

# THE VOICE MAGAZINE

*Volume 15 Issue 26*

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## THE VOICE MAGAZINE

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La Sorbonne

As my second semester of studying in Paris was coming to an end, I decided it was time to revise my experience and my impressions of the French capital. Not surprisingly, I was not very enthusiastic about my leaving. One of the greatest cities in the world had become my home for almost a year. I had the chance to get lost in its alleys, uncovering its secrets off the beaten tourist tracks. I found my favourite café for the morning caffeine boost and my favourite bar for the evening cocktail; the best whole wheat bread; and the sunniest spot by the Seine for an afternoon picnic with a view of the Notre Dame cathedral. I have seen the colours of Paris in every season. And this is but the beginning of the pleasures of Paris.

As I was not obliged to take many courses and pass a number of exams at my university in the suburbs, I had time to stroll around other Parisian schools and *grands écoles*, a group of the most prestigious French post-secondary institutions, to see what they offer. There are twelve universities in Paris alone and a number of other educational institutions. Thus I attended some classes at the famous Sorbonne whose inner court, which you can only enter as a student, is even more impressive than its front, overlooking a fountain and a square where students gather at lunchtime.



Some of the lectures I was interested in took place at ENS (*Ecole Nationale Supérieure*), a peaceful sanctuary right behind the Pantheon with a garden and a fountain. The courses were quite demanding, especially as I was missing some of the basics in philosophy (not to mention my insufficient knowledge of French terminology in this field). However, just to hear some of the well-known philosophers speak made me feel I was not only in the heart of the French capital, but also in the heart of French thought.

I also attended some lectures in linguistic anthropology at EHESS (*Ecole des Hautes Etudes en Sciences Sociales*) where I was fascinated by several presentations made by visiting professors from the U.S. In *Musée du Quai Branly* I listened to lectures by a couple of French professors, a dance choreographer, and an Australian anthropologist. And in the auditorium of the impressive *Collège de France* I attended some free public lectures on history and democracy. I believe that in terms of academic and learning pleasures Paris is hard to defeat.

Another aspect of the French capital to attract people from all over the world is art in every form. Each week you can buy *Pariscopes*, a magazine with every possible event taking place, for just a couple of cents. I saw a number of plays, concerts, and films, but there were a couple of them I will remember better than others.

The first of them happened on a windy Sunday when we were strolling around the biggest *marché aux puces* (flea market) in Europe, just north of Porte d'Orléans. After rummaging through yellowish books, crumpled bank notes (we even found some Yugoslav ones), rusty railings, and dusty but firm furniture that could still



