

THE

VOICE

MAGAZINE

Vol 11 Issue 14
April 2, 2003

AU Tuition and Fee Increases Explained

How they effect you

Autism Treatment

Urban Greening

Beautify your town

Single Parenting

Fiction Feature

Midnight Sun

Plus: A New AU Student Profile, Flicks and Folios, Dear Sandra, Canadian FedWatch!, CD Reviews, and news, announcements and opportunities from your university and beyond.

THE VOICE

April 2, 2003

Volume 11, Issue 14

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CLASSIFIEDS!



We love to hear from you!

Please continue providing your opinions, comments and ideas; any submissions can be sent to voice@ausu.org.

Please indicate if we may publish your letter.

Quote of the Week:

Nothing in life is to be feared. It is only to be understood.

Marie Curie

THE VOICE

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EDITORIAL PAGES

THIS WEEK: AU Tuition increases & news about funding at Athabasca University. Debbie Jabbour gives us the scoop on what's changing, what's not, and some insights into the future of AU

A new AU Student profile on student Marilyn Oprisan, as well as her first fiction submission, *Midnight Sun*.

FEDWATCH – A New Direction. Let us know what you want to see.

CD and Film reviews, and much more.

ATTENTION: WOMEN'S STUDIES STUDENTS

Barbara Roberts Memorial Book Prize Deadline Extended

New Deadline: April 15, 2003

Purpose: To recognize outstanding written work by an undergraduate student on topics on women, gender and feminism.

Policy: The Barbara Roberts Memorial Book Prize is awarded annually in recognition of outstanding achievement by an undergraduate student for written work on topics on women, gender and feminism. The award will be announced at Convocation. Recipients will receive a copy of a book chosen by the committee and inscribed with the prize name and date of the award.

Eligibility: All Athabasca University undergraduate students.

Criteria: Essays will be evaluated by the committee using the following criteria

- the essay is between 2,000 and 2,500 words in length
- the essay is literate
- the essay is imaginative, thoughtful, critical and well written
- evidence used in the essay is clearly documented
- the author demonstrates an awareness of feminist analysis

Submission

- **Essays may be submitted by any Athabasca University tutor or instructor** with the student's written permission
- The student's written permission should include permission to post or reproduce and should include the student's name, address, phone number and student identification number (please see submission form below)
- Submissions should be made to the Women's Studies Coordinator
- Submissions should be in paper form and, where possible, in electronic form
- Submit 3 paper copies
- Essays should be typed, double spaced with ample margins
- Only one submission per student will be received annually

Selection Committee: The Barbara Roberts Memorial Book Prize committee will consist of 3 members:

- 1 full-time academic in women's studies
- one tutor in women's studies
- One full-time academic outside of women's studies.

For more information please contact the women's studies coordinator.



Last week we asked readers to send us comments on their AU tutors.

For next week's Sounding Off, send me your thoughts on the following topic:

How safe are we? With the SARS virus killing people around the globe, mad cow infecting our meat, and increased salmonella contamination of food products, do you feel that we are more at risk than ever, or is the media just hyping a few isolated cases?

I've also had a number of people interested in commenting on topics that we have already covered, or on topics that we have not yet posted. Therefore, I will accept comments on previous topics as well, and feel free to suggest future topics as well.

My French tutor has been very helpful to me. Whether it be by email or phone conversations, she always takes the time to explain things for me. I wouldn't be doing nearly as well without her help!

Susan MacKenzie

I just finished a management accounting course and I have to say that I am really glad it is over. It is by far the toughest course that I have taken. You see, math is a challenge for me and so I have a difficult time understanding some of the concepts. To make matters worse, the tutors are all chartered accountants. I know from experience that trying to explain something that you understand very well to someone who has no understanding of the subject can be difficult. I had to learn how to explain things at work to new employees by starting at the very beginning and looking at the situation from the point of view of someone who has never encountered it before. When I would create standard operating procedures, I would pretend that I was writing them for someone from another planet so that you include even the details that you may think are irrelevant. Maybe the tutors should learn how to explain things in that manner.

Shannon O'Connor

It really annoys me that some tutors still will not accept email assignments. On that same note it should not take more than a week or two to mark assignments (essays should take a little bit longer to mark).

It also annoys me when I receive an essay or assignment back from a tutor with a mediocre grade yet no comments. Come on if you are going to give me a 75% there had better be comments on the paper! How are we supposed to improve?

I love tutors that take that extra bit of time to send you a personal note and instructions on how they want essays written and assignments completed. Both Anthropology tutors I have had have done this. These are the tutors who really make you feel like they are teaching because they love to do it, not because they have to do. Passing on knowledge is more than just earning a paycheck doing it.

Sandra Moore

Tutors should not only be knowledgeable, but need to be able to explain what is expected of a student. In some of my psych courses it was not clear what was expected for the final assignment and my tutor could not explain it clearly. I was frustrated because I felt that I might not do well regardless of how hard I worked. In fact, the comments on my paper said that I had done exceptional work, but that it was not quite what they wanted. I even asked twice to see a sample paper so I could figure out how to do it, but no dice.

I love a tutor who provides good feedback on assignments. My CMNS 423 and 425 tutor was the best for that. Most of my tutors [I've taken 25 courses] have been exceptional, and a few have been lousy. Most respond quickly, but I had English tutors who would take weeks, and who refused to answer email.

Things like this can sour you, which is a shame, because so many AU tutors are incredibly skilled, experienced and dedicated, and I can't believe how much I've learned from some of them over the past three years. The Women's Studies department has some of the very best, though they can be extremely demanding.

Oh, and I know tutors work at home, but when a surly teen answers the phone and says he doesn't know where you are and then hangs up – and it's well into your phone hours – it does not inspire confidence! Ditto for tutors who discourage you from calling or asking questions.

[I've been waiting to get that off my chest for awhile...]

Editor

For next week's Sounding Off, send me your thoughts on the following topic:

How safe are we? With the SARS virus killing people around the globe, mad cow infecting our meat, and increased salmonella contamination of food products, do you feel that we are more at risk than ever, or is the media just hyping a few isolated cases?



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TUITION INCREASES & NEWS ABOUT UNIVERSITY FUNDING AT ATHABASCA UNIVERSITY

By Debbie Jabbour



These last few weeks have been extremely busy with various events and activities requiring my participation. One of the most important was attending the Athabasca University Governing Council (AUGC) meeting on March 21, because the final budget decision for 2003-2004 was being voted on. The preparation of the budget and any proposals for fee & tuition increases began many months ago. The first formal stage of the budget is the Budget Advisory Committee, and the AUSU rep on that committee this year was Sandra Moore. From there the budget goes to Academic Council (where I sit as student representative), then to AU Governing Council Finance committee, and finally full AU Governing Council for final approval. As AUSU President I am the appointed student representative on both AUGC committees.

Due to drastically reduced government funding, all of Alberta's universities have been put in very difficult financial straits this year. Funding from the Alberta government for all universities in Alberta increased only 2% (well below inflation and wage settlement percentages), and the formula that allots funds according to physical infrastructure and full-time enrollment equivalents continues to disadvantage AU (see previous tuition articles on October 16, 23, 30 and November 6, 2002). Although there have been some indications that the government is willing to adjust the funding formula to take AU's technological infrastructure into account, they have no intention of increasing funds to universities overall. Giving AU more money would mean taking it away from the other three Alberta universities, and this is unlikely to happen.

One of the major ways that AU copes with this funding shortfall is through growth. This year's budget is premised on a minimum 10% growth, and it is this growth that will be the major sustaining factor for the university, since student tuition currently accounts for some 70% of university income (as opposed to the other Alberta universities where student tuition only accounts for about 30% total revenue). Fortunately growth at AU has been very healthy during this past year, closer to 12% most months and even reaching as high as 14% some months. Much of this growth is occurring outside of Alberta. A few years ago Alberta undergrad students represented around 50% of the total, but this has been steadily dropping, so that Alberta undergrad students are now at only 40%, with out-of-province comprising some 60%. Growth in undergrad registrations in Ontario alone has been phenomenal, with numbers more than tripling in the last five years! Among graduate students Alberta has an even greater minority - less than 1/3 graduate students overall are from Alberta, with Ontario representing the largest segment of graduate students (see AU Institutional Studies Historical Student Profile for more information: http://www.ausu.org/members/profile/profile2002_files/frame.htm).

Because growth is so important to AU, and because they see such significant growth occurring outside of Alberta, there has been much consideration given to how to facilitate this out-of-province growth. When university President Dominique Abrioux and Acting VP Finance Andy Woudstra met with AUSU executives on January 28 to discuss this year's budget and tuition increase proposals, Dominique explained that a major concern for the university was reducing the out-of-province fee (currently \$70). As already noted, AU's second largest student base is in Ontario, and this year the double-cohort graduates (combining grades 12 and 13 due to the elimination of grade 13), means that universities in Ontario are expected to accommodate double the numbers of potential students. As a result, Ontario entrance standards are being raised, and some universities

are placing strict entrance limits. AU is in a good strategic position to attract a good number of students from Ontario. Unfortunately the proposed 7.3% tuition increase in Alberta tuition, when combined with the \$70 out-of-province fee, places AU in the position of being one of the higher-priced universities in Ontario. At the February meeting we discussed this issue, and Dominique indicated that AU would be looking at ways to address this.

One of the long term goals of the 2002-2006 Strategic Planning Committee (SUP) is to eventually reduce the differential so that all students in Canada pay the same amount. SUP Committee members felt that this was an appropriate move for “Canada’s Open University” and supported the notion of treating all Canadian students equally. For some time now, AUSU Council has been concerned that one of the options for reducing the out-of-province fee might be a selective tuition increase for Alberta students, and we’ve tried to explore other alternatives with AU administration.

AU has also been seeking exclusion from the Alberta Government's tuition policy on the basis of being a distance delivery provider, therefore not needing to be restricted by the current government limits on tuition hikes (30% of operational costs). This has been a concern for AUSU Council, and we’ve spoken to both Dominique and Alberta Learning in protest. Dominique has assured us that they could not raise tuition beyond what the market would bear, or in disproportion to what Alberta’s other universities charge. However, exclusion of AU from any government controls on tuition is something we feel is a very risky proposition, and we’ve been actively raising our concerns to Alberta Learning. At Academic Council on March 5, Dominique announced that he had been “summoned” by Alberta Learning and questioned at length regarding his intentions in this regard. He stated that this had come about as a consequence of AUSU Council members having gone to Alberta Learning, and had reassured the government that there was no intention to move tuition outside an acceptable range if AU is removed from the tuition policy. It was encouraging to hear that Alberta Learning had listened to us and taken action on our concerns, and we will continue to monitor the activity on this front.

When the Budget Advisory Committee (BAC) began their work last fall, and when it became apparent that a significant tuition hike was likely going to be proposed, Council member and BAC rep Sandra Moore brought forth a suggestion that would reduce the impact on AU students who take multiple courses, since they would be most directly affected by the 7.3% increase. She suggested that the university consider some sort of a break in tuition for multiple-course-takers, and the rest of the committee agreed that it was a great idea. By encouraging students to take more courses at AU, this would build up a more loyal alumni (and greater university pride) and encourage more full-time registrations. Since the bulk of AU’s students are currently part-time, and since it costs almost the same administratively to process a single student taking one course as it does to process several courses for a single student, this was seen as a cost saving option by the university as well. The BAC voted in favour of the proposal, and the implementation of such a tuition break began to be investigated.

