

# THE VOICE

## MAGAZINE

Volume 16 Issue 17

April 25, 2008

### Careers

Occupational Therapist

### Chronicles of Cruiscin Lan

Making a scene

### AU Profiles

Heather Fraser

*Plus:*

*The Mindful Bard,  
Milk-Crate Bandit,  
From Where I Sit,  
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



## Giving Credit Where It's Due

As the global credit crunch steamrolls along, the average observer might be forgiven for thinking that, somewhere along the line, ideas about borrowing and lending have gotten strangely turned around—especially when it comes to U.K.-based bank Egg.

In February, the Internet bank sent letters to more than 160,000 of their customers informing them their Egg credit cards had been cancelled. As the [BBC](#) reported, Egg cancelled the cards because they considered those customers “high risk.”

But it was soon the company that had egg on its face: as astonished customers began trading stories, it seemed that, for most of them, their fast repayments were the only risky business for the bank. By not racking up monthly interest charges, they weren't generating enough profit. (Egg denies this is the reason, yet a spokesperson told the [Guardian](#) that, even if affected customers with “decent credit ratings” are proven to be low risk, they won't be offered new cards.)

As one angry customer told the BBC, she and her husband are “retired, no mortgage, no debts” and “always paid the balance off in full each month.” Her check with a credit reference agency confirmed that her credit rating was “excellent,” and enough customers have reported similar stories that some MPs have called for an investigation by the Financial Services Authority.

Perhaps the most alarming fact, though, is that some genuinely high-risk customers are being rewarded. As one financial website [reports](#), “Other Egg customers who were heavily in debt wrote on internet message boards that their credit limit had been increased.” Which has to make anyone with an ounce of common sense wonder just what Egg is thinking, even as economies around the world are stumbling under the weight of credit woes.

In the U.S., the economy hasn't just faltered but is on the verge of a recession, largely a result of the subprime mortgage debacle (including option adjustable-rate mortgages, which allow borrowers the option to pay less than the interest and principal due every month).

In Canada things are better, but the fallout is being felt. [CBC News](#) reports that economic growth is expected to “grind to a near halt in the second quarter of the year.”

Back in the U.K., home of Egg, things are just as shaky: as many as 1.4 million people are facing a “[steep rise in repayments](#)” as their short-term, fixed-rate mortgages come to an end, and key players in the mortgage industry have met with government officials to try and stem the expected flood of repossessions.

Which makes Egg's decision all the more puzzling. A healthy economy is a balance of risk and surety. A certain amount of loss is part of doing business, but banks (and economies as a whole) also rely on certain sectors to remain stable. Even if Egg and other lenders aren't making immediate profits from cardholders who don't carry a balance, they're still benefitting from the financial stability of those customers. After all, people who manage their finances well—for instance, paying off credit cards monthly—are the ones most likely to keep paying their mortgages and, ultimately, not force banks like Egg to write off billions in bad debt. To punish them for sound fiscal management is short-sighted.

When it comes to financial planning, it seems like Egg could use some advice from some of its prudent (and former) customers.

## CAREERS

**Behdin Nowrouzi**



### Consider a Career as an Occupational Therapist

#### What is Occupational Therapy?

Occupational therapy (OT) is an allied health profession that helps individuals achieve their maximum independence with the problems that interfere with their ability to participate in meaningful activities. OT can also reduce or avert a problem and its effects. The Canadian Association of Occupational Therapists (CAOT) is the national body representing occupational therapists and their interests in Canada. According to the CAOT, therapists are involved in everything people do during the course of their daily life.

#### Education and Training

Occupational therapists (OT) are university-trained, regulated health professionals that are required to register with a provincial college in order to practice. Graduates come from an accredited university

program with either a baccalaureate degree or a master's degree in occupational therapy.

In order to be eligible for the national certification examination, therapists must successfully complete a minimum of 1,000 hours of fieldwork education in accredited fieldwork settings (i.e., hospitals, long-term facilities, community centers, etc.). In 2001, CAOT decided to accredit only OT educational programs that lead to a master's degree in occupational therapy as the entry credential (starting in 2008), with all new graduates holding a master's by 2010.

Occupational therapists' training allows graduates to understand not only the medical and physical limitations of a disability or injury, but also the psychosocial factors that affect an individual's ability to function independently.

Occupational therapists subscribe to a holistic framework that considers the interaction of the person with their occupation and environment. The occupational therapist's approach is based on research that proves that an individual's ability to engage in occupation increases health and well-being. Like other health care professionals, occupational therapists are evidence-based practitioners that deliver their services and treatments based on research.

