

# ***THE VOICE***

---

**VOLUME 10 ISSUE 02**

**January 9, 2002.**

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

---

## **QUOTE OF THE WEEK**

**"The great pleasure in life is doing what people say you cannot do." --Walter Bagehot**



### **A Bug In Your Ear...How to be a Canadian**

**By Sarah Conchie, Ubysey (CUP)**

**How to be a Canadian (Even if you already are one)**

**Will and Ian Ferguson Douglas and McIntyre**

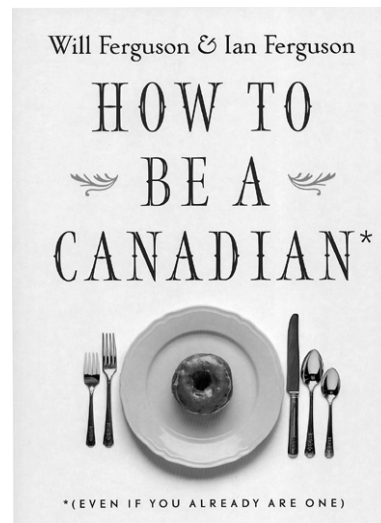
“The Canadian flag does not look like a giant nosebleed.” So say the brothers Ferguson in their first collaborative effort to describe the peculiar habits of this vast country and its elusive culture.

How to Be a Canadian is a Dummies-style handbook that explains all things Canuck in 17 chapters of rip-roaring satire.

The theme of national identity is a favoured vehicle for Will Ferguson, as evidenced in his previous works like *Why I Hate Canadians* and *Canadian History for Dummies*.

Adding fresh wit is Ian Ferguson (author of *Sin City*), Will's older brother and a humorist in his own right.

I don't recommend this book to those preparing to write the Canadian Citizenship exam. Nor should anyone read it in hopes of finding a definitive, ethnically sensitive guide to the Canadian experience. According to the authors, all Newfoundlanders are nymphomaniacs, Tim Horton's is the national religion, and the federal government is up for re-election every two to three months. There is rampant Swede bashing and all kinds of politically incorrect mischief, and the “Cross Canada Tour” offers up an impressive and universally offensive array of provincial stereotypes.



The concept of the book isn't new either, the subject having already been covered by writers such as Eric Nicol, a Canadian newspaper columnist in the fifties. There are passages in *How to be a Canadian* that are eerily reminiscent of Nicol's satiric essays on the sport of curling ("Sport Exposed", 1947) and Saskatchewan ("Land of the Gopher", 1947). The Fergusons have also recycled many of their own punch lines from earlier books, and inevitably spend a few unoriginal chapters on beer and hockey.

*How to Be a Canadian* is likely something Pierre Berton would use in his prairie fireplace; the book is a cynic's antidote to a weekend of "Canada: A People's History", and a welcome respite from the oft idealistic, self-conscious view of Canadian culture in mainstream literature.

Reducing the entire history of Canada to a single page of comedic brilliance and convincingly selling the sex appeal of Canadian Tire takes a certain skill, and the authors provide a punchy and thoroughly amusing romp through a familiar landscape.

From the memorable chapter on the art of a Canadian "sorry" (there are 12 distinct inflections) to the scathingly droll tutorial on how to write the typical Canadian novel, the writing proves consistently funny and easily accessible.

Knowing the finer points of insulting the locals may not be the best way to assimilate the culture, but learning to laugh at ourselves is a valuable lesson and, many would argue, what we as Canadians do best.



## **From My Perspective: TRUST**

**By Debbie Jabbour**

Trust is the foundation upon which all systems rely in order to function, whether it be trust between a husband and wife, trust between manager and employee, trust among members of an organization, or trust between countries. Ralph Waldo Emerson advised, "trust men and they will be true to you," and Warren Bennis accurately observes, "Trust is the lubrication that makes it possible for organizations to work." To distrust causes pain, as artist Paul Gauguin worded it, "I prefer to have too much confidence, and thereby be deceived, than to be always mistrustful. For in the first case, I suffer for a moment at being deceived, and in the second, I suffer constantly." "What loneliness is more lonely than distrust?" states George Eliot, and 17th century French memoirist and philosopher, Francois duc de la Rochefoucauld supports this idea, stating, "It is more shameful to distrust one's friends than to be deceived by them.

While I am loathe to disagree with these wise philosophers, trust, once broken, is difficult, if not impossible, to repair. Like many others, I have had the unfortunate experience of being deceived - by a spouse, by trusted family members, by employees, and by people I considered friends - and it is hard to find a more lonely, hurtful feeling. When you have been deceived by those you openly trusted, people you cared about and believed, people you have lived and worked closely with, mistrust can quickly become the only emotion you are able to identify with.

To many people, lying is a simple thing, and in reality most of us are not 100% truthful all the time. We may use the excuse that we are trying not to hurt people, and arguably this may be justifiable at times. There are some, however, who blatantly and callously manipulate those around them through their lies. Lying becomes easier the more you do it, and for many seasoned liars, they no longer differentiate between what is truth and what is a lie. Sociopaths become adept at lying and manipulating those around them for their own purposes, and many politicians come dangerously close to sociopathic tactics in an effort to achieve their own ends.

