

THE VOICE

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www.ausu.org

QUOTE OF THE WEEK

*"We can be absolutely certain only about things we do not understand."
--Eric Hoffer*

A Bug In Your Ear...



Here's your chance to get involved! **AUSU Student Council Elections 2002'**

Dear AU Student:

Hey! Have you ever wondered how you can get involved with your Students' Union? Here's your chance! It's Election time again and AUSU (Athabasca University Students' Union) is anxious to meet the new Council. So, what are you waiting for?

Get to your post-office today and send in your nomination for new Council!

As in the By-Laws, Article 11_Elections, Section 2 under Nominations: it states "Any Active Member in good standing may submit to the Council a self-nomination together with the individuals written consent to act, if elected".

"Member in Good Standing" means an individual who is a member of the Association in any of the categories of Membership prescribed in the By-Laws, has paid all fees and has not been subject to disciplinary action from the University or the Association.

Deadline for self-nominations/nominations is December 22/01. Students must submit their nominations and the individual's written consent to act, if elected. Their nomination must also include student's name, I.D. number, address and/or e-mail address.

All self-nominations/nominations will be acknowledged after the closing date. Nominees will be given an opportunity to withdraw their name from the slate of nominees, provided that withdrawal is received by the end of January.

Any student submitting nominations must be a registered student of AU at time of nomination and as well as the close of the Election. A Council member must be a Student throughout his/her term on Council. Students, as defined by the Athabasca University handbook, or those who are currently enrolled in an AU course, or who have completed a course within the past six months.

Thanks,
AUSU (Athabasca University Students' Union)

As The Voice would like to encourage the active involvement and participation of all students of AU regarding student government, please feel free to submit campaign material to the Voice to be shared with your AU peers. (Campaign articles will not be subject for payment).



'Tis the season to be creepy... by Tamra Ross Low

Today is my favourite holiday. Okay, officially it isn't a holiday, but it should be. Family day is often wasted, as harried working parents struggle to find something to do with the kids. Face it; for many, time with the kids is limited to the dinner table and the television. If Halloween was a stat holiday, there would be no problem thinking of what to do, what with pumpkin carving, costume making, packing candy into little gift bags, etc.

Even if you don't have kids, these are fun things to do.

Myself, I'll be watching horror films all week (okay, I'm a junkie), and now that [Rogers video](#) is offering free online digital horror movies all this month, I don't even have to stop when I'm writing papers. I'll be dusting off the gargoyle and putting up skeletons, and the voices of Vincent Price, and Bela Lugosi will cackle and purr over the strains of the Misfits (*...bonfires burning bright, pumpkin faces in the night, I remember Halloween...*) and Black Sabbath. I'm teaching myself HTML right now, and my desktop webpage is already wallpapered with classic horror posters and little animated living dead.

My Halloween day will mostly be devoted to my pumpkin(s). I've never failed to make at least one jack-o-lantern, and I'm not about to stop now. Then maybe I'll watch Hellraiser (I've got the DVD box set!), or the Evil Dead (the whole trilogy, of course), or Night of the Living Dead, or ... oh the possibilities are endless! I have most of the Universal Horror classics too! My non-horror loving husband might even watch one with me, which is always fun (he's a scaredy-cat and usually needs lots of comfort and hot chocolate). I just hope it's not blistering cold this year, though I know that's wishful thinking. Too bad all those sweet little demons and witches always have to put the parka and toque on overtop.

Sadly, few people go all out for Halloween these days. What a shame. It's by far our most fun non-religious holiday, which means that people from all faiths can celebrate together.

Halloween is also the ideal time to foster the little one's creativity. Too many costumes are the plastic k-mart smock variety with the mask. But with art classes being dropped from many elementary school's curricula and with video games and television replacing play with colouring books and puzzles, kids are in dire need of creative stimulation. Halloween provides endless opportunities.

Kids and adults can spend weeks preparing innovative costumes. Parents should encourage kids to design their own spooky attire, and work closely with them. Time spent learning and creating together is truly quality time. Even if you purchase the costume, you could make decorations for windows and doors, and of course, design your own pumpkin.

Don't worry if your not artistic. The internet provides tons of Halloween ideas, including stencils for pumpkins [simple](#) ones, [complex](#) ones, and even online carving [tutorials](#). Look [here](#) for some pics of exceptional jack-o-lanterns). You can also find cut-out decorations, costume ideas, and links to online stores that sell unique seasonal décor. [HalloweenOnline.com](#) is one of the best sources I've found, but look around because you never know where you'll find treasures. [Elvira](#) has a great page, and [Ben and Jerry's](#) ice cream has an online haunted house, windows wallpaper, and a template for a skeleton decoration (I printed off two and they look great). If you have a good internet connection, be sure to check out [The Around Carolina Haunted House](#) for a really amazing online spookfest. There's even a site that offers [software](#) that will convert a picture of into a stencil so you can carve a jack-o-lantern with your own face on it. Oh, and since it's not Halloween without Dr. Frank-N-Furter, don't forget to check out [RockyHorror.com](#).

Halloween is not only a great opportunity to get creative, but it is also a wonderful time to teach kids some values. Nothing is more off-putting than a greedy and selfish child, but Halloween seems to bring out these offensive qualities. YTV has been asking kids to write in telling how many bags of candy they will collect. How many bags?! Every year I see kids run full-tilt from house to house to get as much as they can, often knocking over younger children as they progress. Incidentally, I always give these kids a single piece of cheap candy, instead of the goody bags the others get.