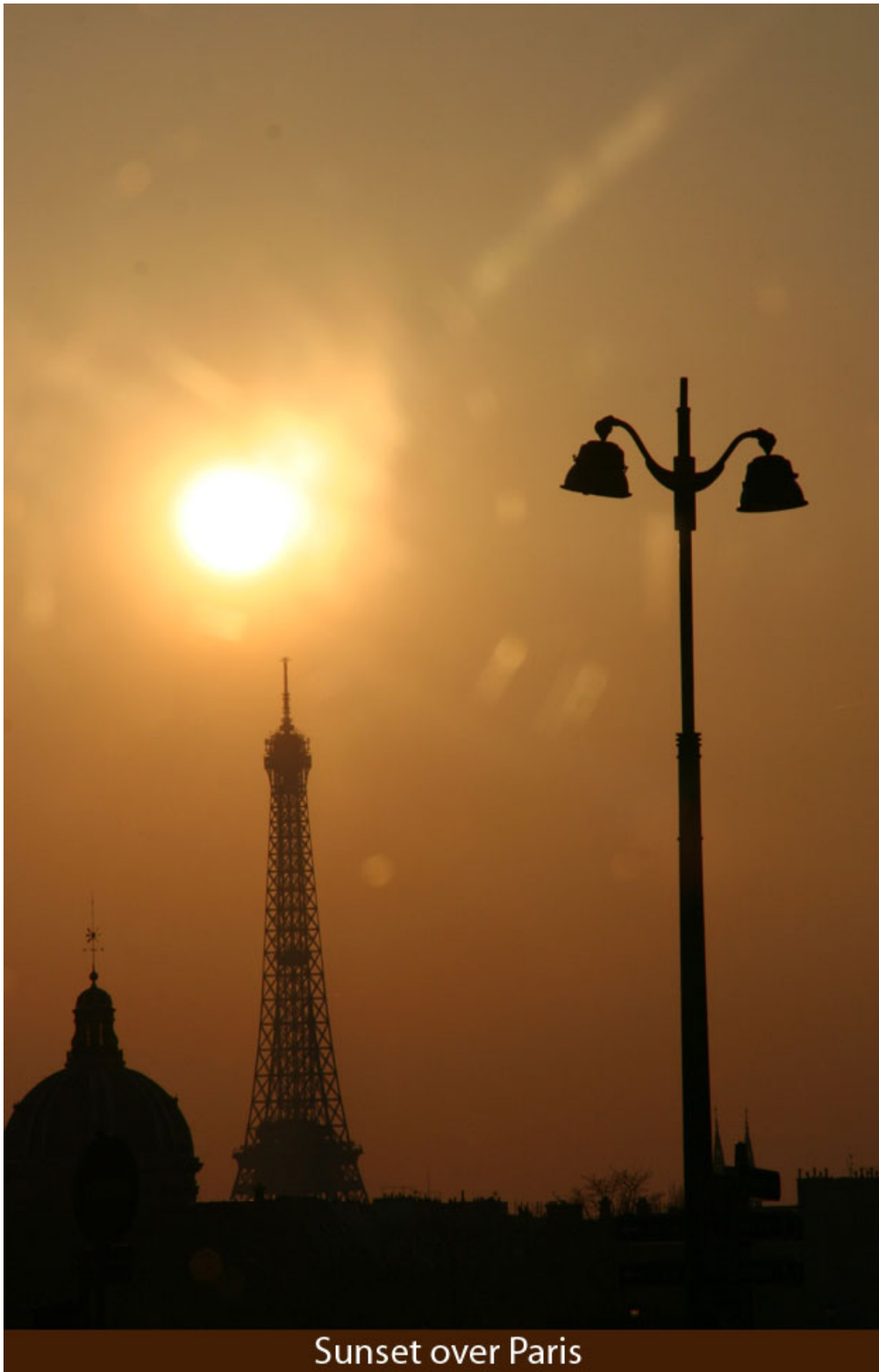
be very much in vogue, we were ready to set off to the metro when we suddenly heard some loud jazzy music coming out of a small bar. We stopped for a glass of lemonade and surrendered to the sounds of two

guitars while outside the storm burst. The musical pleasure of Paris—unexpected, unplanned, and unforgettable.

A few days before our leaving, we also had the chance to enjoy *Fête de la Musique*, the music festival. After a glance at the never-ending list of concerts, I gave up on looking for something special, so we just walked up the Latin Quarter once again. It proved to be the right thing to do, as everywhere you went music just filled your ears and people were dancing wherever they could.

Together with some of our friends we settled at a square where Zoran, an immigrant from Belgrade, Serbia, and his group were playing rock and were indeed good at it.

As the custom is in Paris, where parties often end when it is time to catch the last metro at one o'clock in the morning, all concerts stopped at midnight. But on our way back home, we bumped into a group of drum players. Their beat seemed to be addictive for we not only stopped to listen, but even followed them up the Rue Mouffetard again. Our



Sunset over Paris

procession grew along the way as more and more people with tired, sleepy faces suddenly became revived at the sound of drums and turned around on their heels to join us. For a moment it seemed as if a breeze from Brazil drifted over Paris, making everyone forget the lightening sky that was already announcing another working day.



An artist's gallery in Belleville





Newspaper stand in Belleville

Then there was the weekend in *Belleville*, a quarter in the northeastern part of the city, when the local artists opened their studios, which were often parts of their own apartments, to the public. Armed with a map specially designed for the occasion, we climbed the narrow staircases of buildings too old to have escalators installed, poked our noses into people's homes, discovered what is usually hidden behind enormous blurred windows and high stone walls, and explored the most diverse artistic talents.

The pleasure of staying in Paris for a while also lies in small discoveries you cannot afford if you only come for a couple of days. We spoke to a Slovenian tourist guide who knew but the main Parisian tourist sites—the Louvre, Palais Royal, Notre Dame, Versailles, and, of course, the Eiffel Tower. The queues to climb the latter are never-ending at any time of the day on any day of the week. On the other hand, there was nobody at the ticket office to mount the 56<sup>th</sup> floor of *Tour Montparnasse* in forty seconds. The panoramic view is just as breathtaking and you can include the Eiffel Tower itself in your picture.