Next week: Budget deliberations move to Governing Council

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NATURE NOTES:

FROM THE BACKYARD TO THE BIOSPHERE

URBAN GREENING: REDEFINING URBAN SPACES

By Zoe Dalton



As I write, the snow falls past my window, looking so lovely and innocent that I can hardly bring myself to resent its presence. Still, only two days from what appeared to be the onset of the long-awaited warm weather, I cannot help but try to convince myself that perhaps the snow is just some trick of my senses. Just last week, we were in the midst of springy wonder – spirits were lifting, the birds were twittering away in a state of pure warm bliss, and bulbs were popping from the ground, awakening from their deep winter sleep to bless us all with the news of spring’s sweet coming.

But here I am again, beginning my day by pulling on the heavy boots, the cumbersome winter jacket, and the immobilizing scarf before trouncing out into the newly whitened world. And yet, beneath all the layers, and with snowflake-covered eyelashes obscuring the view, all I can think of is gardening. Umm, the dark soil, with its sweet, rich aroma; the green colour of life in every leaf, stem and blade imaginable; and flowers, summer’s most generous gift. I know, I probably sound like one of those people who stands in a wicked snow storm, eyes closed, and pictures the sun on her skin, the sandy beach beneath her feet, and the sound of the rolling surf soothing her winter-weary soul. Aside from the fact that this technique is really quite effective, I do have to admit that dreams of summer may be a sort of defence mechanism, allowing one to wish away the cold and grey by freeing the imagination to romp in summer’s garden glory.

Of course, the type of garden I’m imagining may not be what most people would picture. So join me, those of you still immersed in the great white; come with me along the imagination’s winding garden path...Suspend for a moment the conventional border and bed garden layout. Forget the trimmed hedge, the manicured window-box and the dominant lawn. Begin to wander through your town, your city, and its forgotten, neglected little plots of land. Look upon that empty concrete planter with a new eye; see that power-line right-of-way for what its immense amount of greenspace could offer; and picture the railway corridor transformed into a blazing path of flowers, grasses and shrubs rivalling the countryside in its sheer testimony to the transforming power of plant life.

Our garden, and our gardening dreams, need not end at the borders of our private space. The city is ours to green, ours to bring to life, ours to reawaken each spring. Our definition of urban space shouldn’t be characterized by its grey colour, or its ecologically dead roads, buildings and monoculture landscapes. As an urban greening enthusiast, the city becomes yours to create, to imagine, and to rebuild in a form of your choosing. The lifelessness and drab character of the city only exist insofar as we allow our definition of urban space to continue in its current form.

Every abandoned city lot adopted, every rooftop colonized by a gardener with a vision, every empty planter re-enlivened is a step towards a new vision of what cities can be – alive, green and healthy. Urban greening beyond our lot lines does not have to mean shoddy gardening work done under cover of darkness, seedling in hand and identity obscured. Rather, urban greening can be a proclamation. Carried out with care and attention,

gardening in public spaces can be viewed as a testament not to our flaunting of community norms, but rather to our desire to serve our communities by volunteering our knowledge and passion for green, healthy spaces. Forget the concrete wastelands of your town or city, forget the snow that covers it all up; think instead upon a new and exciting venture for this summer: urban greening – volunteerism of the most transformational kind. Find yourself a plot and dig in!

Zoe Dalton is a graduate of York University's environmental science program, and is currently enjoying working towards a Master of Arts in Integrated Studies with Athabasca U. She can be reached for comments or questions at zk_dalton@hotmail.com.

CANADIAN FED WATCH!

NEWS ACROSS THE NATION...

By Karl Low



CLEANING UP AFTER THE UNITED STATES

The Government of Canada has committed 100 million dollars for humanitarian aid in Iraq. I am terribly torn on this issue. On the one hand, I do not want to advocate not aiding people who are in desperate need, on the other hand why should governments of other countries be paying to clean up the mess made by the United States military in an invasion that neither we, nor the majority of the world community, approved?

Consider what a hundred million dollars could do for post-secondary education. According to Athabasca University's posted budget numbers, AU's entire expenses came to just under 56 million dollars for the year of 2002. With sales of goods and services coming to about 5 million dollars, that same 100 million could completely fund AU for at least two years – probably more if you consider investment profits that would come from the second half of this money.

What this would mean is that for approximately 24,000 students – be they undergraduate or graduate, their courses at AU would be completely free.

If this sounds too good to be true, the government could even attach strings to the funding – each course taken would require a guarantee that you will remain in Canada to live and work for six months. Thus a full degree would require you remain and work in Canada for around 10 years. Imagine the boost this would give to our economy, having a large and steady supply of students graduating across the country and then remaining in the country rather than immediately heading down to the United States.

As a side benefit to this plan, student loan funding would be significantly less, which in turn means less interest gets paid by the government to the banks that have been funding the loans, and that the overhead costs of

administering student loans and the number of students being unable to repay their loans would also drop. It would also mean that students would be out of debt and thus able to be more productive in the economy sooner.

The downside to the plan is that it means the people in Iraq would have to rely on the people of United States to clean up their own mess – not something I'd wish on anybody.

FIGHTING THE BRAIN DRAIN

The University of Alberta is considering waiving the tuition of all PhD students, even though it already has to deal with a 7.8 million dollar deficit that will undoubtedly be coming from the pockets of the undergraduate student body. Unfortunately, it has little choice, as a similar plan has already been enacted by the University of British Columbia. Similarly, large Universities in the United States are also waiving fees for PhD students and some are offering cash incentives on top of this.

The root cause for all of this is simply that the demand for people with PhD's for faculty positions is much higher than the current supply.

For us at AU, this means that we can probably expect an increase in the number of post-graduate applications and students – having the prospect of a free PhD education once you've attained your Masters might be the key some people need to make them decide to go for it. We can only hope that this increase interest in the Masters programs will translate into more profits for AU which could eventually be turned around and applied to our undergraduate programs. Even if this increase is only in the number of available tutors, students who've had the frustrating situation of trying to call during a tutor's scheduled times and only getting a busy signal would surely welcome it.

PARENTS STARTING TO GET FED UP

For the second time in two weeks, parents are starting to get into the news with their concerns about education funding. This week, it is parents who are questioning why they increasingly have to resort to fund-raising activities just to supply the basic educational needs of their children when the province has recorded surpluses year after year.

Premier Ralph Klein is confused about the uproar, claiming that "There has been a 46 per cent increase [to education funding] over the last six or seven years." And he may well be right. Unfortunately, he is conveniently forgetting to mention that there was a 47 percent decrease in real funding in the 17 years before that. It does not take a mathematician to see that if you take 47% of the value away from something, and then add 46% of the new value back, you're still left with less than you started with.

In fact, when working out the numbers, it becomes plain to see that education has almost a quarter less funding than it did 25 years ago, even though the need for education is greater today than it has been at any point in our history.

So the real surprise isn't that parents are starting to get fed up – it's that it's taken them this long.

CHANGE IN DIRECTION

Some of you may have noticed that Canadian Fedwatch is starting to move away from just the provincial and federal news releases. I have been increasingly trying to focus my efforts on education related materials, and the sad truth of the matter is, there just isn't that much going on in our governments when it comes to education. As a result, it seems I have become a bit of a broken record.

So maybe it is time to change the direction of Fedwatch. Possibilities include branching out into a more varied selection of politics, staying with education but expanding more into university press releases as well, moving more to a general opinion/editorial column on news and politics, or maybe something else that you think would be more interesting.

Write the editor and let her know where your interests for Fedwatch lie. This is your student magazine after all, it should reflect the things that matter to you.

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.

AU Profiles:

STUDENT: Marilyn Oprisan

Marilyn, tell us a little about yourself...

You have an unusual name.

‘Oprisan’ is a Romanian name with a squiggly thingy under the ‘s’ (Oprîșan). You pronounce it Oh-pree-shun (The whole word, not just the squiggly thingy).

Tell us about where you live, and your family?

I'm a Torontonion born and raised, married to a Romanian whence comes the name. We're no spring chickens, I'm 49; he's 56. We've lived in Vienna for a year and a half so far because he works for the United Nations and I also work for an international organization: the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe. I'm a finance officer (read accountant, middle-management) in the "Secretariat" (read head office) here in Vienna. Hubby administers industrial projects in developing nations.

Do you have kids or pets?

My daughters are 21 and 17. They are with us but it took some persuading to get the 21 year old to come along voluntarily. They are adapting to European customs as they relate to young people. It's certainly easier for them to get into a bar here than in Ottawa, where we lived before.

The 11 year old dachshund, sadly, isn't having as much fun. I think the wind bothers him. Vienna is a very windy place.

**When did you first learn about AU, and how are you liking the student life/distance education?
How long have you been a student?**

I was looking for a specific kind of course – creative writing, at a distance university of some kind. Lots of English speakers in Europe take classes through the British Open University and I was looking for something Canadian like that. This was last summer, and my course began last September. I've already had to buy one extension, things being rather busy at the office.

Until this course I confess I didn't know AU existed. When you live in the triangle of Toronto-Ottawa-Montreal you don't lack for universities closer to home. It was upon moving to Europe that I had a need for net-based education.

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

English 381 is my only course at the moment, the one I found by surfing the net. I can't see too much beyond it, but you never know. As of this writing, the end of March 2003 I'm still not finished it yet. Have to write a novel. (Well, okay, we don't hand in the whole novel, just one chapter, but I suppose we are on our honour to actually write the whole novel some day.)

Tell me more about your work in Vienna...

The OSCE has operations in Europe (mostly the Balkans) and Central Asia. My staff is responsible for making payments for goods, services and people all over those places. When I say payments for people I mean the payroll. (We do have a department, though, that deals with actual trafficking in human beings - we're against it.)

What is particularly fun is that our main offices are right in the most 'downtown' part of Vienna, beside the main opera house. My organization also uses large parts of the Hofburg Palace nearby. It's quite a big, famous palace and don't I feel special having a badge to get in and a special permit to park right under the statue of the Ertz-herzog in the middle of the Heldenplatz?

While my husband's work is more exotic than mine (he actually travels to some of his developing countries while I stay at my desk in Vienna), we do have our occasional whimsical moments. My keyboard keeps changing to Russian of its own accord and that never happens in Ottawa.

The people I interact with all day are from all different countries and cultures and different languages are flying around the corridors. My own staff at the moment are a Russian, a Bosnian, an Uzbek, two Croatians and a Romanian. My Slovenian and Macedonian went to other departments and my Finnish girl went back to school in Finland.

How is AU helping you toward your goals?

Taking the course has given me more confidence than I had before. It is a writing course and outside of some silliness on the internet under an assumed name, and a Star Trek novel the publisher didn't buy, I've never really tried to write before.

It's been marvellous to have our course tutor – a published authoress – looking at my work and giving me good advice. Thank you kindly for all your help, Caterina Loverso.

Anything else we should know? Funny stories about the dog eating your laptop . . .

My dog likes to sit in my lap when I am at the computer so it's not to his advantage to eat it. Actually he likes to sit my lap at all times, except at night when he sleeps on my legs.

But seriously, fellow students, there is one thing I'd like to share and that is: I often feel isolated taking a course with only a computer for company. I miss the atmosphere of a real classroom with other students to talk to and a captive teacher to annoy. Our course has a discussion board for students, which I think is a marvellous idea, but not all my fellow students are as chatty as I am.

