

**THE**

# **VOICE**

**MAGAZINE**

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## **Bowl of Cherries**

Millard Kaufman

## **AU Profiles**

Kate Slivko

## **Cultural Mosaic**

A New Day

*Plus:  
Milk-Crate Bandit,  
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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](mailto:voice@ausu.org), and please indicate if we may publish your letter.



## EDITORIAL

Sandra Livingston



## Dear Miss Rose

Dear Miss Rose, I hate to ruin a lovely friendship, but the time has come that something must be said. At first, I tried to be understanding. You're just a poor gal out there trying to make a buck, and even though I was suspicious of your motives, I held out hope that you were simply delusional (nothing serious; just blissfully off your rocker).

However, your correspondence has lately become so persistent, and dare I say over-ambitious, that I think it's high time to warn all those unsuspecting souls who might actually be tempted to fall for your ploy: there is no

"Annual MS-Word Lotto Lottery," there is no \$1,000,000 award, and there isn't even a "European Processing Agent."

I mean, obviously it was too good to be true that you had selected my name from oodles of email addresses around the world for a \$1,000,000 contest I hadn't even entered (and I was never really convinced that Bill Gates was going to hand me wads of cash on some madcap whim).

I figured you'd eventually give up and go away, but then it occurred to me: if you're still putting in the effort to send out all those emails, it must be paying off. And that means that more than a few people are actually falling for your scam—and handing over bank account numbers in anticipation of their winnings. Which is something I just don't understand.

After all, if Bill and his friends are really going to hand out millions of dollars—and enter people in next year's "US\$40,000,000,00 international lottery"—it would only make sense that they'd have enough spare change lying around to spring for a toll-free number for the winners to use. You'd also think they'd provide a real Microsoft email address for responses, or get the efficient machinery of their accounting department to pay the winners by cheque. Maybe they'd even fork out the cash for a proofreader. (Bill's folks know how to polish an image. Somehow, the mangled English of "until your claims has been process" just doesn't seem their style.)

And while we're at it, I'm starting to wonder if your ambitions don't extend beyond being the bearer of good news for the fictitious Lotto Lottery. This week alone, I've received notices from three different Nigerian banks. Apparently, all I have to do to collect on both a \$19.5 million *and* a \$75 million dormant account is hand over my banking details. Call me jaded, but I immediately saw your hand in the botched syntax of this catchy bit: "his last testament of WILL, which is still under my possion and which we will amends to make you eligible to claim the fund."

The point, Miss Rose, is that the people most willing to jump at your bogus offer are the ones who can least afford to lose. If someone is desperate enough to toss prudence aside and supply you with their bank account number (which, let's be honest, you're going to promptly turn around and clean out), then they must be desperate indeed. Whether it's a senior citizen on a tiny pension, a young adult struggling to make a start, or someone who's simply fallen on hard times, I can only hope that this column will make at least one person think twice.

Still, we've been pals for so long now I'd hate to part on bad terms. If I've been harsh, I'd like to make it up by sending you a gift. Twenty-five million, in fact, from a dormant account that's been hanging around. I look forward to receiving confirmation of your account details and PIN number soon.

# AU Profiles:

## AU Profiles: Kate Slivko

Christina M. Frey



This week, we focus on Kate Slivko, a student taking Athabasca University classes for her medical school prerequisites. Kate, who emigrated to the U.S. from Russia when she was 16, moved to Alberta after college in anticipation of applying to medical school there.

She talks about why she chose AU's unclassified option rather than a degree program, and explains why applying to medical school is so competitive. She also details how she set up a lab-based special projects course through AU's chemistry department.

"If someone talked to me . . . 10 years ago and said that in 2008 I'd be in semi-rural Alberta doing toxicology research [and] applying to medical school, [I wouldn't have believed it]," Kate says. She attended undergrad at Macalester, a private liberal arts college in Minnesota, initially studying economics. However, she

didn't enjoy it, and she began thinking about other options.

While volunteering at a local community clinic, Kate discovered her interest in medicine. She took some science classes, did very well, and began volunteering at a hospital "to make sure it was medicine that I really enjoyed, as opposed to just my clinic," she says. She loved it, and decided to make medical school her post-college goal.

However, since Kate had already completed two years of college, switching to a BSc meant that she would have had to start over from the beginning. "Graduat[ing] in four years . . . was very important to me, because Macalester was a really expensive school," she says. "I had a scholarship, but if I stayed past fourth year, I'd lose the scholarship."

"I . . . decided . . . to graduate in four years and finish whatever prerequisites I still had left afterwards, somewhere more affordable," says Kate. AU's unclassified option—for students who aren't seeking degrees with AU—was a good fit. "I already had a degree when I applied, so I wasn't looking specifically for a bachelor's program," she says. "The application process for the unclassified stream was much simpler and quicker."

Generally, medical schools require a year each of general chemistry, organic chemistry, biology, and physics. However, since some schools have additional requirements, Kate is taking all possible prerequisites



for the many medical schools she's applying to, just to be sure. She has completed five courses with AU, and is working on her final six.

Kate believes that the biggest challenge of distance learning is the self-motivation required. Having clear goals helps, however. "I'm pretty good at motivating myself, especially because I have to do this for medical school," she says. "But I think a lot of people fall into the procrastination trap."

