

# THE VOICE

MAGAZINE

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## *Nature Notes* *Bravo to the Birch*

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*Could you be one?*

*Love, the second time around*  
*Could it happen to you?*

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## THE VOICE

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# NATURE NOTES:

from the backyard to the biosphere

By Zoe Dalton

## Bravo to the Birch

Thank goodness that canoe season has arrived once again. Getting back out on the water, feeling the dip and swing of the paddles as they propel this elegant watercraft and its lucky passengers forward, hearing the droplets gently fall and meet the surface of the lake or river -- ah, the simple joy of it. What other means of water travel can compare to the ease and gentility of the graceful canoe? Quiet, swift, efficient, miraculously able to get you into (and out of) the tightest spaces -- it's quite an invention.

Of course, one cannot talk about the canoe without hearkening back to the days of its birch-bark ancestors. When thinking of this relative to our modern-day fiberglass, aluminum, and Kevlar® friends, we must pause a while to think of the lovely tree that gave rise to the much-admired birch-bark canoe -- *Betula papyrifera*, the paper birch.

*B. papyrifera* is one heck of a plant. Much more than just a simple beauty, this shining, bright white, artistically envisioned tree has been dubbed by many northern aboriginal groups as the single most useful tree around. It is what you might refer to as multifunctional, lending a hand in areas as diverse as health, technology and nutrition.

Various parts of the tree have traditionally been used to treat a variety of ailments, including skin rashes, sores, and dermal parasites such as ringworm. Its wood, that is harder than that of many of its northern arboreal cousins, is perfect for building boats, sleds, snowshoes and paddles. The bark, ideal for making containers, once formed the basis for everything from the familiar canoe all the way through to cups and cradles for babies. As the icing on the cake, this beauty of a tree produces a sweet sap that can be collected and boiled down to make a maple-syrup type sweet treat.

The paper birch is a *star* not only from the perspective of use value to people. It is also quite a *winner* in the ecological sense of things. Cold tolerance is not an issue for the birch as it is a largely northern species. Ranging right across Canada and into the northern states, the paper birch is able to tolerate the presence of ice in its intercellular tissues. Fire? Not a problem. *B. papyrifera* is ready and willing to sprout new shoots from existing roots or any above-ground parts that managed to survive the burn. Forestry activities left some bare ground? Wind pollination helps this puppy to arrive early on scene, allowing it to capitalize on the high intensity light conditions in which it can grow quickly and, in many cases, form nearly pure stands.

The little dark horizontal bars that grace the bark (the ones you can peek through when you pick up a piece of fallen birch-bark from the ground) help the tree to *breathe*. These lenticels allow for efficient gas exchange between the inner parts of the tree and its outside environment.

Those hungry herbivores had better not get too greedy, or they'll be in for it. The paper birch is a *smart one*, increasing the presence of toxins known as secondary metabolites when the nibbling gets a little too extreme. While some plants maintain static quantities of toxins to deter herbivory over the long term, the paper birch decided somewhere along the way not to waste its energy creating these substances

unless it was absolutely necessary. Instead, as herbivory increases in intensity, the level of toxic compounds in the paper birch's tasty parts rises to turn off even the most devoted birch connoisseur.

So, next time you're out in the canoe or up north checking out the scenery, don't be shy to pass on a little salute to this special tree. The paper birch, so deserving of our admiration, might just give a little flirtatious sway in the breeze in response to your thanks in recognition of all that it is.

## FICTION FEATURE The Familiar

Rebecca Brewer

### "These things happen"

That's what I overheard standing in line at Cup o' Joes. Margaret and I used to walk here Sunday mornings before she got sick, and after she retired. I was still teaching one English class a week over at the college. Buying the downtown condo had been Margaret's idea. We sold our dream home, the retirement bliss in the suburbs, for 1800 square feet above Jasper Avenue. We walked everywhere, to dinner, to bookstores. She loved going to the Farmers' Market on Saturdays, the busiest day. She always loved a crowd.

The guy in the corner table sounded like he was in the midst of a divorce. His buddy, trying to change the subject, said, "These things happen, Tom. Been through it myself."

*These things happen?* That's what I used to say to Margaret when it rained on our annual vacation on Vancouver Island. We always rented the same green cabin two blocks from the water. It almost always rained. John and Susan used take the ferry over with their three girls. Margaret loved to walk the beach with the girls. Hated not getting her way. When the rain would come down, usually by the buckets, I would say, "These things happen," and pull out a deck of cards. Or when we used to go visit Kelly and Jim in Kelowna and the traffic, weighted with a summer march of trailers and motor homes, would delay us by an hour, "These things happen," Margaret would say, mostly to herself. I was too bothered by then to listen. But divorce? These things don't just happen.

"I know. If someone woulda told you the day you fell in love with her..." I heard Tom's friend trail off.

"Hi Bill. What did you think about those Red Sox?" the girl behind the counter smiles. "Would you like your coffee, two sugars?" she continues.

"Sure, Lynn. Thanks," I say as I give her a twooney.

"See you tomorrow, Bill," she says.

It's a strange saying— *the day you fell in love with her*. How do you pinpoint when you first fell in love? I've never understood that. Is it a moment? Do you fall in love with someone over the passing of one moment, one particular time? Or is it a collection of moments? A perpetual discovery. The beloved familiar. Kind of a mosaic of the ordinary.



I have no proof, but I'm fairly certain whenever a child is born in Vancouver that the parents are required to sign a legally binding contract, which obliges them to freely use guilt as a means of making their offspring go outside and enjoy the outdoors. "It's such a beautiful day. Why aren't you outside taking advantage of it?" Those words have haunted me for years, especially when it's sunny and I happen to find myself indoors. The excessive year-round rain does nothing but reinforce the guilt by placing far too much emphasis on those too-rare sunny days. The contract, at the root of it all, likely stems from the deal our ancestors made with the devil in order to

inhabit this truly majestic city. And who can blame them? With the ocean, the mountains, and the climate -- what more could you ask for?

Well, one thing, actually: that I'm left to enjoy our bounty as I see fit. You see, although rare on the West Coast, I'm what is known as an *outdoor unenthusiast*. For years, we were rumoured to be nothing more than an urban legend in these parts. The majority of the population refusing to believe there could possibly be anyone in this city who does not embrace an outdoorsy lifestyle. It has taken time, but finally I'm comfortable enough to admit it openly. My name is Sara and I'm an *outdoor unenthusiast*.

Don't get me wrong. I don't hate being outside, per se. I simply prefer to enjoy it from the patio of a favourite café or restaurant, while reading a good book or enjoying a friend's company, instead of from the seat of a mountain bike on some North Shore obscure trail, or when I'm laced into my near-death-experience-inducing-booties-on-wheels, also known as rollerblades. Does that make me a pariah? Am I but one step above a smoker on the echelon of life?

