

# THE VOICE MAGAZINE

Volume 16 Issue 07  
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Skimming the bottom

## Health Matters

Knowing your IBDs

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A million  
shining things

*Plus:*

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# LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

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



## EDITORIAL

Sandra Livingston



## The \$54 Million Question

Ever seen a \$54 million laptop? Well, an American woman has—or, more to the point, she *hasn't*, which is what makes her think her laptop is worth all that dough.

According to the [CBC](#), Raelyn Campbell took her laptop to electronics giant Best Buy to have some warranty repairs done. After waiting the six weeks anticipated for the repairs, there was no word on her computer. After three months of phone calls to the store's helpline, Campbell learned Best Buy had lost her laptop.

In November, she filed a lawsuit in Washington, D.C., Superior Court—for \$54 million. She says Best Buy did not notify her of the computer's loss and offered an "insulting" \$900 in compensation. (For their part, Best Buy says Campbell accepted their offer of \$1,100.35 for the laptop plus a \$500 gift card for her troubles.)

So where does the \$54 million come in? After talking to a lawyer, Campbell decided to sue Best Buy because she believes the loss of the computer has left her open to identity theft. It seems that before taking her laptop to the store, she left a lot of very personal information on the hard drive, including her tax returns. By suing the company, she plans to "draw attention to the loss and the risk of identity theft."

"It's not 54 million dollars for a lost computer and content," Campbell told reporters. "It's 54 million dollars to try to motivate Best Buy to address its policies and expose another area that leaves people at risks of ID theft."

Quite frankly, this lawsuit shouldn't get as far as a boot sequence. In this case, the only person responsible for her private information is Campbell, and if she was that concerned about the risk of identity theft, she'd have done due diligence and removed the data from her computer before handing it over to someone else.

At first glance, her situation may seem parallel to data losses by governments and companies around the world. In November, the British government lost 25 million child benefit records (including names, birthdates, addresses, National Insurance numbers and bank details). In December, a Cardiff HM Revenue and Customs office lost personal details for 6,500 pension customers. In January, a computer tape in the U.S. went missing; it contained financial and other personal information for 650,000 customers of J.C. Penney and as many as 100 other stores.

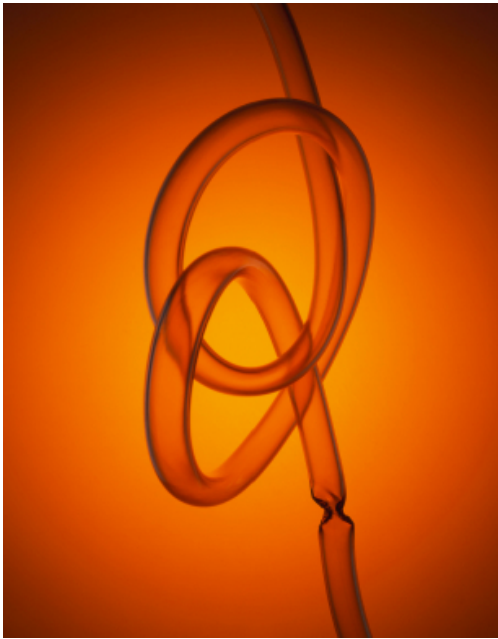
But there's a key difference: in each of those cases, customers were required to hand over that information as part of the transaction. The organizations collecting the information made it a condition of doing business (be it child benefits, credit cards, or pensions), and as soon as they do so they must assume responsibility for keeping that data safe.

In part, Campbell is right when she insists, "America's largest consumer electronics retailer [should] have policies that protect its customers." When stores, governments, or any other agencies *require* personal information, they should be bound to protect it.

But the responsibility to safeguard information also falls on individuals, especially when that data is completely within their control. None of the personal data on Campbell's laptop was requested by the store. She handed it over freely and, as it turns out, carelessly. So before she sues the retailer for poor privacy policies, she might do well to take a closer look at her own.

