

THE VOICE MAGAZINE

*Volume 15 Issue 35
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We love to hear from you!
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THE VOICE MAGAZINE

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Making a List, Checking it Twice

In some ways, surfing the Internet is the equivalent of overhearing a conversation between strangers in a public place. When it comes to blogs, readers' responses to articles, and personal websites, it's the same context: the information you're hearing (or reading) is someone's opinion—no more, no less.

Even if one of those strangers claimed to be a professional, and rattled on with confidence about medicine or law or where to invest the money your rich uncle left you, most people would retain a healthy scepticism about what they were hearing. Where, you might think, did this person earn her credentials? Does he really work for the investment firm he claims to?

Yet somehow, as soon as a perfect stranger posts the same information on the Internet, normally rational people assume that what they're reading is the absolute truth. The moment those pixels make their Helvetica way across the screen, they take on the weight of a strange new authority.

It's a phenomenon that's perhaps nowhere more apparent than in the successful web presence known as Wikipedia, the online encyclopedia that "anyone can edit." The intent of the website is admirable: to create a free, multilingual, web-based encyclopedia that is built by the collaborative efforts of people around the world. A democratic, global-village undertaking if ever there was one.

And also a good reminder that the morass of tidbits, news, video, opinion, and social networks found on the Internet—even if it bears the respectable label of "encyclopedia"—should not be granted instant authority any more than what we read or hear anywhere else.

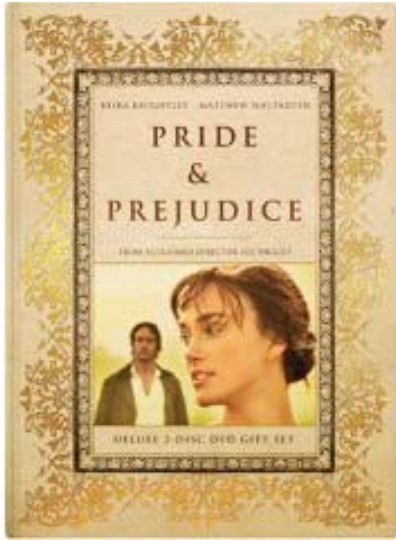
In a move that's sure to irk contributors—but chalk one up for reliability—the Wikipedia site is changing one of the basic features of their encyclopedia. Beginning with the German-language version, the site will no longer be freely available for instant editing. Instead, edits will be performed by a group of trusted participants.

These will be people who have established a history of making reliable, factually correct changes to information, which will, of course, be verified by those overseeing the site. In other words, Wikipedia will become more like a traditional encyclopedia.

The change is, to their credit, a nod to the unreliability inherent in such a free, unregulated place as the Internet—something that millions of people seem to forget the minute they fix their eyes on the screen and start to surf, even if they're engaged in scholarship and well versed in the need to find accurate, verified facts.

According to The Daily Orange, an independent student newspaper in Syracuse, NY, the issue of students relying on unverified Internet sources (including Wikipedia) has become such a problem that several colleges and universities have had to implement policies banning the practice. Given that, it's easy to understand the never-ending stream of e-mails from friends who are convinced that the latest urban legend or health scare they read on the Internet is steeped in fact.

Does this mean that people today are more gullible than previous generations? No. But it does mean that if you're going to rely on this wonderful new tool of the information age, you'd better be checking it twice.



Pride and Prejudice x 3

Whenever a popular novel hits the shelves, it's almost certain that a film version will follow. And it's equally certain to give rise to a debate: which was better, the film or the book?

While I am not a big fan of film remakes in general, there are some literary stories that have many times been made into films, both for the big screen and the little one, and I do enjoy those for the most part; particularly when it involves one of my favourite literary stories of all time, Jane Austen's *Pride and Prejudice*.

This classic story has been made into more full-length films and TV series than I can count—three of which I own, by the way—and what I find interesting about watching different versions of a story is noting what each team of creators has chosen to leave in or take out, and how they have chosen to slant the characters. The three versions of *Pride and Prejudice* that I own (listed by year and principal stars) are:

- 1940: Greer Garson, Laurence Olivier
- 1995: Jennifer Ehle, Colin Firth
- 2005: Keira Knightley, Matthew Macfadyen

Taking the limitations of film into account (and that includes time and ability to carry print-based detail into the visual realm), decisions must be made as to choice of content and the handling of the portions of the story that are chosen for translation from book to big screen. You can't stuff every nuance of a novel into a film, no matter how strenuously you try. So, the first thing you might note overall are the details that are chosen to remain—even seemingly subtle ones.

