

Volume 11 Issue 02  
January 8, 2003

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

# the VOICE

Quote of the Week:

***"Time is the coin of your life. It is the only coin you have, and only you can determine how it will be spent. Be careful lest you let other people spend it for you. "***

**- Carl Sandburg (1878 – 1967)**

# BEST OF THE VOICE

January 08, 2002

Volume 11, Issue 02

## Welcome To The New Format Voice PDF

*The Voice* now has an interactive table of contents. Click on a story title or author name and you will be taken to that article. Click on the bottom-right corner of any page to return to the contents page. Some ads and graphics are also links that will take you to the relevant website.

## ARTICLES AND FEATURES

**A BUG IN YOUR EAR** – Public Service Announcement

**FROM MY PERSPECTIVE:** Suicide – part 1

**SIGHT UNSEEN**

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Mensa Canada Scholarship Programme

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## COMMUNITY AND GOVERNMENT NEWS

### NFB FILM CLUB EDMONTON

*National Film Board*

Free screening of Canadian documentaries and feature films  
co-sponsored with the Edmonton Public Library & CBC Radio One

### COMMUNITY NETWORKS GROUP

*Community Networks Group*

Where Can I Buy Clean Clothes? - A Maquila Solidarity Network Update  
Casa de los Amigos – A Quaker Centre of Hospitality  
Edmonton Dialogues on Foreign Policy

## FROM THE READERS

### LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

### CLASSIFIEDS!



**WRITE FOR THE VOICE!**

Contact The Voice editor at [voice@ausu.org](mailto:voice@ausu.org) for details on writing for The Voice. Provide a sample selection of writing and preferred genre.



## A Bug In Your Ear...

Free seminar for students

### **PUBLIC SERVICE ANNOUNCEMENT**

EVENT: *Explore Public Policy Issues, Student Seminar on Public Policy Issues*  
DATE & TIME: **Saturday, February 1, 2003 — 9:00 am to 5:00 pm**  
LOCATION: **Sheraton Grande Hotel, 10235 – 101 St, Edmonton**  
NON-PROFIT ORGANIZATION: **The Fraser Institute**  
SPONSORED BY: **Fraser Institute supporters in Alberta**  
ADMISSION CHARGE: **FREE**  
FOR FURTHER INFO CONTACT: **Vanessa Schneider**  
**Co-ordinator of Student Programs**  
**1-800-665-3558 Ext. 571**  
**student@fraserinstitute.ca**

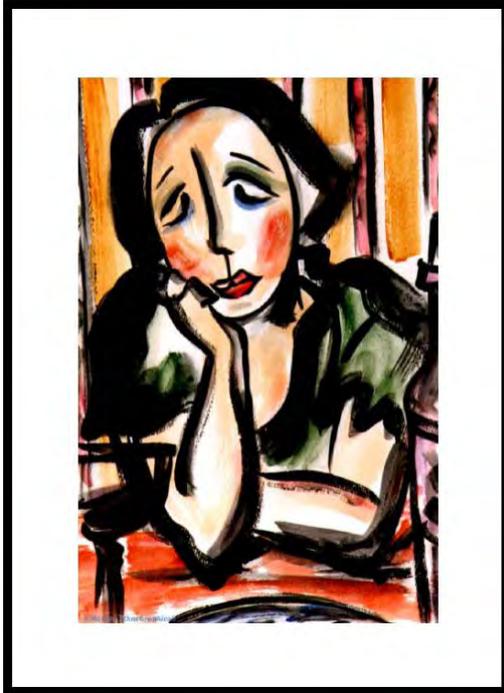
ADDITIONAL INFO:

**This one-day seminar is free of charge and is open to all students. Topics to be discussed include: the global warming debate, health care reform, Canada's military profile, property rights. Special luncheon presentation by Dr. Lorne Taylor, Minister of Environment, Province of Alberta.**

**The format of the event will include presentations, question and answer sessions, and breakout group discussions, in which the students will further consider the ideas presented.**

**For further details, (including a .pdf version of the flyer) please visit the Fraser Institute's website, <http://www.fraserinstitute.ca/studentcentre/>**

The Fraser Institute, 4th Floor, 1770 Burrard St, Vancouver, BC, V6J 3G7  
Tel: (604) 688-0221 Fax: (604) 688-8539  
[www.fraserinstitute.ca](http://www.fraserinstitute.ca)



## **From My Perspective: Understanding Suicide, Part One**

**By Debbie Jabbour**

I would like to start the new year off by taking a serious look at a very serious and difficult subject – suicide. I recently attended a wonderful workshop on suicide intervention, one that made me realize how profound the problem is. At the same time, there is hope - through education and removal of stigma, identification of risk factors, and development of suicide intervention skills.

Although most of us have just enjoyed a period of celebration and goodwill, Christmas is a high-risk time for suicides, with December, January and February the worst months. In Alberta, suicide is among the top ten causes of death. Of even greater concern is the high rate of suicidal behaviour. Statistics for 1999 for Alberta, which has a population of 2,959,504, indicated 447 reported suicides: 15.3 per 100,000 people. Another 45 unreported suicides were documented – cases where suicide is suspect but the coroner cannot label it suicide without an extensive post-assessment. In that same year, however, a staggering 44,700 people engaged in non-fatal suicidal behaviours. In other words, for every person who successfully completed suicide, another 100 people attempted to injure themselves and did not succeed! (SIEC, 2002; ACICR, 2001).

Across Canada, statistics are equally frightening. Suicide is the fifth leading cause of death among Canadians, exceeded only by cancer, heart disease, cardiovascular disease, and unintentional injury. Some aboriginal communities have suicide rates 3-5 times higher than the rest of Canada. According to Statistics Canada, in 1999 the Northwest Territories led the way, with 40.5 suicide deaths per 100,000. Yukon followed with 21.3; then Quebec at 19.8, with Alberta fourth at 15.3, and Saskatchewan fifth at 12.7. All the other provinces were within the 10-12 per 100,000 range with the exception of Ontario with 9.0, and Newfoundland with 7.0. If we operate on the assumption that non-fatal suicidal behaviours follow a similar pattern across Canada, this would make suicide and suicidal behaviour the most prevalent ‘ailment’ in Canada! Research shows that 1 in 25 Canadians will make a suicide attempt at some point during their lifetime, and 1 in 10 will seriously consider it (ACICR, 2001).

Yet funding, research and health care focus on cancer, heart disease, respiratory disease and other “diseases.” Suicide is ignored because of the stigma attached; it is a taboo subject, hidden, a shameful secret we mention only in hushed whispers. Many people, particularly those of certain religious backgrounds, consider suicide attempted murder, a crime, something that is a

person's own choice and thus undeserving of preventative research funding or sympathy. Many religions even forbid conducting memorial services or allowing burial for victims of suicide. Some feel that suicide is selfishness, and discount it as attention-seeking behaviour.

Is suicide simply a matter of personal choice? Is it just a selfish cry for attention? What drives a person to such an act of desperation? Removing the stigma and seeking to understand what causes suicide is an important first step toward trying to find a solution to the problem.

Anyone who has studied human development is familiar with Maslow's hierarchy of needs. Maslow proposed that we all have basic needs, beginning with physiological, then moving into safety, love and self-esteem. If these needs are met we remain healthy and grow towards self-actualization. If they are not met, we become sick. An individual may appear to have all the physiological necessities of life, yet their needs for safety, love and self-esteem are not being met. A person who has lost the means to fulfill any of these needs becomes at risk for suicide; a person who has suffered considerable loss is at very high risk. It is important to recognize that actual loss does not have to occur - it is whether a person perceives it this way that matters.

Loss of safety, for example, could occur with a child who is abused by a parent and has lost the security of a safe home environment; or a woman whose sense of safety has been violated through rape. Love and a sense of belonging is next in the hierarchy. We all need to be loved, to feel needed and appreciated as part of a group, such as family or social group. A person who has lost a loved one, or who has lost family or membership in a group they care about, is not meeting their need for love and acceptance. Self esteem has two elements: that which comes from a sense of personal accomplishment, and that which depends on the attention and recognition of others. For example, a person who is fired from a job, or who has gone through a difficult divorce, may feel inadequate or less than capable, and therefore lose self-esteem.

All of these losses come in the form of stressors on a person. Many of us experience these stressors and are able to cope. Some cannot, and suicide becomes an option. What determines whether a person will have necessary coping skills? Why do some people become so desperate that they see death as the only viable alternative? The main determinate is: resources.

There are two levels of resources; internal and external. Internal resources are those within a person: their sense of self-esteem, personal abilities and skills, creativity, intelligence, faith, etc. External resources are things like family, friends, job, religious organization affiliation, community resources, finances, etc.