## HEALTH MATTERS

Barbara Godin



## Ulcerative Colitis

Ulcerative colitis is a disease that falls under the umbrella term of inflammatory bowel diseases (IBDs). These diseases are characterized by inflammation in the digestive tract. Ulcerative colitis affects the colon (most often the lower part), causing ulcers in the lining of the rectum and colon and leading to inflammation, bleeding, and diarrhea. This condition can be difficult to diagnose because of the similarity of its symptoms to other IBDs.

Ulcerative colitis usually begins between the ages of 15 and 30. It tends to run in families and affects men and women equally. Approximately 170,000 Canadians suffer from some form of inflammatory bowel disease and Canada is believed to have the highest occurrence of IBD. Whites and individuals of Jewish descent tend to have an increased incidence of IBDs.

The most common symptoms of ulcerative colitis are abdominal pain and diarrhea. As this condition progresses, added symptoms appear, such as anemia, tiredness, weight loss, skin lesions, and joint pain. Symptoms may develop outside of the colon and lead to other conditions such as liver disease, eye problems, and osteoporosis. Frequently, these symptoms subside once the colitis is under control.

The direct cause of ulcerative colitis is not clearly known. Emotional stress does not cause this condition, as once believed, but it may aggravate it. As well, eating certain foods may trigger symptoms. Moreover, research has shown that people with ulcerative colitis have an immune system that appears to react strongly to bacteria in the digestive tract, although bacteria are a normal component of the digestive tract.

Several options are available for controlling the symptoms. Drug therapy is frequently the starting point for treatment and often induces a long remission before symptoms reappear. At the very least, drug therapy can control the symptoms and allow an improved quality of life. Occasionally, individuals may experience particularly difficult symptoms and require hospitalization until their condition is stable.

When all other treatment options are exhausted, surgery is recommended. The type of surgery required will depend on the individual case. One option is complete removal of the colon, which will leave the individual with an ileostomy. An ileostomy is performed when a surgeon creates a small opening in the abdomen called a stoma and attaches the end of the small intestine (the ileum) to it. Waste leaves the body through the stoma and is collected in an external appliance, which the patient empties as necessary.

Individuals who suffer from IBD for many years may be at increased risk of developing colon cancer. As a result, these individuals should be monitored closely and have a colonoscopy every year. Ulcerative colitis can be a devastating condition to live with and can greatly affect a person's self-esteem. Therefore, counselling and support groups may assist the individual to successfully live with this lifelong condition.

Further information may be obtained at the [Crohn's and Colitis Foundation of Canada](#), the [Crohn's and Colitis Foundation of America](#), and [Medicine Net](#).



## MILK-CRATE BANDIT

Erik Ditz



### Taking Care of Your Crested Gecko

New Caledonia's crested gecko is one of the most versatile animals in the world. He not only has the ability to change his colour at will for camouflage, but a combination of a prehensile tail; feet adapted to running quietly along the forest floor as well as gripping branches and sticking to tree bark; night and day vision; and the ability to hunt and survive off a variety of insects, rodents, reptiles, and fish.

Although he is best kept alone, he is a very playful animal that is very active at night. He likes room temperature, but when he sleeps during the day it's best to have a regular household lamp on him to give the simulation of the day-night cycle and the warmth of the sun.

He will hunt mostly at night, and should be fed every other day just before bedtime. While young crested geckos are active enough to catch small crickets, the two-year-old male and gravid female should be fed either powdered substitute or waxworms. Of course, crested geckos

should be fed according to their weight and rotundity and must have fresh water daily.

A bedding of mulch and/or moss with fallen leaves is important, and loose upright branches are a great jungle gym to watch your gecko play on under a red light bulb. Daily misting helps to maintain the moisture he needs to absorb through his skin, and the moss will especially help that. Ensure he has a clean cage with a tight-fitting lid—geckos are very slippery and can hide just about anywhere. Imagine chasing your gecko up the walls or under the stove!