This seems to be the consensus among outdoorsy-types when they are faced with my choice of lifestyle. They can't seem to comprehend it. Now that I'm an adult and no longer have to abide by my parents' rules, you would think I had escaped the guilt trip, not so. Avid outdoorsy-types are constantly trying to push their fleece-clad Gore-tex wearing lifestyles on me. If I'm at all unreceptive, they shower me with the same guilt I had to contend with as a child, except that their version has a twist. Not only do I have to be outside when it's sunny, but I also have to engage in some sort of activity. Not just any activity (apparently, window-shopping and latte drinking don't count), but one that may very well be featured in the X games. When I tell them I'm not the least bit interested in spending a glorious sunny day kayaking around English Bay, or doing some crazy activity that involves strapping myself into a harness, like rock climbing, I get unwarranted looks of disbelief and pity, as though I'm misguided or even possibly a bit simple for eschewing this essential facet of Vancouver life. In fact, it's very likely I'll be pelted with half-eaten Power Bars next time I walk down the street for writing this. And surely, it's a risk I'm willing to take. I'm tired of the charade.

Admittedly, my stance is not a popular one in the current climate of an expanding obesity epidemic. Don't get me wrong. I do value exercise. While this article may leave you with the impression that I lead a sloth-like existence, that is not the case, I'm actually in fairly good shape. Cardiovascular exercise and weight training are my friends. I simply don't want to be force-fed a lifestyle that doesn't interest me, and I know for a fact it doesn't interest me because I have tried it on for size and found it to be ill fitting.

In the past, I've done my fair share of hiking, biking, snowboarding, rollerblading, kayaking, and rock climbing. Even when I made a concerted effort to embrace the active outdoorsy lifestyle, it was clear we

were incompatible. Snowboarding and I were a mismatch from the beginning. This became increasingly clear when I began to spend more time exploring the nuances of *après-ski* and chalet life than I did in the snow. Why would I want to spend my time out in the cold waiting in endless chair-lift line-ups when I could be in the chalet drinking hot chocolate? The relationship officially ended when my knee gave out as I unsuccessfully attempted to land a jump and, as a result, found myself on crutches for the better part of a month. Oh, how love gone wrong hurts! With rollerblading, a more recent casualty, I tried really hard. I wanted to make it work, but it just wasn't meant to be. Case in point, one broken arm and severe road rash on my right buttock. The scar remains as a daily reminder of why I gladly gave my rollerblades away. As for hiking, biking, kayaking, and rock climbing, I never had strong feelings for any of them. It was all pretty casual, and as such I felt absolutely no remorse in cutting them out of my life without warning.

As soon as I rid my life of these unfulfilling relationships, I was infinitely happier. Relationships built on guilt are never healthy. Now, I'm completely comfortable admitting that I'm an *outdoor unenthusiast*. In fact, I've come to embrace it. You can be sure the next time I decide to stay indoors and enjoy a sunny day through my living room window, I won't feel the slightest bit guilty, even when I hear the odd Power Bar bounce off the glass.

Sara Kinninmont lives happily guilt-free in Vancouver.

## Won't Get Fooled Again

*El-ahrairah Jones*

The manufacturer of luxury cars promises you a whisper quiet drive. The cigarette company commends, you've come a long way, baby. The plastic surgery clinic asserts that it's all about me, myself and I. The beer maker offers purity and a glimpse of a happier life. A sixty-dollar scarf from the high-end clothing store will make you sexier and more sophisticated. This razor will definitely shave you closer, because three heads are better than one. There are ten ways to drive your man crazy in bed and this magazine article will reveal them all. The jewelry maker shills *crunk*-inspired *bling* at surprisingly affordable prices. Life would be easier if you had more stowage space. Buy now, pay later. Imagine the parties you could throw if you just had this blender. Women are waiting to talk to you on-line. There's a steak sizzling for you at several convenient locations. We're bombing that school in the name of your freedom. Your breath stinks and fortunately this mint is sugar-free. More people would talk to you if you had a slimmer cell phone. Learn Mandarin in six easy lessons. You're nothing if you don't have thick lashes. There's no such thing as global warming. Brighten your teeth and increase your penis size with safe and effective treatments. Your kids will love you more if you give them cereal with more sugar. Your kids will be smarter if they have this new software. Buy mutual funds from us or else you'll soon be homeless. If we hired more teachers and nurses, you'd soon be homeless. Tax the corporations and you'll soon be homeless. If you don't let us strip-mine, you'll soon be homeless. Life is better on anti-depressants. It's a marinade and a disinfectant. This diet supplement will stimulate your *G-spot*. You'll go bald like your mother if you don't wear these slippers. You will be powdered, pampered, and somebody who looks like Brad Pitt will rub walnut oil on your ass cheeks at our day spa. You are so very ugly, but we can make you beautiful. Make three thousand dollars a week in your spare time just by testing video games. You'll be murdered in your sleep without this alarm. Naked supermodels will be lining up to have wild sex with you if you buy this after-shave. Our competitor's dessert toppings will give you brain cancer and our product will cure it. Vote for me to end taxes and world hunger.

*Hey, Mister, do you have any spare change? 'Cause I'm out of work, I'm bipolar, my father burnt me with cigarettes, and they cut off my welfare payments. Can't you at least look at me? I've been sitting on this corner all day long and I'm starting to think I'm invisible. If somebody would just give me a chance, I really think I could make something of myself. I could be your child. I'm a person. I'm a decent person.*

*Yeah, right. What kind of fool do you take me for?*

## FROM MY PERSPECTIVE

# Love, second time around

*Debbie Jabbour*



Me, the soon-to-be-twice-divorced love cynic, writing a story about love! It no doubt seems strange, but love stories interest me. Not the sappy Hollywood type, but the very real ones that involve real people -- particularly those close to you. You might be surprised to find that within your own family there are some of the most fascinating and beautiful love stories. I know I was.

One that has always touched me was that of my grandfather, who at age 80, found love for a second time. Except there was an

interesting twist to the story. The girl he married was also 80, and she was a teenage sweetheart he had loved and lost many years before.

My grandfather had come to Canada at the age of 12 during World War I, and never returned to England, learning to fend for himself in this country. As a teenager he lived largely on his own, working and going to school, where he met "Pearl". Although he had a crush on Pearl, she already had a boyfriend. Life soon dictated a different path for my grandfather and he came to Western Canada, met my grandmother, married and raised a family. Pearl stayed in Ontario, and also married and raised a family.

My grandparents had the good fortune to be able to travel extensively after they retired, and on one of their trips to Ontario, re-connected with Pearl. A few years later, my grandmother passed away, and as Pearl had lost her husband about the same time, she and my grandfather began to correspond and visit. Soon we received an invitation to their wedding. At a reception for them one of my aunts expressed feeling a bit odd about the whole thing as my grandmother had not been dead for a year, but then she put it into perspective -- how many people get a second chance at love when they are 80?