If you are optimistic, you tend to believe that lies can be forgiven and that betrayal of trust does not have to be permanent. Once trust has been broken between a husband and wife, sometimes it can be regained, but it takes a great deal of hard work, love, and commitment on the part of both to rebuild the relationship. Loss of trust in the workplace usually results in tensions that ultimately can only be resolved by firing the employee or manager who has behaved in an untrustworthy manner. Trust broken among friends is more complex to rebuild, and unless the friendship is truly valued by all parties, it is usually not possible to forget the deceit. If the deceit has occurred repeatedly, it is much simpler and healthier to lose the friendship - and I would argue with Gauguin on this point - constant deceit contributes more to constant suffering than does mistrust.

Betrayal of trust ended my first marriage. Betrayal of trust by my former religion, a betrayal supported by my close family, sent me into a severe depression that almost cost me my life. Betrayal of trust has taken an extreme toll on me and my children emotionally and financially. Yet I still remain optimistic, ready to take people at face value, believing, as Emerson said, that if you "trust men they will be true to you". I started this new year with the goal of trying to be more forgiving, to let the past go - only to be immediately confronted with betrayal at the hands of a person I considered a friend and trusted associate.

So I wonder, have I reached my limit? Should I now view everyone with the eyes of suspicion, always expecting the worst? Or should I continue to remain positive and optimistic, trying to see the good in people, trying to rationalize? I don't have an answer right now. I do know that my resolve has been strengthened to keep a closer eye on my own behaviour. I've been guilty in the past of hurting those I love, and sometimes I've let friends down. It was never intentional, but that does not lessen the impact. When I hurt others, I also hurt myself. So I will focus on this and try to always be aware of how my actions will affect others. I don't think I'm going to be as gullible and trusting anymore, but I will continue to do all I can to behave in a trustworthy manner and never betray those who put their confidence in me.

I will leave you with the words of Rudyard Kipling, adjusting the final line to reflect both 'Man' and 'Woman':

"If you can keep your head when all about you  
Are losing theirs and blaming it on you,  
If you can trust yourself when all men doubt you,  
But make allowance for their doubting too;  
If you can wait and not be tired by waiting,  
Or being lied about, don't deal in lies,  
Or being hated, don't give way to hating,  
And yet don't look too good, nor talk too wise.....

If you can talk with crowds and keep your virtue,  
Or walk with Kings - nor lose the common touch  
If neither foes nor loving friends can hurt you,  
If all men count with you, but none too much;  
If you can fill the unforgiving minute  
With sixty seconds worth of distance run,  
Yours is the Earth and everything that's in it,  
And - which is more - you'll be a Man, my son!"\*

\*In the Neolithic Age, Rudyard Kipling. Oxford Dictionary of Quotations, 1979

Other sources:

[http://www.cyber-nation.com/victory/quotations/subjects/quotes\\_trust.html](http://www.cyber-nation.com/victory/quotations/subjects/quotes_trust.html)

<http://www.geocities.com/~spanoudi/topic-t3.html>



## Credit Woes

By Tamra Ross Low

### *Part one of two*

Credit: You need it, but it can be difficult to get, especially if you have stopped working or are only working part time while you attend school.

There was a time when you could manage quite well without a good credit rating. In fact, it used to be a mark of pride to always pay cash and never apply for credit; even today this is still the best way to manage your finances.

These days, bad credit or no credit can really hamper your life. If you ever travel, you will find that it is nearly impossible to rent a car or reserve plane tickets or hotel rooms without a credit card. It can also be difficult to do something as simple as getting a membership at a video rental store or a health club.

Bad credit obviously affects your ability to get a mortgage or lease a car, but it may also affect you in ways you are not aware of. According to a Market Place article, [What's Your Credit Rating](#), a bad rating can also lower your chances of getting a lease on an apartment, or a new job.

This can be an especially tough burden on students, who have limited income and may work short-term jobs between semesters. Part time employment may not qualify you for loans or lines of credit. You may have started out with very good credit, but ironically your rating slips very quickly if you are responsible and do not use your cards for an extended period of time. Good credit gained from paying off a loan falls off your record in a few years.

Your student status may also make it difficult to capitalize on credit gained prior to returning to school. I learned this first-hand this Christmas. Three years ago we planned to purchase a new vehicle prior to beginning school because we wanted one that would not break down while we were on a limited income. Unfortunately, the Student's Finance Board limits the value of the vehicle that you may own, and this value does not increase even if you have one car for two people. So, we had to buy a used car which turned out to be a lemon (and of course we had no warranty, because it was used) that over the past two years has cost us far more than an economical lease payment on a new vehicle would have. Looking at the experiences of many of my friends and family, I am not the only one who has found the cost of older vehicle to be astronomical.