He can be handled, though take care not to let him jump, and cleanliness is important. Too much noise and attention will make him anti-social and he will very likely refuse food and become unhealthy. Also, do not be alarmed if his tail falls off, as he has evolved the ability to drop this at will when threatened by a predator, and it will grow back eventually.

Anyway, if that's too much work I guess you could just watch TV.

### *The Agenda with Steve Paikin*

Steve Paikin is driven by vengeance. You can just tell when you watch him, there's a fury in that man to do battle. Though he may seem complacent at first glance, his tactical skill in the arena of argument is a sight to see, and he makes a point of choosing excellent combatants. This is basically a cockfight and Steve Paikin has the biggest wattle.

### 100 Huntley Street - *Full Circle*

As much as one can say about the aid that telethons and Christian missions have garnered for communities and villages in Africa, children there do not need your care sweaters, especially since they are wool. If as much was spent on helping local people start businesses and obtain medical supplies as this channel spends on wardrobe and airtime, we wouldn't need shows like this that thinly disguise pleas for cash with moral uprightness and chatty ladies on couches.

### *Walking With . . .*

Imagine sending David Suzuki back in time 200 million years and getting him to do *The Nature of Things* about dinosaurs and cavemen. This is the coolest show ever, until Nigel Marven shows up and starts lassoing computer-generated prehistoric trilobites. Sorry Nige, but you are not Steve Irwin or Paul Hogan.

### *Gisèle's Big Backyard*

This is your standard kids' marathon programming with mascots and cartoons and lessons to learn and I am a child and I love these shows: *Sesame Street*, *Polka Dot Door*, *The Friendly Giant*, *Today's Special*, *Hilarious House of Frightenstein*, *Telefrançais*, *The Elephant Show*, etc. I'm either happy I stayed up long enough to catch *Sagwa: The Chinese Siamese Cat*, or really angry that I had to get up so early but glad it's on anyway.

### *The Whitest Kids U' Know*

Following a long line of hit sketch comedy shows into a newer, faster, and more demanding age is difficult, and even *Monty Python* and *The Kids in the Hall* had their low moments. While some of the material here is pretty poorly written, there are definitely scenes that compare with the best even *Mr. Show* had to offer.

### *Dexter*

Dexter is a serial killer who works for the police like the rest of his family, and only murders other killers. The idea of a methodical stalker carrying out righteous, ritualistic murders puts a new slant on justice, and the fact that he's working with the police and his sister to try and capture himself makes for some great storylines. Definitely not for the squeamish.

### *The Super Bowl*

The Super Bowl allows the outside observer to get a very clear look at the nature of America's gluttony. Also, FOOTBALLLLLLLLLLLLLLL!

### *Penn and Teller's Bullshit!*

Once upon a time somebody said "Thou shalt not lie" (or something like that), and that's pretty much what this show is about. The famous magician-comedians Penn and Teller use their powers for good, uncovering all the seedy little lies we've been hearing about for years, like life coaches and John Edwards and circumcision and endangered species lists. The language is pretty raw, but that's because it's slanderous (and thus illegal) to call someone a fraud, but not to expose their lies and call them an asshole.

# AU Profiles:

## AU Profiles: Amanda Evans

By Christina M. Frey



This week's profile focuses on a student who's studying for two degrees at once, but still gets the job done.

Amanda Evans, who lives in Hamilton, Ontario, is enrolled both as a distance student in Athabasca University's Bachelor of Science in Human Science (BScHS) program, and as a traditional student at Mohawk College's Pharmacy Technician program.

This arrangement allows her to easily compare distance education and traditional classroom-based learning. She also explains how AU's articulation agreements and post-diploma program will allow her to obtain a bachelor's degree twice as fast as usual.

Amanda is in her first year of AU's BScHS; at the same time, she is partway through Mohawk College's Pharmacy Technician program. She began this unique arrangement when she learned about AU's articulation agreement with Mohawk College.