Then there is *Arènes de Lutèce*, the Roman amphitheatre in the 5<sup>th</sup> *arrondissement* that the city authorities wanted to transform into a dump but that Victor Hugo fought to have preserved. Concealed by the surrounding buildings, it now serves as a park where the locals eat take-away pizza and children play soccer on Sundays. And then there are the carefully tendered secret courtyard gardens behind virtually every heavy wooden door, often dating back to the 19<sup>th</sup> century, that seem impenetrable to a passing tourist. In reality, you can enter many of them by simply pushing the button on them and in the next moment you are surrounded by un-city-like peace. There, you can easily feel like Alice in Wonderland, and experience the pleasure of discovering a faraway countryside in the heart of what appears to be a stone-cold city.



During all those months, I also got to know some Parisians and was often mesmerized by their views and lifestyle. However, what I admire most about them is their ability to take a day's moment for themselves; to stop, look around, and become aware once again of the pleasures their city has to offer.

Not only do they learn to keep balance while reading at the metro during the rush hour, they also know how to sit down for a glass of red wine after work, in company or alone, just to ponder their day while watching the sun set over the Seine—the pleasure of grabbing your *self* by its tail in a half-hour meditation before you get lost in the city crowd once again.



An evening's moment





Last bags packed, sitting under the double crown  
in front of the Palais Royal





## Hear, Hear

If it's too loud, you're too old. Remember that one? Well, there's a new twist on it, but it's one that most people don't know: if you're between 6 and 60, it's too loud—and it's probably making you deaf. It seems there's an epidemic of hearing loss happening in Canada, and the worst part is that we're doing it to ourselves.

It used to be that people with normal hearing started losing it because they were getting older—much older, say in their 70s or 80s—or they'd spent a lot of time working around noisy equipment. Health and safety rules weren't the same as they are now even 20 years ago, and most people just didn't know how much their noisy workplace would affect their life later on. That's understandable, but sadly, the reasons that North American kids as young as 6 years old are starting to lose their hearing are entirely preventable—and there's just no excuse for that.

The results of a 2002 survey<sup>1</sup> by the Canadian Hearing Society Awareness Society are staggering: 25 per cent of people with hearing loss are under 40 years old. That's right—under 40.

The vast majority—70 per cent—are below 60. An alarming 16 per cent of kids between 6 and 19 “have early signs of hearing loss at the range most affected by loud sounds.”<sup>1</sup> That means teenagers; young adults in their 20s and 30s; people who at 40 still have decades of living to enjoy, are slowly, irrevocably, losing their ability to hear.

Why? Because we've surrounded ourselves with enough noisy gadgets to make ourselves deaf. Home entertainment systems, hair dryers, gas lawnmowers, iPods—all of them can add to your cumulative hearing loss after as little as 30 seconds. Just think of them in relation to the level of a normal conversation. That logs in at around 60 decibels. The danger zone for hearing loss starts at around 90 decibels, and your hair dryer and gas lawnmower are well into that. The teeny tiny earbuds on your iPod can be cranked up to 120 decibels, exposing you to more damaging noise levels—believe it or not—than a jackhammer or chainsaw. Movie theatres? Your guess is as good as mine, but you can bet the average sound systems cranks out something upward of 140 decibels.

And each bout of exposure to loud noise is cumulative; in other words, it's all adding up over time.

Since we're such a short-term, instant-gratification society, it's easy to ignore the facts. I can still hear you today, so why bother? Well, let's just hope that there are at least a few teenagers and 20-somethings that don't think that way. In another ten or twenty years, there are a whole lot of still-in-high-school professionals that I want to have the best hearing possible. The pilot on my plane; my doctor; 911 dispatchers; the person I call for tech support when my software won't behave.

The solution is almost laughably simple. For the most part, we can control the gadgets that are causing us to lose our hearing younger and faster all the time, so it's only common sense to turn them down. For things without a volume control, like hair dryers, there are disposable ear plugs.

The answer to noise-related hearing loss is—quite literally—in your hands.

