

THE VOICE

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www.ausu.org/voice

QUOTE OF THE WEEK

"I don't know the key to success,
but the key to failure is trying to
please everybody."

--Bill Cosby



A Bug In Your Ear...

ATTENTION AU STUDENTS:

Athabasca University, working with your Student's Union, would like to do anything possible to provide extra assistance to students who have experienced exceptional difficulties due to the terrorist attacks on the United States. This can involve free extensions or altering start or completion dates, etc.

Judith Hughes, Vice President of Student Services, is advising tutors to have students who feel that they have particular needs arising from these circumstances to have the students contact Judith's office and each student will be dealt with on an individual basis.

If you are having trouble, and it has not been an issue raised by your tutor, please contact your tutor or Judith Hughes and discuss your situation.

AU and AUSU would like to extend their deepest sympathies regarding issues resulting from the recent tragic circumstances.

CONTACT INFORMATION:

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Alberta Health Care, Heal Thyself! By Tamra Ross Low

This week Health Minister Gary Mar suggested that the only way Canada can continue to provide quality health care is to institute user fees. Support groups for the elderly are worried because the people they represent cannot afford to pay any more. “Mark Wolff, Executive Director of the Multiple Sclerosis Society in Calgary,” points out that “most people suffering from MS are on low, fixed incomes,” and

this is certainly true of many chronically ill persons (Alberta.com news, Sep 23/01, [Medical costs: Elderly struggle with user fees](#)). Students are not mentioned in the article, but clearly they too would find user fees very burdensome.

It might be necessary to charge these fees, but I think Mr. Mar is jumping the gun. There must be other ways to reduce health care costs, and user fees should be used as a last resort, not as our first option. Mr. Mar, like many government officials, seems to think that we can afford these fees since we are otherwise receiving free health care (or heavily subsidized, depending on our income), but most of us know that this is misleading. Most doctors’ visits result in a prescription for pills that we must pay for. Basic dental and optometric care are surely necessities, but we have to pay for them as well. Many of us already do without basic services because we cannot afford them. It is recommended that people who wear glasses get their prescription updated each year, but some people (myself included) wear the same glasses for 5 or 6 years. Many of us only visit a dentist when we are in pain, and some children do not go at all, though they should see a dentist once or twice a year to ensure healthy adult teeth. If our government wants to cut health care costs, why don’t they concentrate on prevention? How much money is spent on drug and hospital interventions for health concerns that could have been prevented for much less money.

I have a radical idea to save some money: free prescription medications! Save money by spending more? It’s not as crazy as it sounds. I’ve been looking at the effects of our current system by examining the health concerns of my friends and family. One friend is chronically sick, requiring antibiotics and other expensive drugs on a regular basis. Unfortunately, to save money, she often neglects to get her prescriptions filled, and this probably leads to more illnesses. Sadly, many people do this, but as was pointed out by Mr. Temple in last week’s Voice, medications are the most common form of treatment for nearly all ailments. Since doctors have little else to offer these days, any time a patient does not get a prescription filled the cost of that visit is wasted. This is only the beginning of the funding drain, however. That person with, for example, a bladder infection, or mild pneumonia, will probably end up much sicker without medicine. This will require another visit and more prescriptions. Maybe this time the patient will break down and pay for the pills, but in other cases, the patient cannot afford the pills, and so the condition worsens until hospitalization is required. Now for the patient, this is the best financial option, as Alberta Health Care covers all drugs administered in a hospital, but the cost to the health care system is enormous. For example, the average cost of treating pneumonia on an inpatient basis is \$1,961 ([Health Costing in Alberta: 1999 Annual Report](#)), far more than the cost of an initial doctor’s office visit and a follow up.

Unfortunately, many people are financially better off being hospitalized, and in some cases they may choose treatments administered by the hospital rather than at home. Sometimes, similar treatments are available for inpatient or outpatient administration, but the cost to the patient varies considerably. I've recently become aware of a ridiculous example of this.

