

THE VOICE MAGAZINE

Volume 16 Issue 13

March 28, 2008

The Bible

A biography of
the Book

Techno Zombies

You are sleepy, very
sleepy . . .

AU Profiles

Bethany Porter

Plus:

*From Where I Sit,
Chronicles of Cruiscin Lan,
AUSU This Month,
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



Picture Perfect

There's a cultural dichotomy coming, arguably the first of its kind. It is unforeseen but quickly emerging, a direct result of the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan. It is the clash of pseudo-perfection and reality, and it is a change that will profoundly affect us all.

As any sitcom, movie, commercial, or print ad will prove, we live in a perfect world. Movie stars are as gorgeous and glamorous as they've always been, but now even ordinary folks are beautiful too. Suave, handsome men drive sports cars or chase criminals; stay-at-home sitcom moms look fit enough to lead an aerobics marathon, and their career-oriented counterparts have time for perfect wardrobes, hair, and teeth even as they save lives in the ER or fight landmark legal cases.

Films and television have always shown an impossible fantasy world, but this obsession with perfection now spills over into every aspect of modern culture. Take the popularity of makeover shows: there are glamorous makeovers for houses, cars, families, and even pets, often accomplished in a simplistic half-hour recap and ending with an ahh-inducing reveal of the fabulously improved subject. Sprinkled throughout these orgies of enhancement, a never-ending stream of models urges us to buy the tooth whiteners, moisturizers, hair conditioners, and diet pills that will ensure our blissful glide into flawlessness. We are perfect, and if not, well, that can always be arranged.

Into this profusion of perfection, enter the new generation of veterans. These are the young men and women who, not so long ago, were probably watching those very same shows; whose biggest concerns may have been jobs, dating, money, and, like any young person, their appearance.

For many, that appearance has been irrevocably altered. Limbs are missing; faces have been scarred by explosives; nerve and muscle damage causes bodies to shake. Flag-draped coffins make the news, but hospitals and rehab centres are the silent holding ground for the thousands of young men and women who will slowly begin making their way back into mainstream life.

From the very first large-scale battles, veterans have returned in vast numbers, visibly changed by the wars they've seen. To loved ones, the outward scars of these veterans won't—and shouldn't—make a difference. Nor should they to any of us.

But we live in a society where appearance *does* matter, to an extent that perhaps no other culture has seen. Thousands of images of physical perfection bombard us daily; people can design and re-design images of themselves in virtual worlds. It is ridiculous, it is unsustainable, but still it is there, shaping our perceptions—and treatment—of those who don't match this impossible standard.

Besides the political consequences of the war, this cultural effect will be a watershed in our society. For those too young to have lived through the homecomings of other wars, it is the first time that many of them will confront certain realities. Not the pseudo-reality of makeover shows or *Survivor*, but the real, up-close understanding of ability versus perception, of prejudices and assumptions.

In the next few years, thousands of disabled young veterans will be rejoining the workforce, getting married, and raising children. Their journey won't be easy, and society's obsessive focus on physical perfection won't make it any easier. For their sake, and ours, it's about time to forget this distorted notion of style and get back to some substance.

AU Profiles:

AU Profiles: Bethany Porter

Christina M. Frey

The Athabasca University Students' Union has just elected its new council! The next series of profiles will highlight the new and returning councillors of the AUSU Student Council.

In this week's profile, we meet AUSU councillor Bethany Porter, an AU student who is also a stay-at-home mom. Bethany, who's studying English, describes how audiobooks give her a head start on her homework. She also gives her best piece of advice for other student moms, and explains why she doesn't find distance education isolating at all.

Bethany, who lives near Halifax, Nova Scotia, is a newly elected councillor on the AUSU student council. "I'm really excited to be a part of council for the next two years," she says.

She became interested in running when she read about some of council's projects, particularly the H.E.A.T. system for tracking complaints about tutors.

"It'll really help advocate for tutor accountability," she says. "I was also . . . interested [in] the bursaries that the students' union gives out to AU students," she adds. "[I] thought that it would be a great experience to be able to be involved."

Currently, Bethany is enrolled in AU's University Diploma in Arts. She plans to finish this year, and then enrol in AU's Bachelor of Arts in English program, transferring her diploma credits into the program. Bethany decided to split the degree to get an "interim credential until I can finish the B.A.," she says. "I'm probably going to be job-hunting again before I finish the B.A., so this gives me something in the meantime that I can say I've accomplished."