One of the things that leaps out most for me is how the ballroom scenes are handled when Elizabeth overhears Mr. Darcy and Charles Bingley discussing the beauty of various ladies and why Mr. Darcy won't dance. While the 1995 and 2005 versions chose to remain book-faithful, more or less, the 1940 version chose to alter the line almost completely, to the point where it changes the flavour from something personal and directly insulting about Elizabeth to being more widely culturally damning. The line in question is spoken by Mr. Darcy and runs as follows:

"She's tolerable enough, but I'm in no mood to give consequence to the middle classes at play."

This isn't the only incident in the film that is much altered from the book, from a personal insult to something more widely encompassing of class. The ball held at Netherfield, for example, is supposed to simply be a ball; it is not meant to include daytime outdoor events, yet that is the direction chosen for the 1940 version of the film.

Caroline Bingley takes the pointed opportunity of insulting the intellect and tastes of "the rustics" by her snide remarks about them being easily amused. It is interesting to note how a quality of behaviour that might in other circumstances be seen as admirable—the ability to make the best out of whatever situation you find yourself in—is here turned into an opportunity to insult and malign.

The most glaring omission from this version of the story is the tour of the Peak District Elizabeth takes with her aunt and uncle. It is during this visit that she gets to see Mr. Darcy's estate and accidentally encounters him, and also the phase of the story where her emotions truly shift from those of dislike for Darcy to the burgeoning of love. The film does manage to add in a transitional point, but I think the loss of this portion of the story means a loss of an important aspect of the story's flavour.

If you are looking for precision in keeping to the story of the book, then the 1995 version is what you're after. It is not precise—no film could be—but it is faithful enough that you could almost use it for study. I very much appreciate the way the close relationship of the two eldest sisters, Jane and Elizabeth, is portrayed. They are open, honest, and very closely tied. It is a pleasure to see such warmth within a family that is so often portrayed as being wildly disparate. Two other sisters, Kitty and Lydia, seem to have a bond too, but it seems to be one of follower and leader rather than a true meeting of mind or sentiment. I find, though, that much of this version is somewhat too staid and polite. I think it could have done with a little dose of vibrancy to combat the social niceties the story is so much concerned with.

I think the most surprising departure from the feeling and flavour of the book is the portrayals of behaviour in the 2005 version of the film, the most shocking of which is Elizabeth Bennet's.

In the novel, as well as every other film or television version I've ever seen, she is portrayed as a woman of wit and sagacity, but also a woman of decorum who understands the proprieties of interpersonal behaviour. The 2005 version of the film portrays her as somewhat petty and insulting; as taking things more personally, and, even being, dare I say it, bitchy. She insults her mother in front of other people, seems to take the ballroom insults of Mr. Darcy in a much more wounded and personal fashion than do other portrayals of the character, and her tone is much more demeaning than she is normally portrayed. This, along with subtle other aspects of the film, make it, to my mind, a cheapened version of the tale.

One of the other notable aspects of the films that is interesting to pay some attention to is how Mr. Collins is portrayed. While in all three he is portrayed as a socially awkward, boring twit without any sort of comprehension of true social niceties and proprieties, each film has flavoured him slightly differently.

In the 1940 version he has an air of pomposity and comic desperation about him that is missing from the other two versions; in the 2005 version he is somewhat more pushy and domineering with no comical aspects; and, in the 1995 version, we have a sweaty, facially flaccid man who can't even eat a meal without making noises.

None of these men have much sense when it comes to interpersonal situations, either private or social, and they all seem to assume that the entire world gives as much of a tinker's damn about his patroness as he professes to. Out of all three I would have to choose the 1995 version, just because he is as socially awkward an oaf as they all are, but he has no air about him that we can attach real dislike or hatred to, and I think that's important with this character. We aren't supposed to hate him; just find him useless and socially embarrassing. Despite his flaws, we are meant to see at least some measure of the fact that he is, as all three versions point out in some fashion, respectable.

