

THE VOICE MAGAZINE

January 6, 2005

Volume 14 Issue 1

The Best of 2005



In Dependent Times

Life on your own

"I am Canadian"

Corporate consumption of our Canadian identity

Accreditation Pays Off

AU achievement opens doors for students

BEST OF THE VOICE 2005

Jan 6, 2006

Volume 14, Issue 1

Welcome To the Voice PDF

The Voice has an interactive table of contents. Click on a story title or author name to jump to an article. Click the bottom-right corner of any page to return to the contents. Some ads and graphics are also links.

MEMORABLE ARTICLES FROM THE BACK ISSUES

IN DEPENDENT TIMES <i>Originally published January 26</i>	Sara Kinninmont
LAMENTING THE LOSS OF "I AM CANADIAN" <i>Originally published April 6</i>	Lonita Fraser
PUB NIGHT WITH JACK LAYTON <i>Originally published April 27</i>	Mandy Gardner
HIS SHIRT AND TIE <i>Originally published January 19</i>	Carole E. Trainor
FROM MY PERSPECTIVE - LIVING DEATH <i>Originally published April 6</i>	Debbie Jabbour
THE PSYCHOLOGICAL BATTLE AGAINST FAT <i>Originally published February 18</i>	Shannon Maguire
WHY YOU CAN BE THANKFUL FOR STUDENT DEBT <i>Originally published October 7</i>	Sandra Livingston
TAKING NOTES: PHD GRADS PLAN TO LEAVE CANADA <i>Originally published July 13</i>	Debbie Jabbour
CHRONICLES OF CRUISCIN LAN <i>THIS ONE'S BRAND NEW!</i>	Wanda Waterman St. Louis
DEAR BARB - Accepting future in-laws <i>Originally published June 15</i>	Barbara Godin
MSCHE - ACCREDITATION PAYS OFF <i>Originally published October 28</i>	Brian Pinto
COURSE EXAM: SOCI 378 <i>Originally published June 29</i>	Katie Patrick
DOWNFALL (Der Untergang): FILM REVIEW <i>Originally published May 4</i>	John Buhler
RETIREMENT AND THE TELECOMMUTER <i>Originally published July 29</i>	Rebecca Brewer
TURNING THE PAGES - AN ANTHROPOLOGIST ON MARS <i>Originally published October 7</i>	Elizabeth Cousar
NATURE NOTES - FINDING THE LOCAL GREEN <i>Originally published August 5</i>	Zoe Dalton
FROM WHERE I SIT - REST IN PEACE <i>Originally published May 25</i>	Hazel Anaka
STUDENT MOMS <i>Originally published September 30</i>	Pam Pelmous



We love to hear from you! Send your questions and comments to voice@ausu.org, and please indicate if we may publish your letter.

The Voice is always delighted to hear from readers about what concerns you, what moves you, and what you would like to read about in The Voice. Following are a number letters from the past year focusing on the pinnacle event for AU students -- the annual June convocation ceremonies in Athabasca, Alberta.

Dear Editor:

Well, I finally finished my coursework. It was official, I could graduate. I was so tired of those dreaded three-hour exams, research papers, all of that reading. Then Dianne at AU called, asking if I would attend the convocation ceremonies. Gosh, I was so tired of school. I thought that finishing was reward enough. Why go to the convocation? After all, I didn't actually know anybody. I'd be graduating with strangers. I'd have to travel from BC to Alberta. I'd never been to Athabasca – it seemed a bit far away. Would my family travel that far? And besides, it's that degree, that piece of paper, that matters most, right? So, why bother?

I told Dianne I'd consider attending, but wasn't likely to, but a few hours later I got a phone call from my dad. Mom was very sick, and it would take some time and a lot of tests to find out what was wrong. Clearly, our family needed a ray of hope, something to look forward to. That call frightened me, but forced me to rearrange my priorities. So, I made a few calls. Mom said she would see me graduate if she had to be wheeled in on a stretcher, and my brother was more than willing to take time off of work. Next thing I knew, we were going to the convocation!

I learned how terribly wrong I was, and how important convocation is. There are no strangers at AU. Everywhere I went, I was warmly welcomed. The staff and volunteers were so down-to-earth and friendly, I felt right at home. I met my fellow graduates, and we had a great time chatting while lined up for the ceremony. The town of Athabasca is lovely, and definitely worth the visit. The floral displays and the grounds at the university were beautiful. I could tell that the town and the university worked very hard to make my day special, and they succeeded. The ceremony was beautiful--better than I could have imagined. I guess I'd been so wrapped up in finishing my courses and establishing my new career that I hadn't realized the importance of taking the time to celebrate. When that memorable day was over, I realized I'd gained enormous pride in my alma mater and I felt so grateful for everyone's work over the years. Perhaps most importantly, I gained pride in myself... (continued)

THE VOICE

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(continued) I realize that doling out unwanted advice is a risky venture, but I have a little message to all AU students: attend your grad. Even if you're busy, a bit shy, even or really don't want to travel--even if you don't think it matters. No matter what is happening in your life, set the time aside and go. Celebrate your accomplishment, and share it with your school and your fellow graduates. I can promise that you won't be sorry :)

Janine Menard, BA (!!!!!!!)

My daughter-in-law, Sheryl Britton, got her M.B.A. from Athabasca University on June 11th. I just want to say how much we enjoyed the weekend that was planned for us. All of the effort and programmes were so well done that, we did not have to worry about a thing.

We came from Ontario for the convocation and are we ever glad we did.

Thank you very much for a wonderful time.

**Yours Sincerely
Mrs. Ellen Britton**

Thank you again for publishing the articles on convocation. After reading it makes me want to attend more upon my own graduation.

I found it interesting when Debbie Jabbour talked about bringing Athabasca home to Athabasca, and that this might have had an effect on Athabasca's ability to compete in the global marketplace. When I originally investigated attending AU, the fact that it was in such a remote location actually enticed me to attend.(I live in Ontario) I figured if these people are in such a remote location then they're going to have a better sense of distance education. Had it been in Calgary or Edmonton my thoughts would have been it's just another University.

Arthur Setka

It was awesome -- I was there too!

I was one of the Nursing program graduates. This was the best experience...better than high school(from what I remember).

I, too, am a mature student and loved the flexibility with the programs and class schedules that were offered. I am now looking to continue my studies.

Marianne deRyber

EDITORIAL PAGES

At one time, the Voice featured an editorial in each issue. Unfortunately as the paper and AUSU have grown, I've been unable to find the time to write a new column each week. I try, however, to keep my hand in and write articles when important information for AU students becomes available. The following article detailing the very complicated Alberta tuition relief program (complicated for Athabasca University, that is), is one such article. It was published on February 23rd.

AU 2005/06 Tuition and Budget

As promised by Ralph Klein in February's televised Fireside Chat, the tuition of Alberta students will not rise one cent for the 2005/06 school year. This is a simple proposition for students at the other three Alberta universities, but here at AU, things need a little more explaining.

First, as people keep repeating, because it is such an important distinction, this is not a tuition freeze. In a freeze, the universities are not permitted to raise tuition for a set period of time, but in this case, the universities can and will raise tuition according to their proposed budgets for 2005/06. However, the government will subsidize Alberta students for any increase above the 2004/05 rate. While this may appear to be a freeze to Alberta students who take courses next year, it's important to remember that tuition will increase, even if we do not have to pay it. The subsidy program is only slated to last for one year, and at the end of that year the invisible increase will take effect, and most likely another increase will be added for the 2006/07 year. So if AU increases tuition by 7% in both 05/06 and 06/07, this will appear to be a 14% increase for Alberta students in the latter year. In both years, AU will receive their full tuition amount, but in 05/06 it will come from two different sources.

This program, called the Centennial Grant, might seem odd to those outside Alberta, but for those in the province, it's familiar terrain. We already receive rebates on our very high gas and electricity bills. This controversial program has allowed the utility companies to raise their rates beyond what the market will bear, while consumers are protected from devastating increases by government contributions. Alberta is accustomed to this model, so it's no surprise that Klein has used a similar tactic here, though it's not clear why he did not simply increase funding to the universities to offset tuition increases.

The bad news for students outside Alberta is that this program applies only to Alberta students as it is a government rebate specifically for the taxpayers of Alberta using Albertan tax dollars in our Heritage Fund. The good news is that AU has quickly revised their budget plan, which had already included another \$10 reduction of the out-of-province fee, to further decrease that fee by \$18.

Alberta Students: Tuition will increase, invisibly, while the course materials fee increase will still be payable. The tuition portion of the increase is covered by the Alberta rebate as it is under the tuition fee policy, but the course materials fee increase is not covered. Therefore Alberta students will pay a very small increase over last year's course fee, but the actual course fee will increase by 6-7% (number not yet confirmed) and this increase will come into effect at the end of 2005.

Canadian Students Outside Alberta: Tuition and fees will increase by the same amount as for Alberta students, while the out of province fee will decrease by \$28 to a proposed \$27. This reduction will almost entirely offset the tuition increase, and this reduction is permanent. Therefore the actual increase for out of province students will be very low - about 1-2% (exact figures to come).

Students Outside Canada: Data not yet available.

Fee changes for all students: the extension fee will also increase, but most other fees, such as exam requests and transcripts, remain the same. All fee changes will take effect on September 1, 2005. The Alberta subsidy will expire by the end of August 31, 2006 and all increases will come in to effect for Albertans as the 2006/07 budget is also released.

How will the subsidy work?

AU has several months to determine exactly how the subsidy will work, but the plan is that Alberta students will not be paying any additional fees up front. The form will state the actual cost of tuition for the 2005/06 school year, and then Alberta students will be able to select a rebate option prior to paying. AU will then bill the government for that portion of tuition. In this way the actual cost of tuition will be made clear to students, but Alberta students will not have to pay the subsidized amount up front.

Is it not clear what the government intends to do about rising tuition over the 2005/06 school year, but we'll keep you posted.

We couldn't include everything:

There were so many great articles we could have included here that this issue simply represents a cross section of the kind of material appearing in the Voice each week. Because all submissions to the Voice are by freelance writers, we had to seek permission to reprint each item and this also affected the content of this issue. Some writers have preferred to submit their work elsewhere, and we wish them the best of luck.

Don't forget to read the Voice each week over the coming year where you will find articles by many of the authors featured here, as well as regular columns that are not featured here including:

The Good Life, by Janice Behrens - a weekly slice of lifestyles and modern living.

Canadian FedWatch by Karl Low - every week, learn what the federal and provincial governments are doing that will affect AU students across the country and around the world.

Lost & Found by Bill Pollett - also weekly, this column is sometimes wry, sometimes moving, and always thought-provoking peek inside the author's mind.

Women You Should Know by Barbara Godin - a monthly tribute to some of the most extraordinary women you'll ever read about.



Sara Kinnimont has been writing for the Voice since the summer of 2003. Her contributions are not frequent, but they are always memorable and strike a chord with Voice readers. An AU graduate, Sara explores the conflicted middle-ground between adulthood and late adolescence that is the third decade of life in North America. Where once it was assumed that people in their twenties would graduate from school, marry, buy homes and begin a family, early adulthood has become a time of extended decision making and exploration for many. Here Sara considers plunging into the murky waters of independent living. This article was originally published on January 26, 2005

What do I know about independence? That depends. The concept is certainly one I'm familiar with, but I won't lie, it's not one I've put into practice. My level of personal independence rivals that of a cat. I come and go as I please without a care in the world, yet when it comes to basic necessities like food, shelter, and Internet access, I'm completely dependent. For years, I've lived in my bubble of dependency, blissfully unconcerned that I'm nearing my mid-twenties, still live at home, have no real career on the horizon, and have been toiling away at my university degree part-time for the better part of five years. As they say, "all good things must come to an end."

Sadly, this appears to be all too true in my case. My twenty-fifth birthday blind-sided me, plunging me into a quarter-life crisis. Gone was the not-a-care-in-the-world girl, and in her place was self-doubting self-loathing introspective girl. She was the one that brought up the point that maybe I should be a little more concerned about the fact that I'm twenty-five and not yet self-sufficient. I decided to humour her, hoping that it would lead to her hasty departure, which is how I found myself plumbing the depths of my psyche in an attempt to find the root of my dependency.

Here's what I learned.