Bethany began by studying at Dalhousie University. However, "[I] didn't take a full load while there . . . I was pregnant with my son at the time and tended to miss class very frequently," she says. Right after her son was born, she enrolled in two AU courses, initially planning to complete a few courses by distance and then transfer the credits back to Dalhousie when her son was a little older.

The plan changed when she discovered that she really liked studying by distance. "I love the flexibility!" Bethany says. She doesn't much miss traditional university: "I find it so much better to work at my own pace," she explains. "I'm not tied to waiting for others who don't understand, or being left behind if I'm slower to catch on."

Her biggest challenge is studying while staying at home with her two children, one almost three years old and the other just seven months. Distance education is a perfect fit for Bethany's situation: "With two kids .

. . . it's nice to be able to study whenever possible, and not be tied to any schedule," Bethany says. "Distance lets me stay home with them, which is really important to me."

However, they keep her very busy, she says. When her son was smaller and still took naps, Bethany could study throughout the day. "I think of those as the golden days!" she laughs. Now, she does most of her homework, particularly essay writing, at night.

However, she keeps an eye out for other opportunities to study. For example, she's currently studying English classics, and has found that listening to classic novels as audiobooks can be helpful. "I . . . leave them playing through the day," Bethany says. "[It] saves a lot of time later since I'm already familiar with the material."

In addition, she makes good use of any spare minutes. "I . . . keep a book with me all the time," she says. "I study whenever and wherever I can."

Another challenge is planning a long-term schedule, especially as Bethany varies the number of courses she takes depending on the associated workload.

"I find that [with] some courses I take much less than the allotted time, but some take every minute," she says. However, she's found that the AU student community is a good resource. "I have met people through both the AUSU forums and Facebook who have taken my classes before, and they've . . . been able to provide insight into what kind of work is required for each course," she explains.

"I've really gotten to know other students, especially recently with the elections."

Bethany also staggers her course enrolments, so that she's at different stages in her different courses. In addition, she registers well in advance "to give me extra time to review the material," she says. "On paper I could be registered in anywhere from one to five classes, but I'm almost always working on three."

One thing that isn't a challenge is the socialization aspect. Bethany feels that, contrary to popular perception, studying by distance is not necessarily isolating as compared with traditional university.

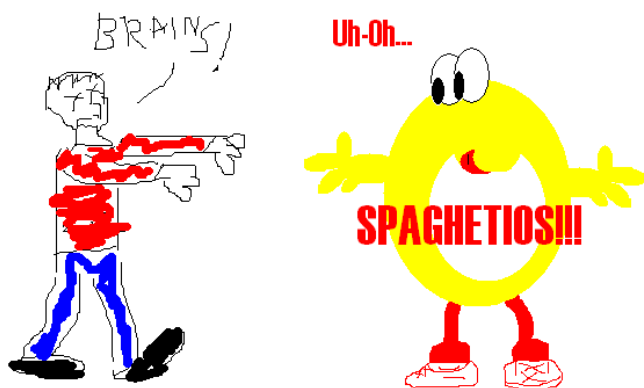
"I've really gotten to know other students, especially recently with the elections," she says. Moreover, "at a traditional university, even though I'd be surrounded by other students, most of them would be full-time students right out of high school," Bethany says. "I'd probably feel isolated around them as well, since few of them would understand the pressures of trying to study and take care of a family."

On the other hand, Bethany has enjoyed meeting similarly situated students through AU's Student Moms Club, where she's able to discuss the challenges of studying while raising a family. "They often have a lot of pointers about doing distance classes with kids around!" she says.

Her own most important advice is to stay positive, even when studying is difficult. "Sometimes it's so hard to find time, and there's days on end when I don't open a single book," she says. "Just do as much as you possibly can when you can find the time . . . and don't get discouraged!"

MILK-CRATE BANDIT

Erik Ditz



Zombie Techno Apocalypse

Like a stumbling, flesh-seeking reanimated corpse, zombie chic has chomped its way into our culture to the point of popular comedies like *Fido* and *Shaun of the Dead* making box-office millions.

Most people would arguably be able to survive a zombie apocalypse based on knowledge they garnered from a movie or show, but what they don't know is the biggest secret being kept by the international DJ community: techno is a zombified corpse's biggest weakness, and

they can't resist alternately dancing and falling asleep. This makes them extremely docile and therefore vulnerable.

It's bound to happen sooner or later, so here are some of the best ways to capture a zombie's attention and render it harmless.

M.I.A. - *Arular*

M.I.A.'s repetitive dance beats are about as infectious as an undead plague; great stuff for waking the neighbours and pretending not to be white or high.

