

THE VOICE MAGAZINE

Volume 16 Issue 15
April 11, 2008

War of Words

Echoes from the past

Plagiarism

The digital
battleground

AU Profiles

Karl Low

*Plus:
Milk-Crate Bandit,
In Conversation With,
AUSU This Month, and much more...*



CONTENTS

WELCOME TO THE VOICE PDF

The Voice interactive Table of Contents allows you to click a story title to jump to an article. Clicking the bottom-right corner of any page returns you here. Some ads and graphics are also links.

Features

Editorial	3
Plagiarism Software: A Primer	4

Articles

Milk-Crate Bandit: Not-So-Starving Artists	7
AU Profiles: Karl Low	9
Health Matters: Plantar Fasciitis	12

Columns

In Conversation With: Mic Boyd.....	13
From Where I Sit	15
AUSU This Month	16

News and Events

Did You Know?: Software Savings.....	8
Getting It 'Write': AU's Write Site	11
International News Desk	18
Click of the Wrist	19
Education News.....	20

From the Readers

Letters to the Editor.....	2
----------------------------	---

**The Voice
Magazine**

www.voicemagazine.org

1213, 10011 109th
Street NW
Edmonton, AB
T5J 3S8

800.788.9041 ext. 2905

Email voice@ausu.org

Publisher
AU Students' Union

Editor-In-Chief
Tamra Ross

Managing Editor
Sandra Livingston

Regular Contributors
Mandy Gardner
Katie Patrick
Hazel Anaka
Bill Pollett
Janice Behrens
Barbara Godin
Wanda Waterman St.
Louis

The Voice is published
every Friday in HTML
and PDF format

To subscribe for weekly
email reminders as
each issue is posted,
see the 'subscribe' link
on *The Voice* front
page

The Voice does not
share its subscriber list
with anyone

Special thanks to
Athabasca University's
The Insider for its
frequent contributions

© 2008 by *The Voice*

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



A Graceful Exit

One of the most interesting things in the news this week is an article about the hit Canadian television show *Corner Gas*.

Yes, I know. Protests on the Olympic torch relay are wreaking havoc; the price of oil keeps climbing; the RCMP deputy commissioner, Barbara George, has been found in contempt of Parliament; and we're all going to hell in a handbasket.

But then this tiny, refreshing breeze wafted across the dreary landscape of headlines. After five seasons, the creator of Canada's beloved glimpse into the fictional town of Dog River, Saskatchewan, is making a graceful exit.

At the height of its popularity, the show will take a bow, exit stage left, and leave 'em wanting more.

In a different age, knowing when to leave probably wouldn't seem so remarkable. But overload is the order of the day, and in the stampede of excess, all too often quality is trampled and left to choke on the dust of quantity.

Wannabe supermodels argue, cry, and squeeze every moment of personal struggle they can onto the screen. Face time is golden time, no matter how embarrassing it may be.

Pop stars and movie stars, even when they've had wildly successful careers, just don't know when it's time to step out of the limelight. Their careers are on a downslide, the studios are no longer calling, but instead of quietly taking stock and regrouping—perhaps coming back stronger and better than ever—they keep forcing themselves stage front, exposing every cringe-inducing moment to the cameras, just as long as those cameras keep flashing.

As far as TV shows go, the slide from popularity can be oh so long and slow, and it's a rare thing for producers or creators to know when to dim the lights. Usually, it starts with a string of B-list guest stars. Then come the musical segments: when a once-popular sitcom or drama starts trotting out the cameo musical appearances, you just know the end is nigh. And when aging hard-rock stars try to trade on their former glory by exposing their family life on a reality show . . . well, enough said.

Which makes the decision to end the incredibly popular *Corner Gas* that much more elegant. As the *Toronto Star* reports, the show "has been a ratings juggernaut for CTV for years, snagging numerous Gemini awards along the way." It's also in international syndication, popular in countries such as Finland, Australia and the U.S., where "it outperforms shows like *Heroes* and *Prison Break* on the cable channel Superstation WGN."

So why say farewell? The show's creator sums it up nicely:

"Comedy is nothing if not timely. There's that moment around the 45-minute mark, where you know you could go an hour . . . and around the one-hour mark, people start looking for their coats. And *Corner Gas* is too special of a thing for people to start looking for their coats."

Classy move, Brent Butt. Classy move.

PLAGIARISM 101

Diane Gadoua



Plagiarism software: A Primer

When it comes to finding places to buy essays, there isn't much confusion. Essay-writing services do a booming business, and they're not shy about selling themselves. "Let professionals take care of your papers," boasts one.

Term papers, lab reports, admission essays, theses—name your deadline, they'll name their price. Other sites offer advice—and standard text—so students can fudge medical-school applications.

Even if students don't use a professional service, there are still shocking numbers of them who admit to stealing material and passing it off as their own.

According to a 2005 McGill University Libraries [report](#) by Lorie Kloda and Karen Nicholson, as many as one-third of Canadian students "admit to plagiarizing at least once before graduating."