Articulation agreements allow students to transfer credits between college and university programs; through this agreement, Amanda will be able to earn credit for the entire Pharmacy Technician diploma, and apply that toward a bachelor's degree through AU's post-diploma program. To finish more quickly, she's studying in both programs at once.

"By the time I'm done the pharm tech and can apply it to the BSc, I'll be almost done [the BSc]," Amanda says.

The more she learns, the more she wants to learn; when she graduates with her BSc, Amanda is planning to attend medical school. "After working as a tech, and learning so much about the body and medicine, I . . . wanted to learn more," Amanda says.

She's particularly interested in McMaster University in Hamilton, Ontario, which has a three-year, problem-based curriculum. And not only is the hands-on approach appealing, it's also close to home, although, Amanda says, she'll go "almost . . . anywhere."

Because she is attending traditional classes at Mohawk concurrently with distance classes through AU, Amanda has first-hand experience with the advantages of distance education—as well as methods to



overcome the challenges of learning from a distance. Initially, she was drawn to AU because of her non-traditional age.

"[I felt] really out of place as a 25 year old among 18 year olds," she says. "AU . . . just seemed the way to go."

Once she began classes, however, she soon discovered other advantages of distance learning. For example, Amanda enjoys working on her own, and AU's flexibility makes that even easier.

"I have to actually make the time to go to . . . traditional classes," she says. "[But] I can do the AU courses anywhere, and anytime."

Another advantage is the ability to work while obtaining her degree. "[I can] pay for the courses as I [go], which means no student loans!" says Amanda.

Like many distance students, however, Amanda sometimes finds it difficult to motivate herself.

"I'm a procrastinator," she says. "A schedule doesn't really work for me . . . I find it hard to stick to unless I just go and do it."

What does work is removing as many distractions as possible. "If I'm at home, I'll want to just have a quick nap, or end up finding other things to do," Amanda says. Instead, to avoid the distractions at home, she studies at the Mohawk College library. "Because I have night classes at Mohawk on Tuesday and Thursday, I try to make those my 'school days'," she says. "[I] head there for the day to work on my coursework."

Although she also misses the socialization and in-class discussions found at traditional universities, she feels that she is able to obtain that support through her Mohawk courses. And she's found a supportive network of other AU students through the AU Health Sciences Society, a new student group that she helped launch.

"It's a group for all BScHS students, or AU students interested in health sciences," says Amanda, who is president of the society. The group hosts a forum where students can discuss "current topics, health news, debates, ethics, [and] what to do with your degree," she notes.

While the ability to discuss current issues with classmates can keep studies relevant, it's also a great support network for students who might feel bogged down. "We're always open to helping each other," Amanda says.

### **A Great Combination: AUSU Provides Locks at Learning Centres**



When students arrive to write their exams at the Calgary or Edmonton Learning Centres, they're often surprised to find that all belongings—including valuables such as laptops—must be left outside the exam area. Until a couple of years ago, this wasn't a problem: AU provided locks for securing valuables. But too often, students never returned the locks, and AU stopped providing the service.

Now, AUSU is providing locks for students to use at both the Calgary and Edmonton Learning Centres' exam units. These mini combination locks will be lent to students while writing exams, and are also available for sale through the [AUSU online store](#).

The locks are just under 4 cm square, feature a metal body and cord, and allow users to set their own combination. At the great price of just \$4 each, they'll come in handy even after your exams are done!



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

Sam Baker: A Million Shining Things

(Notes from a conversation with Wanda Waterman St. Louis on January 29, 2008.)