But AU's flexibility can also be a definite plus. "If . . . you get sick, or you have a really stressful week . . . you can just take a week off from studying and not worry," she says. "Just make up for it by studying more later when you are in a better situation." In addition, she creates her own study schedules, which means she can schedule exams around obligations like medical school interviews. She's also enjoyed the ability to study while travelling back to Russia. "I didn't have to worry about missing classes or exams," Kate says.

Kate is hoping to attend medical school this fall, although the process is very competitive, she says. After applying, one in five applicants makes it to the interview phase. Kate has interviews scheduled at Queen's University in Kingston and the University of Alberta—which she's especially excited about, as it is her first pick for medical school.

"The [University of Alberta] has a Sudden Death Investigation program for medical student rotations . . . working as a coroner or medical examiner," Kate says. "[It's] one of the reasons why U of A med is my top choice."

However, the interview is still a major hurdle: "there are about four people per spot at the interview stage," she says. That's why Kate, who calls herself a "planner," has a backup plan: if she isn't accepted into medical school, she's hoping to obtain a master's degree instead, preferably in toxicology.

*"I always have to keep in mind that I'm representing not just myself, but also Athabasca University. I have to make sure I perform well so other AU students in the future can get a good rep!"*

Toxicology, which Kate describes as a "mixture of chemistry and physiology . . . related to pathology," is key in determining the cause of unexplained death, as with recently deceased actor Heath Ledger. Kate explains, "Toxicologists would test for . . . various substances . . . whereas more general forensic pathologists would analyze . . . bullets or heart attacks."

Currently, Kate is doing a toxicology-based special project course through AU, although its focus differs from medical toxicology: she's studying the effect of the pesticide Roundup on rainbow trout. She's amazed at how smoothly the process of setting up a special project course occurred.

"I decided I needed science research experience," Kate says. The previous semester she'd done well in organic and environmental chemistry. "It dealt a lot with pesticides and their effects on animals," Kate says. "I got curious about that, and . . . emailed . . . the chemistry program coordinator about the special project courses."

Kate was excited to learn that the special project courses could be set up to involve real lab work rather than focusing on literature review. Normally, AU's chemistry department maintains labs in Edmonton, and local students can use these facilities to carry out the lab work for their special projects. However, Kate, who lives five hours from Edmonton, needed another option.

The coordinator informed her that if she could find a local professor who would agree to work with her and with AU, AU would make the necessary arrangements. "It's pretty well orchestrated," Kate says. She investigated the University of Lethbridge and discovered that their biology department faculty included Dr. Hontela, a professor well-known for research in aquatic toxicology. With Dr. Hontela, she set up a learning contract, which was approved by AU's chemistry department coordinator. She'll be graded by the Lethbridge professor, who will be paid an honorarium by AU. And Kate will be able to earn credit for doing lab work, which she loves.

In the future, Kate hopes AU will be able to also set up an agreement with the Natural Sciences and Engineering Research Council (NSERC), an organization that awards students research scholarships for both undergraduate and graduate research. Students apply through their university, which typically has several spaces available for its students. They can then begin or continue research similar to special project research, but earn a scholarship rather than credit.

Kate is thoroughly enjoying her research, although "it's a lot of work," she says. "And . . . I always have to keep in mind that I'm representing not just myself, but also Athabasca University," she adds. "I have to make sure I perform well so other AU students in the future can get a good rep!"

## CULTURAL MOSAIC

**Behdin Nowrouzi**



### A New Day: The Celebration of Norooz

Canada is a multicultural nation that celebrates many different cultural, religious, and spiritual events. An important Persian festival is Norooz, or "New Day" in Farsi. It is an ancient, traditional, and vibrant celebration that occurs annually in many parts of the world.

In harmony with the rebirth of nature, the Persian New Year celebration arrives on the first day of spring. It begins precisely at the commencement of spring, or vernal equinox, on March 20. The exact moment spring arrives is called *Saal Tahvil*. The current Iranian calendar year is 1386. The Iranian year generally starts from March 21 of the Gregorian calendar, and ends on the 20th of the next year.

Norooz has ancient associations: over 2,500 years ago, Zoroastrians, worshippers of the dominant religion of the Persian Empire, rejoiced each spring with the concepts of "The End" and "Rebirth." Zoroastrians celebrated Farvardgan. This event lasted

10 days and took place at the end of the solar year. Farvardgan was a festival of sorrow and mourning, signifying the end of life while, conversely, Norooz represented the beginning of spring, signified rebirth, and was a time of great joy and celebration.

In celebration of Norooz, seven items are placed together: these items all start with the letter س or *seen*—phonetically equivalent to the letter S in English. These decorations are called *Haft Seen* or the seven S.

These seven items are: *Sekke* (coin), *Serke* (vinegar), *Sabze* (green grass), *Samanoo* (a meal made out of wheat), *Senjed* (a dried fruit of the oleaster tree), *Seeb* (apple), and *Seer* (garlic). Sometimes, instead of *Serke*, *Somagh* (an Iranian spice) is included.

Each of the items brings meaning and significance to Norooz. For instance, coins represent wealth and prosperity, vinegar symbolizes age and patience, while green grass symbolizes rebirth. Also present is a mirror for the reflection of life, candles signifying the light of life, and a goldfish in a bowl as a sign of living form. Other items may include painted eggs for each member of the family, or traditional Persian pastries and bread to indicate a plentiful year, but other variations are also possible.

