

Volume 11 Issue 03
January 15, 2003

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the VOICE

Quote of the Week:

"It is impossible to defeat
an ignorant man in
argument."

- William G. McAdoo
(1863 - 1941)

THE VOICE

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Volume 11, Issue 03

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.

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National Film Board

Free screening of Canadian documentaries and feature films
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COMMUNITY NETWORKS GROUP

Community Networks Group

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FROM THE READERS

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

CLASSIFIEDS!



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

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>



A Bug In Your Ear...

NEW COUNSELLING RESOURCE: HOW TO WRITE A TERM PAPER

Julia Nielsen of AU's Counselling Services Unit [CSU] has created a fantastic resource to help students prepare term papers, available at:

<http://www.athabascau.ca/html/services/counselling/writing/>.

The interactive slideshow website takes students step by step through the process of planning, researching, writing, editing and documenting a term paper. Also included are links to sites describing the most popular citation formats and other writing help resources.

The site itself is beautiful, easy to use, and very quick to load.

Whether you are new to writing term papers, or you have some practice already, the advice contained on this site can help you improve your essay writing style, and avoid many of the simple mistakes students often lose marks for. The format of the site also makes using it quite fun!

This resource is the latest of several, excellent CSU web projects, which include the new Math and English assessments [See *News From your University* in this issue.]. All of these interactive web sites require a Flash plug-in for your browser, and links are provided at the menu pages so that you can easily download it. The Flash player is a one time download, and allows you to use many other websites as well.

Other study related resources of the CSU can be found at:

<http://www.athabascau.ca/html/services/advise/conserv.html>.





From My Perspective: Understanding Suicide, Part Two

By Debbie Jabbour

Last week I discussed some of the causal factors underlying suicidal behaviour. Suicide occurs when multiple stressors and loss deplete an individual's internal resources. A person's basic needs of safety, love and self-esteem are not being met. This leaves them in intolerable psychological pain; hopeless, helpless, and feeling completely alone. Suicide becomes the only solution they can see to end the pain.

What, then, can be done to stop suicide? The most important factor is prevention. This requires that individuals build strength and replenish their internal

and external resources – something that can only be done over the long term. To begin building, however, it is necessary to first identify those at risk. Research in suicide prevention has discovered specific risk factors, and these can be used to assess level of risk for suicidal behaviour.

These factors, in descending order of importance, are:

- Age and Gender - certain ages and genders are more at risk
- Stress - a number of difficult experiences that challenge the ability to cope
- Symptoms - observable reactions to stress such as: mood changes, altered thinking, crying or withdrawal, problems sleeping, and attempts to cope through substance abuse.
- Current Suicide Plan - a specific, detailed plan exists.
- Prior Suicidal Behaviour. previous attempts, history of self-injury, others in family have “modeled” suicidal behaviour
- Resources - physical and emotional resources the person believes they have access to.

Age & gender: Although all ages and genders are affected by suicide, certain groups are at higher risk. Females attempt suicide more often, but males have more successful completion rates, outnumbering females four to one. Contrary to what many believe, overall suicide rates are not higher among teenagers. For women, suicide rates are highest in the 35-54 age range, while for men the highest are ages 20-24, followed by 30-45. Rates are the highest among divorced persons, and lowest among married. The preferred method among males is hanging, followed by shooting, inhaling, ingesting, and jumping. For females the preferred method is ingesting, followed by inhaling, hanging, shooting, and jumping (SIEC, ACICR, Statistics Canada).

It should be noted that the age and gender related suicide rates are quite different for Canada's aboriginal population. For this group, suicide is the second leading cause of death overall, with young native males at greatest risk. For males, the highest rate is ages 20-29, followed closely by ages 15-19, then 30-34. For females the 15-19 year old group is highest, followed by ages 20-29.

Stress. A person who has had multiple stressors is at increased risk. These could include a death in the family, job loss, separation or divorce, financial problems, or abuse. The final stimulus for suicide may appear to be something very small, but it represents the culmination of troubling experiences that have depleted an individual's ability to cope.

Symptoms. A person may be at risk if they demonstrate certain observable stress responses. These can be mood changes, sadness, narrowed thinking, crying spells, withdrawal, eating/sleeping changes, or substance abuse. They may behave recklessly, lose interest in activities, and become careless about their personal appearance. Sometimes they give away possessions, and make comments like, "everyone would be better off without me," or "all of my problems will end soon."

The foregoing are all indicators of increased risk of suicide, but the following three are considered the most important in assessing high suicidal risk: Current suicide plan, Prior suicidal behaviour, and Resources – known as suicide "CPR." When confronted with a person you suspect may be suicidal, it is important to ask direct questions in order to determine whether these three indicators are present.

Current Suicide Plan. Does the person have a plan? How detailed is it? Have they decided when and where? Do they have access to a weapon (firearm, car/garage, pills, etc.)?

Prior Suicidal Behaviour. Have they ever attempted to harm themselves before? If so, they are 40 times more likely to succeed the next time. Has a family member or friend "modeled" suicidal behaviour? If a close family member has been successful in suicide, this validates it as an acceptable response to stress.

Resources. This is the most important factor – the physical and emotional resources the person feels are helping, caring and supportive. These can include other persons, groups, economic assets, etc. How alone does the person perceive their self to be?

Determining risk factors is only the first part of intervention. Knowing how to help is next – and it is the most difficult part. Many people are shocked by the notion of suicide, and say and do unhelpful things. All too often they will deny the thoughts, or say, "things could be worse," or "things are not as bad as you think." These comments might be intended to cheer the person up, but they do not validate how they are feeling. Before trying to make things better, we need to find out just "how" sad they feel, and just "how" bad things are.

