

★ Alberta Public Interest Research Group

★ First Annual Report
2002/2003

New Beginnings...

There have been a lot of firsts for the Alberta Public Interest Research Group this year. As one of Canada's newest PIRGs, we have been faced with the challenge of setting up an engaging resource centre, supporting over 20 new working groups, and letting students know about our services and volunteer opportunities.

The story of APIRG began with a group of dedicated students that organized a referendum campaign to fund a PIRG at the U of A. In March 2001, the U of A student body voted in favour of this initiative, and the APIRG interim board began negotiations with the Students' Union to set up APIRG's financial framework and governance structure.

By September 2002, APIRG was ready to open its doors to the campus community. Student organizers set up a welcoming resource centre in bustling HUB Mall, hired two staff members, and began accepting proposals for working groups. Since then, APIRG has been steadily growing, as word spreads about our activities and more students have come in to volunteer or set up new working groups.

This is our first annual report to the community: a celebration of what APIRG has accomplished so far, and an invitation to join us in our vision of helping students to build a more democratic, inclusive, and sustainable society. Read on to find out what we have done this year, and contact us if you'd like to be a part of it!

Rose Yewchuk, APIRG Coordinator



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2002/2003 Interim Board

Undergraduate students:

Genevieve Burdett
Chris Drake
Emilia Kennedy
Eric Kershaw
Bequie Lake
Jen Lusk
Christina Matteotti
Marika Schwandt
Tim Singh
Kit Nash
Ryan Cheng
Tracey Smith

Laura Roberts (**Councillor for the Faculty of Arts**)
Steve Smith (**SU Vice-President Operations and Finance**)

Craig Campbell (**Grad student**)
Pete Presant (**Grad student**)

Contact Us!

Alberta Public Interest Research Group
Hub International Mall
9111 – 112 Street
University of Alberta
Edmonton, AB
T6G 2C5

phone: (780) 492-0614
fax: (780) 492-0615

www.apirg.org
apirg@ualberta.ca

Special thanks to Jay Moore for doing the photography for this annual report.



Between August 2002 and September 2003, APIRG went from being a group of activists with a dream and a constitution to being a well-organized planning and resource centre with one of the largest PIRG budgets in Canada.

Governance for APIRG's inaugural year

APIRG's first Board of Directors was elected at a General Meeting in September 2002. This interim board included undergraduate students, graduate students, and community members. It carried out the work of the organization until an official board could be chosen by the student body in a general election in March 2003.

To set up APIRG's operations, the interim board members drew inspiration from successful Public Interest Research Groups (PIRGs) that had been established at universities across Canada and the United States. They also responded to suggestions from U of A students and community members.

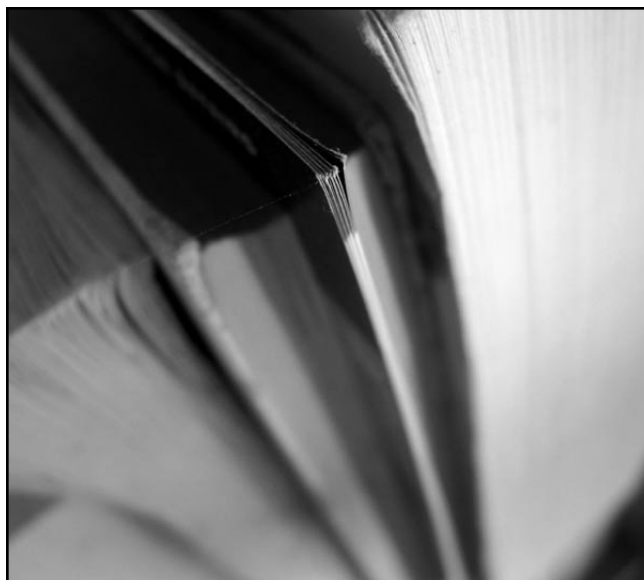
Interim Board accomplishments for 2002/2003:

- ★ Setting up an office in leased space from HUB Mall to serve as a resource centre, work space and meeting space
- ★ Developing a working budget and setting up an accounting system
- ★ Creating an alternative resource library with an online searchable database
- ★ Supporting the creation of over 20 new working groups to address diverse public interest issues
- ★ Setting up a listserv and sending out a weekly community events listing
- ★ Producing pamphlets, brochures, and other PIRG literature
- ★ Developing policies for APIRG's operations
- ★ Hosting several events, including two open houses, a Book Raiser for the library, training sessions on consensus decision-making and anti-oppression, and a workshop on community building held jointly with the Alberta Council for Global Cooperation
- ★ Developing a good working relationship with the Students' Union, resulting in a version of the APIRG bylaw that both parties were satisfied with
- ★ Forming connections and partnerships with other organizations, including the Parkland Institute, the Environmental Research and Studies Centre, the Alberta Council for Global Cooperation (ACGC) and the Office of the Dean of Students
- ★ Holding the first annual Board of Directors elections from among the undergraduate student body
- ★ Making connections with CPIRG in Calgary and LPIRG in Lethbridge and offering support to help them get established on their campuses

The APIRG Speaker Fund is designed to assist individuals or groups with organizing events in the public interest on campus. In 2002/2003 APIRG allocated \$4,259 to speakers and events.