If you ever have an opportunity to see these versions of the story, or any versions, try and make note of little things, like: how the overheard ballroom insult is handled; the discussion of Elizabeth walking alone to Netherfield and her skirt becoming muddy; Caroline Bingley and Elizabeth's "turn about the room" and the surrounding conversation; the visit to Mr. Darcy's estate and Elizabeth's unexpected meeting with him; and the elopement of Lydia with George Wickham. Better yet, read the novel first, and choose your own favourite details to watch for.

The Chronicles of Cruiscin Lan

by
Wanda
Waterman
St. Louis





The Path

Okay, all right. So you're walking along this path, and you can't quite remember how you got there, or what you are heading for. The path leads through a darkened wood. You seem to think that you've been walking along this path for a very, very long time, yet it seems completely unfamiliar. There is something just ahead of you on the trail. It seems that it keeps changing shape. Sometimes it takes the form of a magpie, or a fox. At other times, you catch a glimpse of a woman's back, disappearing into the trees.

Sometimes, there is a break in the trees, and the path follows the edge of high cliffs. A great ocean roars and pounds against jagged black rocks far below you. There are immense, awful sea creatures out on the steel-grey waters, scooping up whales and ships in their immense jaws. There are large, black birds circling overhead. Sometimes they dive and claw at your shoulders and your head. You can feel their razor talons raking the flesh of your face. Screaming with fear and pain, you run on, blinded by your own blood.

Back in the cover of trees, you hide between the roots of a great tree. You want nothing more than to just rest in this spot. You want to close your eyes, and fall into eternal sleep in some sun-drenched field of poppies. But something tells you that you cannot rest, not yet. Something tells you that you must get to your feet again, and keep moving on. If only you could remember why you are walking on this path, and where it leads to.

Eventually, you have walked so far that you no longer have any sense of time or distance. You may have been walking for an eternity, or only a few days. Your feet are bloody and raw. You are crossing an open plain now, amidst a ferocious downpour. The freezing rain is battering your exposed flesh, and running in chill rivulets down your collar. The air smells sulphurous and vile. The ground has turned to swamp beneath your feet, and every step is a great struggle to move forward.

Just when you are sure that you will lose your mind to fear and exhaustion and fever, you see a break in the clouds far ahead. There is the faint glimmer of a constellation in the southern sky that is swallowed up again by carbon-black clouds. But that glimpse was enough. In a flash of insight, you remember why you have been walking this hard, dangerous path. You remember that this path you started on so long ago leads to the place of fearlessness. You remember that it passes through the dark geography of your deepest fears.

Battle of the Rappers



I daresay if you have been awake this past month, you are aware that September 11 was the official drop date for two rap albums: 50 Cent's *Curtis* and Kanye West's *Graduation*.

It has, for reasons that remain blurry at best, been a heated battle for top sales, and at one point 50 said he'd give up rapping if Kanye's record did better than his. Uh oh!

Even before the albums went out, unofficial polling showed that Kanye had the upper hand—and now, after looking at the sales, it seems clear that he is the favourite. To be fair, Kanye never really thought a record race was a great idea, and the winning rapper has remained rather quiet on the subject.

On September 12, when it became clear that Kanye's expected 750,000 record sales would top the Billboard Chart and 50 Cent's 550,000 would likely reach the number three slot¹ (although further sales put him at number two), the more outspoken of the two artists decided to blame his record label. The rapper says a lack of proper promotion led to his record selling less than Kanye West's release, and after this debacle he plans to leave Interscope following his next album.²

But why the one-sided hostility? After all, *Rolling Stone* quotes Kanye West as describing the rivalry as "the stupidest thing."³

The record race was originally conceived by BET hosts on the show *106 & Park*; the two artists had both had their release dates pushed back to the point when they would be simultaneously presented to the public, and BET hosts decided this was a great time to stir up a little action and healthy rivalry between the two rappers. 50 Cent turned up to say that he was all for the record race; he also predicted that Kanye West would have no part in it.

