

THE VOICE MAGAZINE

Volume 15 Issue 27

July 20, 2007



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Throwing the schedule out the window

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If At First You Don't Succeed

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THE VOICE MAGAZINE

July 20, 2007 - Volume 15, Issue 27

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We love to hear from you!
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THE VOICE MAGAZINE

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Us and Them

It really is great, being one of Us. I wouldn't want to be one of Them. It's comforting, this ability to create a wall between Us and Them. I'll cluster together with Us, and together we'll keep Them at bay. It affords a sense of safety, of stability, in an unpredictable world. Or at least, it would if only the walls would stop shifting.

Think of your own Us. Who do you include in the image you've formulated about who is acceptable, who is one of Us? Is the line drawn between rich and poor, male and female? Does being Canadian make the Americans Them? Or are the boundaries broader, encompassing everything (and everyone) that fits the image of your familiar North American (or European or South Asian or Middle Eastern) experience?

And do those groups—the groups we consider ourselves part of—shift depending on what's happening on any given day?

A recent incident got me wondering about this. In June, a group of families was busy cooking, decorating, and getting their community centre ready for a summer celebration. The day of the party, they woke up to find their efforts trashed. Picnic tables and tents were destroyed, and black spray paint covered the walls of the building.

Picture, for a moment, your own family waking up to this—their picnic or reunion or Christmas dinner destroyed by bigotry and hatred. Imagine, if you can, the fear, the anger, that you might feel as you stepped through the wreckage: picked up the pieces of the decorations your kids had made; gathered up the ripped remnants of the tent in your backyard.

The families that saw their hard work and community celebration destroyed are part of the Anishinabeg Algonquin First Nations in Maniwaki, Quebec. The words in black spray paint on the building read "White Power." Swastikas—a symbol that has come to represent self-righteous brutality—were an added flourish.

Your first question is probably "Why?" The answer goes right back to the basics, to the source of wars and prejudice and hate—Us and Them.

It's something that humans have always been particularly good at. We form ourselves into groups based on invented constructions: he's a Liberal, she's a Conservative; you work for minimum wage, I'm a millionaire; the Jones's son went to the right school, the Smiths' daughter went to the wrong one. They're not one of Us.

The examples go on all day. We don't accept people as individuals. We categorize, separate, herd together; fight wars based on labels: colour, religion, money, heritage.

But the fact that these boundaries shift so easily points to how false they are. Take this futuristic scenario: if a drought-stricken U.S. decided to invade Canada for its water, would the same men and women whose narrow-minded hatred caused them to trash the community centre suddenly shift their prejudices? Would the Aborigines become part of the vandals' collective Canadian Us, fighting the invading American Them?

The groups we create are false, without substance, a creation purely of human imagination, yet modern humans cling to them as fiercely as any historic civilization. How far we've come indeed.



Communities are dying. Right here in Canada.

It's an interesting paradox in our world that while communities die in a literal sense in war-torn countries as well as third-, fourth-, and fifth-world countries, those of us in first-world countries are suffering a death that is much more subtle and in some ways catastrophic—we die a metaphorical death. While the peoples of underprivileged countries struggle to meet their daily basic needs, they form a strong sense of community out of necessity for survival. We, who have an abundance of resources, have developed an attitude of independence that destroys communities. We so often refuse to be a part of where we live that millions suffer needlessly.

Examples? I'll give them to you.

On a softer level, many of us don't interact with our neighbours. They are not people we know particularly well, or care to know particularly well. Why should we? The media bombards us with horrific stories about the neighbour who kidnapped or raped a child, and that child could have been yours. I have so many neighbours who are terrified to interact with those around them—they arrive from work and go straight home without the slightest amount of eye contact. The damage? Paranoia, a lack of warmth and support, all affect our children. They learn to be distrustful and to not care for others. And if they are hurt, there are few adults they can trust. Is it because these adults are not trustworthy? I think not. Our children are just scared.