<sup>1</sup> CBC News, 2007. “Hearing loss: Problem nearing epidemic proportions in Canada.” Retrieved July 13, 2007, from <http://www.cbc.ca/news/background/health/hearing-loss.html>



# NATURE NOTES:

from the backyard to the biosphere

By Zoe Dalton

## Canada Day Tirade: Sustainability in Canada's First National Urban Park in Question

I am still winding down from Canada Day festivities with my family, thinking back to the ice cream, pony rides and fairground activities of the day. But it isn't only these sweet memories I find floating through my mind as the evening comes to a close.

I'm left on this Canada Day in a mood of reflection. Who could do other than reflect on a weekend marked by both a National Day of Action by Aboriginal people across the country, and a celebration of Canada's coming into being as a nation? However, reflection on the questionable basis of our country's history is met in my mind by an equally perturbing reflection on our country's geography, particularly the geography of our protected spaces.

A bit bleak sounding, I know, but it wasn't a dark cloud that came over me on this Canada Day, but rather a petition. I was approached mid-merriment by an earnest, clipboard-toting gentleman letting me know that the park in which I was honouring our country was to see 212 of its 572 acres go for housing development.

I had been aware that part of this park's mandate was to cover the costs required for its maintenance. However, I was shocked to hear of the scale to which this land—federal land put aside for protection and the long-term good of the public—was to become urbanized. The shock became increasingly pronounced as I stood, pen in hand, considering this petition, surrounded on all sides by park signs, booths, and brochures whose most prominent linguistic feature was the term *sustainability*.

572 acres of open green space in Canada's largest, most populated (and rapidly growing) city; a huge chunk of land transferred to Parks Canada from the Department of National Defence and touted as a first in our country: a national urban park; a self-proclaimed emblem of sustainability in action. What jumps to mind given this scenario is an incredible opportunity for a world-class, ecologically meaningful green space in the midst of an urban landscape; an accessible parkland for nature-hungry urbanites to satisfy that innate need for connection to something other than concrete; and a space to give back to wildlife in a landscape in which so much habitat is continuously being taken away.

The ecological significance of the park has not been completely lost on those in management. Sections of the park are being rehabilitated, and with impressive results. A visitor to the newly restored areas is met by swallows, monarch butterflies, bird calls, the soothing sounds of swaying grasses in the wind, and



the sweet smells of fresh, abundant vegetation so rare in the city. But somehow, this aspect of the park has been relegated to a position of relatively minor importance. In the development plans are sports complexes, commercial areas, and the neighbourhoods referred to above. What, I cannot help but think, does such a plan have to do with sustainability, and how, I have to ask, will another set of subdivisions and retail outlets benefit all Canadians over the long term?

National parks like Banff, infamous among conservationists for the scale of development within what are supposed to be protected areas, seem like innocents compared to Downsview. Those in management at Banff can be blamed for letting things slide, for allowing something small to get too big. But what can be said of those in charge at Downsview, when their initial vision for this rare gem of an opportunity is based on relegating nature to a back-seat position and opening their arms wide to development corporations?

Sustainability may encompass economic as well as ecological goals. But national parks occupy a special place in our collective consciousness not because of the outstanding shopping opportunities or housing designs they offer, but because they are those rare spaces where—for once—economy must give way to ecology. The land we have decided to protect in our national parks system needs a little sanctity, as well as recognition that these spaces are unique and precious precisely because they do not offer all that can be found in the next stop along the highway. Needless to say, pen hit paper with great vigour: I signed the petition.

## FROM THE GALLERY

Diane Gadoua



Welcome to the gallery—the spot to find out all about the latest doings of the AUSU council. I can hear the wheels spinning now. Hold on, you might be thinking. Doesn't AUSU already have a regular column in *The Voice*?

They do, and it's called AUSU This Month. That's the place where council shares news, updates, and information that may be of interest to AU students; for instance, their investigation into the Coalition for Student Loan Fairness to figure out whether participation would benefit AUSU members.

The Gallery, on the other hand, will give you an up-close look at council meetings from a student's point of view. If you're a member of AUSU, you're invited to all the meetings, and you can check out the ways that your council members are working for you (just email [ausu@ausu.org](mailto:ausu@ausu.org) to get the latest meeting date and dial-in number). But since AU students lead really busy lives, sometimes you probably just can't make it.

That's why I'll be sitting in and checking out what goes on when council gets together. I'll give you a brief rundown of what policies might be up for change, and how the idea of an AUSU radio broadcast is coming along (betcha didn't know about that one). If you want to know a little more about who the councillors are, you can read all about them in the [bios on the AUSU website](#).