My dependence is primarily fed by what I've dubbed Affluence Addiction Syndrome, a rarely acknowledged condition that has become rampant as the Baby Boomers' offspring have been reaching their twenties. The Syndrome is especially prevalent in twenty-somethings raised in upper-to-middle-class neighbourhoods, with its occurrence skyrocketing where the cost of living is exceedingly high. The double whammy of high cost of living and being accustomed to the good life is a direct factor in its onset. The twenty-something in question realises if they move out that their standard of living will plummet, thereby trading off their aspirations of independence for the dependence-induced illusion of affluence.

Several factors contribute to the spread of the Syndrome. First off, good jobs are scarce, which has resulted in almost mandatory post-secondary education of some kind, even post-graduate studies. The combination of few good jobs, the high cost of living, and the likely four-to-six year stretch of university, plus the fact that education is ridiculously expensive in itself, all contribute to its prevalence. Another factor that directly feeds Affluence Addiction Syndrome is the media and pop culture influence. Twenty-somethings today have never known life without TV, and are likely forgetting what life was like before the Internet. They've been exposed to pop cultural imagery their entire lives, with its incessant message that you can, should, and deserve to have it all. And therein lies the root of my problem.

I've bought into the cachet that surrounds the upwardly mobile existence. All the things pop culture has pimped to me are the things that I covet. Meaning, I want the good life: lots of travel, eating out, a nice car, and entertainment in its various forms. After being bombarded with the message that I can have it all, can you blame me? Shouldn't I be able to go for brunch, sushi, gelato, or tapas whenever I want? Shouldn't I be able to afford Pilates, yoga, and a gym membership? Is it too much to expect bi-monthly facials or visits

to my Chinese herbalist? What's wrong with wanting to buy all the magazines and books that interest me? How can I not travel and explore all the places in the world that capture my imagination?

For years, I've knowingly traded my independence for all of the above. Sure, I could move out, embrace my independence, and give it all up. But why? To finally be granted that coveted independence badge from the would-be girl-scout leader that is modern day society? I don't covet the independence badge any more than I do the one for sewing, fire starting, or the ability to execute the perfect bowline knot. It seems when I weigh my options that independence is simply too costly.

Due to extensive and none-too-scientific research, I've come to the conclusion that I'm not an anomaly. There are many Syndrome sufferers out there. Over the years, as I've run into various ex-classmates, and had the horrible mandatory "so what are you doing now?" conversation, I've discovered that many of them have also chosen the route of dependence. Having even come across a few recovered Syndrome sufferers, it seems that one's chance at recovery is directly related to whether or not there is a repressive regime on the home front. The more repressive the regime, the faster the Syndrome will dissipate, which explains why I am a lost cause. In my case, there is no regime. On the contrary, the home front is downright utopian.

Admittedly, knowing that I am one of many has helped soften the blow, not to mention the fact that it helped take some of the steam out of introspective girl's judgmental onslaught. I've managed to get rid of her, albeit temporarily, with the promise to continue to work at independence. Now that I've addressed the problem, I realise it is no easy thing to rectify. I certainly won't be cured overnight. Clearly, I'm going to have to take it day by day. I've already started looking into aromatherapy. Maybe a lovely scented candle or essential oil is the key to my embracing independence? Feng Shui is also a possibility. Maybe I've been enslaved by bad energy?

All in all, this independence thing is going to be a gradual process. No need for me to jump into it blindly. Plus, I'm pretty sure I've staved off introspective girl until my thirtieth birthday. However, just in case she plans to pop in unannounced at my twenty-sixth, I'm planning to spend it pondering my plight on the beaches of Costa Rica, a paradise far from the prying eyes of little miss party pooper.

Lamenting the loss of "I Am Canadian"

Lonita Fraser



Lonita needs no introduction to Voice readers as she's been submitting to this publication in many capacities since 2002. Aside from serving as Vice President External on the AU Students' Union, Lonita contributes to a number of the Voice listings columns and also provides short news items and themed links lists. Her full length articles appear less frequently, but represent an eclectic mix of topics ranging from album reviews with a historical context, to musings on 21st century life and the role of technology in socialization. This article, a heartfelt commentary on the corporate consumption of our Canadian identity, first appeared in the April 6, 2005 issue.

It's been said that Canada's suffered three invasions throughout her history: French, British, and the cultural one by our neighbours to the south. The first two shaped us as a physical nation, the third is interfering with one of the largest problems we, as a people, have ever faced: our search for a national identity. We're stuck, y'see, between two world powers, one old and one new,

trying to figure out if we're more British, more American, or something else entirely. In some small fashion, at least, I think we've decided that we want to be something else, taking the best elements we've learned from our two largest English-speaking cultural influences, pounding them together with what we remember of our French and Native heritages, and coming up with something that is uniquely Canadian, something that we didn't have to borrow from somewhere else and pretend was ours.

One thing we've always been proud of is our beer. We like the fact that it's better and stronger than that of our neighbours to the south. There's always been something uniquely Canadian about the way we approach beer and beer drinking; something we could be protective of, and something that, until recently at least, Molson was getting very good at reminding us of -- however many Canadian stereotypes they played into. Their commercials highlighted certain beliefs we have about ourselves, and while not always being in the best of truth, sense, or taste, they did give us something else that crept into our national identity: they allowed us to say "I Am Canadian" in more than just a beer-drinking context, mean it, and be proud of it.

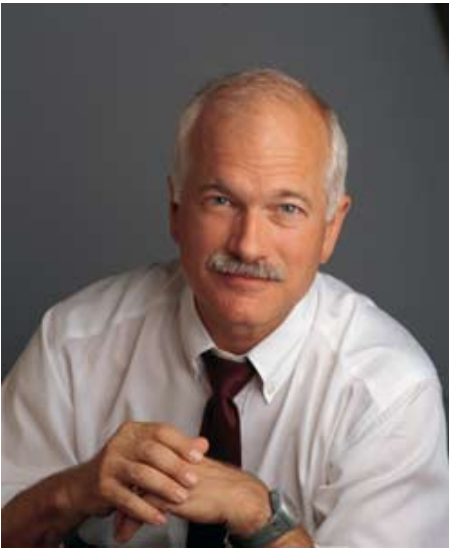
I can't really describe the old Molson "I Am Canadian" ads to anyone who's never seen or heard one, but they played on certain Canadian stereotypes well and made us all happy about them. They were cute, enjoyable, and amusing.

Ever since Molson's merger with the Coors empire, however, the tone has changed. The ads are mostly sex-oriented, with big production budgets. Even their promotions are sexually motivated. The ads are no longer cute, amusing, or enjoyable. They're getting crass, vulgar, and playing on the cheap side of stupid rather than the subtly amusing side. The old ads could have appealed to women as well as men in some cases, but now they're all decidedly male-oriented, and play on aspects of lies to the female, headgames with the female, and being Big Man On Campus. The ads have become stupid. While some of the concepts are all right, they get buried under all the tits-and-ass appeals. We've never been a nation that needed its beer sold to them with tits and ass. We've been fine having it sold to us with guys playing hockey, loons in the background, and nights around the cottage campfire. We're not a hard lot to sell beer to. The big shiny beer ads aren't necessary. The Hollywood production quality is over-the-top. It, like the advantage you're supposed to take of the women and situations portrayed in the ads, is going beyond what is necessary for doing other than big-budget action films.

Molson, I am losing any respect I had for your company. If you felt that the merger with the American beer empire had to change your style of advertising, I can certainly understand that, but couldn't you have come up with something less overt? Did you lose all sense of subtlety when you signed those merger contracts? Please make a liar out of me sometime soon, before you take what was a good nationalistic ad campaign and make me regret every bottle of Canadian that's passed through these lips.

Right now I'm sorely disappointed, and if I see someone wearing one of your lie-to-the-woman conversation-starter t-shirts, I'll be heading in the opposite direction. How am I supposed to take seriously a guy who's wearing a t-shirt they got out of a slab of beer anyhow? I never have before, and I don't think it's suddenly going to appeal to me now. I miss the offshoot of Cadiana and Canadian identity your old ads were. That's gone now, and I think, however silly it may sound, taking those ads away removed you from our national identity -- a place that it was probably very good for your business for you to be. It was certainly good for some faction of our identity as a people. We've got other beers to turn to, but it's not the same.

Well, my identity is still intact at least; I Am (Still) Canadian, but I'm not so certain about you.



Mandy Gardner began writing for the Voice in 2005 with a focus on Canadian politics and cultural diversity. An occasional contributor at first, Mandy has since become a weekly contributor with her short news column, International News Desk, which focuses on a broad range of newsworthy topics from the current events pages that are just a little obscure. Watch for a new edition of this column in every Voice issue to find out what you may have missed in the conventional media. This article, about a night out with the NDP leader, was originally published on April 27, 2005.

The evening of April 2nd offered a unique opportunity to anyone willing to partake of it. Jack Layton invited the occupants of a packed Convocation Hall out for drinks. The invitation followed a superb lecture given by Dr. David Suzuki at the University of Toronto. The event was presented by Layton and his New Democratic Party (NDP) to gather support for their environmental Sustainability Plan.

It was a sold-out affair attended by university students, environmentalists and general left-wingers alike. David Suzuki was the main attraction, being one of Canada's most beloved personalities; he was greeted with thunderous applause. Suzuki's speech was well-received, giving the audience a sense of interconnection with each other and the world around them. Not surprisingly, the experience was rather reminiscent of an episode of CBC's *The Nature of Things*.

After Suzuki had finished, Jack Layton took the stage and restated the importance of implementing the Kyoto Protocol in Canada. In the 7 years since this country signed on to Kyoto, the NDP is the only party to have drawn up a formal plan for its execution. Layton then suggested that the entire audience should join him at O'Grady's Pub for a night of "partying and politics"!

O'Grady's Pub is a regular hang-out for students at the University of Toronto as it is located on College Street just off-campus. Many people jumped at the chance to make a night of it with the local NDPs, creating both a friendly and congested atmosphere in the pub. "Our fearless leader" (as David Suzuki wittily referred to Layton) spent the evening with a smile on his face, a pint in his hand and a swarm of devotees surrounding him. All throughout the night, Jack could be seen debating policies with anyone prepared to confront him and no question was too simple or too complex.

Despite the lack of seating, more and more people managed to cram themselves into the rapidly shrinking space within the bar and take their chance to watch one of our official Opposition leaders at his local haunt. The employees at the pub joined in on the occasion, offering *green* drinks to all the *true left-wingers*.

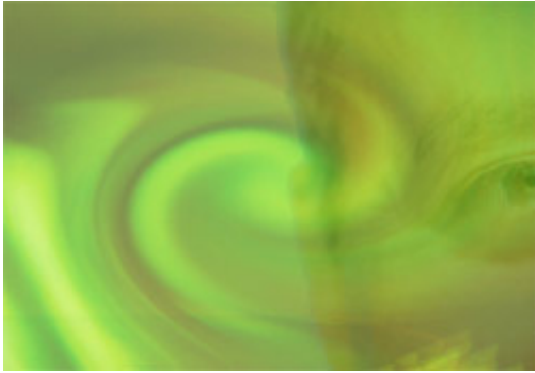
As both leader of the NDP and Member of Parliament (MP) for Toronto-Danforth, Jack Layton has an enormous responsibility to Canadians at home and across the country. With all the stresses that must come from such a heavy workload, Layton did a great job of remaining socially available and connected to his constituency.

In effect, *Pub Night* created an ambience of capability; it showed that real people make up our government. Jack Layton is your average Canadian by night -- having a drink with friends at a local bar, getting to know people over a game of pool. In the morning, however, he's up early and off to unleash his policies on Parliament. The way he strives to achieve so much for the country and his district is in itself inspiring; the way he remains true to himself while reaching for his goals is even moreso.

Layton himself says, "We have to lead by example," and he is certainly keeping to his word. No one could ever accuse this NDP leader of becoming the archetypal politician. Optimistically speaking, perhaps Layton will serve as an example to the other members of government as well as the citizens of Canada. Regardless, let's hope to see more *Pub Nights* with this upbeat and idealistic character!