Stress and multiple loss deplete these resources. A person who has lost all of their internal resources no longer has control over their own life. They are hopeless and helpless, and they perceive themselves to be completely alone, particularly if external resources are lost as well. The pain becomes unbearable, and death seems like the only option, one that will stop the pain and make things better for everyone involved. There are some common characteristics of suicide:

1. A common stimulus for suicide is unendurable psychological pain. People are in intolerable pain, and suicide is seen as the only way to stop the pain.

2. The common stressor is frustrated psychological needs. Basic needs are not being met (physiological needs, or the need for safety, love, self-esteem).
3. The common purpose of suicide is to seek a solution. For a person in pain, suicide seems to be the only possible answer to a hopeless situation.
4. The common emotions of suicide are hopelessness and helplessness.
5. Ambivalence is a common internal attitude. Although in intolerable psychological pain, feeling hopeless and helpless, with no possible answer except death – the person still yearns for rescue.
6. The common cognitive state is tunnel vision. No other options are apparent. A person may even believe that they are doing others a favour by removing themselves – an act of love.

(Schneidman, 1985)

What then, should we conclude about suicide?

1. A person who considers suicide a solution has reached a point of unendurable psychological pain, and loss and stressors have led to an overwhelming sense of hopelessness and helplessness.

*Suicide is **not** just “personal choice” – it is seen as the only possible solution for a hopeless situation.*

2. Internal and external resources have been completely depleted due to stress and loss, and the person feels completely alone.

*Suicide is **not** a “selfish act,” it is the only way to stop the pain for a person who truly believes they have no other resources.*

3. The depletion of internal resources leads to tunnel vision, where the person has difficulty even accessing their own feelings of ambivalence about living versus dying.

Suicide is **not** just an attention-seeking “cry for help.” Rescue may be hoped for, but this is generally not on a conscious level. Many seek help from physicians or friends, but come to believe that no one in their life is listening.

Contrary to what many believe, suicide is not always caused by depression or mental illness. Depression, other mental illness, and substance abuse may be present, and these represent increased risk of suicide. Often, however, there are few external indicators of the severe internal pain and hopelessness that the person is feeling. Stressors may not be obvious, and even if they are, we do not always know whether the individual has the necessary coping skills. Sometimes the person considering suicide actually experiences a lift in mood because they believe they have now finally found a solution.

What, then, can be done to prevent suicide? Research in suicide prevention has discovered specific risk factors, and these can be used to assess level of risk for suicidal behaviour. Next week we will look at those risk factors, and the suicide crisis intervention model.

### References & further information:

SIEC: Suicide Information and Education Centre. <http://www.siec.ca/sptp/index.htm>  
Canadian Mental Health Association: <http://www.cmha.ab.ca/>  
ACICR: Alberta Centre for Injury Control & Research (2001). Suicide in Alberta, Data Report, 1993-1997. Suicide Facts. <http://www.med.ualberta.ca/acicr/>  
Statistics Canada: [www.statscan.ca](http://www.statscan.ca)  
Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs: <http://web.utk.edu/~gwynne/maslow.HTM>  
Schneidman, E (1985). Definition of Suicide. John Wiley & Sons. See: <http://www.sccenter.org/understanding.html>  
World Health Organization. Suicide statistics worldwide. [http://www5.who.int/mental\\_health/main.cfm?p=0000000149](http://www5.who.int/mental_health/main.cfm?p=0000000149)

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*Debbie is a native Edmontonian, and a single parent with four daughters. She has worked as a professional musician for most of her life, and has enjoyed a rich variety of life experiences - with many more to come! Debbie is working towards an eventual doctorate in psychology, and currently serves as the president of the Athabasca University Students Union.*

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**ANNOUNCING**  
University of Calgary  
Department of Neuroscience

**National Graduate Studies  
Competition 2003**

We will be awarding trips to Calgary for the top students interested in visiting the Department of Neuroscience. Successful applicants will be awarded an all-expense-paid trip March 5 - 9, 2003 to tour the department and meet potential graduate supervisors.

**Competition closes January 17, 2003**

For information visit:  
[www.acs.ucalgary.ca/~neuro/recruit.html](http://www.acs.ucalgary.ca/~neuro/recruit.html)

## University Of Calgary Neuroscience Competition 2003

The Department of Neuroscience at the University of Calgary is holding a second National Neuroscience Competition to identify students to fly to Calgary for an all-expense-paid trip for 4 days in March 2003 to visit with group members.

We are interested in meeting with undergraduate students taking courses relevant to neuroscience as well as graduate students and postdoctoral trainees.

For more information, please see:  
<http://www.acs.ucalgary.ca/~neuro/recruit.html>

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## Canadian Fed Watch!

### *News Across The Nation...*

*January 8, 2003*

**By Karl Low**

### **Civil Silliness: The Gun Thing**

As has been on the news in Alberta and various places, the federal government's gun legislation went into full effect on New Year's Day. This means that if you are caught with a fire-arm that you have not yet registered, you can be charged, have your gun taken away, and be fined or even sent to prison for up to 10 years.

Here in Alberta, this legislation has some folk up in arms, so to speak. We even have [an MLA](#) who is openly defying the law.

People who are against the law, including the [Ontario Government](#), say that it is doing nothing to prevent crime, that it is very expensive, and that it targets law-abiding gun owners. The MLA for Alberta, Doug Griffiths, says that the registry is improperly filing the forms and that it has already been broken into which endangers the personal information it holds. He uses this as justification for why he refuses to register his fire-arms. Sun Columnist [Roy Clancy](#) says he hasn't registered because the process is too confusing and difficult.

Personally, I have no idea what all the fuss is about. The process is hardly difficult, my wife registered three guns for her father online. It took all of five minutes out of her day – and that includes the search for the site where she had to register. Perhaps if Mr. Clancy made half an effort he would have had more success.

As to the concerns Mr. Griffiths has, I will certainly agree that they may have merit, but that alone is no reason to break the law. Would he also refuse to register his vehicle if it turned out that the Alberta DMV made mistakes or was not completely secure? I highly doubt it. These are just excuses from a person who feels he has some sort of right to comply only with the laws he likes.

Finally, the complaints of the Ontario government about the legislation not preventing gun crime miss the mark entirely. This is a gun registration program, folks, not a gun confiscation program. Like a vehicle registration program, it does absolutely nothing to prevent crimes or accidents from occurring with those vehicles – it isn't designed to. Saying that a piece of legislation is failing to do something it was never intended to do is spurious at best. The legislation is designed to make criminal investigations easier, and to protect the lives of our enforcement officials. In short, it is not designed to prevent crime, but to aid in bringing criminals to justice.

Similarly, being upset that a registration program targets law-abiding owners makes just as much sense as being upset that a vehicle registry targets law-abiding vehicle owners and not car thieves. The registry enables stolen guns, when found, to be linked to their lawful owners – thus solving a theft in one part of the country, returning property to a crime-victim, and possibly alerting police to multiple crimes that a single gun may have been involved in during its travels. It also enables the police to be aware when they are heading into a house for some situation, such as a domestic dispute, whether they need to be concerned about the presence of a gun at the premises. Surely even the most rabid gun-lover can see the sense in this?

Finally, it seems many gun owners are concerned that this legislation is some kind of punishment for owning a gun. Again, I liken this to vehicle registration. In this day and age, you certainly do not need to own a vehicle, and if you choose to do so, there are certain fees, taxes, and laws that you must abide by in order to have the privilege of vehicle ownership. We do this because a vehicle is a tool that if improperly used can cause very serious damage. Why should gun ownership be any different? Gun owners would probably respond that the same logic could be applied to knives and that next I should be calling for knife registration. Of course, this is wrong simply because a knife requires a lot more effort to be used in such a way as to cause the amount of harm a simple trigger pull or wheel swerve can. The degree of risk associated with an item is a very valid consideration, and guns are simply a much higher risk than a knife.

If gun owners really want to protest having to register their guns, then they should at least be consistent and protest having to register their vehicles as well. Doing that would at least make it obvious how ridiculous their position is.

That all being said, there is one valid complaint that keeps arising, and that is the astounding cost of the gun registry program. With some projecting these costs to rise above a billion dollars by 2005, it seems like there is an astonishing amount of waste going on. What is rarely said, however, is that one billion dollars is the total cost of the program since its inception in 1995, which includes the additional costs taken on by the federal government as various provinces opted-out of maintaining their own portion of the database, and also includes both initial set-up costs and operating costs for the program until 2005. According to Justice Canada's [projections](#), the highest-cost portion of the registry – program implementation – is now complete, and costs will start to go down year by year as the program becomes more mature and streamlined.