I once questioned Student's Finance Board about their guidelines and was told that they are in place to keep student debt low. It is also for this reason that students are allowed to own homes and are not penalized for having equity. The Finance board has determined that mortgage payments can be lower and more stable than rent, and that many students who do run into financial trouble, do so because they cannot find affordable housing. I

think it is about time the board take a better look at their vehicle policy, because our car (and again, we only have one for the two of us - hardly an extravagance) has been our biggest money drain so far, and a low lease between the two of us would have been much more manageable. Or, we could have bought a car outright by placing it on our mortgage and not worried about car payments at all, which would have been great while in school. I certainly understand that the SFB expects that if you have a very expensive car you would sell it for tuition money, but we should not be penalized for driving a low-priced newer vehicle.

The guidelines are strict, however, and we adhered to them while we were funded. This Christmas, though, the money-sucking Le Baron broke down again, and rather than face yet another repair bill, we decided we would get an economical new car. As students who are close to graduating, we are even eligible for a \$1000 discount on a Chevrolet. We ran into problems right away though. First, we could not get lease financing because we work part-time and our job history while in school has consisted mostly of short-term employment. This still should not have been a problem, because we bought our house before entering school, and have enough equity to easily cover the car. Prior to starting school, we easily qualified for a line of credit on our mortgage, but when I called this week, I found out that we cannot touch our equity because of our uneven employment history. Our payment history is excellent, but we have to re-qualify each time we want to make any changes to our mortgage. This is what I mean when I say that your credit history is short-lived. Qualifying once is not enough, because you must continue to qualify if you want to make the most of your mortgage or lines of credit. Our solution has been to switch our home to an equity based lender, but in the process we have had to forfeit a larger chunk of our equity.

So how do you get credit when you are a student or how do you maintain credit that you acquired before going back to school? There are some benefits from your student status where credit is concerned. Most banks offer student credit cards, which allow you to qualify with very minimal income. I got one when I first started school though I had little credit history beforehand. If one institution turns you down, try another. The bank that holds my mortgage denied me credit, but another bank I had never dealt with approved me. Be careful of making too many applications, however, because these inquiries will show up on your credit report and do not look good all grouped together. Keep trying though, all you need is one, low-limit card.

*Next week I explore ways to improve your credit rating and take charge of what's on your credit report.*



## FED WATCH!

By Karl Low

### Employment from Education?

The Ontario Government has [released](#) an announcement declaring that colleges are doing a good job getting people ready for the workplace, and helping them to find a good career. In support of this, they give a number of statistics that show that about 91% of students who graduated and were looking for work had managed to find it.

While this sounds good on first reading, when you realize that the national unemployment rate is only 7.5%, you see that Ontario graduates are actually 1.5% behind the national average.

Not all is lost however, as those graduates who are specializing in the health services industry, from medical imaging to dental hygiene actually have lower unemployment rates than the average, and make the most money as compared to the other respondents. More reason to take a look at Athabasca University's Masters of Health Studies.

### Teachers Organized Across the Province

School teachers across the province, including those from the [Calgary Catholic School Board](#) are getting ready to hold a strike vote. I find this kind of ironic considering how it was not too long ago that the Catholic School Board was making comments about the inability of the public school board to run its business as effectively as they do.

In related news, in the Sunday, January 6th edition of the Calgary Sun, Premier Klein has said that he has put off essential projects involving infrastructure and schools for as long as he possibly can, and that even with a threatening deficit, money must be found for them. It's too bad that he can talk about finding money to fix buildings, but his learning minister, Lyle Oberg, cannot seem to find any money to fix the labour difficulties of the teachers. This seems especially poor when we consider that it is those very teachers that enabled Alberta's Children to score so highly on the international competition I mentioned a few weeks ago.

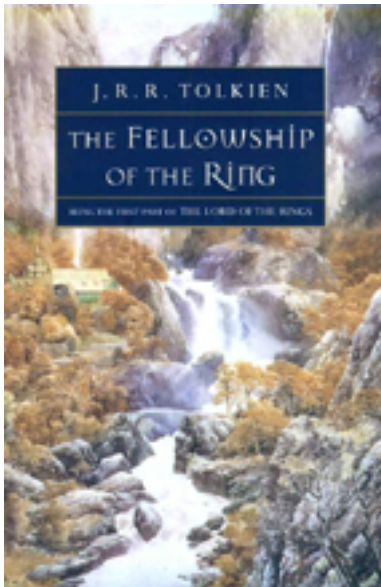
### Experience the Island Culture

Prince Edward Island's government has [launched](#) an internet based radio station devoted to promoting the culture of Prince Edward Island. It only plays artists from Prince Edward Island, so if you want to see what some of the local music sounds like, you can tune into it at <http://www.gov.pe.ca/radio>. The music varies from what you might consider the "traditional" island music played with a fiddle to modern rock and classical. The only problem is that I haven't a clue where I'd be able to pick up the CD for some of the better songs I've heard so far.

It's interesting to note that apparently PEI also streams their legislative meetings over the internet as well. I only hope that other provinces will follow PEI's lead with this - it strikes me as a way to save money over traditional broadcasting technologies (the Alberta Government currently broadcasts their legislative sessions on the Access television network) and as a wonderful low-cost way to promote local culture not only to the locals, but across the nation and the globe. Perhaps if those of us in the west could get a little closer to those of us in the east and vice versa we could do away with these regionally focussed federal political parties.