Thanks so much for taking out the time to answer our questions, Marilyn. You lead an exciting life and are truly an example of the AU dream.

Any Athabasca University student, faculty or staff member interested in being featured in AU Profiles should email the Voice Editor voice@ausu.org. We'd love to hear your story.

AUTISM TREATMENT REVEALED

By Amanda Lyn Baldwin



Autism is a spectrum disorder containing many different “levels” that fall under an “umbrella.” Under the “umbrella” there are high functioning individuals who can talk and communicate their feelings and thoughts like familiar characters from movies such as “I Am Sam,” and “Rain Man.” However, the opposite extreme contains subjects who may never progress beyond the mental age of 2-3 years old, or younger. What kind of places can these children go to for help? What kinds of facilities offer proven therapies and assistance? The Society for Treatment of Autism (STA), and Margaret House specifically, is one answer to this question.

Margaret House, named after its first clinician, Margaret Horne, was initially run from a duplex located by the Calgary Children’s Hospital in 1973. The program was full immediately as it seemed autistic individuals were popping up all over the place. Later that year, Margaret left the program to pursue other interests.

Our Lady of the Lords Catholic Brotherhood, which had, since 1956, been running a home for Métis juvenile delinquents in the building presently owned and operated by Society for Treatment of Autism (STA), laid eyes on the cute little autistic children and immediately decided to become their caregivers. It was a love at first sight kind of thing. At this point there were 22 residents in Margaret House. The primary goal was to provide food, clothing, shelter, and spiritual fulfillment to the children on a permanent basis. Ideally those individuals accepted to the program would spend their entire lifetime in residential care and as such therapy programs were minimal.

In 1974, the realities of autism set in and the Brotherhood, too, decided to pursue other things. The Calgary Mental Health Involvement Society for a short time provided funding and care until, in 1975, the process of incorporation for STA began. In 1976 Society for Treatment of Autism was officially named, and funding through government grants began.

Before the present director, Dave Mikkelson, accepted his position in 1980 he requested that two criteria be fulfilled: 1) Establishment of a discharge age (which would promote individual living in autistic adults) and 2) Development and endorsement of proactive treatment, which would enable therapy and behavior modification programs to be set in motion. Needless to say these goals were met and STA has advocated many programs (discussed below) since.

Currently running the Society, alongside Dave Mikkelson, is a Board of Directors comprised of volunteer parents (not necessarily of clients) as well as interested and informed members of the community. **STA is a non-profit organization.** Government funding allows it to maintain 130 full time equivalent staff and an additional 40 part time employees. Positions range from psychologists, social workers, specific therapists (such as sensory, speech and communication), behavior modification therapists, to students who are currently enrolled in psychology related programs and accounting and office management staff as well as building maintenance crews. There's lots of room for advancement and change throughout the society; new therapists/rehabilitation workers are always in high demand. The society is thus an uplifting and educational experience for all involved.

Currently, in the residential program, there are 14 clients aged 7-17 years. Outside of Margaret House, STA provides services to an average of 100 individuals per year. These services include parent and teacher supports such as literature, advisors, and training sessions. There are also consulting services, specific therapies, and an Early Intervention Program (EIP) containing both home and center based components (the battle against autism is more easily fought when it is encountered at a younger age) and Transition Program which helps children make the transition from home (EIP) to school. Both of these programs are very beneficial to the higher functioning autistic kids. One of the main goals of each program is to give the parents/guardians/teachers the skills to work with their children outside of STA's assistance. Ideally, It would be great if there were no need for residential programs, such as Margaret House.

At a glance, Dave Mikkelson views the "journey into active treatment" and "the development of the early intervention program (which wavered at only 5 clients for the first three years and now caters to over 30)" as the most prominent highlights of STA's past. In STA future Dave hopes "we'll see consolidation and better providing of all services, an increase in community outreach, an increase in diagnostic capabilities, and more activity within the school boards." These goals will be reached through the "**Capital Campaign**" which will be launched in May, 2003. Look for an overview of this campaign in an upcoming Voice issue.

For more information, including employment opportunities, visit the STA website at www.sta-ab.com.

Reference Contacts a the Society for Treatment of Autism:

STA Website: <http://www.sta-ab.com/>



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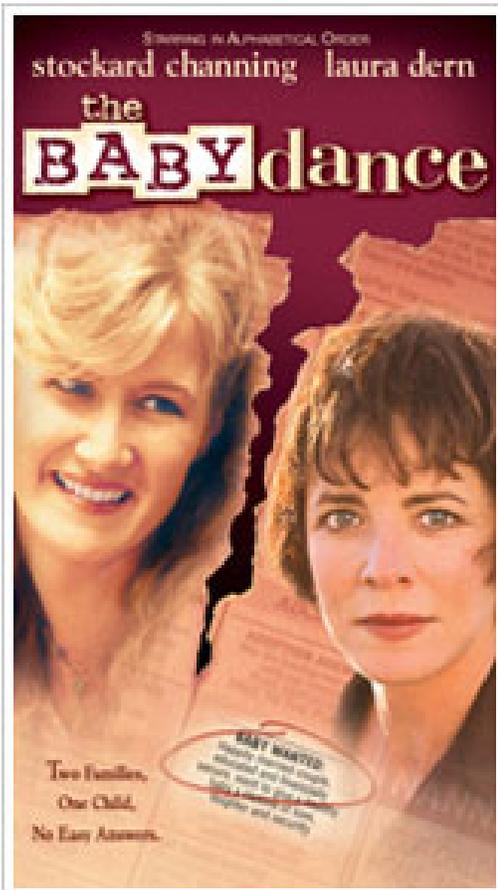




THE BABY DANCE

Film Review

By Laura Seymour



Yet again doing the channel-flipping thing I bumped into a film I would not have watched without seeing some of these well-crafted performances unexpectedly.

The Baby Dance is a 1998 television production that should have garnered major awards. I don't know how some of these fantastic films ever get ignored!

Laura Dern stars as Wanda, a Louisiana housewife expecting her fifth child. As her husband, played by Richard Lineback, is an unemployed no-goodnik she is forced to consider giving her child up for adoption.

Jane Anderson wrote the screenplay and directed. She wrote from personal experience, although she changed the settings and captured so much of the frustration on both sides of the coin when people adopt a child while leaving her personal homosexual angle out of the picture. In reality, Jane and her partner are lesbians who adopted a baby boy from Paraguay after trying to find a child in the United States. They went through so many problems as a gay couple that they hid their status in order to secure the child of their dreams. Jane could have easily made this a platform for gay parents but chose to tell the story from a heterosexual angle and capture the process from a more "traditional" angle. Doing so has shown her ability to write rather than chronicle. I admire this talent.

Mega-power Jody Foster executive produced the film through her company Egg Productions. Not a vanity film company, Jody's firm produces, gains funds, and she often directs projects she believes in whether they star her or not. Indeed Jody has no part on screen in *Baby Dance*.

Now let's highlight the plot.

Stockard Channing plays Rachel and Peter Riegert plays Richard. They are a high-powered Los Angeles couple longing for a child. After going nowhere with one medical procedure after another, they advertise for a baby.

This introduces us to Wanda and Al, who are really just subsisting in a Shreveport, Louisiana trailer park while their four kids camp out at Wanda's mom's. Wanda is six months' pregnant. What follows is an emotional roller coaster of two disparate families awkwardly trying to lead and follow in pregnancy's "dance."

Rachel and Richard are Jewish and are both in the film industry behind the scenes. Wanda and Al are living in a different world as Christians who cannot imagine anyone else's beliefs. Stockard's character tries valiantly to work with Laura's narrow understanding and begins to glumly agree to Laura's religious needs for the unborn child.

The dialogue is incredibly well written and performed. The interruptions of sentences and timing changes were so realistic that they made me feel like a voyeur at times.

Deft touches that only masters of the screen can pull off were evident throughout. Tiny details made the sets so real that there was no feel of objects being "placed".

As the story progresses, we discover that Rachel provided money for Wanda and Al to purchase an air-conditioner and medical care, while Al reveals himself as a regular drinker who is using funds provided for the baby as his personal pin money.

Laura pulls off a beautiful portrayal of a woman raised to keep her mouth shut and stand by her man. Soon she finds that duty hard to perform.

Rachel is also trained to be polite but is finding it hard to watch the money set aside for the child disappearing behind one excuse after another. She and Richard are strained even further when the birth process begins to go wrong. They are told the child may have developmental damage. They are torn...do they continue with the adoption or don't they? Anger, fear and doubt color the process as we head toward the end of the film.

Since I think Stockard is such a talented actress and Peter has long been on my list of sexy guys, I watched with even more interest. I'm not revealing the ending –I want your input instead.

The film is an hour and thirty minutes and I would warn you ahead of time to be aware that the birth sequence is NOT suitable for those who don't appreciate a tactful touch of reality. There is blood and there are some scary moments.

References

Shister, Gail. The parent trip. (the story behind the new film 'The Baby Dance'). *The Advocate*. Sept 1, 1998. Available online at: http://www.findarticles.com/cf_dls/m1589/n767/21148320/p1/article.jhtml

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

*Does the pressure of having to
study alone keep you up at night?*

AUSU STUDY BUDDY

THE VOICE FICTION FEATURE



By Marilyn Oprisan

This week, The Voice is pleased to present another instalment of Student Fiction from new Voice contributor, Marilyn Oprisan. To learn more about Marilyn, read her bio in AU Profiles, this issue.

The King's Creek outpost was far enough north that in summer there was neither warmth nor darkness. The half-dozen Mounties stationed there were determined to talk Ken out of his foolhardy plan, but the cabin that served as their headquarters afforded little privacy. They figured they would have to wait until his American friend was asleep, but that took a long time in the midnight sun. Finally, the American dropped off and they had their chance.

"Ken, wake up," said one, unnecessarily since their movement and muttering around his cot had already awakened him. Ken's eyes eased open, squinting against the sunlight. The lead dog, Trailblazer, who had been sleeping beside Ken's bed, was already fully alert and on guard.

"Yeah, we have to talk to you. Come into the kitchen." They kept their voices low so that the American sleeping in the cot beside would not hear and awaken. Ken followed them into the kitchen and dropped, still half-asleep, onto a chair. Trailblazer trotted along and stood watching.

"Look, I know what I'm doing," Ken began, hoping to forestall yet another lecture. "I was born and raised in the north. I know how to handle a dog-team. My friend's always wanted to go on an arctic expedition, and I promised I'd take him for his thirty-fifth birthday. We'll be fine."

They spent another half hour badgering Ken. Was he crazy, going off into the wilderness for two weeks for no other reason than to drive around and give his friend an arctic adventure? They had only met Ken a couple of days ago when he had flown in with his American friend, equipment, sled and dogs, but he was a fellow RCMP officer, even if he was on vacation.

Finally Ken ended the matter by saying, "I guess it's kind of a reverse-Sam McGee thing. I just miss the north and want to spend some time at home again. Can't you guys understand that?"

They could, so they let him go back to sleep.

Trailblazer trotted to his spot in front of the rest of the dogs who were already in harness and waiting. Ken strapped him up, gave him a last pat on the head and then straightened, looking off into the snowdrifts and grey ridges that made up the landscape ahead.

"This is it, Blaze. We're off. Just like the old days." He turned to Rob. "Climb aboard and I'll wrap you up. You might be cold sitting and doing nothing, so I've got extra furs."

Rob didn't climb aboard. "You said I was supposed to learn to drive this thing."