The Intervention Model consists of three parts: exploration, understanding and action.

1. **Exploration – “I Care”** - You have noticed the person is upset or believe them to be at risk. Engage them with open-ended questions, but remember that it is hard for people to tell their story, so be patient. What are they feeling? Why have their coping mechanisms become so depleted that suicide is an option? Avoid cheerleading – statements like “think of all the great things you have” are meaningless. Don’t try to force them into anything - remember that a person who has reached this stage already feels powerless - don’t reinforce that by attempting to take their power away. Let them know you understand, but be careful not to turn the conversation into one about your own failings – keep focusing on them. Ask them what they are thinking of doing, but be specific. If a person is in extreme pain, asking, “are you going to hurt yourself?” won’t get the right answer – death is not hurting them, it is perceived as ending the pain.
2. **Understanding – “I Hear”** – Try to listen from their perspective and understand why they feel as they do. Assess their risk level (current plan, prior suicidal behaviour, resources available). Take your time and do not be afraid of silence – listening is more important than speaking. Always show respect and sensitivity and do not take away their dignity. Encourage life-sustaining thought patterns.
3. **Action – “I Will Help”** – Work with the person to develop and agree upon a proper action plan, keeping in mind that the goal is to stop the immediate risk. There are three possibilities here, and they depend on the level of risk. To the greatest degree possible, the goal is that the person should arrive at their own solution.
 - a. Non-directive approach. The person can decide their own plan of action. Effective for those who are low risk and have good internal resources.
 - b. Cooperative approach. Brainstorm a solution together. Address their ambivalence by offering them hope, negotiate.
 - c. Directive approach. This should only be used with extremely high risk, crisis situations. You take responsibility and offer only one plan.

We hear much about making a “contract” with a person who is suicidal. This is simply an agreement you reach with the person that allows them to have thoughts of suicide but prevents acting on them. This is most effective once you have determined an action plan, since they require a sense of hope that something will be done before they will agree to postpone suicide.

The contract must be specific, is highly individual, and it may need to be made more than once. For example,

“I promise not to hurt myself *until tomorrow/without talking to you first*, and we will talk to *counsellor/friend/resource* to try to solve the problem.”

Don’t offer involvement if you can’t follow through, but do provide hope. If resources are unavailable, take even smaller steps along the way. Keep working toward life sustaining

activities, develop the ambivalence, and try to access and build on internal resources – if you can keep them alive, internal resources can be rebuilt.

Suicide affects everyone and takes a terrible toll on our society, yet it is preventable. I would encourage everyone to take the time to learn all you can about suicide, and do your part toward increasing understanding and bringing the topic out into the open. Education, understanding, and removal of the stigma; followed by open dialogue about suicide, will go a long way toward reducing risk and saving lives.

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

Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs: <http://web.utk.edu/~gwynne/maslow.HTM>

Schneidman, E (1985). Definition of Suicide. John Wiley & Sons. <http://www.sccenter.org/understanding.html>

World Health Organization. Suicide statistics worldwide.

http://www5.who.int/mental_health/main.cfm?p=0000000149

NEXT WEEK!

From My Perspective, Special Edition: The Popstar Experience

Many of you may enjoy watching reality TV, and are planning on watching the newest episodes of Canada's Popstars: The One, that began airing last Thursday on Global TV. One of my daughters is a finalist, and will be appearing on the show, beginning with the Edmonton audition episode. Her experience has been an extremely interesting one, and starting next week I will be sharing with Voice readers what it was like, and how it has affected her and our family. Neither she nor I agree with the manufactured pop star concept, so we have been very ambivalent through the whole process. As proud as I am of her accomplishments, watching her on national TV and hearing and reading things that are being said about her performance is going to be both exciting and stressful. I know many of you already feel you know me and my family quite well through my writing, so I hope you will enjoy this very personal glimpse into our lives. When you watch the episode, look for a red-head named Amaya. Check out detailed episode information online at www.popstars.ca.

Next week: Popstars - the first audition

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.



Feminotzi

By Lonita Fraser

I'm not a feminist (at least not in the more negative sense that word has taken on over time), but I do believe in as much equality as can be had between two such disparate species as men and women. What turns me off feminism as a system of belief and practice are the rabid, man-hating proponents who would go so far as to alter the spellings of words, simply because they carry the "man" stigma.

1. That is overkill.
2. Ladies, if you are that threatened by something so simple as the use of the word fireman, for example, perhaps it is you that has the problem.

In my opinion, this is an identity and sexuality issue that seems to have nothing to do with words (like fireman), and therefore can't be solved by changing those words. Indeed, I have believed for quite some time that such a hard line in regard to some matters of encouraging female equality has led to more problems than it has solved. I have met a number of men who are afraid to speak totally freely, because they think I'll emasculate them for using the man word, in any way, shape, or form.

Fear is not the way to solve a problem. Fear builds more stress. Fear builds more separation.

Changing people's attitudes to a healthier way of thinking, is not going to begin well by making people nervous. And it is attitudes you have to change, not words. When the attitudes change, those words that need altering will also change. Besides, it does not hurt someone to ask nicely that another person please use a different term of address. I've seen some ladies go after a man with an axe because he didn't use Just The Right Word. There is something to be said for saying please, you know.

Let's talk specific issues for a moment.

Better Half

I don't like this expression. I realise, as I've said previously, that it's just an off-hand expression to most who use it. I still don't like it, because it carries the implication that within a relationship, one party is More Equal Than The Other; it carries the implication that one gender, one human, is somehow more valuable than another. It is, in a word, condescending.