Some parents do not teach kids that greed is a revolting quality. This is nothing new. I remember at age eight, we went on a field trip to the Olivier Candy factory in Inglewood, Calgary. Afterward we were each given a huge barley-sugar lollipop and we were then allowed to take a handful of candy popcorn from a large barrel. Kids scrambled like hungry pups to get as much as possible, pushing others aside, and filling their shirt tails with the candy. I remember my mother (who was a parent-helper) making a disgusted sound as the kids fought to get the largest portion. I never forgot that. I make the same sound when I see certain adults loading up at one-plate smorg. Gluttonish men are the biggest turn-off on the planet, incidentally.

Another problem that is getting worse is that kid's think they can take anything that catches their eye. Last year, Coles in South Center had a big sale, and balloons were tied to the bookracks. A three-year-old grabbed one of the balloons and cried when her mother tried to take it back. Mom turned to the cashier and said "you know you're just going to have to let her have that now." The bewildered teenaged clerk didn't have the nerve to stop her, so mom took the balloon and walked off. I don't care what she called it, it's theft! I see this a lot, though. I notice it on Halloween most of all.

For 20 years I've put out jack-o-lanterns. Until a few years ago, there was no trouble. For three years running, however, I've had curious youngsters rush at my pumpkin and try to stick their hands inside or to pull it off the stool it sits on. I'm afraid to put one out now because I don't want to see a kid get crushed under a flaming gourd. Kids used to stare or exclaim at my decorations, but now they grab them and pull them down. Parents, if you don't want your kids to be greedy and grabby on Halloween, teach them every day that they can look, but not touch, and that they can't have everything they see. Stores are becoming afraid to have heavy items on shelves, because kids pull them off. And ultimately, I think this leads to theft, as kids grow up thinking they can take anything that grabs their eye, so long as no one is watching.

One final note about tonight. Some people are afraid to let their kids trick-or-treat in the wake of September 11th. Why not compromise? Strive for quality over quantity. Emphasize giving candy, rather than receiving. I make up pretty bags with assorted goodies, and really enjoyed doing this with my mom when I was little. Make the day about making costumes and time spent together. Instead of trying to hit a hundred houses (no kid needs that much junk), just go to people you know, and encourage your kids and neighbours to know what each other looks like. If your kid is ever in trouble when you are not around, she will be more likely to find assistance if people know who she is. Also, kids who know the neighbours are less likely to vandalize and throw eggs at their property. Besides, I always save some extra special bags for the kids I know. Teach your kids to be grateful for free candy, because they won't get much for free these days, and above all else, don't send them out alone. It wouldn't kill you to say hi to your neighbours too.

Happy Halloween!



FED WATCH! By Karl Low

Deadly Diamonds

They're called a girl's best friend, and De Beers would love it if we all spent three months salary on one, but when it comes right down to it, a diamond is a rock. Unfortunately, because of the artificial value placed on them, these rocks are responsible for people dying – and worse. Canada's International Development Research Centre has published [an article](#) detailing how in third world countries, many dictators are making use of the high value of diamonds to fuel their wars and line their pockets.

Under the cover of the constant conflicts, troops go into the diamond fields and intimidate the local population through threats, rapes and dismembering the people there. These diamonds are then sold through the black market to various places, eventually ending up in legitimate stores. The really heart-breaking thing about this is that when you think about it, the diamonds themselves have little inherent value. It's only because the De Beers company keeps a stranglehold on them and because we as a society have decided that they are such a status symbol that their price is so extreme.

So next time you happen to wander through a jewellery store, it's something you might consider before making a purchase.

Where Did They Go?

The Ontario government has [an announcement](#) celebrating the fact that over 600,000 people have been moved off of the welfare rolls. The chilling part about this is that the announcement gives little indication of where they've moved with the exception of the line "many to paid employment." This of course means that some have moved to something else. Exactly what, we're not sure, because the government doesn't bother to give us any indication. Given the problems that have been occurring with squatters and the many protests that have been occurring, I think we can safely say that not all of those who have left the welfare rolls have gone on to better things.

Children Getting Free Health Care

For families in need, the government of Alberta is [promoting](#) it's Alberta Child Health Benefit program. Under this program, families with one child who make under \$21,744.00 per year are eligible to have their child fully covered for medical expenses. For each additional child, the income limit goes up by \$2,000. This includes dental and optical services, prescription drugs, essential diabetic supplies, as well as emergency ambulance services. A report done on the program declares that among other benefits it will reduce the long term costs to Alberta Health and will encourage some parents to enter or remain in the workforce.

My thinking on the matter is if this encourages parents to enter the workforce, why don't we extend these benefits to all Albertans? In this way, people who are sick, say with diabetes, and on social services can go and look for work knowing that they won't have trouble getting their needed supplies. It would also help to make sure that if a doctor prescribes something that the person is able to go out and get the prescription, thus removing the need for a person to eventually be hospitalized because they could not afford the pills.

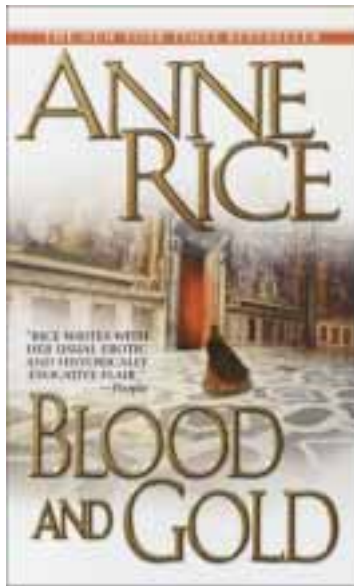
Slap on the Wrist for Pfizer Inc.

