

THE VOICE MAGAZINE

Volume 16 Issue 02

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Mind Games

Use It or Lose It

Resolved

Keeping it simple

The Mindful Bard

The J.D. Miner interview

Plus:

*Chronicles of Cruiscin Lan, Health Matters,
Click on This, Around AU, and much more...*

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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

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



EDITORIAL

Sandra Livingston



Deal or No Deal

First, it became possible to sue manufacturers for not putting ridiculously explicit warnings on packages to cover every potential misuse by consumers. Now, it appears that people who buy illegal substances from other people (read “dealers”) can sue them for damages caused by their products. And not only can they sue their drug dealers—they can win.

A Saskatchewan woman, Sandra Bergen, won a civil lawsuit against Clinton Davey after she bought crystal methamphetamine from him in 2004 and suffered a heart attack after using the drug. (Strictly speaking, she won the case on a technicality: Davey refused to name *his* supplier, causing a Saskatoon judge to strike down Davey’s statement of defence and leaving him unable to dispute liability.)

Following the heart attack, Bergen spent 11 days in a coma and is plagued with “a number of long-term physical ailments.” Bergen’s lawyer says his client and her family will be seeking damages of more than \$50,000.

For now, let’s not even discuss issues of personal responsibility. And let’s forget the sheer stupidity of ingesting illegal substances (chemical cocktails that may well have been cooked up in somebody’s dirty bathtub) and not realizing that dubious quality control might cause a few problems. The true irony of the situation is this: after her win, Bergen told reporters that “she just wanted to show drug dealers that they stand to lose whatever they have now.” She also told Canada AM that “a lack of action within the criminal justice system left her and her family frustrated.”

If the logic behind this wasn’t so arrogant, it would be laughable. For starters, Bergen’s stance is that this drug dealer should pay—in her words, that he should “stand to lose whatever [he] has now,” because he knowingly sold her a dangerous, addictive drug. What’s missing from the equation is that, as an equal and willing partner in the transaction, it could be considered appropriate if she, too, lost everything she had; health, family, money. (It’s true that, once addicted, a user is helpless to deny the need for a fix. But the decision to begin taking the drug came *before* the addiction, a choice that Bergen must take responsibility for.)

Bergen’s frustration with the criminal justice system also has a flip side. I can’t help but wonder how many families, if they were to apply Bergen’s own logic, could sue her. An addict since the age of 18 (although drug free since the 2004 incident), there’s no telling how much damage she has caused to others through her actions. Illegal drug traffic carries a swath of damage beyond the immediate buyer and seller. Crime rates rise; neighbourhoods deteriorate; innocent people—including children—are caught up in the peripheral violence that accompanies the drug trade.

As part of that trade, Bergen has doubtless caused other families to feel frustrated at the “lack of action within the criminal justice system,” at the inability of police to rid neighbourhoods of addicts and dealers. Apparently, Bergen is making some reparation to society on that count: her story is being told on a website and she gives cautionary talks to young people.

While nearly anything that causes a setback to drug dealers should be commended, it hardly seems like justice when one person can sue another for actions, that, in the broad view, they’ve taken themselves. If that’s the case, though, Bergen might want to hang onto her winnings: the plaintiffs’ lawyers just might be lining up at her door.

THE LEARNING CURVE

Christine Purfield



Resolved

On Christmas Eve a box arrived for me from Athabasca University. It contained, as expected, the books and materials for the next two courses. The arrival of such boxes tends to evoke mixed emotions: joy that I've now got a whole new batch of English or French books to read, and anxiety that I have yet to finish the current courses. Resolutions are obviously in order to replace the previous resolutions on how I intend to complete all these courses by the contract end dates.

I read an interesting take on resolutions by Tim Cestnick in the *Globe and Mail* on the weekend. Mr. Cestnick is an accountant who writes a column with ideas on how to avoid paying income tax, none of which ever appear to work for my particular situation, but nonetheless he does generally start the column with an interesting tidbit. This week the tidbit related to New Year's resolutions.

Apparently, for 2006 Mr. Cestnick resolved to lose 10 per cent of his body fat—an admirable, if unattainable, plan. For 2007, he pledged to lose five per cent of his body fat. Again, admirable and could have been attainable had he not neglected to take the steps to actually achieve it. So, for 2008 Mr. Cestnick has promised himself that he will drive by at least one gym on his daily commute in his car. Presumably, he will then inhale the fitness as he passes.

On the surface, New Year's resolutions appear to be the antithesis of procrastination. Except that most (if not all) of my resolutions end up encouraging procrastination, not replacing it. Hence my approval of Mr. Cestnick's approach. If only it would work for my own resolutions as they relate to my courses. Perhaps I could just drive by Athabasca and inhale knowledge? I think not. (It's too far, for one thing.)

On eventually unpacking the aforementioned box, I immediately set about creating folders on my computer for assignments, reading the student manuals (80 per cent of which contain the same information as the last courses), throwing away all the forms (they're all available for download and I have no space to store them in my cubbyhole shed of an office) and carefully reading and agreeing with the suggested study schedule.

I dutifully transfer said suggested study schedule to my AUSU planner and my Outlook task list, and feel raring to go and in control. There's just one slight problem: there are three other courses lurking on the task list and in the planner.

I'm feeling pretty smug about COMP 200; all the assignments are done and the exam booked. ENG 353 doesn't look too bad until I realize that there's a research paper due on who knows what in addition to two, four-page essays and a plan for the research paper—by the end of January. I've been lulled into complacency with this course because there's no exam requirement to spur me on.

I console myself with the knowledge that I have until the end of March to finish FREN 201. Then I remember it's January. And I've submitted one assignment so far. And the new courses start in February. So much for my 2007 resolution to finish eight courses by the end of the year (four are done, three in progress, and one is barely out of the box).