Event	Date	Organizer	Amount funded by APIRG
Revolutionary Speakers Series Inga Muscio	December 5, 2002	U of A Students' Union	\$ 1 500
Aboriginal Law Speakers Series: Justice T. Mandamin Dr. Brian Slatterly John D. Whyte Harold Cardinal Larry Chartrand	February 24, 2003 February 25, 2003 February 26, 2003 February 27, 2003 February 28, 2003	Aboriginal Law Students' Association	\$ 1 000
International Week Darrin Hagen	Jan. 27 – Feb 1, 2003 January 29, 2003	International Centre	\$ 100 \$ 100
Sohkitechwena, Strong Hearts: Panel of Indigenous Women	January 28, 2003		\$ 400
Day of Silence	March 14, 2003	SIDERITE/OUTreach	\$ 660
War Photographer Screening	April 22, 2003	U of A Students' Union	\$ 199
Julia Query	April 11, 2003	FUSS	\$ 300
Total:			\$ 4 259



APIRG's funding comes from a dedicated fee that was established in a Students' Union referendum in March 2001.

In 2002/2003, full-time students paid \$2.53 per term and part-time students paid \$1.27 per term.

First Year Budgeting Challenges

APIRG ran two budgets simultaneously this past year — one using the dedicated fees from 2001/2002 and a second using the dedicated fees from 2002/2003. Both were approved by the U of A Students' Union and have been audited by the chartered accounting firm of Halpert Monsma Aquin.

Start-Up Budget: 2001/2002 Dedicated fees

We used some of the funds from the dedicated fees from the 2001/2002 academic year as a start-up budget to get the office in order and programs into motion.

In 2001/2002 APIRG's dedicated fees totaled \$127 146. Of this amount, we have received a \$54 050 disbursement from the Students' Union to date. We spent a total of \$43 033 of this money during the past fiscal year (to April 30, 2003).

This left \$11 017 in our cash account and \$73 096 in the APIRG fund for 2001/2002. We have requested the disbursement of this remaining amount from the SU to be used as an annual cash flow reserve to cover operating expenses during the six-month gap between the start of our fiscal year in May and the disbursement of our SU fees in November.

APIRG closed the year with an \$84 113 surplus from the 2001/2002 dedicated fees to be used in future years for things like extra projects, more Working Groups, and a reserve fund.

Expenditures from 2001/2002 Dedicated fees

Temporary staff for start-up organization	\$ 7 261
Library resource purchases	\$ 3 580
Computers and office equipment	\$ 11 192
Legal fees for society by-laws	\$ 2 000
SU EcoConference sponsorship – Ralph Nader	\$ 10 000
Parkland Institute Fall Conference sponsorship	\$ 5 000
Repayment of referendum campaign loans from other PIRGs	\$ 4 000
Total	\$ 43 033

2002/2003 Dedicated fees

APIRG's fiscal year runs from May 1 to April 30 and 2002/2003 was our first year in operation. APIRG was severely under budget this year because we did not establish the office and staff until halfway through the year. This will not be the case in subsequent years.

In 2002/2003 students paid \$128 672 in APIRG dedicated fees, of which \$ 77 046 was spent on grants to students and resource centre operations. APIRG also received \$1 647 in additional income from various sources this year.

APIRG closed the 2002/2003 year with a cash surplus of \$51 626. (However, APIRG's actual surplus was only \$33 940, because an additional \$17 686 was allocated to Working Groups who have not yet spent the full amount of their grants since they are carrying out multi-year projects.) The surplus money from 2002/2003 will also be put into extra programming in future years.

The Upcoming Year (2003/2004)

Due to an increase in dedicated fees and student numbers, APIRG's income from dedicated fees in 2003/2004 is anticipated to be \$143 000. This rise in projected income will allow us to correspondingly increase our financial support of student projects and activities. Based on estimates from last year extrapolated to 12 full months of expenses, APIRG has developed a projected budget for the 2003/2004 school year.

We look forward to greater utilization of these resources by the U of A student population, and we anticipate growing interest in APIRG by way of applications and grant requests this year. If you have any questions or concerns with respect to APIRG's financial position or expenditures, please feel free to make an appointment to meet with APIRG staff or an APIRG Board Member. We are accountable to you!

Cherie Klassen, APIRG Financial Manager, 2002-2003

Expenditures from 2002/2003 Dedicated fees		Projected budget for 2003/2004	
Working Group expenses	\$ 14 849	Working group grants and projects	\$ 35 000
Conference fund grants	\$ 4 998	Conference fund	\$ 10 000
Speaker fund grants	\$ 4 259	Speaker fund	\$ 8 400
Workshops for students	\$ 1 295	Workshops and events	\$ 1 500
Library resource purchases	\$ 3 362	Library	\$ 2 000
Elections – CRO and campaigns	\$ 1 998	AGM	\$ 400
Communication and outreach	\$ 1 974	Elections	\$ 3 000
Opt-out administration and advertising	\$ 1 020	Board retreats and training	\$ 1 500
Student opt-out refunds	\$ 291	Office (including rent, insurance, equipment & supplies)	\$ 18 250
Permanent staff	\$ 22 105	Staff (Coordinator, Administrator & Financial Manager)	\$ 50 000
Rent and utilities	\$ 9 476	Contingency and miscellaneous	\$ 5 000
Insurance	\$ 450		
Phone, internet, photocopier	\$ 1 428		
Office – one-time purchases of furniture and supplies	\$ 4 426		
Board retreats and training	\$ 1 120		
Contingency (including a \$2000 start-up loan to LPIRG)	\$ 3 996		
Total	\$ 77 046	Total	\$ 143 000



“I have gained an enriched understanding of the struggles and difficulties faced by those of the South...”

*Comments from Conference Fund Recipient
Laura Roberts*

Purpose of the Conference Fund

The APIRG conference fund is designed for students who are attending conferences and seminars on public interest issues. The fund can be used to cover travel costs, registration fees, per diems, and other costs associated with the conference.

Students and community members can apply by submitting a proposal to APIRG and attending a Board meeting to discuss why their attendance at the conference would benefit the campus community.