Some of the traditions of Norooz include purchasing new clothes, spring cleaning, giving presents, visiting family and friends, and celebrating the arrival of spring. Just as Christmas brings out greetings of "Merry Christmas," Norooz followers greet one another with "*Eideh Shoma Morak*" or "Happy New Norooz." The first 13 days of the year are a time of happiness.

The real purpose of the joyful days of Norooz is to rediscover an original state of purity and equality. Norooz allows the opportunity for families to socialize and pay respect to elders. It is tradition for younger members of the family to visit older members who then reciprocate this act. Relations with friends and neighbours begin anew. The period of mourning for those who died the previous year is ended with the arrival of flowers and new blossoms.

The routine of daily life is interrupted, though indulgence in debauchery is not encouraged or accepted. Distances due to social rank are abolished. Similar to Christmas, businesses and schools close and people gather at home to be close to loved ones. A traditional meal is served made of steamed rice with chopped parsley, dill, and chives served with fish, known as *Sabzi Polo ba Mahi*.

The two-week long Norooz celebration ends with *Seezdeh Bedar*. Seezdeh means 13 and Seezdeh Bedar is the process of getting over with or passing over the thirteenth day of the New Year. Similar in concept to the 12 days of Christmas, on the "Thirteenth day outside" or Seezdeh, Iranians go for picnics to welcome spring. The green grass used as part of Haft Seen has sprouted by this time and is thrown into a stream, river, or current of moving water. This day is usually celebrated outdoors in a picnic style. This is the last day of celebrations, as people will return to their daily lives the following day. The festival of Norooz is over, but spring is just beginning.

People of varied ethnic backgrounds, political views, religions, and nationalities celebrate Norooz. The celebration occurs in many countries around the globe such as Iran, Afghanistan, Turkey, India, Pakistan, Azerbaijan, Georgia, Tajikistan, Iraq, Syria, Uzbekistan, and Armenia. Also, there are large celebrations in major cities such as Los Angeles, Toronto, New York, and London reflecting the international scope of Norooz.

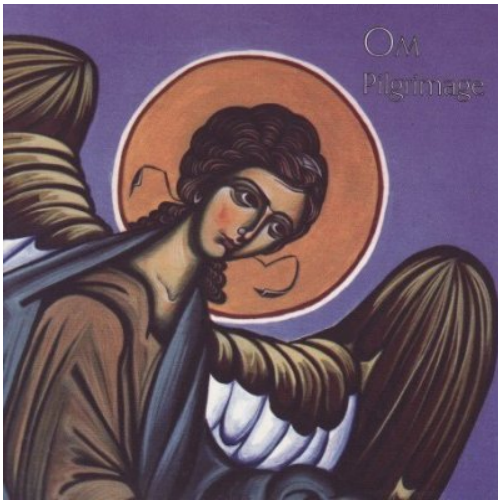
Norooz is not about materialism but is rather much more focused on friendship, respect, and turning the page to a new year full of prosperity and good wishes. Iranians share a great pride in their culture. I hope you take the opportunity to discover this ancient and vibrant celebration.

Happy New Year or Eideh Shoma Morak!



## MILK-CRATE BANDIT

Erik Ditz



## My Fate to Hate

In the future according to Star Trek, we'll see loads of spandex, holograms, and things made out of dilithium. Michael J. Fox as Marty McFly depicts a world where hoverboards and dating your own mom are accessible commodities.

My dream of days to come is a humbler one that plants its roots firmly in the plentiful manure of information. I imagine a planet full of scholars and Internet review columnists rebuilding the world into a sort of intergalactic floating library, sort of like a cross between Cybertron and V'ger.

It's because of this dream that I write. It isn't for the riches or the glory—my landlord has stopped accepting defective Hello Kitty placemats as money—but for the sake of generations to come, for those brave Prometheuses plunging headlong into our ashes to find the embers of yesterday and bellow them into the bright flames of tomorrow.

Some people are born to ride horses, or to like eating Brussels sprouts, or to put holes in garage doors with golf clubs, and like Kurt Brecht said, it's my fate to hate. Thus, in the interest of a magical future full of genius robots that can transform and talk to whales and fly in space, I've gone through some of the worst music around and hated it so that our moist, squealing heirs can build the beautiful landscapes of forever.

The 1990s - *Cookies*

In the upcoming election I will vote for whichever party's platform includes making it a capital crime to take an awesome band name and use it to sell bland pop music.

Om - *Pilgrimage*

Om is a band in a class of its own, like Perrier and Brut. You can buy tonic water and cologne at the corner store, but the true connoisseur can always tell. In the same way, you can easily pick up a copy of *Falling Asleep to Slow Songs* or *Music for Slowly Hating Your Life* at your local Shoppers for a mere fraction of the import price of a snooze-fest like *Pilgrimage*, but all the cool kids will know the difference.

Wu-Tang Clan - *8 Diagrams*

The Wu has always been at the head of the rap pack and that's a tough reputation to live up to, even before factoring in the 15 years they've been playing and the tragic death of one of their founding members, Ol' Dirty Bastard. *8 Diagrams* sounds like a standard rap money-maker and just can't compare to classic Wu-Tang, no matter how much it broods.