This has very little to do with gender equality, and more to do with people equality. Neither party of a relationship is worth more to the relationship, or the world, than the other. While one person may carry more weight in some areas than the other, the balance will even out. If one party is willing to take on more than the other, and all parties involved are willing, that's fair. That's part of the relationship deal, anyhow.

All things being what they are, it is impossible to expect total equality in any way, between two people of any gender, preference, race, religion, or habit. It's impossible. Period.

What isn't impossible, is to expect fair and equal treatment.

Pretty Party

We seem to take a dim view of men adorning themselves, while at the same time, we not only allow it in women but also expect it, and in many cases demand it. Not only that, but we seem to denigrate those trappings that have traditionally been seen as male-dominated (tattoos), or those traditionally seen as female that men now bear (earrings, though long ago it used to be a standard thing for men to have earrings of some sort).

Lest we forget: it is the males of most species who carry the trappings of beauty. Witness the male lion's mane, the male peacock's tail, and the males of many antlered animals.

I don't think it's too much to ask that we not only accept adornments in men, but also encourage them – or at least not condescend to them when they make the attempt.

The Punching of Girls

Do I agree that physical violence is okey-dokey? Hell no. No one should be smacking anyone else around, for any reason whatever. Period.

But this is where my opinion on the matter tends to tick some people off: If a woman hits her man, I believe he's got every right to protect himself. If people want equality, they should accept it on all levels, and not be hypocritical about it. No, I certainly would not want someone to smack me upside the head, but if I hit someone, I should jolly well accept the possibility that I'm going to get just as good in return.

We're In The Army Now

In many ancient cultures, and in modern ones (including some we - in our cultural ignorance - might think would not allow it) women served in whatever form of military there was. Women, in some cases, were the sole members of a fighting force. In some countries, mandatory military service does not just apply to males; it also applies to the women. That's fair.

Here's how I see it...

When a country goes to war to either protect themselves or defend their beliefs, the whole of that population is made up of both men and women. It - the homeland - is a woman's home just as much as it is the man's and I don't believe that it should just be the men who are sent off to die for their nation. If a nation has mandatory service (or Selective Service, as exists in the United States) for males, it should also include women. If it does not have mandatory service, it should still allow those females who are willing, to pick up a rifle and trot off to Whoknowswhereland, to fight for kith and kin. Some people will even tell you that they believe there is no more vicious fighter than a woman, particularly if she's a mother who has to defend the life of her child.

Give Give Give Me More More More

A lot of women talk of how they wish their (male) mates would do more nice, romantic, or spontaneous, things for them. Of course we all want to feel special, but this little game works both ways, whether you want to believe it or not.

Ladies, there's nothing wrong with you doing something special or romantic for your (male) partner. Just because it isn't traditionally done, doesn't mean a man wouldn't want that special dinner, or a new book, or whatever it is he finds nifty. The onus cannot always be more on one partner than the other. This goes back to the equality issue. If you want fairness, you have to be fair. Sometimes there's a lot of credence to the saying that you have to give, in order to get.

Just to illustrate the point: My aunt once kidnapped my uncle after work on his last day before his vacation, and took him to Disneyworld. Isn't that neat? He thought it was, even after the girl at the Tiki Hut asked him (in her very southern accent) where he kept his sled dogs. (We're all Canadian up this way, don't forget; but you still have to go pretty far north to find sled dogs.)

What can I say to sum up? If you want fairness, be fair. If you want equality, treat others equally. Special treatment, in some areas, should come because you as a person deserve it, not because you're the little woman or the big man.

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

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/kaus/alpha/>
Tuition Cause: <http://tc.su.ualberta.ca/>



JANUARY 15, 2003

Dear Sandra,

Four years ago my daughter's father left us. She is now seven, and her dad is rarely in the picture. Once or twice every six months he may drop in and deliver a present, but he's in and out of the door before she even has a chance to spend any time with him. Now that she's getting older this seems to be bothering her very much, she's convinced her dad thinks she is a horrible kid, when she isn't even close to being a horrible kid. I don't how to explain his behaviour to her and it breaks my heart to see her experiencing this kind of pain? Any suggestions?

Sad in Kingston, ON

Dear Sad,

As much as you want to just up and smack the jerk you need to be the responsible one and remember that as horrible as you think this man is, he is still your daughter's father. This is a difficult situation and one that can't easily be solved by words and condolences; this distress your daughter feels will probably last throughout childhood.

It's important for you to reassure your daughter that neither of you made him leave; that it was his own decision. Be honest with your daughter, tell her that you don't know why he doesn't come around, and suggest that perhaps something in his past or present is making it hard for him to be a full-time father.

No matter what you do, don't ever let your daughter hear you say anything bad about him. Children seem to think that if their parents are bad then they must be too. If you are harboring negative feelings about him, don't share them with your daughter, confide in a good friend or write your feelings in a journal.

As a child, I went through this same situation and I truly believe that there is a difference between a dad and a father. A father is the one who impregnates your mother and a dad is the one who sticks around after or picks up the pieces after the father leaves.

SANDRA

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

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



Lingerie 101. Incomprehensible sizing in women's fashion: Part 1

Tamra Ross Low

It's time to get personal. I'm going to share some private measurement data with you, as I tackle a beef I have had with the women's fashion industry for a number of years.

I'm referring to the abysmal standardized fitting system for women's bras.

I can imagine men [and some women] rolling their eyes already. Everyone has seen the signs in lingerie departments proclaiming that over 70% of women are wearing the wrong size bra. Most of us have scoffed at those foolish dames who can't even figure out their own measurements.