Recently in my neighbourhood a child was struck by a speeding car on her way home. I ran after the car when it didn't stop; immediately after stopping, the driver began making excuses and claimed (quite falsely) that she had not in fact been speeding. She cared so much more about a speeding ticket than the state of the child. Thankfully, this child did not sustain any serious injuries other than a cut to the head, although her family had to delay a vacation since they could not fly. What shocked me the most was that the family was amazed by my help; for one, I did not do much, and for another, how could I not have done what I did? This family has lived all around the world, and they said that in North America people have the highest tendency to keep to themselves, even when someone is in trouble.

Consequences can be dire in such an individualistic society—no one watches your back. You can't depend on anyone but yourself. In such an environment, the entire fabric of a strong society, starting with families, deteriorates.

Most families with children cannot sustain their lifestyles without two (or more!) incomes. As a result, parents spend less time with their children, and teachers are essentially the most consistent form of adult support children receive. However, teachers are overworked, underpaid, and often become another distant role model. The inter-adult support has become frail, and without communities, children have little resort other than to raise themselves. Sadly, televisions, computers, and video games offer a cheap substitute for real-life experiences.

Fortunately, many cities offer a variety of programs sustained by volunteers to fill in some of the gaps. Many public libraries offer a wide range of services through which we can nourish compassion and human help. As a long-time volunteer, I find an enormous amount of satisfaction in contributing to my community not

because of what is returned to me directly (sincere gratitude for my services) but because I know that others will be doing all they can to make our city a better place, in their own way.

Unfortunately, an inherent component to individualism is that if you do something for someone, the payment must be direct and proportionate for the effort to be considered worthwhile. Therefore, many people don't volunteer. One of the tragedies in my community is that volunteers are scarce and many of the wonderful programs are in danger of being shut down.

And so our community unravels, and we feel lonelier, emptier, and less satisfied with our lives. Big cities lead to crime not because of an increase of people, but because of a decrease of heart—the leading cause being fear.

I am not a social scientist. I am a mother, a wife, a friend, and a member of my community who watches, with sad eyes, what is going on in the world today. Our world.

EDUCATION NEWS



Hope Springs Eternal

Feel like your studies have got you in a rut? Staring at your textbooks and thinking that graduation is an unattainable goal, or so far in the future it may as well be?

If it's tempting to push the books aside and go soak up some rays (or lie on the couch and channel surf), here's a little inspiration from someone who gives perseverance a whole new meaning.

For the past 39 years, Shivcharan Jatav has sat down to take his 10th grade high school exams. This year, like every year before, he failed the test.

But that doesn't mean the 73-year-old farmer from western India is going to stop trying. He's vowed to take the test again next year, and is determined to get the education that he is certain will improve his prospects for a job and marriage.

Jatav was given no formal education as a child, but he has been trying to pass the exam since 1969. At the time, he was hoping it would help him get into the military. Now, although he's too old for military service, he's still optimistic that getting his high school diploma will make him a more eligible bachelor.

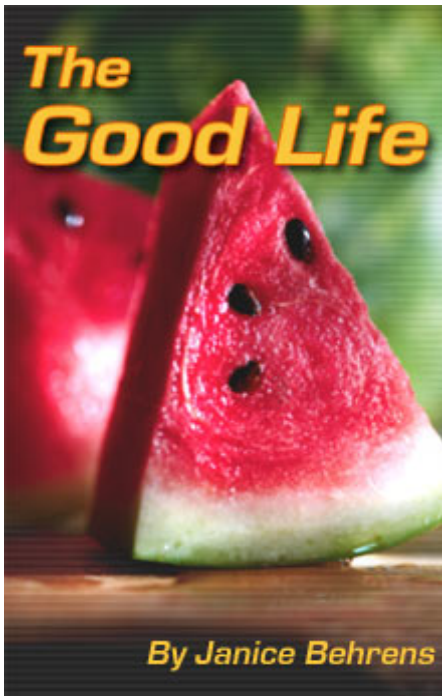
As CBC News reports, the families of potential brides have turned him down in the past because of his lack of education.

"I could not get married as the girls told my family members that I was not properly educated. It's my fate that deprived me of education and a married life," Jatav said.¹

Still, he maintains that he is "a happy and contented person,"¹ and that he'll be back to try the exam again next year.

Whether he passes or not, he certainly provides a wonderful lesson in the meaning of perseverance, dedication, and the eternal optimism it can sometimes take to get the job done.