The problem is also very much alive in [Great Britain](#), [Australia](#), the [United States](#), [Norway](#)—and the list goes on. In short, pick a country and you'll likely find a certain percentage of students who are more than willing to cheat their way to a degree. (Of course, it's reassuring to think that our own doctors, lawyers, and other degree-laden professionals actually did the work and know their stuff. We hope.)

High-school students aren't far behind. According to one [fact sheet](#), plagiarism in U.S. schools is high: "In a Center for Academic Integrity study, 38 percent of students, including many at schools with honor codes, admitted to cut-and-paste Internet plagiarism in the United States last year."

The problem isn't new, but one aspect of it is: the technology that makes it easier than ever to find a service, order a paper, and have it dropped into your inbox, all in as few as three hours.

So how are colleges, universities, and even high schools combating the problem? With some technological help of their own: plagiarism-detecting software.

Plagiarism-detecting services are catching on, becoming increasingly popular even in some [grade schools](#). And the uses aren't limited to catching students who cheat on assignments: according to CopyCatch's [website](#), since September 2007 "the Universities and Colleges Admissions Service is using CopyCatch Investigator to monitor personal statements submitted by applicants to United Kingdom universities." (A word of warning: if you're applying to medical school, don't use the one about [burnt pyjamas](#).)

Here's how it works. A student writes a paper, but instead of submitting it directly to their instructor's inbox, it's filtered through the database of the plagiarism-software service. (Whether the anti-plagiarism software is web-based or downloaded to a subscriber's computer, the theory behind them is the same, and several work with standard course-management software such as Blackboard, Moodle, and WebCT.)

Algorithms then compare the papers (in formats such as Word, Excel, PowerPoint, PDF, RTF, PostScript, and more) to vast amounts of text.

As the [instructor manual](#) at TurnItIn.com explains, “Papers submitted to Turnitin are compared against billions of internet documents, an archived copy of the internet, our local databases of submitted student papers, and a database of periodicals, journals, and publications. Any matching text we find is detailed in an Originality Report.”

MyDropbox’s plagiarism software, SafeAssignment, works much the same way, according to their [website](#). “Our system uses a highly advanced algorithm to compare submitted manuscripts against the Internet Archive of over 8 billion documents, scholastic and news databases with over 9 million articles and an intra-institutional archive of previously submitted papers.”

For starters, the reports don't necessarily detect plagiarism; what they find are all occurrences of matching text. Same thing, right? Not exactly.

After assignments are submitted and electronically reviewed, the instructor logs in and, as shown in one sample report, sees a list of all students and the overall percentage of each paper’s content that matches other sources. If the percentage is high, instructors can take a closer look, doing a side-by-side comparison of the documents (with suspect text highlighted) and viewing matching sources in their entirety.

So what’s not to like? The software makes professors’ jobs easier, students are kept honest, and the scourge of plagiarism no longer debases the perceived value of a degree. But the situation isn’t nearly that simple, and a lot of confusion still reigns.

For starters, the reports don’t necessarily detect plagiarism; what they find are all occurrences of matching text. Same thing, right? Not exactly. Suppose you’ve written an essay about Shakespeare’s *Twelfth Night*. Throughout your 15-page paper, you’ve used plenty of quotations from the play, and you’ve also referenced every one of them in the correct citation style.

But when your instructor glances at the list of percentages detected by the plagiarism software, your paper is tagged with a high rate of matching text. The software is doing its job, but the judgement about whether it’s cheating or simply quoted (and properly referenced) material still rests with a human being. In other words, the software is an effective comparison tool, but it’s not a magic solution. Like all technology, it’s only as good as the person using it.

The software can search more widely—and more quickly—but instructors still need to take the time to read the reports carefully and review bibliographies and matching text.

If charged with plagiarism, students should have the right to review the report to make sure that properly cited material isn’t creating a false positive. (In some versions, instructors can customize settings to allow students to read their papers’ reports either before or after handing them in, but that’s completely at the teacher’s discretion.)

These are important points to keep in mind before embracing this new tool, but perhaps the biggest concern about electronic plagiarism detection deals with copyright.

Programs such as TurnItIn.com (and others) don’t just search the web for material. They also search their database of text submitted by students at different schools—a database that grows with each submitted assignment. It isn’t always the case, but institutions can choose to allow the provider to add every scanned

paper to their archive. This means the companies can offer all subscribers a more comprehensive search, making the product more valuable and potentially increasing profits.

*To many students,
this still rankles.
They created a piece
of work and
someone else is
making money from
it, period.*

But how can assignments be distributed to software users around the globe, and allowed to be used for profit, without compensation to the writer (in this case, the student)?

Some software companies avoid this issue altogether. When it comes to searching databases of student-submitted material, each university's search is limited to papers within their school.

Just like a hard copy might, the electronic assignments are never viewed or released to anyone but members of that school's faculty. And it's perfectly reasonable to expect that schools can compare their students' essays to check for plagiarism, whether a prof sits at her desk with hard copies and a red pen, or compares papers on her computer.

The question remains, though: how can other companies take student papers and distribute them for profit? They can't—at least, not without the professor's permission. If a search by a teacher at University A turns up matching text in a paper submitted by a student at University B, a request must be sent to University B's teacher to release the paper for viewing.

To many students, this still rankles. They created a piece of work and someone else is making money from it, period.