My grandfather and Pearl enjoyed almost ten years together, travelling and spending time with family on both sides of Canada. I came to know and love Pearl as well, and it was wonderful to see my grandfather happy and busy, enjoying himself, and as he approached 90 years old, it was wonderful to see that he was not alone. Sadly, Pearl's health began to deteriorate, and finally my grandfather reluctantly took her home to her family in Ontario. She lived out her final years out in a nursing home, no longer able to recognize my grandfather or remember any of their time together. He, on the other hand, is getting set to celebrate his 100th birthday next month! But he is alone, and although family comes to visit (not often enough!), it's not the same thing as having a companion.

Perhaps this is what drew me to another love story. This one came from Donna Hanover, author of a book entitled, "My Boyfriend's Back." Hanover, wife of former New York mayor Rudi Guiliani, experienced a very public and painful divorce when her husband admitted to an affair. Soon after, Hanover was surprised when an old friend, Ed Oster, looked her up. They had been sweethearts at Stanford University some 30 years previously, and after reading about her divorce, Oster, by now



also divorced, decided to look her up. The romance was rekindled. Hanover, an accomplished actor, writer and television host, and Oster, an attorney, found love the second time around.

Hanover used her own story as the basis for the book, but it contains many similar rekindled-romance stories. Her website, [www.myboyfriendsback.com](http://www.myboyfriendsback.com), has collected stories from more than 600 couples who have found love again with a childhood flame, including several other well-known actors and writers.

Hanover suggests that lost loves that come back may even be the best ones, since old high school sweethearts "see behind the wrinkles and wattles," remembering "who we were, not what we have become" (Haas, 2005). She points out that our identities are being developed during adolescence and young adulthood, and after going through this developmental process together, a very special bond is formed. Those of us studying social learning and life development theories may see some validity in this notion -- certain events that happen during key developmental points in our lives do affect us in profound and enduring ways.

After reading this, I found myself thinking about my past "loves," wondering whether I would ever want to entertain a renewal of one of my younger romantic relationships. I'm not sure I would -- but I certainly wouldn't mind meeting up with a few of the guys I knew back then -- mostly out of curiosity about where they are now and what they have become in life. Websites like [classmates.com](http://classmates.com) are becoming very popular, and I confess that I occasionally check out those from my high school years.

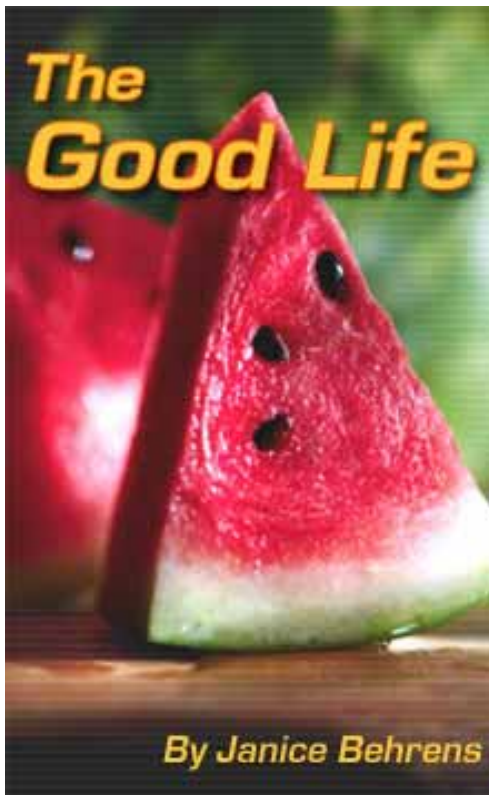
Unfortunately, even if I were so inclined, I doubt I'd have much success trying to connect with an old flame, and I don't have Hanover's kind of high profile story that might motivate one to look me up. Of those whose whereabouts I'm aware of -- almost all are happily married family men. There's only a few who I'd want to look up. One in particular was my best friend, someone I loved dearly and had a very special relationship with between the ages of 16 to 19. We were never sweethearts but I think we could have been. Yes, I would have loved to look him up. Sadly, he died of a brain tumour a few years ago, leaving behind a lovely wife and several beautiful children.

There was another good friend; both his mother and mine wanted us to marry, but the spark just wasn't there. I'd be inclined to look him up, in fact I had occasion to about ten years ago. But he's happily married and seems likely to stay that way. Other than that, I can't think of anyone I knew back in my younger days who might be a potential rekindled-romance.

The rekindled-romance with someone who knew your younger self is a lovely idea, but I doubt that it happens very often. I would think that it was something you only see in Hollywood movies -- except that it did happen to a beloved member of my own family. Hanover's romantic tale may seem like the stuff of fantasy, of romance novels. But who knows? It might happen to you one day!

Haas, J. (2005). Searching for love again in all the old places. *Edmonton Journal*, May 27, 2005.

Hanover, D. My Boyfriend's Back: True stories of rediscovering love with a long-lost sweetheart. <http://www.myboyfriendsback.com/>



## In Defense Of Boredom

It seems to me that there's considerable misunderstanding about what it means to be bored. In our fast-paced world, being bored is considered to be a very negative state, even an abnormal and unhealthy state. It's supposedly a state that exists when our external environment isn't stimulating enough to spark our interest and passion. Think for a moment about some of the *boredom-triggers* that we each experience: waiting at airports; performing simple, repetitive tasks such as peeling and chopping vegetables; and reading what we consider to be *dry* study materials for a course we are taking. Frequently, we find our jobs boring. We are bored by books and films that aren't sufficiently packed with action. A friend of mine who is a couples' counselor tells me that boredom is one of the most frequently cited reasons for tension and animosity within a relationship. We tend to believe that, once we have finished with whatever boring activity, external environment, or person that we find ourselves temporarily saddled with, we will once again become interested and engaged in the world around us.

We are so used to thinking that once this or that has changed, then everything will be better. "When I finally have a job with more variety and responsibility, it will be so much easier for me to get up and go to work." "If I only had someone to share my life with, my

weekends wouldn't be so dull." "If my spouse only had a bit more zest for life, then I wouldn't be feeling so unfulfilled." What if we have it backwards, though? What if boredom has nothing to do with the external world? What if it's something that we carry around with us -- a mood or feeling, just like anger, resentment or joy?

Merriam Webster's Collegiate Dictionary (10th Indx edition (1998)) defines boredom as "the state of being weary and restless through lack of interest." The key words in this definition are "lack of interest." Whose interest is it that is lacking? Clearly it's our own. With apologies to Shakespeare for paraphrasing Hamlet, there is nothing good or bad in this life except in the way that we choose to think about things. The same goes for what is boring or exciting. If we are bored by the prospect of waiting for several hours in a ferry line-up, the responsibility for that lack of interest falls squarely on our own shoulders. The people and things that can change our lives for the better are all around us, everywhere, all the time. The world is full of miracles, if we choose to see them.