¹ CBC News, 2007. "73-year-old takes high school exams for 39th time, and fails again." Retrieved July 20, 2007, from <http://www.cbc.ca/cp/Oddities/070615/K061504AU.html>



In Praise of Unstructured Play

Perhaps it is just a general crankiness related to advancing years, but I am feeling more and more out of touch with the spirit of the times these days. It seems to me as though society has made some kind of profound shift away from the values and beliefs that I have grown up with, and this change seems to have happened almost overnight.

Let me give you an example. Amongst the circle of friends and acquaintances I have known for many years, it was a sort of given that outdoor activities were a significant part of most of our lives. For years, there was never any trouble organizing a pickup soccer game in the summer, or finding a group of people to play touch football, toss around a Frisbee, or just get outside for a picnic.

There was not really an agenda to any of this. It wasn't competitive. It wasn't related to any health concern (although reduced risk of heart attack and enhanced vitality and energy were always recognized as a beneficial side effect).

Above all, it wasn't done in order to shape up for bikini and swimsuit season. It seems to me that my friends and I got outside in a loose, unstructured kind of way as much as we could just because, well, we enjoyed it so much.

Now, it seems to me that everyone is so busy all the time. Ask about getting together for a game of baseball or bocce at the park and everyone starts flipping through their agendas or consulting their electronic time-management oracles. Want to organize a picnic down at the river or a long bike trip in the country on a Saturday afternoon? Apparently you had better start getting the logistics nailed down a good 60 days in advance, because everyone is too caught up in a whirlwind of activities to do anything even remotely spontaneous.

Certainly, it is not that the people I know are any less active. Goodness knows, between Pilates, yoga, kids' soccer, hockey, floor hockey, basketball camp, outdoors club, yada, yada, yada, there is no shortage of activity going on. And good for the participants, I say. It all sure beats sitting around watching the telly or carrying on virtual relationships over Facebook, etc.

I can't help but feel, though, that we seem to have lost our sense that the best kinds of fun are the simple, spontaneous events that are pulled together in the span of a few minutes on a weekend afternoon. I can't help but feel that we would be a little better off if we, as a society, just backed off a little bit from our agenda-driven exercise schedules and allowed ourselves a bit more time for unstructured spontaneity.

Rise Against Tour



After touring Canada with Anti-Flag, Billy Talent, and Moneen earlier this year, Rise Against is gracing our country with another full-length tour that sold out before many people even thought about getting tickets. Even with two shows scheduled to cater to the large Calgary punk crowd, I had to settle for Edmonton and drive a good six hours to get there. But no worries . . . Edmonton had the beer gardens, after all.

The doors opened at 6 at Edmonton's Shaw Conference Centre and it took a good half an hour to make your way from the entrance, past dodgy security guards, and into the auditorium. Once downstairs, I got the lay of the land and it immediately became apparent that the biggest drawback to an indoor concert is that smokers are perennially hovering by the doors to be let out . . . clearly not ideal for them (or, let's face it, for me).

After finally being allowed outside onto the balcony for cigarettes, we took our places on round cement benches and perched along the railing to light up; the perfect opportunity to people-watch. It is moments like these that I have at every punk show, wondering how many of these people I have seen at the Warped Tour or at Bad Religion. I'm certain there is at least a handful of people who are present at every show I go to, so a big shout out goes to all of them, especially the guy who always wears the leather Misfits jacket and spikes his hair about a foot high. I love it when people dress up.

It was later than expected when a band finally hit the stage, and given that the headliner wasn't expected for another three sets after the first, I of course hit the beer gardens with my fellow fans. Despite there being nowhere to sit down or congregate in the barricaded area (and also because of the blatant lack of Kokanee), I took to drinking Coors and wandering around to the sounds of the Holy Roman Empire, Comeback Kid, and Silverstein.

The first had a very Paramore-like presence, with a female on lead vocals and some punkish vibes coming from the band. Not my favourite, but I am really of the opinion that if a girl takes on punk vocals she needs to personify Brodie Dalle (of the Distillers) to pull it off. After a short first set, Comeback Kid hit the stage and started to shake up the crowd a bit more. I have to say, I liked these guys. They played a hard-edged set, and while the lyrics eluded me completely, I still will make an effort to pick up an album when I next have the chance. Oddly, I've seen the band name floating around MySpace for some time, so of all the warm-up bands, Comeback Kid is the only one I had heard of prior to the show. If you are into Billy Talent I suggest you check them out.