#### Admission information and requirements

There are 13 occupational therapy schools across Canada. While individual program requirements vary, the CAOT recommends that prospective applicants contact the schools directly. Students enter the program with a variety of backgrounds and life experience. A combination of biological and health-related courses and social sciences/humanities courses may be beneficial to prospective applicants.

#### Where occupational therapists work

Occupational therapists work in many different areas including in hospitals, as part of health or school boards, in the community, halfway houses, and with workers' compensation boards. They may also work

with rehabilitation or insurance companies, and in government on accessibility and vocational or public health planning issues.

In a hospital setting, occupational therapists help individuals to perform all types of activities, from daily tasks including their activities of daily living (i.e., eating, dressing, toileting) to using a computer. In a hand-therapy practice, occupational therapists may prescribe physical exercises that may be used to increase strength and dexterity.

In a rehabilitation clinic, therapists may propose a treatment plan that includes improving visual acuity or the ability to discern patterns. For instance, a client with short-term memory loss might be encouraged to make lists to aid recall, and a person with coordination problems might be assigned exercises to improve hand-eye coordination.

Therapists in mental health settings work with individuals who suffer from mental illness, are developmentally challenged, or emotionally disturbed. Occupational therapists select activities that are meaningful and also allow individuals to increase their functioning and participation.

### Salaries

Like many health professions, therapists' educational background serves as the starting point for launching a career in many directions with a wide range of salary expectations. In general, therapists working in private settings earn more than those in public settings that face more frequent financial limitations.

The CAOT reports that OTs can also vary from one province to another but a newly qualified occupational therapist can earn from \$40,000 to \$45,000.

Services provided by therapists in public settings are covered under provincial medical plans. In private practice, services may be covered through private health insurance offered by an employer (extended health care benefits, disability insurance), under workers compensation, auto insurance plans, or Veterans Affairs.

For more information regarding occupational therapy, please visit the Canadian Association of Occupational Therapist's [website](#).

### DID YOU KNOW?



#### Study Skills

If you're looking for great tips on how to handle some of the study problems that students encounter, check out AU's [Study Skills page](#).

You'll find practical solutions on a variety of topics, including time management, getting the most out of textbooks, and even advice on effective ways to highlight texts. Other topics include mastering exam anxiety, writing multiple-choice exams, as well as how to improve your study skills, overcome procrastination, or study with your kids around.

You can also try an online Vark questionnaire to find out what your learning style is. Each section is packed with great advice, and the time management segment even has sample documents to help you get organized. Check out the link today!



# AU Profiles:

## AU Profiles: Heather Fraser

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.*



Small-town living is full of opportunities, but universities are harder to come by away from major centres. This week we meet a student who chose to move to a small town, but still was able to pursue her dream of obtaining a degree thanks to distance learning.

Heather Fraser, who is enrolled in AU's Bachelor of Science in Computing and Information Systems program, also manages to fit volunteer work and numerous activities into her life—and loves every minute of it. She describes how she keeps on track class-wise, and explains why her technological knowledge has made her keen to advocate for children's Internet safety.

Three years ago, Heather and her two daughters, now aged eight and 10, made a job-related move from Winnipeg to Kenora—a small town in western Ontario, two hours from the Manitoba border.

"I adore it," she says. "It is so beautiful here, and I love the smaller town . . . [it's] very safe . . . and the majority of kids are more active here."

The downside: moving meant that Heather had to turn down her acceptance at the University of Manitoba. "When I found out about AU I was really excited—I didn't have to give up my dream of getting a degree just because I chose to move to Kenora," she says.

She's not the only local attending AU: "I know of three people in my little town that have started courses at AU because now they know about it," says Heather. "Small-town people don't have a lot of options; university is either moving away, or sometime in the distant future."

"I really like . . . being . . . a large part of the community," Heather says. "If I'm not involved somehow, I don't enjoy myself as much."

In addition to working as a full-time network administrator for the Ontario government, she takes three courses at once, and still finds time to pursue volunteer and community activities. Her days are full. "I work days, [and] drive my daughters around in the evening—they are involved in one to two sports an evening

plus weekends," she says. "I study full-time at night." In addition to the girls' activities, Heather volunteers both at work and in the community.

"I team manage a hockey team, run [a] baseball website . . . I'm the social convener for the Kenora Swimming Sharks, I'm training to be a baseball umpire this year, and am the atom convener for baseball as well." She's also a cadet officer for the Navy League Cadets, an organization in which her daughters are involved.