My mother has cancer. For months she received intravenous chemotherapy, administered by a nurse in a hospital. She lives in a small town and had to drive nearly an hour each time. The treatment was covered by provincial health care, however. Recently, though, her doctors have determined that the chemo they were giving her isn't working. They gave her other options, one of which is a new form of chemo that is in pill form. My mother chose the pills, as they are supposed to be quite effective and she can take them at home. She was shocked to learn, however, that she must pay for the pills. The total cost of this treatment is \$800 for each 3-week cycle. My parents are lucky, despite being retired, that they have excellent health coverage from my father's former job. After applying three different health plans, they have reduced the cost to only \$40 per cycle, but most seniors are not so lucky. Those who cannot afford the pills will probably have to choose the intravenous type (which in some cases is less effective). Doctors will be likely to prescribe this to patients who cannot afford outpatient options. Obviously the cost to the health care system is much higher when nurses must administer these treatments, and this does not take into account other sponsored costs, such as transportation to and from the hospital which a large number of cancer patients require.

It makes no sense to impose user fees until we have exhausted all other possibilities for saving money in health care. It is clear that in most cases, preventative care is much cheaper than in patient interventions, and that treating an ailment in its early stages is much cheaper than treating it later. Providing free prescription drugs would reduce the number of repeat doctors visits, and it would probably reduce hospitalization as well. I know too many people who still go to hospital emergency rooms when they have the flu, or a bad cold, because they want free medicine. There is obviously much room for improvement in this system.



Commuting in Calgary becomes a breeze

By Neil Parmar, Alberta Bureau

CALGARY (CUP) -- In an effort to reduce carbon dioxide emissions, Calgary has become the first city in North America with a light rail transit (LRT) system powered by wind.

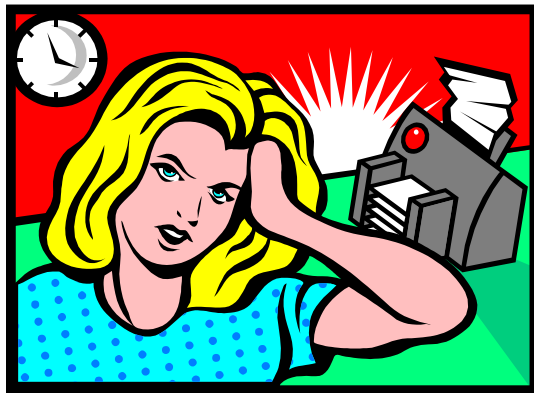
On September 5, the city unveiled its Riding the Wind project, promising to give the one million plus passengers who ride the LRT each week a more environmentally friendly way to travel.

"This is a significant step towards reducing the environmental impact of transportation and will make Calgary's C-Train the world's first wind-powered public transit system since the days of sail," said Dave Colquhoun, Calgary's transit planning manager.

The project was first approved in February with collaboration between Calgary Transit, electricity supplier ENMAX and Vision Quest Windelectric Inc. Since then, Vision Quest has installed 12 turbines at the Castle River wind farm in southern Alberta and has been selling its wind-generated power to ENMAX.

Although Calgary's C-Train never directly produced local greenhouse gas emissions, generating its coal and gas-produced electrical power dumped 21,000 tonnes of CO₂ into the air. As well, the traction power for the trains once consumed approximately 21,000-megawatt hours of electricity annually -- half of Calgary Transit's total electricity requirements.

"Ride The Wind will make Calgary Transit's C-Trains 100 per cent greenhouse gas (CO₂) emission-free. It is a significant step towards reducing the overall impact on the environment." Colquhoun said.



Ways to Relive Stress

By Darren Kereluk

This article is the conclusion of my subseries of mental health articles on stress and will discuss some of the ways that you can deal with stress and anxiety. Please keep in mind that the suggestions that I will be presenting are not meant to be the only solutions to stress problems, but are starting points for you to work on anxiety-related problems. Your doctor and

your local branch of the Canadian Mental Health Association (or equivalent organisation in your locale for non-Canadian AU students) can provide you with more comprehensive information to manage stress and anxiety.