The last band to take the stage before the long-awaited headliners was Silverstein; these guys hadn't cracked their way into my consciousness before now but apparently they had a big fan base in Edmonton that night. The pit swelled in size, the crowd got louder, and the lights in the auditorium were finally put out in favour of stage illumination. Again, the set was fairly punk, but unlike their stage predecessors the vocalist was clear and the band came out sounding a bit like Rise Against would if Chris #2 from Anti-Flag took the lead vocals. Silverstein was a great band and they put on an awesome show that their fans absolutely loved.

Now, the problem with the beer gardens is invariably that one drinks excessively, decides to go out for a smoke at a random moment, and then misses the opening song of the band they have actually come to see.


It is a widespread problem, I understand. At any rate, after chatting through the previous set with a huge and drunken fan of Silverstein (and if you are out there, Kyle who makes boats, thanks for talking to me instead of getting in the pit!), I did indeed miss Rise Against starting up their own set but this was by no means going to stop me from pushing my way right into the centre of the pit. That was what I came for.

Not surprisingly, Rise Against was everything I hoped it would be; the concert was the best I've been to yet, on par with Bad Religion in London the last time they toured. That's a pretty high mark to hit, but Tim, Joe,

Brandon, and Zach performed flawlessly, put together a killer set, and I swear Tim met my eyes as I screamed out the words to "Black Masks and Gasoline." Hell, it would have been hard not to notice me—I was crazed, pink-haired, and one of the only girls so far toward the stage.



*"I pity
anyone that
missed this
show, I
really do."*



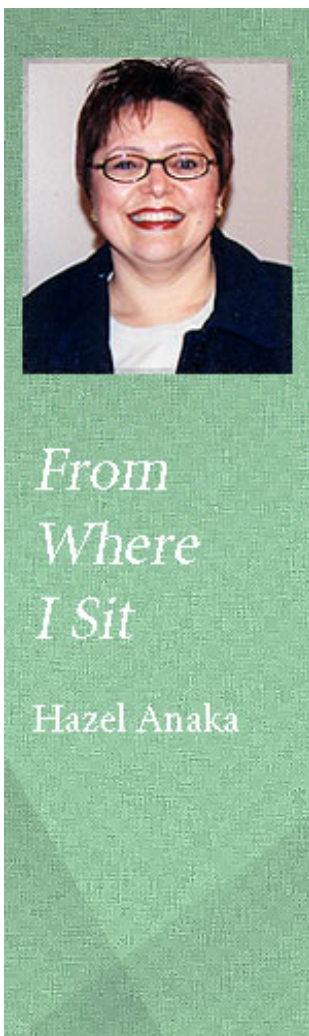
I have to hand it to the crowd, one of the things that disappointed me at the Warped Tour recently was the lack of hard-core moshers, and this was not the case in Edmonton. There was blood, a lot of falling down, and more than a few elbows and swift kicks to the face and midsection, but all in good fun and, as always in a good punk crowd, no one gets left on the floor for more than half a second before being hoisted back up by a load of sweaty strangers. I loved it.

Most of the songs they played were from *Revolutions Per Minute* and *The Sufferer and the Witness*, with the exception of an acoustic interlude that followed the band's departure from stage and our spirited chorus of "Rise Against! Rise Against!"

Tim McIlrath walked back onstage to soothe the perspiring and oxygen-deprived masses with "Swing Life Away" and a Jawbreaker cover whose title unfortunately escapes me. Often with many other bands, this acoustic section would mark the end of the show, and as I sang "We sit on front porches and swing life away, we get by just fine here on minimum wage," I wished for the millionth time that a band could cool us down a bit and then do one last song to mosh to. Guess why Rise Against is perfect? The rest of the band filed back onstage, Tim switched into hardcore mode again, and for one last time we bashed into each other at full force to one of my favourite songs, "The Good Left Undone."

