

THE

VOICE

MAGAZINE

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In the Year 2525

It's all relative

AU Profiles

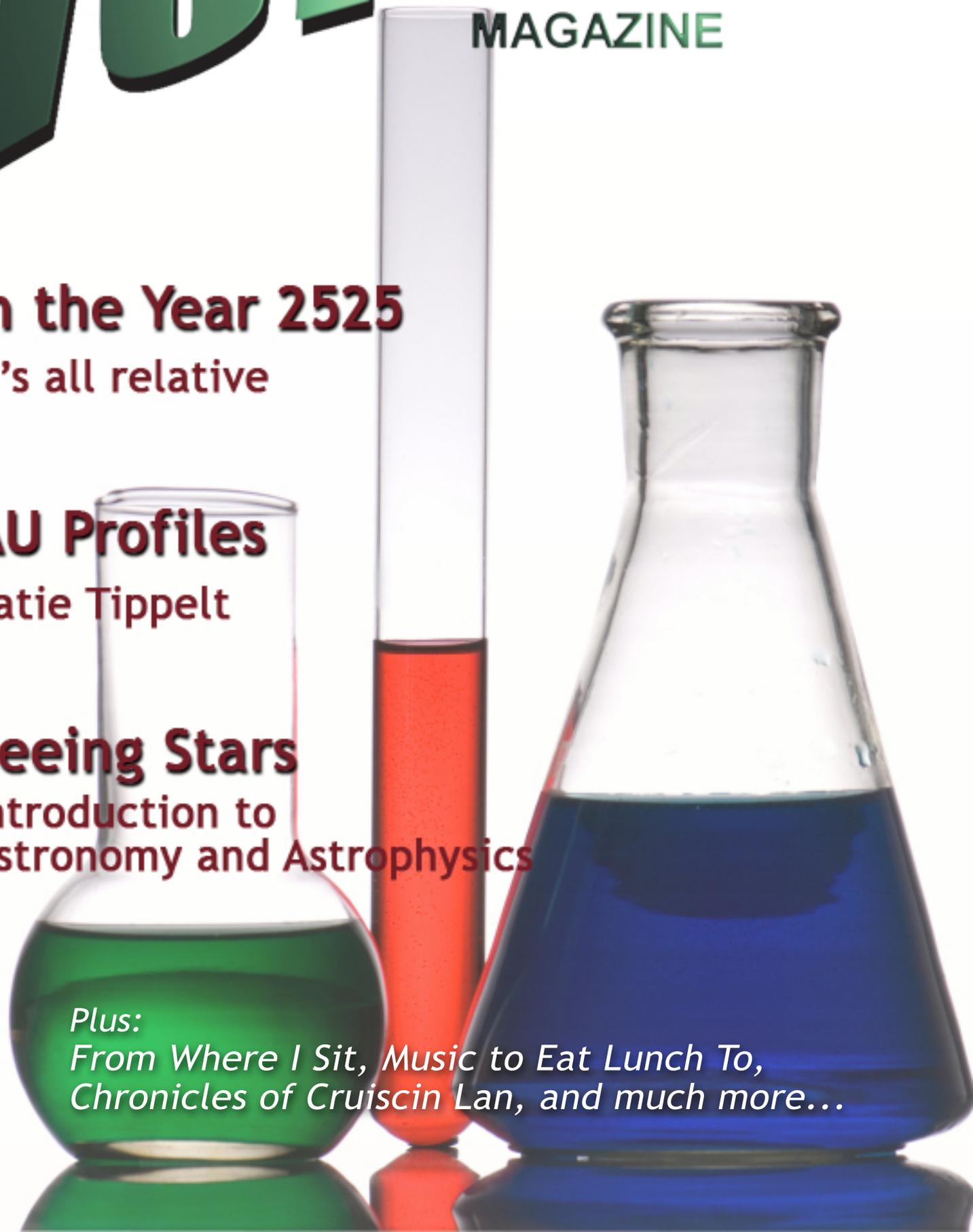
Katie Tippelt

Seeing Stars

Introduction to
Astronomy and Astrophysics

Plus:

*From Where I Sit, Music to Eat Lunch To,
Chronicles of Cruiscin Lan, 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

**In the Year 2525**

In 1969, when Zager and Evans's song *In the Year 2525* became a hit, the prospect of choosing our sons and daughters from the bottom of a long glass tube looked a long way off. Today, that sci-fi vision is reality—complete with complex debates about ethics versus experimentation.

Yet for all the exciting breakthroughs and forays into new territory, it seems that a very fundamental problem has been overlooked: how will the adult children of thousands of anonymous sperm donors know who to kiss and who is kin?

The process is straightforward (even if the science isn't). A man donates sperm to a clinic and the clinic uses that sperm to impregnate their female client. In some cases, the donor agrees to have his identity revealed to the woman. In others, the donor is guaranteed anonymity. No one besides the clinic staff, including his own child, will ever know his name. (Even if the woman knows the donor's identity, there's no guarantee she'll ever disclose it to their child.)

So what does that mean for the children born of donor insemination (DI)? Quite simply, that unless they are aware of the details of their conception, know the name of their biological father, and know all the other children that donor has fathered, the consequences may be disastrous.

It isn't hard to imagine the scenario: a young couple meet, are attracted, and start dating. Human nature being what it is, sex inevitably follows. Perhaps they marry, or there is an unplanned pregnancy, or they simply go their separate ways. Perhaps they'll never discover that they've been sleeping with (or even gotten married to) a half brother or sister. But with the rising popularity of DI, the growing number of offspring, and society's increased mobility, it's inevitable that, more and more, we'll be reading about the emotional fallout of unexpected discoveries.

In Canada, there are no limits on how many offspring a single donor can produce. A man who is popular with clinic customers could potentially end up having 50 or even 100 children, none of whom know they're related. There are some limits; for instance, only a certain amount of a donor's sperm can be shipped to a particular geographic area. According to a 2005 *Vancouver Sun* [article](#), the American Society of Reproductive Medicine recommends 25 pregnancies in a population of 800,000.

That's still a lot of uninformed siblings; except in a few cases, "the approximately 14,000 Canadians born by DI in the past two decades are locked into a system that protects donor anonymity."