## **Where do Canadian Diamonds Come From?**

The federal Competition Bureau has ruled that all that is required for a diamond to be declared a Canadian Diamond is for it to have originated in a mine in Canada. [The Government of the Northwest Territories](#) contends though that there is really no means to test where a polished diamond originally came from, and that this ruling opens the door for low quality diamonds to be sold as Canadian Diamonds in the world market. In contrast, the Northwest Territories was hoping for a ruling that would require a diamond be able to meet certain standards, including tracking the process of polishing and cutting a diamond through Canadian factories. This would allow Canadian Diamonds to be given a certain distinction in the marketplace and perhaps achieve a competitive advantage through that reputation.



## ***The Fellowship of the Ring* by author J. R. R. Tolkien**

### **Review by Wayne Benedict**

When I finished reading [the Hobbit](#) there was a week to go before the motion picture of J. R. R. Tolkien's "Fellowship of the Ring" was due to open. I had my doubts that I'd have the time to reread the entire 400 pages of the Fellowship before I went to see the picture, but I decided to try, literally finishing the last page during the advertising before the movie began. Judging from [the trailer](#) that I had downloaded from the Internet, I was confident that this film version had a good chance of doing the book justice. The first and only other attempt to bring Tolkien to the big screen was the animated 1978 version by director Ralph Bakshi called "Lord of the Rings, Part One". It was a disaster, universally reviled by Tolkien fans the world over, and I was no exception. The pressure on director Peter Jackson, the cast, and crew, to produce a quality product this time around was immense and I couldn't wait to see if they had succeeded.

The Fellowship of the Ring (the first book of the Lord of the Rings trilogy) begins where the Hobbit ends, or 59 years later to be exact. Bilbo Baggins, the hobbit who found “the One Ring” beneath the Misty Mountains, is 111 years old and needs to retire. He bequeaths his hobbit-hole, personal possessions, and the ring, to his 33 year-old cousin Frodo Baggins and leaves to parts unknown. The unlucky recipient soon discovers—with the help of the good wizard Gandalf—that the ring is actually a receptacle of evil power, forged thousands of years earlier, lost, and sought after by Sauron (the epitome of evil and the ring’s creator). Should the ring find its way onto Sauron’s finger, Middle-Earth would be plunged into misery, slavery, and tortuous darkness.

The ring “wants to be found” by its evil creator, and Sauron “knows” that it still exists and that a Baggins has it. He sends forth the nine Ring-Wraiths to track down the ring-bearer, kill him, and retrieve the One Ring of power. Frodo, and three hobbit comrades set off, against all odds, in an effort to elude capture and prevent Sauron from reclaiming his prize.

After many hair-raising adventures and near disasters, the four hobbits, with some aid from unexpected sources, manage to arrive at an elf stronghold called Rivendell. There a council is held to decide what to do about the ring. The magic of the ring makes it impervious to any form of destruction except its being cast into the fires of Mt. Doom where it was initially forged. It is decided that the ring must be destroyed but the mountain lies in the very land where Sauron reigns (Mordor) and so there lays the near-hopeless quest of Frodo the unlikely ring-bearer. A fellowship is formed consisting of the four hobbits, Gandalf the wizard, Legolas the elf, Gimli the dwarf, and two men—Aragorn and Boromir. “*The company of the ring shall be Nine; and the Nine Walkers shall be set against the Nine Riders that are evil*”. And so the fellowship sets off to deliver the ring to its destruction in the land of Mordor.

None of the group goes unscathed on their journey and they are still far from Mordor when their company is sundered by the forces of evil. The fellowship is ended but all is not lost; Frodo still possesses the ring and he continues his quest with only Samwise to aid him. This is where the Fellowship of the Ring, first book of the Lord of the Rings trilogy, ends.

I know from past experience that motion pictures based on books are never the same as their literary predecessors and I prepared myself before I went, determined to let the movie stand or fall on its own. Even though I am very familiar with the tale, I was still on the edge of my seat throughout. The filmmakers kept true to the basic premise of the book and the special effects are spectacular. I left the theatre in awe and plan to see it on the big screen again (very unusual for me). The film is very graphically violent so young children should not attend. I am likely biased in that I am much more of a book-reader than a movie-goer, but as much as I enjoyed the show, the book is a vastly more detailed and fulfilling journey into Tolkien’s imagination than the movie. In condensing the book into a screen-play, many of the subplots were changed, rearranged, or left out altogether (the barrow-downs, Tom Bombadil, etc...).

I highly recommend both the book and the movie. The movie-goer who enjoys the show and has yet to read the book would greatly expand on their experience by reading the Fellowship of the Ring after the trip to the theatre. The literary Tolkien fan should not hope to see the book laid out word for word in a visual reproduction, but expect the movie to be excellent in its own right. The second part of the Lord of the Rings trilogy, the Two Towers, is projected to be released in the theatres in December 2002. I am going to wait to reread that book until then and I hope, and expect, to have just as much fun revisiting Tolkien's world as I have had with the Fellowship of the Ring.