HIS SHIRT AND TIE

Carole E. Trainor



A university instructor, published poet and editor of the Canadian compilation "And I Will Paint The Sky," Carole has been submitting articles to The Voice since January of 2004. Her work focuses on themes of feminism, bisexuality, aging and empowerment. His Shirt and Tie was first published in The Voice on January 19, 2005.

(For my father, Hugh Patrick Trainor of Passmore Street)

My father is an old man and sometimes the nurses that work to feed him and bathe him now will sit him up in a chair and wrestle with the dead weight of him so they can dress him in a shirt and tie.

It was the day after Christmas. I walked into his room and saw a shirt and tie of his thrown over the chair as though he himself had just taken them off. My father's hands and legs are heavy as gravity now. They don't move by themselves. I ask him, "Why do you wear a shirt and tie in here daddy?" His mind is near full of dementia. He doesn't know the answer to this.

He can't say "yes," on this day, so, of course, he can't say "no." He told me only 6 months ago that he needed a change of scenery. Looking at the wall is hard on him. After I heard him say this, I turned inward (in on myself with the pain). I stay away for months. The next time I visit he is in another room.

He can't say "yes, I see how the leaves are falling from the trees now," or "no, I don't want your godawful beef stew for supper again." He is fed his meals here in much the same way young children are fed pablum. His food is mashed. Everything is tasteless and textureless as pablum. Patient, able-bodied people stand on the other side of his supper fork waiting for him to swallow. Nobody questions why his hands don't work, suddenly. The attendants smile. They smile while they wait. I look toward the shirt and tie lying over the chair.

His teeth have been removed. I found them by mistake one day. I was searching for a phone book. They were in the drawer second to the bottom. I picked them up and tried to imagine them back in his mouth. I couldn't. His face is caved in now, hollowed. It is not the face of the man I know.

I tell him a lie. I tell him that soon I am going to buy us a piece of land. I tell him that soon I am going to build a house for all of us--for all of his children, and him. I tell him that soon I am coming to get him from this place. Soon he will be looking out onto the pink skies of autumn and the ocean that he loves. Soon he will be able to smell the wind and the grass with me. He tells me that yes, this is what he wants.

There are clouds inside his eyes now. They are full of mist. I call him, "Daddy!...Daddy...can you hear me?...It's me, Daddy." His mind is so full of dementia. I want him to remember the brown sugar fudge he'd make us on Sunday nights. I call him, "Daddy!"

I hold his hand now, heavy as gravity. The skin is cool. The veins beneath the skin are blue and shrunken. I tell him, "I'm going home now Daddy, but I'll be back tomorrow." He looks around him, wondering where I've gone even as I stand directly in front of him. He shouts out to the frame of the door, "I love you, too, dear." The shirt and tie hang over the chair like yesterday is still now. The tie is knotted perfectly for tomorrow.

FROM MY PERSPECTIVE

Living Death

Debbie Jabbour



A veteran Voice contributor through her two columns, From My Perspective and Taking Notes: Eye on Education, Debbie has published more than 300 articles in our student publication over the past five years. This column is one of personal reflection, as Debbie shares her feelings on current events and events in her own life, often including her experiences with work and education. An AU grad, Debbie continues her studies with AU in the graduate counselling program. Her insights on this program have no doubt been invaluable to those considering the same path. This article, originally published on April 6, 2005, examines the emotional turmoil surrounding a story that touched and divided the world in 2005: the death of Terri Schiavo.

Over the last few weeks, American news media has been intensely preoccupied with the case of Terri Schiavo, a topic that has touched many and prompted vigorous and acrimonious debate. Her life and death struggle has sparked important dialogue in many homes, including my own. I cannot begin to imagine how difficult her life has been over the past 15 years. If, as some believe, she was aware and conscious of what was going on around her, that makes it even worse. I cannot begin to think of myself or a loved one, existing, helpless, at the mercy of those around me, unable to express my desires, unable to say what I'm feeling or what I need.

I was once in a situation many years ago that I can use as a comparison. I had been very ill, in a crisis state, and when I woke up in the hospital recovery room, I was alone, except for a nurse. I was hooked up to a respirator, which left me unable to speak. The room was excruciatingly warm (or at least, I was), and I desperately wanted to communicate that to the nurse who was monitoring me because I thought I was going to suffocate from the heat. Although I was attached to various tubes on both sides, I managed to move my arms enough to flip off the blanket covering me, hoping to get some relief and let in some cool air onto my overheated body. The moment I moved the blanket off me, the nurse immediately replaced it, tucking it in firmly at all sides. I desperately struggled, trying to communicate to her with my eyes and finger movements that I was hot and could not tolerate the blanket. With as much movement as I could muster in my fingers, I again tried to flip the blanket off, only succeeding in moving it a few inches. Again the nurse tucked the blanket in. This struggle had made me even more uncomfortable and hot, and again I fought to move it off. The nurse became quite irritated and reprimanded me, telling me that the blanket needed to stay put. She pulled it up even more firmly around my shoulders. After several more feeble attempts, I finally gave up. I lay there in helpless silence, tears rolling down my face, mutely accepting the fact that I was not going to be able to communicate my needs to that nurse, knowing that I would have to remain subject to her whims. I felt like I was going to suffocate, but I was powerless to change the situation. The feeling of having total consciousness, yet being forced to lay there without any control over what was happening to me, was indescribably horrible.

If Terri Schiavo was able to experience these emotions, I can't help but feel that it was unbelievably cruel to keep her alive in that helpless state. To be at the mercy of those around me... to not be able to communicate even my simplest needs... I could barely tolerate it for those few hours until the breathing tube was finally removed -- but for 15 years?

On the other hand, if Terri was in a "persistent vegetative state," as her doctors ruled, then I'm not sure what to think. What is there to be gained by sustaining existence for an individual in this condition? In many ways it seems selfish, clinging to an unreasonable hope. As a parent, I ache for Terri's parents, who kept hanging on to any shred of hope that Terri might come back to them. I wonder if I would feel the same, were it one of my beloved daughters. Yet, as a parent, do I have the right to force my child to keep breathing, enduring a life of complete helplessness? Do I have the right to inflict my own needs on her and force her to stay alive? Do I have the right to make a life or death decision for someone I love?

Adding to the complexity of this drama, countless individuals and organizations have used Terri's suffering to advance their own political or social agenda. It seems to me that the only person really thinking for Terri was her husband, who made the decision on her behalf to end the torture.

Watching this drama play out on national television has motivated me (like many others) to write my own living will; to define in detail what I want done if I ever should find myself in a similar situation where I'm unable to make the decision for myself. It's not a conversation most of us want to have with our loved ones, but a necessary one.

Quality of life is at the heart of the debate, and it has nothing to do with living with disabilities, as some would have you believe. I have many good friends who suffer disabilities of different degrees of severity. I would never presume to judge what they consider quality of life, nor would I ever presume to suggest that an individual has no quality of life simply because they are disabled. But my own experience has led me to conclude that quality of life takes priority over remaining alive simply for the sake of life itself. What is of utmost importance is individual free will, and I believe each individual should have the right to decide their own destiny and write their own quality of life definition. If, as Terri's husband alleges, it was her decision not to be kept alive by artificial means, this should have been the deciding factor (as the courts ultimately ruled).

When I was a teenager, my grandfather had a stroke at age 70. When the stroke had hit him, he had fallen to the floor, weak and paralyzed, yet still able to speak. He told my grandmother that he could not move, but she didn't believe him initially. By the time the ambulance finally arrived at the farm to transport him to hospital, he was almost completely helpless, unable to speak, move or respond.

I remember all of the family rushing to the hospital, as he lay in a coma. We didn't know what to expect, and thought he might die. I stood by his side, stunned, watching the nurses administer to him when suddenly he began to cry out for my grandmother. I realized that, even though he was paralyzed on the outside, he was very much aware on the inside.

In the years that followed, my grandfather continued to "exist", even though everything else changed around him. My grandmother died, the farm was sold, nothing of his former life was left. His body was paralyzed and movement limited, but for the first few years he retained his mental agility. He knew who we all were, understood his surroundings, and was able to be part of the community in a limited way. But he soon lost this as his physical body slowly deteriorated. I would go to visit him, and he had no clue who I was, nor was he able to even hold a meaningful conversation. It made me so sad to watch him decline, and I vowed to never live that way myself if it was under my control.

My aunt became the primary caregiver for my grandfather at the auxiliary hospital that became his home. She related to me how he would sometimes scream out in pain and frustration, asking God why he was being forced to stay alive in this helpless condition. He would beg her to let him die, to please not make him stay alive. But euthanasia was not an option, and my grandfather was forced to continue to exist until his physical body finally gave up 12 years later. For me, my grandfather died the day he had the stroke. In that helpless shell of a body, he was no longer the same grandfather I knew and loved.

Writing a will is a difficult enough procedure--no one wants to think about dying. Writing a living will is even more difficult because no one wants to even imagine what life might be like living in an uncertain physical condition, or with a severe disability. Many people with disabilities manage to have a very high quality of life. Many do not. What it should come down to is personal choice. No one should be able to

decide for me whether I'm obligated to stay alive, regardless of the quality of that life. I do not want to remain alive, helpless, desperately trying to communicate my simplest needs to those around me, yet unable to do so. Nor would I wish this on anyone I love.

There are many other debates that surround this very sad story. First and foremost is the topic of euthanasia, along with compassionate care for terminally ill, definitions of disabilities and brain death, and the ethics of withholding treatment. The latter includes food and water, and many argue (quite rightly) that euthanasia would have been a more compassionate route than starvation in Terri's case. Unfortunately, our society has not yet managed to resolve these ethical and moral dilemmas, so families will continue to face the same heartbreaking choices Terri's family did.

The legacy Terri Schiavo has left behind is that many people, including myself, will have this necessary dialogue with their families -- making a decision regarding their future. What is most important is the right each of us have for self-determination, the right we each have to control our own destiny, the right to decide for ourselves what direction we wish to go, whether it be life or death.

THE PSYCHOLOGICAL BATTLE AGAINST FAT

Shannon Maguire



Shannon was a regular contributor to the Voice before gaining a place on AUSU council. Choosing to focus on her council duties she set aside her writing for a time, and her contributions have been missed. This article is a blast from the past, but one that might help those who have made a New Year's resolution to shed some unwanted pounds. Understanding how our attitudes affect our eating and exercise habits is half the battle. Read on and consider what lifestyle changes will lead to a healthier you in 2006.

Losing weight can be one of the hardest tasks a person must face. We could theorize that one of the reasons why people find it so hard to lose weight is because they are looking at the task from a completely physical point of view. This point of view would have us believing that weight loss is a simple matter of exercising more and changing our eating habits. Of course, this is true for some people, but not all. Some people may experience difficulty losing weight because of underlying psychological problems and/or irrational thinking. In these cases successful weight loss will likely only occur by dealing with both the physical and psychological problems.

Sometimes obesity and/or overeating are not the primary problems affecting a person's well being, but are instead side effects of other underlying problems. According to the National Eating Disorder Information Centre many people who have eating problems also often have other problems such as alcohol/drug problems, depression, history of sexual abuse/abuse, and chronic anxiety or obsessive compulsive disorder.

Depression can lead to overeating and it can also make it difficult to implement and follow a weight loss plan. Sexual abuse/abuse may cause people to experience negative feelings such as "self-hate, fear, loss of control, shame and flashbacks," which may lead to eating problems (National Eating Disorder Information Centre). Many abuse victims may also experience depression, which again may lead to eating problems. Others may use obesity as a defense mechanism hoping that if they are obese others will not find them physically attractive. The causes and effects of psychological problems such as these can be numerous and complex. When we are faced with such complex problems it is unlikely that we will be able to successfully lose weight and maintain a healthy weight without addressing these underlying issues.

Fortunately, these problems can be solved and the people who experience them can learn to live a better life. When facing problems of this magnitude, it is advisable to seek the help of a trained professional such as a psychologist who can put you on the right track and help you find the best resources to deal with your problems (National Eating Disorder Information Centre, Estronaut).