Even in the U.S., where donors are limited to 40 offspring, there's no sure way of enforcing the numbers: clients are not obligated to report pregnancies to the clinic.

Even though the technology is relatively new, the shift it will cause in society can already be seen. Starting from a single post on Yahoo several years ago, an online community has grown as people search for unknown relatives. Donors (identified by their clinic-assigned number) are searching for children; children are trying to find fathers; and half-siblings and parents are seeking others who may have used the same donor.

As with any scientific development, it would have been impossible to envision the unintended results of DI (including some we probably haven't even dreamed of yet.) But in this brave new world, a DNA test may soon go along with that first kiss.



Astronomy and Astrophysics (ASTR 210)

Athabasca University's Centre for Science has expanded its Department of Astronomy and Astrophysics with a new introductory course on the subject. This course, titled Astronomy and Astrophysics (ASTR 210), provides students with a "general overview of everything in the universe, from a science student's point of view," says course coordinator and developer of AU's Geophysical Observatory, Martin Connors. ASTR 210 also features an exciting home-lab component, carefully designed to give students night sky simulations despite non-traditional lab delivery. As well, the cover photos on ASTR 210 materials are straight from AU's geophysical observatory!

ASTR 210 contains five units, each of which discusses a different galaxy phenomenon. The course opens with unit 1 discussing our relationship to the cosmos over the centuries. Then, students are introduced to the "tools of the astronomer," with emphasis on mathematical formulas. Dr. Connors indicated that ASTR 210 uses "more sophisticated math than ASTR 205," another AU astronomy course, which is for students wishing more generalized knowledge of the universe. The next three units in ASTR 210 outline the solar system, planets, and known galaxies. This part of the course is Dr. Connor's favourite. "Despite its not being my own research specialty," he explained, "I find this part . . . very interesting."

A three-credit course in the sciences, ASTR 210 does not have any prerequisites. However, taking the combination of ASTR 205 and the new ASTR 210 is equivalent to the "six credits of introductory astronomy at many outside institutions," indicated Dr. Connors.

Unique to ASTR 210 is its lab component. Most first-level astronomy courses in traditional university settings have an associated lab component, and Athabasca University's ASTR 210 course is no exception. Dr. Connors indicated that ASTR 210's lab component, which consists of detailed labs, enables students to gain astronomy lab credits while studying independently. "In many [traditional university] astronomy courses," he remarked, "the lab is a visit to the university telescope. We cannot easily do that," he continued, ". . . so we give quite detailed lab exercises." AU's home labs use sophisticated planetarium software that simulates the large telescope experience of night-sky viewing for students, giving them an experience similar to taking the course and associated lab component from a traditional institution.

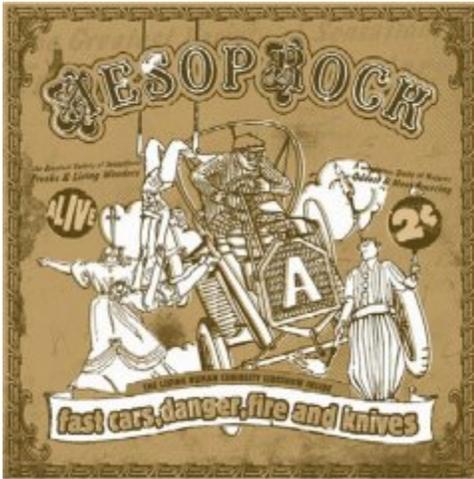
Course coordinator Martin Connors is the Canada Research Chair in space science, instrumentation, and networking. He has broad space-related research interests, recently developing the AUGO, AU's Geophysical Observatory, which enables visualization of auroras and "other sky phenomena." Although he has tutored AU courses in the past, his current interest lies in developing senior-level astronomy courses for the Centre for Science.

ASTR 210 course grades are determined through five quizzes, worth 3% each; five lab exercises (worth either 5% or 10% each, depending on the exercise); and a final exam, weighted at 40%.

For more information, visit the [course syllabus](#).

MILK-CRATE BANDIT

Erik Ditz



Underground Roundup

Aesop Rock - *None Shall Pass*

Constantly defying hip hop convention has worked for Aesop in the past, with underground hits like *Fast Cars*, *Danger*, *Fire and Knives*, and this album doesn't see him settling down.

Between brilliant wordplay, totally original samples and beats, a gorgeous digipack illustrated by [Jeremy Fish](#), and an array of guests like El-P, Cage, and John Darnielle from The Mountain Goats, this definitely isn't your average rap record.

Magik Markers - *Boss*

This is the laziest music I have ever heard. Nobody is this inept. Boss sounds like Sonic Youth playing in a \$13 motel room high on horse tranquilizers after getting molasses blood transfusions. (Actually, that description sounds awesome and I'm starting a band like that.) This is way worse. This is like the soundtrack to three sloths getting into a traffic jam, and each slowly falling asleep while waiting for the other two to move first. Here's a [website](#) with tips on how to be in a band. None of them include "play like you are undead."

65daysofstatic - *The Fall of Math*

Those readers familiar with the Toronto music scene will undoubtedly have heard of Holy Fuck, a pop-electro quintet featuring lengthy Korg solos over funk-driven indie pop and spastic ambient soundscapes.

The sonic assault that Holy Fuck brings forth is pretty hard to compare to anything without running out of breath, but 65daysofstatic comes pretty close. If powerful, driving riffs reminiscent of Mogwai aren't enough for you, there are the breaky tech beats that playfully avoid any real genre and blur seamlessly with the live drums, pianos, and a synthetic orchestra, giving this album an entirely reverent tone. This is very exciting music.

Dave Dee, Dozy, Beaky, Mick and Tich - Self-Titled

Pop is a belief system that is constantly shifting, and that makes it difficult to have faith in. I mean, it's impossible to know where and when something is going to be a big hit; that is, unless you're one of the only three major corporations that distribute 90 percent of the audiovisual media in North America. Or possibly Quentin Tarantino.

This band was the best part of the film *Death Proof*, and that movie had a decapitation. Hey, we haven't seen you at the church of pop in a while. You know, Minister Dave Dee is preaching this Sunday, and you really ought to hear what he has to say.