Having said that, though, boredom is an inescapable part of the human experience. It is simply one of the emotional states that make us who we are and I imagine it is a very rare person who doesn't feel bored on a fairly frequent basis.

All the more reason, then, to understand that there is something truly wrong with the assumption that boredom is a negative feeling, something that must be avoided at all costs by turning on a television set, picking up a newspaper, playing a video game, drinking alcohol, or having an affair.

What we really need to do is change the way we perceive boredom. Consider, for instance, that we are rarely bored in situations where we are feeling threatened or in danger. Boredom, then, is an emotional signal that we are at least temporarily safe and relatively comfortable. Perhaps, what we are saying when we complain that our partners are boring is that we trust them and feel at ease around them. One way to see boredom is as a time of mental stillness, a place of calm at the stormy centre of our complex existence. It's a state of mind in which our imaginations are released from the bombardment of novel stimuli. We are therefore free to wander, recharge, and perhaps receive new ideas and inspirations that will eventually lead us to states of heightened passion and engagement. Occasional boredom, then, is one of the elements vital for a life well lived. Perpetual boredom, on the other hand, is almost certainly a sign that we need to drastically revise the way we see the world.



#### Positive Changes in New Brunswick

The Student Finance System in New Brunswick is seeing some positive changes. Starting August 1, New Brunswick will have reduced the amount that parents are expected to contribute, increased the amount of funding a student can receive per week, and allowed computer-related costs to be considered as part of the assessment for needs.

All of these changes will help New Brunswick students, and specifically the non-traditional AU students, receive adequate levels of funding. AU students already know that having a computer is basically a necessity. For post-secondary students from other institutions, a computer is nearly as important. It's nice to see one provincial government finally acknowledging this.

The increase in weekly living allowance means that a single student can look forward to living on \$520/month, which is \$30 more than they would receive on social assistance. It seems strange to me, though, that the government will pay you nearly as much not to be working as it will if you're struggling to improve yourself and have a better opportunity to be working later. If we really want to support education, doesn't it make more sense to at least give people the same quality of living, for free (not as a loan), as they'd receive if they were not working? Why is it that somebody actively working toward becoming more employable at a higher rate (and hence paying higher taxes to the government) has to repay their living allowance (plus tuition) and someone who isn't working receives living allowance and remains debt-free?

I'm not saying we should make social assistance into a loan program. I understand people needing a hand up once in a while, I've been there myself. But, if the provincial governments really want to support education, why not deduct what has been determined is a basic cost of living from the total debt the student has to pay back. If the student succeeds in their education, the government will very likely make that money back through taxes anyway.

#### Premiers go to a Meeting on Crystal Meth

Okay, so this story probably isn't that relevant to most AU students, but I just loved the headline.

The Western Premier's Meeting is June 10th, and Saskatchewan Premier Lorne Calvert has added a discussion on Crystal Meth to the agenda. Perhaps most interesting is that this drug has reached such a level in public consciousness as to warrant inclusion in the Western Premiers' Meeting. The goal is to develop a set of best practices aimed at prevention and treatment for users of the drug, while lobbying the federal government to increase penalties for crystal meth trafficking to be comparable to those for heroin and cocaine.

Let's hope they concentrate on the prevention and treatment options, since those stand the better chance of having a noticeable effect on the problem. Increased sentences simply mean more taxes devoted to keeping individual drug dealers in prison for longer.

#### Big Bucks for Post-Graduate Research

The Ontario Provincial Government is announcing a 1.8 billion dollar fund called the Ontario Research Fund that will be devoted to increasing research and the commercialization of research throughout Ontario. This money will be put into the fund over four years. The government is also taking steps to ensure the fund gets used (as if that would be a problem) by enabling over 14,000 more Ontarians to pursue graduate and post-graduate studies by the year 2009-2010.

Now what we need to see is something similar for undergraduate research opportunities, as these can be crucial to being accepted into graduate studies.

## COOL TOOLS

### Bitty Browser

<http://www.bitty.com/>



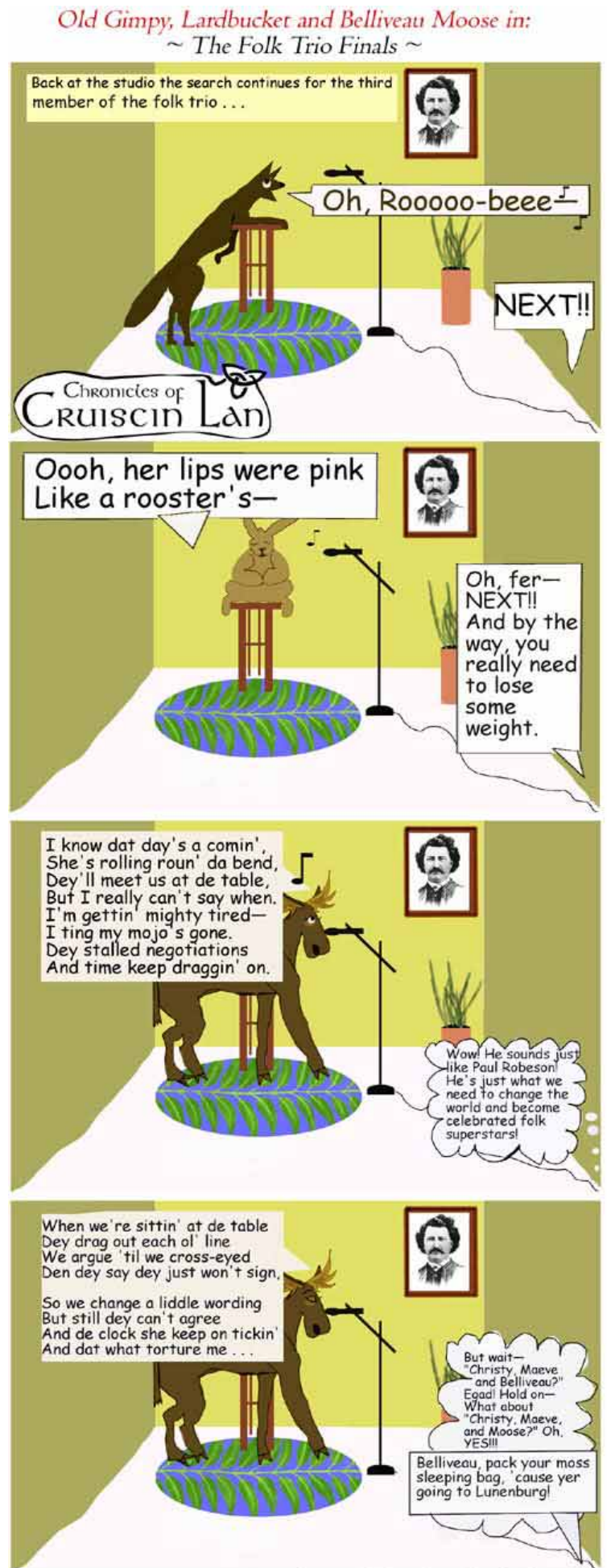
If you're a website creator, you know the trauma that can sometimes arise from arranging content, especially when there's a lot of it. There are tables, and frames, and other tricks you can use to arrange things, but sometimes you

want something a little different; perhaps you want to use an iframe, but you know they don't always work the same way for everyone. Cross-browser compatibility is still a big issue for even the most web savvy slinger of HTML.