The most obvious way to deal with stress is to remove the stressor. Unfortunately, this is often easier said than done. Telling someone who is under great stress to remove the stressor is not unlike telling a person with major depression to smile and "think happy thoughts." As a patient with bipolar disorder, I have never appreciated these comments, and I do not think it is very helpful for a person who is overwhelmed with the demands of life. Yet, there are some types of stressors that can be removed or adjusted to help people deal in a more efficient way with day-to-day life. For example, how many of you over-commit yourselves to activities beyond being an AU student, parent, employee or friend? These roles in your life are sufficient by themselves to cause you grief, but if you add extra activities like volunteering for too many community activities, your stress level mounts exponentially. Unless you are totally immune to stress, if you do not reduce your activities by even a small amount, you will end up in a state of exhaustion, which is the third stage of Hans Selye's General Adaptation Syndrome. According to Selye's theory, people who reach the stage of exhaustion suffer from a whole variety of problems, which I mentioned in my last article about stress. In its most extreme forms, exhaustion can be fatal. Frankly, I think that it would be better to give up one or two "extra-curricular" activities than to have to suffer from the effects of stress.

In an article that I was reading at <http://www.mentalhealth.com/mag1/p51-str.html>, I was surprised to learn that rather than helping us deal with stress, caffeine can actually cause a stress reaction in our bodies. Yes, folks, that morning cup of coffee or that can of Diet Coke can be stressful for you. I think that if caffeine-products are taken in moderation, with perhaps a limit of one or two cups of coffee a day, or perhaps a couple of cans of cola products a day, should not cause you much of a problem, but this is something that can vary from person to person. If you think that you are consuming too much caffeine and you want to reduce the amount that you ingest, you must do so slowly. If you have been a 6 cup a day coffee drinker one day, and decide to become a 1 cup a day coffee drinker the next, you could very well have to deal with withdrawal symptoms including headaches and muscle pain. You certainly do not need to add this kind of stress to your already harried life, do you? Depending on the amount of caffeine that you take in every day, it is suggested that in terms of coffee, for example, that you reduce your consumption by 1 daily cup every one or two weeks. By reducing the amount of coffee (and other caffeine-containing products) that you drink every day, not only will you be doing your body a favour, but you might even save a few bucks for that Ferrari (or AU tuition) that you have been always dreaming about!

Sometimes when I am under a great deal of stress, I like to take a walk. Simply getting out of the house for a walk on a nice evening gives me the chance to clear my mind and to work the tension out of my muscles. Other people go to their favourite gym or do yard work to achieve the same thing. Any kind of exercise or physical effort that is done on a regular basis can go a long way to help you deal with both the physical and mental aspects of stress. Before you embark on any exercise programme, please check with your doctor.

Another group of methods that you can use for dealing with stress falls under the label of “relaxation and meditation exercises.” There are several different techniques that you can use ranging from deep breathing to yoga. For the purposes of this article, I will discuss a few of the methods that I was taught to use during times of anxiety and stress. The first one, which anybody can do, is deep breathing. This type of deep breathing requires that you lay down or find some other comfortable position, such as sitting in your favourite chair, in a place that you will not be disturbed. Once you’ve done this, try the best that you can to clear your mind of pressing thoughts (sometimes this is easier said than done, but please try). Then, take in the deepest breath that you can, hold it for a second and then breathe out. Repeat this process for 5 minutes. The other technique that I use is called visualisation. It involves getting prepared in the same way as for deep breathing, but in this case you close your eyes and try to imagine some pleasant scene that you’ve come across in your life such as a sunny beach, a babbling brook or something of that nature. Clear your mind of all other thoughts and worries and focus on the pleasant scene. You might even consider combining this with the deep breathing exercise. Like the deep breathing exercise, do the visualisation process for 5 to 10 minutes.

For any of the suggestions that I have presented in this article to work, you have to recognise that you have a serious problem with stress, and then undertake these suggestions (and others that you come across) on a regular basis. Developing a successful stress management program is not unlike trying to get fit—it does not happen overnight. The best of luck to you as you learn to deal with stress and studies at AU!



FROM MY PERSPECTIVE: WHAT CAN I DO?

Debbie Jabbour

I watched the news all day Tuesday, September 11. Images that will remain burned on my consciousness forever. Images beyond comprehension, beyond reality. I could only feel a sick numbness and imminent feeling of doom. My daughter and I paced the house aimlessly, not knowing what to think or what to do. That night we all hugged and reassured each other with "I love you's," so aware of the fragility of human life, no longer confident in

what tomorrow might bring.