Even so, one billion dollars is still a lot of money. This money most likely could have been spent better in health care, education, or increased enforcement budgets for police. Yet this does not mean that we should scrap the program, as some are saying – especially now that we've already spent the money to actually implement the system. Scrapping the program would not get that

money back. What we need to do now is perform some serious audits and see where money is being wasted and how we can improve the service. It is developed and running now, we should at least see if it will provide some benefits. According to the Justice Department, it already has provided benefit by lowering the number of gun thefts and the number of lost or missing firearms. This is an extremely good benefit as the more guns that remain in the hands of the law-abiding owners, the less we all have to fear.

What we also need to do is convince our authorities not to be as cowardly as they were with the Alberta protestors. If there is a known violator of the law, they should be arrested, charged, and tried. If the legislation is not legal under our charter of rights, then let's start the proceedings now so we can find out. If it is legitimate, then we should show people that it will be properly and fully enforced. Let us have the convictions to follow our ideas.

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*A native Calgarian, Karl is perpetually nearing the completion of his Bachelor of Arts with a Major in Information Studies. He also works for the Computer Sciences Virtual Helpdesk for Athabasca University and plans to eventually go on to tutor and obtain his Master's Degree.*

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## **Are you an artist?**

### **AUSU supports the arts!**

AUSU is interested in purchasing original works of art from students for 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
- have 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, contact: Debbie Jabbour [<mailto:djabbour@ausu.org>].

Supply a description of the object, a picture if you have it, and its market value.

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# AU Profiles:



Me with a British Jaguar while on the test pilot's course

## AU PROFILE

**Student: Wayne Karperien**

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Voice: Hi Wayne. First off, where do you live?

**Wayne:** At the risk of sounding like a hobo, I have no fixed address. We (my wife, 2 children, and I) are presently living in Salisbury, England. We are moving to Edwards Air Force Base in California right after Christmas. In the last 5 years we have also lived in Cold Lake, Alberta and Winnipeg, Manitoba. No, we don't ride rail cars.

Voice: Do you have a family/ kids/ pets ?

**Wayne:** Other than the spiders that my 3-year old feeds her peas to, we have no pets. The neighbour's cat sleeps on our front step. Does that count?

Voice: What are your hobbies / interests/ activities/ etc.

**Wayne:** Hobbies. Lets see. I'm in the most fortunate position of having my job for a hobby. I'm a fighter pilot, or at least I was until I became a test pilot. So that keeps me fairly busy. Then there are our two small and two grown children, who keep demanding food, stories, wrestles, park visits and attention. My older boy demands that I leave him alone, so I must write to him and call often. Just leaving messages can be a time consuming endeavour. My younger son is learning how to play chess, and he demands that I vanquish him fortnightly. My daughters need me to marvel at their niceness and Hapkido skills. When able, I like to fly radio controlled-airplanes as well, but they have taken a very distant second place to life lately. Oh yeah, I like to take AU courses as well.

Voice: Can you tell us about the AU Courses you are taking at the moment, or a favourite course?

**Wayne: Well, I'm just finishing the Test Pilot course here in the U.K., and I didn't have time for any extra AU courses. I did, however, finish Astronomy 205 just before we arrived here, and I'd have to say it was my favourite AU course so far, although I've really enjoyed all the computer courses I've taken thus far as well. Pacing around the house singing an agitated mantra then darting to the computer to type what I thought was a solution to the algorithm has to be one of my most vivid memories. I really didn't think I was going to get that one to work, but it did.**

Voice: How long have you been a student? (And where)

**Wayne: Way, way too long. I started when I was 6 (mom started us late) and I haven't stopped since. I think my biggest academic hurdle was learning to tie my shoelaces in grade 2, but after that, it has been quite fun. Learning how to say the "R" sound properly was also a bit tough. AU courses are easy and fun, though- nothing like that early stress.**

Voice: What do you think of your courses/ the AU experience/ distance education?

**Wayne: It's hard to really express how strongly I feel about this without sounding trite. I think that distance education is a marvelous gift and opportunity for everyone to get the education and attain the goals they want. It helped put me back on a very positive course in my life, and took away a lot of barriers. It really does allow anybody to do anything they want, given sufficient time.**

Voice: How (or) Is AU helping you towards a goal?

**Wayne: AU is broadening my horizons and providing me with skills and confidence to move past what I already know I can do. This allows for a tremendous amount of personal growth. As an Officer in the CF, attaining a University degree is encouraged and supported and improves your ability to do your job.**

Voice: What are your future goals?

**Wayne: One day I'd like to get my master's degree and become one of those really good profs we hear about or experience so infrequently in our scholastic lives. But for now, I'll just keep plugging away at my undergrad degree.**

Voice: Do you have any advice or words of wisdom for other students?

**Wayne: One course at a time, don't stop. You're never too old, its never too late. It's an old and well worn cliché but its absolutely true, especially when applied to distance ed.**

Voice: Anything else we should know? Funny stories about the dog eating your laptop/ praise for your favourite tutor/ recommendations for a course....

**Wayne: If you want to see a nuclear reaction or stand on Venus then take Astronomy 205. If you want to solve puzzles and make things work then take Comp Science.**

*Thanks, Wayne, for taking some time out of your very busy schedule to be a part of AU Profiles. We wish you the best of luck in your new home in California!*

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**Anyone interested in being featured in AU Profiles should email Tammy Moore, Editor of The Voice at [voice@ausu.org](mailto:voice@ausu.org) My thanks for your participation and readership!**

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## **Sight Unseen**

**By Lonita Fraser**

The things that are most precious to us, our five senses, are things we very often take for granted. They are gifts whose ever-present status means we fail to notice, and perhaps appreciate, them in the same way we notice the novel and infrequent. Our senses of sight, hearing, smell, taste, and touch are our keys to the world. Without one, we would miss one fifth of living.

That said, think of what life would be like without one of those senses. Think of what life *is* like for those millions who cannot see, hear, taste, smell, or touch, and who may never have, and consider this: If you were able to lend one of your five senses to a person born without, which one would you give? What would you forgo so another could experience?

That question is almost too easy for me to answer. I would lend my sight. I am sight-impaired, and wish my vision were far better than it is, but if I could lend my vision (little as it is) to someone without, I would do so without hesitation.

I would want this person to be able to see simple things like the sky, and the sun, and what the food they are eating looks like. I would want them to be able to know what a smile looks like, and what joy there is in reading the printed word, but most of all I would want them to be able to experience colour.

There is no real way for me to describe how I feel about colour except to say that I am in love with it, and I cannot imagine life without it. I would want this person to understand blood red, ice blue, and forest green, the colour of a blush, the colours of changing autumn leaves, and to see all these things reflected in glass and mirrors.

No, I change my mind, colour is not the thing I'd most want them to see. What I would really want them to be able to do is look in a mirror and see themselves, to see their own face shining back at them.

When I am asked what I would want if one wish were granted me, my first reaction is to ask for perfect vision, even if it is only for just a few minutes. I want to understand the world the way a person with 20/20 vision understands it. I want to be able to move around and do things that most of the population takes for granted - read fine print, drive a car, watch TV from across the room instead of being sat right in front of it.

Would it be a tease to have such a gift only to have it taken away again? Would it hurt too much to lose something so precious? Most definitely, but I think it's a price worth paying in order to have the wonders of context being able to see things would give.

The question courtesy of: [The If Project](#), a monthly web-based writing project.

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*Lonita has been an AU student since early 2002, and is studying towards a Bachelor of General Studies in Arts & Science. She enjoys writing, creating websites, drinks far too much tea, and lives in hopes of one day owning a plaid Cthulhu doll. The most exciting thing she's done so far in her lifetime, is driven an F2000 racecar, and she's still trying to figure out how to top that experience. Her personal website can be found at <http://www.lonita.net> and what you can't find out about her through that, you can ask her via email: [lonita\\_anne@yahoo.ca](mailto:lonita_anne@yahoo.ca)*

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**C   A   U   S**  
**Council of Alberta University Students**  
*Athabasca • Calgary • Alberta • Lethbridge*

CAUS represents university students across Alberta. Visit the CAUS and the Tuition CAUSE websites to learn more about what CAUS is doing to keep Alberta tuitions affordable.

CAUS: <http://www.su.ucalgary.ca/caus/alpha/>  
Tuition Cause: <http://tc.su.ualberta.ca/>

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JANUARY 8, 2003

**Dear Sandra,**

**I put on quite a bit of weight in the month of December and I really need to lose it, any suggestions?**

**Chubby from Christmas**

Dear Chubby,

Eat less, move more! It's that simple. Everyone seems to expect some kind of miracle exercise or diet for weight loss, when really it all stems down to eating less and moving your butt more often.

The holidays seem to be the time that most people put on weight. With Christmas parties where the calorie-laden punch keeps getting refilled and the butter cookies grandma sends beckon you to devour them all at once, it's inevitable that you are going to gain weight. Now is the time to redeem yourself. The most important thing to remember about eating less is not to starve yourself. Give yourself 3 nutritious meals a day and a couple healthy snacks.