## **Education Revolutionary by Cathy Thompson Tekatch**

America's "National Center for Public Policy and Higher Education" is an organization funded by the Pew Charitable Trusts, an American philanthropic organization. Both of these groups try hard to get their state and federal governments interested in the quality of their nation's postsecondary system. The

Center's seasonal magazine *Crosstalk* has a really nice article about Athabasca University in its Fall 2001 edition. It's funny that all of the magazine articles about AU emphasize that it's an "online" university when in fact one doesn't need to have a computer to take their courses, which is a really good thing. Emphasizing the online component is good marketing I suppose, but it's good to know that AU is wise enough to know that there are many ways to deliver quality education to people. Here in Ontario when I tell people who work in education that I'm taking a course from AU, they get all giggly and ask me if I'm taking an "online" course. I don't know what to say.

Read more: <http://www.highereducation.org/crosstalk/index.shtml>

-----

According to *The Toronto Star*, Ontario's Minister of Finance, Jim Flaherty is considering a proposal from Queens University in Kingston to deregulate its Arts and Science programs. This would be great for the government because they wouldn't have to pay as much money to Queens. Of course, student groups don't like the idea because students would be paying more for their education. If Queen's students don't like paying high tuition, why don't they simply enrol in arts and science courses at AU? The quality is better, the price is lower, and the flexibility and service standards make for a far

superior learning experience. If students don't like studying at home alone they can easily get together in a library or a spare room at the university or other school. It's no big deal! Also, these students would be saving a bundle for the Ontario taxpayers, something Jim Flaherty would like. Come to think of it, back in November I sent Mr. Flaherty a letter explaining all this to him. Who knows? Maybe he listened.

-----

The mutual fund companies sure do like to scare the bejeebers out of parents in order to sell their financial products. If you open up the cover of this season's *Maclean's* Magazine university rankings you see an ad from the Bank of Montreal with a male child's face staring at you, "Hey Mom, could you lend me \$96,000?" Reading further, we find out that "experts believe the cost of a post-secondary education may well exceed one hundred thousand dollars within the next twenty years. Yikes! Are parents really being sucked in to all this madness? Will they ever realize that these costs could be reduced to practically nothing if the higher education establishment would use learning-centered delivery techniques rather than the current high-cost, and mostly ineffective, teaching-centered techniques that produce needless and expensive duplication of learning materials across the country?"

## **Campaign Platform of Tamra Ross Low**

Some of these letters are very long, but my reasons for wanting to be on council are very simple. I will be brief.

I will make few promises because I need to learn more about the AU student body and its needs before I can. Too few AU students are aware of the union and its programs, and I believe that the union is likewise only aware of the needs of those few students who have addressed the union in the past. Therefore, my first, and most important task as a union member will be to explore new ways of increasing the union profile and researching student needs. Once this is accomplished, I will work to launch new union programs to address these needs.

Why I will be a good councillor:

- I am a full time AU student enrolled in a degree program. I have a lot invested in this school and I have a strong interest in helping the union better serve the student body. My commitment to AU is strong: I plan to continue with this school through a post-graduate degree.
- Like many AU students, I returned to school after a long absence, and have had to overcome many hurdles to get my education on track. I understand the unique challenges facing distance education and adult students.
- In addition to my home-studies, I work on a freelance basis, leaving me ample time to perform union duties.
- Through my work as a Voice columnist and a member of the Academic Committee I have worked to improve communication between students and will continue to do so.

My priorities:

- I believe that awareness of the student newspaper should be increased, both to reach a larger readership and to encourage new writers to become involved. The Voice is our best tool for improving student communication.
- I believe that the union's highest priority should be to learn more about AU students and how the union can best serve them.
- Students put a lot of money in to the union, and as much as possible should be given back. The computer bursary program is an excellent program for students in need, but more can be done.

My commitment to AU:

- I am in my third year at Athabasca. Previously I took high-school upgrading through distance education. I understand the challenges and benefits of distance education, and I have learned many strategies for success in this area.
- Earlier this year I wrote an article for the Voice in which I discussed my feelings about the isolation of distance education students. Through the process of writing this piece, I learned the value of the paper in addressing these feelings. I committed myself then to be a weekly columnist – a position which I have held since June, 2001.
- Through my Voice column I have investigated critical issues affecting AU students such as the threat that AU may lose its funding status with the Student's Finance Board (July 4, 2001), and the negative press distance education has received from some educators (November 7, 2001).
- I am a member of the Academic Committee of the AUSU, which is working toward implementing informal discussion pages and student evaluations for all courses on the AUSU server.

I look forward to serving you,

Tamra Ross Low

[tamra@gmx.net](mailto:tamra@gmx.net) (feel free to write me with any questions).

## **Election Platform for Sandra Moore**

### **Accessible & Accountable to You!**

My name is Sandra Moore and I am running for a position in the upcoming Student Council Elections. I am a happily married mother of two, and I have sat on various school councils and committees as well as non-profit organization committees. I started at Athabasca University in June of this year working towards a Bachelor of Arts degree in Psychology and Humanities.

I will not rattle off a list of false promises to entice you to vote for me, the only promise I will make is to act on your behalf and be easily accessible and accountable to you if elected. An elected member should be easily approachable without making you feel

intimidated or nervous; as well they should also be assertive enough to stand up for your rights and beliefs.