In the spirit of finding help—not procrastination, you understand—I Googled “education and New Year’s resolutions” and got 5,070,000 hits. Yes, you read it right: five million and seventy thousand. One site, specifically for college students in the U.S., suggested that I resolve to party more, think about a different major, and make new friends. The best parties start way after my bedtime, the only major I worry about these days is a major weather system that knocks the power out, and I live on an island with a limited selection of “new friends.” (Dogs don’t count or I’d be fine.)

According to the *Edmonton Journal*, people have been making New Year’s resolutions for about four thousand years. In 2000 BC the Babylonians apparently began celebrating New Year by making pledges for the following year. The most popular resolution? To return borrowed farm equipment. Probably the equivalent of today’s “find that library book and take it back.”

Resolved: this New Year I’m making just one resolution—I’m going to open the box, set up the folders, throw away the forms, carefully read and agree with the suggested study plan, and transfer said plan to my AUSU planner (which hopefully will have arrived by then) and my Outlook task list.

Then I’m going to have a glass of Shiraz and toast Mr. Cestnick. Here’s to achievable resolutions. I may even open the box as soon as it arrives next time. But no promises.

CLICK ON THIS – Oddities

Lonita Fraser

Just when you thought that perhaps you’d seen it all, someone comes along and proves you wrong.

Devout Dolls

Don’t think devotional in the religious sense. These dolls offer something . . . else.

Burton FBI Pocket Tool

Not entirely unlike a Swiss Army knife without the knife format.

Camouflage Toilet Paper

I don’t even want to contemplate what one would be trying to hide with this.

BreathCapture

Save your loved one’s exhalation for all eternity. This strikes me as being just a tad odd, like preserving your cat through taxidermy.

Perfume Rings

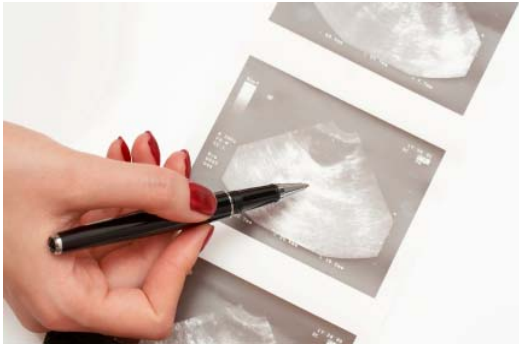
Imagine having your perfume at the tips of your fingers—literally.

Smallest

If you thought you’d seen it all, why not try seeing it all small?

HEALTH MATTERS

Barbara Godin



Ovarian Cancer

One in 70 women in Canada will develop ovarian cancer. Death from ovarian cancer exceeds all other gynecological cancers in Canada. However, when this cancer is detected early, the five-year survival rate is as high as 90 per cent. Unfortunately, 70 per cent of cases are not detected until the later stages, when the five-year survival rate drops to less than 25 per cent.

According to an article in the *Journal of the American Medical Association*, 95 per cent of women with ovarian cancer experienced symptoms before being diagnosed. Therefore ovarian cancer is not “the silent killer” as previously thought. The problem may be that when early symptoms arise women are not seeking medical attention. One of the early symptoms includes a feeling of fullness or bloating in the abdomen. This is usually evident as a woman feels her clothes fitting more snugly around the middle. Another early symptom is urinary urgency, feeling as if you have to go right away. These are all symptoms that women often ignore or attribute to other conditions. Therefore, they do not visit their family doctor until these signs become severe.

Similar to most types of cancer, the cause of ovarian cancer is unknown. However, there are some factors that increase a woman's risk for developing this disease. Age is one factor, as the disease is “most common in women over the age of 50,” and the risk increases with age. A family history of ovarian cancer also increases a woman's risk for the disease. Genetic testing can help to identify those who carry a mutation gene which puts them at greater risk. Women carrying this mutation can come from any background, but it is most prevalent among Ashkenazi Jewish women.

Ethnic background plays a role in the incidence of ovarian cancer as rates are higher among white women in Europe and North America, and lowest among black women. Furthermore, studies have shown an increase in ovarian cancer in affluent societies, attributed to a diet high in animal fat.

Women who have no children, or few children, or who delay childbearing until after age 35, have an increased risk of ovarian cancer. As well, women who begin menstruating early and continue after age 50 are exposed to estrogen for a longer period, consequently increasing their risk for ovarian cancer. On the other hand, women who take birth control pills lower their risk, due to cessation of ovulation and reduced exposure to estrogen. Also, women who have had breast or endometrial cancer may be at an increased risk of developing ovarian cancer.

If ovarian cancer is suspected there are several tests your physician may use to help in making a diagnosis. Tests include a pelvic exam, blood tests, ultrasound and/or a biopsy. A blood test that is proving to be helpful in the diagnosis of ovarian cancer (in conjunction with other diagnostic tools) is CA-125. This test may or may not be covered under your medical insurance; nonetheless, it may be well worth the investment.

As with most cancers, early diagnosis is your best chance for survival. Therefore, it is important to pay attention to any of the previously mentioned symptoms and seek medical attention as soon as possible.

To find out more information about ovarian cancer visit the National Cancer Institute website, the Mayo Clinic site, or the National Ovarian Cancer Association.

MILK-CRATE BANDIT

Erik Ditz



Treasure Hunt

Any experienced bargain hunter knows there are vast treasures beyond their wildest dreams stashed away in every pile of useless junk. Music is kind of like that; a big garage sale where there are a million old bent lamps and stuffed parrots for every copy of *They Live!* or *Jesus Christ Superstar*. Well, now it's time to dust off your pith helmet, pull out the Coleman lantern, and push Lara Croft out of the way: we're going hunting for some DVD reviews!