I was one of those scoffing, until I gained a few pounds and started searching for the perfect fit. Over time, I learned a lot about how bras are fitted and sized.

Women's clothing in general is very hard to fit. Men, if you want to get an idea of how limited women's size specifications are, take a look at any store or website that sells men's and women's [Levi Jeans](#). You'll notice that men's Levis come in a variety of waist sizes *and* a variety of leg lengths. Women's Levis are sold only by waist size. It is unheard of in men's clothing to have

no choice of leg length in pants. Many women [myself included], end up buying the men's jeans simply because they can't get the right length in women's sizes. I'm only 5'4", but have longish legs, and find that most women's pants in my waist size sit about 2 inches above my ankle.

This may not sound like an important issue, but it is. Most women wear a bra for about 16 hours a day. If it is uncomfortable or fits poorly, it can be distracting and leave you feeling lousy at the end of the day. Going without a bra can be very uncomfortable and even painful for women with medium or larger breasts, and poor fitting bras with sliding straps, constricting bands, and slipping cups can also cause pain or discomfort. So, finding a good fit is important, and worth a little time and energy.

It has taken a lot of time and research, but I now have a wealth of data on bra fitting. My conclusion? The people who created bra measurements were using some really primo dope when they designed their system. The method itself is a colossal joke, shared by hundreds of lingerie stores and their staff around North America. They titter behind our backs as we wrinkle our brows, trying to understand how we can possibly be so deformed that their system has returned such bizarre and erroneous results.

Take heart: The problem is not you.

HOW WE ARE SUPPOSED TO MEASURE FOR A BRA

Before writing this, I did extensive research to confirm that the system touted as the 'standard' is, in fact, the same one used by almost all bra stores and manufacturers. This system is based on standardized fitting information from the bra and lingerie manufacturing industry, and it indeed is used by almost every bra store and manufacturer, including *Bali*, *Victoria's Secret*, *La Senza*, *Wonder Bra*, *Vogue Bra*, *Sears*, and literally hundreds of other lingerie stores. You can also find this system on web sites and in books that list standardized fitting data for all types of clothing and jewelry, and even on my beloved afraidtoask.com – a site which generally presents unflinchingly accurate data on a number of slightly taboo subjects.

Here is how the standard calculator works:

STEP ONE: CALCULATING STANDARD BAND SIZE

Intuitively, you might assume that to obtain your correct band size you would simply measure around your ribs underneath your breasts and use the resulting number. Unfortunately, bra band sizes don't conform to actual inches. Not quite, anyway.

No one has been able to tell me why this is, but I suspect that vanity might be at the root of it. Because band inches are somewhat larger than standard inches, a bra band size makes a woman's rib cage sound like it is a little smaller than it actually is. Do women actually care about this? I don't, and I doubt you do either. In any case, if you wear a 34 band, it is not correct to refer to it as a 34" band, as the number is not inches.

There is a simple formula to convert your rib cage measurement to your “Band Size.” I put that in quotes, because it is the official term used in bra fitting. Your band size is always a bra band number, not in inch measurement. The formula, however, is simple:

Take an inches measurement around your rib cage, just under your breasts, while holding your arms down by your sides as much as possible [ideally, have someone else measure]. Then, add 5 to that number. This is your Band Size.

I tried this out: my rib cage measurement is 32. For years I wore a 32 bra, and I still can, though they are just a little tight. So, I thought that the inches measurement worked pretty well. Still, I wanted to try out the charts. So, I added the requisite 5 inches. Technically, my ‘proper’ band size is 37. The charts will all tell you that you must round up if your number is odd, so I should be wearing a 38 inch band. Okay, I can wear a 38. Around my ass!

This was getting confusing. The cup size measurement proved even more baffling, however.

STEP 2: CALCULATING YOUR STANDARD CUP SIZE

The formula for cup sizes is also quite simple. First, you must measure your bust girth. For best fit, the charts will tell you that you should do this while wearing a well fitting bra [if you owned this, would you be using this chart to determine your size?], and with your arms by your sides. Again, it is best to have someone else measure. Once you have that measurement, you subtract your Band Size [not the inches measurement] number from it. The number of inches difference between the two measurements will give you your cup size, as detailed in the table below:

Difference	Cup Size
0 to 1/2 inch	AA
1/2 to 1 inch	A
1 to 2 1/2 inches	B
2 1/2 to 3 1/2 inches	C
3 1/2 to 4 1/2 inches	D
4 1/2 to 6 inches	DD (E)
6 to 7 inches	DDD (F)
7 to 8 inches	G
etc., etc.	etc.

I tried this method – many, many times, and always came up with strange results.

My own bust circumference measurement is 36.5”. Subtracting that from my band size gives me a cup measurement number of -1.5”, but the chart does not allow for a negative number. Of course not. That would indicate that your bustline is actually smaller than your ribcage, which would only be possible if you were missing a couple of middle ribs.

We've all heard ribbing about girls who are so flat-chested they are indented, but it's not literally possible, and it certainly does not apply to me. I am a full C cup.

So, I assumed that I was using the chart wrong. I thought, perhaps, that you should use your ribcage measure *without* the 5 inches added for this calculation, so I read, and re-read the instructions on the various tables, and even contacted some store managers directly to make sure I was doing it right. It was confirmed again and again, however, that the band size, including the 5 inch addition, should be used for the calculation.

To test my calculations, I visited a number of websites that have automatic size calculators. These work off of the raw measurements, and make all of the additions and calculations for you.

