

THE VOICE

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QUOTE OF THE WEEK

"A man doesn't know what he knows until he knows what he doesn't know." --Laurence Peter



A Bug In Your Ear...

NEWS FROM AUSU: FROM BEHIND CLOSED DOORS

Current Council is working hard to ensure that not only are we accountable to our members, but that our activities are open and transparent. In order to facilitate this, we are introducing this new feature in the Voice, "From Behind Closed Doors", in which items discussed at Council meetings, current activities, and upcoming events will be highlighted.

December, 2001 events:

- Council elected a new President, Debbie Jabbour
- Jason Morris resigned from active Council membership.
- Nominations for Council closed December 22/01.

December 17 Council meeting highlights:

- Jackie Foord, a current AU MBA student and Executive Director for the Kidney Foundation's Northern Alberta and Territories Branch, made a presentation regarding policy governance, the Carver model, and the pros and cons of implementing such a model in non-profit societies.
- J. Morris presented a new set of bylaws for consideration. Council moved that these bylaws be sent to the Legislative Committee for a line-by-line examination.
- Council meeting minutes have been adhering to a strict interpretation of Roberts Rules of Order that only allowed for inclusion of motions passed. Council felt

this did not properly reflect what was occurring in the meeting, therefore has now adopted a format that will include pertinent discussion leading up to a motion, as well as motions both defeated and passed.

- G. Dulai brought forth the following motion, "Be it resolved that AUSU does not support any student fee increase in AU's upcoming budget deliberations," which, after short discussion, was amended to "Be it resolved that given the lack of available financial information to justify a future fee increase, AUSU does not support any student fee increase in AU's upcoming budget deliberations." Passed unanimously.
- Psychology Club constitution proposal was accepted by Council.

Other recent Council activities:

- G. Dulai was selected student representative to the AU Budget Advisory Committee
- D. Jabbour attended Academic Council on December 5, and attended Governing Council December 12 in place of the President.
- S. Barg attended AU Awards Committee
- AUSU representation at an event to honour AU graduate Christine Henry on being awarded the Futures Fund Scholarship for Outstanding Leadership.
- AUSU representation at the Centre for Learning Accreditation Strategic Planning Committee meeting.

Coming up:

- Council meeting, date TBA

AU Strategic University Plan Discussion paper release



From my perspective: Travelling in a war zone: Part Three

by Debbie Jabbour

The sudden black night terrified me, but I tried not to show it, and our little girls were gradually lulled to sleep in the back of the van. The road wound endlessly through the jungle, and my brain was alive with possibilities. Surely it could not be much further to safety? We finally reached the border and

the crossing was, surprisingly, very painless. This border guard was small and manned by only a few soldiers; who looked at our documents, glanced into our van, and let us go on without much comment. We knew that Esquipulas was less than a half hour ahead, and accelerated into the darkness of Guatemala.

The jungle darkness was thick and rich. It was terrifying, yet seductively beautiful. I knew we did not have far to go, and tried to settle back in my seat, focusing on the comfortable rest and meal that awaited in Esquipulas. As black as it was, we still occasionally had a sense of trees bending in close to the road, and at one point, realized that we were entering a small town. Whistles echoed faintly in the darkness, alerting us to the presence of fellow humans, and as we headed into the unbroken stillness we commented on them, assuming children must be playing games in the dark. We drove very slowly through what appeared to be the town main street, but all was dark, silent. There were no signs of life.

All at once, out of the thick blackness in front of our headlights, came a half a dozen soldiers, leaping on to the hood of the van, rifles and machine guns aimed straight at us!!

As my husband stopped the van, they surrounded our vehicle, guns aimed into windows, several soldiers at both doors. Hearts pounding, we opened the door. Two soldiers forced their way into the passenger seat, pushing me aside, one aiming his gun at me, another at my husband. They ordered us to turn around. We asked what we had done, and they stated that we had driven through a check stop, and ignored their whistles to stop. We were in no position to argue, and I slid over to allow a soldier to share my passenger seat, his machine gun trained on me, as we turned our vehicle around. Three or four soldiers rode "shotgun"....hanging on to the front bumper of the van as they escorted us back, guns at ready.

Suddenly the lights of the town came alive, and we saw buildings, streets, and people. All I was conscious of was the soldier sharing my seat, his gun, and my little girls innocently asleep behind. I think my love for the people of Central America is what kept me calm, and perhaps on some level I did not believe harm would come to us. Perhaps I was just numb and in shock.