Autechre - *Untitled (Warp180)*

Autechre's complex brand of IDM (intelligent dance music, heh) is engineered to astound and confuse, leaving the listener in an attention deficit coma for hours at a time. The Humane Society is currently considering this record as a more acceptable means of putting down small animals.

The Knife - *Silent Shout*

When it comes to slaughtering the soldiers of a zombie army, it's pretty much this album or a lot of big guns and trucks. Just look at [this](#) brain-melting crap.

Mortiis - *The Smell of Rain*

I'm not sure if Mortiiis is supposed to be some kind of cool ogre or elf or something, but his early 90's industrial rip-offs are so bland that oatmeal would improve them. Ten out of 10 for style, but a big fat zero for effort.

Venetian Snares - *Meathole*

This is the exact opposite of Excedrin.

Scooter - *Excess All Areas Live DVD*

Halfway through the first song, I went out and bought a bunch of neon clothing, got my hair frosted and my everything pierced, and got arrested for dancing in front of Winners with my boom box. I'm now enrolled in a 12-step program for recovering Scooter fans, and I've gained a lot of weight. Hide this from your children.

Single Cell Orchestra - *The Vertical Iris*

How many more rave anthems does the world really need? Stop doing meth, put down your glow sticks, and go have a shower for crying out loud. I take it back; this is too irritating to be used on zombies.

I Am Robot and Proud - *The Catch*

The only way *The Catch* could be any more soothing is if it was a scented candle made out of Yanni.

Tribes of Neurot - *Adaptation and Survival: The Insect Project*

This is a dedication to the multitude of skills and talents evolved by insects over the millennia through the sonic exploration of an insect's world; in other words, an album of what bugs probably hear. I fell asleep just reading the liner notes.

Portishead - *Third*

Apparently, Portishead can't spell "turd."

The Focus Group - *Hey Let Loose Your Love*

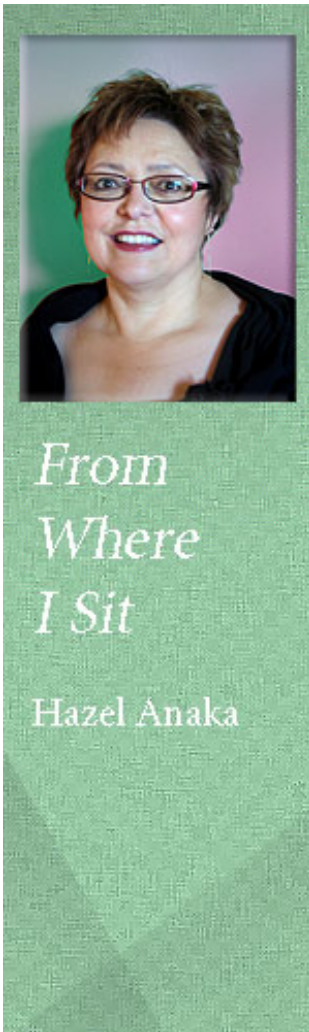
There are pretty much an infinite number of ways to make and pattern noises into songs, and the absolute worst one of these myriad methods is to take brief, somewhat soothing electronic samples and arrange them haphazardly, giving the impression of *Star Trek's* sentient Computer softly weeping disconsolately to itself.

Seriously, how do these people even sleep at night knowing that they charge \$20 for such utterly unlistenable pap? It must be easier to calm your conscience when you're rolling around in big piles of undeserved money and laughing at the plebian suckers you've swindled with your "art."

DID YOU KNOW?**Software Savings**

As a post-secondary student, you know that the cost of a software program can often add up to more than a couple of courses. So if you're looking for great deals on the software that will make your essays and Venn diagrams shine, check out JourneyEd.

They offer substantial discounts on programs from Microsoft, Adobe, Dell, Avid, and more. All you need is proof of student status, such as your AU Student ID card. If you don't have an AU student card, visit the AU website for info on how to apply—and start saving!



Another Chance

Erma Bombeck made a fortune writing about them. Sitcoms spoof them. Barrels of ink have been spilled and miles of film shot bringing them to page and screen.

As individuals, we love 'em and sometimes even hate 'em. Sometimes simultaneously. And there's nothing like a holiday get-together to bring those feelings to the fore. I'm talking, of course, about family. Families in general and ours specifically.

No doubt each of us spent some time with family over the Easter holiday. It likely included extended family and perhaps hours of travel. We were either guests or hosts and surely that affected the degree of angst or pleasure we felt.

How well the experience went is in large measure how well we expected it to go. Would Uncle So-and-so drink too much and get nasty? Would sister insist that only she knows the truth on any and every issue? Would the family critic nitpick us all to death?