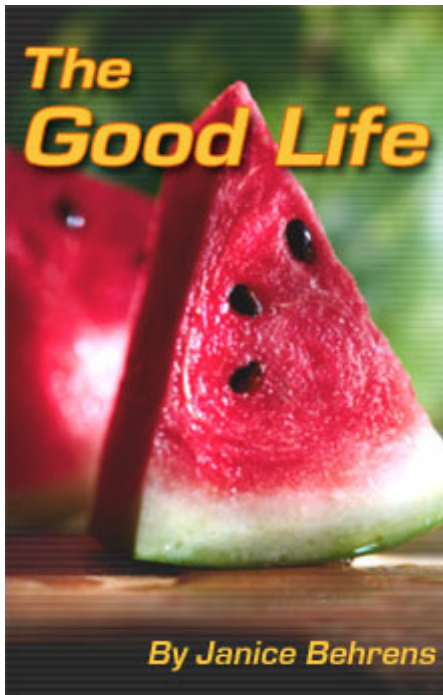
In the end, however, the two artists sat down together for a couple of interviews and talked about how they each want the top spot and how they have collaborated on music in the past, even as recently as 50 Cent talking to Kanye West about the new album *Curtis*.

Fans aren't sure what to expect from this outcome, and heated debate continues as to whether or not 50 Cent will keep his word and actually give up his career in rap.

¹ MuchMusic. "Kanye Stronger than 50." Retrieved September 19, 2007, from <http://www.muchmusic.com/news/story.asp?id=19850>

² MuchMusic. "50 Blames Label." Retrieved September 19, 2007, from <http://www.muchmusic.com/news/story.asp?id=19856>

³ *Rolling Stone*. "Kanye West Calls Proposed Debate With 50 Cent 'The Stupidest Thing'." Retrieved September 19, 2007, from <http://www.rollingstone.com/rockdaily/index.php/2007/08/08/kanye-west-calls-proposed-debate-with-50-cent-the-stupidest-thing/>



The Ways We Learn

It's funny how many things in life fall under the category of "both a blessing and a curse." One of the things, as far as I'm concerned, is the fact that in this complex and amazing world we inhabit it is simply not possible to ever stop learning.

On the one hand, this is a blessing. After all, who needs a boring life of complacency and stagnant comfort? Human beings are immensely complex creatures, with soaring imaginations and brains that are hard-wired for overcoming challenges and delving into mysteries. On the other hand, though, sometimes all this continual learning can wear a person's batteries right down.

In my life I am both lucky enough and unlucky enough to be faced with a seemingly never-ending barrage of learning opportunities. These challenges are present for me on every front of my life. They are there in my career, my relationship, my academic endeavours, and (perhaps above all) in my role as a parent.

In all these classrooms of life (both literal and figurative) I have come to understand that the most important element of success for me is having an understanding of myself, and of the way that I learn things.

A good friend of mine, an educator, once told me that each and every person has a different way of assimilating and processing new knowledge. She told me to try and come up with an analogy to describe the way in which I am successful at learning new things. For her, she told me, understanding new things was a lot like baking a cake: it was a process of gathering and organizing the ingredients—the information she needs in order to come to an understanding of something new—and then carefully blending them together, using patience and precision.

When I asked my husband about this, he said that, for him, learning something new and difficult is a lot like fishing. It is a matter of casting a line into the water, and then going into a state of relaxed awareness, and waiting for the ideas that are circling back and forth below the surface to finally "bite" and take hold. (On the other hand, he tends to relate most things to fishing.)

For my part, the process of learning is a lot like riding a mountain bike up a particularly steep hill. It is really just a matter of gearing down and maintaining my endurance until I've made it all the way to the top. Sometimes, of course, it's not like that. Fortunately, there are moments of swift clarity, when understanding comes like a bolt of lightning. Usually, though, it's more a matter of perspiration and stick-to-it-iveness. But at least I know.



Books, Music, and Film to Wake Up Your Muse and Help You Change the World

Book: Bill McKibben, *Deep Economy: The Wealth of Communities and the Durable Future*

Publication date: 2007

Publisher: Henry Holt, New York, NY

We should slap ourselves for saying money isn't everything when it may bloody well *be* everything for the Chinese worker caring for an ailing parent, the Congolese mother whose children are starving, or the penniless American needing a heart transplant.

Until these persons' incomes hit a level at which basic needs and a few luxuries fall within reach, more money will indeed equal more happiness. Beyond that level—and this is key—money does not increase the quality of life.