A group of high school students recently challenged a plagiarism-detection company over this issue in Virginia federal court, claiming, among other things, that the use of student assignments constitutes copyright infringement. The students lost, in part because the judge found the use of their papers by the companies fell within fair use guidelines.

(Copyright law is complex and varies depending on where you live or your school is located, and there just isn't enough Advil to figure it out. If you're curious, this [Ars Technica article](#) gives a clear summary of the case, and the decision can be found [here](#).)

Although it may be used as a precedent, this is only one case among what are bound to be many. As the use of this type of software spreads, and more and more schools give their students no choice but to use it, the debate is sure to continue.

On one hand, many teachers and students agree that the software is a powerful tool that provides accurate, timely results comparing assignments to more sources than a human-based search ever could. It protects honest students' work from being copied, and keeps dishonest students . . . well, honest.

Opposing arguments are equally compelling. Students put in long hours researching, outlining, and writing assignments. Besides the work, most students struggle under incredible debt loads just to earn their degree. Fundamentally, it seems wrong that companies are making substantial profits off students' efforts, no matter how altruistic the stated goal might be.

No matter which side of the debate you're on, one thing seems sure: as long as it's possible to cut and paste from millions of sources, plagiarism-detecting software will be here to stay.

MILK-CRATE BANDIT

Erik Ditz



Not-So-Starving Artists

History is rife with losers that gave everything they had to their art which, though it immortalized them in the end, never gave anything back during their lifetimes. Among this list rank sad sacks like Pablo Picasso, George Washington Carver, Joseph Mohr, and William Percival Josquin Walcarn Shakespeare III, Esq.

There is a similar stigma today in independent music, with bands being placed not in categories of style or taste but circulation, and a certain amount of credibility is lent to those who strive to make their music as inaccessible as possible, either through low budgeting, creatively unappealing album covers, or other means. Also, food is delicious.

Gravy Train!!!! - *Ghost Boobs*

Gravy Train!!!! is an extremely successful parody of itself, pumping out gaudily overhyped dance tracks about sex and hamburgers, grinding down the stage in their underpants, and basically just being all around perverts. If you like laughing and/or dancing, you're about to be really glad you read this.

DJ Food - *Recipe for Disaster*

Though this album occasionally gets a little bland at points and could use a little pepper, it's still a tasty treat for the turntable-inclined.

Vanilla Fudge - Self-titled

I was sure that by now the Fudge must have realized how hilarious these old recordings are, but sadly they remain a band and continue to play the same tripped-out (mostly covers) hippy poop they always did, including a recent Led Zeppelin cover album. If only it could be 1967 forever, huh guys?

FATO - Devoured/Lapidate/FATO/Vomigod Split CD

Peterborough, Ontario's Forever Annihilating the Obese is a grindcore band dedicated to eating a lot. With songs like "Fast Food Diet" and "Liposuction Fetish," I think they probably qualify as the heaviest band ever, literally and figuratively.

Frank Zappa - *Burnt Weeny Sandwich*

There is something really unsettling about Zappa's music; it has an eerily familiar distortion to it that makes it seem like you could play it at a wedding or a punk show. Always/never appropriate.

Mudhoney - *Piece of Cake*

Dear Steve Malkmus,

Listen up, poseur.

Love, Erik

Eggs - *Bruiser LP*

In the 1990s there was an awful lot of really crappy music being touted as the “alternative” to the lame stuff major labels were barely churning out, and pretty much any jerk with a distortion pedal (e.g., Everclear, Pearl Jam, Hole, Garbage, Dishwalla, Weezer) became the super-heavy new alt thing to like.

Eggs flew in under the radar with some really rockin’, genuinely awesome alternative-to-the-alternative music that absolutely nobody has ever heard of. Eggs: the other white meat.

Guns N’ Roses - *The Spaghetti Incident?*

I don’t think anyone, including Axl Rose, likes Axl Rose, but at least they covered songs by The Damned, The Dead Boys, Fear, Soundgarden, and Charles Manson.

Supertramp - *Breakfast in America*

I will never tire of two things: this album and laughing at skydiving injuries.

Cannibal Corpse - *Eaten Back to Life*

Unless you like it when your ears bleed, you probably shouldn’t listen to this. You know how kids are always trying to find the most vile and repulsive thing to be into so they can use it to horrify their parents? Well, kids that listen to this horrify other kids. I don’t think zombies even like music, but that’s just a guess.

Mike Patton - *Pranzo Oltranzista*

This is an experimental vocal and orchestral album themed after an Italian menu. After that I’m pretty lost, because not one single part of any of this make a lick of sense.

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!

AU Profiles:

AU Profiles: Karl Low

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.



This week's profile focuses on Karl Low, who is returning to the AUSU Student Council for a second term. Karl, an English major, feels that distance learning results in better understanding of the material, but he's aware of, and speaks candidly about, the challenges that accompany studying by distance. He also explains how his work on the student council means advocating AUSU member interests in the larger educational community.

Karl was initially attracted to Athabasca University because it offered him the opportunity to finish his education without feeling out of place among younger students. He had begun studying at the University of Calgary after graduating high school.