Last week I was mentioning some of the problems with the patent system for prescription drugs. Interesting then how this week we hear how the drug company Pfizer (known primarily for it's patented Viagra) has been fined 1.5 million dollars for its part in a price fixing scheme. Should there be anybody left with doubt about how the primary concern of the pharmaceutical companies is profit and not the public, let this [story](#) put it to rest.

The fine comes about as a result of Pfizer pleading guilty to the charges of the Federal Food Court in Canada. The charges come from Pfizer's part in a conspiracy from 1992 to 1994 with other international companies to fix the price on a food preservative agent that is commonly used to maintain the colour and flavour of meat and other processed products in grocery stores. Considering how many of these products are sold in the grocery stores every year, I'm willing to bet that \$1.5 million dollars is hardly anywhere near what these companies made over the two years of the price fixing operation.

Personally, I think a more appropriate punishment would be for Pfizer to have all of its patent protections revoked. This would force them to start engaging in serious competition – the opposite of what they were doing before. It would benefit the consumers enormously as Pfizer's products started being manufactured by generic drug makers, and it would serve as an incredible deterrent to any other pharmaceutical company that thought to try something similar.

As it stands now though, a one and a half million dollar fine not only is inadequate punishment, it does absolutely nothing to benefit the average consumer who suffered from Pfizer's price fixing policies.



Blood and Gold by Author Anne Rice Review by Wayne Benedict

This addition to the vivid world of blood drinkers that Rice has been expanding on since she first introduced us to the Vampire Chronicles in *Interview with the Vampire* (1976) displays Anne's talents at their best. As usual, I couldn't put the book down once I had begun to read it, losing myself in the incredibly detailed world that the author's prose creates. Rice blends fiction with historically significant events to make an unrealistic topic seem believable and almost normal. *Blood and Gold* is the first person account of Marius' life (or undead life if you will) from the time that he was "made" during the reign of Augustus Caesar until the death of *Those Who Must Be Kept* (see Rice's: *The Queen of the Damned* [1988]). I found in *Blood and Gold* that I felt as though I had read parts of the book before and indeed I had, as much of Marius' life

has been touched on in other of Rice's books. In this case, the details have been expanded upon and much of Marius' mysterious, and piteously lonely existence is brought to light. All in all, an excellent addition to the Vampire Chronicles and a must read for fans of Rice. I would also suggest that the reader who has not yet tasted the pleasures of Anne Rice's imagination and rich writing style might use this book as an appetizer before feasting on a banquet of the author's plentiful previous works.



FROM MY PERSPECTIVE: Council Membership & Fiscal Responsibility By Debbie Jabbour

This is the second part of an article in which I depart from my usual policy of keeping my Council membership separate from my writing and instead share with you my personal experience of being on Council. It is not intended to scare potential candidates away, but rather to try and give you a realistic view of what you may expect if you choose to run for Council.

Many students have asked the logical question, "how much time/effort is involved in being on Council?" and "what is required of me as a Councillor?"

Council policy gives some guidelines of minimum hours required. A benchmark is 10 hours monthly for Councillors (who receive an honorarium of \$150), and 40 hours monthly for Executive (honorarium \$600). Each Council member must attend a monthly Council meeting (unless extenuating circumstances exist). In addition, each Councillor must be a member of at least one Standing Committee, holding monthly meetings and carrying out a variety of activities. The executive are also required to chair committees, meet regularly, and sit on university committees as student representatives.

Although an honorarium is received, for a truly dedicated Councillor the actual hourly 'wage' is very small when compared to total hours worked. In an executive position, especially, it really is almost a full time job. Traditional universities recognize this, and their student council executive often take a year off school to devote themselves to being on council, and they receive an honorarium that is equivalent to a full time monthly wage. Much of AUSU work is conducted via email, but this is also very time consuming - I estimate that I spend at least an hour daily just reading and responding to emails dealing with internal issues, student questions and concerns, and University business.

Last week's article outlined how conflict resolution has also been a large part of my job up until now, consuming ridiculous amounts of time. Bottom line: if you are in it for the money, don't bother. Working on Council is a job, like any other. It is a very low paying job, however, one that you perform for other reasons besides the financial. For myself those reasons include: enhancement of educational opportunity, personal enjoyment and growth, gaining experience of the student political process, and the opportunity to make a positive contribution to my fellow students and the University.

Maintaining fiscal responsibility is challenging and requires continual monitoring. We are constantly presented with ideas from within and without that occasionally sway us to make decisions that at the time seem to make sense, but sometimes prove to be poor decisions that cannot be justified in the long term.

One of those ideas was the position of Volunteer Coordinator. As a group, we were eagerly anticipating an influx of volunteers and decided that we would need someone to coordinate this effort. It was also recognized that in order to get people involved, an active recruitment campaign would need to commence. In line with this, we decided to implement the position of Volunteer Coordinator and offer an honorarium of \$100 a month as an incentive.