After endless minutes, we reached a now-brightly lit building, and the soldiers gestured us to pull over. They whipped open all our doors and demanded that we exit the van, asking why we had driven through the checkstop. We explained that we had heard the whistles in the dark and thought they were children playing, that we were tourists who had no idea that we had to stop. They argued amongst themselves, waving their guns, and finally a man who appeared to be in charge came out of the building. We repeated our story, and he quietly and calmly approached the side door of our van and looked inside. He saw our two little daughters asleep on the back seat and said, "oh....tienen niños" (they have children). He immediately stepped back and after some heated discussion with the soldiers, gave orders to let us proceed.

Unbelieving at our luck, slowly we accelerated away, glancing at the line of armed soldiers in the rear-view mirror, terrified and relieved. Twenty minutes later we reached Esquipulas.

Still somewhat numb, yet feeling confident at our close escape, we left Esquipulas the following morning, and upon arrival at Guatemala City, decided that we had enough time to take the scenic route through Antigua Guatemala and Atitlán and still make it across Guatemala in daylight. It's an experience that I will never regret. The road took us deep into the real Guatemala, winding up to the volcanic lake of Atitlán and the beautiful little town of Sololá. About the middle of the day we started to notice groups of people, attired in brilliant and elaborate native dress, standing by the side of the road. After we had passed several such groups, one pleasant faced, brown-skinned gentleman surrounded by four beautifully garbed women waved us down. He asked if we could give them a lift, and we complied.

He spoke a little Spanish (the others only spoke native Mayan dialect), and he explained what was happening. There was a festival down the road in Quetzaltenango, and traditionally everyone got dressed and stood by the side of the road so that drivers would pick them up along the way. To this day I can see the beautiful smiling face of his wife, and his relatives. We could not communicate easily in words, but we shared much. These were the natives that the government was trying to wipe out. In our broken Spanish/English/Maya communication we laughed and shared life stories for the next couple of hours.

Finally we reached Quetzaltenango and we left our guests to their festival, reaching the border without incident several hours later.

I often wonder about those beautiful, humble, friendly natives we gave a ride to. Did they become victims to the next wave of government genocide? I wonder about the guards who apprehended us at the border - I remember the guard that shared my seat as being very young, perhaps one of those forcibly plucked from a village street - did he survive the war? I wonder about those humble, kind, and caring people who opened their home to us in Esquipulas - did their son ever return? I wonder about myself. How could I have exposed my family to such risk? It did not seem so risky at the time, and my experience of the people of Central America was so positive that I could not imagine being harmed. But living in a war zone changes people and behaviour.

My experience has made me understand that living in a war zone is not anything we can comprehend from afar. It is something hopefully none of us will ever have to experience, yet each of us should work towards understanding, since such understanding is the only way we can try to ensure a peaceful existence for our children and our future.



Enjoying The Holidays And Keeping Resolutions

by Tamra Ross Low

It's resolution time again. New Year's day is a time of reflection, and a time to evaluate ourselves, and our personal and professional progress over the past year. Everyone has things that they know they must change, and to facilitate this New Year's has become the traditional day to practice a little radical self-applied pop psychology. Sadly, because few of us are actually skilled in this practice, most resolutions fail and thus, with the predictability of an almanac, New Year's also brings a mass annual guilt trip.

So should we stop making resolutions? No one ever sticks to them, right? And where did this practice start anyway?

The tradition may have ancient roots. The Babylonians celebrated New Year's (although they did it in the spring) with the [belief](#) that "what a person does on the first day of the New Year will have an effect throughout the entire year." Pretty terrifying when you consider how many of us start the year hugging the porcelain begging for some ice chips.

Not to worry, though, the Babylonians have only one opinion. Traditions vary greatly from culture to culture. Here are just a few [examples](#). Moslems "celebrate the new year by wearing new clothes. Southeast Asians release birds and turtles to assure themselves good luck in the twelve months ahead. Jewish people consider the day holy, and hold a religious ceremony at a meal with special foods. Hindus of India leave shrines next to their beds, so they can see beautiful objects at the start of the new year, and Japanese prepare rice cakes at a social event the week before the new year."