Electric Six - *I Shall Exterminate Everything Around Me That Restricts Me From Being the Master*

Electric Six needs money desperately. I can't think of any other reason for a wildly irreverent and energetic song-making machine to sink to this level. The first couple of tracks are pretty upbeat ("Down at McDonnellzzzzz" is a fire-starting retro dance anthem) but the rest of the album is just garbage.

The music videos for “I Want to Take You to a Gay Bar” and “Danger! High Voltage!” (available on YouTube) are strong testament that these guys are lightly insane and heavily awesome, and to hear an album so boring and dunderheaded as *I Shall Exterminate* makes me shake my head in disappointment and wonder which pit trap my personal heroes keep falling into.

Mono + Pelican - Split EP

Though stemming from very different places musically, a lot of similarities exist between the ponderous weight of stoner metal like Middian and the smooth, heavy post-rock of Godspeed You! Black Emperor. Mono and Pelican are two bands that understand where these styles meet. If you’ve ever wondered why classical composers are a dying breed, it’s because you’re looking in the wrong place, and this is a good place to start.

Acid Bath - *Paegan Terrorism Tactics*

I remember a time when I was the only kid in town with spiky hair and a chain around my neck, and now it’s all this Wolfmother crap and you can’t go to the mall without seeing a horde of pubescent snots dressed up like serial killers all covered in slogans and logos that don’t stand for anything, and the damn ring tones going off in the restaurant and the elevator, and of course these people can’t even be civil about the ring tones. They can’t be normal; they have to be blaring some Lil’ Jon or Timber-someone featuring Nelly-someone, and concerts are always full of the most incredibly useless people that have to bump into you a hundred times no matter how much beer you spill on their backs, and quite frankly I say hang it all.

Acid Bath broke up over a decade ago, and this, their last record, takes me back to a time when Tool was still a half-decent band and nobody had heard of the Taliban or torrents or Michael Moore. Maybe I’m dating myself a little, but this album makes me feel young again.

Squirrelpad - *Live in the Big City*

There is a myth that lives in this world today that anyone can be in a band. Even I fell prey to it at age 13 with a stolen drum set in my parents’ garage and visions of incredibly menacing album covers snaring me gazillion-dollar record contracts.

The formula is simple: make awful, wretched noises, upload them to MySpace, and pretend to be tortured. Presto! You’re in a band. As for this crap, if you ever actually find it at Cash Converters and remember that I wrote something about it, congratulations, you’re a garbage-picking memory robot, and be warned—stay away.

On the album cover this guy actually goes to the trouble of typing the band name out (in CorelDraw) as “sQuirReLpAd” and, despite the claims of the title, it is not recorded live. I guess picking on a guy named Squirrelpad is pretty low, but when you appear on your CD jacket wearing Madeline’s beret and giving the Coppertone girl over-the-shoulder look, it’s amazing Ben Stiller hasn’t already snapped you up for “Zoolander 2: sQuirReLpAd vs. Blue Steel.”

AU Profiles:

AU Profiles: Katie Tippelt

By Christina M. Frey

This week, we introduce AU student Katie Tippelt, a single mom in her first year of Athabasca University's Bachelor of Human Resources and Labour Relations program. Katie, who lives about an hour east of Toronto, is enthusiastic about AU and the opportunity it provides for single parents. She explains why AU's flexibility has been the perfect fit for her, and describes how the university could broaden its appeal.

Katie believes that distance education, particularly through AU, is the perfect opportunity for single parents to get ahead. "I think there are a lot of single moms out there who are struggling," she says. "To break out of that kind of situation, you have to have [that] 'piece of paper'."

Unlike traditional universities, studying with AU doesn't require a babysitter, allowing Katie to work on her degree while still being available for her kindergarten-age daughter, Boston. "In a way, I get that stay-at-home mom experience," she says. "I don't know why more mothers aren't doing this!"

In addition, AU is covered by the Ontario Student Assistance Program (OSAP), which has a special program in place for single parents.

"You can get your living expenses pretty much covered as long as you keep your grades up," Katie says. Although eventually some funding must be repaid, a large part is forgiven for single parents. "It could help out a lot of people . . . in situations similar to mine," she says. "It really helps break the cycle of being a *poor* sole support parent."

Katie began attending a traditional university right out of high school, but because she had no particular career goals, she "blew the tuition" by arbitrarily choosing classes. It wasn't particularly exciting, and without direction, she decided not to go back for year two.

"I had a pretty good job," Katie explains. "I figured I didn't need [that] piece of paper."

However, while she was on maternity leave after giving birth to her daughter, her employer went out of business. "The next thing I knew, all I could get were retail jobs," Katie says. "That wakes you up pretty fast!"

As she began working, Katie soon discovered that her interests lay in corporate consulting. "All the companies I worked for . . . seemed to be a mess," she says. "I had . . . ideas for . . . improv[ing] their methods and corporate strategies . . . I wanted to help companies that were having problems, fix them."

After speaking with practicing business consultants, who recommended studying labour relations, she began planning for her degree.

For Katie, the journey to AU was a search for flexibility. She'd begun by taking online courses through a local college. However, she wasn't able to complete the program online, and there were many other hassles despite the fact that she was a top student. "I started to look elsewhere," she says.

This led her to the typical research starting point for today's computer-driven society: run a Google search. She did, and Athabasca University came up. "I recognized the name," she says. "And when I looked at [AU's] website, I knew it was exactly what I was looking for."

AU would allow her to complete her entire degree at a distance, while being able to spend time with her daughter. She could start studying mid-semester, and had the choice of four-month grouped study courses or six-month flexible course contracts. And she didn't have to sit in a classroom with many younger students.

"I feel guilty it took me this long to figure out where I was going!" Katie laughs. Now, however, she's much more focused. Although the Bachelor in Human Resources and Labour Relations is a three-year program, Katie's goal is to finish in a year and a half. "What I like about Athabasca . . . is that I can accelerate [my degree]," she says. She is taking a full course load plus an additional class, and plans to continue studying through the summer.

Katie is also happy with the non-course-related skills that distance education is helping her to acquire. "I'm . . . learning . . . how to manage my time, and force myself to stay . . . focused," she says.

She feels that procrastination is one of the biggest challenges distance students face. "It's so easy to put it off 'til tomorrow," she says. "[There's] nothing pushing you." While she recommends setting up and closely following a work schedule, she's also found that taking the four-month grouped study courses helps motivate her: "I need the pressure to stay focused," she says. "[With] the six month [classes], I find I just leave it all to the end!"