Once they return from their conference, each recipient is required to submit a written report about their experiences and make a presentation at an APIRG general meeting. The full reports are available from the APIRG office and will be posted on the APIRG website.

Comments from the 2002/2003 recipients:

★ “The paper I delivered at this conference was concerned with “race” relations in the past, right here in Edmonton. The larger goal behind my paper was to try to increase the understanding of the history of the relations between Aboriginal peoples and Canadian society at large, and hopefully create more understanding of those relations today.”

Jaimy Miller

★ “The aim of the three-day event was both grandiose and necessary: the bringing together of environmental and social movements. In my mind the conference was a marvelous success and very beneficial to my development as an effective activist.”

Chris Drake

★ “It is difficult to describe the effects that this Seminar has had upon my life. Nonetheless, the memory of an extremely polluted environment with little infrastructure remains firmly in my mind.

This has certainly increased my knowledge about the challenges that developing nations are facing. I can now more easily empathize with immigrants and the adaptations they face in moving to Canada.”

Graeme Brassard

- ★ “The conference began with a bus tour that visited many of the local organic food distributors, suppliers, and businesses. For both Simplefood members this was a great learning experience and provided insight into the industry.

While in Vancouver we also had the opportunity to speak to a variety of individuals that have begun food buying groups, or co-ops, similar to our own. This was possibly the most helpful resource accessed over the weekend, as speaking with these various individuals gave us new ideas and inspiration for returning to Edmonton and building Simplefood.”

Tara Irwin & Poojah Gandhi

- ★ “Our team consisted of four medical students and a pharmacist. Upon arriving in Dschang, Cameroon, a mountain city of 40,000, we created a curriculum to inform villagers on various health topics such as HIV/AIDS and STD education and prevention strategies, hygiene and sanitation, breastfeeding and oral rehydration therapy.

We worked with local health authorities and native Cameroonians on developing presentations that we would give at village meetings. In the five weeks that I was there, we visited ten different villages reaching over 700 people.”

Edward Lee

- ★ “I have gained an enriched understanding of the struggles and difficulties faced by those of the South. Moreover, I’ve learned about all the positive work being done in order to combat these challenges: through growth and strength of Latin America’s leftist political parties, social movements, and student movements.

This is highly complementary to my studies, as I specialize in international relations, and have a particular interest in US hegemony and Latin America politics.”

Laura Roberts

2002/2003 Conference Fund Recipients

2 APIRG Participants	\$ 100
Students’ Union Ecoconference Edmonton, September 13 – 15, 2002	
Marika Schwandt	\$ 60
Workshop on Globalization, Canadian International Trade & Alberta NGOs Hinton, October 26 – 27, 2003	
Laura Roberts	\$ 450
13 th biannual OCLAE conference (Organization of Caribbean and Latin American Students) Guadalajara, Mexico, Nov. 29 – Dec. 2, 2002	
Jaimy Miller	\$ 354
13 th Annual APALA Conference (Anthropology, Physical Anthropology, Linguistics, and Archaeology) Winnipeg, January 31 – February 1, 2003	
Chris Drake	\$ 534
Annual Blue in Green Conference: Articulating Human Rights and Environment Montréal, January 31 – February 2, 2003.	
U of A Model United Nations’ Club	\$ 1 500
Model United Nations Conferences McGill, UBC, and U Ottawa, early 2003	
Carmen Douville	\$ 400
Environ Design 7 conference Washington, DC, April 30 – May 3, 2003	
David Backstrom	\$ 200
BC Climate ExChange/Transportation Demand Management Workshop, March 2003	
Graeme Brassard	\$ 400
WUSC International Seminar to Benin June – July, 2003	
Tara Irwin & Poojah Gandhi	\$ 500
Canadian Health Food Conference Vancouver, April 24 – 27, 2003.	
Edward Lee	\$ 500
Project Intégré pour la Promotion de l’Auto-Développement, Cameroon, Aug. 2003	
Total:	\$ 4 998

APIRG's student-directed working groups are responsible for most of the organization's public interest advocacy work. Working groups are formed by students and community members who want to raise awareness about a particular issue.



APIRG's goal is to provide working groups with the resources and support they need to take effective action within the community. Because working groups are student-directed, the issues they address change from year to year depending on the interests of the students involved.

In 2002/2003, APIRG allocated a total of \$32,535 in direct grants to the various working group projects. The following pages contain reports submitted by the working groups about their accomplishments for the past year.

★ Affordable Student Housing (ASH)

Our group was established to look into ways in which students could increase the availability of affordable student housing on campus. Our group is looking into two strategies: the possibility of students starting a student-owned, student-run residence on the University of Alberta campus, and the use of unconventional residence styles (such as co-ops).

For the former project, we began by investigating residences across North America to learn of the different options

available at other Universities. This was followed up by an investigation into what students want in a residence. We looked at several options for residences, how well they would meet student needs and how adaptable each style of residence would be to other uses. The end result of this phase is a vague definition of an ideal residence.

For the next phase of the project, we began to interview key University personnel about how to move the project forward. Dr. Julian Martin, architect of the University Long Range Development Plan, provided a great deal of insight into the University's future plans and challenges for establishing new residences. He also highlighted the strategy to follow to make sure a proposal will gain traction within the University bureaucracy.

On Dr. Martin's advice, we next spoke to David Bruch, Director of Housing and Food Services for the University. Mr. Bruch outlined the specific financial problems impeding the University from establishing more residences and reaffirmed the view of Dr. Martin that a student proposal had potential for adoption. Mr. Bruch also arranged for us to receive demographics on current residence occupancy.

At this point, our group is planning out future steps for this project.

