

THE VOICE MAGAZINE

Volume 15 Issue 15

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

To AU Students

The deadline to apply to graduate is May 12, 2007. The application to graduate can be found here

<http://www.athabascau.ca/convocation/>

along with a lot of other helpful information about Convocation.

As well, the deadline to RSVP to Convocation invitations is May 18, 2007.

We hope to see everyone in Athabasca in June!

*Mel MacGregor
Events Coordinator
Office of Institutional Advancement
Athabasca University*

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A Tangled Web

Isn't it great, this World Wide Web?

Every day, billions of people catch a virtual wave, surfing the news, posting pictures of their cute kid or puppy or kitten, shopping, doing research—you name it.

In fact, there's so much information available on the web (with more being added every day) that a single person could never view it all in their entire lifetime. And all this access to information, all this exchange of data, empowers people—or does it?

A recent article in *The Tyee*¹ reminds us of the dangers involved in having too much of a good thing. In 2006, Andrew Feldmar tried to cross the border into the U.S. Mr. Feldmar is a respected 66-year-old Vancouver psychotherapist with a long and impressive resume (including an MA in Psychology, work for the UN, published books and articles, and interviews on CBC Radio's *Ideas*).

He doesn't have a criminal record and has been crossing the U.S. - Canadian border for years, on business and to visit his adult children who reside in the States.

This time, though, he was stopped. Not only that, he is now barred from ever entering the United States again. The problem? Information overload.

The border guard, you see, simply turned around and typed Mr. Feldmar's name into an Internet search engine—and one of the results was an article published in a 2001 issue of *Janus Head*, the "Journal of Interdisciplinary Studies in Literature, Continental Philosophy, Phenomenological Psychology, and the Arts."²

In the article, entitled "Entheogens and Psychotherapy,"³ Mr. Feldmar discussed his experiments with LSD-25 during the 1960s.

That did it. He was fingerprinted, asked to sign a statement admitting to having used LSD, and turned back to Canada. (For the record, his article also says that in his practice he would "never suggest the possibility that therapy could encompass the use of entheogens,"³ and that he does not suggest to patients "going on, or coming off psychiatric medications."³ Too bad. The Homeland Security Act doesn't necessarily allow a lot of leeway for the application of common sense.)

Now, what are the odds that this would have happened before the glorious age of information overkill? What are the chances that, without access to the web, that inquisitive border guard would have shouted to his co-worker in the next booth, "Hey Bob, read anything about this guy in the latest journal of interdisciplinary studies in literature, continental philosophy, phenomenological psychology, and the arts?"

It's true that, as soon as he published his article, Mr. Feldmar opened his experiences to the public sphere. But that's where his story becomes a caveat to those who allow anything (and usually way too much) about themselves to be made available on the web.

Because once this article floated into cyberspace, it left the (presumably) sympathetic audience of scholars and mental-health practitioners behind, those who would have possessed the education and experience to put this article into context, and became open to the scrutiny and interpretation of *anyone*. The world.

Billions of people who, with instant access to so much information, may not have the time or resources to consider it and view it in its intended framework.

And that's a fact that a lot of people seem to forget. After all, most of us wouldn't walk up to a complete stranger in the street (or another country, for that matter) and spill the most intimate or trivial or ridiculous aspects of our lives. Yet that's what millions of people do every day, every time they post pictures or information about themselves on the Web.

A crazy party or a hot date might be suitable fodder for conversation with your close friends, and those outrageous pictures from the last May 24 camping trip may be a riot—at least, until a potential employer gets a look at them.

The social networking sites MySpace and Facebook are a good example. Not all of the people posting seem to lack basic discretionary skills, but an awful lot of them do. In a *New York Times* article, job and college recruiters revealed that they often search the web, including sites like MySpace and Facebook, as part of the evaluation process. And what they're finding is that people "post risqué or teasing photographs and provocative comments about drinking."⁴

And that's when the entire context of people's actions takes a shift. They're no longer just sharing personal information in the perfectly acceptable and healthy realm of friends and family. They're exposing it to the world. Their parents. Their bosses. The government. Anyone who has a computer and the ability to spell their name.