Here is the information I got when I entered my measurements into some online calculators:

[Wonderbra USA](#), [Bali Bra](#) and [Hanes Her Way](#) gave me identical messages:

*"Your [Wonderbra /Hanes /Bali] size is 38AA.
Sorry... Unfortunately, Wonderbra/Hanes/Bali has no styles in your bra size."*

I received similar messages from 3 other bra stores including Victoria's Secret and La Senza. I felt like a freak. Not only that, the stores are telling me that they have nothing to sell to me! I reread the sizing instructions yet again, and they were very clear. The calculators leave little room for error.

[Barely There](#)

"your bra size is 38aa " [That truly is 'barely there']

[Secrets In Lace](#)

"The measurements you entered do not calculate to a valid bra size. Please re-measure and check your entries for accuracy."

[Just My Size](#)

*"Your JMS size is 38AA.
Sorry... Unfortunately, JMS[®] has no styles in your bra size.
Please click here to try again". [I love this part – like if I keep trying, I'll develop a bustline.]*

Additionally, I tried a couple of sites that offer the second most popular industry-approved sizing method. This one suggests that you do your band measurement *above* your breasts, just under your armpits. In this case, you don't add anything to the measurement unless you get an odd number, in which case you round up to the next even. This method, offered by [Intelihealth](#) and [Bare Necessities](#) is a little more accurate. It suggests I have about a 34 band size [which is correct], and a cup of B [a little small, but much closer]. Very few stores recommend this method, however.

Finally, I tried the [Afraid to Ask](#) online calculator. Using their instructions manually resulted in a band size of 38 and a cup smaller than AA. Their automatic calculator, however, returned a size of 38 D! Apparently someone was tired of their auto calculator returning errors, so they changed it to not add the 5 inches to the band size when doing the cup part of the calculation. At least the result was a little closer.

So, after trying about 2 dozen calculators and measuring methods, I then applied some simple intuition.

Forget everything I just told you about how bras are supposed to fit. Intuitively, if a woman has a bust measurement that is 4.5" larger than her actual rib cage measurement, then that would indicate that she has breasts. A cup size of AA or smaller, however, is meant to fit a woman with no bust at all. It is a perfectly flat cup, meant only to act as a training bra for young girls, or to add opacity under sheer clothing for women with no bust line. It is common sense, then, that a woman with no bust would measure pretty much the same around the bust as she does around the ribs. Yet, according to the standardized charts, a woman must measure a full 6" larger around the bust line to even register as an A cup.

On top of everything else, these bra size formulas don't take into account the fact that cup sizes change depending on the band size. Yep, you heard me right – cup sizes are not static, but change significantly depending on the band size you wear. Next week, I'll explain how this works.

Continued next week, when I will discuss the manufacturing standards for cup sizes, some of the reasons sizing problems continue, and a new measurement method that looks most promising...

I want to know if I'm the only one experiencing this frustration. I'd like other women to try out the size calculators I've provided links to [and other others you find], and let me know how accurate, or inaccurate, they are. If I get a number of responses, I'll do a follow up next month and send my results to some bra manufacturers as well. Cross dressers are welcome to send in results too – after all, you are buying bras as well – but please indicate your gender for classification purposes.

Size Calculators:

Wonderbra USA: http://www.wonderbrausa.com/frame_fittips.htm

Bali Bra: http://www.balibras.com/mirror_calc_b.html

Hanes Her Way: <http://www.hanesherwaybras.com/bra-size.html>

Barely There: <http://www.barelythere.com/calculator.html>

Secrets In Lace: <http://www.secretsinlace.com/bracalc4.htm>

Just My Size: http://www.justmysize.net/fittips/sizingcalc_bras.jsp

Afraid To Ask: <http://www.afraidtoask.com/breast/frSIZE.html>

Intelihealth: <http://www.intelihealth.com/IH/ihIH/WSIHW000/23741/24783/321366.html?d=dmContent>

Bare Necessities:

http://www.barenecessities.com/csi/fit_sizing.asp?sid=4RJMHSNK4USR2JCN0G0MLH2LTNTSFJV3

La Senza: <http://www.lasenza.com/en/stools/fit.html>

Victoria's Secret: <http://www2.victoriasecret.com/search/bra/?rfnbr=16#>

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.



ART OF LIVING PROJECT: U of A Professor Seeks Submissions for AIDS book project.

*By Dr. Diana Davidson
University of Alberta*

As people continue to be infected and affected by HIV, and the hope of an effective vaccine recedes longer and longer into the future, education and activism remain our best hopes in battling AIDS. Writing enables people to form arguments; provide testimony; break silences; trace histories; expose inequities and injustices; and imagine new ways of relating to, loving, and desiring each other. Writing helps us to see HIV/AIDS in new ways and encourage us to carry out the work of existing and future activists.

In association with "The Art of Living Committee" at HIV Edmonton, I am editing an anthology of creative writing (fiction and non-fiction) about HIV/AIDS by Albertans. Submissions can take any form -- poetry, short story, biography, creative nonfiction, drama -- as long as they are no more than 20 pages (approximately). The flexible (negotiable) deadline for submissions is Monday, February 19th, 2003.

As an editor, I am responsible for collecting submissions and assessing materials. I currently write and teach in the Department of English at the University of Alberta. I have multiple academic publications accepted for scholarly journals and anthologies, and have a book manuscript on AIDS literature under consideration at Manchester University Press. While employed as a counselor at the South Peace AIDS Council (in Grande Prairie, Alberta) I edited a self-published booklet entitled *Blue Streaks: A Collection of Poetry About HIV/AIDS By Residents of Northern Alberta* (1997). *Blue Streaks* gave marginal voices a vehicle for expression and created a community awareness of the disease and I anticipate the same success

will be achieved with the new Art of Living project.