Rize

Cultural evolution's wavelength seems to have gotten much shorter lately. Where a culture's mode of dress and style of life once lasted generations, now it seems every change in culture is a fad, dying out after only a few short years and replicating itself again in some other bizarre way only a few years later.

This is the story of a community in South Central L.A. where gang violence has been replaced with people in clown costumes dancing tough in each other's faces. While this is technically a feature documentary, music plays a big role. The dance-off, or "krumping," generally consists of spastic mid-air thrashing, though there are elements of breakdancing and even tap.

The really amusing part is the faces the krumpers make while having epileptic fits to Jay-Z, which only barely beat out the faces they make when they lose. For anyone interested in cultural anthropology or goofballs dancing around in clown makeup, this is a surefire crowd pleaser.

Sun Ra - *A Joyful Noise*

In his early 20s, Herman "Sonny" Blount was a successful jazz bandleader with plenty of paid work who had won band contests and scholarships. Then one day he took a trip to Saturn and returned as a fat man who liked to wear blue chalk on his face and chain-mail lampshades as headdresses. The Sun Ra story is interesting, especially to read or hear him talking about his personal interplanetary experiences; if this guy was a cereal, he'd be whatever kind has the most nuts in it.

The DVD is a real letdown in that it only covers the last year or so of Sun's life. Rather than spanning his impressive career, it consists mostly of pointless ramblings from an unhealthy looking Sun Ra who just goes on and on about mysteries and Egypt and Saturn.

There are some great live music scenes, but they're interspersed with a lot of shots of a sad and confused band who don't seem to know what's going on any more than their leader, who has professed that he is an alien mystery intelligence here to enlighten our magical energy waves with jazz power. One thing that should be noted is the accuracy of the title; Sun Ra grins like a demon through the whole movie.

Body Count - *Murder 4 Hire*

Ice-T is one of those rappers that nobody can really say anything about because whether or not you believe in his constant threats of painful death, you just can't be certain. I don't really care one way or the other about his music, but I still say a prayer for him every night before I go to sleep in the hopes that this will prevent him from keeping his 12,000 promises to murder me with those crazy-ass eyes and some kind of weapon named after the small numbers on a price tag.

This DVD is a reunion tour for Body Count, and during the interviews they tell us that there are only two members from the original band left in the reunion. So it's not a reunion. It's an excuse to hire a girl to walk around topless on stage night after night and get groped by a guy who built his career on being a gangsta cop killer and who now plays a detective on prime-time TV.

Grindcore - 85 Minutes of Brutal Heavy Metal

This compilation DVD contains almost no grindcore. It does have a bit of brutal heavy metal, but there's definitely not 85 minutes' worth. I recognized a few of the band names so I picked this disc up thinking it would be pretty sweet. Well, I now own some footage of doofuses with fake vampire teeth and fingernails too long to make eating with utensils possible. Here's a band-by-band review:

Napalm Death: Incredibly strong opener, one of the first, biggest, and best acts in grind worldwide. Hilariously unintelligible interviews and great live footage. Love this band!

Morbid Angel: Great old-school band. Not exactly grind, but still awesome. The interview gets a bit weird when the singer starts trying to explain that he lives inside a teacup in his head and that we all live on a saucer beside the tea cup—and he's serious.

Nocturnus: These guys fell out of an *American Gladiators* audience. They play synth-driven epic-solo-boredom-core and pretend to be tough with keyboard mullets. Ewww.

Paradise Lost: I lasted about 3.2 seconds before hitting "Next" and when I do that I always yell "NEXT!" really loud so the scene knows how I feel about it. Paradise suck.

Prophecy of Doom: Dreadlocks and "Free Tibet" shirts are not appropriate metal apparel.

Godflesh: Mediocre industrial is about crappy drum machines and sounding bored. It's definitely not about "changing music." Go back to your mom's basement in Iowa.

Cerebral Fix: King Diamond, except the dude can't sing. Certainly no grind here.

Sonic Violence: According to the interview, these guys want you to poop your pants.

Bolt Thrower: Warhammer-themed thrash metal. Hallelujah! This is awesome!

Vengeance Rising: Crap, I said hallelujah too soon. This is a PSA for the Christian-Bands-Can-Be-Scary-Too Coalition. The music's pretty sweet and the video is totally evil with candles and skulls, but this guy keeps talking like Pinball Clemons.

Entombed: One of the most original bands in death metal ever. Still not grindcore, but worth buying the DVD just for this live footage. No interviews, just video filters.

Carcass: The only actual grind band on the disc aside from Napalm Death is Carcass. Not only are they the first grind band ever (according to the Official Grindcore Society of the World) they're also the only all-vegetarian band of ex-morticians I've ever heard of. They do their interview sitting in front of giant projections of autopsied people. So tuff!

Die Wildecker Herzbuben - Herzlein

The world is a very dark place.



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

The J.D. Miner Interview, Part 1

J.D. Miner is a B.C.-based acoustic folk trio comprising singer-songwriters Darryl Klassen and Joel Klingler and bassist Joe Worst. Click [here](#) to read the *Mindful Bard* article on their CD, *Ain't No Ordinary Hillbilly*.

Describe the origin of the band.

DARRYL KLASSEN: Joel and I crossed paths a few times starting maybe six years ago, since his wife Elsie and I worked together. He played in a guitar jazz duo which I admired a lot. I played in a different trio which we had Joel join a time or two. It became apparent pretty quickly that it wasn't a good fit. Not long after that we got together on our own and it clicked. I first heard Joe playing with the Mennonite Jazz Committee. I loved his playing and thought, why not take a long shot and ask if he'd be interested in playing with us.