Having access to information is important, and the web has proven to be an exciting forum for breaking down barriers, sharing ideas, and bringing unfettered discourse to people who, without cyberspace, might not have it.

But in Mr. Feldmar's case, a noted professional writing about experiments relevant to his field, there's a reminder that for all the positives, this unmitigated flood of information can have a downside too.

As we hurtle along on this technological juggernaut, the consequences of the information age will slowly begin to be seen, and this wonderful tool may well turn out to be a very tangled web indeed.

¹ *The Tyee* (2007). "LSD as Therapy? Write about it, get barred from US." Retrieved April 24, 2007, from <http://thetyee.ca/News/2007/04/23/Feldmar/>

² *Janus Head*. "About the Journal." Retrieved April 25, 2007, from <http://www.janushead.org/jhinfo.cfm>

³ *Janus Head* (2001). "Entheogens and Psychotherapy." Retrieved April 24, 2007, from <http://www.janushead.org/4-1/feldmar.cfm>

⁴ *The New York Times* (2006). "For Some, Online Persona Undermines a Résumé." Retrieved April 24, 2007, from <http://www.nytimes.com/2006/06/11/us/11recruit.html?ex=1177646400&en=4ad61df56456cc81&ei=5070>



Taurus April 21 - May 20



The glyph for Taurus appears as the horns and head of a bull. The circle being pierced by the half moon shape is symbolic of fertility and material wealth. The glyph can also be seen as representing the chin and Adam's apple, which is the part of the body ruled by Taurus.

The keyword for Taurus is "I have," as Taureans are the sign of financial wealth. All Taureans love beautiful things. Their clothes are classy and always of the best quality. Taurus is a fixed earth sign. All fixed signs are resistant to change. The Bull is well grounded, practical, and dependable. Taurus is ruled by Venus, the goddess of love and beauty. Those born under the sign of the Bull are well known for their strength and stamina. They may be slow to make a decision, because of their cautious nature. Taureans tend to be quiet and introspective. They are nurturing, loving people who tend to keep their emotions closely guarded. When Bulls get angry, their vindictiveness knows no bounds. They never forget; years later they will still remember that you slighted them. They are the biggest martyrs of the zodiac.

Taureans have a genuine love for all people and are capable of maintaining platonic relationships with the opposite sex for years. The Bull is patient and prefers to build relationships on a firm base. They are charming and easygoing companions who possess a great sense of humour. They are loyal, affectionate, and faithful partners. The Bull works tirelessly to keep loved ones happy, as they seek to achieve long-lasting relationships. Taureans find it difficult to end a relationship. Therefore they tend to hang on long after their partner has moved on. Along with their strong sense of devotion comes a jealousy and possessiveness that leads to difficulties.

Taureans tend to have light-coloured hair and eyes. A thick neck is an unmistakable trait of all Bulls. They are usually evenly proportioned with elegant, finely sculptured hands. Bulls are often sensitive to everything around them, including smells and sounds. They desire to be surrounded by beauty. Their love of good food may cause them to be a bit plump. All Taureans have a musical and soothing voice, which complements their gentle and friendly manner.

Taureans are the workers of the zodiac. They make good team players and have a strong focus and desire to get the job done. The Bull can be successful in the business world or the arts. Unlike Aries, Taureans are not entrepreneurs, but give them a plan and they will methodically follow it through to completion. They are capable of overcoming any obstacle on their way to success. Taureans possess a spiritual side and are often successful in ministering to others. Many famous musicians are born under the sign of Taurus.

Positive Qualities: practical, patient, dependable, artistic, stable, determined, trustworthy

Negative Qualities: stubborn, materialistic, greedy, negative, jealous, possessive

Lucky Day: Friday

Birthstone: Emerald

Most compatible marriage sign: Virgo, Capricorn

Famous Taureans: Candice Bergen, George Carlin, George Clooney, Sigmund Freud, Janet Jackson, Al Pacino, Jack Nicholson, Uma Thurman, Barbra Streisand

Rough Trade - *Weapons* (Remastered)

Release Date: February 2007

Label: True North Canada

Tracks: 12

Rating: 7

In the words of Something Corporate, I'm a baby of the '80s; and since I really dislike that band, it's pretty lucky to have found me quoting one of its lines. The point is, I'm not able to remember Canadian '80s music as well as some others out there, which makes listening to Rough Trade a unique experience for me. And hell, I liked it.