Heather also spends a great deal of time outdoors, particularly camping—"almost every weekend in the summer and for about a two- to three-week stretch in August," she says. In fact, she's arranged her classes around this pastime: this summer she's taking a break from computer courses, and is enrolling in history and literature classes instead. "I wanted courses that could come camping and to the beach," she explains.

Running for student council was clearly a natural choice for Heather, who was also a student council member at college in Winnipeg. "I miss that part of school," she says. "When I saw the notice on the AUSU website about student council, I was totally excited and threw my hat in . . . right away."

Finding time to study in the midst of all the activity can be difficult. "Most evenings we don't get home from judo or figure skating or hockey or cadets or baseball or soccer or art club or cheerleading . . . until eight," she says. "I mostly try to do my coursework between 10 p.m. and 2 a.m., once [my daughters] go to bed, or Sunday afternoons or evenings."

How does she manage school, work, camping, cadets, council, and her kids' activities?

"I schedule," Heather says. Before starting a course, she lays out her study schedule—and sets it in stone. "I . . . book my exams before the course start date to keep myself in line," she says. "It would be so easy to sit around in the evening playing video games with the kids and pretend that I don't have something else to do."

Accountability is another source of motivation. "People ask me what I'm taking . . . then when I see them a week later, they'll ask me again how my course is going," Heather says. "It's just an extra little bit of motivation to keep myself on track."

She also works in spare moments. "I . . . always carry around a textbook with me," Heather says. "I . . . peek at it when I have a second."

Including the credits she was able to transfer from her college diploma, Heather is in her second year, and plans to graduate in April 2011. She is considering law school as a postgraduate degree.

"I'm interested in the technology/children's safety side of advocacy," she says. "I see what my daughters are exposed to because I have the technical ability and software to do it. Most parents have no idea what their kids are doing online . . . and that is really scary!" Her biggest piece of advice: "Put the computer in the living room," she says. "Never *ever* a bedroom."

"Also," she adds, "with software like Net Nanny, and with firewalls, you have the potential to block any website or term that you can think of."

At the same time, she's also considering an M.Sc. in Computers and Information Sciences, a B.Sc. in Education, or a B.A. in History.

"I turn 30 on May 1," she laughs. "I think I have some time left to decide what I want to do when I grow up!"





## *From Where I Sit*

Hazel Anaka

### To Watch or Not

I know many successful people who have taken the “no media” vow. For their mental health and well-being they have voluntarily decided to stop reading newspapers and watching the news.

The proliferation of bad news played and replayed and described in graphic detail has a damaging effect on mood, feelings of security, and comfort levels. It also reinforces a feeling of helplessness. (What can any of us do about crime, homelessness, or natural disasters? Probably not much globally, but surely, something locally or personally.)

Or is this a handy cop-out for explaining a lack of awareness or involvement? It's like little kids who close their eyes and believe everything “out there” has disappeared.

My own past efforts to go cold turkey have been short-lived. Maybe I really don't believe the rationale. I love reading two daily newspapers and I'm a devoted CTV news watcher.

However, two disturbing stories this past week have me reconsidering my stance. The regular, run-of-the-mill stories about stabbings, drive-by shootings, head-on collisions, etcetera are easy to rationalize, if not understand. There's usually a measure of shared responsibility. Carry a knife—be a victim of a knife. Get in a fight, die in a fight. Or kill someone in a fight.

I'm safe because I don't belong to gangs, engage in drug deals, go to nightclubs, ride the LRT, drive recklessly after drinking and without a seat belt, engage in road rage or jaywalk at 3 a.m. I don't live in a high-crime area. I don't engage in

promiscuous behaviour. I never did allow my kids to run wild or stay out 'til all hours with kids I didn't approve of.

My comfort level was shaken, though, when news of a random, unprovoked, fatal, middle-of-the-day stabbing of a senior first broke. Current information confirms that the 77-year-old man was a true victim. It just as easily could have been me or someone I care about. This is in-your-face scary reality and has visibly shaken the community.

Of course, millions of people are able to go about their daily life, have an anniversary meal with their spouse without being knifed to death. It's an odds thing and the only comfort in this story. It doesn't, however, make it any less tragic or disturbing.

We've seen the tearful news conference a mother gave about the drive-by shooting on a reserve south of Edmonton. She worries about the long-term effects on both her youngsters—the toddler with a bullet lodged between her liver and spine, and her older child who witnessed the trauma. In a civilized world, home is a refuge. A stray gang bullet should not be ripping into our homes or lives.