"Tomorrow. Today it's me and Blaze and the call of the wild." Ken smiled to himself as he looked out

over the sun-lit frozen landscape. He took a breath of frigid air deeply into his lungs and said softly to himself, "Home." Then to Rob he said, "You'll have plenty of time to learn to drive. Come on, your chariot awaits."

When the sun had circled as far west as it was going to that day, Ken decided to make camp for the night. Rob put up the tent while Ken tended and fed all the dogs but Trailblazer. Then, Trailblazer and the two men retired to the tent where Ken fired up their Coleman stove and warmed up their tins of beans and a kettle of tea. Trailblazer preferred hot milk to tea, but made do while they were out on expedition.

After they ate, Ken leaned back against one of the packs and stretched his thermal-sock covered feet towards the stove. Trailblazer lay curled up by Ken's side, his flank pressed against his man's flank.

"So, our first day out. How do you like it so far?" The question was directed to Rob. Ken already knew the husky was having a fine time.

"I wasn't cold. Every movie you see about the North, the dudes are cold. I was great under all those furs."

"You know what we say in the North?" Ken said while scratching Trailblazer behind the ear. "There's no such thing as bad weather, just bad dressing."

"And tomorrow I drive. You promised."

Rob located their two sleeping bags among the baggage, tossed one to Ken and unzipped the other for himself. "I hate sleeping in this light. It's spooky."

"There are strange things done in the midnight sun . . ." Ken quoted with a chuckle as he opened up his sleeping bag.

Trailblazer and the rest of the dog team were good teachers, trotting along at a pace just fast enough to give Rob the right feel for the movement of the sled and just slow enough for Ken to be able to jog along beside, shouting pointers.

By midday Rob felt he had the hang of it and Trailblazer felt he had Rob sufficiently trained. But Ken declined to get onto the sled and ride. "Lazy

men ride," he declared, then seeing his friend's insulted look he added, "or beginners who aren't used to running in the snow."

"I'll show you who's a beginner!" To the dogs he called out a sharp "hee-yah!"

Trailblazer picked up on the cue, took control and dashed off at top speed, while Rob bounced along on the back of the sled.

Ken ran off after them shouting, "Rob! Blaze! Wait uuuuuh . . ." He felt resistance against his left foot, a sudden wrench in his ankle and he found himself face down in the snow. He pushed himself up and sat, legs splayed, looking like a toddler sitting in the snow and feeling just as helpless. The ankle throbbed.

Meanwhile Rob and Trailblazer had, at Ken's cry of pain, made the simultaneous decision to halt the sled and turn it around. Ken watched his human friend jump off the sled and plod through the snow towards him.

"You okay?" Rob held out a hand to pull the Mountie to his feet.

Ken shook his head. "I can't walk on it. Lift me up onto the sled."

Ken muttered and groused as Rob lifted him up onto one foot then swung him over onto the sled. "Didn't look where I was going. Put my foot right into a crack in the ice. Can't believe it. Just like a rookie," Ken grumbled as Rob packed furs around him.

"So, what happens now? Can I set off that Emergency Locator Transmitter you showed me?"

Ken snorted. "You'd like that wouldn't you? Dramatic rescue in the high arctic. The guys would never let me live it down."

Ken noticed Rob's look was getting dangerously like real worry.

"It's only twisted," Ken said, so firmly that he almost convinced himself it was true. "Let's drive on for the rest of the day and if it's not any better by tonight, we'll camp out one last time and then you can drive back."

"Or you could stop being an ass-hole and just let somebody come fetch us."

Ken let out a stream of good-natured curses that fell just a little short of being anatomically feasible and the general gist of which was that he preferred to keep moving.

"Okay, I'll make you a deal," Rob insisted, "we'll camp here for the night. If your ankle's not better tomorrow, we go back."

"Now? It's nowhere near night!"

Rob looked around at the glare of the relentless sun coming off the surface of the snow around them. "Like day or night makes any difference up here. It's never dark anyway."

Rob set up camp under Ken's direction while the dogs watched. Then Rob hopped him over to the tent door, eased Ken inside and settled him onto a pile of furs.

"Well, you're not going anywhere. I guess I'm going to have to take care of the dogs tonight. Come on, Trailblazer, let's go out with your buddies."

"Rob! You know Blaze sleeps inside!"

"Isn't it bad for a dog to be warm at night and out in the cold in the daytime? I read that somewhere."

"Huskies are tough. All Northerners are tough." Ken assured him, then to the husky he said, "Go with him anyway, for company. Make sure he gets things right, then you can come back inside." The husky got up and walked over to where Rob stood at the door-flap of the tent.

Rob sniffed. "If I was the other dogs, I'd be jealous." He slipped out of the tent into the wind and sun, followed by Trailblazer, and zipped up the tent-flap behind him.

"You're attributing human emotions to animals, Rob." Ken called after them, then settled back against a pile of furs, closed his eyes and concentrated on ignoring the throbbing. All of Rob's attempts to get him to take the Tylenol in the first aid kit had been met with impolite observations about the American's parentage.

It was still a little chilly inside the tent so Ken sat up again and scooted himself closer to the stove. His left

foot made contact with a tent-pole and a jolt of agony shot up his leg. It took all his control not to yelp. He sat breathing hard for a few minutes, and then leaned over to pump up the pressure chamber on the stove. Normally he knew not to do that inside an enclosed space with the stove still lit, but his mind was occupied with denying the pain and he just forgot.

Ken became aware that his back was cold. And wet. Why? He drifted into a vague consciousness. Memory of the last few moments came back. Bright flash. Big boom. Now it seemed he was lying down flat. That couldn't be good.

His awareness expanded. He was lying in a puddle of water, face up. Squinting against the light made him realize there was no tent anymore. It also made his eyelids tingle. A moment passed and Ken realized all of him was tingling.

Rob's face came into view, right up close to his own face.

"Ken! Can you hear me? You're badly burned. I'm going to call for help. I'll be right back to you in a few minutes. Hang on."

The tingling became pain, all over his skin and just under his skin. It didn't make sense. He'd been wounded before, but never all over his body at the same time. He thought about this and why he wasn't cold, even though he heard the wind howling and there was no tent. Something about burns?

Rob was talking again. "Nothing's working! The INMARSAT, the transmitter, they must have been damaged in the explosion."

Explosion. It was beginning to make a little sense now.

"You . . ." the sound dragged pain along his throat as Ken forced out the words, ". . . hurt? Blaze . . . hurt?"

"No, we're fine. And all the rest of the dogs. You're the one that got blown up."

Stupid, stupid to let himself get blown up.

"I'll have to drive you back myself, but, Ken, that Global Positioning thing isn't working. You knew the area and we had all that positioning stuff. Damn it, I

didn't pay attention. I don't know how to get back!" There was panic in his friend's voice. Ken knew he had to stay calm and take control.

It's okay, I DO know the area. I'll give you directions. That's what he wanted to say, but the only words that Ken's throat would allow to emerge were "I" and "directions".

"Okay, I'll put you on the sled. Stay with me, Ken. Just stay with me. I'm going to drive you back to the outpost. I think you must have some internal injuries, but I can't tell. I'll try to be as gentle as I can."

Ken's back was out of the water. Somebody was lifting him. The pain that was only in and under the skin before was now also deep inside his gut. No, this definitely wasn't good.

Rob's voice came back. "Your coat and the furs and all our first aid stuff got burned up, but there were a few blankets left on the sled. I'm going to wrap you up now. Okay?"

"Turn left . . . after . . . next snow bank."

Sometimes Ken drifted towards someplace very soft and comfortingly dark. Rob's voice always called him back, always asking the way. Ken somehow knew he had only to relax, and he would be out of the pain and the constant, searing light. But Rob was so helpless.

"Look for . . . two boulders . . . follow . . . the gully."

Shameful to shiver like this. Bad dressing.

"Turn right . . . at . . . boulders."

The sled bounced and sometimes it turned. But it never took Ken to the soft, dark place.

Rob pulled the dogs to a halt. "What now?"

There was no answer at first from inside the blankets.

"Ken?"

Rob was answered by a gurgling sound, like a voice from under water. "What . . . time . . ."

Rob pushed four layers of coverings back from his wrist and exposed his watch. "A little after eleven. At night." he added.

The gurgling gave way to a choke, and then a cough that sent a fine red spray into the air in front of Ken's face. "Good . . . head away . . . from the sun. Do you . . . see . . . hills?"

Rob swung his back to the sun and peered out into the swirling snow. "Yes! Hills! I see them!"

Ken's voice hadn't been loud before but now it was barely audible. Rob crouched beside the Mountie's head and brought his ear close to the furs. As much as the words themselves Rob had to hear Ken's voice just to know his friend was still around.

"Go . . . towards . . . hills. Count the . . . third from the left . . . Go . . . there." The last word was actually a grunting burst of air.

"Right. Just let me have a look at you before we get going." Rob reached to open the bundle of blankets but Ken's voice said, "No, keep it closed. I'm fine."

"You're not fine," Rob said this automatically but he did notice Ken's voice was louder and steadier than it had been just the instant before. Before Rob could reflect on this further, Trailblazer whimpering and twisting about in his harness distracted his attention.

"What now, Trailblazer?" The dog became more and more agitated. Rob went over and undid his harness. As soon as he was loose, Trailblazer bounded to Ken's side, pushing his nose into the wrappings and letting out a series of pathetic yips.

Rob bent down beside him and petted the animal about his neck and ears. "Ken's hurt bad, Trailblazer. We can't stay here. You got to help me get him back."

Trailblazer ignored him. "Don't leave!" he begged Ken. The husky was too distressed to notice that, for the first time, he could actually speak to his man.

"It's too late. I'm sorry, Blaze, I tried to hang on." Ken felt a little less humiliated when he realized that at least now he could talk without burning his throat.

"But I can't smell my way home in the snow. I need your eyes. This other one, he doesn't know where to go. I'm afraid."

"I'll get you both back, I promise."

"Now follow along this ridge, keep it on your left, and in about half an hour you should get to an innook-shook."

"A what?"

"A marker. Pile of stones shaped like a man. You can't miss it."

"You feeling better? You sound better."

Ken hated to lie to his friend, but the truth wouldn't get Rob home any faster. "I'm not in pain anymore," Ken ventured, hoping Rob would be satisfied.

"So maybe we should stop and rest a little. Let me have a look at you."

"No! You're almost there! Once you get to the innook-shook, it should be only another few miles to the outpost."

"Just how stupid ARE humans, anyway?" Trailblazer wanted to know.

"He's not stupid, he's just exhausted. He's been driving for hours."

"Well, I'm tired, too."

"Be brave, Blaze. You're almost there."

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Three of the Mounties came running out of the cabin as the sled pulled up.

"Ken. Hurt." Rob mumbled before passing out in the snow.

"I'll take this one." One of the Mounties hefted Rob onto his shoulder in a fireman's lift and trotted off.

Another pulled aside the blankets, frowned and then placed two fingers at the base of Ken's neck. The frown deepened and he took hold of Ken's forearm, giving it a gentle shake. As he expected, it was completely stiff.

"Look at this. Must have died at least six hours ago, probably more."

The men stood looking at the corpse frozen in place on the sled.

"Poor son-of-a-bitch."

"How'll we get him off?"