If all the memories of holidays past are painful, a degree of self-fulfilling prophecy kicks in and adds one more bad time to the heap. Likewise, if family means unconditional love and support then anticipation of more of the same ensures that such will be the result.

Years ago Kevin Leman wrote *The Birth Order Book*, and unless you're an only child you fall into the first-born, middle child, or baby position complete with all the dynamics that entails.

In addition, we've all got history within our families. Some of us are the proverbial black sheep, with all that means. Some of us are screw-ups. Some of us are roaring success stories. Most of us feel a little like a fraud—pretending to be something we're not, playing the old roles we've been cast in, feeling far different from who we project, hoping not to be exposed. If only this baggage would go missing.

Maybe the most any of us can hope for is the maturity and wisdom to love and accept those around us, flaws and all. The odds of any of us truly changing our basic makeup and outlook are as likely as a leopard changing its spots. What you see is what you get. We can stop playing our expected role, especially if we're not happy with how it makes us or others feel.

We can go to the next gathering with realistic expectations of ourselves and everyone else. We can treat the people closest to us in the world with at least as much respect as we do the grocery store cashier. We can model the behaviour we wish our children were exhibiting because those damn kids mirror us—both the moments that make us beam with pride and the ones that make us cringe with déjà vu.

If life offered do-overs I'd change how I acted this past weekend. I would've been more tolerant during a group discussion and kept at least one thought to myself. The next big thing will be my mom's 75th birthday. Another chance to appreciate those in my life, another chance to do things better, another chance to change my role. I can hardly wait, from where I sit.

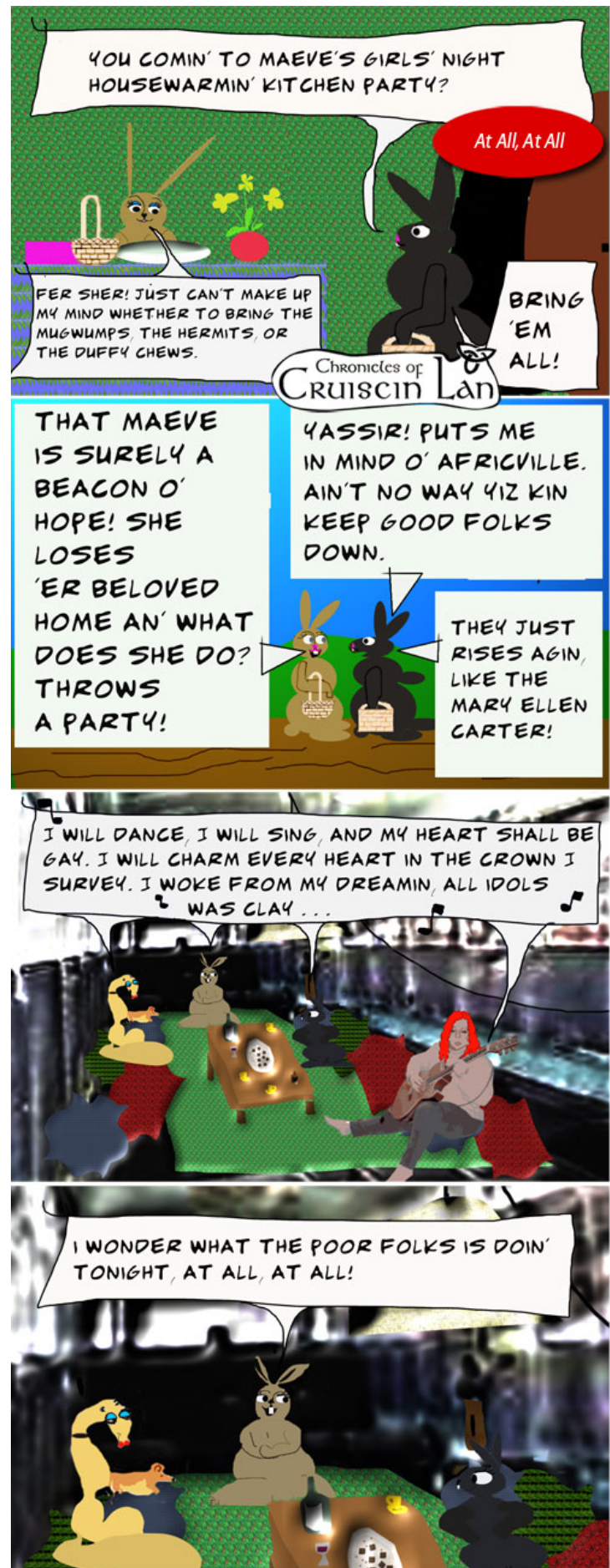
The Chronicles of Cruiscin Lan

by

Wanda

Waterman

St. Louis





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

Book: Karen Armstrong, *The Bible*

Release date: 2007

Publisher: Atlantic Monthly Press, New York, NY

"What is Torah?" asked the Bavli. "It is: the interpretation of Torah."