I pray both these families find comfort in the outrage being felt and the outpouring of support. As difficult as this is to watch and comprehend I'm not willing to hide my head in the sand. Reading the paper and watching the news will continue, from where I sit.

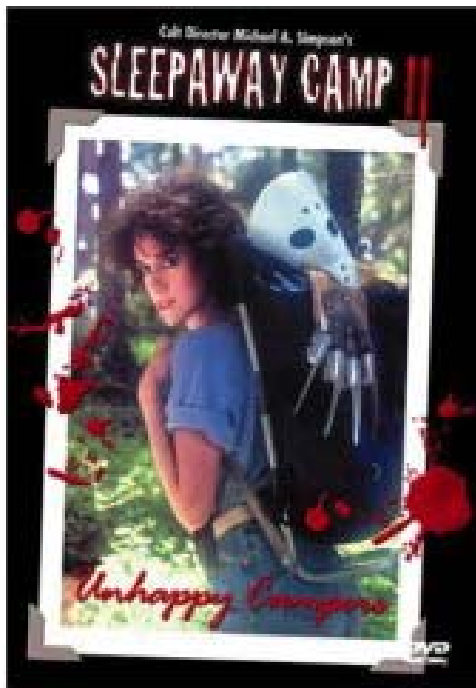
# The Chronicles of Cruiscin Lan

by  
Wanda  
Waterman  
St. Louis



## MILK-CRATE BANDIT

Erik Ditz



## No Such Thing as a Bad Movie

Chances are pretty good you've never seen any of these films, but not because they're terrible; I mean, they are terrible, but that's not why you haven't seen them.

In fact plenty of wretchedly unwatchable movies are awesome if you give them a chance, but because certain subjects are still considered too dark for mainline moviegoers, lots of incredible films remain buried in obscurity.

B horror has a reputation for gratuity and a lack of intelligence, and in my experience the genre offers up some of the best thoughtless indulgences to be had.

The truth is that, like rotten children, bad movies are just misunderstood and with a little bit of time and attention both can be enjoyed thoroughly until they put peanut-butter-and-jelly sandwiches into your VCR.

*The Bat*

This 1926 black and white masterpiece was the inspiration for Bob Kane's original Batman comics. It tells the story of a masked criminal haunting an old house and its guests, and though it tries hard to be terrifying, falls just short of insanely funny.

You know those fake plastic teeth people wear to look like hillbillies? Yeah, the bad guy has teeth like that. This film ranks alongside all those Abbot and Costello horror mock-ups, and was in a sense the predecessor to the whole horror-comedy genre.

*Zombie Apocalypse*

No zombies, just brain-transplanted cannibals and a mad scientist. Oh yeah, it's Italian so there are a thousand and one needless scenes of busty women getting changed into nightgowns and everyone is visibly speaking in English but for some reason still have their voices dubbed over.

*Maniac*

Reminiscent of *The Cabinet of Dr. Caligari*, this cult classic is about an escaped murderer who apprentices with a mad scientist, kills him, and adopts his identity to avoid suspicion and further his schemes, which are left relatively unexplored through the movie.

There are some great fights with unfortunate animals visibly tied together and pretty much no cohesive story, and the main character is played by the movie's makeup artist. This is supposedly based on an Edgar Allen Poe tale, but I still can't figure out which one.



### *Dahmer*

Not many people honestly want to know what was going in Jeffrey Dahmer's head when he raped and murdered numerous young men, but this stark telling dramatically illustrates just how an insecure maladjust becomes a household synonym for evil. It seems so simple in hindsight to point out that a little gratuitous release of tension and a sense of community very likely would have ceased the whole affair before it began, and this very human portrayal of a truly monstrous person leaves you with an odd mixture of empathy and fear for the everyman.

### *Ravenous*

*Ravenous* is the mostly true account of colonial cannibals in the United States. With bang-up performances from Robert Carlyle (*Trainspotting*, *28 Weeks Later*), David Arquette (*Scream*, *Eight-Legged Freaks*) and Jeffrey Jones (*The Hunt for Red October*, *Beetlejuice*, *Howard the Duck*) *Ravenous* is, to my knowledge, only the second movie to tackle this subject, the other being the remarkably hilarious *Cannibal: The Musical* by Trey Parker and Matt Stone.