I feel the students of Athabasca University should demand more of an involvement in the running of Student Council. Plebiscite votes on major issues should be a consideration of Council instead of causing mass internal conflict among themselves. I also firmly believe the minutes from the Student Council Meetings should be published in the Voice or even better, e-mailed to every student. We elect the Student Council to act on our behalf, keeping our ideals, beliefs and attitudes in mind, yet a vast majority of Athabasca students have no idea what they do or even where they meet. Possibly some student may not care, but I believe if the Student Council minutes were distributed to the students either through the Voice or through mass e-mail or snail mail, more students would be actively involved in speaking up because the information is more easily accessible. As an elected member of Student Council, you are an advocate for all the students of Athabasca University, and if elected that is exactly what I intend to be for you.

## **Election Platform of Darren L. Kereluk**

### **Introduction**

Before I go into what I propose to do if I was elected to Council, I want to offer you a bit of a warning. If you are seeking somebody that is pleasant, knowledgeable, levelheaded and likely to tell you everything that you want to hear 100% of the time, then I am most certainly not your type of candidate. I would respectfully encourage you to move on and consider one of the other fine candidates running in this election. I am not a professional politician, nor am I much of a “people person”. I make mistakes—plenty of them, as I am sure that one of my detractors will surely point out to you. One of the things that I can say that I am proud of is my almost compulsive need to work for both ideas and people that I believe in, such as distance education and my fellow students at AU. DON'T GET ME WRONG, I am far from being perfect or successful at this, much like my ACCT 253 final, my “average” in this is roughly 43%, but my heart, such as it is, is in the right place. If you've read this far, I would like to thank you and encourage you to keep on reading. If what I have written bores you, or makes you so frustrated that you can't read any more of it, I'd like to apologize for taking up your time. Frankly, I don't like to listen to politicians, amateur (like me) or otherwise, so I wouldn't blame you if you ran away screaming!

### **Core Concept**

“Let he who is without sin throw the first stone” goes a phrase in the Bible. I must admit that I've thrown quite a number of stones in the past, a couple of which should have been thrown, but many of which should not have even been taken off of the ground. I've learned that being in this perpetual state of attack is not only unhealthy for me, but also for those with whom I have to work with, and for those who I am trying to help. Nothing is ever accomplished by being in a permanent state of war, nor by being incessantly insulting to people. My “core concept” for operating my campaign for election is that I will not engage in mudslinging of any kind no matter how many times I am accused of

having pulled a “hissy fit”, as one former colleague used to term it, called inept, bumbling, or even some names that I cannot write down here (use your imagination and pick one!) because of the wholesome family nature of *The Voice*.

## **Me, and Why I am Running**

My name is Darren Kereluk. I live in Kamsack, Saskatchewan, a community of some 2100 souls that is located approximately 300 kilometres north east of Regina, or 440 kilometres north west of Winnipeg. I’ve been an AU student since September 1998 taking a Bachelor of Administration in Health Administration. In terms of my experience in student government, I was on AUSU Council and Executive from March 2000-March 2001 as Vice President-Student Academics and Services. While I am happy with having raised the profile of the Students’ Union within AU Central, I am going to be brutally honest by saying that I was totally clueless about political intrigue and people skills, both of which had an adverse affect on the performance of my duties at the time. I have been on the Student Academic Appeals Committee since January 2000. I enjoy this work quite a lot because I get to have a direct and positive effect on people’s academic careers.

Why am I running? I’d be lying to you if I said that power and honoraria hadn’t crossed my mind. Well, they have, but I am not so delusional or corrupt as to view your Union dues as my own personal bank account. After all, it is the Athabasca University Students’ Union, not the Darren Kereluk Students’ Union. My duty, if elected, would be to see that YOUR interests are represented before the powers that be, not the other way around. I mean, if the Administration at AU wants to raise your tuition to the maximum allowable by law, I think that it is my responsibility, as well as that of my potential future colleagues, to try and see why such a measure is being considered, with a few to mitigating any ill effects of such an action. If doing such a thing means voting against a pet project of AU administration, or voting against a “proposed” budget, then so be it. My *raison d’être* in mentioning all of this is that my reason for running far exceeds any consideration of money and power.

## **Promises, Promises and More Promises**

One of the things that I’ve noticed about politicians in general is the fact that so very few of them operate with any great degree of consistency. People that are served by elected bodies need to know that if they are made certain promises by their representatives that these promises will be carried out in a manner that is consistent as possible. If there is some reason why a promised undertaking cannot be made, then the public (in AUSU’s case, the student membership) should be informed forthwith. My particular promise for this situation is to ensure that my fellow colleagues and I, as well as any other parties involved in a particular transaction, are all fully aware of the full legal, financial and moral implications of a promise before it is made at all. In other words, everybody has to be operating from the same playbook, with the understanding that if changes are to be made, that the people directly involved know what form a resolution of the problem will take. Additionally, the members of AUSU must be notified of major changes that are likely to affect them—after all, as AUSU students, we all have a right to know. If elected,

I want this concept of contingent consistency to be codified in a Policy, so that everybody involved knows what his or her rights are, and so that AUSU members can be kept fully informed of these changes as they happen.