JOE WORST: I got a phone call one day from Darryl asking if I wanted to play with a couple of guys who wrote all their own music. Up to that point I'd always played with people who played covers, so this sounded like a refreshing change.

Where did you get the name J.D. Miner?

JOEL KLINGLER: We brainstormed it. "J" stands for Joel and "D" for Darryl. "Miner" just sort of happened; we're all digging for something, right?

What do all three of you have in common?

DARRYL KLASSEN: We all love playing music, and we like each other as human beings . . . at least, I like them guys . . .

JOE WORST: I admire how Joel and Darryl continually come up with new tunes and they're not at all like the so-called new songs that we hear on commercial and even non-commercial radio. J.D. Miner's music is written and played with a new and free perspective that's uniquely Canadian.

JOEL KLINGLER: And we all like finely crafted acoustic instruments.

Tell me about your childhoods.

DARRYL KLASSEN: I grew up in Canada, the U.S., Germany, and Switzerland. My dad is a missionary, and is still, at 89, travelling and going strong. I attended 13 different schools from kindergarten to grade 12, in four different countries.



JOE WORST: I was born in Holland, started elementary school in New Guinea, continued school back in Holland, then completed school in Vancouver from grade five on. I started playing electric bass in high school because my brother Eduard had started a band and needed a bass player. I had a misspent youth playing electric bass in every conceivable situation until I could afford my first double bass. I've loved and played both instruments for many years now, and studied with some great teachers on both instruments. I studied music formally in college.

"I've always reacted strongly to the view that the arts are compelled somehow to convey a message. We don't expect carpenters to build only hospitals or churches, or mechanics to fix only school buses or ambulances. A song, a poem, or a painting stands on its own and should be judged accordingly."

Darryl Klassen

JOEL KLINGLER: I'm Swiss and Scottish. I spent my childhood in a small Swiss village and outside of Dawson Creek, B.C. Wherever I spent my childhood I played and played, particularly with Lego. I was profoundly influenced by the music on the school bus radio on my long ride to school and by my elementary school music teacher, Mrs. Whitbread.

Do you have any nationalist sentiment for any country you've resided in?

DARRYL KLASSEN: Oh, I'm Canadian, for sure. I think it's the best country in the world. I just watched the Juniors today, and Canada won the gold. There are other Northern European countries I like but I like Canada the best. I like the people. My parents are from the prairies and I love being in the prairies. I was born in the States but both my parents are Canadian so I have dual citizenship. I tried to renounce my American

citizenship in the middle of Vietnam, when I was eligible for the draft. They actually sent me a card but I didn't even go for my medical.

JOEL KLINGLER: I have feelings for my village in Switzerland. I'm definitely loyal to Canada. I think what I'm excited about most is who we are choosing to become. I think we're going to start seeing a trend where people are going to start raising their voices more. Like with this Taser thing—there was a huge public outcry. With Tasers it's like they think there are no creative options.

What music have you been listening to this week, besides your own?

DARRYL KLASSEN: This week I've listened to the Kruger Brothers, Penguin Café Orchestra, Bob Dylan, Foghorn String Band, and a bunch of banjo players. See my [page](#) on the Banjo Hangout.

JOE WORST: Does Christmas music count? In the last couple of weeks: John Coltrane's *A Love Supreme*, Sathima Bea Benjamin's *Southern Touch*, Joni Mitchell's *Hejira*, Strunz & Farah's *Americas*, Steely Dan's *Gaucho*, *Songs of the Spirit* (various artists). Elgar's *Cello Concerto Op. 85*, Jacqueline Du Pre, Daniel Barenboim, London Philharmonic, and J.S. Bach's *The Six Cello Suites*, Pablo Casals (remastered old recording).

JOEL KLINGLER: I've been listening to Evelyn Glennie, a truly inspiring musician.

What, for you, are the right conditions for artistic creation?

DARRYL KLASSEN: Artistic creation is sort of funny. Sometimes it happens, sometimes it doesn't. I can't understand how professional writers do it. Mostly I feel like I discover songs in an instrument. They are just there, waiting to be found.

JOE WORST: Artistic creation for me is somewhat more technical than it is for Darryl and Joel, I think; they are the songwriters. For me artistic expression is practicing and learning my instrument, working towards improving my “voice” and my musical vocabulary.

JOEL KLINGLER: The right condition is realizing that there are no right conditions. Much creativity comes out of oppression and finding the voice to express yourself.

What impact, if any, does your social conscience have on your creativity? And, vice versa—what impact does your art have on your social concern?

DARRYL KLASSEN: I’ve always reacted strongly to the view that the arts are compelled somehow to convey a message. We don’t expect carpenters to build only hospitals or churches, or mechanics to fix only school buses or ambulances. A song, a poem, or a painting stands on its own and should be judged accordingly. Music either speaks to me or it doesn’t. I am sometimes moved to tears by the beauty of a melodic line. Authentic songs originate somehow in one’s own experience.

JOE WORST: We all have social concerns of course, but our thoughts are more reflected by the lyrics of the pieces than by the harmony we choose to use to carry the message. I like and appreciate how Joel and Darryl’s lyrics represent the feelings of each us as individuals. The listener can also identify with J.D. Miner’s music because it is all of us, from Canada, coast to coast to coast. The music contains our feelings about each other and our reactions to events and people in the world around us.

JOEL KLINGLER: As a folk singer it’s important to sing on behalf of people, places, events, circumstances. It’s important to give voice through song.

Next week, the *Mindful Bard* will wrap up part 2 of the J.D. Miner interview

The Bard could use some help scouting out new material. If you discover any books, compact disks, or movies which came out in the last twelve months and which you think fit the Bard’s criteria, please drop a line to bard@voicemagazine.org. If I agree with your recommendation, I’ll thank you online.