### *Sleepaway Camp 2*

Schlock horror like the original *Sleepaway Camp* is only made worthwhile by the central elements of a movie like that; nobody knows who the killer is, there's a shock ending, and lots of National Lampoon-esque moments that make you feel like you're changing channels between movies. Part two has none of these, but makes up for it with overwhelmingly stupid death scenes: a girl gets forced into a latrine and drowned, another sits complacently while getting a hand-held drill to the face, and a third camper gets his throat cut by a toy Freddy Krueger glove. Hey, if dumb wasn't funny, they never would have made a second Harold and Kumar flick.

### *Brutes and Savages*

As though making a film about Africans and South Americans performing Americanized and scripted traditions and then calling it something so horribly demeaning as *Brutes and Savages* weren't awful enough, this movie actually has a scene where a tribesman battles an alligator but the alligator is really—I'm not kidding here—an inflatable pool toy and the tribesman couldn't even be bothered to be in the scene. This is a case of laughing at, not with.

### *Demons 2*

Dario Argento (*Suspiria*, *Opera*, *Inferno*) has basically just stopped trying. There's no reason given for the wild "demons" (read: angry Italians) running around eating and maiming people, nor for the various scenes where people attack inanimate objects with potted plants. Chock full of hilarious one-liners and lowbrow special effects, this was pretty much on par with *Demons*.



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

**Book:** Robert Alter, *The Book of Psalms: A Translation with Commentary*

**Release date:** 2007

**Publisher:** W. W. Norton and Company, Inc., New York, NY

*"Let but goodness and kindness pursue me all the days of my life.*

*And I shall dwell in the house of the Lord for many long days."*

Psalm 23, *The Book of Psalms: A Translation with Commentary*, by Robert Alter

*"What I have aimed at in this translation—inevitably, with imperfect success—is to represent Psalms in a kind of English verse that is readable as poetry yet sounds something like the Hebrew . . ."*

Introduction, *The Book of Psalms: A Translation with Commentary*, by Robert Alter

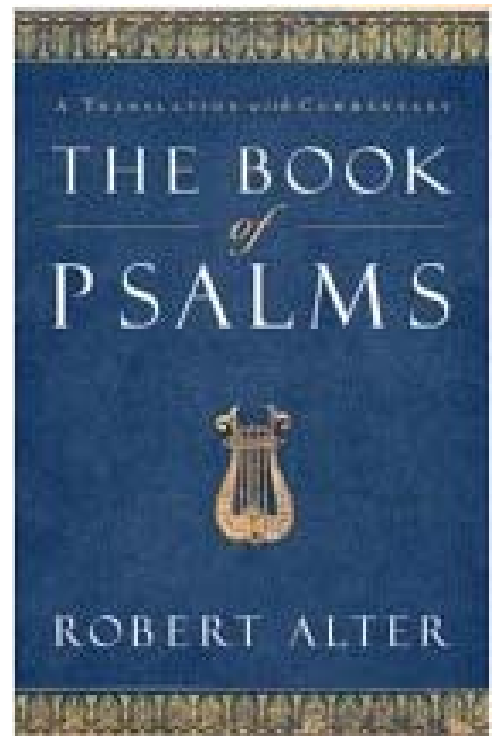
In a meadow near Bethlehem a handsome, ruddy shepherd boy played the harp and composed songs while minding his father's sheep. At one point he played his harp to comfort a mad king. Later that boy became a king himself. He continued writing songs, which were later compiled into the book we now know as Psalms.

It ain't necessarily so, says Robert Alter in the introduction to his translation of Psalms, but he is only citing a jumbo pile of credible scholarly evidence; the book that became one of the most prized and oft-read collections of poetry in the world and that formed part of the canon of both the Judaic and the Christian religious traditions was written by any number of poets, who later attributed them to King David.

Yet somehow the legend of the shepherd king and his exploits is inseparable from Psalms. Psalms without King David is like *1001 Nights* without Scheherazade, or *Canterbury Tales* without the Nun, the Miller, or the Wife of Bath. Psalm 3, for example, would fall flat without the staggering backdrop of the story of David's struggles with Absalom. The same can surely be said of Psalm 51 and the story of Bathsheba.

Alter has not utterly excluded David (which would be impossible without hacking away a slew of introductory verses), yet for him the mythology takes a back seat to the form (the ancient Hebrew poetic mode Hrushovski calls "semantic-syntactic-accentual parallelism") and the intended message of the original texts.

One shift from the major translations is the doctrinal distinction signified by the use of the word "rescue" and "rescuer" in place of the more commonly used "save" and "salvation."





Alter felt that the words “save,” “saviour,” and “salvation” were too theologically loaded to express what had been in the minds of the poets and early scribes, who would not have had a sense that a post-death paradise lay in wait for them as recompense for the earthly suffering they so eloquently described. The Hebrew afterlife was something quite different.