*Sam Baker is a Texan singer-songwriter whose first CD, Mercy, in 2004 brought him an ardent and extensive following in North America and Europe. Two decades ago Sam survived a bomb blast perpetrated by Peru's Shining Path rebels. For the*

*Mindful Bard review of his latest CD, Pretty World, go [here](#).*

### Train to Machu Picchu

It was 1986, and I was in Peru with some friends. We went to Lima and from there to Cuzco to catch the train to Machu Picchu. We were going there for the Inti Rami, which is a pretty big celebration there. The bomb was on our train car. Me and my friends who were there—they were foresters, living in Columbia—the bomb went off and killed them and the German family I was sitting with, a mother, a father, and a boy. It killed them in a particularly terrible fashion.

The exploding shrapnel cut the femoral artery in my leg and I should have bled out right then but for some reason didn't. I stayed alive in spite of subdural bleeding, cranial bleeding, gangrene, and renal failure. When I was brought back to the States I started round after round of surgery.

I think that whole experience made my writing much more empathetic toward people. You see quite a bit after weeks when you can't move, near death. It makes you reflective.

"Broken Fingers" was written partly in memory of the German boy who died in the explosion. His parents spoke only German but he knew Spanish and pretty good English, so we talked. The way my hand is now reminds me of that; the shrapnel blew off the top of my left hand. They didn't operate on it at first because they didn't think I'd survive, but eventually they did operate. I later had to learn to play the guitar left-handed. There were times when I got frustrated. And then I somehow connected that to the boy. Some things are just done, and death is one of them. Some things don't heal, some things don't change.

### Conditions for Creativity

Things come to me and I'm not sure where they come from or how they get to me but once they're here I generally have to deal with them. I work with what comes and I'm not sure what I do to make it happen.



Photo courtesy Todd V. Wolfson

I do listen to some music. I'm deaf on one side and don't hear very well out of the other, and there's a very loud ringing, so I'm not sure I get much out of music. I liked that whole thing Yo-Yo Ma did of Bach pieces. And then when I hear birds I don't know that we are able to do anything much more beautiful than that.

I also read. Recently it's been Thoreau, Conrad, Faulkner, Annie Dillard. I'll probably go to the library this afternoon and see what I can find.

Lately my writing has been sporadic, but then I've got other projects that are taking a lot of my energy so I block out time to see what comes out. The thing is to find the balance: energy-time-time-energy-energy-time. There are a million shining things and you can't do them all.

This is a good month to see how I feel about the world. I hate to say it's "X" or this is my expectation, because then all of a sudden that's what I have to get out of this block of time. It's better to let time pass and let things come to me. It's hard to know what to focus on, to push more energy into, so I'm seeing what sort of energy comes up about different things. It's really more of a triage.

Doing nothing is good sometimes, too. I can look at the trees outside and see that something shining and beautiful is hanging from every branch.

### On Religion: Red Hats, White Hats

You can suffer from belief in nothing. I think you can also suffer from belief in too much. We try to find differences in religions, as if that gives us some sort of edge, instead of looking for those great similarities. The great teachers are all saying, "Drop the ego; we're all in this together." The boat rises and falls. We all rise and fall as does the boat.

In Buddhism there's a story about the coming apart of everything, when the self dissolves. That's not actually that far from the Christian idea of dissolving into the love of God, when ego drops away and we become whatever that is. If Christians have a problem with Buddhism, their struggle is not with Buddhism, it's with Christianity. I think Blake would say that it's that clash, that cracking of our universe so the light peeps out, that comes to everybody regardless of their religion.

What I saw in that terrible thing in South America is that we're all essentially connected. There's an attitude that says, "I'll wear this red hat or this white hat and because of that I have something that gives me access to a different spiritual realm." I think our spiritual realms are right here with us all the time.

### The God of Rosemary

What if everything is perfect right now? By perfect I mean whole and complete, all you need available to you at this very moment. It doesn't mean you're not responsible for making things better. We should all be more responsible and more compassionate, but what if it's you in the face of God this second? You can then get outside of yourself and not say, "Oh, look at me, open the door," or, "Look at me, do something." This whole thing where you and I are separate and look at ourselves as if we were players on a football field—we can get past that.