"First year at U of C, I nearly flunked," he says. "In high school I slept through classes and pulled straight A's. You can't do that in university." He withdrew during his second year and started

working, but kept further education in mind.

"I knew that one day I'd have to finish up my education if I wanted to get beyond bottom-end jobs," he says. After getting married, he tried re-enrolling at the University of Calgary, but felt it wasn't a good fit because unlike most in the classroom, "I was an older student," he explains.

Both Karl and his wife, who was also looking to complete her education, began researching options.

"That's where AU . . . came in," Karl says. It was less expensive than other possibilities—a bonus since they were concerned about student loans. They wouldn't feel out of place as the oldest students in the classroom, since degrees could be completed from home. And while studying, "we could actually work and get things done," Karl says.

Karl and his wife are currently AU students. Although they've never taken courses together at the same time, it has been helpful having a spouse who understands a distance student's challenges. "We both intend to take a French course . . . together one day," Karl says, "but we're still working on getting our own degrees first."

Initially, Karl had enrolled in the B.A. Information Systems program. However, “the [Information Systems] courses . . . just didn’t hold my interest,” Karl says. “I’ve been involved with computers since I was . . . three or four . . . they were omnipresent.”

He found English much more attractive, and eventually he switched to that major. “I’ve always enjoyed and been good at writing, probably because I spent so much time daydreaming and developing stories in my head,” Karl says. “Writing just puts them out on paper.”

Karl feels that studying via distance is an inherently better way to learn. “I know when I finish my essays or exams that I did well strictly because I know it, not because I’ve been pulled along by a timed set of assignments and essays,” he says. “At AU . . . there’s no obvious regurgitation because you’ve got nobody prompting you each day.”

Students learn more because without constant direction, they must come up with answers on their own. “It’s . . . the difference between ‘I know it because I learned it’ and ‘I know it because you told me it’s so’,” Karl says.

That same self-starting focus makes distance education challenging, however: “With other things going on . . . it’s very easy to get caught up in the idea of ‘I’ll do coursework tomorrow’,” Karl says. “It’s never tomorrow, is it?”

Self-motivation is a daily struggle for him: “Everyone knows the rote answers—just do a little each day, get into the habit, get a special place . . . that doesn’t have distractions,” he says. “But if knowing the answers was the same as practicing them, it wouldn’t be a problem in the first place.”

What does help is to think about his long-term goals: “I know that to get . . . there I’ve got to finish what I’m doing here,” Karl says. Accountability is another resource: “Getting other people to simply ask you each and every day, ‘So what did you do on your course today? How far along is it?’ . . . can help as well,” he says.

After he completes his education, Karl hopes to work for Athabasca University as a tutor or faculty member in English or information sciences. “Given the oncoming shortage of professional academics that’s been predicted . . . it struck me as a good area to focus on,” he says. “Not to mention that the whole idea of ‘academic freedom’ really appeals.”

To that end, he hopes to enrol in a graduate program after completing his B.A. “The MAIS [Master of Arts in Integrated Studies] really appeals to me as it might give me a way to unite . . . information systems with English,” he says.

In the meantime, Karl is busy with another aspect of AU—its relations with external interests. During the previous AUSU Student Council term, Karl served as Vice-President of External Affairs, a position that involves representing AUSU’s concerns to interests outside the school, as well as keeping the council up-to-date on external issues affecting students. It’s a considerable task, given AUSU’s widely dispersed membership.

“The MAIS [Master of Arts in Integrated Studies] really appeals to me as it might give me a way to unite . . . information systems with English.”

"Financial issues generally take priority for external, as they affect everyone," Karl says. For example, when one province held a public consultation on student finance reform, Karl advocated for a "student funding system that is more appropriate to our members," he says. "AUSU has a higher proportion of part-time students, for instance, and a higher proportion of first-in-the-family students, which tend to be more averse to taking on large debt loads like student loans . . . in any revamp of their student finance system, I didn't want those groups to be left out in the cold."

"The other big issue for our students is degree recognition and transferability," notes Karl. Although AU degrees are generally recognized, course recognition is a different issue. "[It] varies so much from institution to institution," he says.

Despite his homework, council activities, and plans for the future, Karl hasn't forgotten about his interest in writing. Although he's been too busy to do much creative writing—it's mostly "policy documents, letters, and press releases . . . horribly practical [stuff]", he says—he keeps an "ideas" folder with notes, even one-line sentences, that someday might become inspirational fodder. "I keep on intending and dreaming," Karl says.

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.

HEALTH MATTERS

Barbara Godin

**Plantar Fasciitis**

Plantar Fasciitis is an inflammation caused by excessive stretching of the plantar fascia. The plantar fascia is a broad band of fibrous tissue which runs along the bottom surface of the foot . . . When the plantar fascia is excessively stretched, this can cause plantar fasciitis - www.foot.com

Plantar fasciitis is the most common cause of heel pain, heel spurs, and pain in the arch of the foot. A number of issues can lead to the inflammation and pain of plantar fasciitis. For example, flat feet, a condition that results in collapsing of the arch. As well, an unusually high arch can contribute to the pain of plantar fasciitis.