## Sigur Rós - (I can't spell the album title with this keyboard)

You might as well listen to undersea mammals mating in slow motion. This is what gauze and camera filters listen to when they're feeling down in the dumps. Imagine the voice of God being played at a distance while your head is in a garbage can and you're humming "Irish Eyes Are Smiling" backwards.

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### All Out War - *For Those Who Were Crucified*

Playing somebody else's music badly is not a good idea for starting a band.

All Out War, if you're reading this, please apologize to *Seasons in the Abyss* immediately.

### Lou Reed - *Hudson River Wind Meditations*

Yes, this is a real album inspired by the winds of the Hudson River. I hate Lou Reed.

### MC Mario - *Most Wanted 2007*

The world is full of people that make good money off suckers, and characters like P.T. Barnum, Harry Houdini, and John Edwards are fairly easy to spot. MC Mario is almost as timeless as his art, DJing the same stupid house song for 14 years and tricking millions of ecstasy-frenzied dance machines into paying through their pierced nipples and Snug outerwear to see him. Stop listening to techno.

### Every Time I Die - *The Big Dirty*

Bands like Every Time I Die, Boys Night Out, Atreyu, and The Birthday Massacre will not stop making music until we can either discover a way to keep money out of the hands of our spoiled and emotionally stunted teens, or ban swoopy haircuts.

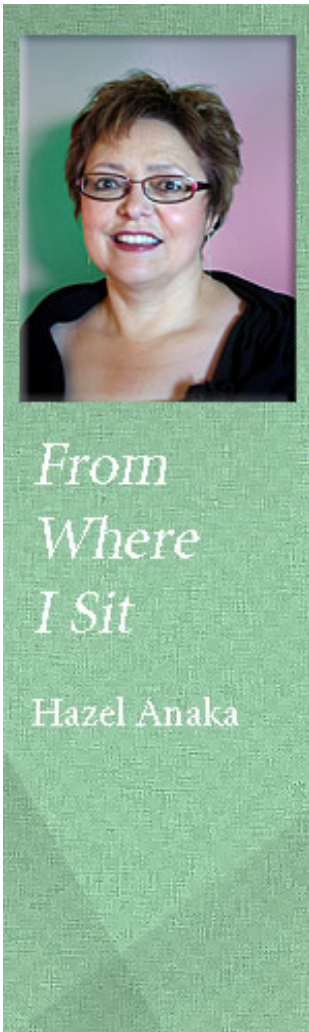
### Metallica - *St. Anger*

I hate this album so much that I didn't even listen to it.

### Mannheim Steamroller - *A Mannheim Steamroller Christmas*

Okay, I lied, this one doesn't suck. Actually, I think this is probably the best album of all time. The beautiful synthesizer and drum machine melodies underscore the gentle grace of the choir, making these some remarkably modern and approachable versions of your favourite Christmas hymns.

Fans of the technical aspects of composition will appreciate the subtle bell and sampler play and the great vocal range of the performers. Mannheim Steamroller triumphs once again with another scintillating performance. Way better than Metallica.



## A Simple Fix

On more than one occasion I've used this space to gush about the joy and benefits of reading. I've talked about the fact I read anytime and anyplace. I read for pleasure, for personal development, and for career advancement. I read magazines, books, and online content. I read billboards, product boxes, signs, license plates, stationary things and moving things, posters, notices.

But that's me. I recognize not everyone shares my enthusiasm or appreciates the value of this activity. Maybe all that will change with information recently made public about an unexpected benefit of reading. Items in the February 21 issue of both the *Edmonton Journal* and the *National Post* make the link between reading and health.

Sometimes what we're unwilling to do for pleasure becomes easier when we know it is "good for us." We walk because it makes us healthier, not because of the sights and sounds. We eat salads instead of cookies because they offer essential nutrients, not because we suddenly hate chocolate. We go to the doctor for the annual checkup because it's wise to do so, not because we love the stirrups or the snap of the rubber gloves. Perhaps more of us will begin daily reading because it will keep us healthier longer.

A 2003 Stats Canada report on adult literacy and life skills concluded that "sixty percent of Canadians and eighty-eight percent of senior citizens lack the reading, numeracy and analytical skills to deal with their health."

According to the article, health literacy is more than merely being able to read pill bottle or nutritional labels. It includes the ability to make informed decisions based on seemingly conflicting information obtained from doctors, books, and the

Internet.

Dr. Paul Cappon, president of the Canadian Council on Learning, says "you need prose literacy, you need numeracy skills and you need to use them simultaneously." The study concludes that reading every day on any topic, and not education levels, is the "single strongest effect" on the ability to acquire and process health information.

Health literacy has the most potential to positively impact diabetes and, to a lesser degree, hypertension rates. With diabetes approaching epidemic rates this is huge. In both cases, individual health choices regarding diet, fitness, and lifestyle can make a huge difference. If you can't comprehend what you read or don't read it in the first place, you're at a disadvantage.

It's hard to talk about health without talking cost. Any attempt to save health care dollars and the high cost of pain and suffering is welcome.