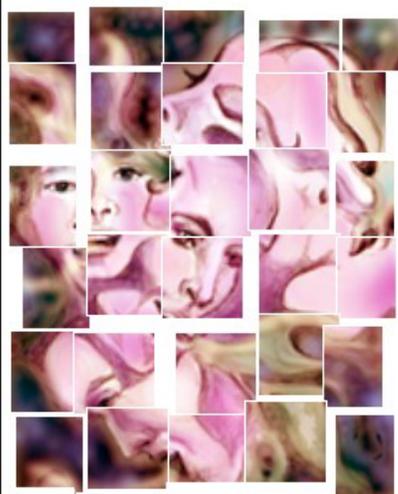
"Damned if I know."

"Tell you what, let's get the dogs first, then we'll figure it out."

As they unstrapped the dogs, each man heard a voice and assumed it was the other one talking.

"Trailblazer sleeps INSIDE," the voice said.

END



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.



Dear Sandra,

Why do we say “Bless You” after someone sneezes?

Just Curious

Dear Just Curious,

Well I’m not an encyclopedia, but I am pretty good at hunting down stuff like this on this Internet and this is what I found.

On the Urban Legends References pages at www.snopes2.com they state: *The origin of saying, "Bless you!" when someone sneezes stems from an ancient desire to safeguard the sneezer's soul or to commend the dying to the mercy of God."*

But other “urban legends” they have heard of on this topic are:

- At one time people believed a man's soul could be inadvertently thrust from his body by an explosive sneeze, thus "Bless you!" was a protective oath uttered to safeguard the temporarily expelled and vulnerable soul from being snatched up by Satan (who was always lurking nearby). The purpose of the oath was to cast a temporary shield over the flung-out soul, which would protect it just long enough to regain the protection of the corporeal body.
- Conversely, the sneeze *itself* was the expulsion of a demon or evil spirit, which had taken up residence in a person. Therefore, although the "Bless you!" was again a protective charm meant to protect the sneezer from evil, in this version it was meant to ward off the *re-entry* of an evil spirit which a tormented soul had just rid itself of.
- The heart was believed to momentarily stop during a sneeze (it doesn't), thus the "Bless you!" was uttered either as a supplication for life to return or as a congratulation upon its successful restart.

No one really knows the origin of this phrase or why it is uttered as a reflexive response to the expulsion of mucus from the nasal cavity (I really just wanted to write the explosion of snot from the nose, but I thought I should try to retain some integrity to make up for answering this question in the first place!). Remember everyone, it’s flu season, keep your souls inside of you and watch out for the “ever-lurking” Satan waiting to grab your discarded tissues. Just goes to show you can ask me anything, and I’ll do my best to answer it.

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

FROM MY PERSPECTIVE SINGLE PARENTING

By Debbie Jabbour



I've been a single parent for much of my adult life. It is a difficult road, and although there are a few compensations, they do not always outweigh the disadvantages. Being single, I can make my own choices without having to answer to a spouse. I can go where I please, when I please. But this freedom is only relative. I think of the Sinead O'Connor song, "Nothing Compares to You," where she lists all the things she can do now that she is single, such as "eat my dinner in a fancy restaurant." Well, the reality for most women who suddenly find themselves as single mothers - we can't afford basic food necessities, let alone a fancy restaurant dinner! We may be free to do as we please - but most of what we would like to do is far beyond our reach financially. We can make our own choices - but we often yearn for a supportive second opinion. We may be free to make choices, but we carry a heavy burden - doing our best to bring up our children alone, assuming the full load of being not just the family breadwinner, but being emotionally both mother and father for our children.

At Athabasca University, around 60% of students are female. After listening to the testimonials at last year's graduation, I would guess that a good number of these female students are also single mothers. I'd like to share my own story, in hopes that maybe I can offer some encouragement to those single mothers out there who are still where I was a few years ago - desperately struggling, discouraged, depressed, seeing no way out and no real hope for the future. Yes, there are single dads out there too, but men generally have options women do not, including an established career that ensures financial stability. I have nothing but deepest admiration for those men who do choose to take responsibility for parenting their children alone, since far too many men simply walk away and abdicate this responsibility to women. In my experience, however, any single dads I've known have not struggled financially, and have a great deal of family support. In addition they generally have many single women eager to "help" them out in raising their children, a situation that is much less common for single parents who are female.

I married at the age of 21, and while I consider that young, I had traveled and enjoyed extensive experience of the world, so I thought myself fairly mature. My husband was of a different culture and religion, but we had a great deal in common. He was a popular musician in his home country and we spent many hours writing music and performing together. We formed a band together with my siblings, and for several years performed all over Alberta. Although I idealistically expected love would conquer all, things did not work out as I expected. In addition to some severe culture shock issues and extreme jealousy, he had an alcohol problem. Even though we shared many good times together, I was also abused physically and mentally right from the start.

As the abuse worsened, I became increasingly isolated from both friends and family. It got to the point where I could not continue with the band, as his severe jealousy and alcohol abuse would make every performance a nightmare. I constantly rationalized and made excuses for what was going on, while making every effort to hide it from others. An emotional abuser convinces you that you are to blame for everything, and you gradually came to believe that you are at fault for everything that is wrong in the relationship. My husband never once took responsibility for his own behaviour - everything was always my fault, my inadequacies, my family, etc. At the time I was also part of a religious environment that completely subjugated women to their husbands, and

the belief that marriage was to be saved at all costs kept me in the relationship for eight years. It took an acute fear for the safety of myself and my daughters before I finally found the courage to break free.

Even then I kept hoping that my husband would change, and that we would reunite - but looking back now I realize what a foolish hope that was. Change in a relationship can only be effected if both partners are committed to it, and change in an abuser only occurs with serious and long term therapy. As long as one partner refuses to accept any responsibility for their actions, there is no hope for improvement.

So there I was, alone with four small daughters, hurt and confused, my self-esteem and confidence trashed. Supporting my daughters became the focus of my life, and I had no choice but apply for social assistance. It was a degrading and humiliating experience, but my children had to eat, so I put up with the “holier than thou” attitude of the social workers. One social worker reduced me to tears when I initially begged for help - I had been using my credit card to buy groceries, and she criticized me for using credit so wastefully. Since I had been so frivolous, in her opinion, I did not deserve government assistance. It was only when I became hysterical that she finally grudgingly provided a food voucher. Another social worker praised me for baking a pie for my children, and suggested I should “plant a garden to save costs”. I had always done these things for my family, and it hurt to have them turned into some merit badge of survival that would let me prove that I was a worthy parent.

After some time I was fortunate to again find enough work as a musician to gradually be able to earn enough to maintain a basic standard of living. I had some family support during this period, but this support was always conditional. My family seemed to think that because my marriage had failed, I was a failure as well. I was made to feel that because I was incapable of making the “correct” choices (they had strongly opposed the marriage since he was a different religion), I was getting what I deserved and needed them to take over and run my life for me and my daughters. No doubt they considered this an act of “love,” but I felt smothered. My ex-husband had spent eight years making me feel guilty and worthless, and rather than have my inadequacies reinforced, I needed to repair the damage to my self-esteem. More than anything in the world I wanted to prove my ability to be independent, to prove that I was a capable parent who had not done irreparable harm to my daughters by divorcing their father. I finally moved to the other side of the city where I and my daughters could start to build on our lives independently and move forward.

Next week: A decision to change my single parent status

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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EQUALITY IN THE WORKPLACE: PROBLEMS FACED BY WOMEN

Conclusion

By Wayne E. Benedict



Women's distributional disadvantage is not restricted to positions on the "employee" side of the fence. Female managers are also disproportionately represented in Canadian firms although there has been some improvement in this arena over recent years:

Women's increased access to managerial jobs is beyond dispute, but the sexes' more equitable representation in managerial jobs has not eliminated the significance of gender in the distribution of organizational authority and the monetary rewards that authority traditionally brings.

Women managers were concentrated near the bottom of chains of command; they tended to supervise workers of their own sex, consistent with conventions that women should not supervise men; they were substantially less likely than men to exercise decision-making authority; and their involvement in decision-making was largely confined to offering input into decisions that men made (Reskin & Ross, 1995, p. 145).

Women continue to suffer systematic gender discrimination in employment but it is not the only area in which they bear the brunt of Canada's industrial relations history. The issue of gender equality in remuneration is another sticky wicket for all interested parties. Beginning at their initial entrance into mass wage-work in the mid-nineteenth century, Canadian women have been paid less than men. That situation prevails today in spite of numerous governmental policies aimed at rectifying that inequity. "Low-wage earners are overwhelmingly female, one-third are the only earners in their families, and almost half are over the age of 35. Most surprising, one-third have a postsecondary diploma or degree" (Maxwell, 2002). "...after accounting for differences in a variety of observable characteristics, [Canadian] women's average hourly wage rate is about 84% - 89% of the men's average" (Statistics Canada, 2001, p. 14). That is not to say that no advancement in this area has been made: "In 1951, the average salary for a female [in Ontario was] ... just 49.5% of the average male salary. In 1997, the average earnings by a female [in Ontario] was...63.8 % of the average male's earnings" (Canadian Department of Justice, 2002); however, there is clearly a long way to go before true wage equality is reached.

It was officially recognized internationally that women were being remuneratively short-changed in 1948 when the International Labour Organization (ILO) began developing policy regarding equality of pay standards. The result was Convention 100 which was passed in 1951 and came into force in 1953. The Convention provided that:

Each Member [country] shall, by means appropriate to the methods in operation for determining rates of remuneration, promote and, in so far as is consistent with such methods, ensure the application to all workers of the principle of equal remuneration for men and women workers for work of equal value (ILO, 1951, Article 2)

Shamefully, Canada, a full member of the ILO, failed to ratify Convention 100 until November 16, 1972 and as the aforementioned statistics will attest, it has a dismal record of living up to the pledge it made when it finally signed on. In fact, Canada's overall record of living up to commitments made at the ILO is less than exemplary, but that is yet another issue that is beyond the scope of this writing. What Canadian governments did do in regards to minimizing, if not eradicating, the gender wage gap was to implement a variety of programs with similar phrases but vastly differing results.

The first such legislation was passed in Ontario and provided for “equal pay for equal work” (Female Employee’s Fair Remuneration Act, 1951). Equal pay for equal work is a “principle...that equal wages should be paid for the same or similar work regardless of unrelated factors such as sex” (Sack & Poskanzer, 1984, p. 58). Legislation of this type is not very potent in battling the gender wage gap. In fact, it “does little for women, since [women] seldom perform the same work as men” (Lewis, 1988, p. 25). This fact is, of course, due to decades of systematic discrimination which relegated women to specific types of “female jobs” such as: nursing; secretarial; clerical; social work; and the like. Men, on the other hand, were historically clustered in “male jobs”, either in management or in well-paying, more secure primary labour market positions. It would seem obvious that with male-female segregation of the Canadian workforce into *unequal* work, any legislation based on a principle of equal pay for *equal* work is a lame duck. And yet, numerous Canadian jurisdictions continue to employ just such legislation:

Equal Pay for Equal Work

42. (1) No employer shall pay an employee of one sex at a rate of pay less than the rate paid to an employee of the other sex when,

- (a) they perform substantially the same kind of work in the same establishment;
 - (b) their performance requires substantially the same skill, effort and responsibility; and
 - (c) their work is performed under similar working conditions.
- (Employment Standards Act, 2000).

Equal Pay

6 (1) Where employees of both sexes perform the same or substantially similar work for an employer in an establishment the employer shall pay the employees at the same rate of pay.
(Human Rights, Citizenship, and Multiculturalism Act, 1980).