"Traditional [New Year foods](#) are also thought to bring luck. Many cultures believe that anything in the shape of a ring is good luck, because it symbolizes 'coming full circle,' completing a year's cycle. For that reason, the Dutch believe that eating donuts on New Year's Day will bring good fortune." Tim Horton's should really promote this one.

Many Americans celebrate the new year by eating black-eyed peas" with "hog jowls or ham. Black-eyed peas and other legumes have been considered good luck in many cultures. The hog, and thus its meat, is considered lucky because it symbolizes prosperity. Cabbage is another "good luck" vegetable that is consumed on New Year's Day by many. Cabbage leaves are also considered a sign of prosperity, being representative of paper currency. In some regions, rice is a lucky food." [Spanish](#) people eat 12 grapes at midnight, one for each chime of the clock (no one ever finishes all their grapes on time, so the tradition is quite comical). People all over the world also make resolutions.

We didn't invent the New Year's resolution, and we can't seem to stick to them either. There may be hope, though. Searching the web I found reams of information on resolutions and how to make them work.

Part of our problem may have to do with the types of resolutions we make. In no particular order, the most common are to lose weight, to quit smoking, to exercise more and to get organized. All require a strong commitment and the breaking of some very tough habits. These are all excellent ideas, but not decisions to be made lightly. Nevertheless, these resolutions are popular across cultures, as this [list](#) from a Japanese student shows.

We've complicated matters a great deal since [Babylonian](#) times, when the most common resolution was to return borrowed farm equipment. According to [How-To-Keep-Your-New-Years-Resolution.com](#), "most of us don't have a clue how to make a reasonable resolution, which is why [we] fail to keep the ones we make. We set high goals for ourselves, and then wonder why we never attain them. So we either stop setting goals (never a good choice), or make resolutions that are ridiculously easy to keep."

This [site](#) offers a number of tips for resolution success, but I will only outline them here. First, don't make too many resolutions at once. Stick with one or two - if you succeed you can add more later. Second, be careful how you word your resolution. Instead of saying "This year I am going to relax," which sounds like a command, try saying "This year I'm going to explore different ways of relaxing," which suggests that the resolution is something you can work toward instead of doing it all at once. This method reduces your opportunities for failure. Next, you should make a plan. Try breaking the resolution down into steps and don't try to succeed all at once. Finally, write your plan down and put it somewhere you will see it all the time, like on your fridge. The biggest cause of failure is simply forgetting.

My own advice - plan for failure. When you do fail, accept it as part of the process and continue trying, undaunted. If you keep failing, don't feel guilty, many forces are working against you. One example: A [study](#) by the Stanford Center for Research in Disease Prevention found that cigarette advertisers may increase their number of ads during January and February in an attempt to foil would be New Year's quitters. Also, guilt and regret cause stress, which leads to an increase in bad habits - possibly those you are trying to break.

If you are still having trouble, do whatever you need to get inspired. I buy body building and fitness magazines every month because the sight of great bodies always reaffirms my commitment to be really fit. Also, try to frame your efforts in a positive manner. It's much easier to make a commitment to eat more healthy food, than to eat less junk food. Once you eat all those extra veggies you'll probably be too full to snack as much. There are also a number of websites that you can visit for extra support for specific habits. Many are listed on [How To Keep Your New Years Resolution](#), including some to help you get [organized](#), how to [quit smoking](#), and how to begin [exercising](#).

If none of this helps, then try making different kinds of resolutions. Technology writer [P. J. Huffstutter](#) suggests you resolve to clean up your digital life by backing up your hard drive, deleting unused files, and changing all your passwords. Another [article](#), by an anonymous writer, has perhaps the best suggestion: resolve to volunteer at your local SPCA or disabled assistance organization.

Most important, break the cycle of guilt. Remember that the New Year can be a time to let go of the past and start fresh. Sing Auld Lang Syne, reminisce a little, and then let the past go. This year, more than ever, we need to just move on.

FYI: [Auld Lang Syne](#) is sung at the stroke of midnight in almost every English-speaking country in the world to bring in the new year. At least partially written by Robert Burns in the 1700's, it was first published in 1796 after Burns' death. Early variations of the song were sung prior to 1700 and inspired Burns to produce the modern rendition. An old Scotch tune, 'Auld Lang Syne' literally means 'old long ago,' or simply, 'the good old days.'

