

THE VOICE MAGAZINE

Volume 16 Issue 19
May 9, 2008

Speak Easy

Publish and
perish

Open Road

A balancing act

People in Planes

In conversation with
Gareth Jones



Plus:

*AU Profiles, Chronicles of Cruiscin Lan,
The Mindful Bard, and much more...*

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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

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



EDITORIAL

Sandra Livingston



Speak Easy

Most days, it's with a great sense of disquiet that I watch the Facebook generation expose the intimate details of their lives to the world. I'm also prone to feelings of despair as I lurch through the abysmal syntax of online newspapers' comment sections. But May 3 brought a certain grudging affection for this flood of information, no matter how poorly written or copious it might be.

In 1993, the United Nations General Assembly designated May 3 as World Press Freedom Day, "an opportunity to celebrate the fundamental principles of press freedom . . . to defend the media from attacks on their independence and to pay tribute to journalists who have lost their lives in the line of duty."

It's not a date most people give a second thought to. Bombarded with news reports on television, radio, and the Internet, it doesn't occur to us that, in some countries, writing an article or filming a news segment can be deadlier than going to war. As we channel surf past the talking heads on CNN or the CBC, or click through endless blogs and social networking sites, the idea that freely expressing your opinion would bring a knock on the door and a trip to a torture cell seems ridiculous.

For Zahra Kazemi, an Iranian-Canadian photojournalist, attacks on the press became a deadly reality. On June 23, 2003, Kazemi was taking photos of a student-led protest outside Evin prison in Tehran. The photos would cost her life: she was arrested and spent 77 hours being interrogated and tortured by police, prosecutors, and intelligence officials. Her injuries were so severe she later died in hospital.

For Ken Saro-Wiwa, a Nigerian writer, journalist, and businessman, the pen became a powerful tool to fight the brutal social and ecological devastation that oil companies brought in their hunger for profits. His non-violent movement for justice was effective: the oil companies eventually pulled out, but his voice was silenced. On November 10, 1995, Saro-Wiwa and eight colleagues "were executed by the Nigerian state for campaigning against the devastation of the Niger Delta by oil companies, especially Shell and Chevron."

The deaths of Zahra Kazemi and Ken Saro-Wiwa resounded internationally, but they are not alone. In the past two years, 121 journalists have been murdered: 68 in 2006 and 53 in 2007. According to one UN body, "only 6.7 per cent of journalists' murders" ever lead to convictions.

The silencing of journalists continues. The UN News Centre reports that Felicitas Martínez Sánchez, 21, and Teresa Bautista Merino, 24, "were shot dead as they travelled along a highway in Oaxaca state on 7 April." Their crime? They were on a reporting assignment for community radio. Russia, China, Afghanistan—the list of countries is long, rife with leaders who either sanction or turn a blind eye to the violent oppression.

And in case you dismiss the blatant control of the press as something that could never happen in Canada, Prime Minister Stephen Harper's actions show otherwise. Shortly after being elected, Harper decided that, in press conferences, he would only answer questions from selected journalists, those whose questions had been approved ahead of time by his staff. Reporters refused to be intimidated and walked out of a press conference, prompting Harper to declare that he would only speak to local media.

So as you skim over endless headlines and tune out the drone of TV newscasters, take a moment to remember those who remain silenced and imprisoned today; those who have paid a heavy price for believing that speech can be free. PEN Canada is a good place to start.

CAREERS

Behdin Nowrouzi



Consider a Career as a Registered Nurse

What is nursing?

The Canadian Nurses Association (CNA) describes nursing as the profession of educating and treating patients. Registered nurses (RNs) inform the public about various medical conditions. Furthermore, registered nurses provide guidance, advice, and support to patients and their families.

RNs monitor patients' symptoms, administer treatment and medications, take histories, assist with and conduct medical diagnostic tests, and help interpret clinical results along with other members of the health care team.

Education and Training

Nursing licensure and registration occurs at the provincial level. Nursing candidates must be licensed or registered in the province or territory in which they will practice nursing.

All Canadian provinces and territories except Quebec require that candidates write the Canadian Registered Nurses Examination as part of the registration or licensure process. The regulatory college of each province and territory is mandated through legislation to regulate the profession of nursing. Its objective is to protect the public's right to quality nursing services by providing leadership to the nursing profession in self-regulation.

Admission information and requirements

There are over 50 nursing programs across Canada leading to either a diploma or baccalaureate degree in nursing. Admission criteria vary and applicants are advised to contact the school of their choice directly.

Athabasca University offers three Baccalaureate of Nursing (BN) degree programs through the Centre for Nursing and Health Studies: 1) post-RN; 2) the post-licensed practical nurses' (LPN) BN; and 3) the BN program.

The first program is geared toward applicants who are graduates of an RN diploma program and wish to obtain a university level education. Conversely, the post-LPN BN program is designed for LPNs, providing the opportunity to further their nursing education in a baccalaureate program.