THE VOICE WANTS YOU



The Education Beat

Do the latest developments in education interest, intrigue, or even infuriate you? Do you follow the ups and downs of college and university life and the federal and provincial decisions that affect students?

If this sounds like you, here’s a chance to make your opinions pay. *The Voice* is looking for a writer with a keen interest in the politics (and peculiarities) of Canada’s post-secondary system.

To find out more about becoming a regular education contributor for *The Voice*, just email voice@ausu.org.



From Where I Sit

Hazel Anaka

Use it or Lose It

It's been nearly a year since I wrote about Nintendo's new software directed at helping us hang onto our mental faculties a little longer. At that time I suggested that if we lead sufficiently challenging lives, perhaps we don't need external aids. Either way, we do need to keep those brain cells humming.

After a challenging year post-surgery and some complicating factors, I really began fearing for my brain. It seemed that most essential, most cherished, most defining part of me was letting me down. And I was scared.

It goes beyond simply being annoyed with not remembering the name of a person we've known for years or a song title or the year we started a particular job. Frankly, it's not much consolation when the elusive bit of info surfaces hours or days later. The embarrassment usually lasts longer than that. It's bad when simple math calculations seem to take forever. Or a person can't remember the turnoff to a favourite location.

A person can't worry about their memory and mental function without making the leap to Alzheimer's disease and feeling threatened. Losing your keys is okay and not a reason for concern. Not knowing what to do with the keys is. I think, at least for now, I can rule out the big A.

We're also admonished to use it or lose it. Do crossword puzzles. Take a different route home. Learn a second language. Try Sudoku.

When I took the "Find all the H's quiz" in *You: Staying Young* and failed to rank, that was the limit. I had a chance to add a Nintendo DS combo to my Christmas list and I jumped at it. The combo included the compact unit, which opens and has two screens, a stylus, carrying case, and three games: Brain Age, Brain Age2, and Flash Focus.

The software was developed by Dr. Ryuta Kawashima and aims at exercising the prefrontal cortex of our brains: the part that "determines how we use stored knowledge in practical situations. It is the foundation of creativity, memory, communication, and self-control."

Through a combination of daily training, encouraging words, progress graphs, and timed exercises I am able to work my way through the software. The Stroop test was a noisy hit at Christmas when family members tried to say the name of the displayed colour rather than the word for the colour as it flashed on the screen. Those results plus the timed score of 20 simple addition/subtraction/multiplication problems establishes a person's brain age. The goal is getting it down to that of a 20-year-old brain. My best so far is 32.

As I turn up day after day for the training, new challenges and harder versions of old challenges are revealed to me. The software tracks my attendance record, time of the day (which also affects results; a tired brain performs poorly), scores, and top three records in each game. Graphics illustrate the overall speed at which these games are completed (walking, bicycle, car, train, jet). Reading aloud is the most taxing activity for the prefrontal cortex. Add the pressure of time and obscure literary excerpts and you've got a challenge. I love some of the games and am ticked off by others but the competitive streak in me wants to keep bettering my score and my time. Finally I can win at Sudoku. I'm lovin' this and haven't even tried the other two software games. Finding the balance between Brain Age and real life is now the challenge, from where I sit.

The Chronicles of Cruiscin Lan

by
Wanda
Waterman
St. Louis



MUSIC TO EAT LUNCH TO

Mandy Gardner



The Best Music of 2007 in Albums and Concerts; Looking Ahead to 2008

The last year has been a poignant one for music; emerging bands found centre stage, old favourites finally wrapped up their recording sessions, and we lost one of the great modern punk bands. Now what do we have to look forward to this year?

For one thing, Green Day is rumoured to be releasing another album sometime near the summer (we'll see how that goes), Anti-Flag is due for another Warped Tour appearance, and judging by last year's records we might still be able to find a couple of these bands in concert:

5: Seether's *Finding Beauty in Negative Spaces*

This is a hard-rock album that has so much more to offer than the myriad other bands in the genre. Seether is talented, fresh, and the musicians have even got a sense of humour. "FMLYHM" is still one of the best songs I heard last year, and I'm looking forward to seeing what this band produces in 2008. If Seether can overtake some of the lesser hard-rock bands in constant play on the radio over the coming months, I'll be a happier critic.

4: The Black Lips' *Good Bad Not Evil*

This record was one of the greatest surprises of last year. First, because suddenly a band came onto my radar that seemed to have a direct link to the original punk artists of the 70s, with that rough, non-sculpted sound and "Cold Hands" video.

Second, the realization that the Black Lips were not only capable of this wonderful throwback but also of modern, truly unique songs that are more alternative and indie in nature further cemented the band in my mind. The Black Lips have been placed under observation and I expect them to accomplish great things.

3: Sum 41's *Underclass Hero*

I don't think this album has moved from my CD changer since it was first introduced into my home, and I don't see that changing anytime soon. Not only was this the best record Sum 41 fans could have hoped for following the uncharacteristic *Chuck*, but the entire track listing was an amazing achievement for the true pop-punk genre. There are so many potential hit singles on *Underclass Hero* that I doubt the producers even knew where to start; this is, in my humble critical opinion, the best record to be released in 2007 and without a doubt it is a triumph for the band. Following the success of the record we might be able to catch these guys in a 2008 tour, or maybe even at Edgefest.

2: The Good Riddance Farewell Tour

Last May, one of the best-loved modern punk-rock bands played its final show in Santa Cruz, California. After more than ten years together, Good Riddance called it quits when band members Russ Rankin, Chuck Platt, Luke Pabich, and Sean Sellers said they had no desire to keep on playing past their peak. After recording on the Fat Wreck Chords label for most of their career, the band officially made 2006's *My Republic* its final record and disappointed a lot of fans by only playing farewell shows in the musicians' home state of California. I may have missed out on this one, but the concert on May 27 was one of the

defining musical events of the year because from here on out we're working without Good Riddance. Despite the breakup, at least one or two of these guys is bound to get itchy fingers sooner or later; any new musical exploits this year are something worth looking out for!