Pregnancy or being overweight can also cause this agonizing condition. Runners are often susceptible to plantar fasciitis, as are athletes and individuals who have jobs requiring standing for long periods of time on hard surfaces. Unfortunately, there is no quick fix, and it may take six to 12 months of treatment to resolve the pain of plantar fasciitis.

Plantar fasciitis pain is very severe and occurs at the bottom of the foot along the inside, where the heel and the arch meet. This pain is most intense first thing in the morning or after resting. As you begin moving around, the pain often eases and becomes more like a dull ache.

Treatment options depend on what is causing your particular case of plantar fasciitis. If the cause is flat feet, orthotics may be helpful. Orthotics will have to be fitted specifically for your feet.

If high arches are the problem, you will need to pay special attention to the type of shoes you are wearing. Running shoes are a good choice as they provide extra cushioning when walking and running. If you stand for long periods of time on a hard surface, look into getting a cushioned carpet or pad that you can stand on, thus relieving some of the pressure on the bottom of your feet. Stretching exercises for your feet and calves before beginning physical activity will also help. Anti-inflammatory medications may also provide some relief.

If none of the above remedies alleviate the pain, cortisone injections may be needed. Supplementary treatments include physical therapy and/or wearing a splint at night.

Finally, if nothing seems to be helping and the pain is still unbearable, surgery may be required. Fortunately, most people will achieve pain relief long before surgery becomes necessary. Surgery is rare and not always successful. The surgical procedure involves release of the ligament that extends along the bottom of the foot.

The good news is there are things you can do to prevent plantar fasciitis before it develops. For example, avoid running on hard or uneven surfaces; avoid weight gain or lose excess weight; and wear shoes that provide proper support, particularly in the arch area.

More information on plantar fasciitis can be found at the Mayo Clinic and the [Foot.com website](http://Foot.com).

IN CONVERSATION WITH . . .

Wanda Waterman St. Louis

**Mic Boyd: Writing to the Beat**

Mic Boyd is a rap artist based in Enfield, Nova Scotia. He is the brother of famed rap artist Classified, who produced Mic's recently released CD, Lost in the Woods, and he often contributes to his brother's recordings.

Mic wrote or co-wrote the lyrics for every track on this CD. He recently took a break from playing basketball to talk with Wanda Waterman St. Louis.

How Did I Get Here?

I didn't think about rapping or singing or anything 'til I was about 19. I've got social anxiety. I've never done a presentation in school. I never get up in front of people. It took me a long time to get over that and I'm still not over it. I get a lot of anxiety before I go on stage.

My dad was in a rock band when he was in high school. And then there's my brother. He's my mentor. I learned everything from him. I don't like to admit it but it's true.

On Long, Strange Trips

Touring has its ups and downs. It's hard to get sleep. You're constantly moving, going to sound check every day. Then you get a half hour here and there and you try to sleep before the show. That's probably the worst thing.

And the travelling, going through the mountains out west with six guys squished into a minivan. We had a tour bus for the first 10 shows and then we used the van for the rest of Canada. The first night on the tour bus, in Victoria, me and my brother's laptops got stolen, so that kind of sucked.

The Writing Life

When I write a song, first I get the beat. I listen to the beat, get a feel for it, and see what it reminds me of. I like to write to the beat. Some people like to write the songs first, then find the beat that fits the song. I like to write to the beat. I find it easier to get a topic from that.

Once in a while I go into a song with a topic. It's more of a formula now, like over the years you're playing at little things like which rhymes go where and which lines are better flow-wise.

If I wasn't doing rap I'd be doing rock for sure, though I've never tried to write a rock song. I like CCR, the Beatles, all that 70s rock. It was the first music I listened to and I'm still getting to like it more and more. The new stuff I'm not super fond of. Mostly I listen to Oldies 96.

Leisure Pursuits

When I want to unwind and I'm not doing music I'm playing sports. I play basketball and I'm big into hockey. I play hockey three or four times a week. And video games. I play a *lot* of video games.

I haven't read a book since they stopped making me read them in school. I love movies. I watch pretty much every movie that comes out. I love comedy, I love laughing. My favourites are like *Dumb and Dumber* and *Old School*.

But one of my favourite movies and soundtracks of all time is *Jesus Christ Superstar*. I love it. Know it word for word. My dad let me hear it when I was really young and every time I hear it, it just keeps getting better and better. When I was in high school I saw the play live, with all the original characters, at the Metro Centre in Halifax.

The Price of a Toke

Me and my brother go through this every day; we'll record stuff high and listen to it high and it sounds great but when you listen to it not high it doesn't sound as good. We have a lot of trouble with that.

But mainly I think I try to do my writing not high even when I'm recording but when I'm listening over a song, going over it trying to touch it up, I like to get high and then I'll pick out little things here and there but I find it throws me off a little when I write high. I can't think. I'll just keep going in circles, thinking of other things.

"I try to do my writing not high even when I'm recording but when I'm listening over a song, going over it trying to touch it up, I like to get high and then I'll pick out little things here and there but I find it throws me off a little when I write high. I can't think. I'll just keep going in circles, thinking of other things."