There are other psychological factors that may influence our ability to lose weight that do not necessarily require the assistance of a professional to deal with. Some of these factors are irrational thoughts that enter our minds when we attempt to lose weight. *Psychology Today* identified 7 irrational thoughts we often have that cause us to experience difficulty losing weight. The factors are:

1. Irrational obsession with becoming thin. If our thoughts are focused only on the need to become thin we may become desperate and our long term health goals may fail.
2. Irrational desire to eat until full. Food has become readily available and more accessible than it was in our past, which has led to many people believing that they must stuff themselves to the point where they cannot eat anymore.
3. Irrational desire for immediate results. Many people get caught up in the appeal of short term satisfaction which makes it difficult to commit to a long term program or goal. People are likely to think "why should I eat sensibly when the reward will not occur for some time and eating this cake will make me feel good right now?"
4. Irrational desire to eat for comfort. Many people eat to make themselves feel better. "Fatty and sugary food provides immediate comfort and distraction from other issues" (qtd in Brabham p. 62). Instead of eating you should try to resolve your problem.
5. Irrational pessimistic attitude. Many people who become obese may take on an "end of the world outlook", which is not going to help them lose weight. You need to have a positive outlook on your ability to achieve your goal.
6. Irrational belief that dieting is too hard. "It's just too hard to diet." This thinking renders you helpless. People who are easily frustrated want easy solutions. We're seduced by fad diets because they appeal to that immediacy. Yet people who rely on fad diets suffer high failure rates. When you diet with the short term in mind, you don't learn strategies that require patience and persistence" (qtd in Brabham p. 62).
7. Irrational feelings of worthlessness. Many people view being overweight as a personal failure that makes them a weak and worthless person. Other people may irrationally believe that their value as a human being is determined by what they look like. These people have fallen victim to the media's view that beauty is the same as thinness. When you feel like a failure you are not likely to be able to stick to a long term weight loss program.

These thoughts are all irrational thoughts that will adversely affect our ability to achieve our goals. We must learn to recognize and change these thoughts before we can be successful in our weight loss goals.

Whenever our own mind works against us it becomes much harder to achieve our goals. Whether you have a serious psychological problem that requires professional help or are a victim of your own irrational thoughts the first thing you must do is recognize that there is a psychological element to your problem. No one can solve a problem without first being aware of all of its elements.

Sources:

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- National Eating Disorder Information Centre. (1997). Questions and Answers. Nedic.ca. Retrieved February 12, 2004 from <http://nedic.ca/qa.html#13>
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One of our newest contributors, Sandra has already submitted a number of insightful and well researched articles on topics ranging from the independent media to aging gracefully. This article, published on October 7, 2005, provides food for thought for all Canadian students who complain about tuition rates. While the need for an affordable education system is clear, we must be thankful for the quality of our system, the availability of student funding, and the wide variety of course offerings we can choose from.

Put down your textbook, set aside that thesis, and hold on tight, because we're going to turn your world upside down (Just for a few minutes, I promise). Using round numbers only, take a quick guess at how much you've spent on tuition in the past two years. Got a number? Good, because now comes the interesting part.

I want you think of paying that tuition as a privilege. Not a burden, but something you're very lucky to be allowed to do. And while we're at it, let's throw in the stress of exams, the struggle of balancing work with course loads, and all those philosophy courses that make your brain hurt. Hard to imagine, isn't it? Now, let's turn right side up again and take a closer look at this unusual notion.

"Everyone has the right to education." So begins Article 26 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, a document published by the United Nations in 1948. The Article also decrees that, in the elementary stages, education will be both free and compulsory. A noble premise indeed, but the truth is, if you attended a reasonably clean, reasonably competent school system as a child, you were one of the privileged ones. And as an adult attending Athabasca University (or any post-secondary institution), you're luckier still.

Just for the record, this isn't a discussion of the quality of our education system. We're not talking about tuition fees versus government funding, or any of the other debates that swirl around the subject. This is about the guaranteed right to receive a basic education, and the freedom to pursue post-secondary studies to the best of our abilities.

In Canada, children are part of a lucky minority. Forty-five percent, to be exact. They have a legal right to go to school. Not only are they guaranteed that privilege, they're expected to exercise it, with mandatory ages set for both entering and leaving the system. So where does that leave the rest of the children, the ones in over half the world's countries? The 2005 EFA (Education For All) Global Monitoring Report gives us a clue. Of 203 countries listed, 58 of them do not offer their children the right to a free basic education. Of the remainder that do, 52 ignore their own dictates and charge fees to attend school, a burden that's often impossible for families to afford.

The realm of adult education is more complex still. The options (or lack thereof) in post-secondary studies are staggering and far too numerous to describe here. Knowledge takes many forms, but the ability to read and write can profoundly alter people's lives, and that's what makes the following so incredible.

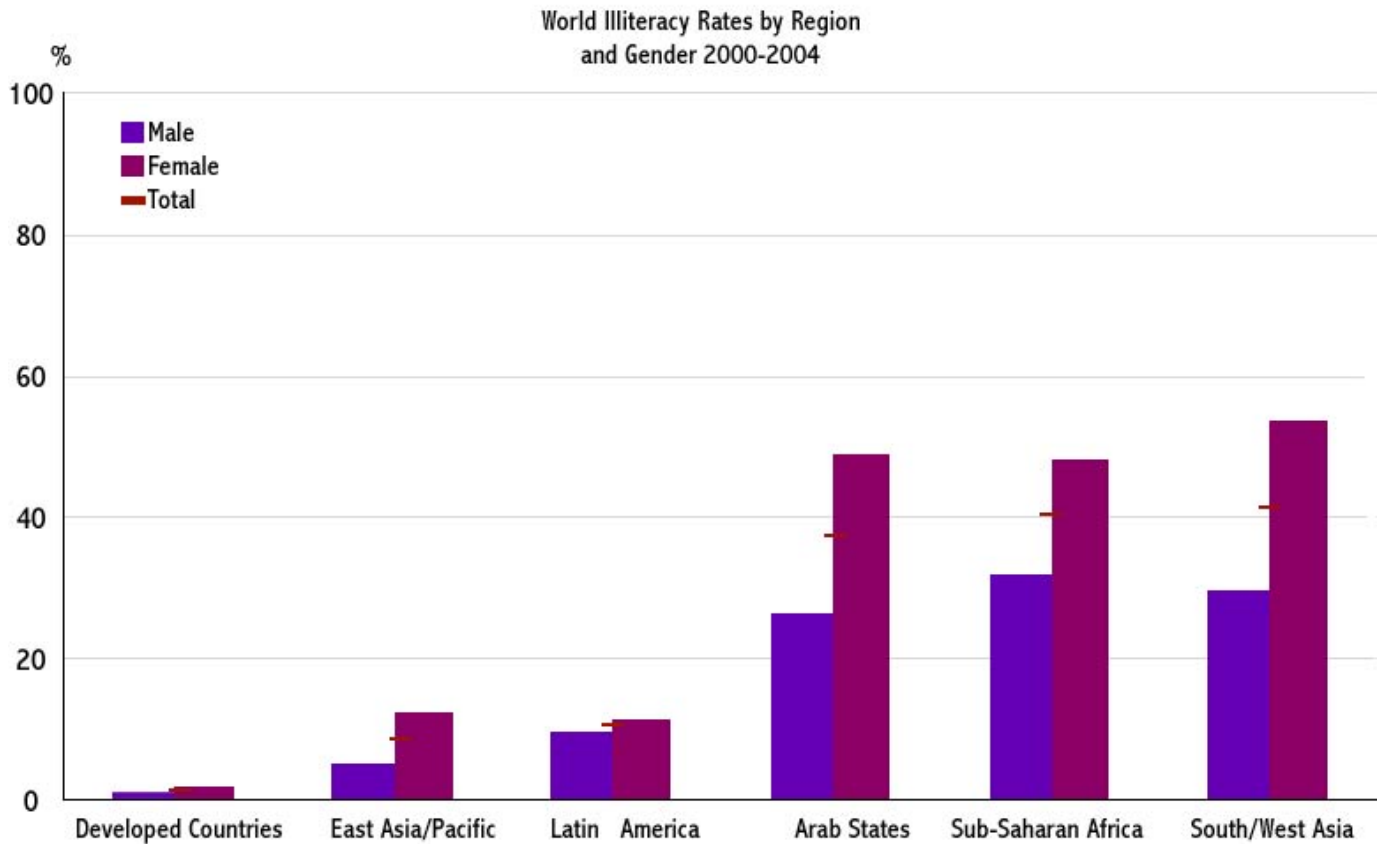
The Arab States, Sub-Saharan Africa, and South and West Asia have a combined illiteracy rate of 40%. In South and West Asia alone, over half the women can neither read nor write, never mind fighting for the right to pursue an education. These individuals would be unable to read the textbooks even if they had them. Now, as frustrating as an overdue essay might be, I can't imagine trying to create a better life if I didn't have the freedom to learn. To broaden my horizons, to understand and make decisions about the world, to work in the field of my choice; all these opportunities are mine because I have access to education. Without it, so many doors would be closed, but George Bernard Shaw neatly summed up the other side of the coin. He probably wasn't talking about education when he said, "liberty means responsibility," yet the sentiment is apropos. With every advantage we enjoy (voting, a driver's licence, clean air and water) comes an obligation, and the right to an education is no different.

For most of us, though, the tightrope of work, studies, and family is a balancing act extraordinaire. Restraints on money, time, and energy simply do not allow us to build schools, lobby governments, or even tutor at the local library. So how do we give back? How do we enjoy the privilege even as we recognize the responsibility?

It's simple; by being aware. Do you have the legal right to an education? Who makes decisions about funding and access? Are any of your rights in danger of being eroded, or outright taken away? Big questions, but you can begin to answer them with only a little time and effort.

- Do a quick 'education' search on your country's government website. Is there any major legislation in the works?
- Find websites that report on education news; instead of ploughing through reams of articles, use RSS feeds to receive customized e-mails based on certain keywords.
- Check out the Athabasca Newsroom and Students' Union websites to find out about issues that directly affect your education.

But how, you may wonder, does this contribute to the bigger picture? In essence, if we know what we have, we're better able to safeguard and improve upon it. And by ensuring that we preserve the rights that already exist, we may also serve as a model to those still struggling to achieve the most basic access to education. Like the song says, you don't know what you've got 'til it's gone.



Sources:

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http://www.e-laws.gov.on.ca/DBLaws/Statutes/English/90e02_e.htm#BK19
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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, attn: Debbie Jabbour



PHD GRADS PLAN TO LEAVE CANADA
Debbie Jabbour

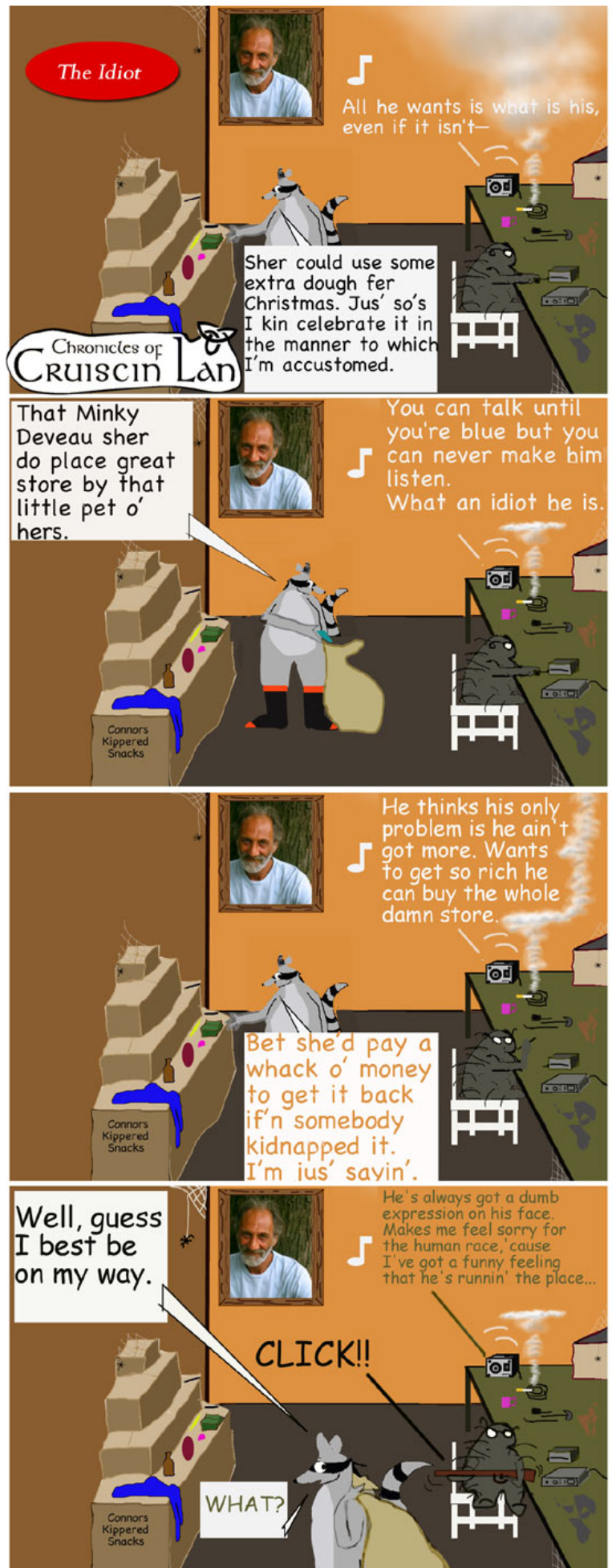
The first national census of PhD recipients in Canada, Statistics Canada's Survey of Earned Doctorates, has revealed that of 3600 doctoral graduates

produced last year, one in five say they plan to leave Canada to work or to continue studying. Life science and physical science graduates were the most likely to leave the country, accounting for one in three PhD graduates in these programs. Although the good news is that of those grads intending to leave Canada, almost half say they plan to return, this may not be enough to sustain Canada's universities. With a 9.5 percent decline in doctorates awarded and a need to replace up to 20,000 retiring professors in the next decade, Canadian universities are facing a serious shortage of professors.