1: Anti-Flag, Rise Against, and Billy Talent Canadian Tour

I don't think I need to explain why this tour was the ultimate musical event of 2007; usually the only punk-rock lineup that includes three fantastic bands is the Warped Tour. Unfortunately, these sets are only half an hour long and, as I discovered in the summer, Warped is more of a musical taster session for teenagers than something hard-core fans want to see.

So one full-length concert that included Billy Talent, Rise Against, and Anti-Flag is something that people like me would only ever dream about. It's like those people who create fantasy football teams and make them pretend to play each other; never gonna happen in real life. Except that this concert not only happened, but the tour dates across Canada were extensive and afterward Anti-Flag band members were found in local West 49 locations to take donations of winter clothes for homeless shelters. You don't get more punk rock than that. Without a doubt this was the greatest moment of music in 2007 and I hope none of the bands have worn themselves raw with the constant touring. 2008 has a lot to live up to.

AROUND AU



Students in AU's Centre for Science are sure to be "bugged" by this news: biology professor Dr. Robert Holmberg retired at the end of December. Dr. Holmberg has been developing and teaching courses at AU since 1974, including BIOL 204: Principles of Biology I, BIOL 205: Principles of Biology II, and BIOL 345: Ecology. Along with teaching about the fascinating world of insects and arachnids, Dr. Holmberg investigated methods for effectively teaching science, particularly biology, at a distance. *The Voice* wishes him well in his new endeavours!

As part of the Science Outreach - Athabasca program, the month of November brought Pirkko Karvonen to AU Central to debut her latest film, *Peter Sawatzky: Life in Bronze*. The film follows the creation of Peter's newest larger-than-life bronze sculpture, documenting the process of translating the beauty of caribou in their natural setting into wax and finally into bronze. Let's hope that these presentations will be made available via podcast soon, so the entire AU community can enjoy them.

The conversion of AU courses to the Moodle learning platform is underway, and a staff website is available to help smooth the process. Along with a course conversion schedule, the site gives AU staff an overview of Moodle, training, support networks, and links to more Moodle-related info. Here's to the ease of adding assignments to a Moodle dropbox, and the end of wondering whether they got there via email!

A group of AU staff and faculty has been busy getting a life—a Second Life, that is. The group is interested in the possibilities that the popular computer program holds for distance education. In Second Life, participants create an onscreen persona (an avatar), and interact with other avatars in a virtual world. The concept of combining distance learning and Second Life is still unproven, but archaeology students, for example, might be able to visit virtual, 3D dig sites to enhance their textbook material. Here's an interesting [video](#) about the potential educational uses of the program.

With special thanks to Athabasca University's The Insider.

AUSU This Month



AUSU Election 2008 - Message from the CRO

Dear AU Students:

My name is Rehan Qureshi and I am pleased to have been appointed your Chief Recruiting Officer (CRO) for the Athabasca University Students' Union (AUSU)'s 2008 General Election. It is my position to accept and verify nominations for the election; field any questions and interpret policy and procedures for nominees; and to ensure an accurate and fair vote count at the time of voting. Please feel free to contact me at mcro@ausu.org for any of the above.

If you have ever wondered how to get involved with your Students' Union, or wanted to play a role in shaping the experience of AU students, then here is your chance! Elections

will be held from March 9 - 12 on the AU website, so send in your nominations for AUSU council today.

Qualifications for nominees include:

(As stated in AUSU Policy 3.01.9, Election Conduct) "For General Elections, any Active Member in Good Standing may submit a self-nomination to run for a seat on Council." To be an active member you must be enrolled in an AU undergraduate course when the election opens on March 9, 2008 (pre-registrations do not apply; the course must have started). Plus, to be a "member in good standing" means you are an individual who is an AUSU member, has paid all fees, and has not been subject to disciplinary action from AUSU. Students must submit their name, student I.D. number, address, email address, and written consent to act if elected, along with their nomination.

All self-nominations/nominations will be acknowledged after the nomination closing date. The nomination period runs from January 9 through February 6, 2008. Nominees will be given an opportunity to withdraw their name from the list of nominees provided their notice of withdrawal is received by the last day of February 2008.

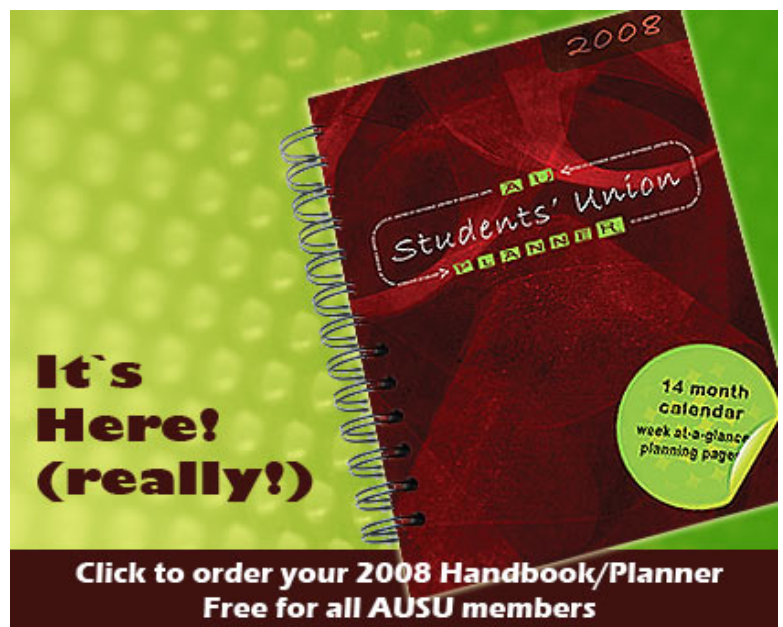
I invite you all to participate, as the student body governs on your behalf and every vote counts. I am available for any questions regarding the election so feel free to contact me. Good luck to all who enter and hopefully we will see the rest of you at the polls!