The Art of Living: Albertans Write HIV/AIDS will contribute to the small, growing, and socially essential field of AIDS narratives and criticism. I hope you will consider being a key player in making this vision a reality.

Submissions and inquiries can be directed to Dr. Diana Davidson at diana.davidson@ualberta.ca adn 3-5 Humanities Centre, University of Alberta, Edmonton, Alberta, T6G 2E5.

Dr. Diana Davidson's U of A Web site:
<http://www.ualberta.ca/~dmd3/>



WRITE FOR THE VOICE!

Contact The Voice editor at voice@ausu.org for details on writing for The Voice. Provide a sample selection of writing and preferred genre.



Canadian Fed Watch! News Across The Nation...

January 15, 2003

By Karl Low

Costs of the Royal Treatment

Manitoba has released the preliminary [estimates](#) on how much it cost to host the Queen and Prince Phillip for an overnight stay. So far, the total has come to just over half a million dollars.

So what does \$505,000 purchase these days? Apparently it purchases staging, talent, and a production at both the Forks and the Legislative Building; a royal dinner, reception and the associated trimmings; and the accommodations, transportation, security, hospitality and promotion of the visit. But is this really worth it? After all, the money paid out for the Queen's visit on October 8th and 9th, 2002 could have paid for the full undergraduate education of 10 students.

I can understand wanting to ensure that a visit from the Royal Family is treated with the pomp and pageantry that it deserves, but did it really deserve over half a million dollars for less than 48 hours? As a [comparison](#), there are 111 student loan accounts since 1997 where the holders have declared bankruptcy. These accounts total approximately \$356,000 and are still considered owing because of a change in the bankruptcy act that requires that student loans remain a debt even after a student has gone bankrupt.

So for less than the cost of the October 8th and 9th royal visit, the Manitoba government could have wiped these accounts off the record, and 111 people would be able come out of their bankruptcy with a fresh start, as is intended, rather than a huge debt.

Saskatchewan Looking for Aboriginal Graduates

The Province of Saskatchewan is seeking aboriginal students who have graduated in the last five years for participation in their [internship program](#). Those chosen will be working in various departments throughout the public service sector of Saskatchewan in a job rotation plan that allows participants to experience many different areas of the Saskatchewan government.

The internships last for two years with salary and benefits paid. More information can be found by going to <http://www.careers.gov.sk.ca>, but you'll need to apply soon as the final application date is February 28, 2003.

xwave: Problems Brewing in Atlantic Canada

The Government of Newfoundland and Labrador recently issued its [reaction](#) to the announcement that a certain company known as xwave was going to be laying off 42 workers. The reason they are concerned is because they recently extended their contract with xwave until March of 2007, and among the conditions for that contract is one that obligates xwave to create a minimum of 100 jobs by the end of the contract – with 40 of them to be created by March 2003. The provincial government now estimates that the recent layoffs mean xwave will be short of the target by some 66 jobs.

Meanwhile, the Government of Prince Edward Island is pleased to announce that over 1300 square feet of space in their new Atlantic Technology Centre has just been leased to a subsidiary company of the Aliant group: A little company known as [xwave](#).

Maybe this rental will allow xwave to somehow generate enough business in PEI that they'll have to hire a bunch of workers in Newfoundland to handle it all. More likely is that a company having difficulty maintaining its contracts in one province will find it equally difficult to maintain new contracts signed in another.

Unfortunately, the people who are most likely to get hurt from this deal are the citizens of those two provinces who will end up having to pay the legal fees should xwave run into further difficulties.

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.



Aristarchus of Samos (ca. 310 - 230 B.C.)

Definition:
A Greek astronomer whose heliocentric theory predated Copernicus by almost 2000 years.

Background:
Aristarchus of Samos was a Greek astronomer and mathematician belonging to the Pythagorean school. They attempted to understand the universe in terms of geometry and arithmetic. Aristarchus proposed that the earth rotates on its axis daily and that heavenly bodies, including the earth, revolve around the sun. This heliocentric view predated Nicolaus Copernicus (1473-1543) by almost 2000 years! He is also known as the first astronomer to calculate astronomical distances using mathematics, which up to that time had been a matter of guesswork and speculation. A prominent lunar crater (the brightest feature on the moon) is named after him.

Further Reading:
Dictionary of Scientists (1999). *Aristarchus of Samos* [On-line]. Available: <http://www.reference.com/entry/49394>
Heath, T. (1913). *Aristarchus of Samos: The ancient Copernicus*

600bc 500bc 400bc 300bc 200bc 100bc

Students can also select individual items to display a colour-coded bar on the history line across the bottom, showing the time-frame in which the subject was alive or when the term was in popular use. The timeline runs from 600 BC to 2000 AD, and allows up to three items to be highlighted at once so that comparisons can be made. For example, beginning psychology students know that Wundt predated Freud, who predated Skinner, but selecting all three men on the timeline will not only provide background on

the men and an overview of their respective theories, but the coloured bars on the timeline also demonstrate how close in history the three men lived, and during what time period their lives and work overlapped.

Anyone with access to the AU library can use the timeline and glossary, by entering their name and student ID number. The login process is identical to the one for using the AU library journal databases, and requires only some simple browser configuration and an active student status.

The AU Psychology Glossary and History of Psychology Timeline are very useful, informative and graphically exciting ways to learn about psychological terms. The small self-tests are great extras for those who want to brush up on terminology before a test. The psychology department at AU has always made great use of internet technology, and this new offering is in keeping with the high quality of learning tools offered by the psych staff.

With any luck, more faculties will catch on and begin offering similar tools for internet learning.

For another great AU produced learning tool, see this week's A Bug In Your Ear for information about the Counselling Department's How To Write a Term Paper tutorial site.