By Wednesday morning I awoke to a new set of emotions, and a new sense of reality began to develop as I listened to the talk of War and watched as the nations of the world began to align themselves alongside the US against terrorism. I started to feel anger. Anger at the mindless hatred that serves as justification for the indiscriminate destruction of innocent lives. Anger at religions that insist that anyone who does not subscribe to their particular set of doctrines does not deserve to live. Anger at the US Government for its arrogant foreign policies that breed development of such unreasoning hatred against Americans among people of other nations. Anger at people who think violence and aggression is the only way to solve problems.

On Friday, together with the rest of Canada, we observed 3 minutes of silence at work. The call centre became completely still. As a body, we all rose and stood with heads bowed...each lost in our own thoughts. I looked through the windows - we are on the 5th floor with a magnificent 3-corner view of the city of Edmonton...and I imagined how it must have felt to be looking through just such a window.... on the 101st floor of the World Trade Centre on Tuesday...and the tears finally came. I was filled with nameless grief and an overwhelming sense of loss and helplessness.

Now, almost a week later, all these emotions are struggling within me. The grief, the helplessness, the anger, the worry about the future. The overwhelming emotion I feel is that of wanting to do something. But what? I can't go to New York and dig through rubble. I can't put my arms around those who are clutching pictures of loved ones, frantically begging for a miracle, in a futile attempt to offer some consolation. I can contribute financial aid.... but I would like to think there is more I can do.

There IS something I can do. Something real, something that will have results.

The root cause of this started at an individual level. It started with perhaps one person, or a small group of people, who took their hatred of those who are different and developed it into a holy war against nations. This hatred is not restricted to the Middle East. It is not restricted to the United States. This hatred exists everywhere - even in Canada, the most multi-cultural and tolerant of countries. It is fostered by a lack of education, by poverty, by fundamentalist religions, and by a lack of understanding and tolerance of other cultures, other religions, and other people.

Solving the problem means working from an individual level. What can I do as an individual? I can pursue my education, setting an example for my children to follow so they will be less likely to fall victim to prejudice. I can show my children my reaction to these events - help them see all sides to the story and to understand that blame is not born by only one country or group of people - but is shared. I can work on my own deeply ingrained biases and prejudices; rethink my faith, my religion and my attitudes - to ensure that I am not guilty of condemning others for their differences even in the most subtle ways.

On a more tangible level, I can take the time to talk to my neighbours, try to get to know who they are and where they come from. If they happen to be Muslim, Sikh, or of Arabic descent, I can put my hand out and say "we both hurt.... and we will work together". I can look into their eyes and ask about their families, let them know I'm interested. I can make a concerted effort to view every person as an individual, see them with empathy and understanding, regardless of their ethnic background, religion, social class or condition of mental health.

Idealistic? Certainly. Possible? Why not! Necessary? Absolutely.

We may be facing World War III. What lies ahead is unknown and very frightening. But we CAN do something about it, and it starts with each one of us...here and now. We can make a difference, starting with those closest to us - our families, our children, the people we work with, go to school with, the people next door. Each of us must reach into our own hearts and replace hatred and prejudice with understanding and tolerance.

"We have just enough religion to make us hate, but not enough to make us love one another"

(Jonathon Swift, *Thoughts on Various Subjects*, 1706)



The Indignant Journalist – Canada’s Time: Get with the Program!

By Mark Gueffroy

There are at least 12 pieces of provincial legislation that violate the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms, section 15, subsections 1 and 2. These statutes include the Age of Majority Act, the Personal Directives Act, the Wills Act, the Prevention of Youth Tobacco Use Act, the Employment Standards Regulation, the Change of Name Act, the Young Offender’s Act, the Jury Act, the Human Tissue Gift Act, the Minor’s Property Act, the Local Authorities Election Act, and the Election Act. There are also several pieces of federal legislation that violate this section of the Charter as well, and they include the Canada Elections Act, among others.