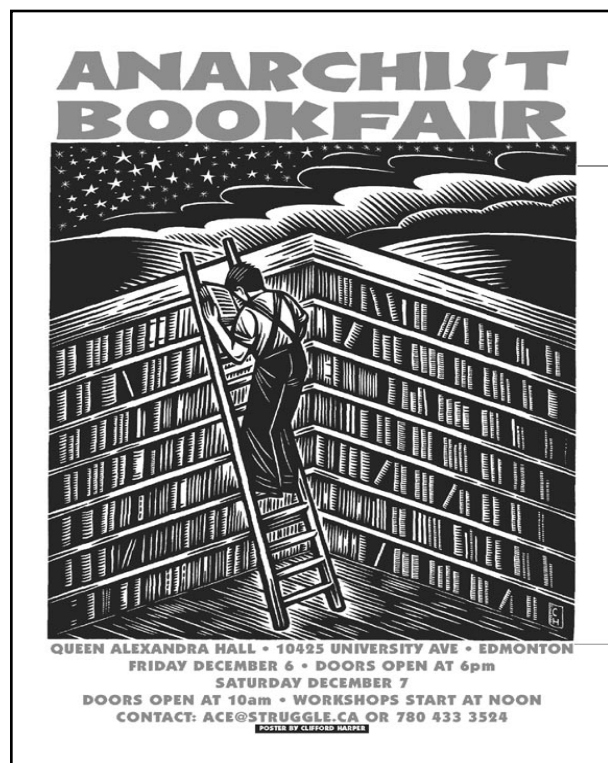
★ Anti-Capitalist Edmonton (ACE)

Since becoming an APIRG working group, the activities of ACE include organizing the 2002 Edmonton Anarchist Bookfair. This two-day event was a success, with great attendance; books, zines, music and other materials from all over North America; and several excellent workshops presented by local and visiting anarchists.

ACE has also presented several debate/discussion forums that we call "The Fight Club." These forums are designed to give activists a space to hash out issues that are often overlooked. Topics have included drug use, sex and sexuality, racism in the activist scene, and strategy/tactics. Some sessions have been well attended and others have suffered due to poor outreach and lack of interest.

At the U of A's 2003 International Week, ACE presented a workshop titled 'Opposing White Supremacy, Challenging White Privilege' which was extremely well attended and has lead to several opportunities to present the workshop in other venues.

ACE also participated in the May 2003 Culture and the State conference at the U of A with one member, Donnie Osler, presenting a talk on the challenges of anarchist organizing in isolated and conservative areas.



Alberta Taiga Oilsands Project (ATOP) ★

The Alberta Taiga Oilsands Project is organized to provide a ready structure for research into the social and ecological ramifications of oil sands industry of Alberta. Researchers and participants are welcome to contribute their own work to the database, and to use the resources for their own research. It is hoped that ATOP will constitute a platform and foundation for research.

ATOP website: this website was designed to provide data and resources for those interested in doing research on the oilsands. It represents the group's baseline of information.

Myth busters: ATOP has designed a format for the dissemination of information. This is organized around the idea that short informative documents can promote awareness, inculcate an interest in the industry, and provide a foundation for further research. Some ATOP members are currently working on designing some mythbuster documents in their spare time.

Biofreedom ★

Since becoming a working group with APIRG in the fall of 2002, Biofreedom has had many successes in getting the issue of Genetic Engineering (GE) before the public.

The first project we undertook was to book the Zeidler Hall Theater in the Citadel so that we could have a screening of the National Film Board documentary *The Genetic Takeover*. This flick was chosen for its well-researched facts about GE crops and the concerns around the science (or lack thereof), as well as the interviews with a variety of experts. The screening went very well with over 200 people attending, some good discussions after the film and many new members signing up for our listserv.

We have set up an excellent web page and a listserv that is currently sending GE updates to over 200 recipients. Whenever there is a local event or a news item about GE we send it out to everyone through email. New people are signing on every day.

We contacted Percy Schmeiser, the world-renowned farmer who has taken Monsanto to court, and invited him to share his experiences on January 9, 2003. Percy travels the world to update people about his trials with the biotech industry and we were very lucky to have him here. He is spearheading the legal battles that will determine precedent-setting results for farmers everywhere. Many dollars were raised to help with Percy's legal fund.

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Biofreedom report continued from previous page

Biofreedom also attended the Greater Edmonton Teachers' Convention Association in late February. We were set up with a very good booth where we could distribute information, talk with teachers about the curriculum, and sign up interested teachers to the listserv. It turned out to be an excellent chance to network and make connections. For every one of the 8000 teachers in attendance there are probably twenty to a hundred students who will in turn talk with their friends and families about the issue. Some serious seeds were planted that day and we reached many people who are outside the activist community or who otherwise are hard to reach. We are hoping to attend more conventions in the future and to give presentations.

Another presentation we did was at Seedy Saturday, where many farmers and seed savers gather to discuss agriculture. Matthew and Brandy gave an excellent talk about the concerns around GE Wheat, which is about to be released in Canada. The National Farmers' Union and the Canadian Wheat Board itself have condemned the use of GE Wheat for the simple fact that a massive amount of Canada's wheat market goes to Europe and the European Union has banned GE crops for consumption. This move would decimate farmers in Canada and still Monsanto wants to plow ahead because they stand to profit as well as gain further control over the agriculture industry.

Without APIRG's assistance we would not have been able to make the photocopies we needed or to make the banner for the teachers' convention, Percy Schmeiser would not have spoken here, nor would we have been able to connect to so many established groups via the web site. We now work in tandem with the Council of Canadians, the Polaris Institute, Greenpeace, the Sierra Club, the Union of Concerned Scientists, the David Suzuki Foundation, and many others who already have a large base and significant funding and resources. With APIRG's continued support we can continue to grow and to attain mandatory labeling of ALL GE products, and perhaps even a recall and moratorium of GE products and crops until further research is conducted.