For now, there isn't a lot to report. Council met on June 8 for the Annual General Meeting, where they approved the minutes of the 2006 AGM, reviewed the annual financial statements, and generally wrapped things up.

Their next meeting is going to be on July 23, and I'll be there to check it out and bring you news of everything that happens. See you in the Gallery.



*From  
Where  
I Sit*

Hazel Anaka

## Making Things Right

Readers of this space may remember an earlier column called Rant Alert! Rant Alert! In it, I blew off steam about deteriorating customer service that appears to be the rule rather than the exception. I bemoaned the prevalence of incompetent, uninterested, disengaged employees all across the spectrum, from mom and pop stores to big-box stores, from e-commerce sites to multinationals, from franchises to chains.

I have not made it my life's work to search out maddening merchants and unsettling incidents to bitch about. I'm just as likely to write letters of praise or speak to a superior when I receive exceptional service. Or it may be ordinary service delivered by an extraordinarily cheerful, pleasant, funny person. You know—someone who either loves people and their job or are doing a great job of acting as if they do. Letters of commendation and thanks should end up in personnel files just as surely as complaint letters do.

I'm here to report that sometimes apologies or recompense are so slow in coming you give up hope of actually having your issue addressed. Other times, it's prompt, unexpected, and delivered with grace. It brings to mind two five-dollars-off cards from Dalton's Steak and Seafood Restaurant given when we waited too long for our meal. Or a card for a complimentary dessert from Moxie's when I ordered a dish that ended up being too hot for my taste.

More recently Ben Moss gave me a \$50 gift card for the inconvenience caused by repeated trips to the store after a ring purchase. It got me back into the store. These people know how to hang onto a customer.

In March, I wrote an email letter of complaint to the manager about rude, shoddy telephone service from a rep at Elkhorn Resorts in Canmore. Three and a half months later I got a letter from someone else with no fewer than five apologies in it. Was it finally dealt with because I told my sad story to a company marketing guy from the Manitoba office who happened to be working a trade show? Likely. Thanks, Troy.

The all-time record has to be Boston Pizza. Through one of my editors I got a message to call Brad at BP International. He found my "An Opportunity Lost" column on the Internet and wanted to make things right. Thirteen months after the incident this was welcome news. Today I received, by priority post, a wonderful letter of apology and a \$50 gift card. Will I be going back to BP? You bet. Will I tell my story to anyone who'll listen? You bet. Way to save a relationship, Brad.

My BIG problem is with Stores Online and is as yet unresolved. A word to the wise: with these guys, proceed with extreme caution. Hopefully, this story too will have a happy ending.

When you've had a bad retail experience expect a company to make things right. You deserve it, from where I sit.



# The Chronicles of Cruiscin Lan

by  
Wanda  
Waterman  
St. Louis





## In the Middle of the Night . . .

. . . a woman is awakened from sleep by a brief exchange of gunfire on the street below her bedroom window. There is a banshee screech of rubber tires on summer pavement. There is the sound of hysterical, improbable laughter, the sound of a screen door flying open, and footsteps receding into the night.

The woman, she gets out of bed to check on the twin infant sons sleeping in the room next door. She walks downstairs to the kitchen, which costs her a great effort of will, because she is sure that the creeper, the one with the pale nightmare face she has known since her own childhood, is waiting for her in every darkened recess. If he is not already waiting, then every too-heavy footfall, every creaking footfall, has the potential of alerting him to her presence.

She turns on the bright kitchen light, and fills a glass with bright, clear water. She feels the blessed coolness of it washing some of the bitterness of fear out of her mouth. For a moment, she is reminded of her own prairie childhood, arcing into the icy cold water of bottomless lakes, the momentary ecstasy of weightlessness, followed by the panicked effort to escape from the entanglement of weeds and unseen things. On the other side of the swimming hole, there was an old farmhouse that everyone knew about, abandoned for many years by the time she herself had been born, in which a witch mother had murdered her three daughters by singing them to sleep with a fatal, enchanted lullaby.

Back upstairs, she re-enters their bedroom. She puts her face close to their dreaming heads, inhales the sweet/sour of their intertwined breath. She has X-ray eyes tonight, can see right through their bird-fragile chest bones, right through their delicate, mortal ribs. She can see four silken lungs inspired with air, suspended in bottomless darkness like beautiful, silent subterranean things. For her tonight, their heads are made of glass. She can see the dim blue-green flicker of electrical impulses pulsing and arcing through cerebral nodes.