First, the album reminded me of the biggest tie I have to the '80s (as every other '90s teen can claim) in *The Wedding Singer*. Was this band on the movie's soundtrack, I wondered? Nah, it's just freakishly similar in that the movie epitomized that certain '80s pop sound. Rough Trade first released *Weapons* in 1983, so you see my confusion.

Aside from a fake sense of nostalgia, I doubted whether the remastered *Weapons* had anything to offer me; I was shocked, then, to hear the tracks take on a new-wave sound all their own in a deviation from the telltale resonance of radio in my very early youth (one year prior to my birth, in fact). At times the vocalist sounds like she's in the spotlight during a momentous piece in a musical; at others, the band members seem to have gotten lost inside their own pieces of the music while the track skips along haphazardly.

I must recommend "Paisley Generation," with my humble blessings, to all who are interested. It is a pleasant paradox that in the invocation of the '80s that is *Weapons* remastered we also hear a twice-done invocation of the '60s. The chords seem to slide off their rigid fixtures for a few minutes as the vocals pay tribute, quite literally, to Jimi Hendrix, Bob Dylan, the Velvet Underground, the Doors, and many more great artists of the time. There's nothing like hearing a tribute to the foundational work of so many talented bands and musicians to make you appreciate a band like Rough Trade all the more.

I was skeptical of the re-release of an album like this, but I've got to say I'm happy to have heard it and this might have been the only way that was possible. I admit I don't go digging around in the '80s section for much of anything unless I've got something specific and non-pop on my mind. My loss, really. Don't let it be yours. If nothing else, think of Rough Trade as that uniquely Canadian contribution to '80s pop and new wave. It's educational, silly—but it's also a fun listen.



*From
Where
I Sit*
Hazel Anaka

Enrich Your Life

The call for proposals, the short list of five designs, and the eventual awarding of the new Edmonton art gallery project several months ago continue to grab headlines as costs have ballooned to 88 million dollars. The change in the province's top political office to salt-of-the-earth Ed Stelmach has the arts and culture community wondering where his government's priorities lie. Analyzing the implication of government policies, and all things political, was the Edmonton Journal's regular political columnist Graham Thomson. With Thomson now on assignment in Afghanistan, Todd Babiak seems to have swapped the arts beat for the government gig. Column after column he continues to make the case for increased arts funding.

Babiak and others—dare I say worldly people with education, experience, and exposure—understand that all sophisticated, evolved societies require balance. An awareness of and appreciation for the finer things in life—art, literature, theatre, dance—enrich all of us. Alberta's reputation as a redneck backwater notwithstanding, there is a hunger for some meaningful support for arts and culture.

Critics like to equate everything to how many homeless people could be housed and fed with X number of dollars. And of course it's true. The 88 million dollars slated for the new art gallery could help the unfortunate. In a society as rich as ours it shouldn't have to be a choice. There is enough wealth to do both, all. I don't begrudge the support programs and resources for those less fortunate. In fact, my monthly donations go to the Salvation Army and the Stollery Children's Hospital, not some arts organization.

Recently I had the opportunity to attend the Edmonton Citadel's production of *The Overcoat*. It was breathtaking. A total of 22 actors playing 64 characters in 85 costumes danced and mimed their way through the play. Not a single word was spoken! The lighting, music, and choreographed movement of actors was a sight to behold. The two-storey, 20-tonne set added to the drama of the play. The production has been running for 10 years and has toured across Canada and in Europe, the U.S., Australia, and New Zealand.