So many diets centre around restrictions; don't restrict just constrict (if I ever become a health guru that's going to be my slogan). Instead of 3 hamburgers have 1, instead of the pan of brownies have 1 (cut it into regular size!). If you are a sugaraholic like I am, taking yourself immediately and completely off sugar will only lead your body to make you a nut case sneaking out late at night to the 7-11 to buy candy. I try not to eat sugary foods at any other time than after dinner, this way I know I'm getting something "good" once a day and I don't try to sneak it in. Adding more fruits, vegetables and fibre to your diet and drinking the recommended 8 glasses of water a day will help fill you up quicker than those empty calories in that candy. 8 glasses of water seems like a lot, but really it's only 4 – 500 ml water bottles a day.

If you take the time to keep a food journal, whether it's on the computer or in a little notebook in your pocket, you will be amazed at how much goes into your body in one day (when you are not eating responsibly). You need to record every morsel that enters your mouth from those M&M's you stole from the skinny girls' desk to the gum you chewed after to get rid of the smell in case she checked (hey, overeating is an addiction, people do crazy things). Keeping this journal along with how your body reacts roughly an hour later will show that oatmeal (without 5 handfuls of brown sugar and a cup of homo milk) will keep you fuller and give you more energy than 2 honey crullers, 20 Tim-bits and an extra large mochaccino. Make small changes everyday; put half the cream or sugar in your coffee, drink only one pop a day, pack your own lunch, cook with sprays instead of butter, etc...

Don't try to stop all your bad eating habits all at once, keep a food journal so you are aware of what you are eating and gradually get rid of all those foods in your diet that are not on the food guide and add more that are.

As for moving your butt, you should be doing something active for at least 30 minutes 5 times a week. This doesn't have to be 30 minutes of continuous exercise; 15 minutes of yoga in the morning and a 15-minute walk at lunch are just as beneficial as a 30-minute walk. Do what you like to do. If you like to swim, swim. If you like to run, run. If you like to dance around in your living room and relive your days as an 80's punk rocker wannabe, dance like an idiot! You can exercise by sitting at your desk just by contracting muscles. It doesn't have to be complex and you don't have to do it with other people.

Losing weight is not rocket science; eat less junk and more nutritious food and get up from your desk or off the couch. There is an abundance of help on this subject; your local library, magazines, gyms, and of course the Internet (just try typing in weight loss and see how many hits you get!) Keep in mind that improving your diet and getting more exercise will not only help improve your figure but it will also improve your mind and provide you with more energy to cram through the night. Of course it's going to be hard to walk past the bakery and refuse that tempting aroma, but the payoff is worth it. No more laying on the bed to do up your jeans with a coat hanger, and if you start changing your ways now you might just be able to venture out onto the beach in a bikini by July (unless you are like me, my butt and stomach look a roadmap from the stretch marks my two children gave me, I'll always be a one-piece, towel wrapped around my butt until I step into the water kind of girl!) Good luck!

*Sandra*

**I WANT TO HEAR FROM YOU!  
TELL ME YOUR TROUBLES.  
YOUR CONFIDENTIALITY IS ASSURED.**

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*This column is for entertainment only. Sandra is not a professional counsellor, but is an AU student who would like to give personal advice about school and life to her peers. Please forward your questions to Sandra care of [smoore@ausu.org](mailto:smoore@ausu.org)*

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## Chrétien Action Figure!

By Laura Seymour

We need to make a protest. We need to do something about this! We can't sit by and let this happen! "What", you ask? Why, so many world leaders have an action figure and Canada is, laughably, without one. We must get on the bandwagon and be counted in! What will our American neighbours think if we don't?

Recently on KTLA (Los Angeles TV) a story aired about the new George W. Bush action figure. The reporter stopped a few people on the streets and asked what they thought about this doll. He held up a doll that wore a suit. Then he pulled the string and out came excerpts of some of George W. Bush's speeches. People listened to him bumble over a word or two and laughed at his mistaken pronunciation. What fun! Some of the passers-by said they thought the doll was cute, while a few others said that it was in bad taste (Heavens! Can you imagine the doll that would have been created if Al Gore had been President?). Well anyhow... the hubby then turned to me, eyes wide and asked, "gee shucks, why don't the Canadian people have such a neat doll?" (Okay, you got me! He didn't really say this!)

The Real Canadian Leader Doll would have to have certain attributes to be believable. First, when it speaks French it would have to speak with a natural looking mouth. Then, when it spoke English, one side of its mouth would have to shrink up to the side. Hmmm, that may need hydraulics. We may have to increase the price to cover that! Then he'd have to have some exciting speeches for the children to listen to. I'm still working on that part but here are a few contenders:

*"Yes. You may land the planes in Canada. You're welcome President Bush."*

*"I welcome Her Majesty The Queen to Canada."*

*"I disagree with the !#&@ honorable member!"*

Okay, maybe these aren't as exciting as telling the world that we are at war with terrorists, but that's about what we have to go with, folks.

We have to be careful as we assess this doll's market potential. After all we are talking about a money venture.

If you want a doll that will bring on money, how about Osama Bin Laden. That doll is a major cash cow! Of course we're not talking downtown Calgary for sales. Osama's doll comes with a

neato beard and a long white burnoose to wear. Kids delight in the realistic guards and jeep that come with it. That doll is selling off the shelves in the Middle East.

So too is the President Saddam Hussein doll. After all why wouldn't it? It has a peachy keen moustache and a couple of outfits to wear – one of them has a thingamee to sling across his chest for bullets, just like Rambo used! Iranian children just adore cuddling with it as they nod off to sleep and dream of war with the world and being leaders of a country who can fool people with a favourite game of Hide The Nukes.

So, I think we need to start working on our action figure. When children in Canada cuddle up with their official Prime Minister doll, they will have to dream of being in office more than once, wearing a nice suit daily, ummmm... help me out here!

Maybe the extras with the doll can include an optional change of suit? Hey! Maybe this action figure has a limousine! YEAH! Kids like props. Maybe if we get a reworked Malibu Barbie car? Of course, we'll have to hear, "Sold separately!" blaring out from the TV ads.

Now we need to be realistic on price. I don't have access to the prices for the Saddam Hussein or the Bin Laden dolls so I think we need to do a bit more research. Anyone have any price suggestions? Now, now, let's be nice. After all he's bilingual and ummm...wears a suit.

Maybe CBC will do a TV series about this special Canadian moment "A Gift to Laugh At" ? Or would this be another Canada Post moment?

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*Laura Seymour first published herself, at age 8. She has since gone on to publish a cookbook for the medical condition of Candida. She is working toward her B.A. (Psyc).*

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## **VOICE CLASSIFIEDS**

### **Looking to buy, sell, or connect?**

The Voice offers FREE classified ads for all AU students. Ads are posted on the Voice website, and in the pdf version of the paper.

Take advantage of the free Voice classifieds section today.



## **AU's Learning Centers Don't Make The Grade**

**By Tamra Ross Low**

Athabasca university offers education with convenience that is unparalleled by traditional universities. Everyone who is capable of completing the course work, has equal access to an AU degree, regardless of their geographic location, work schedule, child-care [or elder care] responsibilities, or physical or psychological limitations.

AU, in so many ways, fulfills the promise of providing open and accessible education. Our school also, despite ever increasing tuition costs, continues to provide excellent value for our money by including books with tuition, and mitigating the cost of traveling to and from school.

I've been very happy with all of these aspects of AU, expect for one little thing – something that mystifies me, and makes me wonder if the school is really in touch with student needs.

I'm talking here about the location of the AU Learning Centers. Both Calgary and Edmonton have learning centers, and both – amazingly – are located in the downtown core area of the cities.

This makes little sense to me. No other university has set up shop in the highest rent district of a city, with the exception of Mount Royal College, and this is just one of four campuses, with the rest located in outlying areas. SAIT has a second campus, but it is in the low-cost Mayland heights area. It simply makes sense to locate a school in low-rent districts where large facilities can more easily be afforded. It is not like AU gets a lot of walk in business.

Nevertheless, AU has chosen to place a school – of all things – in the downtown core of both Calgary and Edmonton. Predictably, the AU office space is tiny, and poorly built. Most of the internal walls are only-slightly-better-than-a-cubicle partition dividers, and sound travels with amazing ease. Anyone who has written an exam at the CLC knows that the exam room is astonishingly noisy, and that any conversation within 10 feet of the door travels through with little impediment. I have been told that the Edmonton center is similar.