Hard Times Come Again No More

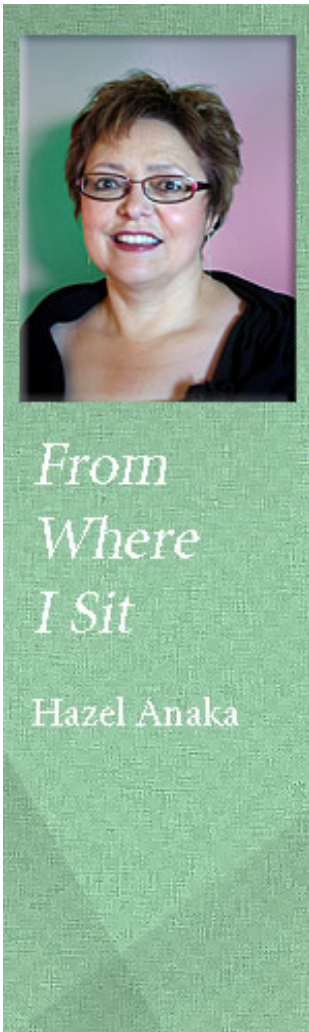
I don't think writing about hard times is just a rap thing; rock songs talk about people going through hard times with drugs and stuff but they don't say it as blunt, straight out. They'll say it in a metaphor so you can't tell they're talking about drugs.

I've been through so much relationship crap. That's why I write about that stuff. I'm really bad at that stuff. But things aren't as bad for me now as they were back in the day.

Stage Versus Studio

I'm kind of a shy person so I'm not super big on the live performances. I don't even know if I like people looking at me; I just do it because I have to. We're shooting a video soon for "True Love," in Toronto, I guess. I'm kind of looking forward to it, even though the first time I was on camera it kind of freaked the shit out of me.

Recording is fun 'cause I'm in my brother's studio. He just lives down the street. I just go there and hang out so it's pretty good that way. I get to hang out with my brother and make music every day so I can't complain.



Here and Now

Is there a person alive who hasn't said or done something stupid they regret, if not immediately then at some future date? Most of us will admit this sad fact in the privacy of our own thoughts, if we do at all. MP Tom Lukiwski is not most people.

When public figures get caught making the same mistakes ordinary, everyday people do, it becomes front-page, six-o'clock-lead-story worthy.

By now, everyone and his brother know that 17 years ago Lukiwski said something ignorant in a party situation. He has duly offered a sincere, heartfelt apology for his ill-advised homophobic remarks.

He didn't try one of those oblique, pseudo apologies so popular with politicians. You know: the ones where they say they're sorry "you misunderstood and were hurt by" whatever "words you took out of context" and here they are being vilified by an unholy press who can't see that they are in fact the victims in "this unfortunate and regrettable incident."

This has been handy for the transgression of the day: whether a presidential escapade with his intern, a misunderstood senator in a public restroom, a shoplifting MP or actress, drunk driving or drug charges, and of course adultery.

Lukiwski's apology has been different. It seems sincere. There's been no excuse making or scapegoating. The Opposition would, of course, love to have his head on a platter at high noon in front of the Centennial Flame.

This is not the first time nor will it be the last time that beliefs about a group of people have changed over time, making once-accepted intolerance subsequently repugnant. Think women, Aborigines, African-Americans, Jews, the disabled, the elderly, the overweight, homosexuals.

The language changes as we change—from faggot or queer to homosexual or gay, from nigger to black to coloured to African-American. Of course, sometimes the discourse goes in the other direction: from acceptance to rejection. Think emaciated models, fur-wearing socialites, or smoking.

While at the core most of us stay the same, many of us try to grow and evolve. Am I the same person I was 17 years ago? No. Hopefully I'm better, wiser, more tolerant, more humble, and more sure that I'm unsure.

Likewise Tom Lukiwski. His behaviour was reflective of the time. If he had made those remarks a week ago, we'd all have reason to be morally outraged. Only knuckle-dragging fools question the equality of women in 2008. Not so in 1908. Beliefs change.

Little by little, one group at a time, perhaps one individual at a time, we change and broaden our definition of acceptance. We censor the derogatory names we may have heard growing up and try to role-model more enlightened views for our own children.

I say accept Lukiwski's apology. I'm willing to bet we all have something to apologize for. The difference is the NDP didn't stumble across us on tape. The tolerance should start here and now, from where I sit.