How do these acts, and others, violate the Charter? Section 15 of the Charter says, and I quote, “(1) Every individual is equal before and under the law and has the right to the equal protection and equal benefit of the law without discrimination and, in particular, without discrimination

based on race, national or ethnic origin, colour, religion, sex, age or mental or physical disability. (2) Subsection (1) does not preclude any law, program or activity that has as its object the amelioration of conditions of disadvantaged individuals or groups including those that are disadvantaged because of race, national or ethnic origin, colour, religion, sex, age or mental or physical disability.” (http://www.pch.gc.ca/ddp-hrd/canada/guide/equality_e.shtml) All of these acts violate the Charter by not according “equal protection and equal benefit before and under the law without discrimination” based on “age.”

Now, I imagine that many of you may not agree with my philosophy and legal reasoning. You may be more interested in agreeing with this: The Young Offender’s Act also violates the Charter. It does not allow for “equal protection,” or in this case “equal responsibility,” before and under the law.

If you will recall in history, when a group of people (such as women or African-American people) gained their rights under the law, they also gained additional responsibility. Law prevented women from voting or participating in many other rights, and when they won those rights, they also won responsibilities not formerly a consideration. For example, women became responsible to pay taxes, became fully criminally and civilly responsible (they could be sued), etc.

There is a precedent for youth to be given the same rights under the law. California and many other states have a law titled the Emancipation of Minors Act. This Act permits a minor to make an application to the court and be declared a legal adult if it is found they are capable of understanding the nature and effect of such rights and responsibilities. It is time for Canada to GET WITH THE PROGRAM!

ANNOUNCEMENTS FROM AUSU

AUSU is currently seeking a volunteer to occupy the position of Chairperson, Student Funding Committee. This sub-committee will report to the Student Services Committee, and will be responsible for developing the criteria for granting student bursaries and scholarships, and making decisions on the qualifications of applicants to student bursary and scholarship programs. The applicant should have a desire to assist fellow students in situations of financial need, and have a respect for the need to place criteria on the distribution of scholarships and bursaries, as well as a respect for the need to adhere to criteria. They should be well organized, and have some understanding of committee procedure.

DEADLINE FOR APPLICATIONS: October 1, 2001

The Academic Committee is currently looking for Committee Members. If you have an interest in student academic issues, and are willing to volunteer towards improving the student academic experience, please contact the Volunteer Coordinator by email or phone (volunteer@ausu.org or 800-788-9041 ext. 3413). Applications will be accepted until otherwise posted.

For an application form or more information, please contact the Volunteer Coordinator by email at mqueffroy@ausu.org, or contact the Edmonton office of AUSU at (800) 788-9041.

Bryon Paege Memorial Fund



Bryon Paege, November 28th, 1964 - February 27th, 1995
AU Graduate - AU Tutor

In July 2001, CUPE Local 3911 and AUSU cooperated in the creation of the first-ever grant from the Bryon Paege Memorial Fund. The grant was donated by Local 3911, and consisted of the cost of one 3-credit course at AU. This year it was awarded to one student randomly selected by AUSU from among those in need of, and eligible for, emergency funding. Although the emergency loan program is currently being revised, this award will become permanent once new criteria are firmly and clearly in place.

Bryon Paege graduated in June 1988 with a Bachelor of Administration from AU. Starting in 1990 he was employed by AU as a tutor, and worked in that capacity until his untimely death in 1995. He really lived the ultimate AU student dream, achieving his degree and then joining the AU academic community in giving his knowledge and expertise back to other AU students.

Bryon was a valued member of the AU family. He is vividly remembered by his sisters and brothers in Local 3911, and it is their intention, and now the intention of AUSU as well, that his achievements, contributions, dreams and passing never be forgotten.

Submitted by:

Debbie Jabbour on behalf of AUSU

Donna Koziak on behalf of CUPE 3911



Pius

By Wayne Benedict

Do you know anyone named Pius? It's not a common name where I live. Even outside of those that I know or have met personally, I am only familiar with the fact that many of the Popes of the Catholic Church were named Pius. When I first met my Uncle Pius, I didn't know that his name was unusual (being only four or five years old), but I recognized that

he was different from the other adults that I knew. He seemed stoic and reserved and my earliest memories of him are at family gatherings where he would often be cloistered in the basement with his TV set, watching hockey and smoking a cigarette while the rest of the family would be visiting; us kids playing. He was an enigma to me long before I knew the word or its meaning.

