convinced us to fear 'ring-around-the-collar' and Shower-To-Shower said that we would smell offensive if we didn't powder after we washed? No one ever really knew what ring-around-the-collar was before these ads. It was an invented problem, designed to sell a product. Surely we would never fall for that again? Okay, how about Febreze? Before this stuff, did anyone every complain about odours in their carpet, their sofa, or their mattress? Of course not. Febreze invented this problem to sell a product, and against our better judgement, we let them convince us that we must soak our upholstery and our linens in liquid chemicals to remove these odours, lest anyone think we are not clean! Mysteriously, airing out the house no longer is enough.

I guess I should not be surprised. We can blame companies for over-packaging all we like, but we demand it. Parents don't want to see their kids grow up with poisonous air and festering landfills, but who is buying all those pampers and little cardboard juice boxes? Parents just love cute little individual packs for kids. It saves having to wash a dish if you have to spoon out servings from a larger container, I guess. It's the kids that will eventually be wading in all those rancid diapers and perfect-as-the-day-you-bought-them, totally un-biodegradable juice boxes anyway.

Like I said, I should not be surprised. We'll package anything. We seem to prefer our pets that way. Just look at the success of William Wegman's dolled-up [Weimeraner prints](#). Babies benefit from liberal packaging as well. Anne Geddes has made a million dollar industry of turning human children into conversational objects. What's cuter than three little babies? Three little babies dressed as bears and stuffed in [flower pots](#)! How about a bouquet of [multi-racial infants](#) with flower petals pasted to their heads, or an oddly disturbing calendar shot of four, weeks-old babies sleeping in [suspended cocoons](#). Once, popular baby pictures were nudes. We thought they were plenty sweet without accoutrement. How can we question the objectification of women in our country when we are so enamoured with the total degradation and objectification of our children.

I may be getting off on a tangent here about the baby thing, but it is linked to our problems with over-packaging. We value what looks the cutest, the prettiest, or the most colourful. If we find babies and puppies more appealing when they are outrageously costumed, then surely it is a natural extension to choose those products that most please our eyes. Manufacturers know this. That is why they spend the extra money on layer after layer of packaging. St. Ives skin-care products have often been cited as one of the most over-packaged on the market, but they are still one of the best-selling mass-market lines. The reason is that St. Ives products--really very cheap stuff--are made to look like the high end cosmetic lines by the use of their clever, multi-part packages.

So, I am sceptical about this new initiative. It may convince some companies to reduce packaging, but many already have done this. Items like laundry soap (except the hideously over-packaged tablets - another 1950's style convenience product) now come in concentrate, shampoo and conditioner bottles can be refilled at many salons, and cereals, like Nature's Path, come in bags instead of boxes. These are specific types of products, however. Nature's Path appeals strongly to health-conscious people and environmentalists already. Laundry soap is not a glamorous, so we feel good about buying the less packaged brand, and shampoo never really came in fancy packages anyway. Other items, however, like cosmetics, disposable razors and cartridges (for the new Venus razor, they are individually wrapped!) and perfume are very reliant on fancy packaging and advertising. If the new initiative makes manufacturers of these products pay extra for the disposal of their packaging, it is likely that the price of the product will increase to reflect these costs. Until consumers stop showing a preference for pretty packages, any initiative that targets manufacturing will only effect products that do not use sophisticated packages to attract buyers, which are often already available in enviro-packs. The only way to combat over-packaging of the worst offenders, is for consumers to stop buying them, and to express their concerns to the manufacturer. It is not good enough to buy the product, and then gripe about all the stuff you have to throw away, we have to stop rewarding companies for creating too much waste.