Organizing this was something that was my responsibility, and I immediately took steps to recruit a suitable person. After several weeks, my ad on the website had received no response. About that time, we were still struggling with the conflict mentioned last week, and were trying to find a productive outlet for the young council member, Mark Gueffroy. Mark had already been very successful in getting people involved in the Student Services committee, and since we had not yet received any external applications at the time, decided to allow him to assume the role of Volunteer Coordinator, feeling that this would be an effective use of his skills.

Mark also had a good rapport with the Voice, having submitted articles on a regular basis for a time, and the Voice Board suggested that he be appointed as the liaison between the activities of the Board and Council. This position also carried an honorarium of \$100.

Here I will refer to a previous endeavor that tried to legislate the Voice as an 'arms length' organization....one that was funded and maintained by your Students' Union, but yet had editorial autonomy and freedom to print whatever they pleased without fear of reprisal from the Students' Union. This autonomy was discussed at the Council meeting in July 2001, and a certain amount of funding was allotted to ensure the continuance of the Voice as an independent student 'spokesperson'. Several conditions, however, needed to be met.

First, the Voice had to submit a budget and a financial plan to Council. This was to ensure that Council could answer fiscally to the student body and justify that their money was being spent prudently. Secondly, the Voice board had to be comprised of AUSU members who were not on Council, a measure that was intended to ensure that only AU students would be involved and reduce possible conflicts of interest. Third, the Voice board was to have a representative from Council who would act as a liaison and communicate between the two.

One month went by, and another. The Voice Board submitted no reports to Council, nor did they attend any Council meetings, although invited. We asked the Voice Liaison what was happening - his response was that he had no idea, since he had not been invited to any of their meetings. Council immediately arranged a meeting with the Voice Board, Voice Liaison, and the President to sort things out. The Voice Board was reminded of the requirement to make monthly reports to Council, and of the necessity to avoid conflict of interest. Editorial autonomy of the Voice was reinforced, as was accountability to the student body.

No reports were received. Several weeks later the Voice was abruptly moved off the AUSU server without Council's knowledge or permission, and a company owned by the Voice Board chair and her husband took over the publication. It also came to light that this same Board member was not an AU student. When the Voice Liaison was asked by Council what was going on, he had no answers, and implied that it was none of our business.

We realized that we needed to take immediate action, since the Voice as an intellectual property belongs to AUSU and Council is answerable to the student body for how their funds are being spent and how the Voice is being run. It became apparent that we needed to find a better way to ensure editorial autonomy of the Voice without compromising accountability, and that a more clearly defined relationship between the Voice and AUSU needed to be determined. It was essential to protect both the integrity of Council and our student newspaper. I should add that the competency of Voice Editor Tammy Moore has never been in question - Council has always respected her right to editorial autonomy and will continue to do so.

Given that the Voice Board had not fulfilled their agreement with Council, had never submitted a budget or financial plan, was not composed completely of AU students, and given that the Voice Liaison was not acting as a communication link between Council and the Voice Board, Council met on October 16, 2001 and passed resolutions that dissolved the Voice Board and eliminated the Voice Liaison position. Although invited to that Council meeting, neither the Voice Liaison nor any member of the Voice Board attended.

At the same meeting, Council looked at the Volunteer Coordinator position and realized that it was not being carried out as intended, and that the amount of work involved could not justify the payment of an additional honorarium. It was determined that the workload currently being done by the Volunteer Coordinator was very small and should be accomplished as part of the regular hourly commitment of the Councilor. The decision therefore was made to eliminate the position and the accompanying honorarium until the workload increased sufficiently to justify its existence.

Of course these decisions were not popular with some of those involved, and sticking by them was to require patience. More time needed to be spent to straighten things out, and I was starting to wonder if it was worth it. I was feeling increasingly stressed, my schoolwork was suffering, and once again I felt my time was not being used productively on behalf of the students.

I tried to maintain focus on the positive aspects of being on Council. I was learning a great deal about student government processes, and experiencing personal growth in my skills as a communicator and organizer. My involvement on the University Academic Council and the SUP Committee was proving to be extremely interesting and very educational. Council activities such as student clubs, student advocacy, and the website, were challenging and satisfying, and I continued to thoroughly enjoy the opportunity to interact with other students and the feeling of contributing something positive to my student community and University.

However, I had still more to learn about the difficulties and challenges of being a student councillor.

Last week I identified three key qualities needed to be successful as a Council member. To these I now add:

#4 Awareness of fiscal responsibility to the student body, ready to answer to them for how their money is being spent

#5 Willingness to admit when a poor decision has been made and the wisdom and courage to correct it.

#6 Treat Council membership as a job, a job that requires a significant time commitment with no corresponding financial benefit.

Next week's conclusion: Demands to Resign

EDITOR'S NOTE:

The above article, at the direction of the council member who wrote it, has not been edited for grammar, spelling, or content. I, as editor of the paper, do not agree with many of the implied circumstances regarding The Voice, or the former Voice Board. Granted, when directly asked if editing this paper would cost me my position, the answer was that it would not; however, that my position as an unbiased editor would be sorely compromised.

The position of the Voice Board, and the autonomy of the school paper, was implemented by the AUSU council in an effort to make the paper independent to run material that was not always sanctioned by council or the university, without the pressure of these institutions to bias the reader, or put the editor in conflict of a desire to be a team player and remain employed.