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

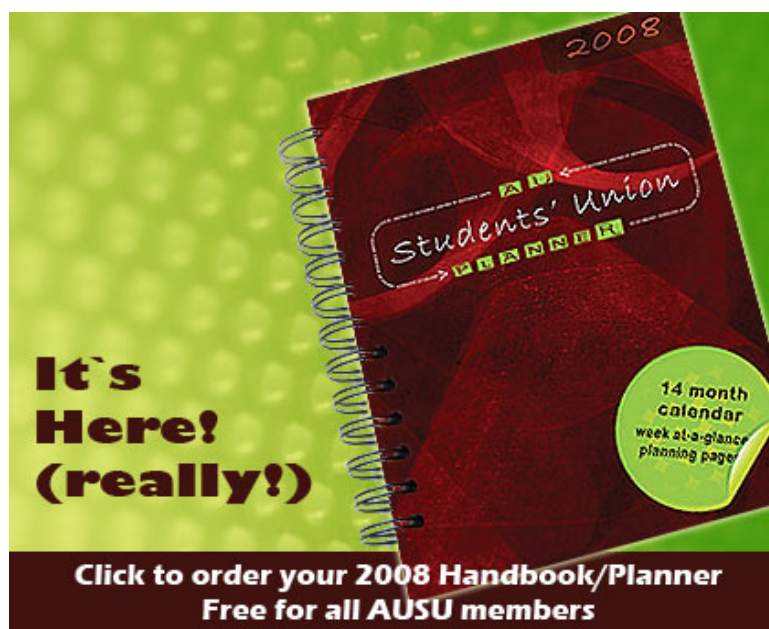
Smart Draw – Benefit for AUSU members

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: Canadian war vet cut off from visitors by border crackdown

An 85-year-old New Brunswick man has had access to his home cut off after a crackdown by U.S. border services.

Nikolaj Pedersen's farm is in New Brunswick, but the road that carries friends, family, mail, and the newspaper to his door lies in Maine—and that means visitors have to briefly enter the U.S. before turning into his driveway.

For decades, U.S. authorities didn't make a fuss, but a March crackdown has changed all that and made it impossible for family members to visit the senior unless they first check in with the U.S. customs office in Fairfield, Maine.

It's a detour of nearly half an hour. Besides the extra time and aggravation, the demand by U.S. officials means that, when Pedersen's visitors go down the driveway again, they'd be illegally re-entering Canada.

In effect, the senior citizen—and war veteran—is now cut off from his social network because of bureaucratic nitpicking. Clarence Clark, a neighbour who lives on the U.S. side of the road, told [CBC News](#) that a solution should be found.

"This is a very local thing right out here, especially with the Pedersens. They should know what their rights are and take into consideration this road, which goes in and out of Canada and in and out of the United States, and it ought to be enforced one way all the time."

"They're certainly people who can be trusted," he added. "I've known them for 45 years and they're a trustworthy family."

Mike Allen, an MP for Perth-Andover, has been trying to arrange a solution through discussions with a U.S. senator's office. "My heart goes out to Mr. Pedersen because [he's] 85 years old, a veteran, certainly deserving of his services, so . . . we've got to find a way to accommodate this," he said.

One solution would be to relocate Pedersen's driveway, but to avoid touching on U.S. soil, the driveway would need to be a kilometre long.

For now, U.S. officials will let emergency vehicles cross the border to access the property, but any other visitors who fail to visit customs face a \$5,000 fine.

In Foreign News: IOC relieved by San Francisco torch relay events

After recent protests in London and Paris disrupted the Olympic torch relay, International Olympic Committee (IOC) officials are relieved that the San Francisco leg of the trip passed with only minor disruptions.

Although large crowds of protestors had gathered, the relay route was first shortened, and then changed at the last minute, to avoid the protests. As well, a waterfront closing ceremony was cancelled and the flame was carried directly to a waiting plane.

Jacques Rogge, president of the IOC, told reporters that although organizers were pleased with events in San Francisco, the relay was “not the joyous party” they had planned on. In spite of the widespread—and violent—protests, Rogge and other IOC officials are determined to provide athletes with the “games they deserve.”

“This is going to be their Games and they will enjoy it. Tell them not to lose faith in the Olympic movement. Tell them we will rebound from this crisis,” he said.

If necessary, IOC officials may suspend or cancel the remaining stops of the relay. Expected to cover six continents and 21 stops, the relay is headed to Buenos Aires next, then a dozen other countries, including India.

Though the protests have received a lot of attention, and the Olympic games have overcome political hurdles in the past, including boycotts, Rogge reiterated that Olympic venues, including the podium, were not the place for politics. The Olympic Charter states that clearly, forbidding any kind of “demonstration or political, religious or racial propaganda . . . in any Olympic sites, venues or other areas.”

CLICK OF THE WRIST – How Very Sporting

The closest most of us get to being an Olympic athlete is the exercise of channel surfing between events. In the interests of all things athletic, here’s a look at the wide (and occasionally weird) world of sports.

Olympic Games - This list includes some truly hilarious remarks made by Olympic commentators and other sports-watchers, like this little gem: “Well, either side could win, or it could be a draw.”

Sports Bloopers - This video collection features some Olympic athletes, and others whose athletic skills are far more dubious. Watch for the girl being vaulted through a basketball hoop; it’s even more amazing on the replay.

Beijing 2008 - If you take your sporting events a little more seriously, here is the official website of the 2008 Beijing Olympics. Everything you need to know, from the history of the Games to the current weather in Beijing.

Greatest Sports Moments of All Time - An amazing collection of historic moments in sports, with lots of great archival footage.

Weird Sports - A more comprehensive list than I could ever have dreamed up. Some real (and really odd) sports are Pooh Stick Racing (named after the bear, silly); sheep tackling; Korfbal; and Chessboxing. The best is still Calvinball, though.

Superstitious Athletes - A pick of the 10 quirkiest habits of pro athletes.

Bizarre Baseball Injuries - Everyone knows that baseball can be a dangerous sport, but these injuries happened off the field. Note to aspiring pitchers: never iron your clothes while you’re wearing them.