Based on a short story by Nikolai Gogol, it chronicles the mind-numbing routine of a working man. A transformation in his life occurs with the acquisition of a custom-made overcoat. A surprise ending provokes thought. How much of our lives revolve around the pursuit of things? How much of our self-image is wrapped up in the externals of our life, like an overcoat (car, house, vacation, et cetera)? How often do we allow the perception of and treatment by others to define our image of ourselves?

The bottom line is that without arts funding to identify, nurture, and promote the creativity and artistry of our citizens, we all lose. We lose as individuals with talent. We lose as audience members. We lose as a culture.

A life without art, museums, dance, music, theatre, film, or festivals is a life devoid of colour and richness, from where I sit.

The Chronicles of Cruiscin Lan

by
Wanda
Waterman
St. Louis



AUSU THIS MONTH



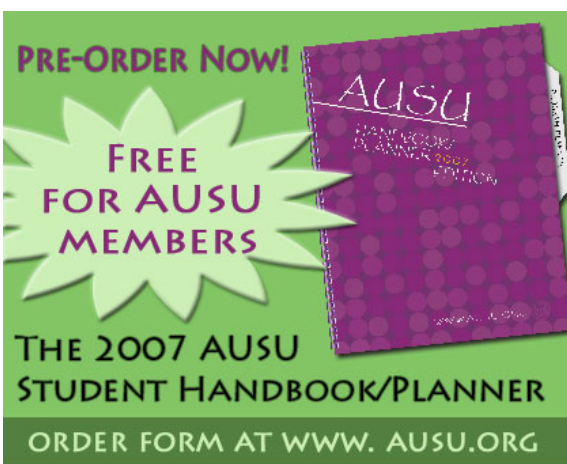
Changes to Council Executive The AUSU "cabinet" does the shuffle

AUSU councillors are elected for two-year terms and, traditionally, the three executives also serve for two years. In early 2005, however, council began to discuss the possibility of holding a mid-term executive election for the following reasons:

- Executive positions are very demanding and require a large time commitment for a modest wage. All AU committees and executives work daytime hours, as do AUSU staff, therefore most meetings AUSU executives must attend regularly are also scheduled during the day. While executives can make their own hours to some extent, the frequent daytime commitments preclude AUSU executives from holding full-time jobs outside of AUSU. They may also find it difficult to maintain a full course load (many universities permit student council executives to hold full-time student status while taking only one course while they serve, but AU has no such provision). A mid-term election provides tired executives an opportunity to step down after a year without prejudice or a sense of ending their commitment early.
- Some councillors may not run for executive positions when they first get on council because they are inexperienced and do not feel ready to effectively serve in this capacity. For this reason, seasoned councillors usually are elected to executive positions. By midway through the two-year term, newer councillors may reconsider. This also allows councillors who may have been added to council through a by-election to have an opportunity to run.
- After a year, councillors will also have a better idea of who will serve best in each of the executive positions and may want an opportunity to cast a new vote.

A mid-term election was necessary during the 2004/06 council term due to the resignation of two of the three executives. This term, councillors developed a new executive election policy to allow for the option of a mid-term election each term. In mid-March, council decided to hold a mid-term election for this year.

Lonita Fraser, VP External for AUSU for the last two years, decided not to run at this time due to a high course load, and she has moved to a regular councillor without portfolio position.



New councillor Huma Lodhi, who has been with council for one year, chose to run for VP Finance, due to her experience on the AUSU Finance Committee over the last year.

VP Finance for the past three years, Karl Low, chose to run for the vacant VP External position.

Lisa Priebe, President for the last two years, opted to run again for her position.

The three candidates were acclaimed to their positions at a special meeting of council held on April 16, 2007. As both outgoing executives are still with council and available to assist their successors, the changeover is expected to be very smooth.

EDUCATION NEWS



Getting the Edge: Universities Vital to Competitiveness

In a world where trade is increasingly global and developing countries are eager to industrialize, the ability to become—or stay—competitive is important. And according to a recent survey, three-quarters of Canadians polled think that investment in our universities plays a key role in this country's competitiveness.

In a survey of just over 1,000 Canadians,¹ 75% said that increasing university funding plays a crucial part in improving Canada's economic competitiveness. The poll was conducted for the Association of Universities and Colleges in Canada (AUCC).