Most of us already know we need to be proactive advocates for our own health and that of our children and parents. We've all experienced difficulty understanding the need for more tests, assimilating a diagnosis, and implementing a treatment plan. A simple fix—reading something, anything, each day—with the potential to make us healthier makes sense, from where I sit.



# The Chronicles of Cruiscin Lan

by  
Wanda  
Waterman  
St. Louis



## MUSIC TO EAT LUNCH TO

Mandy Gardner

The Flatliners – *The Great Awake*

Release date: September 2007

Label: Fat Wreck Chords

Tracks: 12

Rating: 10

## Introducing the Band:

Chris Cresswell - Vocals and Guitar; Scott Bringham - Guitar; Jon Darbey - Bass; and Paul Ramirez - Drums

The Flatliners are a four-piece punk band from Toronto who were picked up by Fat Mike and the Fat Wreck Chords label after their 2005 debut record, *Destroy to Create*, and now that the boys are all out of high school they've got the time they need to dedicate to their music. During the recording of the 2005 album, The Flatliners were still high school kids looking for a break; their release with Stomp Records led to touring across Canada and the United States with bands like Bigwig, Bad Religion, and No Use for a Name. Now that Fat Wreck Chords has picked them up, they've embarked on an extensive U.S. and European tour with NOFX, the Loved Ones, No Use, and myriad other great punk bands.

Judging from *The Great Awake*, The Flatliners and Fat Wreck Chords were made for each other. Cresswell has mastered vocals that are reminiscent of Tim Armstrong while Bringham, Darbey, and Ramirez have perfected both the punk and ska beats; ska features largely throughout the record without making it feel too light and inconsequential. The stars of the album are "Eulogy," "Mastering the World's Smallest Violin," ". . . And the World Files for Chapter 11," and "This Respirator," all of which showcase an unrelenting talent for hardcore punk and old school ska that disguises the youth of the band members.

The tracks also cover a wide range in terms of lyrical purpose: "Eulogy" embraces the death of a loved one with a positive attitude and the will to carry on:

*The sun shows no mercy this morning  
I'm staring thin-eyed as the rolling ground comes to a halt  
A heart once close has stopped beating  
But its memory lives forever  
And your blurry eyes will make some sense of this*

*You will always be remembered, you will be celebrated*

*You will never be forgotten, these tears still haven't faded*

"Mastering the World's Smallest Violin" is the classic punk song; its lyrics speak about tearing the world apart and questioning your own role in the chaos. Similarly, ". . . And the World Files for Chapter 11" focuses on societal greed and the uselessness of only taking what you need when the government asks more and more from you. This is such an amazing record in terms of musical prowess, lyrical meaning and traditional punk/ska status that I'd go so far as to compare it directly to the epitome of the genre: the



Clash's *London Calling*. Buy it. Or better yet, get onto the Fat Wreck Chords website and get yourself in the crowd at one of the shows this year if you're in the area—it'll be such a worthwhile trip!

### The Loved Ones – *Build and Burn*



Release date: February 5, 2008

Label: Fat Wreck Chords

Tracks: 10

Rating: 8

#### Introducing the Band:

Dave Hause - Guitar and Vocals; Dave Walsh - Guitar; Michael Sneeringer - Drums; and Chris Gonzalez - Bass

*Build and Burn* is the third album from The Loved Ones, and their second release with Fat Wreck Chords. Since 2006's *Keep Your Heart* the band lost its original bassist but cemented the current lineup after the breakup of the Explosion last year, which freed up touring guitarist Dave Walsh and fill-in bassist Chris Gonzalez. The result of the upheaval is actually a tightly knit and well-functioning band who admittedly feel more comfortable playing together than ever, according to the Fat Wreck Chords bio.

The title of this record is significant because every track has been written in accordance with this theme of building and burning, or what Hause feels is that innate human pull between creation and destruction. The phrase "build and burn" occurs in a few of the songs and keeps pulling you back to the main idea of the record.

*Build and Burn* is really a soft, modern interpretation of the punk music that all the band members hold in such high regard. They admit that in writing the songs they were forced to let go of musical labels and just let the creativity flow as truthfully as it could, and in doing so The Loved Ones have nestled into the comfortable listening zone of bands like No Use for a Name. Lyrically speaking, the record is focused on personal emotional battles and this is never better expressed than in songs like "I Swear," "Brittle Heart," and "Sarah's Game." "I Swear" is one of the most memorable tracks on the album, sticking out because of its simple yet completely heart-wrenching lyrics:

*I'm sweating all alone here in the dark  
Are you sleeping soundly all the nights we spend apart?  
We knew this was a gamble from the start  
And now I'm trying everything just to keep your heart*

*I'll love you till the end  
What I live and what I learn  
What we build and what we burn  
I'll love you till the end*

The Philadelphia band is currently on an American tour in support of *Build and Burn*, with a full itinerary ending at the Belgian Groezrock Festival in May. They share tour dates with The Gaslight Anthem, Mexican Disaster Squad, the Flatliners, and Cobra Skulls.



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

**Book:** Millard Kaufman, *Bowl of Cherries*

**Publication date:** 2007

**Publisher:** McSweeney's Books, San Francisco, CA

" . . . I am no less the hero of my life than great Caesar was of his."