With the removal of the Voice Board, editorial autonomy is not possible, as I am no longer free to make editorial judgment as I see fit. I gave serious consideration to resigning my position, as I feel my integrity is compromised, but I have decided to remain editor until I am removed from this position, as I feel I do this job to the best of my abilities and that, for the most part, I am successful. The Voice is very important to me, and I have done a great deal with moving it forward over the last year, and finding an fantastic and reliable writing team, which has excelled even my expectations. My writers are wonderful, and have helped ensure that the quality of this paper has been maintained. We have traversed from a paper last January that obtained roughly six article submissions in a month, to a paper that exceeds fifteen pages weekly, and often more than twenty.

Regarding the allegations listed above:

“Several conditions needed to be met.... First, the Voice had to submit a budget and a financial plan to Council” - The Voice Board, as far as we understood it, was separate from the council. Communication between council and The Voice Board was to be limited to the Council Liaison, to assure that autonomy could be complete. The Voice Board was not informed that we would have to answer to the council, not that we were to supply a blow-by-blow account of our activities. Information regarding the fact that we were working on creating our budget, policies and bylaws, and that we were operating smoothly was given to the Voice Liaison for the August council meeting. No contact was reported back to the Voice Board stating that we were in any capacity not living up to expectations regarding the successful management of the Voice. We were not aware that our budget was to be turned over to council. As editor, I keep every email I receive. As editor, I was also on the single and only group listing of the Voice Board. I have found no indication or request asking for a financial plan or our budget. Council may have expressed this as a concern amongst themselves; however, to the best of my knowledge and records, this information was not requested from the Voice Board. This, I am sure, had direct bearing on the fact that our reports were not received.

During the fourteen weeks the Voice Board was in operation, meetings between the Chair of the board, myself, the president, (once in attendance was the Voice Liaison, also once in attendance was the webmaster of AUSU/the Voice). It was at the last meeting, in late September, that we were told that council was feeling left out of our developments, and was worried about whether we were financially responsible. It was agreed that our Chair of the Voice Board would submit a report to the AUSU Council, for the next meeting occurring on October 16th.

“Several weeks later the Voice was abruptly moved off the AUSU server without Council's knowledge or permission, and a company owned by the Voice Board chair and her husband took over the publication...” At the above-mentioned meeting, it was also shared with council that the Webmaster of the AUSU/The Voice, had resigned his position from The Voice, and on two occasions had denied a willingness to discuss the matter further. Control of the Voice web-page and material was not given to The Voice Board, as the Webmaster claimed the web design as ‘personal intellectual property.’ The advertisement forwarded to the Webmaster for the web-master position was not included into the paper.

A new page was built within seventy-two hours (yes, by the husband of the Chair) and service was resumed via a link from the original site. The Voice was posted on webspace controlled by the Chair of the Board, free of charge, to avoid disruption of service. The new Voice page was very well done, and I wanted to keep it. The Chair of the Board was against her husband working for The Voice, and refrained from voting on this issue. She felt this was a conflict of interest on her part, and she resigned over the issue.

I would like to mention that at no time during this issue, did AUSU council approach the Voice Board and ask for clarification, information, our account of events, or otherwise. The Voice Board, wishing to have a member of the University present for the Council meeting, invited Judith Hughes to attend to ensure that proceedings would be carried out in a fair manner. Judith informed us she would not be able to meet with us until October 30th, at the earliest. The AUSU president was informed that the Voice Board would not be in attendance on October 16th, and that we were requesting a meeting be set for the thirtieth. On October 16th, at the meeting, AUSU Council dissolved the Voice Board. We were informed by email the following day.

AU NEWS FLASH

By Pam Patten

AU English tutor Tom Wharton has been nominated for a Governor General's Literary Award for English fiction, for his latest novel, Salamander. The announcement was made in Ottawa on Tuesday.

Tom began Salamander, the story of a printer on a journey to create an infinite book in late 18th century Europe, shortly after his first novel, the highly acclaimed Icefields, was published in 1995.

Salamander began as Tom's PhD thesis at U of C.

Quote from Tom, as reported by journalist Todd Babiak in the October 24 Edmonton Journal: "I just hope it means more people will buy it, read it, and discover it's a good read."

AUSU Elections: Campaign Platforms

Campaign Platform for JASON MORRIS

My name is Jason Morris. I am running for Council in the upcoming 2002 AUSU elections. I'd like to start by thanking the editor of the Voice for giving candidates in the upcoming election this important opportunity to talk to AUSU's members directly. I know that all of you need and want to make informed decisions, so I've taken some time to prepare this document. It gives some background information on me, and outlines the specific things that I will endeavour to do as an elected councillor.

Who Am I?

I started my BSc Computing and Information Services degree program in January of 2001. My beautiful wife Maja is a BSc Nursing student at the University of Alberta in her final year. I have lived in and around Edmonton since birth. I was a BSc Engineering student at the University of Alberta for a short while in 1995. My previous experience with "bricks-and-mortar" post-secondary institutions has reinforced my belief in the quality of the service that Athabasca University and institutions like it provide.

I was a students' union council member for all three years of high school. In the first year I was a delegate to the Alberta Student Leadership Conference, in the second an organizing committee

member and master of ceremonies for that same conference, and in the third year a delegate to the National Student Leadership Conference. I also redrafted the constitution of that union. At the University of Alberta, I was an active member of the first-year engineering students' association.