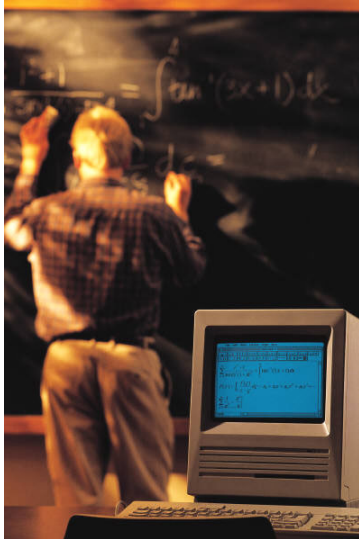
Youthful Lessons By Wayne Benedict

When I was in my late teens I was psychologically addicted to weight lifting. At one time, I would spend three hours a day, six days a week in the gym and would miss work before I would miss a workout (if only I could regain a fraction of my misplaced motivation...). I liked to drive from my home in Surrey, BC to the Canada Games Pool in New Westminster, use the gym and soak for a time in the hot tub. It was while I was driving home after one of these excursions that I had one of the innumerable encounters that made life interesting growing up in Greater Vancouver.

The streets were enveloped in fog and the evening traffic was relatively light as I turned onto Royal Avenue. One of New Westminster's arterial routes, Royal Avenue has two lanes in each direction that are separated by a concrete median. Looking to my left, I was surprised to see a small white car keeping pace with my truck. It was traveling against the current of traffic and the driver was weaving from side to side as he attempted to avoid the fuzzy, yellow headlights of the oncoming vehicles. I recall deriding the mental capacity of the driver in a spontaneous commentary as I watched the unbelievable show for several hair-raising blocks. The driver made an attempt to escape his predicament by turning left onto Second Street, but in doing so, he collided with an oncoming car and the two of them spun over the Second Street median and came to rest.

Parking my truck, I crossed Royal Avenue and approached the accident scene. The driver who had been hit was standing dazedly on the median at the front of his car; the driver of the white car was attempting to restart it. I had begun to ask the victim if he was injured when the white car's motor roared to life. Time seemed to slow down for me as my brain accelerated to meet the situation. I sidestepped, pulling the accident victim with me, and the white car crashed over the median where we had been standing. As the car passed beside me, I reached in through the open window and grasped the driver's throat with a grip strengthened by years of training and seconds of adrenalin. I was simultaneously being dragged down Second Street and squeezing off the driver's trachea in a contest that lasted mere seconds. He stopped the car and I quickly had him out of it and subdued. His car, unfortunately, was still in gear and drifted, driverless onto Royal Avenue where it caused another collision in the foggy gloom. The police arrived shortly thereafter and placed the intoxicated man under arrest.

I never saw the driver again but the large bag of marijuana that was hanging out of his breast pocket was undoubtedly an aid to his conviction. How does one go from a self-perceived "hero" to an undisputed "zero" in two weeks? I found out, but that is for next week's *Voice*.



Education Revolutionary

by Cathy Thompson Tekatch

On April 7, 2001 the prestigious Massachusetts Institute of Technology announced a great and wondrous gift to the world.

Going against the intellectual property greed-fest of the current higher education establishment, MIT with the cooperation of its faculty, declared that it plans over the next decade to put most of its course materials, including faculty lecture notes, on the internet, free to the world.

This revolutionary offering is not only a challenge to the “privatization of knowledge”, but is also an indicator that the university is beginning to accept and appreciate the ability of

humans to learn on their own, independently of the role of teacher as sole authority and dispenser of knowledge. The value of independent study is a philosophy of which Athabasca University and other open universities were founded upon.

Perhaps social philosopher Ivan Illich would consider MIT’s initiative a step towards his “deschooling” goal. This premise argues that traditional educators and their systems have hijacked learning by insisting that learning on one’s own is unreliable, and that it can only take place within a “school” under the watchful eyes of lecturing teachers and system caretakers. Illich also argues that the expense and ineffectiveness of these systems is unsustainable, and is harmful to the world’s social and economic well-being.

It is fitting that MIT should be the first university to make this bold announcement. Being a technical institute, its rigorous science and engineering curriculum does not at all transfer well to students using the lecture method of teaching. This is documented in a book by Elaine Seymour and Nancy Hewitt called “Talking About Leaving – Why Undergraduates Leave the Sciences. The book gives the accounts of 460 science, mathematics and engineering students from seven un-named American universities, and details the emotional and financial stress that these students suffer because of the poor learning conditions.

Perhaps the focus on independent learning helps explain why the Open University in the United Kingdom has been given the highest rating for engineering education by Britain’s Quality Assurance Agency.