Discrimination in wages

12 (1) An employer must not discriminate between employees by employing an employee of one sex for work at a rate of pay that is less than the rate of pay at which an employee of the other sex is employed by that employer for similar or substantially similar work (Human Rights Code, 1996).

Although the wording of such equal pay for equal work legislation varies, the results in combating systematic discrimination are the same—dismal. The next type of legislation employed is marginally more potent than those upon which the equal pay for equal work principle is based. Equal pay for work of equal value or “comparable worth” can be defined as a “principle...that equal wages should be paid for jobs which are of comparable worth [to the employer], having regard for such factors as skill, effort, responsibility and working conditions” (Sack & Poskanzer, 1984, p. 58). Comparable worth is based on job comparisons being made in order that jobs respective values to the employer are determined and wages adjusted accordingly. Such a system does take into account clustering of genders into male/female jobs, but it is no panacea. The major flaw in comparable worth is the fact that jobs must be rated as to skill, effort, responsibility and working conditions by a person or persons. Almost exclusively, said person(s) are management personnel who, like all humans, are liable to mistakes, biases, incompetence, arbitrariness, discrimination, and *mala fides*, among other human failings. In other words, there is no guarantee that the rated comparable worth of the jobs will be fair, just and equitable. However, even with its flaws, comparable worth programs go much further in advancing the concept of “equal remuneration for men and women workers for work of equal value” than equal pay for equal work does. An example of comparable worth legislation is as follows:

Equal wages

11. (1) It is a discriminatory practice for an employer to establish or maintain differences in wages between male and female employees employed in the same establishment who are performing work of equal value (Canadian Human Rights Act, 1985).

Comparable worth legislation is usually complaints-based and requires an individual who believes that he or she has been discriminated against to make a complaint to the appropriate board or tribunal in order to initiate a response under the applicable legislation. Pay equity based systems, on the other hand, are the most potent equal pay legislation and they place the onus with the employer to show that it is complying with the applicable legislation and furthering the principles upon which that legislation is based. Both systems are “similar in that they involve payment of equal wages to men and women for jobs of equal or comparable value to an employer. They differ primarily in that pay equity puts more legal pressure on the employer to achieve an equitable situation” (Falkenberg, Stone, & Meltz, 1999, p. 341). In other words, pay equity legislation is proactive, affirmative action based legislation whose underlying policy objectives are to ensure that equal wages are paid to men and women who perform work that requires similar skill, effort and responsibility under similar working conditions (evaluation is usually based on a points system and jobs whose overall points roughly equate are considered to be of comparable value even though points within individual categories might not jibe). An example of proactive pay equity legislation is the Ontario Pay Equity Act, R.S.O. 1990, c. P.7.

Women continue to face discrimination in employment as well as in remuneration despite the (best?) efforts of governments and employers. They also face the prospect of sexual harassment on the job in frequencies far in excess of their male co-workers. Sexual harassment has been defined as:

Harassment of an individual by another on the basis of sex; sexual harassment at the workplace may include (1) conduct ranging from unwelcome physical conduct to gender based insults [jokes] and taunting, or (2) threats to an employees economic well-being and job security; such conduct and threats are illegal under human rights legislation, either explicitly through the prohibition of sexual harassment or implicitly as a result of the injunction against discrimination based on sex (Sack & Poskanzer, 1984, p. 139).

The previously discussed issues are real problems for female workers and equally so for the organizations which employ them and governments that regulate the social relations of production. Employers must concern themselves with: internal equity; external equity; governmental regulatory compliance; legal liability issues; public relations; ease of recruitment; and many other unmentioned issues. Strategies that employers can engage with regard to legal compliance and internal/external perceptions of equity and equality are similar regarding all forms of gender discrimination—employment, remunerative, and sexual harassment—and can be applied synergistically. They include: education of management staff in relation to applicable legal compliance; development of internal managing diversity programs and policies to complement external requirements; development of corporate discrimination/harassment policies, education of all staff in relation to them, wide publication and advertisement of them, consistency in their application, and strict remedial and/or punitive penalties imposed for contravention of them. The reader should be aware that women are not the only groups that are occupationally discriminated against in Canada. Other groups that are legislatively protected against discrimination in federal employment include: aboriginal peoples, persons with disabilities and members of visible minorities.

It is not infrequent for women to be dually or trebly disadvantaged—i.e. a minority woman, an aboriginal woman, a disabled woman, or a disabled minority woman. Studies have shown that dually and trebly disadvantaged women suffer compounded discrimination; for example, the average aboriginal woman is shown to be more severely occupationally disadvantaged than either the average woman or the average aboriginal

person. It is plain that Canadian society has a long way to go before it can claim universal equality in the workplace, or anything close to it; and yet, major advances have been made toward gender equality which should not be discounted flippantly. With hard work, perseverance, vigorous debate, political pressure, and rejection of the *status quo*, Canadian women may yet realize their collective goal of occupational equality; a condition that should be recognized as an inalienable human right, but isn't—yet.

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Hope to see you there!

Sandra Moore
Athabasca University Psychology Students' Society

CD REVIEWS : JUNO AWARDS ALBUM; HUMMERS

By Clare Bradley

The annual Juno awards take place on April 6, at 8:00 pm on CTV. To promote the event, EMI Canada has produced a CD called *A Year of Great Canadian Music*, which landed on my desk last week. I sat down to give it a listen and see if the title was deserved...

Predictably, the nominees include such Canadian notables as country-pop veterans Blue Rodeo, the ubiquitous Celine [fast becoming the Anne Murray of our time – but I can't see her boycotting the Junos if she wins too many], teeny-popper Avril Lavigne, and the increasingly whiny but occasionally rockin' Our Lady Peace. Lead OLP member Raine Maida's *Lady*, Chantal Kreviazuk, is not nominated this year, probably because her album was released too late.

The selections on the CD are equally predictable...

The Blue Rodeo single, *Bulletproof*, starts out like it's going to be a Twin Peaksish (remember Julee Cruise) warped pop dirge, but quickly turns pedestrian as Jim Cuddy's clear but bland vocals all but annihilate the instrumentation. I admit I cringe at the sound of anything that even resembles country music, but Blue Rodeo had a few songs in the past that I didn't mind. There is nothing striking here, however.

Ex-Philosopher King Jarvis Church's *Shake it Off* sounds like ... well ... The Philosopher Kings. He may as well have kept the old moniker and benefited from the name recognition. Church is notoriously arrogant and, possibly because of this, the Kings managed to attain great popularity while never being truly embraced by the Canadian audience. I expect Church's solo work to be similarly received. The song is catchy, interesting, and well produced, and he is one of those rare men who can sing in a very high register without sounding ridiculous. His music is a unique fusion of funky pop and something that is entirely his own.

Sam Roberts' music has been called "some of the freshest power-pop to be heard from a major label Canadian artist since Sloan's *Twice Removed*" by HMV.com, but despite a similar retro-Beatles guitar sound and some nice but far too understated vocal harmonies, there is too much pop and not enough power – or ingenuity for that matter – to make the comparison stick.

Remy Shand sounds like Jamiroquai on valium – it's what my mother would have called "nice music." Next...

I've heard Celine Dion's *A New Day Has Come* so many times it seems like it's been out for a decade. It's an ok song, but Celine does not handle subtler passages very well – especially live. This song really highlights her weakness, and when she performed it on Rosie O'Donnell she seemed to be really labouring to keep her voice subdued. I think her best song is still the Jim Steinman penned *All Coming Back to Me Now*, as like Steinman's favourite son Meatloaf, Dion really shines on the bombastic numbers. She lacks the subtlety or humility to pull off serious emotion, but she can wrench out over-the-top pop pathos while maintaining



credibility where most would simply seem foolish.

In contrast, Diana Krall, who sounds very masculine for much of this song (*A Case of You*), is a master of control and powerful understatement. She has a lovely voice and this is a lovely song, though it is so doleful that it is nearly morose. Her bluesy interpretation is right on the mark however – gutsy and emotive without becoming overwrought.

Shania's *I'm Gonna Getcha Good* (does she pull these titles out of some moldy country cliché bible?) is a thin sounding piece of country pop fluff which was apparently recorded while several of the instruments were not plugged in. Her signature off-key vocals would benefit greatly from a little more 'cover.' I'm not a fan of Shania's, but this is the worst thing she's done, and the fact that she's up for songwriter of the year for this godawful tune is astonishing. The strings in the bridge are blatantly out of place, and suggest that the album's engineer had a last minute urge to beef up this tinny tune by any means possible. Amazingly, the song was produced by her husband, Mutt Lange, who normally could coax a richer sound out of a mosquito in a soup can. The bottom end drops out of the song during the chorus as though Lange is trying to negate the obnoxious thousand-voice choruses he popularized with Def Leppard by working a minimalist routine on his wife's albums. The fact that she's released both a pop version and a country version of this album (both sound like country anyway, thanks in part to the shrill vocals) is the most shameless marketing ploy ever, though it shows that this is one artist who makes no bones about being in it for the money.

Conversely, Lynda Lemay's single *J'veux bien t'aimer* is exceedingly dramatic but far from commercial. Why is that so many French ballads sound like they should accompany an ice skating performance? I can almost picture the skaters soaring around the rink as I listen. This is not a good thing. However, it is a breath of fresh air and distinctly different from the Anglophone music that is popular right now.

Avril Lavigne has in no way been influenced by her francophone roots, and is yet another young commercial pop artist who looks far more punk than she sounds. Punk-wear is the trend of the moment, no doubt about it. I doubt any of these little-punkettes own an album by the Sex Pistols, Black Flag, or even the Ramones, but hey, they look ratty and wear leather bracelets, so who am I to question their credibility. *Complicated* is pure teeny-pop fluff *a la* Mandy Moore, but her producers have taken a cue from the Pink camp and packaged her in a punky guise which totally belies her music. Mandy drives around with her friends in a formation of brightly coloured VW Bugs while eating candy; Avril and her friends tool around in a fleet of skateboards eating candy – see the difference? Didn't think so. It's a shame, because there is plenty of room in the music scene for a young rocker with early Joan Jett or Susie Quatro attitude. This song is catchy and well produced, despite the sometimes weak vocals, and preferable to most Britney Spears or N'Sync tunes. I'd like it more if they packaged her honestly.

Amanda Marshall, on the other hand, has an amazing rock and roll voice like so many other great Canadian female rock vocalists before her (Lee Aaron, Darby Mills, Holly Woods [Toronto], the list goes on...). The first time I heard her, she was an unknown, unsigned artist singing Jimi Hendrix's *All Along The Watchtower a capella* on the beach during a Much Music interview with her buddy Colin James. I couldn't wait to hear her album, but when it came out my hopes for another great Canadian rock performer were crushed. This latest offering does little to revive them, though it's catchy as hell and a lot of fun. The opening guitars remind me of anything by the The Spin Doctors.

I have similar concerns about Alanis's direction. Her contribution to the Juno album, *Precious Illusions*, has that airy India-inspired feel of many of her hits, but it sounds far too much like many of her other songs too. This is a problem with much of her work – there is so much sameness, and the better songs on her albums rarely are showcased. It's like she's suffering from Multiple Personality Disorder [Dissociative Identity Disorder as it's now called, for all you PSYC majors] – there is the cool, ground breaking, kick-ass Alanis, and the ethereal, shoe-gazing girl who aims for precocity but too often simply annoys.

Over all, the current Juno line-up seems to have finally proved that in Canada, Rock and Roll is dead.