Foreign students represent nearly one-quarter of all doctoral graduates, and are the most likely to report plans to leave Canada. With countries like India and China able to retain their own PhD grads and lure students back who study overseas, greater pressure is being placed on countries like Canada to produce even more PhD graduates.

On average, doctoral graduates were about 36 years old, and took almost 6 years to complete their programs, with those in humanities and social sciences taking slightly longer. About half were able to finance their studies with scholarships, or teaching or research assistantships, and among those who did incur debt to finance their graduate studies, 41 percent owed less than \$10,000, and 32 percent owed more than \$20,000 (Schmidt, 2005).

Schmidt, S. (2005). 1 in 3 PhD science grads plan to leave country, StatsCanada finds: first such census hints at coming shortage of profs. CanWest News Service, July 6, 2005. <http://www.canada.com/edmonton/edmontonjournal/news/story.html?id=0d4e271b-bfd0-430f-a362-6ab279e73305>





Barbara Godin became the new Voice advice columnist in the summer of 2004, continuing the popular column that began as Dear Sandra, and then Dear Heather as our previous columnists moved on to other pursuits. Despite having published over 70 columns in the Voice so far, Barb continues to cover new ground while answering a very wide range of questions of relevance to Voice readers. This is one column that relies on the input of readers, and The Voice is thankful to all of you who have taken the time to share your questions so that others may benefit from the discussion. This column is typical of Dear Barb's style as it discusses one of those all-too-common family dilemmas that often leave the best of us bewildered and in need of a fresh perspective.

Dear Barb,

My sister is getting married next month and I can't stand her fiancé. I feel really bad about this, but I just don't care for him at all. He has never done anything to my sister or me specifically. I just find him very arrogant and at times he seems to be demeaning to my sister. This seems to bother me more than it does her. I love my sister very much and I don't want to cause problems between us. How can I overcome these feelings and be more accepting of my soon to be brother-in-law?

Paul in St. John's, New Brunswick

Hi Paul, thanks for writing. It's good to hear from a man once in a while.

I think you've partly answered your own question. You need to be more accepting of your future brother-in-law. Remember, this is your sister's choice -- not yours. I don't know if you are married, but if you are, how would you feel if your sister wasn't accepting of your wife? I'm sure that would hurt your feelings very much.

You need to try to find common things that you can talk about or do together with your sister's fiancé. Perhaps you both enjoy golf or bowling, or share an interest in carpentry or car racing.

Even though you find this man arrogant, sometimes arrogance is a cover-up for a deep-seated insecurity. You will never know if this is the case, unless you put forth the effort to find out.

There must be something in this fellow that your sister sees that makes her to want to marry him. Perhaps, you can also try to spend time with them as a couple. Participating in activities that you all enjoy will make him feel more relaxed with you. As a result, he may drop the exterior persona of arrogance, thus providing you the opportunity to see the person your sister fell in love with.

On the other hand, if he becomes abusive to your sister and you see that she is hurting, you may need to discuss this with her. However, if this situation arises there is only so much you can only do. Your sister is an adult, and has to live her own life and make her own choices. It is important to always be available for your sister, let her know she has someone to turn to.

Good luck Paul. I hope I was able to help with your dilemma.

E-mail your questions to dearbarb.voice@ausu.org. Some submissions may be edited for length or to protect confidentiality: your real name and location will never be printed. This column is for entertainment only. The author is not a professional counsellor and this column is not intended to take the place of professional advice.

MSCHE - Accreditation pays off...

Brian Pinto

Brian Pinto has published only one article with the Voice, but it touches on one of the most important things to happen to Athabasca University in its more than 30 year history. In 2005, AU became the first university to ever be fully accredited in both Canada and the United States -- an achievement that was nearly five year in the making. While this is expected to make AU much more attractive to international students who do not wish to have to choose between a U.S. and a Canadian degree, there may be other benefits as well. On October 28, Mr. Pinto shared his experience with applying to an American university after obtaining an AU degree.

I am sure most Voice readers are aware of Athabasca University's recent institutional accreditation in the U.S. under the governing body of the Middle States Commission on Higher Education (MSCHE). It is a milestone and an achievement that has not been attained by any other Canadian university currently under the Association of Universities and Colleges of Canada (AUCC). We, as Athabasca University students, should enthusiastically observe this triumph as a chance to seek avenues that in the past were not easily accessible for future studies. Athabasca University prides itself in breaking down barriers to education and I strongly urge future grads to take advantage of opportunities such as these to reach their goals.

I am currently enrolled in Athabasca University's Bachelor of Management Three-Year Post Diploma Program, which I will complete next month. I was also recently accepted into the Master of Science in Education Program at Niagara University in New York, and I am scheduled to begin in January of 2006. My teachables are marketing and information processing. Since Athabasca University and Niagara University fall under the same accreditation body, the MSCHE, I was able to reap the benefits of AU's recent official recognition to gain acceptance into NU's teacher certification program. Other factors were necessary, but I still believe that AU's new status played some part in my acceptance, for several reasons.

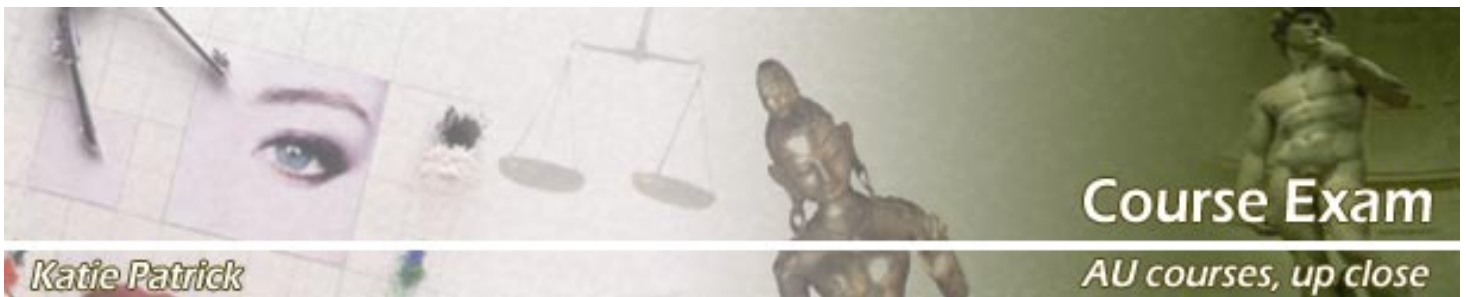
Earlier on in 2005 I was supply teaching and did class observations at my old high school, which really increased my desire to pursue a career in teaching, although, my options were very limited in Ontario. Moreover, I was at a slight disadvantage having a three-year undergraduate degree, as most institutions require you to have a four-year degree to pursue graduate studies. Many of the universities here in Canada do not offer marketing and information processing as teachables, and general business studies is not a common teachable. Also, if I were to apply to any College of Education in Canada, I would have to do so nearly a year in advance. With my other family obligations, I could not wait that long and wanted to begin as soon as possible. By researching several of university websites, I realized that Niagara University, along with other universities under the MSCHE, have three start dates for their programs: Spring (January), Summer (May) and Fall (September). Many of these universities have rolling admissions, which means that you can apply even a few weeks before the semester commences and gain acceptance (pending your meeting admission requirements). Niagara University even offers distance education courses, though I will be attending on campus and living in residence while I study.

As you can imagine, I was very excited when I received my acceptance letter and that is why I decided to channel my excitement by sharing my experience with other AU students in similar circumstances who may wonder whether they will be able to pursue the "possible career options" found in the "program learning outcomes" on the AU website.

If you look at the Athabasca University Website under "Possible Further Education Options" for every program, you will see that there are several graduate programs that students can pursue at AU, but those who feel limited should explore opportunities available at other institutions and even consider the American institutions that fall under the MSCHE governing body as an option. In some cases, the provincial government (depending on the program) will provide financial assistance. For my particular program, OSAP is available as it leads to *Canadian Teacher Certification*.

I hope my experience will give others in my situation some encouragement and optimism that there is light at the end of the tunnel. Thank you AU for pursuing the MSCHE accreditation because, *it sure paid off for me!* I hope others will follow suit to pursue their aspirations.

If anyone is interested in learning more about the Middle States Commission on Higher Education (MSCHE) and about the other member institutions alongside AU that are part of this membership association, please check out <http://www.msche.org>. For information on Niagara University's online courses, visit <http://www.ed2go.com/niagara>.



SOCI 378: Media Construction of Social Movements & Issues

Katie Patrick began writing course reviews for *The Voice* in late 2003, and her column has now become a regular feature with a review or two appearing each month as her schedule allows. The column has grown from a brief overview of new courses to more in-depth coverage including tutor interviews. This column, published on June 29th, features one of the many brand new courses offered by AU this year.

Have you ever wondered how many of the social norms prevalent in today's Canadian society were formed? Have you ever been curious about the extent to which the media has influenced society? If you've considered these things, then Athabasca University's new course, SOCI 378 (Media Construction of Social Movements & Issues), is for you!

A 3-credit course in the Social Sciences, SOCI 378 provides an "overview of the critical literature on media coverage of social movements," writes course professor and author Dr Ella Haley. She indicates that course topics like SOCI 378 are becoming more popular, "particularly after 9/11 and...the invasion of Iraq," as people are "questioning whose interests the mainstream media serve." Dr. Haley designed SOCI 378 so students will be able to "examine the significance of mass media in the world today" and be introduced to the "growing concentration of media ownership and the role of propaganda" in today's society. Using the knowledge gained from this background information, students then proceed to critique "how mainstream media shape and influence how we speak and write about social movements" says Dr. Haley, as well as "how social movements are fighting back."

Media Construction of Social Movements and Issues is divided into three parts. Part one, which consists of six units, introduces students to how society is shaped by media influences. It discusses concepts in critical analysis, as well as the relationship between social movements and democracy. Students will also discuss the effects of propaganda on social norms. The second part familiarizes students with theories prevalent in the mass media over seven units. First, students learn about effects research as they examine prevailing theories of media and social interactions, including the Functionalist theory. Canadian content is interwoven into the course as students take a look at influential Canadians in the mass media movement like Grant, McLuhan and Menzies. Culture-related issues and feminism are also discussed. Finally, the third part, which consists of six units, discusses in detail how social norms and issues are influenced by the mass media. Here students learn about the movements prevalent in today's society, including the environmentalist movement and how this has affected our perception of our earth, the labour movement, gender equality issues, and issues surrounding war and peace.

SOCI 378 has several exciting features. Students "seek alternative viewpoints by reading alternative news sources [like] Manchester Guardian and internet," said Dr. Haley. Additionally, they read "Canadian documentaries such as *The Corporation* and *The Take* [which] reflect the public's thirst for alternative sources of information on issues that matter to them," she continues. And once students finish the course:

"students who would like to expand their interest in this area in a more independent fashion are welcome to approach me about SOCI 426, an independent research course," offers Dr. Haley.