I pity anyone that missed this show, I really do. I met some great people, lost them in the crowd, got nicely drunk and then cooled myself off outside for a smoke among the brotherhood of RA fans, then lost my head and bruised all my soft tissue in the pit. If that isn't a perfect moment in life, I don't know what is. Only upon walking home did I realize that my foot might actually be broken, my kidneys had been pummelled, and the entirety of both arms was untouchable for the pain. My hair had been pulled, I'd been soaked in other people's sweat enough to actually curl my hair, and although by that point I was immune, I'm sure the smell was pretty atrocious.

In short, I'm there again in a heartbeat, and if you've got any inclination at all for this band for its music, vegetarian standards, or simply its stage presence, you ought not to let the next shows sell out before you get onto Ticketmaster. It's so worth the bruises and broken bones.



It's Not Too Late

It's not too late. In bigger centres, the earlier you start the better your chances for success. Some may even say it's your duty.

I'm talking about the October municipal elections. Every city, town, village, and rural county or municipal district will be looking for a few good men (and women). Unfortunately, in 2007 women will still be the minority. Ladies, it's time to step up.

In 1993, then-Lamont County Reeve Ed Stelmach ran for a provincial seat. He won that election and the rest is history.

His decision triggered a by-election. A couple I respected approached me to run. "Are you crazy? I hate politics," was my gut reaction. They kept talking. The county needs someone like you; they need another woman; it's a great learning experience; you can do it.

I didn't sleep that night. Or the next few. I talked to Roy; my kids; my parents, Ed and Marie. Eventually I decided I had nothing to lose and everything to gain. I decided not just to run but to win. I began planning and enlisting the help of friends, family, and neighbours. I collected my five signatures, paid my \$100, and filed the nomination papers on the appointed day in September. With help I covered the entire division, visiting every household and asking for support. On October 5, 1993, I beat three men to win the seat. I believe I simply outworked them.

It was the best of times and the worst of times. If you love to learn, like rising to the challenge, love meeting new people, seeing and doing new things, politics may be for you. If you want to influence decisions, get things done, serve your community, politics may be for you. It is an education like no other.

If you hate lobbying efforts, backroom deals, and hypocrisy, stay away. I (wrongly) believed that if you work hard, come early, stay late, read the meeting package, ask probing questions, consider the recommendations of the bureaucrats, look at the big picture, be fiscally prudent, do your due diligence and act with courage, ratepayers will understand the tough decisions and support you. Wrong.

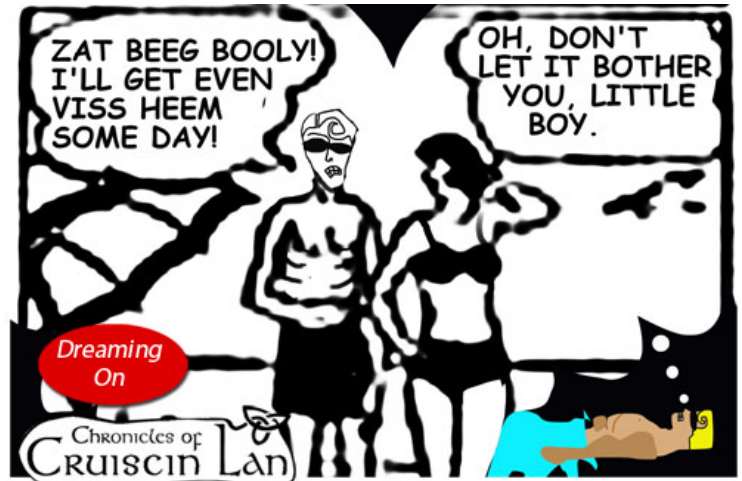
I believed if you explained things truthfully, said it clearly enough and often enough, you could make anyone understand anything. Wrong. Some people can't get it, others choose not to. I found myself growing up and growing cynical. It was an education in human nature like no other.

As someone who's won an election and lost an election, winning is decidedly better. In 1995, during the early days of the Klein revolution and with everyone hurting, there was a huge turnover province-wide as taxpayers struck back at the closest targets. There is not quite so public a defeat as losing an election. Luckily, it doesn't kill you. Hurts like hell, but not fatal.

I have no regrets. I've done my time. It's not too late for you, however, from where I sit.