Millard Kaufman in *Bowl of Cherries*

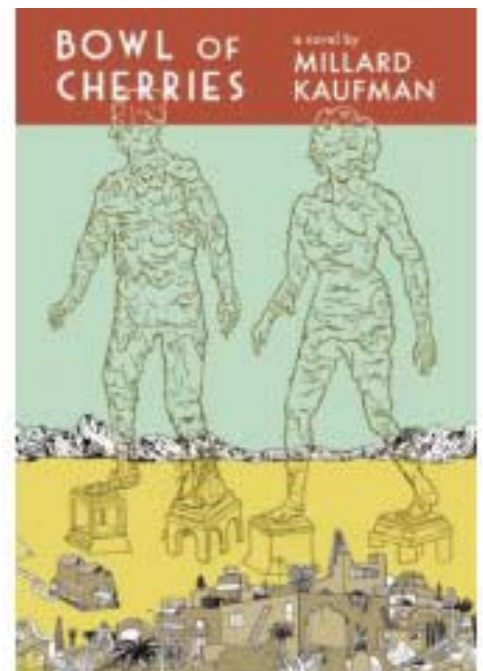
A brilliant scholar is holed up in an Iraqi nuclear facility, expending his awesome brainpower on trying to get music to move objects. By this means he hopes to change the world and win glory for his little self. Eventually he claims to have made a bowl of cherries bounce and dance to his cacophonous symphony. But Judd Breslau knows, alas, that the cherries are full of live worms, jolted, no doubt, by the blaring of trumpets and the oompahing of tubas and the trilling of fipple flutes (I didn't know either until I looked it up; it's a recorder).

This story is in part about the hilarious lengths people, especially men, and most especially Westernized men, go to to win fame while "civilizing" the world. The story is also about how fruitless it all is. At least in appearance, the world dances before their eyes like a bowl of cherries and deludes them into thinking that something has changed, has gotten better even, all due to the elaborate contortions they engage in on their way to wealth and glory.

Judd Breslau is conspicuously apathetic compared to the movers and shakers in his orbit. An early bloomer, a graduate student at Yale at 14, he is self-centred and directionless. A colossus of knowledge, he lacks warmth, compassion, and pretense. It is hard to like this guy at first. But Judd is sensitive and perceptive in spite of himself. This may have something to do with the degree to which he freely accepts his feminine side, manifested in a guiltless delight in sensuality and nature, and in his empathy for bullied women. This is part of what makes him the perfect postmodern hero.

Judd ends up in a fictitious Iraqi province where he is asked to use his extraordinary gifts in the service of mankind. This is a Campbellian hero's journey, no question, but it digs deeper into the loser dimension of heroism, the aspect of the one who is everything because he is nothing. Judd turns out to be the only one who can get things done; everyone else is too busy being a hero.

Judd's psyche is much preoccupied with finding his schmuck of a father, a traumatized Nam vet who, in spite of trying to create scenes of affection, bursts out in spasms of mental abuse toward his son and wife whenever his academic career plans are thwarted. He finally deserts Judd and his mother at the dawn of Judd's adolescence. In every new place Judd sees his dad everywhere,



eagerly accosting strangers only to go numb with embarrassment and disappointment when it turns out not to be pop after all. But he keeps searching, feeling “shivers of expectation” at the thought of someday winning his father’s approval. Getting past this dad quest with his sense of identity intact is one of the tests in Judd’s hero’s journey.

Another test is protecting the feminine from the masculine. Judd feels the pain of bullied women as if it was his own, and yet his ego naturally protects him from too deep a sympathy. His mother, a kohl-eyed, turquoise-bejewelled sinking ship, submits to her awful fate and loses herself in her work, painstakingly writing poems that only a few people ever read. Her dependence first on Judd’s father and later on her editor are pseudo-solutions to her oppression.

Valerie, Judd’s inamorata, lacks dimension as a person in her own right, but then she is highly symbolic. She is Judd’s Tinkerbell, his Tank Girl, his phallic female. She is Judd himself; that is, the avatar of his feminine side. He will never tire of her.

Kaufman resembles Vonnegut in the kind of cartoon world he creates in which violence is both commonplace and frolicking, never really registering on the psyches of the characters, none of whom are scarred by horrific and unexpected events. (It’s just like *Star Trek*; in real life these people would all be catatonic by the third brush with death.)

Everyone but Judd seems terribly concerned about the state of the world and is grimacingly determined to do something about it. Each is certain that his own pipe dream will save humanity from war and hunger. And yet most of the characters in this story exhibit distancing of affect, a psychological phenomenon in which inappropriately trite, cheerful, or vapid responses are given in response to occurrences guaranteed to be psychologically damaging to the normal brain. Kaufman himself, like Vonnegut, displays this trait in his writing. It is less a personal voice than a symptom of our present world’s disconnect with reality.

It is significant that Judd is very young and very well-read. This hero needs to be grounded in Western literature in order to escape the pointless spinning of many young people today who know nothing of the colossal errors of the past and so are destined to repeat them. *Bowl of Cherries* is the rallying cry of a wise new generation, and it’s just peachy that it comes from a nonagenarian.

*Bowl of Cherries* lives up to six of the Mindful Bard’s criteria for books well worth reading: 1) It is authentic, original, and delightful; 2) it confronts and mocks existing injustices; 3) it makes me want to be a better artist; 4) it inspires an awareness of the sanctity of creation; 5) it tells of an attainment of the true self; and 6) it harmoniously unites art with social action, saving me from both the ivory tower and slavery to someone else’s political agenda.