Even though they are soundly sleeping, she sings an old lullaby to them, a lullaby filled with songs of the bittersweet potentials of life. The minor key notes of the song wander like soft velvet nocturnal things through the membranous labyrinths of their inner ears, finally taking refuge in the shadowy forests of their dreams. Nudging them over, she falls asleep with one protective arm thrown across them, her twin sons, oblivious and free.



*Vans Warped Tour 2007*

If there is anything stranger than attending the Warped Tour in Calgary after five years, four of those being spent out of Alberta and the entire rural-punk connection, I'd like to hear it (narcotics excluded). If you keep up with this column, you know I've been waiting for Warped for weeks now, so I've got to address whether or not it was worth the wait. Strangely, this is a tough question to answer.

For the first time in my Warped Tour attendance history, I showed up very late and almost completely ignored the smaller and poppier of the bands on the lineup. Most of this was due to my late arrival but I have to say that when I got there, I knew that all I really wanted to do was chill out, enjoy the atmosphere, and spend my energy on Pennywise and Bad Religion. I remember this being the attitude of my older friends back in the day, while I wanted to be in the middle of every pit for every single song and every single set. I guess this tells me I really am getting older.

After a rather lengthy stay in the beer gardens (first time of age!), the first band I had the pleasure of listening in on was Paramore—a band featuring a feisty Hayley Williams on vocals, Josh Farro on lead guitar, Jeremy Davis on bass, and Zac Farro on drums. They drew a pretty decent crowd, especially for the early evening time slot, but toward the end a steadily growing crowd at the vacant adjacent stage vocally demanded an end to the set and the onslaught of “Pen-ny-wise!” Williams did her best to tell the persistent

detractors to fuck off without using so many words, but in the end Paramore finished amidst calls for Pennywise that didn't let up until the first chords were heard from the second stage.

I can't blame the crowd, really, because even though Paramore, and arguably many of the earlier bands, played an excellent set, there is just no beating the big names at the Warped Tour. I'd taken my place in the Pennywise crowd a good ten minutes before they were due to start (and you have got to hand it to the Warped crews, they always have everything running on time), and when they started to play I forgot my sympathy for Williams and her crew. Hell, I'll bet she's done the same once or twice.

So what of the heavily anticipated set? Two things come to mind: sublime and far too short! By the time Lindberg had me pumped for the show (and he always manages to do this, being one of the great front men of his profession) it was already time for the "Bro Hymn Tribute," the classic Pennywise end tune. I guess I've gotten too used to full-length concerts. I felt like I'd missed out; like I just couldn't peak as quickly as the rest of the crowd!

The end of Pennywise saw me to another stint in the beer gardens until Bad Religion showed up on stage just after 7 o'clock. The heat was intense; dozens of us were crowded up against the bottom of merchandise tents, random flag poles, and the walls of porta-potties for the several inches of shade they provided. The beer gardens being fully without shade, there were far too many of us drinking and unfortunately sweating away our precious moisture reserves, and this (plus another important and unnamed factor) left me incredibly light-headed when I heard the guitar grumble to life on the distant stage and the massive crowd, overflowing the grounds in front of the stage, let out a roar.

Stumbling frantically toward the stage in my plaid long-shorts, Vans sneakers, and bleached blond hair (if you can't dress up for a punk show, when can you?), I made it into the crowd as Greg Graffin finished unnecessarily introducing the band and pushed my way as far into the pit as I could.

Now, when I was a teenager, getting into the centre pit scared the shit out of me. It's not as if I didn't do it for my favourite bands regardless of the fear, but I worked under the assumption that getting into the front centre crowd of moshers meant that I was going to come out bruised, possibly bloody, and gasping for air. I don't know if I have become infinitely more capable than my teenage self of dealing with this stress or if the energy simply wasn't there, but I am disappointed to relate that only one guy came out with blood on his face and I received no injuries to speak of. What's the fun in that?

I think that all in all, this was one of the least energetic Warped crowds I've seen. Even where I was standing for both Bad Religion and Pennywise, there were so few insane moshers that for the most part we had to be content to simply dance to the music. Dance?! This isn't right. I wonder if it's a problem with my generation; I mean, when I was younger I took it for granted that the older, stronger, wiser punk fans would get into the front and start the pit for us. I didn't do that; have I neglected my unwritten duty? Maybe it was up to me to make the event better, since the older crowd has thinned out considerably as they favour full-length concerts over the mishmash of 30-minute shows and legions of kids you see at the Warped Tour. Maybe I'll abandon it next, who knows.