There are some ongoing problems with the Bylaws of the AUSU. While some interesting and constructive changes have been to the version that is currently floating about, no mention has been made about direct election of the Executive, nor why there needs to be three Vice Presidents. Executive members in the current Council, with the exception of the President are "Acting" positions created by Council versus being legislatively sanctioned ones according to the Bylaws of 1996. If the 1996 ones that are to be followed, both for current operations and the 2002 elections, then the only people who legitimately could claim to have any legitimate claim to their positions as Executives are the President, Vice President (currently Vice President Academic) and the Secretary-Treasurer (currently operating as the Vice President of Finance and Administration). I have not come across anybody else that is on the Executive is there under the authority of any of the Bylaws of 1996. Such people are entitled, though, to any honoraria for extra duties that are authorized by a resolution of Council. These good people are not to blame for these problems, because the Bylaws which they (and earlier, I) were left with were a disaster. Bylaw revisions are very hard to do owing to the complexity of issues and number of people that are affected. Because of the rather dispersed nature of AUSU's membership, more people need to get involved in order to bring about a proper semblance of legality and clarity to the Bylaws. I propose the establishment of a special Bylaw Committee of AUSU whose mandate shall be to solicit public input into Bylaw revisions, and then report to Council with their recommendations. Ideally, Council will have approved the revisions and any modifications to them by the beginning of June, with an Annual General Meeting of the membership to be held in mid July. The AUSU's legal counsel would then do a final review of the draft 2002 Bylaws and forward them to Alberta Registries for approval before the end of summer. The problem is that the longer AUSU, Council and Executive gets bogged down in procedures, definitions and clarifications, the less time that they all have to get out and meet with as many of you as possible to find out what your concerns are. It's very well and good to rely on the *Voice* and the AUSU website to provide day-to-day information and elicit your comments on it, but students occasionally need to see their representatives out amongst them in order to feel the pulse of student thoughts.

With regard to putting AU and AUSU in the hearts and mind of people within Premier Klein's cabinet, this is something that has to be undertaken with the greatest dispatch, keeping in mind that this is not the sum total of the equation. The Council of Alberta University Students (CAUS) is a nice touch in terms of basic representation of AU students to Alberta Learning, but should your funds be used to equally fund projects for which you do not receive equal benefit? This is something that I want the next Council to consider. Based on recent figures, less than half (47%) of AU's undergraduate students currently live in Alberta, so the focus of the new AUSU Council needs to be increasing pressure on the governments in which the other 53% of the student population lives in order to ensure that AU's funding base is much more broader than the Government of Alberta and student fees. The pressure is on student fees right now, as I am sure that you

all will agree. If elected, I would like to see an external affairs committee established with representatives of the student body selected to lobby their governments on a day-to-day basis to help fund “their” students at AU. My “selling point” for AU would be is that it is much more cost efficient to “buy” the AU model than to build additional facilities and pay the associated overhead costs for them. If other provinces begin to fund their students in a more direct manner, this would free some of the pressure on the already strained budgets of AU students. I would also like to see that all governments, including the one in Ottawa, modify their student aid programmes to reflect the 6-month contracts that are in place at AU in order to give our students a better chance to finish their coursework properly, without worrying about meeting a 4-month deadline. Keep in mind that AU students are rather unique in that they are often juggling careers, families and school responsibilities at the same time. When I explain the idea of computer multitasking to people, I always point to the average AU student as a “real life” example of this concept. This is a topic that I approached the University on in the past, and it is something that I would want to do the same in the future if I was elected.

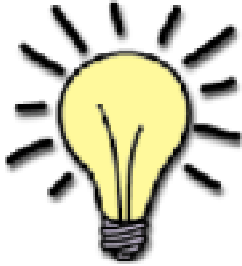
The last plank of my “basic election platform” is for AUSU to reach beyond Alberta’s borders to the rest of Canada to show our fellow students that their students’ union cares about them and wants to hear what they have to say. It is only logical to make some attempt at reaching out to out of province students, since they compose more than half of the student body. While I am not suggesting in the least that AUSU cease sponsoring social events in Edmonton and Calgary, it must begin to hold these types of events in places where there is a sizable AU student population. This does not mean, of course, that I am suggesting that Council hop on the plane and visit every last community in Canada. It does mean that when Council is holding a retreat, it should consider planning it for a place where there is a significant number of AU students, such as in Vancouver or Toronto. For example, it means that if I was elected, that I would need to get more involved in promoting AUSU within Saskatchewan. I travel a lot through the province as it is, so making time to meet with my fellow Saskatchewan AU students to discuss their University experience and their students’ union at no cost to the AUSU treasury for travelling, since I would have been making the trip regardless.