Katie's excited about her AU courses, and finds the case-study approach that many use particularly effective. "I think the classes give structure to my . . . creativity," she says. "You have to know the rules before you can break them . . . so the courses are teaching me all the basics I need." In fact, she's using both as she evaluates various organizations around her, looking for possible improvements.

Athabasca University is no exception. "I think the university needs to get out of [the] 'distance ed' mentality and work toward a more *university* experience with ultimate flexibility," she says.

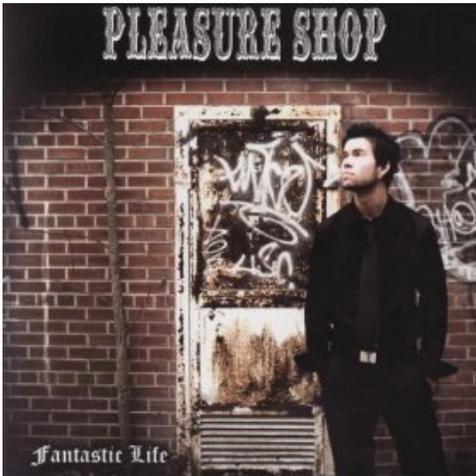
For example, she recommends that AU begin hosting large events with well-known speakers like Canadian environmental scientist David Suzuki or British entrepreneur Richard Branson. Holding such events in major centres like Toronto would give AU "really good exposure" in the greater community, Katie feels. "It would increase the university's reputation and visibility," she says. "Plus, students would get more of that university experience . . . [and would] get to meet people in [their] area. I think it would be a brilliant marketing strategy."

In the meantime, Katie's busy studying for her degree and recruiting others to Athabasca University. "I don't think that enough people really understand the opportunity that it offers," she says. "It's brilliant. I wish I had known about [it] a few years ago!"

MUSIC TO EAT LUNCH TO

Mandy Gardner

Pleasure Shop – *Fantastic Life*



Release date: June 2007

Label: Hype Music

Tracks: 10

Rating: 7

Pleasure Shop is an Ontario band that originally began its musical life playing the blues; front man Chris Chown says when he started singing and writing music he hadn't even listened to the radio, just his mother's blues records for inspiration.

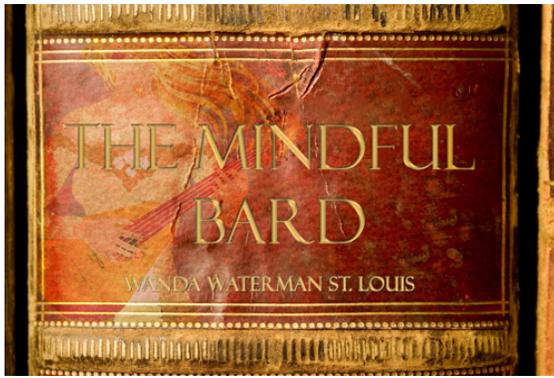
Eventually, Pleasure Shop guitarist Adam Thibert took Chown to a rock concert that changed his outlook on music; although he wasn't initially a big fan of the rock genre, Chown was impressed with the energy of the event and the intensity of the music. Together with Chuck Keeping and Ryan Spong, these two musicians forged ahead with their rock music career and are proud of what they've accomplished in *Fantastic Life*.

Chown's vocals are very reminiscent of Chris Cornell, particularly on the song "Fall." The album contains songs that are quite mellow and alternative as well as songs with harder guitar riffs that show the band's versatility and diversity in musical inspirations.

While "Just Another Day" and "Fall" lend themselves more to the mellow ear, "Blame" and "Flawed by Design" incorporate some heavier tones and hard-rock melody into the album, which really helps to lift the whole record up and give it more credibility. While it isn't difficult to grasp the blues background throughout most of the record, the ability of the musicians to produce songs with more of that classic rock edge is more impressive when coupled with softer tracks.

Although the music isn't as intense as it might have been, *Fantastic Life* is nevertheless an enjoyable record filled with contrast and obvious talent on the part of the four musicians. The band members have figured out how to make the initial transition from blues to alternative rock music. However, they may still have some more changes to make to their style of composition. At the moment, Pleasure Shop can be closely compared to bands like Live or Soul Asylum without having the extra bite of other genre bands like Moist or the Smashing Pumpkins.

With a little more attitude and perhaps a bit more familiarity with hard-rock music, Pleasure Shop could fine-tune its sound and musical focus without losing the elements that make it unique; primarily the stunning vocals, the ability to write and execute an excellent guitar riff, and the fundamental tribute to blues and soul.



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

The J.D. Miner Interview, Part 2

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*.

What personally brought you to the place where you could write about such serious subjects in such a lighthearted way?

DARRYL KLASSEN: There's so much nasty stuff going on that you could get pretty depressed if you didn't take a lighthearted approach to it. Without a sense of humour in life you could get pretty depressed.

JOEL KLINGLER: John Hartford. Surprisingly the bluegrass community hasn't connected with him yet, but he has so much to teach us about treating serious stuff with humour. I think it's a sign of maturity. I do spend a lot of time crafting my songs, but I craft them from my experiences of depression and pain and finding humour in funny, quirky situations. I'm true to who I am; I spend a lot of time laughing. A lot of time crying, too.

How do you market and distribute recordings?

DARRYL KLASSEN: We sell through gigs, eFolk, CD Baby, and friends. We're not getting rich. If that's what we wanted I guess we'd have to try to write rap or something.

Are you happy with *Ain't No Ordinary Hillbilly*?

DARRYL KLASSEN: I am very pleased with *Ain't No Ordinary Hillbilly*. It's the fourth CD I've been involved in, and, in my opinion, the best by far.

JOE WORST: I like the CD although I'd always like to do some of the bass parts again because I'm never happy with them after I've heard them.

What do you like to do to unwind?

"I like the energy and the stories from ghost towns. I like to write about ghost towns to perhaps make us think about why they exist and why other towns are not ghost towns."

Joel Klingler

DARRYL KLASSEN: I love sailing, or just being by the water. I also build small sailing and row boats.