The Calgary office is located in an area that is currently under heavy construction. Large condominium complexes are being built nearby in three directions, and this construction has been going on for a couple of years. I had the pleasure of once writing an exam at the CLC while a huge crane noisily hoisted structural steel high into the sky just outside the window. I also had the good fortune to write on the day that one of the AU offices – the one adjoining the

exam invigilator's booth – was loaned out for use for an office party. There is nothing like peals of laughter, glasses clinking, screams, guffaws, and general everyone-is-happy-and-talking-louder-than-everyone-else banter to make the test writing process a real dream.

I complained after I was done my test, and I was told that if it was bothering me I should have said something earlier. But they knew the noise was going on. Everyone in the exam room was rolling their eyes, sighing, muttering complaints, and otherwise quietly griping. The thing is, I'm not sure much could have been done, anyway. As I said, the walls are so thin, you can only get quiet if no one outside the room talks. Even when the invigilator is on the phone in her booth, you can hear everything she says.

Size is a big issue with the Learning Centers. There is hardly any space for paced course rooms, and the exam rooms are simply too small. More students attend AU each year, and I'm already running into the problem of having to choose several alternate times when I want to write an exam, because often the exam room is full for the time I want. Of course there is always plenty of room if you want to write in the beginning or middle of a month, but this does mean that you have to forfeit some of your contracted course time.

AU really seems to need more space, but due to high rental costs for the buildings, they can't get much more. Clearly, however, if the buildings were in an area outside of downtown, substantially more space would be easily affordable. Given that AU has indicated that they are feeling the crunch of inflation, you would think that they would stop wasting money on high profile downtown offices that offer little value to students.

Placing the offices downtown not only costs more for AU, but for students as well. Parking prices are astronomical downtown, and I have sometimes had to pay as much as \$8 just to park long enough to write a test. Some AU courses now have 2 exams, which doubles the parking costs, and doubles the stress of driving around downtown trying to find a place to park. This assumes, of course, that you are brave enough to leave your car in a downtown lot, and that you are brave enough to walk around downtown alone. The CLC is on a really seedy street, and I've had a couple encounters with really scary individuals around there. In fact, I was told by a CLC staff member that they keep their stairwell door locked at all times due to vagrants coming in.

Writing exams is stressful enough, without the added stress of getting downtown and parking. Using transit is not an option for all people, and this should be a personal choice. Also, keep in mind that AU has a large number of students with anxiety disorders, agoraphobia, and similar conditions, and that for these people, the atmosphere of the downtown core at 9:00 am, 1:00 pm or 4:30 pm [the most common exam times, which also coincide with the highest traffic times downtown], is very distressing.

I asked once, why the CLC had to be in such a lousy location, and was told that they had to be located downtown as it was easily accessible by transit, and most people use transit.

I think that sounds like bullshit, to be honest. Pardon my language, but really? Let's look at that. First, you have little choice but to use transit downtown, but that does not imply a preference for it. Second, the mean age of AU students is higher than most universities, and

older students more often have vehicles. In fact, when I've been sitting around waiting to write an exam, the common small talk among those waiting has been about the difficulty of finding parking. Third, while transit access is important, you don't have to be downtown to ensure it. There are many places in the city with excellent transit access. Why in northeast Calgary there are many large, low cost office locations with ample parking, and the c-train runs right along large portions of it. I know of two technical schools that have had their space in this area for some time. I've peered in the door of the tech school in my area, and noticed all the space and thought longingly how I'd love to park out front, come inside, and write my exams there. I have wished I lived more than 100 kms from a campus, so that I write at a school of my choice.

I was excited a year ago when I heard the CLC lease was about to expire, but stunned when I heard that AU actually signed on for another term in this crappy location! I hate writing tests there so much, I actually avoid those courses with extra invigilated exams. A while back, I was thinking of taking Norman Temple's much lauded nutrition course [and probably will eventually], but didn't due to the fact that it is only 3 credits but has 2 invigilated exams. It's just too much hassle to take a course that hauls me downtown twice for only 3 credits. I find exams to be pretty stressful (based on all the books on coping with exam anxiety, I'd say I'm not alone) and writing at the CLC is the worst.

IKEA keeps prices low for customers by utilizing a number of cost saving techniques. They ship items flat, produce in bulk, eschew on-floor salesmen, and they only build IKEA stores in areas of the city that have low property value. It's right in their mission statement. It makes good sense. Most universities, colleges, and technical schools are also located in lower cost areas, where they can have a lot of land and ample classroom space. Only AU has decided that expensive, cramped office space with a downtown address is preferable to a more functional, and cheaper space elsewhere.

It's mysterious....

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*Tamra lives in Calgary with her husband and two cats. A fulltime AU student, she splits her free time between her duties as an AUSU councillor, writing her first novel, and editing written work by other students and friends.*

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## Scholarship News

### MENSA CANADA SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAMME

**Value:** \$750; \$500; Honourable Mention.

#### **APPLICATION DEADLINE: January, 2003**

Mensa Canada Scholarship Programme wishes to reward students who follow through their career strategy. To apply, all you need to do is to submit a 250 word essay. The deadline for the current competition is January 31, 2003. The competition results will be announced after May 15, 2003

#### **OVERVIEW**

- Applicants must be Canadian citizens or landed immigrants enrolled in a full-time program at a Canadian post-secondary institution, during the 2002-2003 academic year.
- Applicants must be at least 18 years old on January 31, 2003.
- Awards are based on applicants' essay.
- Essays may be written either in English or in French. Only one essay will be accepted per applicant.
- The Mensa Canada Scholarship Program includes one scholarship of \$750, one or more scholarships of \$500 and may also include Honourable Mentions, all of which are awarded in accordance with the dictates of the Board of Directors of the MCSP, as funding permits.
- Applicants must write an essay, of 250 words or less, describing their career plan and how they are achieving those goals

Complete rules, conditions, and application information can be found at the Mensa Canada Scholarship Program website:

<http://www.mensacanada.ca/home.asp>

## **SYNCRUDE/ATHABASCA UNIVERSITY ABORIGINAL SCHOLARSHIP**

**Value:** \$2500

**APPLICATION DEADLINE: AUGUST 31, 2003**

**Administrator:** Athabasca University

**Donor:** Syncrude Canada Ltd.

**# Available:** Up to three (3)

**Announcement date:** Late fall

- Applicants must be Alberta residents of Aboriginal ancestry: Indian, Inuit, or Métis.
- Preference will be given to students entering their first year of full-time studies; students in other years may also apply.
- This award may not be won by the same person more than once.
- Late applications may be considered if there are still rewards available after the deadline.

### **Open to students in the following degree programs:**

- B.A. (major in information systems).
- B. Admin (Major, or Post Diploma major in Management, Industrial Relations, or Organization).
- Bachelor of Commerce
- Bachelor of Nursing (Post R.N.)
- Bachelor of Science, or Bachelor of Science (Post Diploma)
- Bachelor of Science in Computing and Information Systems
- Bachelor of Science in Computing and Information Systems (Post Diploma).
- Bachelor of Arts (major in Information Systems).
- Bachelor of Administration (major in Management, Industrial Relations, or Organization).

### **APPLICATIONS**

Application forms are available from the address listed below and should be returned to the Student Awards Office at Athabasca University.

### **CONTACT INFORMATION:**

Student Awards Office, Office of the Registrar

Athabasca University, 1 University Drive, Athabasca, AB T9S 3A3

Phone: 1-(780) 675-6249

Fax: 1-(780) 675-6174

Toll Free: 1-(800) 788-9041

**Web Site:** <http://www.athabascau.ca/html/depts/registry/studawrd.htm#sast>

**Email Address:** [auinfo@athabascau.ca](mailto:auinfo@athabascau.ca)



## INTERNSHIP OPPORTUNITIES WITH REALM MAGAZINE

### ONLINE INTERNSHIP WITH NATIONAL MAGAZINE

**Position:** volunteer editorial intern

**Location:** various – job is fully online

**Duration:** TBD



REALM is a national Canadian magazine about life and work in your twenties and creating work you want. Located on every college and university campus across the country, REALM provides young Canadians with the tools they need to turn their passions into a career they'll love!

REALM Re•Verb is an online community of youth from across Canada who contribute to REALM in a variety of capacities. As a member of the REALM Re•Verb Editorial Team, you are a representative of REALM in your community, keeping REALM on top of the trends and attitudes affecting Canadian youth! Duties may include but are not limited to:

- Advise REALM editors on issues of interest to or affecting youth
- Contribute story ideas and profile leads
- Contribute ideas on contests, formats or features for REALM
- Review quarterly editorial line-ups and provide feedback, ideas and leads for articles
- Contribute to **Trend Watch**, an exclusive Re•Verb section in REALM which highlights what's hip, what's happening and what's passé on campuses, in clubs, and in cities and towns across the country
- Review article drafts and provide feedback
- Provide design ideas
- Provide feedback and recommendations on questions of advertising and editorial policy for the magazines and webzines
- Review the magazine after it is published and provide critiques, feedback and ideas for improvement
- Represent REALM editors in your community - this may mean speaking to the media, and attending career fairs or entrepreneurship conferences (optional)

For more information on the position or to apply, please visit <http://realm.net> or contact Nikki Whites at [nikki@realm.net](mailto:nikki@realm.net). Please do not send resumes.