Sincerely,

Rehan Qureshi - Chief Returning Officer (CRO)
cro@ausu.org

AUSU Handbook/Planner 2008 in stock now!

The wait is over! The 2008 AUSU planner is in stock and its way to members. We've added a few enhancements this year, including cheat



GO HOME EARLY.



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 **SmartDraw**

sheets for common citation styles, a clip-in page-marker ruler, and a funky fridge magnet to remind you to get your weekly dose of *The Voice*.

Last year we had about 400 pre-orders, but this year we have 1,000! Please be patient. We're working as fast as we can to fill all of the orders and everyone should have their book by the end of January when the 2007 edition calendar pages run out. As always, we're excited to know what you think of the planner and welcome all feedback to ausu@ausu.org

Smart Draw – Benefit for AUSU members

AUSU has purchased a licence agreement to supply the award-winning SmartDraw software to all AUSU members (current undergraduate students). To access this deal and find out more, visit the front page of our [website](http://www.ausu.org).

SmartDraw allows you to create a wide range of graphics for your assignments and submit them electronically in a Word file. You can also place your graphics in Excel or PowerPoint files, or export them as TIF, GIF, or JPEG files to make a web graphic or even a logo. Just a few of the graphics you can make include Venn diagrams, genetics charts, graphs, organizational and flow charts, and Gantt charts. For any course that requires charts that cannot be easily created in Word or Excel, this should be a real time saver and make it easier to submit all portions of an assignment by email. Remember, though, that you should always check with your tutor to find out if there is a specific format he or she prefers. Your tutor does not have to have SmartDraw to view these graphics, however.

Installations under this program are good for one year. The package includes both the Standard and Health Care editions of SmartDraw.

AUSU Election

Convenient.
Satisfying.
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Submit your self-nomination,
January 9 through February 6th, 2008



At Home: Canada increases trade with China amidst criticism from human rights activists

David Emerson, Canada's International Trade Minister, has ended his two-day visit to China this week and feels that despite some mutual political unrest Canada stands to increase its trade with the Communist country.

Many Canadians, as well as international citizens and governments, have shown their displeasure not only with China's own poor human-rights record but with the support of the Chinese government for Burma's undemocratic military regime.

While the Canadian government has acknowledged these concerns, Emerson has pushed for continued and increased trade with China, which is currently Canada's second-largest trading partner after the United States.

According to the [CBC](#), Canada's exports to China actually grew over the last year regardless of human rights criticisms, and Emerson feels that at a time when China's economy has become the fastest growing in the world Canada cannot afford to let political issues get in the way of developing stronger economic ties.

Emerson also told the press that he had taken the opportunity to bring up these issues during his meetings in China, although no details were given. The minister said that:

China in my opinion is as open as (it has) ever been to hearing our concerns and being prepared to listen to positive and constructive commentary about areas for improvement whether it's in the legal system or in dealing with electoral kinds of issues and democracy issues and economic freedoms.

The minister also said that as yet there has been no economic retaliation by China toward Canada for the controversial meeting between Prime Minister Stephen Harper and the Tibetan spiritual leader the Dalai Lama. The Dalai Lama seeks to preserve the Tibetan Buddhist culture in a small area that has been ruled by China since 1951, and the Chinese government took offence when many Western leaders met with the spiritual leader last year.

As yet, trade with China continues to rise and no ground has been made in the fight toward a democratic system and a clean human rights record.

In Foreign News: How they skip school in Mexico: industrial strength glue

The mother of ten-year-old Diego Palacios awoke on the first day of the new school term to find her son awake and watching television with his hand glued to his bed. It turns out that Diego had so much fun over the Christmas break that he wanted to stay out of class—and apparently saw this as his only option. Unfortunately for him, the police and paramedics were called after his mother tried unsuccessfully to unstick his hand using water, oil, and finally nail polish.

She was at it for two hours before giving up and calling in the experts. The paramedics were able to remove the glue and send Diego to class on time with an embarrassing story to tell his friends—or a story worthy of hero-worship, depending on the sort of friends he has.

Diego's mother told *Reforma* that she couldn't understand why her son would have gone through so much trouble to miss school, although she did remark that he is "a good boy but mischievous like all kids."

Diego said simply, "I didn't want to go to school because vacation was so much fun."

Perhaps the most interesting part of this story comes in the form of reader comments on the Yahoo News site:

At last—something interesting instead of the stupid celeb garbage we usually see! (Teri)

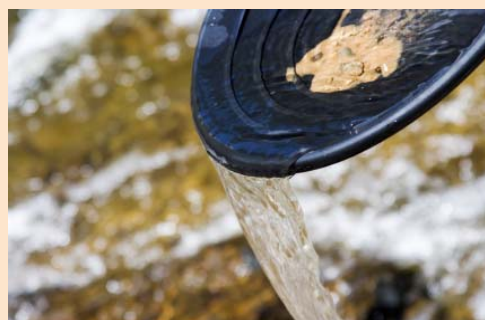
Utter foolishness, a good a\$\$ whooping would make that kid think twice about not wanting to go to school. (Vaynard)

This could be my son. He tells me all sorts of stories to get out of going to school. I wish I could just keep him home and make him happy. (siobhan256)

It's amazing how differently people can react to the same story! Diego's hand is fine and he received no injuries from his rather innovative glue stunt.