Student evaluation in Media Construction of Social Movements and Issues (SOCI 378) consists of three assignments (worth 20%, 25% and 25%, respectively) and one take home midterm exam, worth 30% of the final course mark. Dr. Haley feels that the "assignments are closely tied to the course material to help ensure that students have a solid grounding in key sociological materials."

Spend your summer learning about the role of mass media in today's society by enrolling in SOCI 378. For more information, visit the course website at: <http://www.athabasca.ca/html/syllabi/soci378.htm>

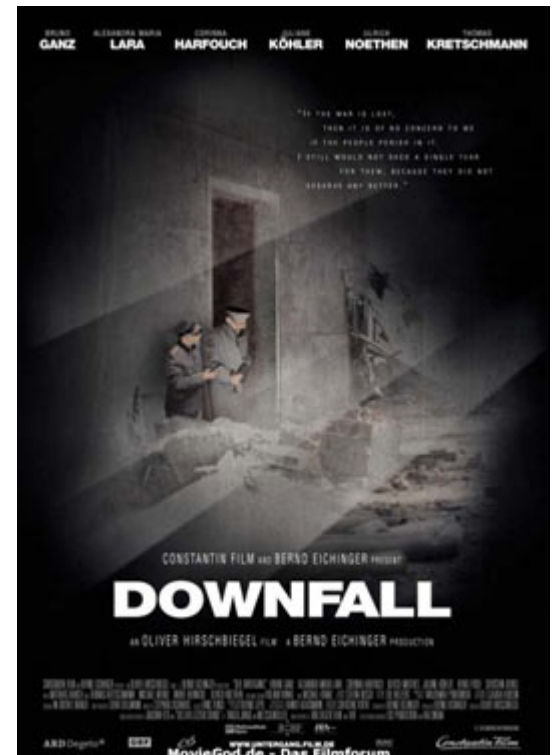
Downfall (Der Untergang) Film review by John Buhler

John Buhler began contributing to The Voice on August of 2003 with an article about the impending deregulation of tuition rates for distance education students. Since that time he has continued to contribute articles on issues of relevance to students and Canadians, as well as a number of travel photo features. This year John took the plunge and moved to Germany for a year to join his wife who is there on a study visa. His experiences as an AU student abroad have appeared in a number of Voice articles and this series will continue into the new year. The articles are a wonderful testament to the flexibility of distance learning, as well as a first-hand account of what it is like to immerse oneself into a new culture. In this issue, however, his excellent review of the German film Downfall has been selected as one of the best articles of the past year.

It is always fascinating to see how a German movie confronts that nation's Nazi past. The main focus of *Downfall* (Eichinger and Hirschbiegel, 2005) is a twelve-day period in April and May of 1945 leading up to Hitler's suicide and the collapse of the Third Reich. The movie's North American showing is especially timely as the film coincides with the 60th anniversary of these events. The film shows Hitler in the bunker under Berlin, throwing tantrums and giving orders that are impossible to carry-out. When he realizes that it is no longer possible to win the war, he blames the German people for having been too weak to achieve final victory, and he resists efforts to save German civilians in the battle for Berlin. Meanwhile, on the streets above the bunker, Nazi lynch mobs patrol the city for old men who have failed to join the futile battle against the Red Army. By the end of the film, Hitler and his Nazi movement have become enemies of Germany.

It is also interesting that *Downfall* uses a foreigner to portray the foreign-born Fuhrer. Swiss actor Bruno Ganz is perhaps best known in North America for his role in *Wings of Desire* (Wenders and Dauman, 1987), in which he plays an angel watching over a divided Berlin. He surrenders his angelic status when he falls in love, becoming in effect a fallen angel. Of note, *City of Angels* (Siberling, 1998), with Nicholas Cage and Meg Ryan, was a poor American adaptation of this theme.

In *Downfall*, Ganz once again portrays a *fallen being* as the Nazi leader who has tumbled from the height of his power, and is forced to take refuge in a bunker underneath Berlin. Much of the film is based on the recollections of Hitler's secretary, Traudl Junge (actress Alexandra Maria Lara). In the film, she is shown as being an admirer of Hitler, and she remains blindly obedient to him even after his suicide.



The relative security of life inside Hitler's bunker is in sharp contrast to the battle raging above. Josef Goebbels' children sing for Hitler, while children in the city above are pressed into service against Soviet tanks. These contrasts make the film all the more powerful in its effect.

Downfall is controversial, in part, because Hitler is sometimes shown to be human. He loves his dog Blondi, is charmed by the young women who work for him, while they apparently find him charming as well. He is also fond of small children. It is difficult to make sense of these scenes, if we can only view him as a monster. The film does not offer an explanation and the viewer is challenged by the contrasts in Hitler's character.

It is not necessary for the film to encompass the whole war for it to have a chilling effect on the viewer. When Hitler barks orders for armies that can no longer function, we know that this madman happens to be responsible for the horrors taking place outside of the bunker. It is also disturbing to watch as Magda Goebbels systematically poisons her own children, rather than allow them to be raised in a world without National Socialism. And when Hitler boasts of his mass murder of Europe's Jews, we know of the horror that his statement implies.

One critic felt that *Downfall* failed to give us any insights into Adolf Hitler's personality ("Unsolved mysteries," 2005). Yet, if historians have spent decades examining the issue of Hitler's personality, it seems unreasonable to expect that a 148-minute movie will provide any stunning revelations.

No doubt, some factors that contributed to Hitler's character included physical and psychological abuse in his childhood, and the pervasiveness of anti-Semitism in the Austrian society in which he was raised. But this would be different film altogether.

There have been other criticisms as well. In an article by Randy Boswell (2005) of the CanWest News Service, the film is criticized because Wilhelm Mohnke, shown as a hero trying to protect German civilians, has been accused of murdering captured Allied soldiers. As *Downfall* concentrates on twelve days inside the bunker, Mohnke's earlier actions are not disputed, but are simply outside of the film's timeframe.

Make no mistake, however, the film is not an apologia for the Nazis and the Germans who supported them. At the end of the film, an interview with the real Traudl Junge in 2002, reveals that it took her many years, but eventually she came to realize that she shared responsibility for the destruction that Hitler had unleashed upon the world.

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Rebecca Brewer (nee Flann) contributed her first article to The Voice in 2003 and has recently returned after a hiatus. Now a regular contributor, her articles cover a wide variety of topics and include both fiction and non-fiction. Retirement and the Telecommuter, which first appeared in the July 29th issue, is particularly relevant to AU students, who may wish to translate their distance learning experiences into opportunities to work from a distance.

"I wish I could work from home." my friend states willingly. She commutes

three hours to get to her place of work. She may be the wrong person to ask, but working from home is part of her ideal job.

Working from home, or telecommuting, has been advocated lately by some businesses. According to an article in *The Globe and Mail*, telecommuting "is still in its infancy in this country" (Patriquin, 2004), but I wonder how long this will last with some major corporations singing its praises. The newspaper article cites Compaq Canada, Bank of Montreal, Nortel Networks Corp., Ontario Hydro and Imperial Oil Ltd., as among the companies "experimenting with telecommuting." Dr Ken Envoy, whose company SiteSell is based on telecommuting, estimates he has saved \$800,000 since 1998 by not needing office space (Self Motivated).

It all sounds wonderful, like a utopian "never never land" for employees. You can sleep in a little longer, go to work in your slippers and still get paid. But it is still work and it isn't for everyone just yet. Dr. Envoy is quoted saying that about "70 per cent of workers aren't cut out for it." He goes on to explain that the perfect telecommuter is "self-motivated and deadline-friendly" (Ibid.).

This personality type sounds strikingly similar to the ideal Athabasca student, doesn't it? I consider Athabasca University to be excellent training for those of us who would consider working from home. Both distance learning and telecommuting require similar skills. The distance learner and telecommuter will likely face similar reactions from others. The questions and misunderstandings people have about distance education seem to be the same misperceptions people have about working in the home.

Since starting with Athabasca University, I have realized that people don't consider what you do from home as work. Of course, this is not exactly an epiphany. It's something stay-at-home moms, or involved parents of any kind really, have known for years. I've had people ask me, "So, are you taking a break from school?" even though they are aware I am taking classes with Athabasca University. This seems like a common reaction. When journalist Anna Quindlen quit her job at the *New York Times* to write from home, someone asked her how retirement was (Quindlen, 2005, p. 207). Perhaps we shouldn't be offended by this reaction. They think we're living the good life by not traveling to pursue our accomplishments. But no one likes to feel underestimated and eventually hard work deserves some credit. When working from home, this may not be something you will readily receive.

Sitting at my computer, listening to its buzzing, I wonder if I'm one of the 30 per cent that is supposedly cut out for telecommuting. I think about office drama, of people coming to work telling you what they did on vacation, where they went for dinner, or who's gossiping about whom. I think about relating with the person you work

next to when they've had a hard day and making friendships that last longer than the job does. I wonder if this unproductive, but still mostly rewarding, part of working can be replaced by technology.

Dr Envoy views "his Australia-based programmer a good friend, despite having never met him" (Ibid.). I think about Voice editor Tamra Ross Low. I email her every two weeks, but I've never seen her in person. Are we on the high-speed track to friendship? People often talk more with each other via email than they do in person. People are said to have fallen in love over the Internet. Certainly relationships can be formed, but I'm reluctant to say that we have reached the point in our society where technology replaces face-to-face companionship.

My friend who commutes to work would settle for working closer to home. She used to work ten minutes from her house, but she hated the work. "It was nice to go home at lunch. I could feed the dog, do some laundry." When I asked her if she'd trade jobs (her previous job for her new job), she hesitated, but then said no. For the most part, she likes what she does, but she's interested in doing something closer to home. She would definitely try telecommuting if given the chance. What she's really looking for is flexibility and balance. We all seem to be looking for that and may even find it somehow. Telecommuting may be a means to work-life balance and happiness. It may make us happy, and we won't care if other people consider it retirement because we know it's not.

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Turing the Pages...

Elizabeth Cousar



Over its 14-year history, The Voice has almost always featured a book review column, and in 2005 Elizabeth Cousar decided to add her unique perspective to the mix. With a fondness for science fiction, Elizabeth reviews a variety of books which include eclectic selections from both fiction and non-fiction. This review explores a fascinating book by a fascinating author -- the renowned neurologist Oliver Sacks, whose discoveries were chronicled in the film Awakenings and in a number of books. This article was first published on October 7th.

I'm back in non-fiction mode this week, possibly because I haven't been working enough on my course work, and feel guilty. At least when I read non-fiction, I know I'm getting my mental exercise.

I read *An Anthropologist on Mars*, by world-renowned neurologist Dr. Oliver Sacks. This collection of case studies and personal anecdotes has been out for a long time, but if you haven't read it yet, you really ought to pick it up.

Dr. Sacks believes in getting to know the whole person who is referred to him. He visits his patients, spends a lot of time with them, observes them in their own environments. Most of all, he wants to understand not only the problem that got them the referral, but also what effect or effects that problem has had on other parts of their lives.

For example, in the first case study of a man who suddenly became colourblind after an accident, Dr. Sacks explores not only the physical causes of the man's colourblindness, but also the depth of loss that the patient felt--which was, conceivably, more than most people would, considering that he was a professional artist who mostly worked in oils. Pigments were essential to his creative self, and, in his concept of himself, which was deeply tarnished by his sudden loss.

There are seven stories in this volume, all of which are different, but all written with care and deliberation, by a greatly intelligent, kind, perceptive man who obviously genuinely cares about the people he sees. He speaks of different kinds of people--an artist, a surgeon, a "dropout" from the 60s, a blind masseur, and of many different neurological problems, as well. This is a very readable primer in some (fairly) common neurological problems, but primarily, it is about treating the whole person.

While treating the whole person is not a new idea, and it sounds a bit warm-and-fuzzy for a serious science book, this collection of narratives really helps the reader understand the problem with a conventional hands-off medical head space. If Dr. Sacks had behaved as a typical neurologist with his patients, he would not have been able to make them come alive on the page--and he would not have been able to treat them with the kindness and compassion that seems to be his trademark.