*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.*

## 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)

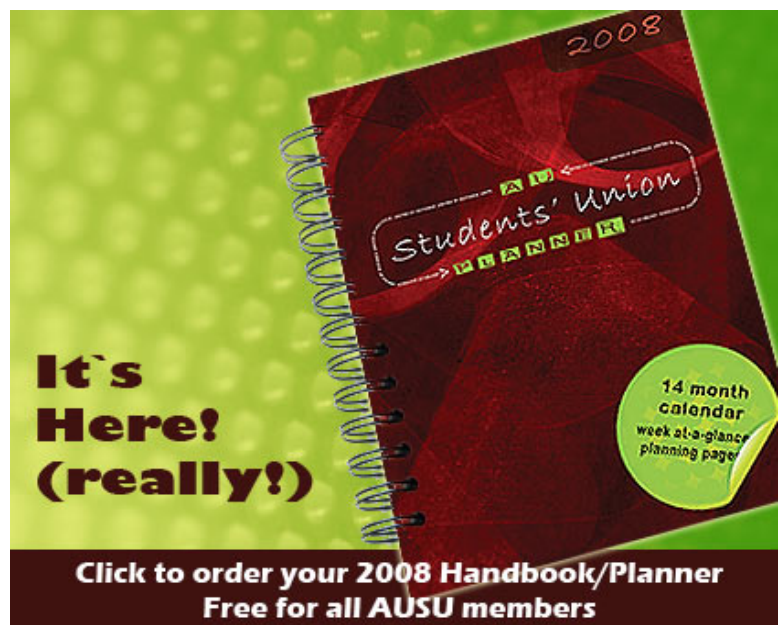
### AUSU Merchandise for Sale

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.

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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](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

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January 9 through February 6th, 2008





## At Home: Alberta votes 2008

On March 3, Albertans are due to hit the polls again and ultimately to elect Progressive Conservative leader Ed Stelmach. Let's face it, Alberta isn't known for its close political races. The only real excitement this time around comes from the Edmonton-Castle Downs race, where in 2004 Progressive Conservative candidate Thomas Lucaszuk won by a mere three votes over his Liberal opponent Chris Kibermanis. The result of the election was delayed by two months, and after three recounts, Kibermanis was understandably disappointed. Nevertheless, the loss spurred him to dedicate his efforts to the upcoming 2008 election.

Alberta is decidedly a Progressive Conservative province, with 47.07 per cent of the overall votes going to the PCs in 2004; the Liberals were the runner up by a long shot with 29.05 per cent, and the NDP trailed with 9.79 per cent. Edmonton is clearly the most atypical of the Albertan cities, having elected four New Democratic Party representatives as well as 12 of the

total 17 Liberals in the entire province. Only two PC representatives were elected in the Edmonton jurisdiction, contrasting sharply with voting results from Calgary and especially the rural ridings, where PC support rose to more than 50 per cent.

This time around we've got Ed Stelmach (current premier) leading the Conservatives, Kevin Taft leading the Liberals, Brian Mason leading the NDP, and Paul Hinman in charge of the newly minted Wildrose Alliance Party. The Wildrose Alliance Party is the result of a January merger between Alberta Alliance and the Wildrose Party; the Party should be expected to pick up rural votes by ultra-conservatives who have become disenfranchised with the centre leanings of the modern PCs.

To ensure your name is on the voter registry list, call Elections Alberta at either 780-427-7191 or 1-877-422-8683.

## In Foreign News: Norway opens Arctic seed vault to preserve crop diversity from climate change and war

February 26 saw the official grand opening of the Svalbard Global Seed Vault in Norway, about 300 kilometres from the country's mainland in the frozen Arctic. After less than a year of construction, funded by the Norwegian government, the vault has been stockpiled with a quarter of a million seed samples that are estimated to number more than 10 million seeds. The purpose of the vault is to protect these diverse crop seeds, used as staples in many different parts of the world, and thereby protect agricultural diversity if need be.

Construction of the vault cost Norway's government more than £4 million (nearly \$8 million CAD), and maintenance fees are being supplied by the United Kingdom. The vault, designed not only to withstand natural disasters like earthquakes but also a nuclear strike, has been built to keep crop seeds safe in its isolated position. The enormous space, near the town of Svalbard, is basically a man-made cave inside a mountain, in which freezers have been installed to keep the temperature around -20 degrees Celsius.

Designers say that in the event of a power failure, the mountain temperature will still remain below 0 degrees.

Cary Fowler, Executive Director of the Global Crop Diversity Trust, says that the crop seeds housed within Svalbard are “the most valuable natural resource on Earth,” and other professionals working on the project agree that the vault is key to sustaining agricultural diversity throughout the world. One of the most damaging factors to crop diversity is war; the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan have destroyed those countries’ seed banks and it is disasters like this that the Svalbard vault will help alleviate.

Currently, one man stands guard at the entrance of the vault, armed with a rifle. He claims to be protecting the seed bank from polar bears.

## **CLICK ON THIS – Benden Fold**

**Lonita Fraser**

It's a deceptively simplistic art, creating such beauty from a little piece of paper; but there is so much more to it than might first appear. This week it's a foray into the delicate world of origami—with a twist.