*What emerges is a clearer, purer book of Psalms in which the relationship with the deity is pragmatic yet mystical.*

The Hebrew word elsewhere translated as “forever” means long life, and the afterlife is here presented as a dark place in which human beings are helpless to praise and serve their creator. Prayers that in the King James appear to be petitions for apple-pie-in-the-sky-by-and-by are rendered by Alter as prayers for here-and-now health, safety, freedom, dignity, and the privilege of daily communion with God.

It is tempting to accuse Alter of banishing the numinous from Psalms, yet an intensity of spiritual fervour remains; there is a mystical personal connect with the deity, a link that appears to transcend all the worldly cares and desires that the psalmists describe. The deity is portrayed as the source and sustenance of our highest personal qualities, notably including compassion, understanding, and fairness.

You can also observe a progression from a basic to a complex and refined spirituality, e.g., from a desire for vengeance to a merciful tenderness; from a desire to protect oneself and one’s own to a desire to help the weak; from “lead me not into temptation” to “test me and try me”; from a dread of a warrior god to a profound trust in a God of love; and from a dependence on personal righteousness in the pursuit of divine favour to an acknowledgement of personal weakness and the joy of receiving mercy and forgiveness.

What emerges is a clearer, purer book of Psalms in which the relationship with the deity is pragmatic yet mystical. In this translation Alter has released from theological bondage the sense that relationship with God is immediate, mutually responsive, and evolving.

*The Book of Psalms: A Translation with Commentary* lives up to 10 of The Mindful Bard’s criteria for books well worth reading: 1) it is authentic, original, and delightful; 2) it confronts existing injustices; 3) it renews my enthusiasm for positive social action; 4) it makes me want to be a better artist; 5) it gives me tools which help me be a better artist; 6) it displays an engagement with and compassionate response to suffering; 7) it inspires an awareness of the sanctity of creation; 8) it is about attainment of the true self; 9) it provides respite from a sick and cruel world, a respite enabling me to renew myself for a return to mindful endeavour; and 10) it poses and admirably responds to questions which have a direct bearing on my view of existence.

*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.*

**Correction:** In last week’s Mindful Bard (v16 i16), the Bard noted that the authors of *What’s the Use of Truth?* quote “Henry James’s dictum that we must stop believing we have an obligation to God.” In fact, it is William James the authors refer to, and the Bard apologizes for any confusion.

## AUSU This Month



term; Joy Kryz, who served two terms; and Mac McInnis, who completed his third term on council. We wish them all the very best. Your new council is:

### New Council Takes Office

#### New Executive Elected

At 7:00 pm, April 14, 2008, the 2006/08 AUSU council was dissolved and the newly elected councillors began their two-year term.

The election of the new executives was also completed. The execs will serve for one year, at which time a mid-term re-election will take place for the three exec positions.

Council wishes to express our deepest gratitude to the four departing councillors—Lisa Priebe, who served two terms and was president for three years; Real Beaulieu, who served one

Karl Low - President

Barbara Rielly - Vice President, External

Sarah Kertcher - Vice President, Finance

Bethany Porter

Lonita Fraser

Shaun Driscoll

Heather Fraser

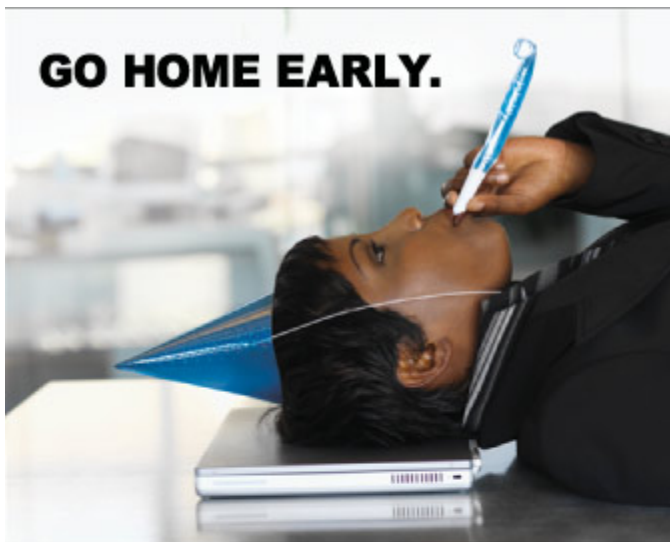
Zil-E-Huma Lodhi

Emily Dukeshire

Watch our site for bios of your new councillors, coming soon.