How's Your Hygrometer?: A New Year Challenge!

By Laura Seymour

It took me a while to learn what the thing is on my living room wall that reads my room's humidity. It's called a hygrometer. It's obvious that it watches the humidity in our home but it isn't obvious how much humidity we have or should have. I only know that when I start getting hit with static shocks in the winter I need to crank up the water content in the air!

This all came together as a topic when my hubby started to get interested in cigars. Yes, I know some of you are confused, but the cigar smokers will understand. Cigars should be kept at a certain temperature and in a specific amount of humidity. The hubby decided to join an on-line cigar club (cigar of the month?) and start stockpiling some favourite smokes with a buddy when he goes down to California to visit relatives. So while I kept watch over the little gauge in his expensive cigar box I started to think about the humidity we ignore around ourselves.

We, as people, need to deal with the water in our lives. Who hasn't been told to drink 8 glasses of water a day? Indeed, there are a number of articles and books out which are trying to get the message through to us. For some reason we want to be camels and rarely drink enough to nourish our systems! Coffee doesn't count! One of the most quoted books on the subject of water is *Your Body's Many Cries For Water* by Fereydoon Batmanghelidj, M.D. (<http://www.watercure.com/> as quoted in *Woman's World*, December 3/02).

The author warns us that we are likely to experience many symptoms of our need to drink. Hunger signals are likely to increase when we don't drink enough water. When you don't get the amount of water you need, the body will seek out alternative energy sources through food. It also makes us fatter when we don't drink enough water. How many actors and celebrities have you seen toting around water bottles? It's not just a celebrity status item, it's a natural weight loss method. When you start drinking water, or alternatively an occasional herbal tea, you start boosting your stores of fat-burning enzymes. This means that just by paying attention to drinking water you increase your metabolism. That means you burn off more fat. "Wow! Get me a glass of water," I say.

If you have a problem with stomach gurgling and water retention, no problem. Go to your local Health Food Store and pick up a bottle of Calcium and Magnesium tablets. Also making sure that you get 1/4 tsp. of salt per gallon of water. It helps to clear your bladder. Salt and these minerals are needed to keep your fluids balanced internally. Make sure you're not eating lots of high salt foods on the side though or that you have been warned off salt by your M.D.

Remember the half-hour rule. Start sipping water a half hour before a meal and your system will feel full more quickly. You eat less, and you'll be less likely to mistake your body's cry for water instead of food.

Some people lose as much as 50 pounds just by drinking the correct amount of water daily. Make it a habit!

In the meantime, your skin may be screaming for water too. I'm getting more and more prone to dryness as the years fly by. I'm scratching when I don't use a good loofah to scrub the dead skin off my legs, and forget to turn on my humidifier. ICK! Who needs blood-flecked legs?!

Humidifiers are very helpful. Consider buying a hygrometer to monitor your room's water content. Keep your windows closed and let the humidity stay in. Also, depending on the size of your home, a peaceful water fountain can add to the water in your home. (For those of you into Feng Shui, good chi increases if you put water sources in the North and South East of each room). For those of you who snore, installing a humidifier is often recommended by M.D.s as a cause of snoring is a dry throat.

All this humidity helps your personal appearance too. English skin is something to admire – so soft and supple. Is it any wonder with the constantly humid conditions in Britain? Of course it's hell on trying to air dry your wash!

In the same way we clean our floors and shower our exterior covering why shouldn't we be habitual enough to clean our internal irrigation systems and the air we breathe?

For the New Year make a resolution to drink more water...and keep to your promise! I have to go get a glass of water right now. Happy New Year.

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).

Let's make cancer history.



Canadian Cancer Society
Société canadienne du cancer

cancer.ca | 1.888.939.3333



Scholarship News

ESSAY CONTEST ON AYN RAND'S NOVEL: ATLAS SHRUGGED

Value: \$5,000 [1]; \$1000 [3]; \$400 [5]; \$100 [20]; \$50 [20]

APPLICATION DEADLINE: SEPTEMBER 16, 2003

Administrator: Ayn Rand Institute

Award Information:

Essay should be written on Ayn Rand's novel "Atlas Shrugged." See contest website for details and essay topics.

Contact Information:

Anthem Essay Contest, Dept. W
The Ayn Rand Institute
P.O. Box 6099
Inglewood, CA 90312

Web Site: <http://www.aynrand.org/contests/atlas.html>

E-mail: essay@aynrand.org

CANADIAN NORTHERN STUDIES TRUST: Studentships in Northern Studies

Value: \$10,000.

APPLICATION DEADLINE: Friday, January 31, 2003

Administrator: Association of Canadian Universities for Northern Studies

The Royal Canadian Geographical Society (RCGS) is sponsoring two studentships this year, both of which will be administered by the Canadian Northern Studies Trust (CNST). The James W. Bourque Studentship is available for those enrolled in a doctoral program at a Canadian university. The other RCGS studentship is open to students currently enrolled in an master's level program.

Scholarship Criteria:

Available to French and English Canadian students.