The Chronicles of Cruiscin Lan

by
Wanda
Waterman
St. Louis





A Minor Houdini

Grim-faced and determined, he passes the tools of his trade amongst the crowd that is gathering at the end of the pier. He offers the devices of his entrapment for their careful inspection; he doesn't want there to be any question that what he is about to attempt is merely some street corner chicanery, some cheap and cheesy sleight of hand. He allows the skeptical audience to closely examine the cage that will soon be lowered beneath the waves. They run their hands over the inflexible bars fashioned of Reinforced Fears. He lets them hold and heft the thick chains, with their heavy links wrought from the Steel of Denial, each and every inch tempered in Furnaces of Hate. He insists that they peer closely at each of the strands of the Ropes of Failure and Disappointment.

Some amongst them hold the Blindfold of Self-Deception up to their own eyes, and they eagerly confirm that no light can possibly pass through. Straining until his face turns a dark shade of purple, the strongest man amongst them confirms that the leather and wire Gag of Lies is as sturdy as it appears. With a flourish, the pale and thin minor Houdini passes around a magnifying glass so that each of them can minutely examine the workings of the dozen fiendishly clever locks that it seems will inevitably seal his fate.

Satisfied with the Apparatus of Confinement, the crowd becomes slightly impatient. They shift from foot to foot as two eager, fresh-faced volunteers wrap and tighten and test every aspect of the Trap of Death. Civilized and polite in the way that all crowds are, for a limited time, the onlookers don't want to appear impatient. Nevertheless, they have only a limited amount of time to spare for this curious but minor distraction. They have meals to prepare and knives to sharpen. They have children to berate and beds to set on fire. They don't necessarily want to unduly rush this performer, but they do want him to succumb to the depths. They want to see bubbles of desperate breath rising to the surface, to imagine the silken sacks of his lungs irreversibly filling with brackish sea water. They want him to die a watery death, and sooner, if you please, rather than later.

Themselves sensing the rising impatience of the crowd, the two volunteers (as instructed) use the winch to lower the cage containing the bound, gagged, and blindfolded man into the ocean. In moments, the whole contraption disappears silently underwater.

Below the waves, the man is in a room filled with bilious green light. He knows that the throng gathered above are waiting for his final exhalation. He knows that the tricks of his trade—the ropes, the chains, the cage—are not tricks at all; they are serious and they are real. But he also knows, as the crowd does not, that there is a golden key hidden in the top pocket of his shirt, pressed close against his heart. He knows that if he can reach this key, then he will once again cheat his fate, and come rising, majestic as a swordfish, to the surface. Staying as calm as he can, he tries to achieve some loosening of his bonds, tries to gain just enough freedom to allow his long, sensitive fingers to pluck the golden key from where it sits . . .

For what seems a long time, the crowd stands on the edge of the pier, staring down. Some of the younger and more sentimental amongst them harbour half a hope that the man will reappear, triumphantly gasping for breath. Surreptitiously, many of them sneak glances at their watches.

Eventually, as darkness begins to fall, all but one of them turns and heads for home. The only one left there, a woman who has known the escape artist from past performances, dangles her feet over the blackening water, and drops red flower petals, one after another, on the unbroken surface.

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—and don't forget to read the posting information if you are new to Frappr.



At Home: StatsCan statistics reveal that young Canadians are drawn to Calgary while the elderly are moving into Victoria

According to a portrait of the Canadian population in 2006, by age and sex, Canada is becoming top-heavy with retired seniors and the influx of children is not sufficient to replace those older workers facing retirement.

With 13.7 per cent of the population aged 65 and over (a record percentage), the numbers show that Canada's retired community is attracted largely to Victoria, B.C., and that its youth is attracted more toward Calgary, Alberta. The latter city has expanded by 109,190 people since 2001, reaching a total population just under 1 million at the time of the 2006 census.¹

So I guess we have to wonder what's causing the age difference in settling statistics between the two cities. Why is Calgary pulling in the young set? I wonder in a personal sense as well as simply being curious, because in a year or maybe

two I wouldn't be surprised to end up there myself. What is it offering that another city, namely Victoria which I have adored since childhood, is not?