U of A Coalition Against War and Racism (CAWAR) ★

In 2002/2003 we managed to organize three major anti-war/anti-racism marches, and help with the organization of two of Alberta's biggest protests. We helped create a new citywide anti-war Coalition. We had two teach-ins, and a dramatic die-in. We also had several rounds of tabling, and helped distribute and produce activist literature. We recently began a campaign to lobby the Universities of Alberta Pension Plan (UAPP) to divest itself of GE stock.



Citizens for Peaceful Communities (CPC) ★

Citizens for Peaceful Communities was formed to advocate for police accountability in the wake of increasing militarization of police forces and aggressive encounters with the public. CPC believes that independent civilian oversight of policing and just handling of complaints of police misconduct are necessary links in the chain of public accountability. CPC also seeks to counter racial stereotyping, profiling, and public order programs.

CPC's recent activities include preparing a 13-page response to the provincial review of the Police Act and sending a representative to Vancouver for the Little Sister conference on community resistance, security, law and technology.

★ Edmonton Small Press Association (ESPA)

The ESPA is an incorporated, not-for profit arts association that is committed to fostering the awareness and development of independent small-press ventures. The ESPA has an extensive resource library and small press archive, and tech equipment such as industry-standard computers and peripherals, a community photocopier, and more. We are a resource network for independent producers from all walks of life and skill levels, fostering the D.I.Y. or Die philosophy that anyone can be creative and anyone can have a voice.

APIRG's funding is going towards the ESPA's inaugural North of Nowhere Expo (NoN), a multidisciplinary exhibition incorporating visual art, literary works, film/video screenings, workshops, an Information Fair and much more. The name comes from our recognizing we are on the fringe of both the traditional arts establishment and the traditional activist networks—although we are active in both arenas, where do we fit in? Nowhere.

Of the \$2500 we have received from APIRG, to date, \$400 has been paid out to casual labour and another \$900 has been allocated to specific Coordinator positions. All of the remaining \$1200 will be used to pay a combination of additional support staff positions (including casual labour as necessary) and Coordinators (which will need to be supplemented by other funding we receive).

Thanks again for APIRG's support. I can't express the gratitude I feel in receiving the funds to be able to hire the casual labour we have to date—I can say without a doubt that without the APIRG allocation we would be far, far behind what we are now, and there is no doubt whatsoever from my perspective of APIRG's value to community grassroots initiatives.

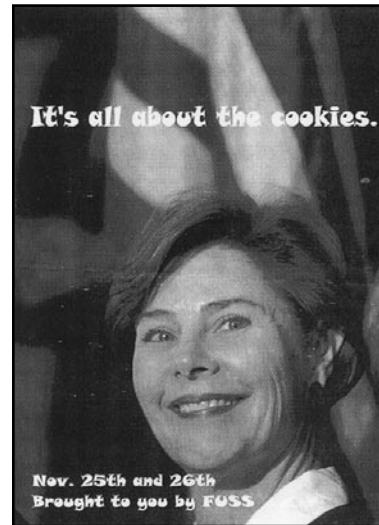
★ Fait Accomplit

Fait Accomplit is a biannual creative/critical literary journal that was originally founded in 1985 by the graduate students of the Department of Comparative Literature at the University of Alberta.

Our goal is to provide a forum for the publication of new writers and artists. Fait Accomplit publishes poetry, short stories, essays and art in all styles and of all schools, and in any language. Our primary focus is to discover and encourage writers from the University of Alberta, but we are certainly not restricted to the university. We receive and welcome submissions from anywhere. We hope that by

encouraging a community of writers centered here, we can further the cause of the arts in Alberta.

APIRG funding is important to us because it eliminates the need to seek out corporate or SU funding that would carry with it restrictions on content that we are unwilling to make. It allows us to maintain a level of objectivity and independence that is required by such a publication.



FUSS Feminist Collective ★

FUSS endeavors to bring in speakers and resources and create a safe space in which any interested parties could discuss and organize around feminist ideals on campus. FUSS has focused on issues of sexuality, self-representation, and workers' rights (particularly in relation to sex work).

In October, 2002, FUSS co-sponsored a reading and appearance by Inga Muscio (author of the new feminist classic *Cunt*) as part of the Students' Union Revolutionary Speakers Series. In preparation for Ms. Muscio's talk, FUSS members did on-campus outreach (distributing literature and hundreds of homemade 'cunt' cookies and advertising the event at a concert by feminist performer Ember Swift) and participated in media promotions of the event. This speaking event drew approximately 250 people.

In January, 2003, the group created its own 'Girls of FUSS' calendar, in response to the production of a campus bikini calendar. This publication featured self-representations of FUSS members, using a variety of media and approaches to combat stereotypical images of women in traditional 'Girls on Campus' calendars. Dozens of these calendars have been sold to members of the campus community and general public.

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FUSS report continued from previous page

In late February, in support of the Women's Centre Collective's Menstrual Week, FUSS organized the 'Menstrual Cabaret', an evening of food, art, music and discussion aimed at examining the various meanings of menstruation. The cabaret was attended by approximately 100 people.

In March and April, FUSS organized 'The Sex Work Series', two events linking feminism, labour activism and sex work. The first part of the series, a talk given by two local escorts, focused on the legal and social challenges faced by Edmonton prostitute-activists. The second, which took place in mid-April, saw Julia Query, renowned feminist filmmaker and former exotic dancer, speak on her experiences as a labour activist within the sex industry. In anticipation of Ms. Query's appearance, FUSS sponsored a free pre-screening of her award-winning film *Live Nude Girls Unite!*, and worked with APIRG, the University Student's Union, the Industrial Workers of the World and the International Socialists to finance her flight and speaking fee. In order to promote Ms. Query's talk, FUSS did front-line labour outreach with local exotic dancers; in doing so, we made some initial contacts with feminist dancers. Both of these events were well-attended and successful in building alliances between feminists on campus and activists within the sex industry. The first talk reached an audience of several dozen people, while the film showing and Ms. Query's speech drew crowds of approximately 100 and 60 respectively.