If you want a little space to display some content, perhaps links to other sites, or website information, Bitty Browser may be the tool for you.

Bitty allows you to place a little web browser right into any website. This browser can contain anything you wish to put into it - pointers to other sites, RSS, links page, Flickr, podcasts, or a del.icio.us account, whatever your heart desires, and it works in Mozilla Firefox and Internet Explorer. You can use Bitty like you'd use any browser, links opening inside Bitty or in another window, and it even includes a Google search box. You can even have others display content from your site by using a Network Links style, to which others can sign up.

Bitty is customizable and simple to use, and involves very little knowledge of coding beyond knowing how to cut and paste. The Bitty website allows you to input the information you want the Bitty Browser to display, and generates the code for you. Simple!





*Dear Barb,*

*My fiancé and I are graduating from university this year. We have been studying really hard and reading only textbooks for years. This summer we have decided to rent a cottage at the lake for the month of July. While there, we would like to catch up on our reading. Can you recommend any books? We both have very expansive interests so I can't really say any specific type of books that we would like to read, although I tend to like a good mystery and my boyfriend enjoys adventure books. Thanks Barb, we'll be watching your column for your suggestions.*

*Bonita in Kelowna, B.C.*

Hi Bonita, thanks for writing. I know how you feel. Reading textbooks seems to deplete your love for reading. As a result, the last thing you want to do during your free time is to pick-up a book. Now that you have graduated (by the way, congratulations!), I have some suggestions that I hope will assist you and your fiancé in getting caught-up on your reading. Unfortunately, I can't say I have read any of these books, because I am still too consumed with reading textbooks to be able to afford the time to read for pleasure. Although, when I have the time the following books will be on my list.

*Shake Hands With The Devil: The Failure of Humanity in Rwanda* by Roméo Dallaire. Published by Random House, October 2004. Winner of the Governor General's Literary Award 2004 - Non Fiction. Definitely a worthwhile read. It is the unforgettable retelling of the genocide in Rwanda as told by Lt. Gen. Roméo Dallaire, the man who led the peacekeeping mission in 1993.

*A Complicated Kindness* by Miriam Toews. Published by Knopf Canada, April 2004. Winner of the Governor General's Literary Award 2004 - Fiction. A heartbreakingly sad and hilariously funny story of a young Mennonite girl's struggle to grow-up. A coming of age story of young Nomi, whose journey is further complicated as she tries to unravel the mystery of why her mother and sister went missing.

*Angels and Demons* by Dan Brown. Published by Pocket Star Books, June 2001. Fiction. A fast-paced mystery/adventure that has recently been compared to *The Da Vinci Code* written by the same author. In *Angels and Demons*, a famous symbologist Robert Langdon joins forces with a beautiful scientist; their mission is to try to save the Vatican from a time bomb.

No summer reading list is complete without the amazing *Harry Potter*. *Harry Potter and the Half-Blood Prince* by J.K. Rowling is scheduled for release on July 16, 2005.

This is the much-anticipated sixth book in the best-selling Harry Potter series. The story continues with Harry's sixth year at "Hogwart's School of Witchcraft and Wizardry" as the battle between good and evil persists. We'll have to wait for its release to learn more.

One more book that I feel would be a fun book to read is *Freakonomics: a Rogue Economist Explores the Hidden Side of Everything* by Steven Levitt and Stephen J. Dubner. Published by William Morrow, March 2005. Basically, the title explains what his book is about. Every question you can think of is included, for example "How much do parents really matter?" and "Which is more dangerous a gun or a swimming pool?"

This is a book I will definitely look-up whenever I get out of the textbook haze.

I hope I was able to help, Bonita. Let me know what you thought of the books.

# AUSU THIS MONTH



## AUSU Course Evaluations

Would you like to know what your fellow students have thought of an AU course? If so, you are not alone. Many students find the input of their peers invaluable when selecting courses or a program of study. AU students may not have cafeterias and hallways in which to share this knowledge, but AUSU has provided an alternative: AUSU Course and Program Evaluation surveys.

Accessible through the "Course Evaluations" link on the right side of the top bar of AUSU.org, these surveys ask a series of questions about AUSU courses and programs. Each student may rate each course or program only once, to ensure the validity of the results, so you must be logged in to access a survey form. Anyone, however, may view the results. If you haven't already, please rate some courses you have taken so that others may benefit from your experience. Note: these surveys are not the same as the ones that AU distributes with their course manuals. No AU staff or faculty member has access to the AUSU website, nor can they determine who has filled out a survey. Your anonymity is assured.

## AUSU Discussion Forums and Chat

Looking for a way to interact with fellow students? Check out the AUSU discussion forums and chatroom, accessible through the top menu bar of AUSU.org. The forums contain many sections to address a wide variety of student interests. You'll find the most students in the General Student Chat section, but you may also wish to use one of the province or city-specific forums to speak with AU students in your local area.

## The AUSU Office has Moved

The Edmonton Learning Centre, which not only houses a number of AU services such as invigilation rooms and student advisors, but also the corporate offices of AUSU and The Voice, has moved to a new location in downtown Edmonton. The phone numbers and email addresses at the ELC remain the same. Watch AUSU.org for some photos of our new office once we get everything unpacked! Our new mailing address is: Athabasca University Students' Union, Peace Hills Trust Tower, 1200, 10011 109 St., Edmonton, AB T5J 3S8

## AUSU Needs Volunteer Mentors

AUSU needs volunteer mentors to help new students adjust to AU and distance education. If you're an experienced AU student interested in being matched to a new student, please email [ausu@ausu.org](mailto:ausu@ausu.org) for an application form. The mentor program is designed to help new students succeed with distance learning. If you're a new student and would like to be matched to one of our mentors please fill out the application form at this address: <http://www.ausu.org/services/mentorsforms.php>