## ONLINE INTERNSHIP WITH NATIONAL MAGAZINE

**Position:** volunteer marketing intern

**Location:** various – job is fully online

**Duration:** TBD



REALM is a national Canadian magazine about life and work in your twenties and creating work you want. Located on every college and university campus across the country, REALM provides young Canadians with the tools they need to turn their passions into a career they'll love!

REALM Re•Verb is an online community of youth from across Canada who contribute to REALM in a variety of capacities. As a member of the REALM Re•Verb Marketing or Campus Agent Team, you are a representative of REALM in your community, keeping REALM on top of the trends and attitudes affecting Canadian youth!

### Duties may include but are not limited to:

- Advise REALM marketing staff on issues of interest to or affecting youth
- Advise on marketing policy
- Contribute ideas on contests, advertising in REALM
- Aid in various marketing initiatives
- Help with distribution opportunities in your community or on campus
- Help develop unique marketing initiatives
- Provide design ideas
- Consult on issues relating to REALM's web site
- Review the magazine after it is published and provide critiques, feedback and ideas for improvement
- Represent REALM in your community - this may mean speaking to the media, and attending career fairs or entrepreneurship conferences (optional)

For more information on the position or to apply, please visit <http://realm.net> or contact Nikki Whaites at [nikki@realm.net](mailto:nikki@realm.net). Please do not send resumes



## Notice to AU graduate students and those considering entering grad studies at AU.

Athabasca University Students' Union is in the process of establishing an AU Graduate Students' Association.

Here's a sampling of benefits of belonging to a Graduate Students' Association:

- Graduate student representation on University Committees
- University and government advocacy and lobbying
- Affiliation with provincial and national graduate students' organizations
- Assistance with university/student dispute resolution
- Information source
- Networking

### For more information contact:

Shirley Barg [[sbarg@ausu.org](mailto:sbarg@ausu.org)] Vice-President  
Athabasca University Students' Union  
Call 1-800-9041 ext. 3413



## Conference Connections

Contributed By AU's *The Insider*

- **CASE District VIII** - March 8-11, 2003 - Coeur d'Alene, Idaho - "Connect in Coeur d'Alene." Details: <http://www.connectincda.com>
- **AMTEC (Association of Media & Technology in Education in Canada)** - "E-convergence: Education, Media & Technology" - May 25-28, 2003, Montreal, Quebec. Call For Papers deadline is Dec. 15, 2002. Details: <http://www.amtec.ca>
- **ICDE World Conference** - 21st annual - June 1-5, 2003 - Hong Kong. Deadline for abstract submission is Aug. 1, 2002. Details: <http://www.ouhk.edu.hk/HK2003>
- **CADE** - June 7-11, 2003 - St. John's NF
- **International Studies Association and the Central and East European International Studies Association (ISA/CEEISA)** - June 26-28, 2003 - "The Global Tensions and Their Challenges to Governance of the International Community" conference at Central European University in Budapest, Hungary.

## Canadian Diabetes Association

We gladly accept donations of:

- Clothing
- Linens
- Toys
- Small Appliances
- Jewellery
- Shoes
- Luggage
- Sporting Goods

Canadian Diabetes Association  
(403) 509-0070 [Calgary]  
(403) 509-0072 [fax]  
1-866-811-0070

Email: [cycolpro@telusplanet.net](mailto:cycolpro@telusplanet.net)  
[www.diabetes.ca](http://www.diabetes.ca)

Canadian Diabetes Association (CDA) is



a non-profit, charitable organization with over 150 branches across Canada. CDA volunteers and staff work directly with people with diabetes and their families at the grass roots level. The CDA Collections Program collects clothing and reusable household items as an entrepreneurial fundraising venture. The funds raised from this program assist in promoting diabetes research, education, service and advocacy.



## NFB Film Club Edmonton

[www.nfb.ca](http://www.nfb.ca)

Upcoming **free** screening of Canadian documentaries - feature films co-sponsored with the Edmonton Public Library & CBC Radio One

Showing @ the Milner Library Theatre downtown, 7 Churchill SQ. Time: 7-9 p.m.

### **January 14: To My Birthmother ...**

Directed by Beverly Shaffer / Produced by Beverly Shaffer & Mark Zannis

Delving into the past can be a risky business, especially for someone who's been adopted. When Marie Klaassen went looking for her birthmother, she discovered that trying to locate her would take perseverance and guts, and that succeeding in the search was not the end, but another beginning. This video diary recounts Marie's personal journey to find the woman who gave her life. It's a fascinating story of a reunion fraught with suspense, humour and humanity.

### **February 04: The Journey of Lesra Martin ...**

Directed by Cheryl Foggo / Produced by Selwyn Jacob

Lesra Martin was poor, illiterate and struggling in Brooklyn, NY, when a chance encounter with a group of Canadians shattered his world. Raised in the chaos of the inner city and given a fresh start in Canada, Lesra became a hero when he helped bring justice to wrongfully imprisoned American boxer Rubin "Hurricane" Carter. Finding the courage to change his own life, Lesra is now a lawyer and motivational speaker. This film brings together intimate interviews with Lesra, his family and friends. From his home in BC to a poignant return to the streets of his childhood, Lesra reflects on the event that altered his life.



## ANNOUNCENEMENTS FROM YOUR UNIVERSITY

### **AU MATH AND ENGLISH ASSESSMENTS: ONLINE**

Athabasca University's Mathematics Diagnostic Assessment is now published online at: <http://www.athabascau.ca/html/services/counselling/math/>.

Two versions of this online test contain 30 or 70 questions that will help assess students' mathematical skills. Based on their score, the assessment will recommend which Athabasca University mathematics course a student is likely ready to take successfully.

You may also find the online English Language Skills Assessment useful. It is found at <http://www.athabascau.ca/html/services/counselling/esl/>

Thank you for your cooperation in this matter. Please contact me at the e-mail address below if you have any questions or concerns.

Dean Caplan  
Instructional Media Analyst  
Dept. of Educational Media Development  
Athabasca University  
<mailto:deanc@athabascau.ca>



### **CHANGES TO THE UNDERGRAD GRADING POLICY AT AU!**

This is to advise you of an important change in the undergraduate Grading Policy at Athabasca University.

Athabasca University has approved a new Alpha/4.0 grading scale for undergraduate studies effective January 1, 2003. The grades that students achieve will be stated, on transcripts and

in student records, as alpha grades on a scale from A to F. Grade averages will be expressed as Grade Point Averages using the 4.0 grading scale.

These changes in grading scale are part of a province-wide initiative in Alberta.

Undergraduate courses that began before January 2003 will be graded using the percentage grading scale.

For a complete statement of this Athabasca University policy please go to:

<http://www.athabascau.ca/policy/registry/gradingpolicy2002.htm>

**If you have questions please contact me.**

**Bruce Dawson**  
**Assistant Registrar, Registration Services**  
**Athabasca University**  
**1 University Drive**  
**Athabasca, AB T9S 3A3**  
**Phone 780-675-6147, Fax 780-675-6174**



## **LEARNING IS LEARNING:**

### **Challenge for Credit Option Exists for AU Students**

Many students may not be aware that AU recognizes prior learning and encourages students to use the challenge for credit process if they feel they have knowledge or expertise in a particular subject area.

The process is not easy, but it is not insurmountable, and it can save the cost and time of taking a course if prior knowledge exists.

“We want to raise students’ awareness about the option and let them know that they don’t need to re-learn material or spend money on a course they don’t really need to take,” said Joan Fraser, director of the Centre for Learning Accreditation.

“Learning is learning and a student shouldn’t be penalized if that learning was not done within the confines of bricks and mortar,” she said, adding that those students with significant life or work force experience are typically those who pursue the challenge option.

Challenge for Credit is handled by the Registrar's Office. Students are encouraged to check the course description to see if a challenge is permitted for the course they are interested in. If so, then the student must investigate a number of things prior to deciding whether to proceed.

First, and most important, the student should discuss the matter with the course coordinator. The coordinator will be able to give a better idea of the depth of the materials covered in the course, and the student's chance for success should he/she opt to challenge.

The AU calendar outlines the challenge steps, notably completing the Challenge for Credit Application and accessing the course materials, which further allows the student to review the materials and determine if the challenge is viable. There is a non-refundable challenge for credit fee (check the web site for the current fee), but it should be noted that no withdrawal is allowed once the application has been completed.