EDUCATION NEWS

Natasha Marar



Senator challenges bankruptcy law to ease student debt

WINDSOR (CUP) -- Quebec Senator Yoine Goldstein reintroduced Bill S-205 last October, hoping to ease the burden of graduates who can't pay back their student loans.

Post-secondary groups from across the country have since lent their support to the bill, which was discussed in Parliament on April 3.

The bill would amend the Bankruptcy and Insolvency Act to allow post-secondary students to apply for bankruptcy within only two years of finishing school. Currently, students must wait seven years before filing for bankruptcy.

"At one extreme, a former student who can really afford to pay back the loan over time and without too much difficulty should be compelled to do so," Goldstein said.

"At the other extreme, a former student who has no short- or medium-term prospect to be able to reimburse any part of the loan should not be compelled to remain in limbo, being unable to pay and also unable to make a fresh start."

The Canadian Federation of Students, Canada's largest student lobby group, has long advocated for the elimination of the wait time before a student can declare bankruptcy. Ian Boyko, government relations coordinator for CFS, is one of many student supporters of Bill S-205.

"[The Canadian Federation of Students' (CFS)] position is that there shouldn't be any [delay] . . . but reducing the [delay] from seven to two years is a step in the right direction," he said.

The bill will also allow former students with long-term financial constraints resulting from their loans to apply for a court order, which would relieve them from all or part of their debt.

If the court decides not to fully eliminate the debt, they could still opt to make payments more reflective of their financial situation.

According to the 2006 Canadian Undergraduate Survey Consortium (CUSC), 55 per cent of graduating students owe an average of \$24,047 in loans.

The survey also indicated that undergraduate students with more debt are less likely to pursue graduate studies.

Bill S-205 has received support from The Canadian Federation of Students (CFS), The Coalition for Student Loan Fairness (CSLF), The Canadian Alliance of Student Associations (CASA), and Fédération Étudiante Universitaire du Québec (FEUQ).

"The Bill has received general support from student associations and from a number of Liberal Senators. It is opposed by the Department of Finance and by the Conservative Party Critic in the Senate, on behalf of the Government," Goldstein said.

"It's a great bill, and Senator Goldstein is one of the foremost experts in Canada on bankruptcy so I think it will hold considerable weight," Boyko said.

Both Goldstein and Boyko warn, however, that filing for bankruptcy under the bill's provisions does carry risks, and should only be used by students in the most dire situations.

Declaring bankruptcy affects an individual's credit for several years and makes it impossible to obtain credit cards, lines of credit, and mortgages.

"The whole Bankruptcy [and Insolvency] Act is designed to provide last refuge for those who have no last option," said Boyko. "This is not an instrument that will be used for widespread debt relief."

"Going into bankruptcy always affects a person's credit record and this is the reality that a former student loan debtor will have to face if he or she goes into bankruptcy," said Goldstein.

"Repayment of a student loan is a legal obligation. Only in exceptional circumstances should that obligation be reduced or eliminated. Those circumstances are best determined by judges and not by universities," explained Goldstein.

Goldstein does, however, believe that universities need to educate students on how to manage debt.

"Universities and all other educational institutions should be teaching numeracy and responsible incurring and discharging of debt."

Although the CFS is advocating for Bill S-205, it believes that student debt should be discouraged in the first place.

"What our organization is calling for in Ontario is immediate reduction in tuition fees, which will reduce the need to borrow [money]. An upfront grant is the most effective way of reducing student debt," said Boyko.

Goldstein disagrees with that point.

"Student debt cannot, and should not, be 'prevented.' In appropriate circumstances, students have to borrow in order to be able to pursue their post-secondary education," he said.

"However, all stakeholders have a role to play in teaching the proper use, handling and discharge of debt and that role should more properly be played by educational institutions as an educational function rather than lending institutions which necessarily have a particular point of view," Goldstein concluded.

Boyko thinks that Ontario universities are "grossly irresponsible" because they are using taxpayers' dollars to lobby the government to increase and deregulate student fees.

"The most efficient and fair way to deal with student debt is to deal with everything possible to make sure it doesn't increase in the first place," he said.

CLASSIFIEDS

Classifieds are free for AU students! Contact voice@ausu.org for more information.

THE VOICE

1213, 10011 109th Street NW, Edmonton, AB T5J 3S8 -- Ph: 800.788.9041 ext. 2905 - Fax: 780.497.7003 attn: Voice Editor

Publisher Athabasca University Students' Union
Editor-In-Chief Tamra Ross
Managing Editor Sandra Livingston

Regular Columnists Mandy Gardner, Katie Patrick, Hazel Anaka, Bill Pollett, Janice Behrens, Wanda Waterman St. Louis, Barbara Godin

Contributors to Listings Zil-E-Huma Lodhi, Lonita Fraser

www.voicemagazine.org

The Voice is published every Friday in html and pdf format

Contact *The Voice* at voice@ausu.org

To receive a weekly email announcing each issue, see the 'subscribe' link on *The Voice* front page. *The Voice* does not share its subscriber list.
Special thanks to Athabasca University's *The Insider* for its contributions