Contact Information:

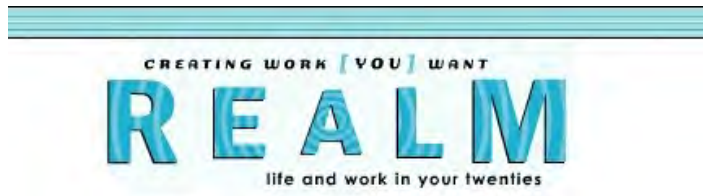
Association of Canadian Universities for Northern Studies
405 -17 York Street
Ottawa, ON K1N 9J6

Phone: (613) 562-0515

Fax: (613) 562-0533

Web Site: <http://www.cyberus.ca/~acuns/EN/awards.html>

E-mail: acuns@cyberus.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. 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. 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] 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>
- **CU Expo** – Community University Institute for Social Research – “Partnerships, Policy & Progress” – May 8-10, 2003, Saskatoon, SK. Details: <http://www.usask.ca/cuisr/cuexpo>
- **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

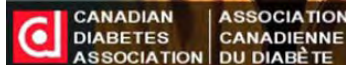
Canadian Diabetes Association
(403) 509-0070 [Calgary]
(403) 509-0072 [fax]
1-866-811-0070

Email: cycolpro@telusplanet.net
www.diabetes.ca

Canadian Diabetes Association (CDA) is



Your donation of reusable clothing helps support the Association's efforts



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

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.

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
become a hero when he helped bring justice to
wrongfully imprisoned American boxer Rubin
"Hurricane" Carter. Finding the courage to charge 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.



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
[djabbour@ausu.org].

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



ANNOUNCEMENTS FROM YOUR UNIVERSITY

AU'S E-JOURNAL ON DISTANCE EDUCATION GETS A NEW LOOK



Contributed by AU's *The Insider*

Paula Smith, managing editor of The International Review of Research in Open and Distance Learning (IRRODL), provides an update:

Every healthy child encounters growth spurts. And Athabasca University's e-journal *The International Review of Research in Open and Distance Learning* is no different. Sporting a new design that strategically complements AU's new web presence, *IRRODL*'s new web site also boasts of abstract translations in Spanish, French and Chinese. New features also include full search engine capabilities, as well as a new series called *Technical Notes*, showcasing the work of evaluators as well as AU's Master of Distance Education students. CDE's Jon Baggaley is the series editor for *Technical Notes*.

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.



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.

Community Networks Group



The Maharashtra Seva Samiti Organization [MSSO]

MSSO was established in 1984 by immigrants from the Maharashtra State in India. It is a volunteer based registered charity which helps grassroots volunteer groups in India implement projects, locally deemed appropriate to better the lives of the people there. MSSO assistance priorities are in vocational training, health care and family planning, water and sanitation, and sound environmental development. In addition, MSSO gives preference to projects which provide benefits to **Adivasi (tribal)** people, destitute women, and children.

MSSO insists that projects will be sustainable. Many projects, weaned from foreign assistance, are now paying for themselves. Three examples are:

Tribal midwives training project, begun with MSSO dollars, is now self-sustaining through user fees collected at the associated maternity hospital. A printing technology institute in Dhule, funded by MSSO to train students in printing technology, is similarly paying for itself by providing printing services to the surrounding area. A work centre for destitute women in Nashik, constructed with MSSO funds, supports itself through paid contract work from local industries. MSSO appreciates any contribution, small or big. A donation to MSSO is tax-deductible.

For further information:

Maharashtra Seva Samiti Organization
26-700 Ranch Estates Place NW, Calgary AB T3G 1M3
Tel: (403) 288-0048 / Fax: (403) 547-5471
e-mail: wani@math.ucalgary.ca



Casa de los Amigos 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
e-mail: amigos@casadelosamigos.org

Courtesy of the Community Networks Group



The Fireweed Institute

www.fireweedinstitute.org

Money and Life: Making It Work

Five Mondays starting: Jan. 13, 27, Feb. 17, 24 & March 3, 2003

Time: 6:30 - 9:30 p.m. @ Robertson-Wesley United Church Memorial Hall (10209 - 123 St.)

Fee: \$30 per workshop or \$130 for all five workshops.

To register go to <http://www.fireweedinstitute.org/> or call 433-1830.

The New Year is the perfect time to take a look at how we balance our need for money with other important values in our lives, such as living with meaning, time for family and friends and community involvement. The Fireweed Institute's "Money and Life: Making It Work" course can help. Register now for this five-session course which explores how to let go of old ways of relating to money and create a plan for a healthy financial future, as part of sustainable living.

Session 1 - Money and You: Participants explore what money means to them and learn how to get a handle on how money comes into and goes out of their lives. This session is a prerequisite to all the others.

Session 2 - Money Messages from the Past: Participants examine their inner beliefs and emotions around money and how these affect behaviour. Cultural messages about money will also be explored.

Session 3 - Money in Your Life Now: Participants will have an opportunity to examine their spending patterns in detail and analyze how their actions with money relate to their personal beliefs and values.

Session 4 - The Practical World of Money: Concepts of spending, saving, borrowing and investing will be examined in detail so participants can identify changes they want to make in these areas.

Session 5 - Creating Your Financial Future: Participants will create a plan to implement changes in their finances within their current social context. Barriers to change will be examined and strategies developed to overcome barriers.

Instructors: **Jackie Gendre**, brings 15 years of experience as a Professional Home Economist, and **Lori Thesen**, brings 12 years of experience in banking and business education.

The Fireweed Institute is a non-profit educational institute dedicated to helping people find ways of working and living that are less stressful, more meaningful, and contribute positively to the Earth and the human family.

INFOLINE: **433-1830 / 464-1920**

e-mail: <mailto:jgendre@telusplanet.net>

e-mail: <mailto:info@fireweedinstitute.org>

Courtesy of the Community Networks Group



WRITE FOR THE VOICE!

Contact The Voice editor at voice@ausu.org for details on writing for The Voice. Provide a sample selection of writing and preferred genre.



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

****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



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 9th 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 10th 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. 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 15, 2002

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 with 'CLASSIFIED AD' listed in the subject title.

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



FOR SALE

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.