Nickelback are the closest thing to a true rock band to have thrived in Canada over the last few years, though a formulaic approach and unthreatening attitude have helped warm the pop audience to these Hannah-born boys. There are some great songs in their repertoire, but *Too Bad* is not one of them, nor is the unbearable Jon Bon Jovi-ish *Hero*, featuring Nickelback's Chad Kroeger and Josey Scott (vocalist for Saliva, who actually aren't bad). We can be thankful, however, that Nickelback cronies, Default, seem to have dropped off the radar.

It is too bad that so many great Canadian acts have been neglected this year, including Danko Jones and the Tea Party who have been relegated to the Hard Rock category, and Molly Johnson who is only nominated for a jazz award.

I recall a recent interview where techno-metal artist Rob Zombie admitted that he is baffled by the tastes of many young music fans today: "What is it with all the kids listening to this old fart music that their grandmas like?" He's got a point. When I was in high school [centuries ago...] we sure as hell weren't rocking out to Enrique. Take away the image, and the music of Britney and the boy bands isn't far removed from ABBA. I could hear Britney doing *Waterloo*, albeit with a pulsing dance beat...

In support of the 'old fart' theory, Bif Naked did a decent album this year [though she seems to be suffering from Lee Aaron syndrome, i.e. a good artist wasting her time with a mediocre songwriter] but it did not garner a mention, nor did the album by Holly McNarland, which only was nominated for best album cover.

As a hard music fan, I'm always annoyed that the Junos have no category where hard rock, metal and industrial bands can be nominated. They have a hard rock category, but heck, Treble Charger are in it and if they're hard rock, so is Avril. This is a shame, because some of Canada's finest and most influential acts have been heavier bands. Nettwerk (record label) bands like Skinny Puppy and Delerium and groundbreaking metal acts like Fear Factory and the newly reformed VoiVod have not only produced some innovative and vital music, they have also influenced scores of American bands who proudly list them as the forerunners of their respective genres. I don't need to tell anyone about the success of Canadian rock acts like Neil Young, Rush and BTO, and we have also produced some of the worlds finest punk bands [DOA, SNFU the list goes on]. This is in contrast to Canadian pop, where so many of the acts are merely the Canadian versions of well known American acts. Pop music simply is not our forte. Meanwhile, many upcoming heavy bands like Breach of Trust, Kitty and Slaves on Dope, are also producing great music with little attention. The latter band has already left Canada to try their luck in the states, and others will surely follow.

The only other genre in Canadian music that seems particularly vital these days, is rap. While I don't listen to a lot it, I find that it's actually the American product that I dislike a lot of the time. Canadian rap artists - from the Dream Warriors, to Maestro Fresh Wes, to Swollen Members - seem to have a fresher approach, and a greater diversity of styles than the largely inbred American scene [the bands, not the people]. Forget the ubiquitous 6 degrees of separation game, you can find connections between most American rap acts with only 2 degrees, and with a few notable exceptions like Eminem, most of these acts look and sound similar, right down the to cliché gangsta attitude and the bouncy-cars-and-boobs-and-butts videos.

The aforementioned Swollen Members continue a tradition of cool and unique Canadian rap that combines musicality, microphone skills, slick production, and a rock edge. They are one of the most listenable acts on this year's Juno list, and a more credible rock band than most of the rock offerings this year. Sadly, they did not make the CD (which instead features a catchy rap track by Rascalz), and they were nominated for only one award - Group of the Year - along with another unique and vital Canadian act, Sum 41, whose melding of punk, metal and rap is reminiscent of early Beastie Boys material.

You can vote for your choice in the fan favourite category at junos.ctv.ca, but don't expect your favourite act to be on the list – it's rather.. well.. predictable. Oh, and the page is confusing, but the submit button for the entry form is in fact the Juno logo on the bottom right, which does not look like a button at all.

SAVE THE JETS – THE HUMMERS



The Hummers album is the antithesis of the Juno offerings. Watching these corporate music programs can lead you to forget that Canada has a thriving indie music scene, which continues to be largely ignored by music journalists despite the immense popularity of many of these bands.

Save the Jets is an instrumental album – the fourth from this "all improv musical collective from Winnipeg" [<http://www.the-hummers.com/>]. Canada has a tradition of producing cool instrumental bands, from the Shuffle Demons [ok, they have some vocals, but the instrumentation carries the songs] to Shadowy Men on a Shadowy Planet, which share strong musicianship, eclectic style, and a tendency toward repetitiveness.

The Hummers funky, well played, instrumental jazz is no exception. The songs are all based on repetitive rhythm tracks with some fine jams played over top. The best of these songs are moody and trippy, while others tend to drag. A lot of great jazz and funk numbers use repetition to great effect, but if the melody doesn't quite flow, the repetition becomes obvious instead of natural, and the result can be annoying. A couple of the tracks on *Save The Jets* fall into this category, but others succeed at creating living soundscapes that transport the listener and transcend the individual notes, chords and samples.

The open track, *Meal Ticket*, is the worst of the bunch and meanders toward muzak, I think due in part to the overabundance of high toned instruments and bells. This is one track where the repetition becomes annoying, but the album improves dramatically after this.

A Song For Our Pets has a great improvisational feel, featuring percussive scat vocalizations and some fun hip hop samples over a deep funky bass line. The song is upbeat, snappy and fresh, in contrast to its follower, *Feels Good Doesn't It*. One of the album's best tracks, *Feels Good* steals the weird reverb effect from Mr. Oizo's hit *Flat Beat*, but slows and mellows into a hypnotic trance groove. Like *Flat Beat* this song is dominated by quirky sound effects, but The Hummers layer these effects within the song, rather than obnoxiously plastering them over the top as Oizo did. This song, *Hightower and Mahoney*, and the *Green Green*, are smooth and restrained; the subtlety of the tracks draw the listener in to search for hidden depths below the sonic layers. I suspect that recreational drug users would find infinite variations and surprises within these tracks. The hummers definitely write music for those who like to trip out. The title of the closing track, "*When The Drugs Wore Off, It Wasn't So Much Fun Anymore*," is fortunately not accurate – unlike many trippy bands, the Hummers music never becomes so self-indulgent that straight folks can't relate. This final track is also the jazziest on the album, and great fun.

The One Day Flu is my favourite, and it reminds me of the best work of Stone Gossard's side project *Brad*, without the grating vocals. Subtle and smooth, this is great mellow jazzy tune with a bass line that grooves but never grates.

Also entertaining are the Hummers tongue-in-cheek, euphemistic song titles which [deliberately?] fail to lend any interpretation to the songs. This is music for long highway drives, or all nighters.

Save The Jets can take a few listens to really get into. I was put off by the first track on my first listen, and it took me some time to get beyond that. Once you warm to these songs, however, they continue to offer new and intriguing layers that will keep you listening. The players are also top notch.

PREVENTIVE MEDICINE

By Zil-E-Huma-Lodhi



In the past, providers of health care were primarily concerned with diagnosing and treating existing diseases in patients. The quantity and quality of health professionals services were the primary determinants of patient's health. Nowadays, this view has been reviewed and replaced by more comprehensive vision of health that places a focus on prevention. Evidence of this change comes from two main sources:

First, a critical study of the history of disease shows that major infectious diseases such as plague and leprosy, which were the leading causes of death in societies at the turn of this century, began to decline long before the introduction of effective therapy.

Second, the evaluation of today's major causes of death and disability are the real eye opener. For example, unprotected use of intravenous syringes constitutes the major cause of death in homeless or street people, which is largely the result of self-imposed risks and lifestyle habits. Further, deaths caused by practising un-protected sex cannot be reduced by traditional forms of medical treatment, but rather by changes in behaviour. Measures such as increased caution, sobriety, and the use of sterile syringes in case of intravenous drug intake, are more effective in reducing deaths than medical treatment. Therefore, a concept of health must include prevention factors in addition to traditional medicinal interventions.

Following is the summary of factors that contribute significantly towards the deterioration of Canadian's health:

LIFESTYLE AND BEHAVIOURAL RISK FACTORS:

Lifestyle and behavioural risk factors are the ones that can easily be avoided and changed without undergoing traditional forms of medical treatment (Shah, 1998, pg 87). Examples of these factors are:

:: Stress ::

Chronic stress has a tremendous effect on Canadian health, and women tend to suffer more than men. Stress is commonly found in working parents, for example, and as it increases, family dysfunction increases with it. During stress our bodies go through physiological changes that include, increased metabolism, heart rate, blood pressure and muscle tension (Bensen & Stuart, p.177).

:: Substance abuse ::

This refers to the problems linked with the excessive use of alcohol, tobacco, drugs and illicit drugs eg. cocaine. Heavy drinking is more likely to occur among those in the workforce, who have a high income and higher education. According to the author of *Public Health And Preventive Medicine In Canada* (Shah), **"48% of Canadians take some type of medication in any given 48 hour period, but only 60% do so on the advice of a physician."**

:: Nutrition ::

A healthy diet helps to maintain not only good health but it also boosts the body's immunization response to disease. Canadians have been shown to have increased their vegetable intake over a past two decades but mostly by using potatoes (as french fries). Poultry and red meat remain the most popular choices among Canadians. (Shah, p.90; Bensen & Stuart, p.129)

:: Physical Activity and fitness :: (Shah, p.93)

Physical activity is crucial to the health of the heart, joints etc. According to *Public Health and Preventive Medicine in Canada* (Shah), **“in 1994, over half the population (56%) reported that they were inactive.”** Most of the leisure time was spent watching television.

OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH AND DISEASE

Occupational health is defined as the maintenance of health in the work place. Most of us spend a huge amount of time at our work place that can expose us to hazards that are physical (radiation, temperature and humidity), chemical (poison and volatile solvents), mechanical (repetitive strains), ergonomic (Carpal Tunnel syndrome), and biological (viruses). Some of these can cause immediate problems while others develop over extended periods of time – e.g. workers at industrial mills can develop noise related problems, while those who work in the health professions are exposed to numerous germs (Shah, p.246).

Legislations allow workers to refuse dangerous work, and also ensures their right to know the nature of their work.

MEANS OF PREVENTION

There are three levels of prevention. The choice of which kind of prevention tactic to use depends upon the population at risk, their location and the suspected agent (disease or host) (Shah, p.16; Bensen & Stuart, p.25).

Primary prevention, aims at preventing disease before it starts – e.g. sex education is considered a primary prevention toward the spread of HIV/AIDS.

Secondary Prevention involves the early detection of disease – e.g. cervical and breast cancer screenings fall into this category.

Tertiary Prevention stresses treatment and rehabilitation to keep an existing health problem from recurring - e.g. drug rehabilitation centres for former drug abusers, or meditation as a relaxation method in order to reduce stress, are both tertiary preventions.

PREVENTIVE HEALTH PRACTICES

Preventive health initiatives can not always be imposed by Government health sector. We are responsible and accountable for our daily lives, and by simply taking steps like washing our hands before a meal, or using seat belts, we can make a huge difference in preventing death or disease. Following are some basic preventative measures that can vastly improve the health of Canadians" (Shah, p.94).

:: Immunization ::

Immunization helps in the prevention of infectious diseases, such as Measles, Rubella, Influenza and Hepatitis B (Shah, p.199).

:: Blood Pressure ::

For both males and females blood pressure monitoring should increase with age. High blood pressure is one of the major risk factors for getting cardiovascular disease, coronary heart diseases and stroke. The good news is, it can be monitored and regulated by diet, exercise and medication (Shah, p.94).