As well, 74% of respondents believe it is important to increase funding to allow more people to earn degrees, and 71% agree that it's essential to fund research at Canadian universities.

Claire Morris, AUCC president, sums up the survey's findings in a recent media release:

More and more Canadians see that investments in universities and university research pay valuable dividends to our economy, make a vital contribution to our quality of life, and assure we remain competitive and prosperous in today's knowledge-based world.²

While it's only natural that the AUCC would endorse the importance of education, the most recent Global Competitiveness Report also ranks higher education and training as one of the nine key pillars "that are critical to driving productivity and competitiveness."³

Along with measuring the importance of factors such as health care and market efficiency, this 2006/07 report by the World Economic Forum recognizes that "today's globalizing economy requires countries to nurture pools of well educated workers."³

Pursuing a university education can fulfil some very personal goals: a sense of achievement, an enjoyable career, an improved lifestyle. But it can also provide some very tangible benefits to the country as a whole and contribute to a more robust and competitive economy for all Canadians.

¹ The survey by the Strategic Counsel polled 1,018 Canadians (aged 18 or older) between October 12 and 15, 2006. A summary of findings is available at http://www.aucc.ca/pdf/english/media/strategic_counsel_report_april132007_e.pdf

² Association of Universities and Colleges of Canada (2007). "Universities key to competitiveness: poll." Retrieved April 23, 2007, from http://www.aucc.ca/publications/media/2007/13_04_e.html

³ World Economic Forum (2007). "Part 1: The Competitiveness Indexes." Retrieved April 23, 2007, from http://www.weforum.org/pdf/Global_Competitiveness_Reports/Reports/gcr_2006/chapter_1_1.pdf

INTERNATIONAL NEWS DESK

What's new here and around the world

Mandy Gardner



Mandy Gardner

At Home: Toronto Residents Want To Get Rid Of Hot Dogs

Toronto's local legislation states that no street vendor can sell any meat products except for sausages and hot dogs, under the assumption that as pre-cooked meats these are less likely to cause food poisoning. Food Network Canada chef Guy Rubino and his partner and brother Michael Rubino (both of the program *Made to Order*) expressed their disgust for this policy on the CBC News website, citing exotic street foods from Europe and Asia as the basis for such a strong dislike of hot dogs:

It's a joke. I'd rather see absolutely no street food at all, period . . . The crap that's being served right now, you think that's bread they're serving? That's not real bread.¹

To better reflect the cultural diversity of Toronto, Multistory Complex is working with Alphabet City and Ryerson University to launch a redesign of the vending carts currently used. The group hopes that the competition will spur a lot of creative Toronto dwellers to not only come up with an interesting new cart but some fun ethnic foods to match. They want healthy food made available on the streets to combat the negative connotations of the humble hot dog: "The Street Food Vending Project aims to introduce tasty, affordable, healthy, culturally diverse and locally sourced food to Toronto's streets."²

So far the idea is very popular with residents, who agree their street food is generally shameful when compared with other international cities.

John Fillion, Toronto's board of health chairman, has said that while he agrees the available hot dogs need to be kept to a bare minimum in favour of better foods, the legislation calling for the sale of only pre-cooked meats is not likely to be changed.

He told CBC News that change would be "fabulous for showcasing our ethnic diversity. It's fabulous for our nutrition to get away from hotdogs. I can't imagine anything worse for your health."¹

¹ CBC News (2007). "Toronto sticks fork in street meat rules." Retrieved April 17, 2007, from <http://www.cbc.ca/canada/toronto/story/2007/04/17/streetmeat.html>

² Multistory Complex. "Street Food Vending Project." Retrieved April 27, 2007, from http://www.multistorycomplex.org/street_food_vending_project

In Foreign News: Toto Toilets Recalled For Catching Fire

The Japanese are known for their technological gadgets, but remote-controlled curtains, virtual pets, and highly advanced karaoke machines have got nothing on the modern Japanese toilet.