After leaving the University of Alberta, I was trained as a network administrator, and worked for a number of Edmonton computing firms before accepting a job as Informatics Technician with the Government of Canada, working in a minimum-security jail in Hobbema, Alberta. A year later I took a job working at the Cross Cancer Institute as a Support Analyst, and later accepted a different job in the Alberta Cancer Board as Systems Analyst. Immediately after starting my first course at AU in January of 2001, I decided to continue my involvement with student organizations. In March of 2001, shortly after volunteering with AUSU, I was appointed to Students' Council. I have chaired committees of the Council ever since.

What will I do?

I have four major goals for my two-year term in Council. First, I will drastically improve www.ausu.org, turning our web site in the international standard for distance education students' unions. Second, I will save you money by eliminating the waste from the handbook/planner. Thirdly, I will get AU and distance education students on the political radar in this province, in the country, and in the world. Lastly, I will get the AUSU administration on its feet, and ensure that you can see what we're doing, and tell us when we're not meeting your expectations.

Improve AUSU.ORG

I was instrumental in the improvements to www.ausu.org in the last year. As councillor, I will continue to improve our website, providing advanced services in collaboration with Athabasca University CIS, including making ours the first totally interactive online student union newspaper. Collaborating with AU's CIS department, I will work to implement seamless services that connect you to students with similar interests, enable you to keep track of your classes, your marks, and your friends through the web, and keep you up to date on the services that AU and AUSU provide. I will also work toward reducing the duplication of web design and hosting services by moving the Voice, our student newspaper, to the front page of www.ausu.org, allowing you to interactively write new articles for the paper, and comment on the articles that your fellow students write.

Eliminate Handbook/Planner Waste

Vice President of Student Services Norm Greenfield wasted over \$30,000 of your student fees this past term in the printing of the Student Handbook/Planner. As councillor, I will see to it that these books will be printed in a way that does not cost our members money, or not print them at all.

Due to a single complaint from a single student about a single quotation in the original printing, all of the quotations were removed in the reprinted version except for one on the very last page, which read, "The important thing is not to stop questioning. – Albert Einstein." Well, I'm questioning whether or not this book should even exist.

Even if mistakes hadn't been made, Council fully expected the printing of the book to lose money. Their efforts to recover some of the costs through advertising were ill founded, and poorly executed. Among the incredibly few that were printed were advertisements for industrial trucking services, and a company that sells transistors.

The Council should have known that these books would not be used. AU students don't have the sorts of strict schedules that other university students have. In addition, many of us are students at other universities that already provide these books. We are now hard pressed to find a place to store these books that by the end of 2002 will be useless for anything but kindling.

I support providing online scheduling services over the www.ausu.org website. However, as not all of our members have constant Internet access, I can see how this handbook fills a need. Therefore, as councillor, I will see to it that if these books are printed, it will be in a way that does not penalize members that don't benefit from them.

Get AU onto Government Radar

It is rumoured that at a meeting with the Alberta Learning Minister he was heard to utter, "...our three universities." I don't want to know which of the four Alberta universities (Alberta, Calgary, Athabasca, and Lethbridge) the Minister had forgotten. As councillor, I will ensure that the desires of Athabasca University students are on the political radar of all levels of government.

AUSU is anticipated to become, within the next few years, the largest students' body in Alberta. Nevertheless, the increase in distance education students has made little if any perceptible impact on learning policy in this province.

As councillor, I will ensure that AUSU plays the role it deserves in promoting the unique concerns of distance education institutions to all levels of government. I will also ensure that AUSU works with the Council of Alberta University Students to persuade the Government of Alberta to amend the Universities Act and the Athabasca University Regulation to ensure that all students' unions in Alberta receive equal, fair, and guaranteed representation in their respective universities.

Make AUSU Government Transparent/Consistent

AUSU's bylaws were written nine years ago and, despite numerous efforts, have not been revised since 1996. Even the bylaws we do have are not being followed. As councillor, I will ensure that the operations of AUSU are open, transparent, and in accordance with our bylaws. Our bylaws require that the Vice-President undertake a review of the bylaws annually. For five years now, this review has failed to result in any changes. The bylaws need to be rewritten from scratch, and as councillor, I will make sure that it happens, and that it happens in such a way as to ensure they will be effective for a very long time.

I will also ensure that the current bylaws, policies, and proceedings of AUSU will be documented and maintained on www.ausu.org, and made easily available to all students. It is your right to know what your representatives are doing, and the rules under which they operate. AUSU Members have been kept in the dark for far too long.

Summing Up

I take a great deal of pride in the opportunity to be so deeply involved with AUSU. I think it has the opportunity to provide valuable services to the students of AU, and to really enhance the learning experience. I also think that we, as a university, are on the forefront of what life-long learning will mean to our children and to our grandchildren, and that as such, we have an opportunity and a responsibility to make sure that we get it right. I say let's improve AUSU today, and improve education forever.



Between the Lines... Mixed Messages From Uncle Sam By Orville Lloyd Douglas

More death, more violence, more bloodshed, this is the result of the American government's aggression in Afghanistan. Poor people die while Uncle Sam wins. But what will Uncle Sam win? Right now, the Bush administration is attempting to win a public relations battle with the American people. Bush states that no innocent people will be targeted.

However, four United Nations have died and more are injured. Many more people will die in the next few weeks. The American government now states that rations will be dropped over Afghanistan for the people. What? This is lunacy anyone with a reasonable mind will know that the food means little to millions upon millions of starving Afghan people. The United Nations and organizations such as Oxfam have stated that there can be a humanitarian crisis in six weeks due to the fact winter is approaching. Millions of Afghan people have already fled to Pakistan's border only to be sent to refugee camps where there is little food and no clean water.