Karen Armstrong in *The Bible*

In the 4th century a great rhetorician was sitting in his garden wrestling with the idea of Christianity. His Christian mother had been praying for him at intervals all day, every day, frequently prostrating herself on the floor; Christian belief was not something he could lightly dismiss. A child's voice drifted from a neighbouring garden, singing, "Pick it up and read it." Immediately he picked up one of Paul's epistles and began to read, and thus began the enlightenment of the man who came to be known as St. Augustine.

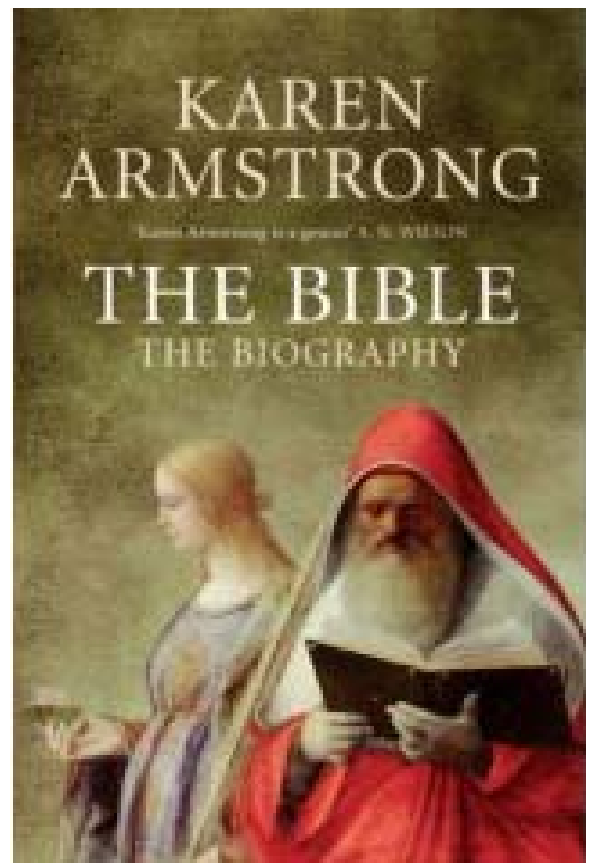
Historian Karen Armstrong has written a succinct biography of the most influential and widely read book in Western civilization. Weaving in and out of Jewish and Christian history, she examines the impact of historical contexts on how each biblical book was produced, studied, translated, and revised, and on whether or not they were included in the canon.

Armstrong shows that, from the beginning, readers and hearers of scripture have tried to understand holy writ by relating it to personal experience, to the immediate and salient evidence of their surroundings and the events unfolding in their own lives.

This is the best piece of writing on the Bible that I've read since Northrop Frye's *The Great Code: The Bible and Literature*. Like Frye, Armstrong insists that *mythos* is a mode of language meant to be profoundly meaningful but not factual. As with several other interpretation problems, we get hitched up when we demand modes of understanding from ancient scripture which ancient scripture itself does not recognize.

Today, literal interpretation of the Bible remains a problem, and not only a theological one; it reaches into social and political life as well, as Biblical prophecies and injunctions are used to justify acts of violence and selfishness that the Bible's central message denounces.

The most progressive way of reading scripture is in fact one of the oldest traditions in scriptural study. In pointing the way to a redemptive use of scripture in our own time Armstrong refers us to Rabbis Hillel, Akiba, and Johanan, near contemporaries of Jesus, who claimed that charity was the secret flame within scripture that the scholar must draw



out, a concept presaging Augustine's dictum that "an exegete must always seek the most charitable interpretation of a text." The Kabbalah mystics would agree with Northrop Frye that scriptural study is a means by which we allow divinity to draw nearer.

"The major religions all insist that the practice of daily, hourly compassion will introduce us to God, Nirvana, and the Dao. An exegesis based on the 'principle of charity' would be a spiritual discipline that is deeply needed in our torn and fragmented world" (Armstrong, p. 229).