JOE WORST: I love being on the water, going on a long trip in my kayak, and, in the summer, a day trip by bicycle. In the winter when the weather isn't conducive to these activities, I like to do the electronic repair work on instruments of students and friends, write and arrange music for bands, and look after my two cats.

JOEL KLINGLER: I listen to the wind in the hills, enjoying silence, meditating on silence.

Joel, what was on your mind when you wrote "Water Into Wine"?

JOEL KLINGLER: This song is about Mother Mary, who turned water into wine when she gave birth to her son. It's a miracle that is ongoing.

I've never thought of that metaphor in relation to Mother Mary.

That goes back to having those inspired moments when you don't know and you open yourself up to bigger interpretations. You can see through other eyes besides your own. Your pain and happiness become part of the pain and happiness of other people. Mother Mary's perspective, her story, has been lost in a male-dominated history.

Darryl, tell us about "The Atavist."

DARRYL KLASSEN: I have no idea where this came from. Robert Service wrote a poem about an atavist. I guess that's where I heard the word, probably 30 years ago. I liked it. Maybe it's also a bit of a reaction to political correctness. Go out with the boys in a boys' setting and things become pretty apparent—at least with my friends.

Where is Fairview Town and what is its story?

JOEL KLINGLER: Fairview Town was in the back hills of Oliver, B.C., not far from where I live. It was a booming, busy, gold mining town. All the structures have been burned down now and all that's left is a sign to remind us. I like the way the name Fairview sings and I like to write about ghost towns to perhaps make us think about why they exist and why other towns are not ghost towns. I like the energy and the stories from these ghost towns. Right now there's a booming wine industry where Fairview once was and maybe this is our modern-day gold rush. Ghost towns can teach us that we shouldn't rely on just one type of resource or industry or we'll continue to create ghost towns.

"We need to muster the political will to nurture and take care of the planet we're riding around on. There are so many organizations now that are calling for better care of our surroundings that it saddens me to see the average person driving around in an SUV and just not getting it."

Joe Worst

Do you hold to any political ideology or religious doctrine?

DARRYL KLASSEN: Politically I'm less "aligned" now than in the past. I think there tend to be good and bad ideas on every wing of the political spectrum. I am a disciple of Jesus. I'm not a very good one, and I'm sure as hell not very religious, but I think we live in a created, orderly universe. There is an invisible realm that surrounds us—call it spiritual if you want—and it's somehow more important than this visible one. Its primary characteristic is love.

JOE WORST: I have no hard and steadfast political doctrine these days but we need to muster the political will to nurture and take care of the planet we're riding around on. There are so many organizations now that are calling for better care of our surroundings that it saddens me to see the average person driving around in an SUV and just not getting it. Our leaders in every level of government aren't going to get it until the people do—one of the great beauties of democracy and one of its great detriments.

Darryl, how can one be a disciple of Christ and not be religious?

DARRYL KLASSEN: I think religion has been added onto Christ, but I guess that depends on your definition of religion. Religion is made up mostly of ritual and doctrine. I hope it has something to do with everything I

do. The song "Mystery," that kind of hints at something. It's like that cartoon of yours where the two rabbits are looking at the moon and saying, "I know I'm loved." I think too much of Christendom is quantifying Christ and dogmatizing him and completely missing the point.

Joel, I don't think I've ever heard a love song quite like "Brown-Eyed Girl from Canada." It's so different from any commercially successful love song and yet it's such a listenable song. Can you talk about where that came from?

JOEL KLINGLER: I must have been 21 years old when I wrote that tune. I had a huge crush on Sarah McLachlan at the time. That was before she was big. I was living in the same cabin I'm living in now out near Twin Lake. There was no running water and I was living as simply as I could. This song came out of nowhere. I don't know if she even has brown eyes. I thought I would never do that tune or perform it or anything but Darryl suggested I do it. With that song it was written from a pure, inspiring moment. For a lot of my songs I just wait. I wait for them to come, and they come from some other place.

The intro on that—we've never played it the same way twice. That's like all our music. We just had a gig on the 28th of December, and I think all our tunes were totally different. It's all on the spot, you know, to keep it alive. That's so important as an artist. I don't feel like painting the same picture twice. Improvisation, that is the key, that is the soul of music. That's the point of being alive and a musician, *communicating*. It doesn't matter to me what skill level a musician as long as you're partaking in the gift of playing. Basically choosing to live at that point means that things are going to change. I call it "living creatively in a creative universe."

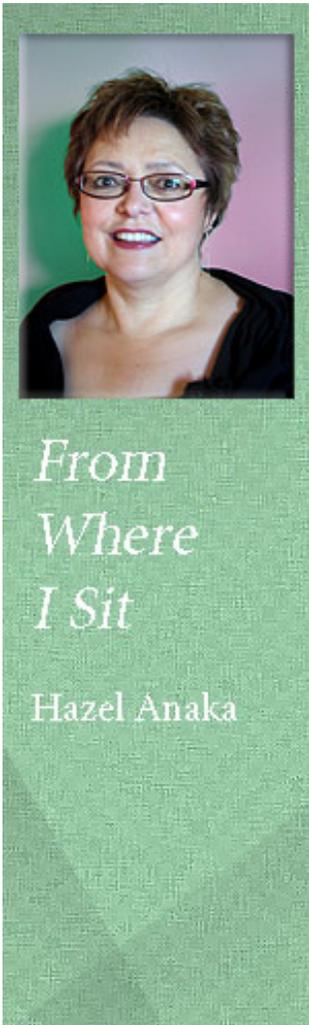
You make a strong connection between your art and the world.

JOEL KLINGLER: That's the key. As songwriters and artists, especially folk artists, we should be aware of what's happening in our regions, in the galaxy, in the universe. We're so arrogant as a species. We've got a craft that we're putting out there. The stuff that we're doing on this planet is having obvious effects universally. What kind of messages are we sending out? If I were observing Earth from another planet I'd say, "Let's just watch them self-destruct." When I choose to live creatively I put out good vibes.

So you feel like you're participating in something huge and marvellous. It's not just you.

JOEL KLINGLER: My philosophy as a musician is that it doesn't start with me. If I allow myself to be an instrument of something bigger than me, the universal artistic consciousness plays through me and through the instrument. Of course as a musician you're constantly practicing, but personally I feel that I've become a transducer, channelling the voices of the past, like an old-time banjo from the hills back in Oliver, because I feel like it comes right through me. I open myself up to that.