All in all, the atmosphere of the Warped Tour is something I am glad not to have missed, but at best it whet my appetite for the bigger shows I'll be seeing in the next few weeks.



## AUSU THIS MONTH



### Coalition for Student Loan Fairness

AUSU is currently investigating the Coalition for Student Loan Fairness (CSLF) to determine if participation with this group would be advantageous to our members. The group, a grassroots movement of student loan borrowers from across Canada, supports fairness in the loans repayment process.

The CSLF notes that Canadian students are charged a rate of 2.5 to 4.5% above prime for loan repayment, resulting in interest charges that can amount to as much as 33% of the loan principal over the lifetime of the loan. Borrowers who utilize interest relief during low-income periods may pay considerably more. Given that student loans are offered as a public service and incentive to learning, the high profitability of these loans is of concern to AUSU.

CSLF also notes that students over the age of 30 are not included in government surveys of student loan experiences. This is of particular concern to AUSU as the majority of our membership is 30 years of age or older and we know from our experiences with our members that the current loans program does not adequately serve these members, nor does it serve members who wish to work to support themselves while studying part-time.

CSLF also asks that the government provide an Ombuds office to handle student loan complaints—a change that would help address many of the problems we hear about regarding lost forms, incorrect instructions, and confusing requirements. Additionally, CSLF supports providing for consolidation of multiple student loans into a single loan with a single payment, a change that many students have asked for.

Members are encouraged to check out the CSLF website at <http://www.studentloanfairness.ca/index.php>

### AUSU Frappr—Show Us Where You Are

On June 20 AUSU launched a Frappr member map on the front page of AUSU.org. Just three days later, nearly 140 members have added their dot to our map, and a "picture" of the dispersion of our website visitors is taking shape. We're thrilled to see so many of you leaving your little mark on our site, and we love all the great pictures and shoutouts people have uploaded. Members who have left anonymous pins are encouraged to add their name (or alias, if you are shy) so we know you are all different people! If you haven't added your mark, drop by [www.ausu.org](http://www.ausu.org)—and don't forget to read the posting information if you are new to Frappr.



## At Home: Albertans polled as least likely of any Canadians to see a bright future for Quebecois - Canadian relations

Polling by the Association for Canadian Studies for Canada's 140<sup>th</sup> birthday this year has shown that the province with the most pessimism toward Quebec's future within the country is not Quebec itself, but Alberta.<sup>1</sup> Although it's quite obvious that a great deal of us who have developed an opinion on the subject have not actually visited the province in question, it's clear that we are a population that is, in theory, pitted directly against Quebec in terms of ideology and government.

An *Edmonton Journal* editorial on July 4 pointed out that much of this hostility may be based on traditional polar ideals, but that constant federal government favouritism toward the French province has left western Canadians, specifically Albertans, feeling disenfranchised despite the fact that they have a higher provincial income than Quebec. Indeed, much of the federal money that is given to Quebec and many other

provinces, in particular the Maritimes, is the product of transfer payments under Canada's equalization policy.

According to the *Journal*, the average family income in Montreal in 2005 was \$58,900 while in Edmonton it was \$72,600. In contrast, the Canada Day celebrations money granted to Quebec this year was \$1.85 million, while in contrast it was \$50,000 in Alberta. The reason for this huge disparity is less favouritism than it is the Harper government making up for the fact that the Quebec Charest government has not allocated any money at all to Canada Day celebrations in Quebec.

Clearly, this is mirroring the Liberal sponsorship scandal a bit too closely for Albertans, who often wonder why their province isn't being celebrated for its culture and ability to be independent. The polling showed that while 34% of Albertans were pessimistic about Quebec's future in Canada, 33% of the highly separatist Quebec population feels the same way. Perhaps this is something we should both be working on?