:: Cervical Cancer And Breast Cancer Screening ::

According to a population Health Survey, “85% of Canadian women over the age of 15 reported that they have had a pap test at some point in their life.” This is important, because cervical cancer can easily be prevented but due to late detection it is taking so many lives. This deadly disease can be prevented by going through regular screening. Breast cancer is also very common in women and early detection through mammography can help in curing breast cancer and fast recovery. <http://www.hhs.gov/news/press/2000pres/20001012a.html>

CONSEQUENCES OF NEGLECTING PREVENTION

Economic burden

Mortality (death) and morbidity (illness) not only affect patients but also the whole nation. According to *Public Health and Preventive Medicine in Canada*, “the total burden of ill health and mortality on Canadian society was estimated to be \$156.9 billion.” This toll includes illness, disability and premature death.

Cardiovascular diseases, injuries and violence, cancer, and arthritis were responsible for half of the total cost, while overall chronic conditions accounted for the major economic burden (Shah, p.121).

Clearly prevention is a key factor in maintaining good health, but too many patients rely on doctors to treat illnesses after the fact. The outcome of this approach, however, is often poor. Prevention means that patients must take their health in to their own hands, rather than relying on medications and other interventions in order to maintain health. Education is the only way to encourage people to take this important step.

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Herbert Bensen, M.D., Eileen M. Stuart, R.N., M.S.; 1993. *The Wellness Book*. Simon & Schuster: New York.

Up late studying?
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Open All Night

NEWS FROM AU - CONTRIBUTED BY THE INSIDER

MIDDLE STATES ACCREDITATION



Spearheading AU's Middle States accreditation efforts are Nancy Parker (liaison officer), Sandy Sales (committee recording secretary), and Ken Collier (committee chair).

Athabasca University is proceeding with its efforts to achieve full accreditation with the Middle States Commission on Higher Education, an accomplishment that will help facilitate AU's expansion into the US market. Ken Collier, chair of the steering committee, provides an update.

Why Accreditation?

Athabasca University recently achieved "candidate" status with the Middle States Commission on Higher Education on the path toward accreditation in the USA. A representative committee and 11 task forces are working toward that goal. AU staff work on organizing the needed documents and resources. "But why are we doing this?" some have asked.

In 1999, the Strategic University Plan update process committed AU to enter the US higher education market. Research and consultation led to the conclusion that US accreditation would be needed. American and visiting students to the USA are reluctant to enroll at unaccredited institutions. Credit transfer and general academic recognition hinge around accreditation.

Diploma mills and fly-by-night operators cloud the American education climate. Potential students are suspicious of universities with whom they are not familiar. Though the Canadian scene is less concerned with accreditation, an additional benefit of US accreditation will be that AU will also be better recognized in Canada and internationally, where concerns about diploma mills may be less prominent than in the US, but nevertheless a reality.

Accreditation goes a long way toward easing these fears. Dr. John Bear, who visited AU a few years ago (and whose best-selling Bear's Guides to non-traditional degrees, degrees by mail and modem, etc. mention AU favourably) makes the case for accreditation at: http://www.degree.net/guides/accreditation_guide.html

Though there is no formal accrediting body in Canada, the Association of Universities and Colleges of Canada (AUCC, publisher of *University Affairs*) is exploring a full

accreditation role, though its realization is both uncertain and many years off. AU, as a full AUCC member, could bring both experience and DE distinctiveness to this function, should it occur.

Why Middle States?

The AU Executive group and the International Projects office explored US accreditors. Six American regional bodies do this work. They have similar, yet slightly varying, missions and criteria. Some have more experience with distance education and open learning than others. At the time of application, only two regional accreditation bodies accepted applications from institutions that were not incorporated in the US, and as AU wants to serve this market without creating a new infrastructure (as did the USOU) this reduced the alternatives significantly.

Middle States was chosen because it showed some understanding and active interest in Athabasca University's approach - both to distance education and to the accreditation process.

The Accreditation Process

Much can be learned about a university's own functioning through accreditation. This is not just an act of supplication to a distant - foreign - body. If that was all the accreditation bid amounted to, neither AU nor Middle States would be interested.

Rather, AU gets to see itself through somewhat dispassionate eyes. It also sees itself through its own utterances - how it states its own mission and goals, how it carries out its educational roles, how it explains itself to others, what practical deed it commits, and ultimately, what the implications of all those activities are.

The accreditation process invites stakeholders to show their relationship to AU. Students, tenured academics, tutors, subject matter experts, administrative and maintenance staff and interested observers get to measure AU against recognized criteria. Middle States gets more experience with a distance education university. Middle States already knows other institutions with considerable DE approaches. The [Middle States web site directory](#) lists the variety of institutions they accredit.

They also have an interests in AU as a Canadian university to be accredited in the USA (they already have a few) and as a solely DE provider. AU's unique features, while eminently accreditable, also provide input to their processes that will surely meet many more DE institutions in the future. AU gains membership in this accrediting body and can influence its policies and directions through active engagement with other US and global higher education organizations.

Next up: Going Global

SCHOLARSHIPS & AWARDS

MATTINSON ENDOWMENT FUND SCHOLARSHIP FOR DISABLED STUDENTS

Value: \$2500

DEADLINE: JUNE 01, 2003

Administrator: Association of Universities and Colleges of Canada (AUCC)

Notes: Available to those in or entering in their first year of study and who have a general disability. Must be a Canadian citizen or have lived in Canada for at least two years as a permanent resident. Must not have an undergraduate degree. Available to students enrolled at any Canadian degree-granting institution or community college (must be following a degree program under the college-university transfer system).

Contact Information:

Canadian Awards Program International and Canadian Programs Division
Association of Universities & Colleges
600-350 Albert Street
Ottawa, ON K1R 1B1

Phone: (613) 563-1236



ACCD EDUCATION FOR LIFE BURSARY

Value: \$500

DEADLINE: JUNE 30, 2003

Administrator: Alberta Committee of Citizens with Disabilities

Notes: Available to those in or entering in their first year of study and who have a general disability. Valued at \$200 to \$500. Must become a member of ACCD (Alberta Committee of Citizens with Disabilities). Must include a letter of reference from an adult other than a family member. The cheque will be mailed to the post-secondary institution.

Contact Information:

Alberta Committee of Citizens with Disabilities
10339 - 124 Street NW Suite 707
Edmonton, AB T5N 3W1
Phone: (780) 488-9088
Fax: (780) 488-3757
Toll Free: (800) 387-2514
Web Site: <http://www.accd.net>
E-mail: accd@accd.net
Application Address: <http://www.accd.net/Bursaries.htm>

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NGO Youth Camp - Greece Voluntary Action for Youth's Ages 18-32

<http://www.youthcamp.gr/>

The NGO YouthCamp - Voluntary Action for Youth is an independent, voluntary youth organization that is aiming to play a major role in the area of international voluntarism in Greece and Cyprus.

Aims

- a) The protection, conservation and development of natural and social environment.
- b) The promotion of voluntarism as an alternative way of democratic participation in all areas of social activity.
- c) The development of cultural relations among youth with different national backgrounds.

Activities

- a) Organize and administrate short term voluntary projects (workcamps) in Greece and Cyprus, during summer time!
- b) Take part in NGO networks of humanitarian, environmental and social orientation.
- c) Develop action for the promotion of voluntarism's movement.
- d) Implement projects-actions in cooperation with the public sector, European Union and International Organizations

An international workcamp is a voluntary project of young participants, from all over the world, and in collaboration with local authorities.

What type of workcamp? The workcamps are focusing on environmental, social, cultural, archeological and constructive issues.

Who can participate? Everybody can participate in international workcamps. The conditions of participation are, at least:

- a) To be between 18-32 years old
- b) To have basic knowledge of English

When it takes place? Workcamps are available at the beginning of June till the middle of September. The usual duration is 2-3 weeks depending on the local community's needs.

Which Language ? English is the communication language of all workcamps.

Accommodation The accommodation is FREE. It is going to be at local school or community center. Living conditions provide all facilities to volunteers.

Meals The meals are FREE. Volunteers are provided by all supplies to cook. In some workcamps volunteers are going to take their meals in a local tavern or restaurant.

Fee of Participation The participation fee is 100 Euro per workcamp and covers part of our administration cost (Our funds are limited). Travel arrangements & payments are covered by the volunteer.

Contact

YouthCamp – Voluntary Action for Youth

Athinas 13,
Agia Varvara, Athens,
Postal Code 123 51
Greece

Tel: 0030-210-5610728

Fax: 0030-210-5621093

E-mail: info@youthcamp.gr

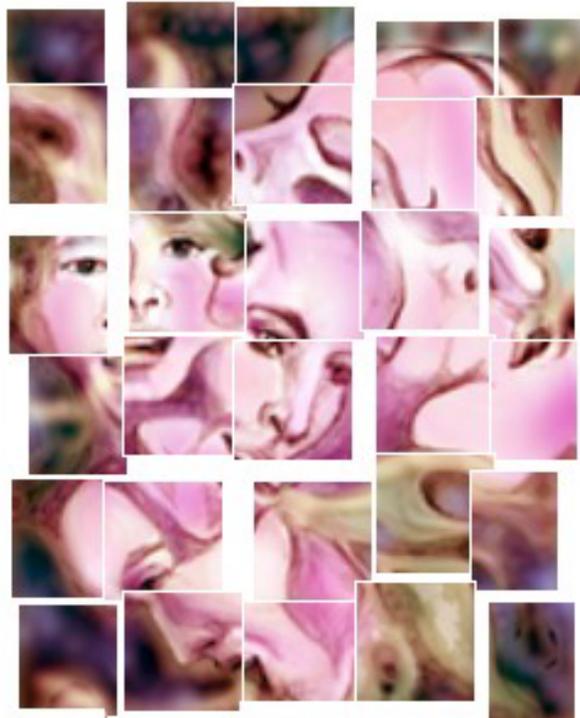
kpikramenos@hotmail.com

CONFERENCE CONNECTIONS

Contributed By AU's *The Insider*



- **CU Expo** - Community-University Institute for Social Research - "Partnerships, Policy & Progress" - May 8-10, 2003, Saskatoon, SK. Details: <http://www.usask.ca/cuisr/cuexpo>
- **Distance Education Technology Symposium (DETS-03)** - sponsored by the Centre for Distance Education - May 15 - 17, 2003 - Edmonton, Crowne Plaza Hotel. Details: <http://cde.athabascau.ca/DET/2003/> or contact [Pat Fahy](#).
- **AMTEC (Association of Media & Technology in Education in Canada)** - "E-convergence: Education, Media & Technology" - May 25-28, 2003, Montreal, PQ. Details: <http://www.amtec.ca>
- **ICDE World Conference** - 21st annual - June 1-5, 2003 - Hong Kong. Details: <http://www.ouhk.edu.hk/HK2003>
- **CADE** - June 7-11, 2003 - St. John's, NF. Details: <http://www.cade-aced2003.ca/>
- **"Women and Leadership in Higher Education: How Thick is the Glass Ceiling?"** - International Conference - June 12 - 14, 2003 - Monterrey, Nuevo León, Mexico. Details: http://www.swaac.ca/Prof_Dev.htm or <http://www.swaac.ca/Regional.htm>



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.



CLASSIFIEDS:

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 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 advertisement at her discretion. Thank-you.

THE VOICE

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