"It (the challenge for credit) is something that's there for you – use it," Fraser said. Anyone with questions about the process is encouraged to call Joan Fraser at (780) 675-6481 or check AU's website at [www.athabascau.ca](http://www.athabascau.ca).



## **AU News From Academic Council**

**Contributed by The Insider**

### **Academic Council passed the following Action Items at its Nov. 6th meeting:**

- Step II & III approval of a Master of Nursing program (open for applications on April 1, 2003 with courses beginning Sept. 1, 2003)
- Regulation changes to the Master of Health Studies program (effective Sept. 1, 2003)
- Step II approval for the Environmental Studies program (includes a concentration within the BA and a University Certificate program)
- Credentials awarded to the graduands in the Advanced Graduate Diploma in Management

Approval given for the three new centres with the School of Business: Centre for Accounting and Taxation; Centre for Finance, Management, and the Economy; and Centre for Marketing and Organization.



## **COMMENTARY AND FEEDBACK! LETTERS TO THE EDITOR**

Thanks to all of you who have been providing us with such great feedback on The Voice. Please continue providing your opinions, comments and support; any submissions can be sent to [voice@ausu.org](mailto:voice@ausu.org)

**\*\*PLEASE REMEMBER ALL LETTERS TO THE EDITOR INTENDED FOR PUBLICATION MUST BE MARKED “FOR PUBLICATION”.**

Accepted letters to the editor have not been edited, nor do they necessarily reflect the opinions of The Voice staff, AUSU, or Athabasca University.

Tammy Moore

Dear Readers,

I have received a number of email asking for printable editions of the current Voice. The current issue is always included in the list of PDF Archives (link from the cover page) or they can be found on the internal pages under “Download PDF Version of The Voice” at the bottom of the right hand index list.

Thank-you for your readership and support!

Tammy Moore

# Community Networks Group



## Edmonton Dialogues on Foreign Policy: GOVERNING THE WORLD ECONOMY

Saturday, January 11, 1:00 - 4:30 p.m. / 1-09 Business Building, U. of A.

Infoline: Tel: 492-5962 / Fax: 492-1134

e-mail: [Nancy.Hannemann@ualberta.ca](mailto:Nancy.Hannemann@ualberta.ca)

website: [www.international.ualberta.ca](http://www.international.ualberta.ca)

### Guest Speakers ...

Dr. Randall D. Germain, University of Wales

Dr. Susanne Soederberg, University of Alberta

Global financial institutions such as the World Trade Organization, the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank are pushing measures which accelerate globalization. These include increased capital flows, freer transnational investment and production, increased liberalization, incentives for the wider dispersion of new technologies, a broadening of trade access to services and trade-related investment.

Policy makers at local and national levels are losing control over their own economies and policy choices to global governance bodies which, critics charge, make their decisions in a secretive and undemocratic way. Measures being implemented at the international level appear to be in the interest of big corporations rather than the growing ranks of poor in the global South.

How can the global economic architecture be reformed or replaced to entail local democracy, representation and accountability? How can the goals of justice and poverty alleviation be achieved? **Join in this discussion of how the processes of globalization are**

**and should be governed.** This is the first of a series of five roundtables to provide input into Canada's foreign policy. The second discussion on "Inequality as a Source of International Unrest" will be held February 1, 2003.

### About the Speakers ...

**Dr. Randall D. Germain** teaches international political economy at the University of Wales, Aberystwyth. He is the author of *The International Organization of Credit: states and global finance in the world-economy* (Cambridge University Press, 1997), the editor of *Globalization and Its Critics: perspectives from political economy* (Macmillan Press, 2000) and is currently working on a book that examines recent developments in global financial governance. His work has been published in journals such as *The European Journal of International Relations*, *Global Governance*, *Review of International Studies*, and *Review of International Political Economy*.

**Dr. Susanne Soederberg** is an Assistant Professor at the Department of Political Science, University of Alberta. Her areas of interest include international political economy with special reference to the global South, critiques of global governance, and international financial markets. She is writing a book entitled *The Politics and Paradoxes of Inclusion and Exclusion in the New International Financial Architecture: A View from the South*.

**Sponsored by** the Canadian Centre for Foreign Policy Development and the University of Alberta International. *For further details about the Dialogues on Foreign Policy Series, please contact:*

**Global Education Program International Centre**  
University of Alberta, 172 HUB International  
Attention: Nancy.Hannemann@ualberta.ca  
Tel: 492-5962 / Fax: 492-1134 / [www.international.ualberta.ca](http://www.international.ualberta.ca)

*Courtesy of the Community Networks Group*



**casa de los amigos**

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

Casa de los Amigos is a *Quaker Centre* of hospitality, service and international understanding. We also manage a guesthouse where people come together to share ideas, time and space. By providing a space where people of different cultures and backgrounds come together, this program helps fulfill part of the Casa's mission to promote peace and international understanding.

The Casa receives over 2,500 visitors each year from all over the world. Our guests are Quakers, people working with social organizations, volunteers, groups visiting Mexico to work on a service project, researchers and students, and travellers who come to learn about Mexico.

Accommodations are simple and we offer a unique experience that we hope our guests carry with them long after their visit to the Casa. We offer shared accommodations (separate sex dormitories) and private rooms.

**Casa de los Amigos** is a non-profit organization and we ask for a donation to cover costs. Please contact us for the current list of suggested donations. Guests of the Casa form part of our community and in order to benefit from and give to that community we ask that guests stay a minimum of two consecutive nights. We especially welcome groups visiting Mexico to work on social development projects.

The Casa offers a variety of spaces and services: a guest lounge and kitchen, library, information center (with publications and announcements on social justice themes and volunteer opportunities), video library and conference room, among others.

**For further details:**

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

e-mail: [amigos@casadelosamigos.org](mailto:amigos@casadelosamigos.org)

*Courtesy of the Community Networks Group*



## Where Can I Buy Clean Clothes? A Maquila Solidarity Network Update

### Contributed by The Community Networks Group

"Where can I buy clothes that aren't made in sweatshops?" is probably the question we at MSN are asked most frequently, over e-mail, by phone and, quite often, in person. Especially during the holiday season. It's a fair enough question, but to date there are no easy answers. Boycotting particular countries or brands doesn't necessarily support workers' struggles to improve conditions in those countries.

While buying "Made in Canada" products might benefit the Canadian garment industry, it doesn't guarantee that your clothes weren't made in sweatshops. The "**Union Made**" label is however a pretty good guarantee of fair working conditions, but you won't find it on many apparel products sold at the local mall.

Despite the general lack of ethical shopping options, there are a few promising developments. As more and more US and Canadian consumers become aware of sweatshop abuses and ask questions about where and under what conditions clothes are made, there is clearly a growing market for sweat-free clothing. A few companies and fair trade initiatives are beginning to fill the void in the sweat-free niche market.

### **Pioneering Efforts ...**

A new US company, **No Sweat Apparel**, plans to sell clothing produced exclusively by members of independent trade unions in North America, Europe and the developing world. Its "Union Made" sourcing strategy is designed to help protect unionized workers in the North and fragile union victories in the South, and to support worker organizing.

Two other ventures have taken a more US-focused approach. **All SweatX** brand clothing is sewn in a unionized factory in Los Angeles, which is run as a cooperative with the **workers as co-owners**. Hoping to cash in on US university demands for clothes made under ethical conditions, the company plans to focus on wholesale orders of popular collegiate apparel styles, like T-shirts and caps.

Another Los Angeles-based company, **American Apparel**, also markets its products as "sweatshop free." The T-shirt and undergarment manufacturer claims to have discontinued the use of sweatshops, subcontracting and offshore factories. It says its workers receive a living wage, health benefits and pensions. Its ads fail to mention that its employees are not represented by a union.

A fourth initiative, the UK-based **Ethical Threads**, sells T-shirts made by women's co-operatives in Nicaragua and Bangladesh, and by a network of UK factories employing people with disabilities. According to the Ethical Threads website, conditions in all its workplaces meet or exceed international labour standards outlined in ILO Conventions. Ethical Threads T-shirts are being marketed to rock bands, concert promoters and others purchasing for the UK music industry.

### **No Easy Answers ...**

These "sweat-free" alternatives may not be the answer to the growing problem of sweatshop abuses, but they do show it's possible to respect workers' rights and compete in the marketplace. They are also setting new standards for transparency and accountability by revealing where their products are made, and committing to respect and promote international labour standards.