### 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



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

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



 **SmartDraw**

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](mailto:ausu@ausu.org)

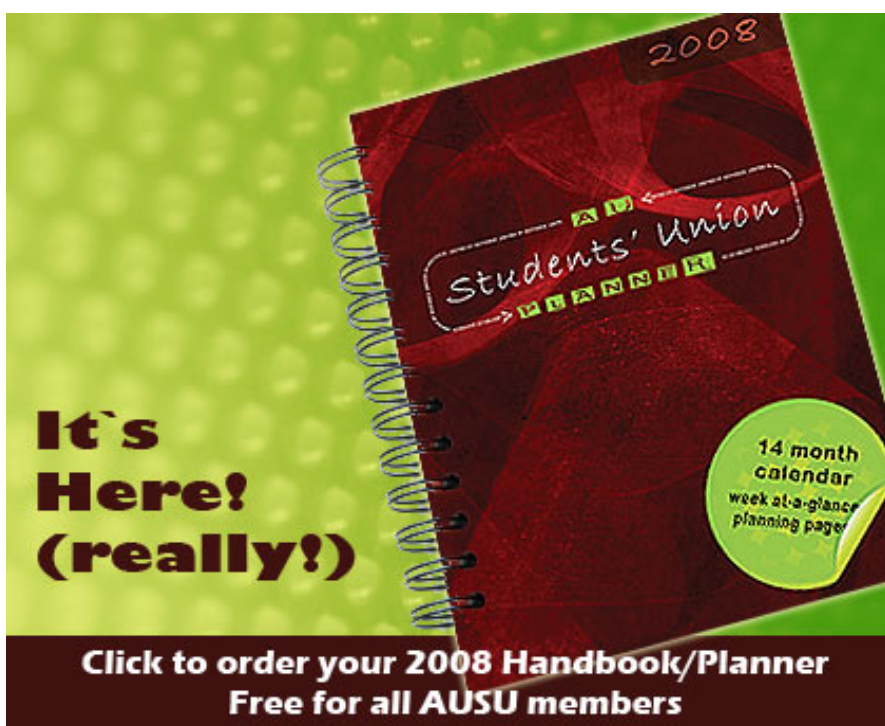
### Smart Draw – Benefit for AUSU members

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](#).

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.





## At Home: Albertans to Receive Free Health Care

It was announced in Alberta's budget this week that funds have been allocated to cover the personal portion of the Alberta Health Care Insurance Plan (AHCIP).

Currently, Albertans pay \$44 per person per month to stay insured under the plan.

Until now, anyone reaching the age of 65 has been exempt from paying premiums (as well as their spouses, if they were younger than 65). Also, premium subsidies have been available for Albertans with low incomes.

This change is set to take place January 1, 2009, and officials at Alberta Health Care are reminding everyone that they are still responsible to pay all their premiums up to that time. They also note that Albertans are still required to keep their AHCIP cards and to present them when they go for treatment.

According to the *Edmonton Journal*, Premier Ed Stelmach says the Conservatives are merely coming through on their promise to eliminate premiums within the next four years. Stelmach is quoted as saying, "We said we would do it sooner if we could and that is exactly what we're doing."

Provinces decide individually how to charge (or not) for health care premiums.

The goal of the Canada Health Act is to "ensure that all residents of Canada have reasonable access to medically necessary insured services without direct charges." Each province determines how they will administer their health care and premium program.

## In Foreign News: Scientists and leading economic experts warn that measures to curb global warming are harming the economy

Depending on how much attention you normally pay to environmental issues, you may or may not be aware that a few years ago, before global warming became the hot topic of the decade, experts warned that the speedy switch from traditional fuels to biofuels would place too much pressure on farmland to be sustainable.

Of course, this biofuel option was the first explored by scientists and even politicians, with George W. Bush being one of the most outspoken national leaders on the subject.

Critics warned that although biofuels do offer a clean-burning, natural, and renewable alternative to gasoline, the mass production of fuel crops would lead to further deforestation and have other major repercussions on the environment. In South American countries especially, rainforests fell into immediate danger because of the deforestation caused by creating prime farmland for crops like corn and palm that can be processed into fuel.

Like too much other good advice, these predictions were ignored as the United States and other countries plowed ahead with scientific exploration of biofuels, content in the idea that clean fuel with no carbon emissions would cure the problem outright.

Now, biofuel production has come back to haunt us because the cropland being used to produce these fuels has been diverted from food production. Economically speaking, this means that food prices are rising right along with gasoline and the average North America is feeling the pinch.