Armstrong sees a love-centred reading of scripture as part of a necessary antidote to what she calls the "nihilistic ruthlessness at the heart of modern culture." She pulls no punches when it comes to pointing out the many problems with the Bible itself and the harm that has been done in the world with alleged scriptural support, and yet by sensitively chronicling the depth of spiritual fervour with which scholars and teachers produced, revised, translated, and commented on scripture Armstrong has effectively silenced the common charge that the Bible is the work of a pedantic conspiracy bent to the will of a racist patriarchy.

The Bible lives up to four of The Mindful Bard's criteria for books well worth reading: 1) it confronts and rebukes existing injustices; 2) it displays an engagement with and compassionate response to suffering; 3) it inspires an awareness of the sanctity of creation; and 4) it speaks of an attainment of the true self.

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. For a list of criteria, go [here](#). If I agree with your recommendation, I'll thank you online.

GETTING IT 'WRITE'



AU's Write Site

If you're looking for a single place to find all the academic writing help you need, look no further. AU's [Write Site](#) has it covered, from grammar quizzes to ESL support to feedback on individual assignments.

Whether you're trying to organize an essay or put the finishing touches on a project, there's something for everyone at this easy-to-navigate site: the main page outlines just what the Write Site can do; the Staff and Coaching sections explain how to request feedback; and there's even a link to AU writing courses.

Along with the support offered by Write Site staff, students have access to lots of great information, including links to Evaluation of ESL sites. The Writing Resources section includes a comprehensive look at topics such as The Writing Process, Organization, Style, and more, as well as the English Grammar Handbook provided by the AU Centre for Language and Literature.

The writing samples are a great help when you just can't figure out how to organize that argumentative or expository essay, and sections on other writing genres are being added.

There's a lot more to explore at the Write Site, including timed writing assessments, so why not grab your mouse and check it out? It might just make writing that next essay a breeze.

AUSU This Month



AUSU Elections 2008

New Council Elected

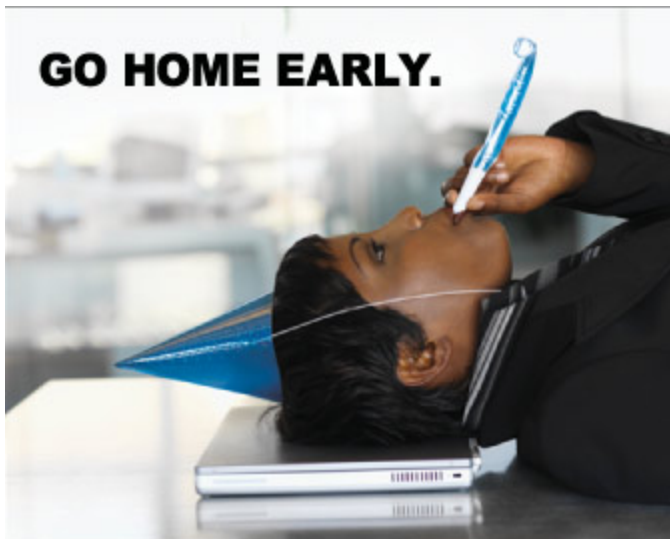
On March 13 2008, Rehan Qureshi, AUSU's Chief Returning Officer for 2008, announced the results of our election. Your new council, who will take office by April 14, 2008, are:

Karl Low
Lonita Fraser
Zil-E-Huma Lodhi
Barb Rielly
Sarah Kertcher

Bethany Porter
Sean Driscoll
Emily Dukeshire
Heather Fraser

The new executive will be elected at the time of changeover. Until then, the new councillors-elect will shadow the current council to learn about our programs and services and to begin taking part in council's discussions.

Voter turnout for this year's election was about 80% higher than our last election, but this increase is less impressive when the low turnout overall for both years is taken into account. However, the very large ballot this year may have contributed to this issue. We realize that making selections from this large ballot was difficult and thank everyone who took the time to cast a ballot this year.



The incumbents look forward to working with the new group to continue providing services to AU students and to develop new programs for our members.

Election materials will remain in the forum for a while so that students can learn more about their new councillors.

An announcement of the executive election will appear on the AUSU front page, including a full list of your new council, on April 14th.