Another title for this book might be: *More is Better, But Only Up to a Point*. *Deep Economy* is a skilfully wrought challenge to that throng of power-wielding Greenspan dittos who sweep aside demands for tax increases and better social security on the grounds that such measures would place limits on economic growth, limits tantamount to economic suicide. As McKibben makes clear, unlimited growth has become a very, very bad thing for all concerned, and the sooner we slow down this wildly listing hay wagon the better.

When I first saw Shumacher's book *Small is Beautiful: Economics as if People Mattered*, I did a double take. What? You mean economics doesn't recognize that people are important? I was soon to discover that indeed it does not. A healthy economy is a growing economy and that's that. It's all about the numbers. Economic growth has brought us gains for which we must be grateful. But untrammelled economic growth is only good *up to a point*. Beyond that point it destroys the environment, creates poverty, and worse: for all its costs economic growth does not bring happiness, not even to its beneficiaries.

The current materialistic excess of Americans alone is sucking the earth's udder dry and emerging economies like India and China are now hell-bent on achieving the same pace of consumption. If America continues to use up as much stuff as it does right now and the Indians and Chinese come close to catching up, the toll on natural resources will be several times what the planet can produce. This taxing of the environment will of course wipe us out, if the pollution created doesn't off us first.

I could go on and on about how bad things are, but the gist of this book is ever so much cheerier than that. Not only is there a way out, but a growing worldwide army is now actively engaged in carrying out the slow, laborious changes necessary for the survival of the human race. Local, community-supported agriculture, radio, music, currency, schools, politics, urban gardens, and transportation are all adding a vital dimension to economic growth, *deepening* it, if you will.

What is needed to “deepen” the economy? Community, community, community. Communities provide myriad sources of wealth that is sustainable and stable and which brings joy and personal growth to our lives. The greatest thing about farmers' markets, for example, is not that you can buy fresh, local, organic produce and even sell some yourself, but that people actually spend a lot more time talking to each other at farmers' markets than they do at the huge supermarket chains. The crowning wealth of communities is human connectedness. But it isn't enough to simply believe in community; you have to put your wallet

behind it, because the building (and destroying) of communities is dependent on how we choose to spend our money.

Convention would have us believe that we creative types do much better as solitaires labouring in our ivory towers or in rooms of our own, but history and experience show us the folly, for people of imagination, of isolationism, of its tendency to lead to depression, substance abuse, and a fatal abdication of the artist's responsibility to society. McKibben refers us to ancient Greek city states and Italian Renaissance communities wherein arts and ideas flourished because people were interdependent and in frequent communion with each other.

Stop saying, "I know I should, but . . ." The world McKibben reports on and recommends isn't perfect, and it does mean consuming less. But it is rich in health, happiness, ecological balance, creative problem-solving, closeness to nature, and freedom of intellectual exploration. What are you waiting for?

[CLICK ON THIS - Watching the Wheels](#)

Lonita Fraser

You gotta get there, right? You might be getting there by foot, air, rail, water, or road, but you're getting there . . . or maybe you're just playing at it.

World's Largest Railway Model

This makes me want to set up my own choo-choos. Yes, as a matter of fact, I do have choo-choos!

World's Longest Train

Speaking of choo-choos, what a beast machine this is!

Air-Car

Ooooh, shiny! And no fumes!

The 50 Worst Cars of All Time

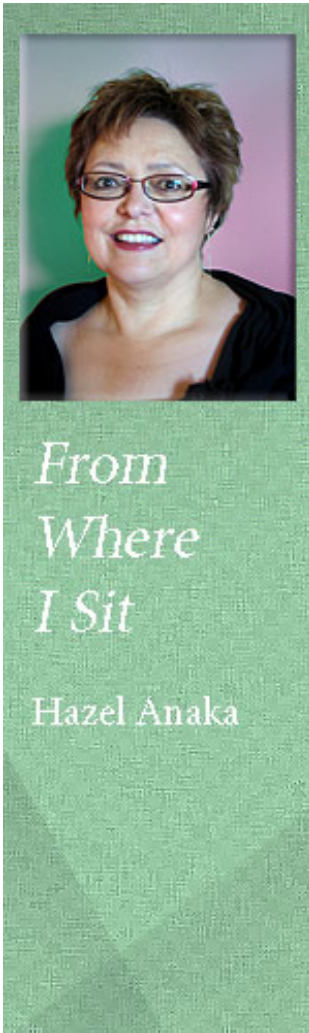
Now there's a lemon history if ever there was one.