SPOTLIGHT ON . . .

Barkerville Historic Town, Barkerville, B.C.



If the thought of spring thaws and melting snow has you itching for some outdoor adventure, there's no better time to catch a little gold-rush fever.

Barkerville Historic Town was the site of a large gold strike on Williams Lake, B.C., in 1862, and modern-day treasure seekers can relive the excitement at the more than "130 original and reproduction buildings dating to the early Gold Rush in British Columbia."

The town operates all year, but the majority of activities are offered from May through September. Visitors can enjoy stage coach rides, live theatre, and street interpretations. Blacksmiths and goldsmiths demonstrate their crafts, and a restaurant, bakery, and confectionary provide a chance to relax and refill.

For the history buff, there are over 120 rooms containing artefacts and interpretive displays. The Lee Chong Co. Chinese Museum highlights the contribution of Chinese immigrants to British Columbia's development, not only during the gold rush, but also before and after the building of the railway.

To discover more about the wild gold-rush days of B.C.—and try your hand at panning for gold—visit the Barkerville Historic Town [website](#).

EDUCATION NEWS

Sarah Millar

**National PSE strategy needed: report**

TORONTO (CUP) -- If Canada does not develop a national strategy for post-secondary education, we risk falling behind in the globalized knowledge economy.

The Canadian Council on Learning 2007 report on strategies for success in post-secondary education encapsulated their entire report in that singular recommendation.

"There's no question that not having a national strategy weakens everything about post-secondary education," reads the report.

Paul Cappon, president of CCL, explained that without a national strategy, students are hampered in their abilities to even understand how their education will affect their move into the workforce after graduation.

"More than anything, it weakens the choices that learners can make, it weakens the information they can garner in order to make enlightened choices, it weakens the mobility that students have among provinces, it weakens their access to the best learning opportunities, it weakens the possibility that it can match their course of study with the labour market," Cappon said.

"It does detract from learners most of all, but it also detracts from the ability of the country to progress economically and socially."

According to Cappon, creating a national strategy on post-secondary education would not necessarily mean that each province would have to do the same thing, but that each program in the country would be comparable—which is not currently the case.

"Whether you have the same system or different systems [across the country], you need to have national goals," he said. "You can have different curricula, different courses of study and, even, different ways of doing things among provinces. In fact, you should have different ways of doing things, each one can be its own laboratory. But you have to have the same goals and principles, you have to have mobility across jurisdictions."

He cited examples of making credits more transferable from one institution to the next and encouraging more institutions to recognize workplace learning that may not have occurred in the classroom.

The process, he said, might not even be as complicated as it seems on the surface. Other countries, like the United States, have already created something similar and provided a model that we can jump from.

"What we need to do is start with what we already have in common in each of the provinces—that's part of some of the work we've already done in the report: identify what we already have in place from which we can build a national strategy and work with the pieces one by one," he said.

Cappon said that one of the first steps to developing the strategy should be to compile a "data strategy, a national information strategy so that we're defining things in the same way, in a common way."

This year's report is only the second national report on post-secondary education ever created in Canada. It also discusses tuition costs which, while important, often overshadow the underlying issues related to post-secondary education.

“Obviously, as we report, there’s no doubt the public support for college and university is decreasing as a proportion of the overall cost and the private share of the burden is increasing over time. And we’ve shown what that does to student debt and other issues for students, in general, for the issue of accessibility.”

The report also points out that women now outnumber men at post-secondary institutions, especially universities.

Because of the difference in numbers, men are now considered an underrepresented group. The report suggests looking at ways to bring more underrepresented groups like men and aboriginal peoples in to post-secondary institutions.

“Canada needs to examine why this gender gap is widening,” reads the report, also noting that “many Aboriginal students are still reporting financial, academic and motivational barriers.”

The report also brings up the fact that Canada does not have a strategy in place for e-Learning, which is another access detail. Cappon says there is very little information out there to help students who want to get a good education online.

“If you want the best program online for any particular course of study, how do you want to access it in Canada? You want to access it from any point in the country and have the best quality,” he said. “You’re going to get the best program from a set of institutions have spent half a million dollars on a course, which have, not just good instructors, but have the best knowledge about the technical requirements. And that happens when resources are pooled across institutions, and across provinces,” Cappon said.

Another concern raised by the report is that fewer and fewer Canadians are getting their PhDs. This may lead to trouble in hiring Canadian-born professors in the future, but could also present problems outside of academia.

“An increasing proportion of jobs in an innovative economy and society require PhDs. And not just for faculty, there are many, many occupations now which require PhDs, or in which PhDs are desirable. PhDs, and graduate degrees in general, do drive innovation and productivity to some extent, so that is important for society,” Cappon said.

But the CCL isn’t the only voice pushing for a national strategy on post-secondary education.

Former Ontario Premier William Davis recently wrote in the College Voice, the newsletter of Ontario colleges, about the need for a national strategy.

“When we created Ontario’s community college system 40 years ago, we did so with the understanding that the economy, and indeed society itself, was entering a new era. Today, we are unmistakably in the grip of another socio-economic shift, this time toward a global knowledge-based economy, and the time has come for us to act,” he wrote.

“Many of our national competitors have already embraced this way of thinking. Australia, the United Kingdom, New Zealand, Switzerland, Germany and the United States have adopted or are developing national goals and criteria to assess the quality of their PSE sectors . . . it is high time we did the same.”

You can read the report from the CCL in its entirety at <http://www.ccl-cca.ca/CCL/Reports/PostSecondaryEducation/>

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THE VOICE

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