## **Conclusion**

My dear friends (now I am really starting to sound like a politician!), I’ve done like many other politicians that have come before me, and probably after me, and wrote a lot but told you nothing. I am very imperfect. Like other politicians, I have glossed over most of the major issues that need to be discussed in the name of brevity. I am very imperfect. I will have my full platform available to discuss with you by the time that this article is published. If you have any questions for me, or wish to find out more what I am about, I welcome your emails at [dlk\\_2002\\_ausu@yahoo.ca](mailto:dlk_2002_ausu@yahoo.ca) I am very imperfect. If you aren’t too wild for me as one of your representatives on AUSU Council, but would like to talk with me about my close personal friends Bipolar Disorder II (ultradian rapid cycling type) and Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (primarily inattentive type) please feel free to drop me a line about these subjects as well. By the way, keep in mind that I am very imperfect.



For an application form or more information, please contact the Edmonton office of AUSU at (800) 788-9041.



## ENLIGHTENING INFORMATION

---

### **What do Aboriginal People Want? with James Guest & and Anna Marie Sewell**

Join us for a lunch hour conversation on Aboriginal issues - let's tune in to what two distinguished Edmontonians have to say about the ongoing and often tense relationship between Aboriginal people and mainstream society.

James Guest is a Metis and originally from Manitoba. Currently the Director of the Indigenous Law Program and an Assistant Professor teaching constitutional law at the University of Alberta, Mr. Guest is a graduate from the University of Manitoba & Harvard. He's also editing a book on Aboriginal Rights.

Anna Marie Sewell is a poet / writer, actor, playwright, a cultural worker, and founder of BigSky Theatre. She is Polish, Anishnabe and Mi'gmaq by heritage, and legally both a Canadian citizen and a member of the Listuguj Mi'gmaq First Nation.

January 10th, 2002 / Noon - 1:00 p.m.  
Expressionz Caf , 9142 - 118 Avenue  
Infoline: 474-6058 / Admission is free

A presentation of:  
The Community Networks Group (c)  
6819 - 119 Avenue, Edmonton (Canada) T5B 4L9  
Tel/Fax: (780) 474-6058 / Pager: (780) 419-7654

---

## **Big Alberta Sky – Pictures of Home**

This exhibition of photography curated by Calgary artist Wendi Jenkins, presents the work of 3 locally based photographers representing a wide spectrum of photographic practice. Bradford Uphill, who holds a BFA from the Alberta College of Art and Design, approaches the medium from a largely conceptual standpoint. Todd Korol has worked in advertising for a diverse clientele, with his work appearing in many national and international publications from Time and MacLean's to National Geographic and Saturday Night Magazine. Mike Drew's career has roots in journalism – he is currently a columnist and photographer with the Calgary Sun.

In this show, these artists explore notions of home as located in the landscape and country life of this province. Drew and Korol present iconic and distorted views of the hero of the modern west – the cowboy, while Uphill extends and fragments the rural landscape. These diverse “pictures of home” encourage the viewer to consider the photographer as the true lens of the camera.

On view

At

### **The Untitled Arts Society Gallery**

At 319 – 10<sup>th</sup> Avenue SW - 4<sup>th</sup> Floor

**January 6<sup>th</sup> to January 26<sup>th</sup>, 2002**

**Gallery hours:** Friday and Saturday, Noon to 5pm

Otherwise, Viewing by Appointment

**Opening Reception (artists in attendance)**

**Thursday, January 10<sup>th</sup>, 8 pm**

Everyone Welcome. Enter at door in back alley.

**For More Information or Viewing by appointment, Contact the curator at 714-7186  
or Untitled Art Society at 262-7911 (please leave a message).**

## **UNTITLED ART SOCIETY ANNOUNCEMENT**

Up coming shows in the Main Gallery

"Pieces of a Picture"

By Ryan Hamilton and Tanya Mastrobuono

Untitled Arts Society +15 Window

225 - 8th Ave. SE (West end of Performing Arts Centre corridors, 2nd Floor)

On view from December 1st, 2001 to January 31st, 2002

This collaborative show presents a whimsical series of collages by Ryan Hamilton and Tanya Mastrobuono, the former a University of Calgary Fine Arts graduate, and the latter, soon to be.

Random, discarded, leftover puzzle pieces are the key constituents of these light-hearted mixed media works. From this starting point these artists looked for surprising and unexpected ways to take the familiar and remake it as something new. Imaginary landscapes and flights of fancy result, as these recombinant puzzles show traces of their process of exploration, and the marks of the artists' hands.

The artists will be in attendance at the opening reception. All are welcome. For more information please contact the artists @ 340-3970 (Tanya) or 289-6743 (Ryan) or Untitled @ 262-7911 (leave a message).

---

### **Untitled Art Society +15 Window Space in the Performing Arts Centre**

PIECES OF A PICTURE: Ryan Hamilton and Tanya Mastrobuono

December 1 to January 26. Opening December 13.

PLEASE NOTE: Untitled Art Society's Gallery will be open on Fridays from 1pm to 4pm and on Saturdays from 12 noon to 5pm. 4th floor (Box 16), 319 10 Avenue S.W. Calgary, Alberta, Canada

---

### **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](mailto:djabbour@ausu.org). Supply a brief description of the art object, a picture if you have it, and its market value.

---

## **WRITE FOR THE VOICE!**

Contact Tammy Moore at [tmoore@ausu.org](mailto:tmoore@ausu.org).