Happy New Year



FED WATCH!

by Karl Low

Klein's Silver Lining

So it turns out Premier Klein's not-so-sober visit to the Herb Jamieson Centre has had some good effects as well. Since being reported on the news, the homeless shelter in Edmonton has been "flooded with calls" by people who want to donate money, clothes, and time to the shelter. It seems strange how people are so willing to help with a cause so long as it's been featured on the evening news. This also happens when the news has stories about injured animals - the S.P.C.A. routinely reports that they get hundreds of calls from people wanting to adopt that specific animal, but very few that go on to adopt one of the many other animals the S.P.C.A. winds up having to put down.

In related news, Klein has managed to go to The Mustard Seed here in Calgary and serve Christmas Dinner without incident. Given the results at the Herb Jamieson Centre, I wonder if the managers of The Mustard Seed are happy or disappointed about that.

Why Health Care Must be Changed, the Million Dollar Spin

The Alberta Government is going to start a one million dollar advertising campaign (or *information initiative* as they euphemistically like to refer to it) as to the current challenges our health care system is facing. This is leading up to the report from the

Advisory Council on Health that is scheduled to come out early this year. The recommendations from the Council will be used to help the government come to decisions on the future of Alberta Health Care. There has already been some concern raised about this report, considering that the Chair of the Council, Don Mazankowski, is also on the board of the Great West Life Insurance Company, and could stand to profit greatly if more health care services are moved to private insurers.

Opposition critics have already begun criticizing the move as an exercise in propaganda, the money for which could have been better spent in health care services.

Wild Weather of 2001

Environment Canada has released it's annual top ten weather stories from across Canada. The number one story was the massive drought that afflicted the Prairies. Conditions were apparently drier than in the dustbowl of the 1930s, and worse, unless we manage to get an unprecedented amount of snowfall in the next few months, it looks like we're setting up to have a repeat of the situation in 2002. The third top story is the number of record highs that were broken over the summer. The fourth deals with how close we came to being a nation covered in wild-fires, and the ninth story explains how the increasing heat is not just a freak occurrence, but part of a world-wide trend with this being the ninth warm year in a row for Canada, and its third warmest overall in the past fifty years of records.

With a new major in Environmental Studies being proposed for the Bachelor of Arts, we can only hope it goes through the process quickly. We may need those graduates in the not too distant future.

Personal Note on the AUSU Elections

Some of you may be aware that I had decided to run for election on the AUSU council. Unfortunately, it was brought to my attention that there is a potential for a conflict of interest between the Council position and my current employment with AU on the Virtual Helpdesk.

To avoid this, I am withdrawing my candidacy, but there are still a number of excellent candidates to choose from. These are the people who will be responsible for representing your wishes as a student of AU to those who make the decisions for us, and they are those who control the eight dollars we pay in for every course. It's up to us to choose them wisely.



White Ribbons and Lipstick

by Audrey Karperien

“Oh no! They’ll think I look silly without lipstick.”

It was my daughter raising the concern, as we pulled into the parking spot outside the restaurant. I pointed out that I was not concerned that I had no lipstick or other makeup on. I pointed out that she never wears makeup, yet all her friends like her just fine. My words didn’t alleviate her distress. The

pressures on young girls today are heavy and had really been getting to her lately. After watching on TV a young man worshipping at the shrine of silky smooth legs of woman, for instance, she had commented only days before that she should maybe shave her arms.

I think the confusion over arms is explained by the fact that she turns three next week. But more importantly, that fact illustrates how our youngest Canadian nonmales are taught from the start, by a force apparently stronger than anything parental, that they are not good enough, that they do not look right unless altered. Barbie and breast surgery, both blatantly ridiculous statements that human women suck, have been commented on more than often, but remain devastating to female self-esteem as well as to male respect for females. And, as already illustrated, the problem is so pervasive and facilitated that it hits sooner than most young males and nonmales know what a Barbie is (or is not).

It is not only a young girl’s perception of her appearance that is wounded. Young girls are bombarded with subtle messages of their lesser importance and male rights to privilege. Marc Levine has a following in the television and advertising industries. His message is confirmed in so much of what we, a society, offer our children, male and nonmale.

The problem reeks and it seeps in everywhere. One person offered me advice today. This was over the phone advice about what to do in the future to get post-doctoral work, delivered by a neuroscientist with whom I had incidentally made contact and who had never met me and knew only that I was female. Amongst other things, he mentioned that if I happened to be pretty that would increase the opportunities. I was amazed, however, at how freely and unconscionably the words slipped into the conversation. I was instantly humiliated yet knew he felt no remorse or shame and was giving me no opportunity to do anything but accept the degradation thrown at me. He expected me to swallow and shut up.