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.



Leaving a Legacy

The biggest distraction I face when I'm home alone is the TV. Most days it's on for hours, providing background noise while I read, write, do paperwork, housework, or exercise.

At its worst it splits my focus and makes everything else take longer. At its best it provides me with information and inspiration for story ideas and just getting along in the world.

The other day I was listening to *The Voice*, a Retirement Living TV production on the ONE channel. It covers issues of interest to retirees and older adults. What a lucky break for me. The topic of the day was legacy. Baby boomers are especially motivated by the desire to leave their mark.

The session that grabbed me was the segment on ethical wills. I had never even heard the term, never mind known what it meant. An ethical will is a written letter (or longer) for one's children or grandchildren. A last will is a legal document detailing the disposition of your estate. The ethical will is an opportunity to share your beliefs, values, ideas, reflections, and memories of your life with those closest to you. A priceless legacy.

I so understand this. Back in the late '70s I worked on our community's history book. Greg was only three years old when the book was published in 1980. What would a three-year-old know (or be able to remember) about who his mother is and what she stands for? It was important to me to have my name attached to something tangible, important, and lasting if I were to suddenly die.

Every day since, I've been able to teach through word and deed those things I believe in and stand for. But I also like to believe that I will have important things to say, demonstrate, and teach 'til the day I die. So the legacy thing is a moving target. Surely my legacy today would be richer (because of my life experience) and better received (because of Greg's age) than it was in 1980.

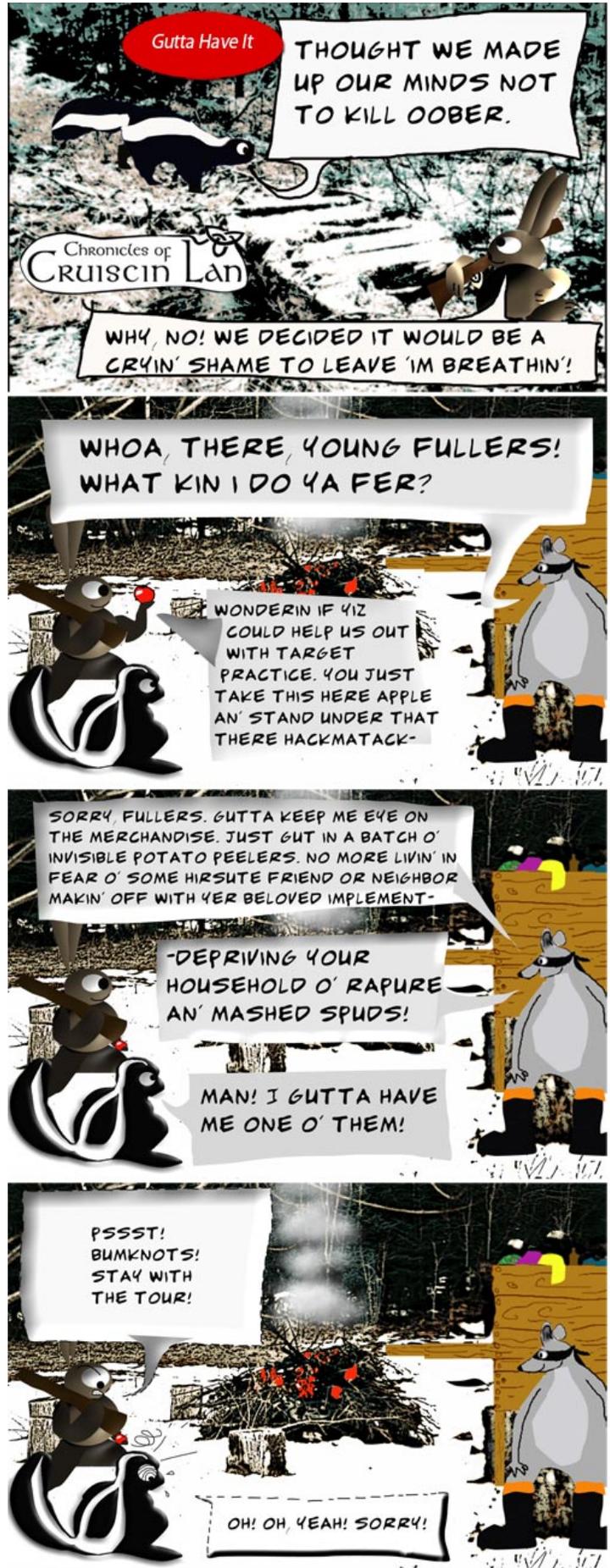
The reason this idea grabs me is because I don't think the teaching and learning ever ends. Life is hectic, people are busy. No one I know is taking the time to talk and record memories, words of advice, family trivia. Imagine the value of a document written in your parents' hand about their life and the enduring messages they wanted you to get.

Experts warn against using the ethical will to scold or chastise the reader. They also point out that the written word can appear harsher than the same spoken message, which has inflection, tone, and body language to soften it. We're also advised to use acid-free paper to ensure the document holds up for future generations.

Note to self: don't wait to have all the planets aligned and everything perfect before beginning. A short document that gets done is oh so much better than the perfect vision that never reaches the paper. Though surely having a leather-bound album and specialty paper can't hurt, from where I sit.

The Chronicles of Cruiscin Lan

by
Wanda
Waterman
St. Louis



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 Returning 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 cro@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.