### Brian's Origami Page

A truly delightful collection of animal, insect, and other shapes to tempt your paper-folding urges.

### Origami Star Folding

A vast resource dedicated to folding various kinds of paper stars.

### Origami Bowl

The perfect thing to serve up a sweet treat in—and the best part is being able to choose just the colours you want.

### Richard Sweeney

Not your everyday geometric origami.

### Star Wars Origami

How could the Star Wars junkie in you resist this collection of designs?

### Eric Joisel Origami

A collection of some incredibly complex paper arts.

### Origami Tessellations

Offering a look into a broader spectrum than just traditional origami, this blog looks at geometry and art and their various relations.

## EDUCATION NEWS

Kelly Ebbels



## Quebec caps ancillary fee increases

MONTREAL (CUP) -- The Quebec Ministry of Education has announced a proposal to regulate ancillary fees, hoping to empower students by allowing them to accept or reject fee hikes at the province's universities.

The announcement comes after years of student lobbying for government regulation of drastic increases to the fees, which are above and beyond tuition.

"Ancillary fees are very different from one university to another—with a gap of \$1,000 from the lowest to the highest," said Jean-Pascal Bernier, press attaché for the Minister of Education. "That's one of the main reasons the government made this change." According to Bernier, the goal is to curb the variation in fees between universities

and to give students input into decisions to raise fees.

The new regulations require all ancillary fee increases to be approved by consultation with students through referenda, general assembly, or other processes. If students do not approve ancillary fee increases, the increases are capped at a nominal rate, depending on the amount already being charged.

For universities where ancillary fees are at least \$700 per year, they can only be increased by \$15 per year without student consent. Universities with lower fees are allowed larger increases.

Max Silverman, vice-president of external affairs at the Students' Society of McGill University, said that the announcement is good news for students. "With this announcement, the administration will have to justify funding for certain projects, and students will have to agree on the project before they can go ahead," Silverman said.

Pending final approval by the Ministry's Consultative Committee on Financial Accessibility for Education, the regulations should go into effect on April 30, effective for the next three years.

Ancillary fees in Quebec have increased steadily since the 1994 freeze on tuition fees. Provincial student association the Fédération étudiante universitaire du Québec (FEUQ) estimates that ancillary fees rose by approximately 300 per cent between 1993 and 2007, to \$476.

According to the Ministry of Education, McGill has the highest ancillary fees in Quebec at around \$1,500 for full-time students. According to FEUQ, that kind of power over students' wallets is exactly what they are fighting.

"Universities had the unilateral power of increasing fees as each institution saw fit. That was a big problem," said Katherine Boushel, vice-president of federal and institutional affairs at FEUQ. "Year to year, students didn't know what to expect."

The Ministry of Education had originally promised to address ancillary fees in 2003. Last fall, the Ministry engaged in consultations with universities and student unions, moving toward the current proposal.

University administrations, however, think that the proposal could limit their ability to create new programs and improve services.

Morton Mendelson, deputy provost of student life and learning at McGill University, said the proposed regulation would not help Quebec universities improve quality and services by diversifying their revenue.

"Of course [these regulations] are unhelpful. Anything that limits the university's ability to generate needed revenue is a problem," Mendelson said.

Boushel said the final proposal affords autonomy to individual schools as to how they should consult students on fee increases. "This will depend on student associations' culture on consulting students," Boushel said. "It respects unions on campuses, and ensures there's a respect between what students want on campus and the leeway that universities want on campus."

But the proposed regulation does not go as far as FEUQ had hoped. Boushel pointed out that since the regulations have not been signed into formal law, there is no guarantee that the regulations will continue after the initial three-year period expires.

"It's not as stable as what we've been working for," Boushel said. "But in and of itself it's a great first step."

Bernier said that the system would be evaluated again after three years. "It's completely new. We'll see in three years, but we hope it will work," Bernier said.

McGill administration have noted that, since the methods of consultation have not been made explicit by the Ministry, it could not move forward in negotiating how ancillary fees would be decided.

"When we have the final regulations, we'll be able to specify how we're going to move forward," Mendelson said. "In the meantime, we're studying the current situation, and the principles [in the proposal], and we're going to come up with an action plan."

Bernier said it was clear that consultations must be with student associations, but it is not yet clear whether these associations must be officially accredited under provincial law.

Silverman said that, since most ancillary fees are determined at the faculty, rather than university, level, consultations would likely proceed through faculty referendums.

"This really empowers faculty associations to get involved with their students and get them to think about the money," Silverman said.

Not all student unions agree the regulations are good, though. Marc-André Faucher, information secretary for l'Association pour une solidarité syndicale étudiante—a provincial student union with a platform supporting free education—said that, while a cap in ancillary fees was an improvement, it institutionalized a fee system that shouldn't exist in the first place.

"The news that came out institutionalizes the fees," Faucher said. He added that it is unclear how the regulation applies to CEGEPs.

Boushel said that, at best, the ancillary fee regulations are an unsustainable solution to a greater underfunding crisis. "It's a good announcement, but it's still a band-aid solution. This isn't bringing any long-term, sustainable solution to our funding problem," Boushel said.

# 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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