<sup>1</sup> Association for Canadian Studies, 2007. "Quebec-Canada Relations 2017: Optimism Characterizes Prospects for 'Reasonably Accommodating' Each Other." Retrieved July 12, 2007, from <http://www.acs-aec.ca/Polls/Quebec%20Canada%20Relations%20at%20140.pdf>

## In Foreign News: Christian Union members of Dutch Parliament pushing for more conservative attitudes to drug use and prostitution

Hitting on a subject close to my heart after my recent vacation, the *Edmonton Journal* published an article July 4 that suggests that the Netherlands will be making reforms to its world famous liberal policies concerning drug use and gay marriage. Journalist Molly Moore blames this shift in national attitude on the instalment of the Christian Union Party into government; the party occupies two of the 16 ministries of the Dutch coalition government.



The Christian Union Party has introduced a bill into parliament that would allow religious officials to refuse to marry a gay or lesbian couple if they morally objected to the partnership. They have also been supportive of the move to ban sales of hallucinogenic mushrooms from Dutch streets and to close down all coffee shops within a 250-yard radius of any school in the nation's second-largest city of Rotterdam.

The Labour Party councillor for Amsterdam, Frank de Wolf, has said that given the extreme liberalism of the Netherlands in terms of immigration and drug use, the police force is quite unable to deal with the organized crime that has sprung up in the city. He also stated that "there is not only a different mood among our people and politicians, but there are different problems now (as a result of decades of liberalism)." <sup>1</sup>

The gradual change from an ideologically liberal state to a more rigid and structured nation has been coming for some time, according to researchers and citizens who have been seeing the increasingly diverse population demanding more and more from centralized government bodies. When artist Theo van Gogh was murdered by an Islamic radical in 2004, the Dutch population immediately began to question its immigration laws and to wonder how federal policies were expected to accommodate new populations of such varying beliefs.

Now, it seems that the Netherlands is trying to cope with the demands of new social groups that wish for a different way of life to that which has become world renowned as the most liberal in the world. As Moore puts it, the country is "struggling with its loss of homogeneity" <sup>1</sup> and government officials are expressing their desire to deal with issues that have not been present in past decades.

I know I'm not alone in my wish that problems like underage drug use and organized crime are curtailed while still leaving that modern Dutch culture intact for the rest of us to enjoy once in a while, and possibly even aspire to.

<sup>1</sup> Edmonton Journal, 2007. "Liberal Netherlands takes a hard right turn." Retrieved July 4, 2007, from <http://www.canada.com/edmontonjournal/index.html>

## What's Up?



Have you checked out the *Voice* events listings lately?

There are lots of great events posted—everything from the Bard on the Beach Festival in B.C. to the Festival International Nuits d'Afrique in Montreal.

If music is more your thing, there are three days of performances happening at the Islands Folk Festival in Duncan, B.C., or you can take in the Buskers Rendezvous in Kingston, Ontario—a four-day festival featuring buskers from around the world.

With over 25 events listed, from arts festivals to a UN youth assembly to an Alaskan market, there's something for everyone on the [Voice events page](#) (and new events are added each month).

So check it out, grab a friend, and enjoy one of the great summer events happening near you.

Too often, I think, we rush from sun to sun, and do not take enough time to look at the beauty of the world that we inhabit. This week, then, a celebration of some of the beauties of planet Earth.

U.S. National Arboretum: Bonsai Images - <http://www.bonsaihunk.us/pic/nat/nat.html>

No doubt the most well-known of plant life manipulations are the collection of tiny trees we call bonsai. I used to think, as a child, that tiny apple trees would grow very tiny apples. 'Twas not to be, however.

Arborsculpture World Tour - [http://www.arborsmith.com/world\\_tour.html](http://www.arborsmith.com/world_tour.html)

You can take a tree down and carve a chair, or grow a grove to suit a shape; but did you know you can manipulate full-size living trees as well?

Gordo's Cloud Gallery - <http://www.capetownskies.com/clouds.htm>

They hang above us almost daily; we watch their flight and find dreams and the shapes of objects around us. Solid, yet fleeting, these clouds' fleeting shapes are caught in the frozen time of photographs.

Deep Sea Photography - <http://www.deepseaphotography.com/index.html>

The wonders that most of us will never see up close on our own; the life beneath the undiscovered country of the sea.

World Championships of Sand Sculpture - <http://haha.nu/amazing/world-championships-of-sand-sculpture/>

Man manipulates not only the trees, and mentally manipulates not only the clouds, but also the tiny stones of sand that blanket almost every beach in the world. I made a tiny little sandcastle last year, but I'm guessing the waves of Lake Erie have washed it away by now.



# classifieds

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

## THE VOICE

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