Near the end of the school year, FUSS began organizing a series of sex-positive workshops and events. 'Pleasure Week' took place in late May 2003 and included workshops on various aspects of sexual expression to introduce participants to safe and consensual radical sex practices. It concluded with a Pleasure Cabaret, which featured music, art and literature addressing feminism and pleasure.

In its brief history, FUSS has grown from a small group of previously-acquainted activists to a much larger and more diverse organization, while evolving our analysis and focus through hands-on organizing and action. Our members have gained skills, contacts and new goals in the process of organizing and promoting inclusive feminist events on a campus that has lacked, historically, a cohesive and continuous feminist activist presence.

We would like to stress that none of FUSS's projects would have been possible without the donation of labour, time and basic materials (photocopying, paper, staples, the use of space) by FUSS members, allies in other activist groups and the greater community. These non-monetary contributions (along with the generous support of APIRG and its staff) have made it possible for us to achieve many of our goals as a new campus group, and in many cases, exceed them.

House of Mother Earth (HOME) Project ★

Our group has logged approximately 1000 hours of volunteer and staff time since our inception in November of 2002. Our long-term plans for developing an Eco-Village housing and educational facility in Edmonton are still in the early research stages.

To date, our group has planned the following events:

- ★ A community forum on ecologically designed communities, asserting our intent to form a group oriented towards creating such an entity in Edmonton.
- ★ The HOME Project Local Sustainability Speaker Series, intended as a means of encouraging open, community-oriented discussion. So far, we have hosted Richard McKelvie, a Ponoka-area organic cattle rancher; Dennis Vriend, a local organic vegetable farmer; and Gordon Howell, an Edmonton solar energy advocate.
- ★ Participation in the River Valley Clean-Up. Ten HOME project members collectively contributed an estimated 50 hours of community service to Edmonton in Spring 2003.
- ★ The Mobile HOME Bus Sustainability Tour, which took place in Summer 2003 and involved visits to the Borealis Eco-Village near Edson, the Laughing Coyote Eco-Cooperative in the Little Slokan Valley, and Rainbow's End, a beautiful and desolate community high in the Duncan Valley near Kalso, BC, among others.

As always, HOME's research and preparations are dedicated towards the goal of creating an Intentional Community. APIRG has really helped us out by providing us with advice, logistical aid, funding, resources like the photocopier and fax machine, and putting up a basic website for our group. It's been really good working with you all, staff and organization alike, and we look forward to continuing our relationship.



★ Just Java

Just Java in its first year was a group of eight U of A students and the United Church Chaplain, all of whom were affiliated in some way with the United Church of Canada. These people were united in their desire to live their faith convictions in actions promoting social change.

In its first year Just Java set forward the following goals:

- ★ To educate ourselves about the issues related to fair trade
- ★ To educate people on campus about the issue of fair trade coffee
- ★ To encourage coffee retailers to sell fair trade
- ★ To increase the demand for fair trade coffee on campus.

To meet these goals, Just Java did the following projects and activities:

- ★ Educated ourselves about the issue of fair trade
- ★ Picked a name and created a logo for ourselves
- ★ Wrote letters to retailers on campus
- ★ Created a coffee passport to promote those retailers close to campus who sell fair trade coffee
- ★ Created a series of four educational posters on fair trade coffee and posted them around campus
- ★ Created a presentation with skits, speakers and dialogue for International Week. It was also presented to three Grade 9 classes in a local junior high school.
- ★ Wrote articles for the Sierra Club and the Pembina Institute
- ★ Worked educational tables in SUB with fair trade coffee taste tests three times

As we approached various coffee retailers we learned much about the retailing of fair trade coffee. Michael Kalmanovich and Debora Robb at Earth's General Store were particularly helpful on this. As a result, we shifted our focus from getting retailers to sell fair trade coffee to increasing the demand for fair trade coffee.

We were very gifted with a graphic artist in the group who put considerable time into creating our posters, which seem to have been very successful in educating people. Creating the interactive skit and presentation was educational for everyone in the group as well as for our audience. The taste testing was far more successful as a means of educating people about coffee than simply having a table in SUB would have been. A goal for next year is to push to get more people involved who don't necessarily have our faith background.



Kyoto Working Group ★

The Alberta In Kyoto Investigation Group was set up to analyze the potential effects of the Kyoto Protocol on the province of Alberta's environment, people, economy and industry.

Our members have been building lists of faculty members who may be in a position to offer expert opinion on Kyoto and its pending implementation. We've formulated a list of questions and plan to interview campus experts about the many implications of the protocol so that we can release an objective report.

Lal ★

Lal is a new media collective that provides technical services to make it easier for non-profits to use the internet for promotion, communication, and collaboration. We plan to research the needs of non-profit groups, develop open-source software to meet those needs, and make our results publicly available to other groups.

We have managed to set up and maintain the APIRG server. We have the base foundation needed for development now up and running. Our biggest challenge has been finding the time to develop the software.

★ Media Working Group

Media working group members are committed to providing a structured, objective, and credible media analysis. In collaboration with the U of A Coalition Against War and Racism, we completed an analysis of the local newspaper coverage of the situation in Iraq. This study was published by APIRG in May 2003 and is available on the APIRG website.

We have submitted articles about the study to the Parkland Post, VUE Magazine, and U of A Express News. We also intend to promote the creation of alternative media sources.