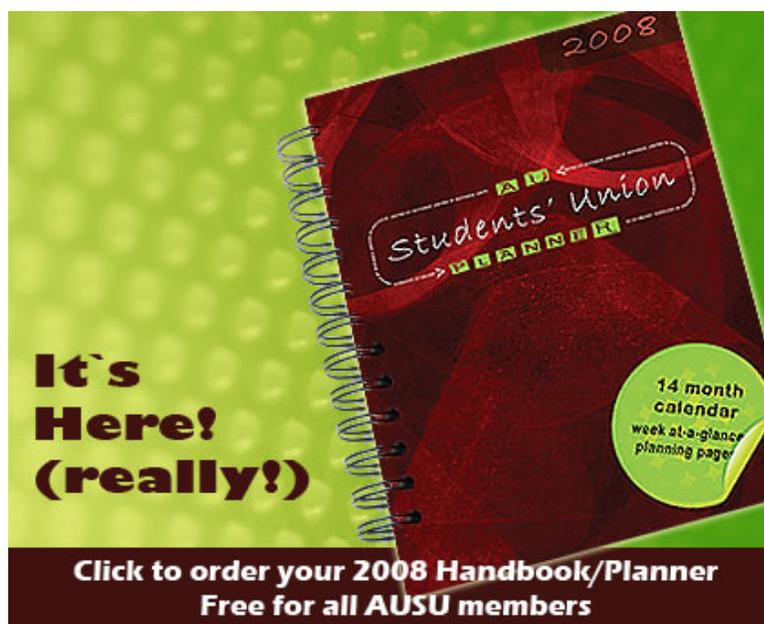
I invite you all to participate, as the student body governs on your behalf and every vote counts. I am available for any questions regarding the election so feel free to contact me. Good luck to all who enter and hopefully we will see the rest of you at the polls!

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 on its way to members. We've added a few enhancements this year, including cheat

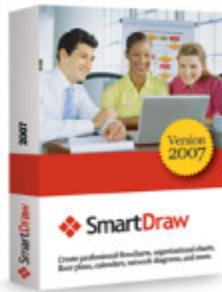


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 SmartDraw

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



At Home: Canada's aboriginal population has risen at an exceptional rate

A recent report released by Statistics Canada shows that the total number of Aboriginal Canadians has reached the one million mark—an increase of 45 per cent over the last ten years. Comparatively speaking, this means that the native population (this includes people grouped under Indian, Metis, or Inuit) is growing six times faster than other ethnic groups within Canada.

Rosemary Blender of Statistics Canada said that one of the reasons she believes this number has risen so sharply is that more and more Canadians are officially stating their native ancestry, where in recent years Aboriginals have neglected to take part in government surveys.

The survey results have also shown a shifting lifestyle for many Aboriginal families; fewer natives are living in crowded conditions with more than one person living in one room; more

families and individuals are living in urban areas; and, in total, more than half of the Aboriginal population is living off-reserve.

Currently, 54 per cent of native people are living in urban areas, up from 50 per cent in 1996; 81 per cent of non-Aboriginal Canadians lived in urban areas in 2006. Also comparatively speaking, the median age of Aboriginal Canadians is 27; the non-Aboriginal median age is 40.

The Turtle Island Native Network has commented on the StatsCan findings, noting the high increase in the overall native population and the shift from reserves to urban centres.

In particular, the community highlighted the overwhelming explosion of the Metis population—between 1996 and 2001, this group experienced the greatest population gains, with an increase of 43 per cent.

Despite Blender's assertion that more Aboriginals took part in the last survey than in recent years, the Network pointed out that "22 reserve-based communities did not participate in the 2006 census."

In Foreign News: Austrian chimp cannot gain "person" status

A chimpanzee named Matthew is the subject of a legal battle in Austria because his home, an animal shelter, is closing down and leaving him homeless.

Determined that Matthew should not be given to a zoo or a medical testing facility, the animal rights group Association Against Animal Factories is trying to find an alternative home for the chimp, who was smuggled into Austria from Sierra Leone for use in animal testing before the illegal shipment was intercepted. At the time, Matthew was handed over to the shelter, where he has been living for 25 years. The animal rights group has decided to pursue legal action that would have Matthew declared a person under Austrian law so that they can effectively monitor his safety in the future.

Although independent groups and individual donors have offered to provide the funds necessary to sustain the chimp after he becomes homeless, under Austrian law no party can receive such donations unless they

are legally a person. Thus, the Association Against Animal Factories wants to have Matthew declared a person and subsequently become his guardian.

The group has lost the battle in Austrian courts but will take the issue up with the European Court of Human Rights. If this case is ultimately lost, the chimp faces an uncertain future in which he may be sold outside the country.

Lowering the Bar suggests that this plan is not altogether farfetched; there is a precedent in European courts to offer a level of rights to animals that equate to basic human rights, and at least two countries have actually amended their constitutions to include such legislation.

The chimp in question, known officially as Matthew Hiasl Pan, may have a donation fund set up for him in the event that the Association Against Animal Factories is successful in its venture. But for now, his fate is in the hands of the European court.

CLICK ON THIS – Just Do It

Lonita Fraser

It's no secret that you can do just about anything online these days, but all that variety gets buried under itself. Here are a few things you might have missed.

DaniDraws

It's not so much a do as it is a collection of how to. Drawing tutorials in text and video.

Zoho

A host of tools of all sorts, from word processing to task scheduling to collaboration, for those of you who might not have access to business-standard applications but who need to interact with those who do.

10 Fast Fingers

These days it can be a real disadvantage if you don't know how to type, but here's an easy-to-use online program that'll walk you through the process of learning to touch type.

Do My Stuff

Don't want to pick up that dry cleaning, walk the dog, or shovel the sidewalk? Here's a site that can help you find someone who will.

Remember the Milk

And if you do choose to do it all on your own, here's a task-managing site that'll help you remember it all.

iPrioritize

Another online task-managing solution or list maker.

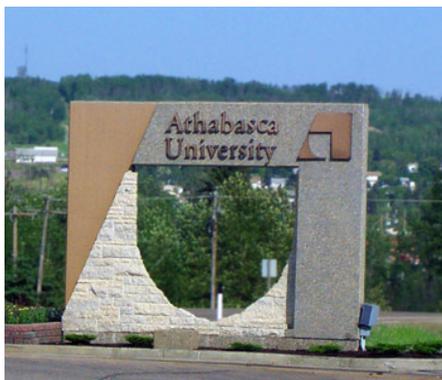
Mikons

Make, share, and use any number of personal icons—images about you that tell your story.

KnitPro

A tool that will take any image you input to the site, and return a pattern sheet that you can use for needlepoint, knitting, or whatever you wish.

AROUND AU



Watch for a brand new look, coming to the Athabasca University website soon!

AU is working with Yellow Pencil, an Edmonton company specializing in website construction. Yellow Pencil has been evaluating the existing content on the AU site to help develop ideas for a new look and feel. Their creative director has also been looking at other AU documents as the company works on redesigning, restructuring, and implementing the site.