## What Makes Life Sweet: Fifty of the Ten Million Minor Delights (In No Special Order)

1. The taste of trout cooked in a frying pan outdoors.
2. Listening to Duke Ellington on a suitcase phonograph on the front porch.
3. Reading the sports section in the back of *Caffe Artigiano* while my daughter reads the Sunday comics section at seven o'clock in the morning when it's a balmy 22 degrees.
4. Reading Kurt Vonnegut in a hammock and laughing out loud.
5. Lawn sprinklers.
6. Spending half a morning in a used bookstore.
7. Breyer's All Natural Vanilla™ ice cream.
10. The sweat you get from a dish of good curry on a hot night.
11. Eggs Benedict with hash browns and Tabasco sauce.
12. Riding a motorcycle through the Kootenays.
13. The taste of peaches and blue cheese on a midnight picnic when the moon is nearly full.
14. The way smoke rises from an island in the middle of the lake, while the canoe paddle cuts through the still water.
15. Duck hunting on a Saskatchewan slough.
16. Helping a seven-year tomboy build a backyard tree house.
17. The sound of singing whales off the coast of Quebec.
18. Reading ghost stories in a rented cabin when the wind is high in the trees.
19. Walking through the lobby of an art deco building.
20. Watching a Buster Keaton film with somebody who's never seen one before.
21. Snowmobiling across an open field.
22. Planning a trip to Venice.
23. Finding a box of Japanese comic books at a garage sale.
24. Driving a borrowed Mini Cooper out to Horseshoe Bay for fish and chips wrapped in newspaper.
25. My sister-in-law Jacquie's homemade salsa.
26. The smell of snuffed-out candles.
27. Pear with other windfall fruit the day after a storm.
28. Finding that quirky video store where they have a whole section devoted to the films of Robert Lepage.
29. Unexpected invitations.
30. Line dancing at an East Indian wedding.
31. The smell of burnt matches and Christmas cigars.
32. Sex in the morning.
33. The taste of tarragon in gravy.
34. Those rare occasions when it somehow seems okay to drink beer at breakfast.
35. Half-price tickets to the Fringe Festival.
36. Reading Dr. Seuss out loud to a room full of grade two students.
37. Watching a friend perform on amateur night at a comedy club.
38. Going for donuts after a game of five-pin bowling.
39. Exchanging stories about UFO sightings.
40. The smell of fried onions at the fair.
41. Jumping naked from a railway bridge.
42. Being in the presence of a gathering of thousands of crows.
43. Scuba-diving off the coast of Salt Spring Island.
44. The cocky feeling of accomplishment from accidentally fixing a lawn mower.
45. Doing a couple loads of colours and watching a Sunday afternoon blues jam at the *Wash N' Slosh* in Saskatoon.
46. Listening to Carlos Santana and eating grilled eggplant sandwiches on San Francisco sourdough.
47. Having tigers wander through your dreams.
48. Hot air balloons passing overhead.
49. The way friends sometimes get pregnant when they finally stop trying.
50. The way nothing happens quite the way you expect.

This column focuses on a wide range of issues affecting post-secondary students. Students are encouraged to submit suggestions and educational topics they are concerned about, or personal experiences with courses or university situations they feel other students should know about. If suggest a topic or a course alert for taking notes, contact [voice@ausu.org](mailto:voice@ausu.org), attn: Debbie Jabbour



## FOREIGN STUDENTS AND ACADEMIC CULTURE *Debbie Jabbour*

Edmonton's NorQuest College is now offering a five-month class for international students. The program teaches the academic culture of Canadian universities and colleges. The program was created after NorQuest researchers tracked international students transferring into other programs and other colleges. The researchers discovered that, although these students had good academic and language skills, they had difficulties adjusting because they did not understand the subtleties of the Canadian academic culture.

International students are often from countries such as China and Belarus. Many of the students are foreign-trained engineers, teachers, nurses, biochemists and doctors who are seeking the necessary post-secondary training to practice in Canada. The NorQuest College program teaches some of the unspoken academic rules, like "how to work in groups without pointing fingers at the slackers or taking credit for certain key components" (Sinnema, 2005). In some countries, students are not accustomed to taking notes and the concepts of group work, class presentations and expressing one's own opinion, may be unacceptable in a university culture that values memorization without question. According to the course instructors, some academic cultures even sanction copying text from the Internet verbatim without proper citations, considering this a good sign of research (Ibid.), rather than plagiarism.

With increasing globalization of education, all universities are facing challenges in helping students adapt to our academic culture. Courses such as NorQuest College's program, if designed with cultural sensitivity, can go a long way towards promoting the success of foreign students.

### References

Sinnema, J. (2005, May 20). Foreign students learn academic culture. *Edmonton Journal*. Retrieved on May 23, 2005, from [http://www.canada.com/edmonton/edmontonjournal/news/cityplus\\_alberta/story.html?id=d62bc30f-6d0e-473d-82a8-d503ed5a35a3](http://www.canada.com/edmonton/edmontonjournal/news/cityplus_alberta/story.html?id=d62bc30f-6d0e-473d-82a8-d503ed5a35a3)  
Norquest College (2005). International Programs [web site]. Retrieved on May 23, 2005, from <http://www.international.norquest.ca>

## **Women You Should Know**

### ***Anne Boleyn, (approx. 1500–May 19, 1536)***

**Anne Boleyn** was born in England, but grew up in France and returned to England in 1522. At that time, Henry VIII was the King of England. He was an intriguing character whose main interests included eating, gambling and women, though he was married. He met Anne Boleyn when she was a mere 23 years old. However, she was not willing to be used by King Henry, as her sister Mary had been when she was the King's mistress. As a result, Henry sought an annulment from his marriage to marry Anne in 1533. Shortly thereafter, Anne became pregnant with King Henry's child. A discreet wedding followed and Anne became Queen of England in 1533. However, Henry continued to be unfaithful to Anne as he had been to his first wife. Serious problems arose when Anne's first child was a daughter and Henry desperately wanted a son. After three miscarriages, Anne was only able to produce a stillborn male. Consequently, Henry turned to one of his maids. Realizing he would have to free himself from Anne to marry again, King Henry planned to have Anne executed on the grounds of adultery, incest and practicing witchcraft. Although the charges were false, Anne was found guilty and imprisoned. Unfortunately, despite Anne Boleyn's protests of innocence, in 1536 she was beheaded under orders from her husband. Anne's daughter, Elizabeth, was three and a half when her mother was executed. Elizabeth would later become arguably the greatest queen of England.

### **Sources for additional information**

Anne Boleyn [web site]. Retrieved May 30, 2005, from <http://englishhistory.net/tudor/monarchs/boleyn.html>.  
Eakins, L.E. (1995). Anne Boleyn: The Most Happy. Retrieved May 30, 2005, from <http://tudorhistory.org/boleyn/>.



## Extreme Weather



From  
Where  
I Sit

Hazel Anaka

On Sunday, Roy and I were outside trying to do some catch-up on the mowing and yard work that had stalled during a week of rain. It was Roy who first noticed the menacing funnel cloud forming to the south-east. We couldn't quite believe our eyes.

I now have a better understanding of the so-called *storm chasers* -- those crazy souls who risk life and limb to study tornadoes up close. Since the killer Edmonton tornado of 1987 and the more recent Pine Lake disaster, each season the media drums warnings and safety precautions into us. Intellectually, we understand the dangers. Yet there's something mesmerizing about this phenomenon: the power, the fury, the sound, the spectacle, and the inherent danger. We watched it roll and lift, twist and turn. We heard it roar like a jet plane. It seemed very close. Of course, we had no idea how quickly it could overtake us if things got ugly. As I ran to the basement to take shelter, Roy ran for the camera.