Biofuel is a great innovation, but clearly we need to look at some other options when it comes to dealing with global warming.

## **CLICK ON THIS – Wordistry**

**Lonita Fraser**

Out of our mouths and pens and keyboards, words flow daily. Without them, life would be almost impossible. We are so incredibly dependent on them. We need them in ways not entirely unlike how we need air and sleep and food. Yet we don't always appreciate them as much as we might.

### One Sentence

How economical can you be with what you say? Can you convey an entire thought in the scant few words in the average sentence? Give it a try!

### 26

An association for writers, editors, and language consultants that "is here to inspire a greater love of words, in business and in life."

### Reviews in Haiku

See? You can do a lot more with words than jot down the daily grocery list!

### Interactive Poetry

And words, by their very nature communal, can be shared in a more collaborative way than just your everyday conversation.

### Rhyming Dictionary and Thesaurus

If the rhyme animal in you needs a little assistance now and then, this is a good place to start.

### Book Holder

So now you can eat and work and read all at the same time, since your book can be propped up with this handy little item.



## EDUCATION NEWS

Hayley Darychuk



## Universities struggle to cope with mental health issues on campus

**Study indicates students 12 per cent more likely to suffer mental health issues**

OTTAWA (CUP) -- Post-secondary institutions across Canada are struggling to [meet] students' demands for mental health care services or support.

Richard Kadison, chief of mental health services at Harvard University, recently conducted a study in which he found students to be 12 per cent more likely to suffer mental health issues than the rest of the population.

Debate remains, though, as to whether the increase is because students are having a harder time dealing with the pace of modern academia, or if students are simply more aware of available services and are accessing them.

Pam Whiting, the director of health and counselling services at Simon Fraser University, said that "increased awareness on the part of students, staff, and faculty of mental health issues is leading to more students coming forward and being referred."

Patty Allen, the health educator at Carleton University's health and counselling services, said she thinks the increase is due to an increase in both awareness and stress levels.

"This is definitely a younger generation, both chronologically and maturity-wise," she said.

"Competition to get into university has become more intense. Institutions are attracting high-achieving and overachieving students who put a lot of pressure on themselves in all aspects of their lives."

Allen said universities are also struggling to provide mental health services for their students because of a lack of funding.

Whiting said that it is difficult to pinpoint which issues are affecting students most, and what is causing the increases.

"I do know from a social and population health perspective that financial issues, adjusting to a new culture, normal developmental transitioning [from family to greater independence] and both internal and external pressures to do well, can all play a role."

Simon Fraser University recently added a second psychiatrist to its staff to fill the increasing need for expertise in dealing with students' mental health.

Stanley Kutcher, a mental health expert at Dalhousie University, though, believes that Kadison's study defines mental health issues too vaguely.

In order to accurately determine if students are more susceptible to mental disorders, he said, the study would have to examine specific issues, such as stress or depression.

"There has been no increase in the rate of mental disorders or depression . . . the measure has been going down over the past decade," Kutcher said.

The Canadian Mental Health Association (CMHA) said that university students' stress levels increase when the social and financial costs of education increase.

The CMHA said that adolescents cope with emotions differently than adults.

Self-injury is becoming a common way for youth to relieve psychological pain. Thirteen per cent of teens involved in a recent CMHA study said they cut, burnt, or hit themselves.

Reasons teens engage in this behaviour might lie in the fact their brains are undergoing massive behavioural changes as they continue to grow and mature.

Dalhousie's teen mental health website states teens are more likely than the general population to face depression, anxiety, and have thoughts of suicide while they adapt to new environments like university.

These brain developments cause adolescents to go through periods during which they lack motivation in their work, and take risks they previously would not have thought right.

"In talking with our counselling staff and physicians, it would appear that the complexity and severity of mental health issues has increased," said Whiting.

## AROUND AU



### AU Has the Answers

An Athabasca University publication, *The Book of Answers*, has garnered another prize, this one a silver award from the University Continuing Education Association (UCEA).

The UCEA represents institutions offering continuing education, including "public and private accredited colleges and universities, and nonprofit organizations with a significant commitment to continuing higher education."

AU's *The Book of Answers* is a prospectus publication. It was included in the competition's Continuing Education category because AU offers students the opportunity to study part-time while they work, a format similar to that of continuing education courses. *The Voice* offers congratulations to student recruitment and marketing manager Heather Newton and her team.

*With special thanks to Athabasca University's The Insider.*



# 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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