I think I was about fourteen when I first began to work casually for Pius. He built houses and was kind enough—no doubt as a favour to my father—to take me on as a labourer. I knew absolutely nothing about anything related to construction but since I thought I knew everything about everything else, I doubt that I made a very good apprentice. Looking back on those days is quite humorous to me now. Pius tended to mumble and would point by holding up his arm while his index finger drooped toward the ground. He was tall and lanky and I wasn't as tall but was even lankier; he was strong and I wasn't. When directing me to a task he would point and mumble, I'd ask him to repeat himself, he would, I'd ask again, and he'd let go with a non-understandable explanative and go off to do the job himself.

I made so many mistakes I could have been the subject of a Laurel and Hardy movie, but Pius never cursed at me, just into the atmosphere in general. Once he asked me to cement a manhole lid into place and the concrete hadn't set three days later because I'd mixed some other powdery building substance with water and squished it into place. Pius fixed that one up and didn't tell me. Another time I attempted to drive a three-story forklift around the block. Since I couldn't see out the front window very well, I raised the forks up about six feet, which, unbeknownst to me, raised the boom about two stories. I knocked down several power lines and cost the company quite a few bucks, but Pius held his anger in check and let me learn from my own errors.

Pius gave me my first job, and I came to enjoy it so much that I attended Kwantlen College in Surrey and acquired a Certificate in Building Construction in February of 1983. We continued to work together off and on throughout the years. He taught me drywall boarding and the two of us could work an entire day, hardly speaking a word between us. After all the time we spent together, I understood his peculiar form of occupational sign language. A point here, a grunt there, perfectly clear to me. Later I knew that Pius had quite the sense of humor. It was very dry and well hidden, but it was there and I enjoyed his company.

The last time I saw Pius was several years ago. He was living in Greater Vancouver and I am working with the railway in central BC. Pius passed away unexpectedly several months ago and I never got the chance to tell him how great an influence that he was in my life. I doubt that I ever would have anyway, that's just how we were together—reserved and somewhat stoic.



FED WATCH

By Karl Low

New Brunswick brought down by Microsoft

You may or may not have heard about that virus that has been making the rounds lately. They call it Nimda. It seems this one actually managed to halt the on-line services of the New Brunswick Government for a time. You can read their press release [here](#).

It's strange to me how often we hear about these viruses that are bringing down whole businesses, yet not a word about recovering damages from the company that allowed such insecure software to be put out in the first place. Some might claim that it's not Microsoft's fault, it's the fault of those who make the virus. Just like if someone breaks into your car and trashes your radio, it's not the car company's fault.

My response is would we buy a car that had no locks on the doors? Yet major institutions keep pumping money into the Microsoft coffers. What's really bad about this is that there is indeed a patch that was released several months ago that could have stopped the virus, but most and a lot of institutions, including the New Brunswick Government I guess, didn't know about it. Would it be so terribly hard for Microsoft to send an e-mail to the people who've registered the software saying that they found a problem and this is how you fix it?

Of course, then we'd be getting an email every time somebody found a problem with a Microsoft product, and I get enough spam already, thank you. I guess you can't win.

Newfoundland deals with Gabrielle

In amongst all the other tragedy last week, Newfoundland had to endure a tropical storm called Gabrielle. Fortunately, there will be some [financial assistance](#) for those who suffered losses, but it reminded me of the people who live in Florida or on the banks of the Mississippi. These places seem constantly subject to floods, or hurricanes, and repeatedly suffer massive damage. On the news you see people talking about how they've lost everything they own. My question is, "why were you living there in the first place?"

Let's just hope that with everybody focussed on the problems in the United States right now, we don't forget our own.