While multitudes of apparently but not very male individuals are standing idly by, men are taking responsibility for the “inherently object” attitude about women and girls instilled in North Americans. Twisting right the twisted powers that be with tough

commentary on advertising and attitudes regarding young females, Dads and Daughters stands up boldly and asks a question many people are afraid to ask: is that how we should view young women: as sources of titillation? Through the Dads and Daughters organization, fathers can assert that they “need to work with other parents to demand an end to violence against females, media sexualization of girls, advertisers using anorexic-looking models, pornography, and all ‘boys are more important than girls’ attitudes”. In Canada, the White Ribbon Campaign, which rose from the ashes of the Montreal Massacre, fights for the same cause, not tolerating mixed up misogyny at any level.

The bottom line is it makes a lot of people sneer, it makes a lot of people cry, and it makes a lot of people act. You can make it might go away. If you are a courageous nonfemale or a curious female, test your mettle: visit Dads and Daughters <http://www.dadsanddaughters.org/tentips.htm> or the White Ribbon Campaign at <http://www.whiteribbon.ca>.



The Hobbit by J. R. R. Tolkien

Review by Wayne Benedict

In my early teens, I never read anything that wasn't required of me by one of the teachers in my school. I didn't hate reading, but I wasn't attracted to it either. One of my friends was always raving about a series of books by an author named J. R. R. Tolkien and he ultimately convinced me to read the first of the set. The book was titled The Hobbit and reading it, I fell under the spell of great literature. I've been an avid reader of fiction and non-fiction ever since. Throughout my teens, I read Tolkien's books—the Hobbit, the Fellowship of the Ring, the Two Towers, and the Return of the King—numerous times each and never grew tired of the tale.

As the advertising hype for the major motion picture “The Fellowship of the Ring” grew to a crescendo in early December, I found that the fires within my Tolkien heart had been relit. After nearly twenty years, I dug out my old paperback copies of the four books and prepared to journey to Middle-Earth once again. The covers of my books are all cracked and torn from years of repeated use, but the pages within are filled with words that are as fresh and exciting as the first time that I read them.

The prequel to the Lord of the Rings trilogy is the Hobbit. It was written by Tolkien as a bedtime story for his own children in the 1930s and met with instant success upon its publication in Britain in 1937. It is not surprising that Tolkien could write exceptionally well, as he held multiple professorships and was recognized as one of the finest philologists in the world (philology is the study of literature). Tolkien was born in South Africa in 1892 and died in 1973.

What, you might ask, is a hobbit? They are short (about 4 feet tall) creatures with large, hairy feet that dwell in Tolkien's fantasy realm of Middle-Earth. They live in comfortable hobbit-holes, love to eat, and generally shun adventures of any kind. The Hobbit is the story of one hobbit—Bilbo Baggins—who is swept up into a most harrowing adventure with thirteen Dwarfs and one wizard named Gandalf. The group sets off in search of a huge treasure trove of gold and jewels that was stolen from the Dwarf's ancestors by an evil dragon. Along the way they are accosted by trolls, goblins, wolves, giant spiders, nebulous creatures in the dark, and in the end, the dragon himself. The story tells of Bilbo's finding of the evil ring and thus sets the stage for the trilogy "the Lord of the Rings".

The Hobbit predates Harry Potter by seven decades and is the undisputed king of children's literature, winning the 2000 Keith Baker Millennium Book Award for the most significant children's book published between 1920 and 1939. Although classified as children's literature, the Hobbit is appropriate and enjoyable for all ages. The sequel series is much more adult oriented and next week I will review the Fellowship of the Ring, compare the book to the movie, and hopefully encourage others to join the ranks of millions around the world that read, love, and relish the Tolkien novels.

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 (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 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.



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 – 10th Avenue SW - 4th Floor

January 6th to January 26th, 2002

Gallery hours: Friday and Saturday, Noon to 5pm

Otherwise, Viewing by Appointment

Opening Reception (artists in attendance)

Thursday, January 10th, 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. Supply a brief description of the art object, a picture if you have it, and its market value.

WRITE FOR THE VOICE!

Fill on our online application at or contact Tammy Moore at tmoore@ausu.org.