★ Sierra Youth Coalition

The Sierra Youth Coalition Working Group encourages awareness and action on environmental issues through lobbying and consciousness-raising on the University campus and the greater Edmonton community. Our mandate is to seek coalitions amongst other groups with similar mandates to assert our collective voice to move us on a path of greater ecological and social sustainability.

Our major goal is to produce "The Ecological and Social Responsibility Guide" that will include input from other groups such as Just Java. This will provide a guide for individuals to learn about what they can do to improve the planet.

To date, we have decided on a format for the guide, researched the material to include in the guide and created preliminary versions of many sections, and put out a callout for artists to illustrate it (we have been in contact with several respondents).

currently only provide non-perishables, but in the next year we hope to work out the details to provide seasonal, locally-produced vegetables to our community.

We feel that it is equally important to provide freely available information about food issues and why a wholefoods organic diet offers a more sustainable and healthy alternative to the de facto processed- and fast- foods lifestyle led by most North Americans (and many students!) We wish our group to be a provider of both sustenance and community for these issues on campus.

In summer 2003, Simplefood moved to a permanent location at 10008 -109 St. and has renovated the space to meet health regulations. We are setting up a system for inventory and expect to begin taking regular orders sometime during the fall of 2003. New volunteers are always welcome to help out!!!



★ Simplefood Organic Food Cooperative

Simplefood was brought to life in order to provide easily accessible organic foods to students and the larger Edmonton community. Although we have strong ties to the university, we are open to all Edmontonians and hope to incorporate as a registered co-operative under Alberta law sometime in 2004.

Simplefood is completely non-profit and entirely run by member volunteers, ensuring the lowest possible prices. We preferentially choose distributors who are local, certified organic, and, if possible, co-operative in nature. We

Students for Indian Development (SFID) ★

During the summer of 2003, thirteen Canadians journeyed to Pune, India to spend a month volunteering with two local non-governmental organizations. These organizations were the Deep Griha Society and the Akanksha Foundation.

At Deep Griha Society, our volunteers planned and carried out English-language classes for slum children. Our volunteers adapted their lessons to the range of English abilities of the children. Class sizes ranged from six to sixty. These classes were held at Deep Griha's Family Welfare Centre or in one of the three slums Deep Griha works with.

Akanksha volunteers assisted a professional teacher, and were given lesson plans from the standardized Akanksha curriculum. Akanksha centres had up to 60 children, with a head teacher and an assistant teacher. Volunteers did take on a leadership role, and taught a fair amount because teaching staff were short at the time.

Deep Griha has a traveling health clinic that goes to surrounding villages, providing basic medical care. Various members interested in pursuing medicine spent time with the traveling health clinic. Jamkhed is a global model for community-based healthcare, and some of our members spent four days learning how this model is implemented, through lectures and visits into the community.

This trip proved to be an invaluable experience to each one of us. At first, culture shock and the change in climate made things very difficult. Of our entourage of thirteen, only one member was spared the gastrointestinal havoc of India.

For most of us, our time in Pune was our first exposure to a developing nation and its slum communities. On one hand, with our Eurocentric views, all we could see was the poverty: the flies, the rats, the garbage, and the corrugated tin shacks people called home. On the other hand, all you could hear was the laughter of the children playing, the voices of the women inviting you in for chai, and all you could feel was a sense of hospitality from being in a community, in the truest sense of the word.

We thought by coming to Pune, we thought we would be giving a lot of ourselves, without realizing how much we would receive in return. We spent a month surrounded by children who taught us about giving, and that giving means much more than hopping on a plane or sending a cheque—because they gave to us of themselves, of their smiles, and of their hearts. They made us feel welcome, and India became more than a place to visit, but a place that feels like home.

We hope to continue our relationships with those we met, both at Deep Griha and Akanksha. Unfortunately, we are not in a position to return for the next couple years, but we encourage others to follow in our footsteps. We would like to remain as information resources for anyone who is interested in pursuing a similar trip. We had an incredible journey and a wonderful experience.

★ Student Worker Action Group (SWAG)

SWAG has been holding regular meetings through the school year that allow for the group to share information about upcoming events and actions. As well, we have been

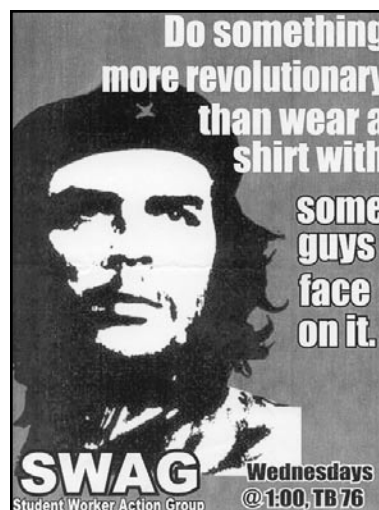
building contacts within the TA staff on campus in order to help them address their low pay and being overworked.

In November we took part in a demonstration at the Shaw Conference centre picket line during the Grey Cup festivities. This demo, which threatened to close down the banquet, was instrumental in getting their union certified and winning their first contract. As well, we spent many afternoons out on the picket line supporting the Shaw workers. In particular, our relationship to UFCW is very close and we plan on building on this in the future.

In addition, we helped FUSS with posterizing and volunteering for Julia Query's talk here at the U of A and helped with the posterizing for their event with local sex trade activists.

Seven people from SWAG attended the Alberta Federation of Labour biennial convention as fraternal guests. The convention was four days long, and we participated in extensive caucus meetings, and began the planning of future work with both the Women's Caucus and Youth Caucus. As well, it allowed us to follow up on a lot of our work with UFCW, which may lead to a union organizer coming out to the U of A to train student activists in how to organize unions.