Nova Scotia postpones Advanced Studies

The Department of Education in Nova Scotia is [postponing](#) a pilot program for their gifted students because the for-profit company they had partnered with "Knowledge House Inc." was forced to close its doors. The program was intended to use web-based learning to help students develop problem-solving, critical thinking, and technology skills. The province invested 1.2 million dollars into this project already, and in return have received a complete first unit, design of the second unit, and the foundations of a remaining six units.

The province had received assurances from Knowledge House as recently as August 31, 2001 that the company was financially sound. Like they're going to tell a client that they're having trouble. The students who were involved in the program now have to "quickly enrol in other courses". So it seems these advanced students are going to wind up taking whatever happens to be left open for options. I'm sure they're thrilled. This is just more evidence to me that relying on for-profit institutions for public education just doesn't make sense.

Canada Snubbed?

After George W. Bush's speech to Congress, some Canadians we're feeling that we had been snubbed. The Canadian Alliance took this to mean that the United States was unhappy with our immigration policies. The Liberal Party took it to mean that the Americans have a lot on their mind right now and no slight at all was intended. On a show on CBC's news channel, it was brought up that Americans tend to think of Canada as basically an extension of themselves. So when President Bush was talking about the many fine qualities of the Americans, he meant us as well.

I'm not sure about you, but I'm not an extension of America. I'm very much a Canadian, and very proud to be one. I find myself agreeing with Joe Clark's statement however. He suggested that it means that Canada is simply being taken for granted in this entire matter. While I don't think that this is a time to be terribly worried about such things, I think it should be something we keep in the back of our minds. I'm too proud of Canada to let it be reduced to just another "extension" of America.

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.athabasca.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@athabasca.ca



AU NEWS RELEASE

Athabasca University professor decries commercialization of medical research

**Contributed by Pam Patten,
Communications**

Edmonton, September 12, 2001 -- New research and analyses published by nutrition and disease prevention expert Dr. Norman Temple of Edmonton suggest that the merits of breast and prostate cancer screening are "dubious," that the search for "wonder treatments" through the study of genomics is misguided, and that drug companies largely control and manipulate the research agenda, pushing the public debate from "Should I take a pill?" to "Which pill should I take?"

Temple, an Athabasca University professor and an outspoken advocate of disease prevention and full disclosure of research results, discusses how medical science has gone radically astray in its enthusiasm for technological "advances" in a new book, *Ethics, Medical Research, and*

Medicine, published this summer by Kluwer Academic Publishers. Temple co-edited the book with Dr. Andrew Thompson, a retired professor from the University of Oregon.

Temple says that researchers and doctors tend to settle for the apparent worth of an intervention rather than its proven worth.

"As a result," he adds, "doctors often mislead or out-and-out lie to patients about cures and treatment. "If they don't have access to - or the time to access -- all of the information and research data surrounding a specific treatment or intervention, they can't help but give the patient a less than accurate picture.

"This translates into, at best, misguided reliance on dubious interventions and treatments, and, at worst, a potentially harmful or fatal result for the patient."

The authors' review of studies to date indicate that, for example, the efficacy of breast cancer and prostate cancer screening in reducing mortality has not been proven. In other studies, statin drugs, commonly prescribed to reduce the risk of heart disease, may not be giving good value for money and that diet and exercise should be used more often.

"However, there is no profit to the pharmaceutical industry if dietary changes are implemented. This may be why so much research has been expended in the development and trial of cholesterol-lowering drugs and so little in designing programs that would encourage and implement the establishment of healthy diet and exercise patterns, both as prevention and as treatment," the writers say.

"For the majority of people, not only are many of the interventions commonly taken valueless from a health perspective, they are costly, they build unnecessary fear, and they may deflect health care providers from other treatments and preventative actions," Temple suggests.

In Ethics, Medical Research, and Medicine, he and his coauthors take a hard line with researchers and medical practitioners, citing numerous examples of resource abuses, and outlining proposed standards to reverse the "deleterious effects of commercialization and professional ambitions on medical research."

Temple and Thompson believe a "the cure is just around corner" mentality is driving what has been dubbed "the age of the genome." Most of it, they believe, has little chance of making a significant difference in the quality and length of most people's lives.