Laurie Blahitka, director of women's health for the Calgary Health Region, has said that Calgary is "a very young city, and a lot of young families transferred here from other provinces because of job opportunities."²

In contrast, it seems that Victoria is maintaining its status as a sort of haven away from the more frantic lifestyles of the rest of the country. While Calgary, and Alberta itself, are drawing in the crowds for work and subsequently to spend time in trendier, newer social groups, Victoria is a place with limited growth potential and therefore it is economically easy to see why the latter city is pulling in the retirement crowd instead of young families.

The apparent Calgary baby boom does seem to be concerning some residents, however, who wonder how the city will cope with overcrowded schools and housing when more and more children come of age.

¹ Statistics Canada. "2006 Community Profiles." Retrieved July 20, 2007, from <http://www12.statcan.ca/english/census06/data/profiles/community/Details/Page.cfm?Lang=E&Geo1=CSD&Code1=4806016&Geo2=PR&Code2=48&Data=Count&SearchText=calgary&SearchType=Begins&SearchPR=01&B1=All&Custom=>

² CTV News, 2007. "Calgary is Canada's fountain of youth: census." Retrieved July 17, 2007, from http://www.ctv.ca/servlet/ArticleNews/story/CTVNews/20070717/census_calgary_070717/20070717?hub=Canada

In Foreign News: Australia deals with climate change

"The effects of climate change [are] likely to be less severe in systems that have some resilience and that we haven't gone in and buggered-up."¹

So says David Lindenmayer in true laid-back, straight-to-the-point Aussie style. Lindenmayer is a professor of conservation biology with the Australian National University, and he was referring to the Australian plan to establish a climate corridor across the entire country so that plants and animals would have a safe place in which to flee the effects of climate change.

The plan, approved by federal and state Australian governments, will involve 2,800 kilometres of protected environment that will essentially be a haven stretching the length of the country's east coast, from the alps in the south to the northern tropical tip. In a nation where climate change is of great concern, especially as Australia already boasts the world's driest inhabited area, Australians have made it their priority to protect the natural environment and the flora and fauna that goes along with it.

The conservation efforts will establish a corridor that encompasses the Australian alps, miles of forests, and hopefully many different species of plants and animals that are not only integral to a balanced ecosystem but that are unique to Australia. The corridor will be treated almost as a national park, with rules against clear-cutting, development, and environmentally damaging practices.

This idea of a conservation corridor is one that Canada is also pursuing to protect native animal species that otherwise suffer a high risk of being killed on highways that cross their native migratory paths.

Scientists in Australia say that although the climate corridor is a noble endeavour, governments must be doing more to address the initial causes of climate change so that their unique ecosystem is not lost.

¹ Reuters. "Australia to build cross-continent climate corridor." Retrieved July 9, 2007, from <http://www.alertnet.org/thenews/newsdesk/SYD145470.htm>

Someone told me that what you should get for the person who's got everything is antibiotics. I, however, prefer a little more levity with my gift giving.

Hand Soap - <http://foliage.myshopify.com/products/handsoap>

Who says soap has to look like a cake of Camay or seashells that collect dust on the bathroom windowsill?

Glowbrick - <http://www.gadgetshop.com/pws/ProductDetails.ice?ProductID=333>

Interior decor need not be functional alone. Why not this little gem for the night-light - loving soul in your life?

Eureka Shower Curtain -

<http://www.wrapables.com/jsp/ProductDetail.jsp?ProductCode=A52718&cate=sale&sec=0202>

If the item above didn't make you think "Eureka!" this one surely will.

Wake Me Up At . . . - <http://www.wakemeupat.com/>

For all you Londoners who nap on the tube, perhaps one or two of these will be of some use to you so you don't miss your work stop in the morning.

Hostessblog - <http://hostessblog.com/>

Planning to spend a lot of time entertaining this summer? Perhaps some of the tidbits here would be handy, for yourself or the hostess who entertains you.

Giant Pencil - <http://www.rkdm.com/giantpencil/>

I bet this little item would last through an entire AU degree's worth of note taking!

Life in Miniature - <http://www.inandoutgifts.com/products.php?cat=11>

Sandcastles, origami, golf, tennis, and so many more, in this wonderful collection of desktop suitable gifts for anyone you want to get a little something for.

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

THE VOICE

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