Our challenges were the usual ones for campus activists. Many of us had a hard time getting to meetings and reporting to APIRG because of school and work. As well, generally a lot of what we do isn't terribly exciting or glamorous, and is often just plain hard work. This makes burnout fairly common as well as making it kind of hard to get new people involved. Generally speaking, though, we overcame these obstacles by not biting off more than we could chew, and not taking on projects that we couldn't make time for.



★ The Olive

The Olive is a non-profit editorial collective established by students and former students at the University of Alberta in 2000 to provide a regular and consistent forum for poetry in Edmonton. The mandate of the organization is to feature local writers and poets from across Canada; we wish to foster an environment where local writers and poetry enthusiasts can interact with artists from the larger literary community.

From the very beginning The Olive has distinguished itself as a unique cultural experience: we feature a single author at each reading and we also distribute a free “chapbook” (a small collection of poems; in this case, 8 pages) in which we publish selected poems by our monthly reader. We also host an open stage at the conclusion to each evening where anyone interested in sharing work is invited to read. We host our readings at Martini’s Bar and Grill (9910 109St., Edmonton) on the second Tuesday of every month during the academic year.

Since becoming an APIRG working group, we have continued with our monthly readings and zines. Our February reading/zine was Edmonton poet Wayne Defehr; March was Vancouver poet Russell Thornton; April was Hamilton poet Chris Pannell. Attendance at the readings ranged from a very good 40 person crowd for Wayne, to a disappointing 15 person crowd for Russell, with Chris receiving a solid 25 people. All the readings contained an open stage portion, which has been increasingly busy: the open stage that followed directly after Chris’s reading had an open stage of 9 people, which is the largest number we could remember for our open stages. We have discussed ideas for increasing crowd size and open stage participation, and we plan to take full advantage of any opportunity to advertize the series in the future.

The money that we have yet to use, as well as the balance of our APIRG funding, will go towards creating our zines for our 2003/04 reading year, as well as the creation of two chapbooks, which we expect to take to press in the next 8-10 months.

★ Track-tion

Track-tion is a sports event for persons with mental disabilities. Competitors are matched with individuals called “counselors” (somewhat similar to the camp counselor concept) who will spend the day with them providing support and friendship. Some of the sporting activities are open to the counselors as well, and everyone participates in the leisure and social activities together.

The planning for Track-tion began in October 2002. Several committees were formed including a volunteer/participant, events, sponsorship, publicity, and security committees. Sponsorship letters were sent out to numerous businesses. An events schedule was made for the day and we were successful at booking the Butterdome. An info pamphlet was designed and also a website was created for the event. Waiver forms and volunteer & participant registration forms were made; all of these could be downloaded from the website. About 30 different organizations that had clients with mental disabilities were contacted and mailed pamphlets and registration forms.

Our largest challenge was lack of manpower. We did not foresee how much work it takes to get an event like this off the ground. We needed to spend more time talking face to face with organizations and special needs teachers in schools to promote the event. Snail mail just didn’t affect the public well enough. And with only 4 full-time students on the volunteer/participant committee, there were not enough people to do the quality job that was needed. Now that we have our initial contacts in the community made, we will be able to work on advertising to and recruiting participants and volunteers earlier on in the year. The same goes for finding sponsors. We were initially planning Track-tion for May 3, 2003, but have since rescheduled the date for May 2004. We are now looking forward to a successful and well-prepared event for next year.

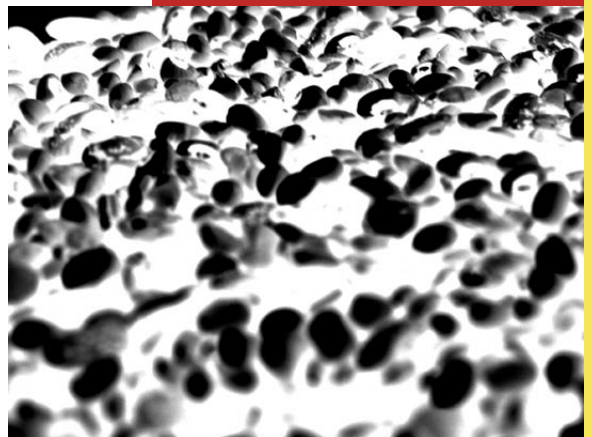
Working Group Budgets

Affordable Student Housing (ASH)	\$ 1 950
Anti-Capitalist Edmonton (ACE)	\$ 860
Alberta Taiga Oilsands Project (ATOP)	\$ 1 050
Biofreedom	\$ 1 370
Coalition Against War and Racism (CAWAR)	\$ 2 800
Citizens for Peaceful Communities (CPC)	\$ 4 000
Edmonton Small Press Association (ESPA)	\$ 2 500
Fait Accomplit	\$ 1 000
FUSS Feminist Collective	\$ 600
House of Mother Earth (HOME) Project	\$ 3 200
Just Java	\$ 700
Kyoto Working Group	\$ 100
Lal	\$ 300
Media Working Group	\$ 595
Sierra Youth Coalition (SYC)	\$ 2 200
Simplefood	\$ 2 880
Students for Indian Development (SFID)	\$ 2 000
Student Worker Action Group (SWAG)	\$ 80
The Olive	\$ 1 720
Track-Tion	\$ 2 630
Total	\$ 32 535

**Providing students with resources
to be active citizens**



**APIRG is always looking for new volunteers,
board members, and working groups.**
★ **Contact us to get involved!**



Alberta Public Interest Research Group (APIRG)
phone: (780) 492-0614 fax: (780) 492-0615
www.apirg.org apirg@ualberta.ca
Hub International Mall
9111 - 112 Street
Edmonton, AB
T6G 2C5