Toto, a large toilet manufacturing company based in several parts of Asia as well as North America and Europe, says they “focus on creating products with consistent, exceptional performance and design.”¹ The company is known for turning out top-range toilets and bidets with some crazy companion technology.

According to Engadget, Toto is responsible for the toilet-plus-urine-analyzer, the Sound Princess (which uses a motion detector in toilet stalls to start the sound of running water to ease your anxieties), a stain-resistant ceramic glaze, and the SD card that lets you play your own music while passing the time away happily on the can.²

Good stuff. Unfortunately, now Toto needs to repair 180,000 of its special combination toilet-bidet units for a common issue: the tendency to catch on fire. Not the usual problems one might expect from a toilet system, eh?

Metro.co.uk says that the units in question feature “a pulsating massage spray, a power dryer, a ‘tornado wash’ flush, and a lid that opens and closes automatically.”³ Three of the toilets caught fire prior to the recall and a company spokesperson said that there have been no injuries as no one appears to have been using the toilets at the times of the fires.

This is fortunate, because the electrical fault that caused the flames meant that the scalding would have happened right on an exposed butt—what a way to get burned!

¹ Washlet. “TOTO corporate story.” Retrieved April 27, 2007, from <http://www.washlet.com/about.asp>

² Engadget. <http://www.engadget.com/search/?q=toto&submit=Go>

³ Metro.co.uk. “Hot flush?” Retrieved April 27, 2007, from http://www.metro.co.uk/weird/article.html?in_article_id=45569&in_page_id=2

Thousands Unable To Register For MCAT

Influx of registrants overwhelmed system

By Michael Olson

The Manitoban (University of Manitoba)

WINNIPEG (CUP) -- Registration for students aspiring to write the Medical College Admission Test was temporarily put on hold.

Thousands of students hoping to register for the August session of the MCAT—used as a prerequisite for students applying to medical school—were unable to do so due to a malfunction in the registration program.

Last year, 6,000 students in Canada took the exam in August. This year, however, only about 3,000 spots are available for that exam. The change is due to a change in format: the test is now administered on computers, and is being offered throughout the year instead of only in April and August. As a result, the test administrations have smaller capacities.

Due to the reduced spaces available and the number of Canadian students applying for the August test date, the technology that the Association of American Medical Colleges uses to run the registration process was temporarily overwhelmed, since the registration system opened up at the same time for everybody.

“The Canadian students have always preferred August. We found it interesting this year that they did not tend to take the earlier test dates, for example in June and July,” said Matt Fidler, MCAT program manager for Kaplan Test Prep and Admissions, the leading provider in MCAT preparation for students.

There are a number of options for students wanting to take the test this summer. In addition to the six test dates in August, there are two scheduled in June and three in July. There are also four test dates in April and five in May.

“I was intrigued to see that the Canadian students did not attempt to look at an earlier test date knowing that their fellow Canadians would be clamouring for an August test date,” Fidler said. “Canadian students, historically, take time over the summer to prepare for the exam and study for the exam, and that is why they all jammed onto the system and tried to register.”

This, consequently, affected every student who was trying to register as soon as the system opened for August registration; registration for August and September tests was temporarily closed. As a result, many students were under the impression that the registration system had crashed or that they were too late to register for a test.

For students wishing to take the MCAT, Kaplan reminds them that there are still many seats open for July and August test dates.

“[Kaplan is] telling our students that if something comes up during their registration process to give AAMC a call,” Fidler said. “AAMC firmly believes that they have enough capacity for everyone in Canada, and if that is not the case, Canadian test-takers should be sure to call AAMC and tell them that there is not enough space available.”

Registration for the MCAT opened up again April 11.

classifieds

Classifieds are free for AU students! Contact voice@ausu.org for more information.

Research Subjects Wanted -

Distance and Open Education Effects on Accessibility for First Generation Learners

Participants must be:

- first generation post-secondary distance education students or alumni
- fluent in English
- at least 18 years old

Respondents who complete our survey will be entered to win \$150.

To participate or for information, email survey@leximortis.com

Study performed and funded by AU students L. Priebe, MA; T. Ross; and K. Low.

THE VOICE

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