A fully functional Alfresco testing environment has been established, and the Yellow Pencil team is evaluating features and functionality by creating test cases. In the next stage of the project, the company will continue to interview stakeholders, with a focus on student recruitment, synchronization with AU's CS department, and the Alfresco file structure.

The Voice can't wait to see the new look!

In other news, Alumni Relations hosted a reception in Victoria in late November. Receptions and other events are held regularly, a great avenue for AU grads and students to meet in their own communities. At the Victoria reception, around 40 AU students and graduates got together at the colourful studio of Ted Harrison, Doctorate of Athabasca University (1991) and a member of the Order of Canada.

Students and alumni also got to chat with Canadian writer and director Brian Paisley, Doctorate of Athabasca University (1990) and well known as the founder of the Edmonton Fringe Festival.

Also in November, Counselling Services and Learning Services Tutorial (LST) held an open house to celebrate their new location at the Duniece Centre in downtown Athabasca. As of early October, the departments are located together on the second floor at 4810 - 50th Street.

With special thanks to Athabasca University's The Insider.

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EDUCATION NEWS

Ksenia Prints and Nick Taylor-Vaisey



PSE enrolment could nose-dive after 2013: report

OTTAWA, WINNIPEG (CUP) -- A recent projection of post-secondary enrolment is predicting an acute shortage of students in Canada's colleges and universities. Non-traditional applicants are the key to survival, says the report.

"We wanted to put forward a series of what-if scenarios," said Patrice de Broucker, one of the authors of a Statistics Canada report.

Statistics Canada teamed up with the Canadian Council for Learning to produce the report, entitled *Post-secondary Enrolment Trends to 2031: Three Scenarios*. It found that enrolment trends in Canada's universities go far beyond simple demographics.

"We can't believe that demographics itself (sic) is setting the trends; it's more than demographics," de Broucker said.

Three enrolment scenarios were put forward. The first projection, based purely on demographics, assumes students will continue enrolling in institutions at current rates. It concludes that enrolment will reach its peak in 2012-13, after which a drastic decline will occur and prevail for another 13 years.

The second scenario studied long-term trends in post-secondary enrolment from 1990-2006. This projection established a rise in the number of students aged 17-29 until 2017, compensating for a drop in other age groups. But this group too will run out of youth in 2031, leading to another steep decline.

The final and third scenario hypothesizes that men, a newly under-represented group in universities, will begin enrolling at the same rate as women. This prognosis is the rosiest of them all, as it predicts steadily rising numbers in many provinces and age groups well into the future.

Saul Schwartz, a public policy expert at Carleton University who specializes in post-secondary education, doubted the usefulness of studying increased male participation rates.

"Male participation rates, I think, are a function of the economy," he said. "Raising them would be difficult in the current economic context, just because there are so many jobs out there that males seem to be attracted to that don't involve post-secondary education."

The report comes to a conclusion realized long ago at many universities: the need to attract students from all across Canada, the world and from all socio-economic levels.

"I know a lot of universities [are] worrying about what happens after the baby[-boom] echo moves through the system. One of the things almost all of them are focusing on right now is the international marketplace," said David Robinson, associate executive director of the Canadian Association of University Teachers.

Robinson, however, believes that these institutions should first look inside the country for under-represented groups.

"We know there's a huge cohort here in Canada," he said.

Peter Mason, 34, was drawn to Winnipeg's Red River College because of the lack of training opportunities on his reserve at St. Theresa Point, 400 km northeast of Winnipeg.

"There are not so many options in the field you want to study in; that's why people like me come to colleges and universities [in the city]—to further my education in a different field where no one has ever achieved yet," said Mason.

Mason has since enrolled in the Aboriginal Self-Governance program at the University of Winnipeg, a degree meant to, according to the program's website, advance "original and creative solutions" to aboriginal issues.

"Education is important for me so I can be a role model in the community once I'm done, and inspire other upcoming students . . . to do better," he said.

But Mason is far from the norm in aboriginal communities and Robinson thinks universities should focus more on changing that.

"We have a terribly low participation rate amongst Canada's aboriginal population, and yet that's one of the fastest-growing components of our population; particularly young, urban aboriginals who arguably are in dire need of more education."

Schwartz, however, doesn't believe that post-secondary participation can be increased substantially.

"I think most people who want to go are currently going. Aboriginal students are an exception, I think," he said.

"It's not just a matter of offering more money or, in my opinion, more information. Those who want to go are going, those who don't want to go aren't going, and we can't do much to change that."

Schwartz added, however, that if boosting participation rates is the goal, aboriginal students would be "high on [his] list" along with first-generation students, a conclusion also reached in the Millennium Scholarship Foundation's 2007 report entitled the Price of Knowledge.

Mature students, those who have already entered the work force but who return to continue their education later in life, were also identified as important to the future of Canada's universities.

Thirty-six year old Linda Warkentin does not shy away from the title of a mature student.

"I really felt I needed to continue my career . . . I was looking for something that would be fulfilling personally to me and that would enhance the work I've already done," she said.

Universities, colleges, governments and dozens of other organizations already recognize the difficulty of bringing more people like Mason and Warkentin into the post-secondary fold.

Most institutions participate in career fairs in rural areas and abroad. Many also offer rural extensions and programs.

Needs-based bursaries and scholarships often pave the road, and initiatives like the University of Winnipeg's Task Force on Access aim to improve the availability of post-secondary education to people from all income brackets.

At the federal level, the Post-Secondary Student Support Program and the University College Entrance Preparation Program encourage aboriginal youth to attend university or college by targeting funds at reserves, the distribution of which falls to band councils.

However, at least one observer claims these initiatives are not enough.

"The biggest problem [for Aboriginal youth] is lack of funding that's holding them back, as education dollars were strictly for education but now they can be moved around to different areas," said Don Sandberg, Aboriginal policy fellow for the Frontier Centre for Public Policy.

De Brucker believes that the Statistics Canada study will help post-secondary policy-makers direct future efforts.

"In the institutions, you either accept the decline and adjust your programs, or you may go after out-of-province students, try to sell yourself," he said.

While Warkentin recognizes the barriers standing between adults over 25 and post-secondary education, she does not accept excuses.

"It's amazing how people underestimate what their skills and abilities are . . . They think they can't do it anymore, and I think it's a bit of a myth."

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.

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THE VOICE

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