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



 **SmartDraw**

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 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

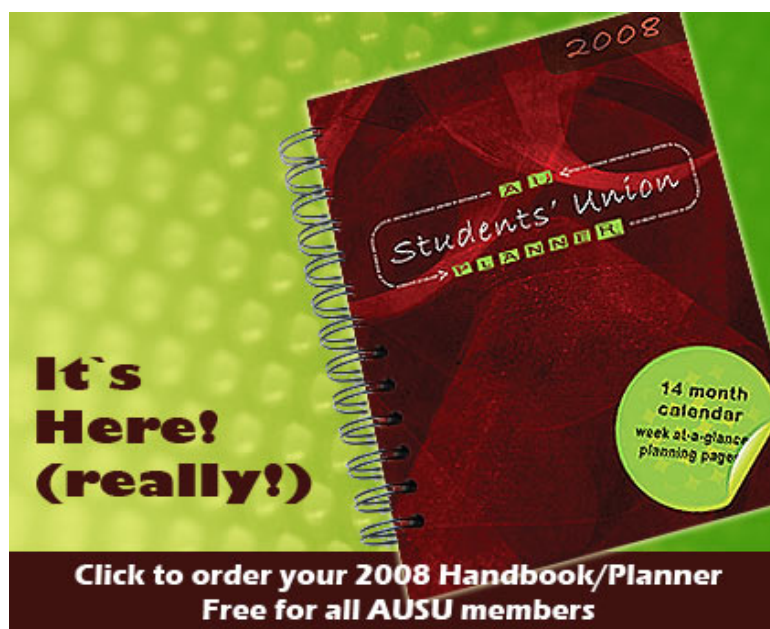
Smart Draw – Benefit for AUSU members

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](#).

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.



INTERNATIONAL NEWS DESK



At Home: Ontario economy in recession, says Tory

There's been a lot of speculation lately about how the U.S. mortgage crisis will affect the Canadian economy, but at least one politician believes we've got a homegrown recession of our own.

According to John Tory, leader of the Progressive Conservatives, Ontario is already in a recession and the province's economic woes are having a negative influence on national growth.

Tory acknowledges that the economy in places like Alberta and Saskatchewan may be booming, but fast action is needed to halt Ontario's "deteriorating" economic outlook.

As the CBC reports, Tory says that one way for Ontario to cut spending is to eliminate civil servants who do little productive work and sit around "breathing each other's exhaust."

In a speech to a Toronto business audience, he focused on the "bloated" civil service as a key problem area, suggesting that private-sector companies wouldn't be in business long if they

operated the way the Ontario government does.

News of the manufacturing sector's downturn has been widespread, and there is speculation that the growth rate in Ontario's employment numbers "has been largely supported by the public sector." As Tory pointed out in his speech, "there are more than 20 vacancies for policy analyst jobs in the province."

"These kinds of jobs are people who are breathing each other's exhaust and sitting around, analyzing each other's papers," Tory said. "There hasn't been enough attention paid to looking at whether those people are really making a productive contribution to the effective delivery of public services in Ontario."

But a chief economist at TD Bank, Don Drummond, isn't quite ready to pin the recession label on the province, pointing out that provincial numbers are only released on an annual basis.

Whether or not Ontario's civil service numbers are responsible for an economic downturn remains to be seen, but most of us don't need to look far to find examples of the kind of bureaucratic bungling and wastefulness that Tory refers to. Recession or no recession, any action that would result in the more efficient use of taxpayers' money would likely be welcomed by all Ontarians.

In Foreign News: Baghdad under curfew in crackdown on militia

Yet another round of fierce fighting has broken out in Iraq, and on March 27 the Iraqi government imposed a curfew in Baghdad, ordering vehicles and pedestrians off the streets for at least three days.

The latest clashes are the result of a crackdown on militias by the Iraqi government. Security forces and the militias have been fighting in the southern Shia heartland, and the U.S.-protected Green Zone continues to be the target of rocket attacks.

According to a CBC article, a U.S. citizen was killed inside the Green Zone on March 27, and the State Department has ordered "all personnel at the U.S. Embassy in Baghdad not to leave reinforced structures." This is the second death of a U.S. citizen inside the protected area in the same week; a contractor was killed by a mortar and rocket attack on March 24.

President George W. Bush praised the Iraqi prime minister's crackdown on the militia groups. He said the offensive will solidify the gains made by the recent U.S. surge and that it "demonstrates to the Iraqi people that their government is protecting them. Prime Minister Nouri al-Maliki's bold decision, and it was a bold decision to go after illegal groups in Basra, shows his leadership and his commitment to enforce the law in an even-handed manner," Bush told a group of invited guests in Dayton, Ohio.

With international and domestic support for the U.S.-led war fading, Bush emphasized that Iraqi security forces were in charge of the crackdown, although the Pentagon has admitted that "U.S. forces are providing air support."

As in most conflicts though, the silent battles are the ones behind the scenes: as the fighting raged, the BBC reported that many civilians in the area say they are running out of essential supplies like food and water.

CLICK ON THIS – Speak and Ye Shall Find

Lonita Fraser

We do it every day, make it with our hands every day, do it with thousands of people throughout our lifetimes, and it is one of the most powerful things you can do with your mouth, yet it is possibly the one true gift of being human that we think the least about: talking, using language.