Sir John Daniel, former Vice-Chancellor of Britain’s Open University and now Assistant-Director at UNESCO, fully supports the MIT initiative, and has urged the Open University to experiment with this open courseware concept. It already has faculty approval.

If the open universities, with their ready made learning materials, were to make them universally accessible on the internet, free to the world, would we be closer to Utopia?



Hamburger Hell – Food for Thought

By Billie Tenant

I emailed Tammy a few days ago with the idea of writing for the Voice. Over the course of our emails, the inevitable question came: are you male or female?

I always get a chuckle out of people's reactions to my name. I was relating some of the stories to Tammy, and she thought it might make a funny story. She hinted at having problems of her own (what can they do with the name 'Tammy' I wondered?)

I grew up in a small town, and basically went from kindergarten to grade 12 with the same group of people. My name was my name, and no one thought too much of it. My first inkling of things to come occurred during my first year at the U of Calgary. I took a job at the A&W, and naturally, I had to wear a nametag. People were just amazed at the idea of a girl named Billie. Most thought it was cool, but some just couldn't wrap their heads around the fact that my parents really did name me "Billie on purpose –and not because they wanted a boy. Many times people have announced to me, with much authority, that there is no way that Billie is my real name, and that it is in fact short for Wilhelmina. This is especially true of people who know my Dutch heritage, as Wilhelmina was the name of one of the Dutch queens. Now, first of all I can't spell Wilhelmina without spell check (why the heck is it in there anyway?), and if that was my name, I'd sue my parents for cruel and unusual punishment. But what always got me was the audacity of people who would tell me that I was wrong about my name. I can admit to being wrong about many things, but I mastered the letters of the alphabet back in Mrs. Scott's kindergarten class, and I've never made a mistake with my name since.

The novelty of people asking about my name quickly wore thin for my co-workers (it was long worn out for me). It turns out that they were fielding questions from the curious folk who were too shy to ask me to my face. I began feeling a bit like a freak, and some of the staff took to calling me "Libby". After breathing fast food grease for a few months, Libby looks like Billie backwards.

One day a guy happened by, and asked the usual question, "What is Billie short for?" Usually I am pretty patient with people, as they don't realize that I get asked this question three or four times a day. But this day I was cranky and instead of the usual reply "No, my name is just Billie." I retorted, "No, actually, it's long for Buh." (The sound the letter 'B' makes). The guy looked at me blankly, blinked a few times, and said, "Oh." Then he walked away... without his burger! I guess he didn't get the joke, but my co-workers were hysterical!

I was a pretty shy person then, and always the type of person who thinks of the witty retort three hours too late. I was quite proud of myself for this sharp remark, and the ability to think on my feet like that has come in handy time and time again. Although it may start with inquiries regarding my name, many a job has found me in a position where customers and clients pry too hard, or are too forceful in their attitude.

During my stint at A&W, I was 'lent' to the 14th Street location. It was my first experience working a drive thru, and I learned a lot. Guys were very bold when they couldn't see my face.

On one occasion, when I asked if there was anything else for the order, the driver replied, “Yeah, your ass on a platter.” I replied, “Well sweetheart, it’s gonna cost more than you’ve got in your wallet and pants combined!” His friends were laughing hysterically and needless to say, he was pretty sheepish when he got around to the pickup window.

Currently I work as an operator at Telus, and while I don’t wear a nametag, we are supposed to use our names on the calls. I get the same stupid questions there as I do anywhere else, so I use a fake name on the phone. Now the usual questions are “What do you look like?” (My own mother wouldn’t recognize me!) and “What is your phone number?” That one’s easy – it’s 411!

While my stories here are funny, I have had some frightening experiences too, like inappropriate touching and sexual comments. While the customers in question were probably joking, I had no way to know for sure. Like many situations in life, it is not what is intended that is important; it is the perception of the circumstance that matters.



FED WATCH

By Karl Low

Time to Switch to UBC.

University students in British Columbia have some good news coming their way. Advanced Education Minister Shirley Bond recently [announced](#) that tuition fees in B.C. would be cut by 5% for the 2001-2002 school year, with the difference made up by the government. It seems at least one government is cluing in to the long-term benefits that a well-educated populace can bring.