God is in every face we meet, and not just in every face—in every plank of cedar that's tacked onto the outside of our houses, in the rosemary that grows in the yard. The question then becomes: *How can I learn not to turn away?*

*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](mailto:bard@voicemagazine.org). For a list of criteria, go [here](#). If I agree with your recommendation, I'll thank you online.*



## *From Where I Sit*

Hazel Anaka

### **Suspicious Activity**

If pressed we can all list a few ways we've had a perfectly good day ruined. It may be a flat tire, an extra long lineup at Tim Horton's, car trouble, power outage, or other such nuisance. Most of us quickly bounce back from these petty irritants.

So, let me tell you about my Monday. A personal banker at my local credit union called me on my cellphone. I didn't know how she'd gotten my number or, more importantly, why she'd tracked me down. It soon became clear.

She said the fraud department had noticed some suspicious activity on our business account. It appears that in late January at an Edmonton business the information on my debit card was skimmed. Fraud investigators noticed that on February eighth, twice on the ninth, and again on the tenth, cash withdrawals were made at ATMs in Montreal. It continued until the account was cleaned out.

I was stunned, in shock, pissed off, not necessarily in that order. I called my husband to warn him not to use his card because any purchase would be declined. He worried that automatic debits may be dishonoured because of lack of funds. "Don't worry we won't bounce anything," was the reassurance from the bank.

On Tuesday I did the police report in Edmonton. I approached the counter, made a fist, pounded the counter, and declared I was a victim of crime. The duty cop pounded his fist in reply. The next step is taking a copy of the report back to the credit union and swearing an affidavit saying it wasn't me who withdrew all that cash in Quebec. We won't be out the money because of the bank's insurance coverage. Small comfort for this invasion of privacy and inconvenience.

When I had more time to think, I was grateful we hadn't yet received and deposited a large cheque we've got coming. The little bastards would have gotten a windfall. I then wondered what would have happened on an account with an authorized overdraft. They could've kept going 'til the overdraft limit was reached.

How did the sleazebags do it? At least one policeman I spoke to says it's organized crime. When I looked at my slips from that day in the city I narrowed down the likely business. The card had been swiped twice because supposedly the first time it wasn't approved. It seems quite often they use two machines and the owner and staff are in on it. They've got the means to somehow get the pin number as well. The duty officer who took my report predicted the creeps in Quebec used small convenience store ATMs because they don't have cameras.

Dear reader, be aware, this does happen to ordinary folks doing ordinary business. I know we need to make some changes in how we do business. Being a victim of crime sucks, from where I sit.



# The Chronicles of Cruiscin Lan

by  
Wanda  
Waterman  
St. Louis





## AUSU This Month



### AUSU Elections 2008

#### Nomination Period Closed

Dear AU Students:

My name is Rehan Qureshi and I am pleased to have been appointed your Chief Recruiting Officer (CRO) for the 2008 General Election. It is my position to accept and verify nominations for the election; field questions about election 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](mailto:cro@ausu.org) for any of the above.

Elections will be held from March 9 - 12 on the [AUSU website](http://ausu.org).

The nomination period has now closed. You may view your list of candidates [here](#). Nominees may withdraw their name from the list of nominees up until the last day of February 2008.

Good luck to all of the candidates. Hopefully we will see the rest of you at the polls!

Sincerely,

Rehan Qureshi - Chief Returning Officer (CRO)  
[cro@ausu.org](mailto:cro@ausu.org)