This book is an old favorite that I decided to re-read. It is between these pages that I first "met" Temple Grandin, who is well-known as a designer of slaughterhouses, because of her almost empathic connection with cattle. She understands them very well, knows what will scare them or confuse them, and thus works to make the experience as pleasant as possible for the animals--much kinder than nature. The fact that Grandin is autistic is interesting, and has shaped her whole life, but almost as much time is devoted to her profession as her condition. This book also contains the story of the man who was blinded as a toddler, but became sighted as an adult. One can read about how babies learn to see in a psychology textbook, but it is much more meaningful to hear about one man's experience, and how he felt about it (bewildered, mostly).

There are some interesting adventures between the pages of the book, as well. Dr. Sacks scrubbed in on surgeries performed by a surgeon with Tourette's—and took a ride in a plane with the same surgeon at the stick. He took the "last hippie" to a Grateful Dead concert in New York. Life is not boring, I guess, when you're a world famous doctor and author.

Dr. Sacks' works include *The Man Who Mistook His Wife for a Hat* and *Awakenings*, along with several others. All are warm and human, and worth reading. Not only are they accessible and interesting as stories of exceptional people, but they also contain some curiosity-rousing science.

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NATURE NOTES:

from the backyard to the biosphere

By Zoe Dalton

Nature in Our Midst: Finding the Local Green

A real Voice staple, Nature Notes has been the environmental conscience of AU students for more than four years. A reader-friendly column, it encourages readers to learn more about their natural environment and to spend more time in their local green spaces to gain an appreciation for all the natural world has to offer. Finding the Local Green, published on August 5, is a terrific introduction to the column that will inspire you to find a little of nature even in the most urban of environments.

Incredibly, summer's end has already become a topic of conversation. But I know that for myself, the nature bug that bit so many of us earlier in the season continues to demand my attention. Spending time indoors feels like a crime, and those blue lakes and rocky shores seem to beckon to me like sirens from tales of yore. But as a generally car-spurning type, the question for me becomes: how to reconcile a yen for green with a distaste for arriving in the lovely wilds surrounded by a choking cloud of greenhouse gases?

I am no environmental angel, and the car does play a larger-than-I'd-like-to-admit role in my need-to-get-out-of-the-city summer yearnings. But, despite my urban abode, I have been able to find a surprising degree of green within a distance that does not require a car at all. Looking for and finding nature close to home, even when home is in Canada's largest city, is less difficult than one might first imagine.

Hanging out in the mini-forests of the larger parks, bug-watching in little overgrown abandoned lots, even following garbage-strewn pathways along abused urban waterways are high on my list of green journeys worth pursuing. They offer bits of solitude and tranquility, as well as that contact with living, breathing ecological entities so refreshing to the concrete-weary senses.

So many green city nooks have become important to me that it is hard to rank them in order of personal preference. However, some of my favourite memories of urban green chasing are times spent hiking the railroad tracks in my old neighbourhood.

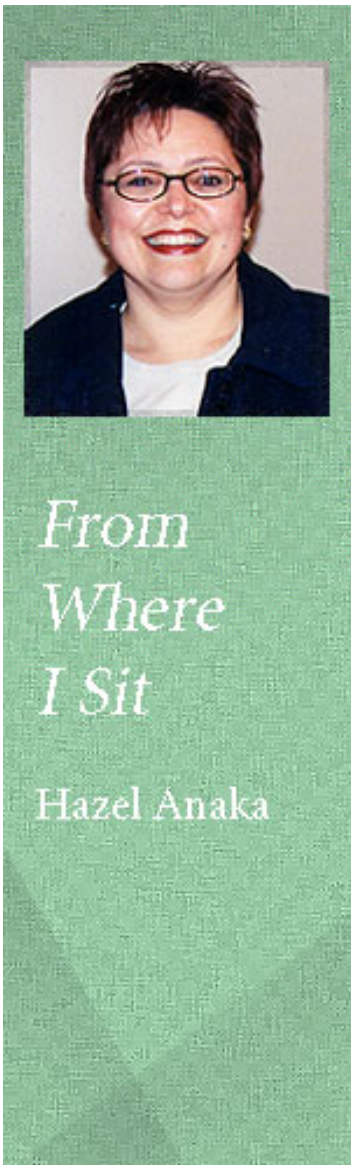
Every day a couple of summers ago, my partner, our dog and I walked the tracks in this neglected -- albeit gradually gentrifying -- corner of the city. What began as a way to give our canine companion some afternoon exercise soon became as much a passion of ours as it was of his. As the weeks passed, the dominant vegetation changed, the ever-evolving floral display shared with us lucky passers-by a new and varied sweetness, the grass grew up to hide whatever unsightliness may have lain beneath, and the newly-feathered fledgling birds hopped around, just getting the hang of the whole avian thing.

Throughout the season, the sun-warmed vegetation flourished, and in the later weeks of the summer gave off a scent you could only hope to find in a well-tended herb garden. When we moved to our current location at the end of the summer, the thing I was sorriest to leave behind from our Parkdale neighbourhood experience was our odd little natural paradise.

I know that what I crave most from out of town adventures is that feeling of freedom, of being able to walk around unconcerned, tousled and far from everyday cares. We certainly met some people on our walks who had achieved such a state along our lonely route, some of them shockingly so. But we too, with our bounding dog alongside, downtown skyline in full view and a surprising richness of green

around us, found an unexpected peace, freedom and contentment along the Parkdale tracks.

I still crave those isolated islands, pristine lakes and wild rocky shores that feed the nature-hungry soul so fully. But I have been happily surprised by the joy and loveliness that has come from exploring my local green.



Rest in Peace

From Where I Sit is the only ongoing Voice column that is reprinted - the rest of the material is all written specifically for The Voice. Selected for its consistent quality, and accessible, slice-of-life style, this column reflects the life of the modern rural student, combining farm life and responsibilities with higher learning and artistic expression - truly the best of both worlds.

As I struggle to come to grips with the death of yet another friend, I am confused. How can we prepare ourselves for death? How can we delay its approach? How can we live to our fullest potential?

Recently, a motivational speaker reminded delegates at a conference that I attended that God's question to each of us will be "What did you do with the time and talent I gave you?" Will you respond with a long or short report? Will the explanations, excuses and disclaimers take longer than your listing of deeds?

These are some of the questions running through my mind as I ponder Wanda's life and death. Wanda was a co-worker of mine for just over a year, so I didn't know her extremely well. Like all of us, I believe Wanda had the usual mix of joy and sorrow, challenges and triumphs. Some days she was buoyant and bubbly, and on other days she was profoundly sad and silent.

Her proudest accomplishment was losing over 150 pounds. I never knew the overweight Wanda, though she did show me pictures. She was within a mere two pounds of her goal weight just before Christmas. The excitement was palpable to all of us as she brought in a pair of her old fat pants and revelled in the significance of what she was accomplishing. She hoped to get onto the *Oprah Show* with her story. I loved to watch her preen. With a new hair colour and style, funky new glasses, bold coloured clothing, and lots of jewellery, Wanda was enjoying her new body. I admired her courage and determination as she stayed strong in the face of the smorgasbord that often appeared in our lunchroom. I admired the fact that she went to the gym at 6:00 a.m. to get the exercise routine done before work.

Just as important as the changes she was making to her exterior was the work she was doing on her interior. She still had her share of problems, but she was working hard to honour herself. When I last saw her in February she was still looking, at age 38, for a man who would treat her as she deserved to be treated. I had become one of her confidants. My heart broke for her as she suffered pain and betrayal from a particular man in her life. Her and I talked about what her ideal job would be. Though never a mother, she loved children. She hoped to take some courses and pursue an aide position in one of Vegreville's elementary schools.

Though Wanda had a generous heart and bubbly nature, sometimes her interactions with others didn't go well. When one such an encounter brought me to tears, a prompt and heartfelt apology got us back on track. We cried some more, we hugged and we vowed not to let some careless words on her part spoil our relationship. I am so glad today that we parted on good terms. Rest in peace, dear Wanda. You deserve it, from where I sit.

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Our newest contributor, Pam focuses on philosophical musings and inquiries into the nature of how humans learn and categorize things. This article, however, focuses on a very common theme here at AU - the balance between caring for children and continuing education. With the AUSU Student Mom's Club boasting more members than any other club, the relevance of this topic is clear.

Few students, no matter how bright, would claim that post-secondary studies are easy. I've come across a number of individuals, and not merely an insignificant minority, who struggle with one or two classes per semester simply because finding

motivation to do homework can be difficult. Even if you're managing five or six classes per semester, let's face it--paying vast amounts of money to learn things most of us won't remember in a few months, not to mention years, is not exactly enthusiasm-inducing.

Few parents, no matter how energetic and patient, would claim that having children is easy. The sleepless nights, the perpetual responsibility for people half your size who all too often forget the importance of gratitude--the experience can be frustratingly unrewarding. For those of you not yet blessed with the 18 or more years of responsibility that comes with childbirth, believe me, you don't know what it's like until you're there.

That said, I'd like to bring to everyone's attention a special human achievement of the 21st century--the student mom. Student moms take two extremely demanding situations and somehow manage to make the sleepless nights, the emotional stress and the perpetual lack of motivation work. And what's more, so many of them not only maintain top marks, but take the little time they have for themselves and use it to volunteer. Many have jobs on top of everything else. To me, that's nothing short of incredible.

Even more remarkable than these commendable student moms are the student single moms who work, part-time or full-time, to make their lives and that of their children's function. These are individuals who from inner strength derive (somehow) the time and energy to raise their children and improve their intellect, yet who manage to remain sane, at least most of the time. I admit that the inspiration for this article comes from living the struggle that comes from full-time education, part-time work, and 24 hour per day responsibility of parenting, but I'm not talking about myself. I only have one daughter. I'm talking about the single moms (and even the married moms) who have more than one child and a million other things to take care of (a lot of the time, this includes husbands!). These are the individuals who, as much as they might like to or intend to, cannot spend their evenings relaxing, partying, or volunteering. And the lack of that last option - volunteerism -- is probably what prevents these hard-working, incredible individuals from being properly recognized and celebrated.

I have had the fortune of joining and participating in AUSU's *Student Mom's Club* (founded by a commendable student mom) and interacting with the amazing moms of AU. They're around us, everywhere, waist deep in the struggle for survival. Over the past few years, I've read numerous articles stating that women, despite societal progress, cannot have it all--it's a matter of choosing between career and family. To these people, I say that right here at AU we have women who have it all and more. They're a credit to humanity.

All I ask is that the next time you hear a woman talking about how she had to stay up until four in the morning to finish writing an essay because her child was up sick the entire night prior (this is to be distinguished from individuals who stayed up all night partying), let this woman know how amazing she is. Because student moms are nothing short of superhuman.



Searching for Internships

Lonita Fraser

INTERNSHIP

The Walrus Magazine

Toronto, Ontario

The Art Internship is six months long. Sessions begin in July and January.

Application deadline: April 15 for July 2

There are two six-month Editorial Internship sessions per year.

Four interns are chosen for each session, and begin in pairs on consecutive months.

Requirements:

- must be graduates of a post-secondary academic institution or design school
- no more than thirty years old
- those who do not meet the criteria may make a case for consideration on the basis of exceptional circumstances

The Walrus editorial internship aims to introduce aspiring writers and editors to the magazine industry and to train them for future work in their fields.

Responsibilities include:

- fact checking, research, and reading unsolicited pitches
- take part in production and story meetings
- may shadow edit articles alongside staff editors
- assist with proof reading final copy
- are encouraged to pitch stories to the magazine
- administrative tasks are part of the interns' responsibilities, but will never occupy more than ten percent of their time

Submit:

- a statement of purpose
- a resume
- two letters of reference
- editorial internship applicants who have a strong preference for starting time should indicate their preference.

Qualified editorial applicants will be given a set of tasks to complete in a time limited period, and a selected group will be interviewed.

All interns receive \$900 bi-weekly, plus benefits.