"By far the biggest area where complex research dominates is cancer," they write. "Research on this disease demonstrates how it is possible to spend over a billion dollars year after year and yet make trivial progress. What we see is vast spending on complex research and regular announcements of 'breakthroughs.' However, based on the track record of complex research, we must be pessimistic over the likelihood that gene therapy will lead to real progress in finding cures for disease.

"Gene therapy seems well on its way to becoming the greatest sinkhole for research dollars."

The book has attracted the endorsements of such international notables as award-winning scientist, environmentalist, and broadcaster Dr. David Suzuki, Dr. Patricia Baird, the vice

president of the Canadian Institute for Advanced Research a respected geneticist, researcher, and educator, and Dr. David Horrobin one of the world's leading experts on cardiovascular disease, prolactin, prostaglandins, essential fatty acids, alcoholism, schizophrenia, depression, diabetes, and cancer.

Dr. Suzuki says, "This book is very timely contribution of a much needed perspective in the ongoing discussion of the ethical, social and economic repercussions of biotechnology." Dr. Baird says, "I found the book a most useful gathering together in one place, of evidence on how we are not using our current knowledge in a way that brings benefit to most, but rather in a way that benefits special interests."

Dr. David Horrobin, Laxdale Research, Sterling, Scotland, adds, "This book provides admirable examinations of the issues and provides a wake-up call to those who should be concerned -- which means everyone."

Temple is also the co-editor of *Nutritional Health: Strategies for Disease Prevention*, a book published last spring by Humana Press. He co-edited *Western Diseases: Their Dietary Prevention and Reversibility* and is the author of *Health for the New Century: A Commonsense Nutritional Approach*. He has a PhD in Biochemistry from Wolverhampton University, UK (1980), publishes frequently on diet in relation to the diseases of lifestyle, especially cancer, and teaches Athabasca University's courses in nutrition and health.

Athabasca University is Canada's largest and fastest growing online and distance education university, with 25,000 current students. Founded in 1970, Athabasca University now offers more than 500 Individualized Study and Grouped Study courses, bachelors and masters degrees, university certificates, and diplomas, all through online learning and other distance delivery methods.

ENLIGHTENING INFORMATION:



The ART GALLERY OF CALGARY

Presents:

STORYBOOK STORY

Public reading by Fred Wah

Storybook Story is an exhibition featuring two primitive historical panoramic renderings of the Minnesota Massacre of 1862 from the Glenbow Museum's permanent collection.

The AGC has commissioned four writers to construct short stories, when presented together as a serial draw the two paintings together. Readings will take place from 19 September through 31 October.

Presented in partnership with **PanCanadian Wordfest: Banff/Calgary International Writers Festival**.

Date: Wednesdays
Time: 12:10-12:50PM
Cost: Admission by donation
(Lunches may attend with you; refreshments served)

For information contact Kellie Moynihan at 770-1350

**Art Gallery of Calgary
117 8 Avenue SW
Calgary, Alberta.
P. 770. 1350
F. 264. 8077**

**info@artgallerycalgary.org
www.artgallerycalgary.org**

\$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

Are you an Artist? AUSU supports the arts!

AUSU is interested in purchasing original works of art from students for use in promotional purposes. These promotions may include: gifts from AUSU to graduates at convocation, tokens of appreciation for volunteers, special presentations, etc.

The works of art must:

- be created by an AU Student
- be within a value range \$0-\$500.
- be accessible or easily transportable to Alberta

If you are an artist of any kind who creates a product you feel we would be able to use for such a purpose, please contact djabbour@ausu.org. Supply a brief description of the art object, a picture if you have it, and its market value.

International Year of the Volunteer

2001 is the International Year of the Volunteer, and the title recognizes the contribution that volunteers make to our lives every day. Our communities would not be whole without volunteers.

As a Writer/Reporter for The Voice, I would like to include a profile of a worthy volunteer in each week's issue of this newsletter. I invite you to contact me by email at markqueffroy@hotmail.com if you know someone who has made a contribution to their community, or to the AU community, by volunteering their time. This person may receive an honorarium for their volunteer efforts, but cannot be a paid staff member or considered an employee.

Celebrate Volunteers with the staff and volunteers at The Voice!

WRITE FOR THE VOICE!

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