25 English Language Oddities - "'One thousand' contains the letter A, but none of the words from one to nine hundred ninety-nine has an A."

D-E-F-I-N-I-T-E-L-Y - I think that one's fairly self-explanatory.

One Sentence - A most beautiful example of the power of language: true stories told in only one sentence.

Ambigrams - If you think that lettering is merely for the creation of words in combination to tell a tale, don't forget that there's a more aesthetic side to it all as well.

Omniglot: Puzzles - Linguistic and alphabetic curiosities that maybe you can help solve.

English 101- Simple explanations for common mistakes.

The English Moot - What would English be like if it borrowed nothing from other languages? This could help clear that issue up . . . or make it more confusing.

Latin, The Easy Way - Sentio aliquos togatos contra me conspirare.

Band Names Which are Complete Sentences - Clap your hands, say yeah!

EDUCATION NEWS

Ksenia Prints



The new face of Canada

The post-secondary education profile of new Canadians

WINNIPEG (CUP) -- Immigrants new to Canada are highly educated and prefer "real-world" disciplines like engineering and business administration. They also differ greatly from native-born Canadians in their approaches to post-secondary education.

Data pulled from the 2006 Census revealed that between 2001 and 2006, 700,000 immigrants came to Canada.

Their education levels are astounding. Approximately 51 per cent of immigrants aged 25 [to] 64 held a university degree, double the percentage of Canadian-born degree holders of the same age.

Overall, immigrant Canadians comprise half of Canada's doctorate and master's degree holders. Sixteen per cent of them earned their degree in a Canadian institution.

"Canada is twice the size as Brazil and one third on the population," said Caroline Rosa, a 25-year-old Agriculture graduate student at the University of Manitoba. She began her immigration process earlier this year.

"There is a lot more competition back home . . . I wanted to take a higher degree that would allow me to work in places other than Brazil."

At the University of Manitoba, 15 per cent of graduate students have international student status. Many of them are in the process of immigration.

Aaron Glenn, vice-president external for the University of Manitoba Graduate Students' Association, believes that the numbers are also a factor of the immigration system.

"There is a preference for people who are more educated," he said.

It is also the result of the highly rewarding graduate school system Canada has.

"In Brazil, I knew I was getting the same pay as a pharmacist as I would as a student here," said Rosa.

Rosa came here in 2005, lured by graduate stipends, a familiar academic advisor, and the promise of opportunity. She applied for immigration earlier this year.

The differences between the Canadian-born and new immigrant populations continue past degree acquisition, however, and into their choice of disciplines.

Approximately one quarter of immigrants between 2001 and 2006 held a university degree in Engineering. Only six per cent of Canadian-born people between the age of 26 and 64 held the same degree.

Business, Management, Marketing and Related Support Services were second in line for immigrant participation.

Thirty-five per cent of the University of Manitoba's international graduate students concentrated in the department of Engineering in 2006. It was second only to Agriculture, which contained 45 per cent of the non-citizen students.

In comparison, these students make up only 12 per cent of the university's Arts faculty.

One reason for this is simple supply and demand.

According to the Canadian Council of Professional Engineers, the number of international students pursuing post-graduate engineering almost doubled between 2001 and 2005 to comprise nearly one third of all engineering graduate students in Canada.

"Engineers find more opportunities here than in India, they can go very far here," said 28-year-old Chandra Singh, who is in his third year for a Biosystems Engineering PhD.

Singh said that India has a 200,000-person waiting list for enrolment in an engineering PhD program.

"It's a very tough competition to get into a good engineering school [back home]."

In Canada, where only 20 per cent of the population holds a university degree, the options are much greater.

"In Brazil, I have to be the best to even get a job and get minimum wage," said Rosa. "Here, people do well without having a degree."

"[Canadian-born citizens] wait to see what they're really like," she continued. "[Back home], none of my friends went to work right after high-school."

Immigrant and international students fill educational and economic voids that Canadians miss out on.

"There's a demand for higher education (masters and PhD students) here, if you don't recruit Canadians you go internationally," said Singh.

Cultural differences play a great part in the post-secondary education choices of new Canadians.

"In certain countries there's an emphasis to go to post-secondary education and go into engineering or medicine where you'll make something of yourself," said Glenn.

"Here, the parents don't seem to be [as pushy]."

Rosa agrees.

"My parents really encouraged me to have a higher degree . . . Back home, you are not likely to have many chances if you don't hold a degree."

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THE VOICE

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