Please mail application materials to:

Internship, The Walrus, 19 Duncan Street #101, Toronto ON M5H 3H1

Information gleaned from: <http://www.walrusmagazine.com/article.pl?sid=03/07/09/1835250>

SCHOLARSHIPS & AWARDS

Contributed by Zil-E-Huma Lodhi

Ritchie-Jennings Memorial Scholarship

Value: \$1,000

Application Deadline: May 13

Description: Must be currently enrolled in full-time studies at the undergraduate or graduate level at an accredited four-year college or university. Declared major in accounting or criminal justice, with interest in becoming Certified Fraud Examiners

Submit maximum 500 word essay on specified topic. Transcripts and letters of recommendation are required.

Association of Certified Fraud Examiners (ACFE)

Web Site: <http://www.cfenet.com/services/scholarships.asp>

Gloria Landis Memorial Bursary

Value: \$1,000

Application Deadline: June 15

Description: For residents of Ontario at least 25 years of age with a learning disability, entering first year at a post-secondary or accredited vocational institute program as a mature student. Must not have attended school full-time for three or more years. Must submit 400-600 word essay on topic of learning disabilities.

Submit letters of reference, proof of learning disability, proof of residency and acceptance into a post-secondary institution.

Learning Disabilities Association of Ontario (LDAO)

Web Site: <http://www.ldao.ca>

Helen Basset Commemorative Student Scholarship

Value: \$1,000 (4)

Application Deadline: July 29

Description: For Aboriginal women under 31 years of age who are pursuing post-secondary studies with a demonstrated commitment to improving the situation of Aboriginal women in Canada. Submit short essay on goals and plans to contribute to society. Financial need required. Must submit proof of age, Aboriginal descent and post-secondary registration, transcripts, letter of reference, statement of financial need and budget breakdown. For further information, please visit the website posted below

Native Women's Association of Canada (NWAC) / L'Association des femmes autochtones du Canada (AFAC)

Web Site: <http://www.nwac-hq.org>

Steven Huesing Scholarship

Value: \$500

Application Deadline: July 31

Description: Enrolled in a Canadian post-secondary institution in a health informatics or health care information management program. Must be of sound academic standing. Submit maximum 500 word description of achievements in health informatics. Transcripts, proof of enrolment and personal letter are required. For further information, please visit the website posted below

COACH: Canada's Health Informatics Association

Web Site: <http://www.coachorg.com/default.asp?id=627>

Voice Events Listings

On and off campus events worldwide

To list events in your area, e-mail voice@ausu.org with the word "events" in the subject line.

alberta

HAVE A HEART FOR HOSPICE HOLIDAY CAMPAIGN

December 01 - December 23, 2005

Calgary 11:00 AM-1:00 PM - Eau Claire Market

catherine.bell@hospicecalgary.com

<http://www.hospicecalgary.com>

The Holidays can be a special time for sharing memories and thinking about those we love. This year, Hospice Calgary invites you to dedicate a heart and place it on the Tree of Love at Eau Claire Market from Dec 1 - 23 between 11:00 A. M - 1:00 P.M.

LIFE & TIMES OF THE MOTORCYCLE

Now until September 17, 2006

Wetaskiwin, AB - Reynolds-Alberta Museum

10:00 AM - 5:00 PM

Adults \$9; Seniors \$7; Child \$5; Family \$25

under 6 is free - 1-800-661-4726 - ram@gov.ab.ca

<http://www.reynoldsalbertamuseum.com>

Visit 'Life and Times of the Motorcycle', an extraordinary exhibition featuring 150 of the most influential motorcycles in the past 100 years of motorcycling.

british columbia

MIDNIGHT EXPRESS NEW YEARS EVE AT THE STATION

December 31, 2005 - 9:30 PM - 2:00 AM

Rocky Mountaineer Vancouver Station

Tickets \$70 before December 23

<http://www.thestationnye.com>

DJ Jesse James

DJ Timeline

Live Performances - Acrobats

HERITAGE CHRISTMAS

Now until January 01, 2006 - 12:00 PM - 5:30 PM

Burnaby, BC - Burnaby Village Museum

Adults, \$8.15; Seniors/Youth, \$5.85; Children, \$4.95

Carousel Rides, \$1.50 each

604-293-6500 - <http://burnabyvillagemuseum.ca>

Features: Street characters, choirs, childrens' entertainment, father Christmas

CAROL SHIPS DINNER CRUISES

December 01 - 23 - Vancouver, BC

6:00 PM - 10:00 PM - Range from \$49.95 to \$59.95

Ticket Outlets www.VancouverCruises.com

604-681-2915 - gary@vancouvercruises.com

We'll join the many ships in the Carol Ships Parade and enjoy a Traditional Christmas Buffet!!

manitoba

SILVERWING

December 09 - 24, 2005 - Winnipeg, MB

CanWest Global Performing Arts Centre

2 Forks Market Road

All seats \$15 - <http://www.mtyp.ca>

Recommended for age 8 to adult

CHRISTMAS LIGHT RUN

Now until January 04, 2006 - 6:30 PM - 9:00 PM

Winnipeg, MB

ASSINIBOINE VALLEY RAILWAY - 3001 ROBLIN BLVD

Free access to site free. Parking free. We also collect donations for christmas cheer board and winnipeg harvest. The avr 1/8 railway offers train rides for \$2.00 each - <http://www.swedenfreezer.com/avr>

Come ride the train through a 7 acre aspen forest. 1/8 scale train. 75,000 christmas lights

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Winnipeg, Manitoba - Nov 25 - Jan 04, 2006

75,000 plus Christmas lights on an Interatctive site plus a chance to ride a 1/8 scale train through the illuminated bush. For event information: Telephone: (204) 837-1305 Fax: (204) 786-5082

iceman@swedenfreezer.com

www.swedenfreezer.com/avr/

quebec

FLUID - ALL INCLUSIVE PARTY

December 30, 2005 to January 01, 2006

9:00 PM - 3:00 AM - Montreal, QC - FLUID

info@fluidnewyears.com

<http://fluidnewyears.com>

www.newyearsmontreal.com

This NYE party in style at FLUID, the only ALL INCLUSIVE event in Montreal. Leave your wallet at home. Drinks, coat check, food, even tips, everything is included.

FULL OPEN BAR ALL NIGHT

2 floors, 5 DJs, Hip Hop, R&B, Old school, Laser light show, Bongos, dancers, free massages
Bring your friends, party for free. Bring everybody you know, win an iPod!

ontario

WOMENS ART ASSOCIATION CHRISTMAS ART SHOW

Now until January 07, 2006 - 12:00 PM - 4:00 PM
Hamilton, ON
Hamilton Museum of Steam and Technology
FREE for all ages - Donations encouraged.
905-546-4797 - steammuseum@hamilton.ca

Supporting women in art for 110 years, this local association presents works in many media by media by member artists.

DUNDURN CHRISTMAS EVENING TOURS

Now until December 30, 2005 - 7:00 PM - 9:00 PM
Hamilton, ON - Dundurn Castle
\$19.00 per person - Reservations Required
905-546-2872 - dundurn@hamilton.ca

Enjoy a unique opportunity to see Dundurn Castle decorated for Christmas in the evening. Begin your evening with carol singing in the front hall and enjoy an assortment of traditional Christmas food served in the historic kitchen.

WINTER FESTIVAL OF LIGHTS

Now until January 02, 2006
5:00 PM - Niagara Falls, ON

\$52.43 Ray Price, Brenda Lee
\$52.43 Bobby Vinton

\$66.34 Elvis Dinner Show
\$22.00 Silver Sizzles Revue

1-800-563-2557 - 905-374-1616 ext. 26
<http://www.wfol.com>

Marvel at the beauty of wintertime in Niagara Falls, as we light up the nights with over one million sparkling lights and nearly 100 motion light displays, including the ever popular Enchantment of Disney displays. This year, you'll notice a big lighting improvement as we add over 200,000 energy-efficient LED lights.

You'll certainly enjoy our illuminated night parades, weekly fireworks and Canada's largest New Year's Eve Concert Extravaganza.

'DEHUMANIZE' OIL ON CANVAS BY LEIF HARMSEN

Now until December 30, 2005 - 9:00 AM - 6:00 PM
Toronto, ON - Gallery X - Cost: Free
416-925-6665 ext 0
galleriyx@extra.ca - <http://www.harmsen.net>

maritimes

ST. JOHN'S CIRCUS: GROUP PRACTICE

St Johns, NF - Tuesdays - Mun Athletics building - FREE
<http://nick.wirelesszero.net/cgi-bin/juggling/YaBB.cgi>
Everyone's a Star! Juggling, Unicycling, Magic, Clowning, Poi, Diabolo, Fire, and whatever YOUR skill(s) is!
Tues At 7:00 PM - Thurs At 7:00 PM - Sat At 2:00 PM
Sessions usually run about 3 hrs...

123 SENSE

St Johns, NF - Saturdays - 12:00 PM - 5:00 PM
Eastern Edge Gallery, 72 Harbour Drive
free entrance
709-739-1882 - <http://www.easternedge.ca>
Jean Klimack (Winnipeg); Dave Yonge (B.C); Tania Lewis (NY/Newfoundland)
These three artists present in different mediums (video, drawing and photography) odd senses of the everyday, urban myths and gentrification.

To list events in your area, e-mail voice@ausu.org with "events" in the subject line.

Conference Connections

HIP HOP ECONOMIC SOCIAL CONFERENCE

Jan 5 - 8, 2006 - Atlanta, GA - <http://www.tnma.com>

TNMA conference will have enormous hip-hop celebrities and respected visionaries communicating the importance of establishing a sound financial future. The topics selected are to empower the participants to improve their quality of life. Events include: a celebrity basketball game, celebrity golf game, banquet and achievement awards.

3 day all access pass with accomdation: \$850

1 day access pass: \$380

1 day conference pass: \$475

1 day workshops pass: \$200

INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCES ON SHAMANISM, ENLIGHTENMENT, AND SACRED SEXUALITY

Jan 20-24/06 - Santa Fe, New Mexico <http://bizspirit.com>

Some of our presenters are Raphael Cushnir, Alberto Villoldo, Joyce and Barry Vissell, Brant Secunda, Leonard Shlain, Juliana Dahl, and many more. The Message Company creates blocks of hotel rooms for you at a discounted price. All the rooms are on the Plaza.

MINDBODYSPIRIT MEDICINE PROFESSIONAL TRAINING PROGRAM

Jan 29 - Feb 4, 2006 - Berkeley, CA <http://www.cmbm.org>

The most comprehensive mind-body training program in the United States, using a unique, small-group model for healthcare professionals who want to integrate the best of MindBodySpirit medicine into their clinical practices including medicine, psychology, nursing, social work, or other healing profession, or into medical school education. Become a better healer, and find more meaning in your work through this experiential, science-based program. Continuing education credits and partial scholarships available.

2006 HAWAII INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON ARTS AND HUMANITIES

Jan 11-14, 2006 - Honolulu <http://www.hichumanities.org>

The main goal of the 2006 Hawaii International Conference on Arts and Humanities is to provide an opportunity for academicians and professionals from various arts and humanities related fields from all over the world to come together and learn from each other. An additional goal of the conference is to provide a place for academicians and professionals with cross-disciplinary interests related to arts and humanities to meet and interact with members inside and outside their own particular disciplines. Performing artists (live dance, theater, and music) interested in displaying their talents will be accommodated whenever possible.

2006 HAWAII INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON EDUCATION

Jan 6 - 9, 2006 - Honolulu - <http://www.hiceducation.org>

The main goal of the 2006 Hawaii International Conference on Education is to provide an opportunity for academicians and professionals from various education related fields from all over the world to come together and learn from each other. An additional goal of the conference is to provide a place for academicians and professionals with cross-disciplinary interests related to education to meet and interact with members inside and outside their own particular disciplines.



**Prairie
Universities
Biological
Symposium**

40th Anniversary Conference
BY students FOR students

University of Calgary
Feb 23-25, 2006
Registration \$22, Banquet \$20



Banquet at the Calgary Zoo
Guest speaker: Dr. Robert Barclay

SUBMIT YOUR ABSTRACTS NOW!
Deadline: Jan 10, 2006

Registration & information:
<http://homepages.ucalgary.ca/~pubs/>

Know of a conference that is not on this list? Contact 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 for more information.

AU Student in Canada seeking thirty-something Alberta pen-pal to correspond with about school and life. Contact voice@ausu.org for contact information.

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THE VOICE

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