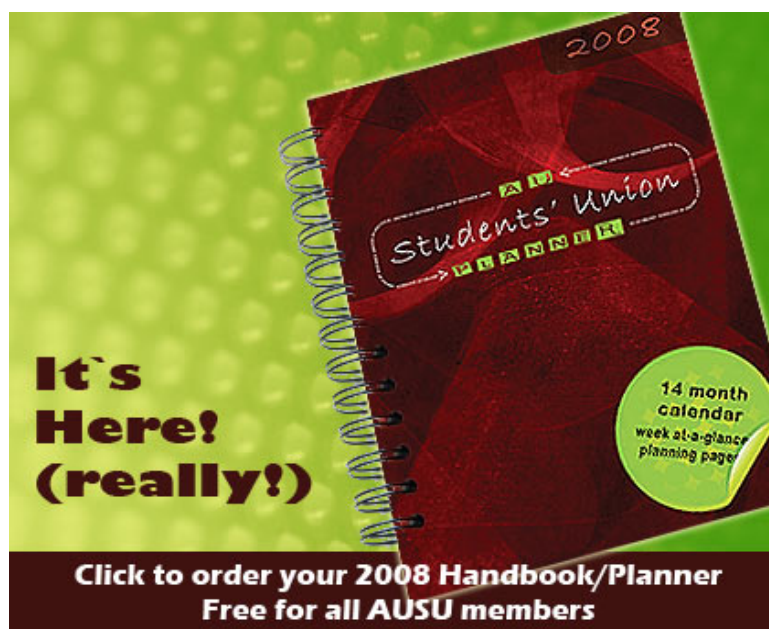
### AUSU Merchandise for Sale

Due to a high demand for AUSU merchandise, and delays in setting up our online store, we have put together a quick catalogue with a few items we have in stock now. To download it in pdf, visit our [home page](#). Shipping costs will be calculated per order and we'll let you know by phone or email.

We are only accepting credit card orders at this time, unless you are able to visit our Edmonton office. Please excuse the poor quality of the product photos. These will be improved shortly. More products will be available soon. Suggestions are welcome.

### 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



## GO HOME EARLY.



Create professional-looking flowcharts, timelines, graphs, and more, in minutes, all by yourself. Then go spend some quality time with your family.

Free for AUSU members. Visit [www.ausu.org](http://www.ausu.org)



 **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](mailto: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: Gunman arrested in Montreal high school

Montreal high school Polyvalente Cavelier-de-Lasalle has a reputation of being a somewhat rough educational centre, where earlier in the week a parent allegedly assaulted his eighth grade child's gym teacher, punching the man and breaking his nose.

The police are said to have a close relationship with the personnel of Polyvalente because of many incidents of violence between students, siblings, and even parents.

On February 12, a 15-year-old student became involved in a fight during school hours, and when the news spread, his 19-year-old brother charged into the school ready to fight—and armed with a gun.

The brother, Mutlek Amrov, came onto the scene with a loaded handgun, presumably with the intention of protecting his little brother. Following the arrest, the man was denied bail and is

currently in jail awaiting sentencing on April 14.

Unfortunately for Amrov, a police body search not only uncovered his loaded weapon but crack cocaine as well. The 19-year-old has pleaded guilty to the possession of the drugs as well as the handgun.

School officials claim it was the quick actions of an unidentified police officer that stopped the incident from escalating further. This is because the officer often checks in at the high school to ensure the safety of students and staff.

Although authorities don't believe that Amrov intended to use his gun, the circumstances surrounding the arrest, coupled with the fact that he was in possession of drugs at the time, mean that sentencing could be much harsher than if he had simply shown up unarmed and without drugs.

## In Foreign News: Does your Valentine's Day gift represent a human rights violation?

It would be untrue to say that people didn't put serious thought into their Valentine's Day gifts. After all, there are a million things to consider when buying flowers, chocolates, teddy bears, or trinkets steeped in personal meaning. It depends who you're buying for, what relationship you have with them, and how well you know them.

When it comes to human rights, however, chances are not many of us have considered what our most traditional Valentine's Day gifts—flowers and chocolates—represent.

An activist group made a special Valentine's Day date with the UN to discuss this issue, and their focus was the major issues of child labour in the West African cocoa industry and sexual harassment and health issues in the South American flower industry.