The American government claims to be fighting terrorism, yet Uncle Sam is also playing into the hands of Osama Bin Laden. CNN has aired a videotape of Bin Laden that the American government believes has mixed signals. On the American news network CNN, there is only a brief news story about this embarrassment for the American government. Even more chilling is the refusal of the mainstream American press to discuss the dissenting side of the issue.

CNN continues to plaster opinion polls on its network claiming that the vast majority of the American people support America's new war. However, on university campuses such as in Berkley, California, there is public vocal dissention. Not one major American news network has focused on the voices of young people under 30.

How is the Bush administration's campaign any different then Bin Laden's? People are dying after four days of air strikes. All across the American press there is a blood thirst and a revenge vengeance. When will the American people realize they are beginning to lose support internationally? Bush has already stated that more countries will be targeted. This is a contradiction to what Bush said recently that the United States seeks to bring Bin Laden to justice. Now America has emerged as an international bully. America has surfaced, as an international terrorist organization except the world is silent to the American government's campaign. America is the world's only superpower therefore other countries must submit to America's demands. The American government has caused starvation in Iraq where innocent children are dying of malnutrition.

Bush now wants to attack more countries. For what reason though? How does attacking other nations in the Middle East solve the current crisis? It does nothing this is only another example of America's ruthless aggression. The Americans have often been victims of their own foreign policies. The Americans claim to have the support of the Saudi royal family which also has discriminated and oppressed it's own people. The Northern Alliance in Afghanistan also has a suspect past yet the Americans are working with this group as well.

Canadians are currently divided on the issue of supporting the Americans. From television and radio talk shows, to just ordinary people on the street, there is dissention. President Bush claims the Canadian people should not be offended but many of us are furious. Not all Canadians are sympathetic to the United States during this tragedy. Pick up any major newspaper in Toronto and Americans will learn that some Canadians blame the American foreign policy for America's demise during this tragedy. The Canadian news media have provided a balanced perspective of this by telling the Canadian people the truth about the American government's foreign policy. Many Canadians are annoyed that the major media outlets such as CNN refuse to tell the American people the truth about Bin Laden and the Taliban. The truth is that both factions were nurtured by the American government, supported with millions of dollars, and trained by the CIA. The Taliban was created to fight for American interests during the Cold war when Russia attacked Afghanistan. The American government provided the weapons and millions of dollars to Bin Laden and the Taliban.

Contrary to the American people's belief, not all Canadians believe the violent act of terrorism was not America's fault. Many international folk believed the chickens were coming home to roost. While the Palestinians were celebrating the violence in New York when the tragedy had first taken place, not everyone North of the border was shocked by their joy. The American government has a history of violence and terror in the Middle East. Often the American government has made allies with one terrorist group over another in an effort to maintain America's self interest.

Canadians know that the Persian Gulf War ten years ago had nothing to do with freedom and everything to do with America's only interest in oil in Kuwait. One of the United States' closet friend Saudi Arabia is ruled by an oppressive monarchy that discriminates against it's own people, yet the American government ignores the Saudis prejudice but discusses the Taliban's. Now the American government and media are attempting to state that their interest concerns the women in Afghanistan. Where has this sudden interest in the plight of Afghan women emerged? The truth is the women have been oppressed in Afghanistan for many years prior to 1996 when the Taliban emerged as a regime.

America is at war again because the American government has pushed itself into this situation. Unfortunately this time the American people had to pay the ultimate price as over 6,000 innocent human beings died due to the self righteous blood thirst nature of the American government.

Now the United States plans to bomb Afghanistan as they hunt Bin Laden. Bombing a poor country such as Afghanistan will solve nothing. The Afghani people already are fleeing to Pakistan while many others are starving in refugee camps.

Once again America has created a new war wanting Canada's support. Once again innocent people's lives are in danger. Once again terrorists that the American government trained back in the 1980s are now the United States enemy. The largest most powerful international terrorist organization in the world is the United States government.



THE INDIGNANT JOURNALIST Youth Rights Organization Reviews Legislation By Mark Gueffroy, Freelance Journalist

A youth rights organization that recently moved to the Blackfalds area has issued a press release stating that after reviewing numerous pieces of provincial statutes and regulations they have forwarded their official position to MLA Judy Gordon, Lacombe-Stettler Constituency. The group, titled the Youth Liberation Assoc. of Canada, reviewed legislation such as the Employment Standards Regulation, the Personal Directive Act, the Age of Majority Act, the Local Authorities Election Act, and the Young Offenders Act, among others. The YLAC says that they would like to see the Age of Majority Act modified so that youth in situations of “extenuating circumstances” can make an application to the appropriate court and be declared a legal adult, similar to the procedure for “emancipation” in California and other US states. However, the YLAC also states that it supports the repeal of the Young Offender’s Act, stating that “with additional rights and privileges come additional responsibility.”

The Youth Liberation Association has included in their Press Release that they are currently organizing a new Board of Directors, which will consist of youth aged 15-21. For further information about the mission statement or about the organization in general, you can contact their Executive Director at (403) 885-4853, or by email at youthlibcanada@hotmail.com!

AUSU Job Posting Chief Returning Officer

The Athabasca University Students’ Union represents AU students and their interests. The Union strives for a fair and accessible election process for members to the Students’ Council. To this end, AUSU is seeking a student to fulfil the role of Chief Returning Officer for the year 2002 AUSU General Election.