I was annoyed at him. There's a widow-maker in the offing and he's snapping pictures. I was too cowardly to stay and watch. I couldn't have stood the embarrassment of dying in a preventable incident. I can hear the talk at the funeral now, "I always thought she was smarter than that. Everyone knows you go into the basement. No one in her right mind watches it approach. What could she have been thinking? I guess it's true, when your time comes..."

I did watch the devastating hail and heavy rainfall that accompanied the funnel cloud. Roy parked the car and newest pickup under the protective cover of a lean-to roof. The first few hailstones sounded like gunshots as one-by-one they bounced off the grain bins and the metal roof on our house and garage. As the storm worsened, the hail began accumulating in the eavestroughs, in drifts along the patio, flowerbeds

and walkways. It's only later that I noticed that my two small garden beds look like a salad and that the leaves of trees and flowers had been pulverized and shredded. The masonite siding on the house and garage took a beating. Now that the surface has been damaged, the integrity of the product is in question. Wet masonite can't be a good thing.

Before long, Roy started checking the adjacent fields of canola and wheat for damage. In one canola field, the blossoms are gone and the leaves stripped off. The wheat (which is heading out) is bent or broken. Thank God for hail insurance! So between hail and crop insurance and our homeowners' policy, we now play the insurance game of claims, waiting periods, adjusters, deductibles and hopefully settlement.

The touch-down occurred about a mile away. That's close enough for me, thank you! I guess if the photos turn out we'll have a lasting reminder of a near miss. A good thing for the family coward, from where I sit.

*\*Reprinted with permission*



## Searching for Internships

**Lonita Fraser**

### PEARSON PEACEKEEPING CENTRE INTERNSHIP PROGRAM

PO Box 100, Clementsport, Nova Scotia B0S1E0

phone: (902) 638-8611 - fax: (902) 638-3315

**Dates:** all year

**Internship types:** Economics, History, Humanities, International Relations, Library & Info Science, Political Science/Politics and Social Sciences

**Qualifications / skills needed:** Interns must have a university degree (example BA/MA International Relations). Interns will be assigned to assist in various departments and will be exposed to an international network. Peacekeeping and peace operations is a major focus of this internship. Interns are given responsibilities designed to assist other staff in its major departments: Operations, which consists of a Course Development and Training Section, Exercises, Program Implementation, and Research and the Library.

**Description:** The Internship Programme is intended to provide university students and recent graduates, who have an interest in peacekeeping, peace operations and international affairs, with work experience and greater exposure to the activities of the Centre. The Internship is a volunteer position with an honorarium of CDN\$300 per month, and a one-time travel reimbursement valued up to CDN\$300. Internships may be requested and granted for periods lasting from four to eight months. While at the Centre, Interns receive on-site meals and accommodation at no additional cost.

**Highlights:** Interns have a great opportunity to interact with a diversity of people living and working in the field of peace operations around the world, including civilian and military researchers, trainers and practitioners. While every effort will be made to accommodate a candidate's background, specific tasking is based on Pearson Peacekeeping Centre requirements, related skills and mutual interest. Interns are also expected to provide assistance in the areas of general administration and library support.

**Languages required:** English, French and Spanish

**Joan B. Kroc Institute for Peace & Justice (IPJ)**  
Southern California - San Diego, CA, United States  
University of San Diego

Fall 2005 Intern

Research, write, edit, & publish weekly updates on conflicts around the world. Assist with the development of IPJ projects & events.

**Requirements**

\* Enrollment, with senior status, in an undergraduate program; or enrollment in a graduate program; or a recent degree in a field related to peace studies, human rights, or international relations.

\* GPA of 2.75 or higher.

\* Excellent writing skills.

\* Minimum time commitment of 15 hours per week, up to 20 preferred.

**To Apply**

Visit the "Programs" / "Internship Opportunities" on our website at <http://peace.sandiego.edu> to download an application form and view other requirements. We invite applications from international students who have all the needed visa arrangements in place. If you have additional questions, please contact Elena McCollim at (619) 260-7573 or [emccollim@sandiego.edu](mailto:emccollim@sandiego.edu).

# SCHOLARSHIPS & AWARDS

*Contributed by Zil-E-Huma Lodhi*

## Business, Sciences and General Education Program

Application Deadline: June 1

For Canadian residents who are First Nation status or non-status, Métis or Inuit Enrolled in Canadian university, technical college or CEGEP in program of no less than two years in business, science, law, engineering, information technology, technical studies, education, social work and social sciences Based on academic merit, financial need and applicants' demonstrated interest and commitment to their education

Contact: National Aboriginal Achievement Foundation (NAAF) / Fondation nationale des réalisations autochtones (NAAF)

Web Site: [www.naaf.ca/financia.html](http://www.naaf.ca/financia.html)

## Canadian Marketing Association (CMA) Student RSVP Awards

Value: \$500, CMA membership, Strategy Magazine profile and subscription

Application Deadline: Varies

Must be attending any Canadian college or university in business, marketing, commerce, advertising or design. Must not be currently employed in a marketing-related position. Must submit marketing or creative campaign based on selected case study. Applicant must be coached by professor / instructor.

Deadlines are June 9, June 30 and July 21

Entrance fees vary depending on time submission

For further information please visit the website posted below

Contact: Canadian Marketing Association (CMA)

Web Site: [www.the-cma.org/awards/welcome.html](http://www.the-cma.org/awards/welcome.html)

## Michael Luchkovich Scholarships for Career Development

Administrator: Alberta Scholarship Programs

Award Amount: \$2,000.00

Must have been working full-time in Alberta for a minimum of three years. Program of study may be up to six months of full-time study or up to one year of part-time study. Deadlines are December 1st, April 1st and August 1st.