More than half of the cocoa used in chocolate production worldwide comes from West Africa, a region known for its use of child labour and low plantation wages. In particular, the Ivory Coast has been facing pressure over child labour, and the nations of Ecuador and Colombia employ mostly women for flower



production and cultivation and face accusations of sexual harassment as well as unfit working conditions due to poisonous pesticides.

Spokespeople for both industries claim that the Valentine's Day protest is unnecessary because the appropriate steps are already being taken to protect the rights of workers in Africa and South America: namely, educational programs and high-profile brand agreements with suppliers.

Stephen Pursey, director of policy integration at the International Labour Organization, believes that the awareness needs to be spread to the purchasing public, however.

It does make sense, you must admit; Valentine's Day is about showing people that you care, so shouldn't that sentiment be spread to the labourers who create those special gifts?

## CLICK ON THIS – Oddities

Lonita Fraser

Most of us get up each morning, work, eat, enjoy a few pastimes or luxuries, sleep, and get up to repeat the process again the next day. Life continues contented and acceptable, and most of us never experience something truly bizarre, odd, or coincidental. Until now.

### Top 15 Amazing Coincidences

Okay, some of that's just a bit too hard to believe, but freaky regardless!

### Suspicious Checkout Line Combinations

I would honestly love to hear about anything you've seen or purchased yourselves. Come on, spill it, and maybe I'll make up a little collection for another week.

### Seven Strange Lucky Charms

Vulture heads and swastikas? Yep, that's strange all right.

### The Museum of Unnatural Mystery

How much truth there is in some of it, I'll leave up to you to figure out; but we do live in an odd universe of infinite wonder.

### Top Ten Craziest Science Stuff You Didn't Know

Okay, so you can hypnotize chickens. Riddle me this—WHY would you want to?

### 8 Craziest Cults

The day you think weird things happen at your own weekly meetings, whatever they may be for, just consider what *could* be going on instead.

### Weird Things People Keep In Jars

Truly not for the faint of heart or easily disturbed.

## EDUCATION NEWS

Angela Wilson



### Multiple degrees the norm for post-secondary education seekers

WOLFVILLE (CUP) -- Post-secondary education is rarely a one-degree commitment anymore, according to a survey of graduating students in the Maritime Provinces.

The study, conducted by the Maritime Provinces Higher Education Commission (MPHEC), revealed that over three-quarters of graduates from liberal arts universities plan to continue their education past a bachelor's degree.

The majority of those students, however, said that they would leave the Maritimes to do so.

Of the students who do not plan to continue their education in the Maritimes, 38 per cent said it was because their program was not available in the region, while 29 per cent responded that the program they sought outside of the region had an excellent reputation.

Mireille Duguay, chief executive officer for MPHEC, said that this is not a surprising trend, considering that most universities in the Maritimes are primarily undergraduate institutions.

"We cannot be all things to all people," she said, adding that students are often encouraged to study outside of their home region in order to experience living elsewhere.

Although most Maritime universities may not be known for their graduate and research programs, post-secondary institutions across the country are benefiting from a boost in graduate enrolment.

A 2007 study by the Association of Universities and Colleges of Canada (AUCC) revealed that full-time masters and PhD enrolment has risen rapidly in the last decade, from 65,000 students in 1996 to 102,000 students in 2006: a 57 per cent increase.

Meanwhile, preliminary figures for the Atlantic provinces in 2007-2008 indicate that graduate enrolment in the region is up by 2.9 per cent over the previous year.

This boost in graduate enrolment is also reflected in the labour market.

Over the last 16 years, the number of full-time jobs filled by graduate degree holders has grown from 550,000 in 1990 to more than one million in 2006.

Despite the fact that most students will seek to continue their post-secondary education outside of the Maritime provinces, the survey revealed that a majority of them (73%) and about one quarter of students from out of province indicated that they would like to stay in the region to live and work.

This is good news for a region that faces declines in undergraduate enrolment and an aging population.



# CLASSIFIEDS

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

## THE VOICE

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