U-BoatWorx Submersible

It's almost enough to make you want to move to an island where you have to commute via ocean, river, or very large swimming pool.

Strange and Unusual Vehicles

Now why can't they put some of these into mass production? Sure beats the hell out of the SUV.



Living the Dream

Some might call it a mid-life crisis. We prefer to consider it an old dream just recently fulfilled.

For years Roy talked about wanting a Honda Gold Wing motorcycle. For the uninitiated, it's not a crotch rocket. It's not a sport bike or even a cruiser. It's a touring bike, or, in the words of a friend, "a couch on wheels." Comfort is its name. With a backrest and comfy passenger seat, this is the motorcycle you're most likely to see a middle-aged couple get off after they've been joyriding down the road or across America.

Ours is a 1986 model with 78,000 kilometres on it. That sounds like a lot until you learn a Gold Wing will keep going until about 260,000 kilometres. She's also very heavy at 728 pounds. Putting her on her side is not something you want to do without ready help to right her again.

Because Roy didn't have motorcycle experience, he registered for the Alberta Safety Council three-day beginner course. It was an intensive, steep learning curve culminating in the road test.

I observed most of the eight required manoeuvres that the examiner put the 13 students through. I didn't know anyone but Roy in the group, yet I felt like a nervous mother. You know the feeling: watching your kid get the breakaway and going one-on-one with the goalie. Or having your kid at bat, bottom of the ninth, bases loaded, score tied. Or perform at a piano recital.

I wanted so badly for each of the "kids" to do well. Unfortunately, all three women were eliminated during the figure eight. The trick there was to do the course without touching a pylon or going so slowly that you instinctively stick out your leg to keep from falling over. Three attempts and you're out.

Roy was dubbed Mr. Smooth by his fellow students. He could shift like a dream. And yes, he passed the road test. There are follow-up courses on group riding, slow driving (like on Whyte Avenue), and riding on metal bridge decks or over Texas gates. He's since passed the written test, gotten insurance, and registered the bike. If it wasn't for harvest he may even have gone the five miles to Andrew by now.

It will be some time before he's confident enough to have a biker chick on the back! Shortly after buying the bike we went shopping for helmets. I was shocked at how heavy they feel. I felt like a bobble head. It's really quite a foreign feeling. We didn't want the claustrophobia of a full-face visor so we settled on the flip-up style. We looked at Joe Rocket body armour jackets.

It's lucky we ran out of time before we got to the ass-less chaps or dew rags! And you'll be relieved to know there are no immediate plans for tattoos.

We expect to do some serious riding next year, so look out world. Mid-life crisis, phooey—it's living the dream, from where I sit.

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](#).

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



At Home: Afghanistan pleads with Canada to stay the course

It has been the opinion of many Canadians over the last several years that our country's involvement in Afghanistan is without any real merit. Troops continue to be sent into the war-torn country on the assumption that they are aiding the nation in its battle against the terrorist forces of the Taliban.

The Taliban ruled Afghanistan for the latter half of the 1990s and was forcibly removed by co-operative efforts between Americans, Canadians, the British, and the Afghan-based Northern Alliance because of its strict implementation of Muslim Shariah law. For the freedom and safety of Afghani citizens, the world community saw fit to remove the Taliban from rule and to establish a democratic system in the country.

Since 2001, Canada has had an integral role in the military endeavours within Afghanistan and this has indeed been the primary military exploit of our country for the past seven

years. As the mission continues, however, it has become less and less popular not only with the public but with members of Parliament who feel that this expenditure of troops is unnecessary and essentially a waste of money and effort.

Although Prime Minister Stephen Harper and his close associates maintain that the Middle Eastern mission to maintain peace and security is going well, it can't be denied that public opinion does not coincide.¹

On the brink of an almost overwhelming tide of negativity concerning the Afghan mission, the prime minister of Afghanistan himself has spoken out in a plea to the Canadian public to support the perseverance of Canadian troops in the region.

CBC News Today reported that Prime Minister Hamid Karzai made a plea directly to the doubting citizens of Canada, asking that they support the troops in Afghanistan and urge the government to keep them on after the mission is set to end in 2009.

He aimed his plea specifically at the citizens of Quebec, who are most set against the Afghan mission, saying that while he always regrets the loss of troops, without Canadian soldiers patrolling his country there is bound to be heightened violence from a renewed Taliban.