Contact: Alberta Scholarship Program

9940 - 106 Street, 9th Floor, P.O. Box 28000, Station Main, Edmonton, Alberta T5J 4R4

Phone: (780) 427-8640

Fax: (780) 422-4516

Web Site: <http://www.alberta-learning.ab.ca/scholarships>

E-mail: [heritage@gov.ab.ca](mailto:heritage@gov.ab.ca)

Application Address: <http://www.alis.gov.ab.ca/scholarships/forms.asp>



#### **4th World Conference on Breast Cancer**

June 8, 2005 - June 12, 2005 - Halifax, Nova Scotia  
<http://www.worldbreastcancerconf.ca>

#### **ScArt4: Science and Art 4th International Symposium**

June 9, 2005 - June 12, 2005

New Brunswick, NJ, USA

<http://mechanical.rutgers.edu/scart4/>

#### **The 2005 Society for Arts In Healthcare Conference - No Borders: pARTners in HEALTHcare**

June 22, 2005 - June 25, 2005

Edmonton, Alberta

<http://www.thesah.org/annual>

#### **26th Annual International Wetlands Meeting**

June 5, 2005 - June 10, 2005

Charleston, NC, USA

<http://www.sws.org/charleston2005/>

#### **Geology for Non-Geologists - Calgary**

June 6, 2005 - June 9, 2005

Calgary, Alberta

<http://www.peice.com/eventdetails.aspx?event=101746&ref=Allconferences&frfi=16734>

#### **Nano 2005 Conference**

June 7, 2005 - June 8, 2005

Santa Clara, CA, USA

<http://www.techbriefs.com/nano>

#### **e-Gov Forum & Expo, June 9 & 10, 2005**

June 9, 2005 - June 10, 2005 - Ottawa, Ontario

<http://e-gov.wowgao.com>

#### **The 4th Annual Hawaii International Conference on Social Sciences**

June 13, 2005 - June 16, 2005 - Honolulu, Hawaii, USA

<http://www.hicsocial.org>

#### **8th International Conference on Drug-Drug Interactions**

June 13, 2005 - June 17, 2005 - Seattle, WA, USA

<http://www.isciencex.com/events.htm>

#### **Universal Village: Livable Communities in the 21st Century**

June 15, 2005 - Washington, DC, USA

<http://www.aarp.org/livable>

#### **2005 Hawaii International Conference on Sciences**

June 18, 2005 - June 20, 2005 - Honolulu

<http://www.hicsciences.org>

#### **2005 International Business & Management Research Conference, Hawaii**

June 1, 2005 - June 4, 2005 - Hilton Hawaiian Village

Beach Resort & Spa, Waikiki, Hawaii, USA

<http://www.jaabc.com>

#### **1st International Conference on Female Sexual Health & Dysfunction**

June 2, 2005 - June 4, 2005 - Rancho Mirage, CA, USA

<http://www.fsdconference.com>

#### **2nd Annual Cosmeceuticals Forum**

June 2, 2005 - June 3, 2005 - New York, NY, USA

<http://www.srinstitute.com/CG123>

#### **Breast Cancer Management**

June 5, 2005 - June 12, 2005 - Cruise sails from Vancouver, BC

<http://www.continuingeducation.net>

#### **Internal Medicine: Diabetes**

June 5, 2005 - June 12, 2005 - Cruise sails from New York, NY, USA

<http://www.continuingeducation.net>

#### **Houston Home and Garden Show**

June 4, 2005 - June 6, 2005 - Houston

<http://www.exposwest.com>

#### **Cultures of eBay**

August 24, 2005 - August 25, 2005 - Colchester, England

<http://www.essex.ac.uk/chimera/culturesofebay.html>

#### **International Family Nursing Conference**

1 to 4 June 2005 - Victoria, BC, Canada

[www.venuewest.com](http://www.venuewest.com)

#### **Social Workers: Challenging Systems, Leading Change**

9 to 11 June 2005 - Ottawa, Ontario, Canada

<http://www.oasw.org/ENG/conference.htm>

**Canadian Science Writers' Assoc. 34th Annual Conference**

18 to 21 June 2005 - Jasper, Alberta, Canada  
<http://www.sciencewriters.ca/>

**Thirteenth Berkshire Conference on the History of Women**

2 June 2005 - Claremont, California, United States  
<http://www.berksconference.org>

**Distance Education Administration Conference**

5 June 2005 - Jekyll Island, Georgia, United States  
<http://www.westga.edu/~distance/dla2005.html>

**Words and the World: How Words Capture Human Experience**

6 to 7 June 2005 - Bethlehem, Pennsylvania, United States  
<http://www.lehigh.edu/~inwords/index.htm>

**18th Annual Forensic Anthropology Conference**

6 to 10 June 2005 - Ashburn, Virginia, United States  
<http://www.afip.org/Departments/edu/upcoming.htm>

**Advertising Law**

6 June 2005 - Chicago, United States  
<http://www.AmericanConference.com>

**Dancing from the Center: Annual Conference of the Society of Dance History Scholars**

9 to 12 June 2005 - Chicago, IL, United States  
<http://www.sdhs.org/c2005.htm>

**Writer's Weekend**

9 to 12 June 2005 - Seattle, WA, United States  
<http://www.WritersWeekend.com>

**Earth and Religion**

9 to 12 June 2005 - Annandale on Hudson, New York, New York, United States  
<http://www.earthandeligion.com>

**Society for Philosophy and Psychology**

9 to 12 June 2005 - Winston-Salem, North Carolina, United States  
<http://www.hfac.uh.edu/cogsci/spp/wwwanlmt.htm>

**Murder In The Grove**

10 to 11 June 2005 - Boise, Idaho, United States  
<http://www.murderinthegrove.com>

**Histories of Print, Manuscript, and Performance in America**

10 to 12 June 2005 - Worcester, Massachusetts, United States  
<http://www.americanantiquarian.org/PHBACcall.htm>

**5th Annual Country Schoolhouse Conference**

20 to 22 June 2005 - Barbourville, Kentucky, United States  
<http://public.unionky.edu/countryschoolconference>

**Sexual Rights and Moral Panics**

21 to 24 June 2005 - San Francisco, California, United States  
<http://iasscs.sfsu.edu>

**Society for Historians of American Foreign Relations Conference**

22 June 2005 - College Park, Maryland, United States  
<http://www.shafr.org/cfp.htm>

**10th International D.H. Lawrence Conference**

26 June 2005 - Santa Fe, New Mexico, United States  
<http://www.wsu.edu/~hydev/dhl/dhlsna.htm>

**Contributed By AU's *The Insider***

- **iCORE (Informatics Circle of Research Excellence) Summit - Aug. 2005 -Banff.**  
The second annual iCORE Banff Informatics Summit will bring together leading information and communications technology (ICT) researchers for three days. The field of informatics encompasses computer science, electrical and computer engineering, physics and mathematics. (403) 210-5335.  
<http://www.icore.ca/>.
- **Sheldon Chumir Foundation for Ethics in Leadership Symposium - Oct. or Nov. 2005, Calgary.**  
The Chumir Foundation promotes an active, involved citizenry and principled leadership. (403) 244-6666. <http://www.chumirethicsfoundation.ca/>.

**Know of a conference that is not on this list? Contact [voice@ausu.org](mailto:voice@ausu.org) with the details and we'll list it in Conference Connections.**

# classifieds

Classifieds are free for AU students! Contact [voice@ausu.org](mailto:voice@ausu.org) for more information.

**AU SPORTS CLUB SEEKS NEW EXECUTIVE** The AU Sports Club is looking for AU students who are interested in serving on the AUSC executive. All that is required is a few hours a week to respond to emails, add new members to the discussion forum, and locate information to update the website or forum sections. Being on a club executive is a great way to meet other AU students!

## THE VOICE

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