On the other hand, Athabasca University's total tuition fees have gone up approximately 7% since last year, with a little note in our new University Calendar that "it is Athabasca University's intention to increase its tuition fees in future years by the maximum amount permitted under the government of Alberta's Tuition Fee Policy." So according to Athabasca, whether expenditures justify it or not, our fees are going to be going up for the next unlimited number of years.

Okay, I know that Athabasca still has one of the lowest total costs in Alberta, certainly lower than the other Universities, but considering that I get to talk to my tutors generally only once per week, almost never get to speak with the professors, that feedback can only come when I specifically seek it out or on assignments (as opposed to a good instructor knowing when they're having trouble getting a point across to the class and giving it extra attention), and that those "side" benefits of the regular institutions (clubs, concerts, peer-interaction, peer assignment-review, extra-curricular activities or teams, or even the lack of a blank look on somebody's face when I mention what University I'm with) are pretty much non-existent (with some efforts being made now, I know), I should hope the tuition is lower.

In fact, according to the University of Calgary's [web-site](#), tuition for a single course there is only \$470.25, and that includes unfettered access to a top of the line fitness centre. Athabasca by contrast is now \$476.00 for a single course. Cost-wise, the only benefit Athabasca has is that the course materials are included. For some of the courses, this is a significant benefit. For others, that just provide you with a single text-book and a number of review questions, this "benefit" is easily questionable.

Speaking of those expenditures, did anybody receive notice that the new hard-copy University Calendar is even out? I just happened to luck into it when I went to the CLC for an exam. I found it's posted in a little corner box in the AU World that you may have recently received, but I definitely missed that the first time through. It's only when I went back looking specifically for it that I spotted it.

I'd like to think that for my extra 7% I can at least be sent a separate calendar request card. Besides, the calendars are one of Athabasca University's best marketing tools as far as I'm concerned. I left a copy with an interested cab-driver at one point when he saw it and began asking if they had accounting courses. I don't know if he actually applied, but if it hadn't been for that calendar, I'm pretty sure he wouldn't even have thought about it.

Helping Northern Alberta Students

The Alberta Government's [Northern Links](#) program is giving \$200,000 to programs encouraging students from Northern Alberta to continue with their education after high-school. The projects include campus tours, career resource centres and peer mentoring.

I like the BC way of doing it better.

Things We Really Don't Need to Import

Environment Canada is pleased to [announce](#) that Canada imported 279,000 tons of hazardous waste for disposal. That's right folks, this is a good thing. Why? Because last year we imported 394,000 tons. Of course, what's bugging me is why do we import any of it? Just to make things clear, this isn't Canada importing it because we have the facilities to treat it and make it non-hazardous. Some of that does happen, but in Ontario at least, 46% of the hazardous waste imported goes into a landfill.

The end of the announcement says that Canada is working with the United States and Mexico within NAFTA to develop an approach to environmentally sound management. Here's a thought they might want to consider: "If you make it, you either keep it or you fix it." In my eyes at least, sending it to another country to be buried doesn't count as fixing it.

Makes Sense to Me

Just a final note, the premier of New Brunswick has [released](#) a short opinion/editorial piece about equalization payments, some problems with them, and the ways they could be fixed.

It's an interesting little piece, and certainly worth a read.

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, 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



ENLIGHTENING INFORMATION:

\$7,000 in scholarships to be awarded to Métis students at Athabasca University

Edmonton, July 24, 2001 -- The competition is now open for seven \$1,000 scholarships to be awarded this fall to Métis students who have demonstrated scholarly merit in studies at Athabasca University.

The awards, funded by Canative Housing Corporation, are available to Métis students who have completed at least three credits (normally, one course) through Athabasca University. Canative Housing Corporation director Herb Belcourt presented the University with the scholarship monies -- and a commitment to fund the new awards for at least 10 years -- two years ago.

The application deadline is October 31, 2001. To apply, contact:

Janice De Girolamo
Office of the Registrar
1 University Drive
Athabasca, AB, T9S 3A3

T: 1-800-788-9041 (ext. 6249)

E: janiced@athabascau.ca

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.

PRESS RELEASE

From: Student Services Committee, AUSU

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!

"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 mqueffroy@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.