Before sweat-free choices are widely available at the local mall, there will need to be **increased pressure on apparel industry giants** to eliminate sweatshop abuses throughout their global supply chains. While ethical holiday shopping may be a small part of the solution, supporting garment workers' struggles to organize and improve their working and

living conditions continues to be the most promising route to a sweat-free garment industry. That's not an easy answer to the question of where to find clean clothes, but it's still the best answer. For more information, please visit these websites:

<http://nosweatapparel.com;>

<http://www.sweatx.net>

<http://www.americanapparel.net>

<http://www.ethicalthreads.co.uk>

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

*Courtesy of the Community Networks Group*



## **AUSU SPEAKS: Winter Session Provided By AUSU**

*News from the November 28, 2002 council meeting*

AUSU met on November 28th, 2002, for a regularly scheduled council meeting. Items on the table for discussion included the post-secondary coalition to fight tuition increases and government under-funding (headed by CAUS), the CAUS media campaign to raise awareness about tuition increases, the development of an AUSU External Committee, and the status of the AUSU Handbook/Planner.

On November 17th, the Council of Alberta University Students [CAUS], through the initiative of University of Alberta SU, organized a provincial education coalition meeting. In attendance were leaders of provincial organizations that are stakeholders in the cause of fair tuition and adequate funding of post-secondary education in Alberta. Attendees were urged to support CAUS in their fight to maintain affordable university tuition for Alberta students.

A motion was introduced at the AUSU council meeting, to the effect that AUSU should "participate in the provincial education coalition to further our cause of not permitting distance education to be exempt from the tuition cap, and to aid in persuading the government to adequately fund all public post-secondary institutions in the province."

The motion was passed, and we look forward to supporting CAUS in this important action.

A second motion asked that AUSU assist CAUS by contributing funds toward the CAUS media campaign to raise public awareness of the cost of post-secondary education and the

critical under-funding of post-secondary education in Alberta. The media campaign has consisted of newspaper advertisements in the Edmonton Journal, the Edmonton Sun, the Lethbridge Herald, and various rural newspapers.

Some of the CAUS ads can be viewed at: <http://tc.su.ualberta.ca/education/explanation.htm>

To aid in raising public awareness, CAUS members hosted public forums at the University of Alberta and the University of Lethbridge. AUSU participated in both forums. The University of Calgary Students' Union will host the third CAUS public tuition forum in March.

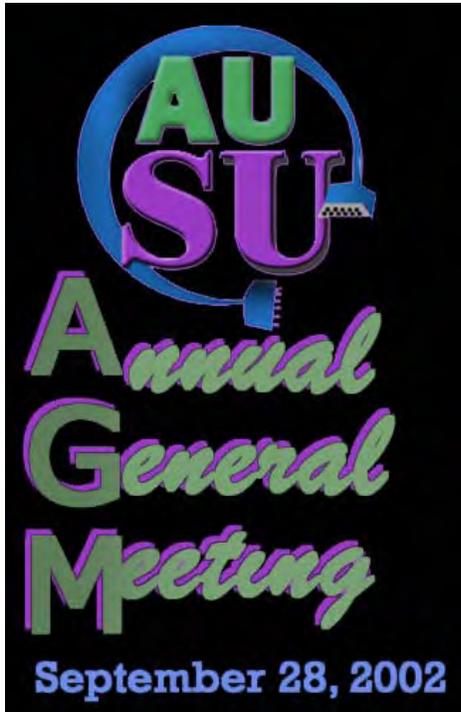
In support of the public awareness campaign, AUSU voted to contribute \$1,000 toward the media costs. Additionally, to address the need for more AUSU involvement in external activities, such as the CAUS initiatives and programs to gain student discounts in various programs and activities, AUSU has developed the new External Committee.

Students are invited to volunteer for this important new committee, and anyone interested should contact committee chair, AUSU VP Shirley Barg, at <mailto:sbarg@ausu.org>. The purpose of the Committee is to plan and implement activities that relate to AUSU's external relationships for the betterment of Athabasca University students.

Finally, AUSU has decided not to produce a student handbook/planner this year. We apologize to those students who have asked for a planner already, but after long deliberation, we have determined that the current format of the planner is not effective, and that we can increase the usefulness of this item by redesigning it in a smaller format. The old handbook/planner, which has been produced for many years, was only moderately popular, and we feel that we may be able to provide students with other items that may be more useful. Current plans are to redesign the planner and offer it in an improved, compact format next year. Until then, an alternative student gift package is in the works. When items are available, it will be posted on the AUSU website and in the Voice.

In other news, membership on the AUSU forums continues to grow, students are beginning to fill out the new course surveys on the AUSU website, there has been increased interest in forming AUSU student groups and clubs, and submissions to the Voice continue to rise. Overall we are experiencing greater interest and involvement from AU students, and hope to see this trend continue next year.

AUSU would like to wish a very Merry Christmas, all of our members, and we look forward to serving you in 2003!



## **NEWS FROM THE AGM Provided By AUSU Council**

The 9<sup>th</sup> Annual General Meeting of AUSU was held this past Saturday, September 28 at 1:00 P.M. Eleven students were in attendance, nine in person and two via teleconference. Quorum was satisfied and the meeting could proceed. In the President's welcome, Debbie Jabbour commented that the low attendance should not be taken as an indicator of apathy, but rather one that speaks to the reality of the lives of Athabasca University Students. Many may be interested in participating in student affairs, but few can manage to find the time to do so. Debbie also spoke of the uniqueness of AU students, and the importance of having a good relationship with the university administration.

Judith Hughes, Athabasca University Vice President External and Student Affairs, brought a welcome from AU and seconded Debbie's words about the importance of collaboration and cooperation between the university and the students' union. Many changes are occurring within our university, and development of strong alumni is a first step towards strengthening the image of AU and finding alternate forms of fundraising to benefit the university. By working collaboratively, AU and AUSU can also have a more effective voice in lobbying the government for policy changes that recognize that AU is different and should not be considered under the same funding policies as other universities. Current policies do not recognize our technological infrastructure and open entrance policy, and the result is that AU must rely for the main part on tuition fees rather than government funding to maintain operations.

Activity reports were presented. It was recognized that most of the current group of Council members were not part of the 2000/2001 fiscal year, and did not have input into the financial statements presented. However, Council wanted members to know a bit more about us, and let everyone know what we've been up to recently and what is being planned for the future, so each Councillor submitted an activity report.

The financial statements were presented. Treasurer Gurpreet Dulai explained that an operational deficit had been incurred due to the reprint of the student diaries. Steps have been taken to ensure this type of problem won't re-occur, and during the 2001-2002 fiscal year, the deficit will be recovered. He also explained that increased convocation costs were a deliberate move intended to raise AUSU profile and provide greater graduation support during the most important event of the year. Overall AUSU began the 2001/2002 fiscal year in a financially healthy position.

Once those in attendance approved the financial statements, and an auditor appointed for the upcoming fiscal year, the floor was opened to general discussion and questions. Several Council members spoke about their experience of being on Council during this past year, and how positive and educational it has been. Darren Kereluk, who along with Gurpreet Dulai, are the only Council members who had any significant presence during 2000/2001; Darren spoke of how different the experience has been this past year from the one he had when on Council previously. Even though disagreements occasionally occur, this group has been able to resolve things without entering into the type of conflict that tore the previous Council apart. Others on Council agreed that the atmosphere among this group has been always positive. Even when there is disagreement on how to proceed, the attitude is to discuss it and move on - move forward whether or not there is 100% consensus on issues.

Debbie Jabbour brought the meeting to a conclusion by thanking everyone on Council, volunteers and staff for their participation in making this last year such an enjoyable venture. She noted that in future years, other Council groups may look back at what we do and wonder “what were they thinking?”, and that although we may make mistakes, we are all working with good intentions to improve the student experience for all AU students. The upcoming spring AGM will be a celebration of the 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary of AUSU, and plans are already underway to make it a very special meeting.

The 2001 Annual Report is available to any AU student who wishes to obtain a copy, and we encourage you to do so. You can request one by calling 1-800-788-9041, extension 3413 (local to Edmonton 497-7000); or by email to [ausu@ausu.org](mailto:ausu@ausu.org). Please include your full name and AU student ID, as well as a mailing address. Indicate whether you prefer a hard copy mailout or a pdf copy by email (include your email address).

Thank you to everyone who showed an interest in the 2000/2001 AGM. We look forward to seeing you next spring for our tenth anniversary AGM!



## **CLASSIFIEDS:**

**PUBLISHED IN THE VOICE**

**January 08, 2002**

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### **CLASSIFIED SPACE:**

Students of AU may print classifieds in The Voice free of charge (maximum three per issue) as long as they are not representing a company or product.

Classified ads must follow the direct guidelines and ethics stated in the Voice Policy and should be submitted to the editor at [voice@ausu.org](mailto:voice@ausu.org) with 'CLASSIFIED AD' listed in the subject title.

The Editor reserves the right to refuse any classified information at her discretion. Thank-you.



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Ghetto blaster: CD player, duo tape deck, AF/FM radio, removable AC plug, or battery power (needs 6 C).  
\$ 70.00 Call (403) 201- 4299  
between 9 am - 9 pm only.

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