Position Duties and Responsibilities

The CRO’s responsibilities, as outlined in AUSU policy, include arranging for a secure post office box, receiving, collecting and maintaining ballots in a secure location, overseeing counting of ballots with two (2) Scrutineers March 16, 2002, notifying candidates of results and conducting the appeal process as required.

The CRO reports to the General Manager of AUSU and AUSU Students’ Council.

Selection Criteria

- Applicants must be currently registered as an AU student.
- Applicants must be bondable.
- Applicants must have strong organizational and logistical abilities.
- Applicants must be able to analyze and apply policy to ensure a fair election process.
- Candidates in the 2002 AUSU General Election are ineligible for this competition.
- Candidates must be able to operate out of the AUSU head office, located in Edmonton, AB.

Remuneration \$500 stipend
Application Deadline Wednesday, Jan. 12, 2002

Apply to the AUSU office at #306 North Tower, Seventh St. Plaza, 10030-107 St., Edmonton, AB T5J-3E4 ph. (780) 497-3413 or toll free (800) 788-9041 ext. 3413 or e-mail clynch@ausu.org

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.

RAE STASESON, Visiting Artist

November 2, 2001: Friday, 7:30 PM

REHEARSING THE EVERYDAY: A Retrospective Screening and Artists Talk

Nov. 3, 2001: Saturday, 2:00-5:00 PM

"THE POLITICS OF PROCESS"

Individual Consultations by appointment

**At EMMEDIA - The Screening Room- Free
#203. 351-11 Avenue, SW Calgary**

Tracing her work from site-specific performance to video installation, Rae Staseson's retrospective screening & accompanying artist's talk will elaborate upon the recurring theme of "Rehearsing the Everyday". To date, as such, her work has concentrated upon process as it remains as important as the production of any single artifact. The talk explores the uses of the ephemeral and the "everyday" in feminist video making. The presentation will include Staseson's video and performance work produced over the last decade.

In addition to a series of slides that document her body of work between 1990 to the present, clips from Rae's earlier video work will also be presented within the Retrospective. This includes *Up & Down* (7 min); *Pipes* (3 min); *Meat* (5 min); *Laundry x Two* (6 min); *Stain* (3.5 min.) and *Slang* (4:11 min.). *The Comfort Suite - A Video in Four Parts*, was completed in 1996 and can be either exhibited as an installation, or screened as a single channel video. When exhibited, the installation consists of a series of light boxes that interrelate with the videotape. *The Dollhouse Diaries* (7 min, 1999) is an exercise in the construction of memory. *The Dollhouse Diaries* suggests that one's relation to one's own past remains an ongoing act of the imagination. Rae Staseson will also premiere her newest work(s) *HELLO BABY - The Training Video* and its French cousin, *SALUT BÉBÉ - La Vidéo de Formation*. These tapes investigate language training for parakeets. Rae's academic analysis of arts practice, her experience as a television station manager, and her burgeoning career as a professor, make her an excellent candidate for this municipal artist talk/speaker's tour, in conjunction with ACAD and the University of Calgary.

At the Artist Producer's Workshop on Saturday, November 3rd, Rae Staseson will meet individually with artists/producers to discuss the tactics of process-oriented practice and its related politics. Producers are invited to schedule individual appointments. Ms. Staseson encourages artists to bring completed media works, works in progress, and/or ideas for future endeavors. It is strongly recommended those interested in meeting with Staseson attend her talk and screening.

Rae Staseson is a former Calgary artist who has been producing performance, and video for the past ten years. Staseson's work is concerned with place as a site of knowledge; she juxtaposes images, symbols, actions and language to expand possible areas of meaning, to reposition the 'ordinary' and to create new and extraordinary experiences. The focus of her work revolves around domestic themes and vernacular language that addresses personal and political issues. Her first tapes were made deep in the swamps of Louisiana, while she was a graduate student in sculpture at Louisiana State University. Realising that the mosquitoes, fire ants and the department were not sympathetic to her conceptual needs, Staseson escaped the south and completed her M.F.A at Mason Gross School of the Arts, Rutgers University (New Brunswick, New Jersey). She then spent two years living and working in Chicago before returning to Canada in 1994. Rae Staseson was Executive Director of NUTV at the University of Calgary until 1999, when she moved to Montreal.

*Staseson's work has been screened across Canada and the United States, as well as in Europe, Mexico and South America. Over the past few years, her work has been seen at the Museum of Contemporary Art in Los Angeles, the Knitting Factory in New York, and the National Gallery of Canada. In 1999, Staseson had solo exhibitions at the Mendel Gallery in Saskatoon, and Truck Gallery in Calgary, and premiered her tape, *The Dollhouse Diaries* at the St. John's International Women's Film and Video Festival in Newfoundland. Most recently her work has been exhibited at the Sarah Meltzer Gallery in New York City, and screened at the Centre for Art Tapes in Halifax. Staseson's work is included in the exhibition *Magnetic North*, collaboratively produced by the Walker Art Center (Minneapolis) and Video Pool (Winnipeg). This exhibition of Canadian experimental video is on an extended world tour.*

Staseson lives in Montreal and is an Assistant Professor in the Department of Communication Studies at Concordia University. She still collaborates with Zimba the Cat and they are currently working on a script about the circus.



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 markgueffroy@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.