¹ *TheStar.com*. "Afghan leader woos Canadians." Retrieved September 19, 2007, from <http://www.thestar.com/News/World/article/257326>

In Foreign News: Pacific Rim countries unite against climate change

Amidst many doubts concerning the outcome, the recent Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) summit in Sydney, Australia has released its climate change declaration.

While the U.S. joined in on talks about resolving climate change, its collaboration with John Howard's Australian government to think outside the Kyoto Protocol was not met with appreciation by other APEC members, notably Malaysia, China, and the Philippines.¹

It is the belief of these APEC countries that to decide on anything other than the Kyoto Protocols is to work against the global cooperative effort toward ending climate change, and that such a move will only delay action by corresponding governments.

The declaration released following the summit has outlined the intentions of APEC countries with regard to several different aspects related to climate change, including development and energy security. Still refusing to adhere strictly to Kyoto principles, the APEC Declaration has instead called for a global convention after 2012 in which the entire world community will be called upon to form a cohesive solution to climate change.

Until then, the countries have simply agreed to further research and funding toward green development and the slowdown of carbon-producing industry.

A full rundown of the APEC objectives can be found in the official "Sydney APEC Leaders' Declaration on Climate Change, Energy Security and Clean Development" document, available on the [APEC website](http://www.apec.org).

¹ BBC News, 2007. "Apec 'muddies the climate waters'." Retrieved September 19, 2007, from <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/science/nature/6981360.stm>

EDUCATION NEWS



Students consulted on future of Canada Student Loans Program

Nick Taylor-Vaisey

OTTAWA (CUP) -- Human Resources Minister Monte Solberg has launched an online consultation to hear from students in the ongoing review of the Canada Student Loans Program (CSLP).

The online survey went live on Sept. 7 and is asking interested Canadians to offer their advice about "how to best modernize, simplify and administer" the CSLP. The consultation lasts until Sept. 28.

Julian Benedict, a spokesperson for the Coalition for Student Loan Fairness (CSLF), welcomed the move, though he still had concerns about the review.

"It's certainly better late than never. We are disappointed that it took this long for the government to realize that the almost one million student-loan borrowers deserve a say in the system they are paying for," he said. "Borrowers pay sky-high levels of interest for a system that is antiquated and unresponsive. We're pleased that they've finally opened the review up."

Benedict was cautiously optimistic about the outcome of the review, given that students now have a chance to air their grievances.

Zach Churchill, the national director of the Canadian Alliance of Student Associations, said that despite the consultation, the CSLP review is still inadequate.

"The review is still too narrow in scope and doesn't address the real issue with student-loans programs or student financial aid in Canada," he said. "People's stories and input will only go so far with this review, the way it's set up."

Benedict said that the federal Liberals have been relatively quiet on the issue and the Bloc Québécois don't actively work on federal post-secondary issues. But, he said, the NDP has supported much of the work of the CSLF.

Denise Savoie, the NDP post-secondary critic, welcomed the public consultation.

"I would have liked for that process to begin right from the start of the review instead of this last-minute three-week window, but nonetheless I think it's important that [the government is] listening and all I can say is that I hope they incorporate what they hear," she said.

Benedict said that while the CSLP review's mandate only looks at "administrative tinkering", much more is necessary to fix problems plaguing the system. Savoie agreed.

"All former governments have done is tinker around the edges of the system. So I think it's high time to have a substantive fix to the student aid program," she said.

Lesley Harmer, Solberg's director of communications, wrote in an e-mail that the government has actively consulted stakeholders throughout the process.

"Consultations have been underway for a few months," she said. "The online consultation is just one more component. The best way to gather information is to have discussions with the people directly involved and that is what we are doing."

The CSLF published a report last July that outlined a number of perceived problems with the CSLP, including high interest rates, the lack of a national student-loans ombudsperson and inadequate hardship-relief programs to help those who default on their loans.

The online consultation is available on the HRSDC website at: http://www.hrsdc.gc.ca/en/learning/canada_student_loan/form_en.shtml

According to a spokesperson with the Ministry of Human Resources and Social Development, the completed review of the Canada Student Loans Program is scheduled to be released with the 2008 federal budget.

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THE VOICE

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