Finally, the BN at Athabasca University at Mount Royal College (BN AU at MRC/Calgary) is a "collaborative, integrated program designed for students who are just entering the nursing profession."

Athabasca University also offers graduate programs, including a master of nursing and related graduate health sciences degrees.

The nursing employment situation in Canada is improving after several years of hospital downsizing and mergers.

Where registered nurses work

According to the CNA, the majority of RNs work within the publicly funded sector of health care. A minority of nurses work in the private sector and an even smaller number are self-employed.

Nurses are employed in a variety of settings, from working in the emergency room to community-based practice. Nurses are also employed by the private industry, as part of school boards, and also as consultants for the government.

Salaries

The nursing employment situation in Canada is improving after several years of hospital downsizing and mergers. The CNA states that nurses with skills and experience in specialty areas (e.g., emergency, critical care, and operating room) and those willing to work in smaller communities or isolated communities are in the most demand.

The Canadian Nurses Association is anticipating a shortage of RNs in Canada. Unionized full-time nurses' wages across the country are listed below:

Full-time RN Hourly Rate Ranges (not including premiums) by province

Province	\$/Hr Min	\$/Hr Max	Hours Worked Per Year
British Columbia	29.30	38.46	1879.2
Alberta	27.93	36.67	1920.75
Saskatchewan	26.90	32.96	1948.8
Ontario	26.80	38.74	1950
Manitoba	26.80	31.59	2015
New Brunswick	26.38	31.49	1957.5
Nova Scotia	26.28	30.72	1950
PEI	25.50	31.86	1950
Newfoundland & Labrador	23.48	30.00	1950
Quebec	19.56	29.15	1891.5

Source: *Adapted from the Ontario Nurses' Association (2008).*

For more information or a directory of nursing programs, please visit the Canadian Nurses Association [website](#).

For information about nursing programs at Athabasca University, please visit the Centre for Nursing and Health Studies [website](#).

AU Profiles:

AU Profiles: Emily Dukeshire

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 new AUSU Student Councillor Emily Dukeshire. Emily, a Human Services major in Athabasca University's Bachelor of Professional Arts program (BPA), is using the BPA to enrich and build upon her college degree in recreation therapy.

She describes recreation therapy, explaining why she finds working in the field so enjoyable. She also tells why she's glad to be part of Student Council, and explains her unique online "office hours" for fellow students to share their issues and concerns.

Before switching to full-time study, Emily worked in a hospital as a recreation therapist, a job that involves "using recreation and leisure to enhance well-being," she says.

For example, at the hospital, she coordinated programs for the elderly: "I would perform assessments and then [run] programs to meet client needs," Emily says. "I [ran] card games, news and views, social events, exercises, supper club, walking groups, [and] sensory stimulation."

She adds, "It's one of the greatest jobs! Who else gets paid to hold parties?"

Emily, who recently moved to Calgary, began studying with AU shortly after graduating from college with her two-year diploma.

"I really liked my diploma because it was . . . hands-on," Emily says, "but I wanted to balance that out with some more theoretical stuff." In addition, she hoped that a bachelor's degree would give her an "edge in the job market," she says. "Most recreation therapists just have a college diploma."

Studying independently was familiar to Emily, who was home-schooled for "most of her life," she says. "I really liked the idea of AU, it fit with my learning style."

Moreover, she enjoys its flexibility. "I . . . love AU because it goes wherever I need to," she says. "My husband and I have been moving around a lot for his work and school. AU just comes with me wherever I go."

"I want to hear what other students think and feel. I think it creates a connection between council and the student body."

An added bonus: AU's BPA program allowed her to transfer her entire diploma, leaving only twenty courses remaining in her degree.

"I really didn't want to start all over," Emily says. With seven courses remaining, she'd like to graduate sometime next year, although she's keeping an open mind. "I am . . . going to wait and see how things go in Calgary," she says. Either way, she adds, "I want to keep working on my courses."

Planning helps her get through classes without getting bogged down. "I am always amazed at what I can get done when I just keep plowing ahead, doing a little [each] day," she says. She notes: "If I am preparing for a test, I will review a chapter a day; by the time the exam rolls around, I am ready."

Studying by distance brings its own set of challenges, however. "Sometimes I do miss the social interaction," Emily admits.

However, she counters that by taking classes at a traditional university at the same time. "With my degree I can take half the courses at a local B and M school and transfer the credits to AU," she says. "By the time I graduate I will have attended seven post-secondary schools!"

A more difficult aspect of distance learning is the delayed feedback. "If I don't understand something at a B and M school I can just ask the teacher after class," Emily says. "It takes two minutes, and I can continue with the project I'm working on."

Quicker answers and assignment turnaround are two things Emily hopes to advocate now that she's been elected to AUSU's Student Council.

Now in her first term on council, she's excited to be a part of it all. "Once I started campaigning, I got really interested in the student issues," Emily says. For example, she is looking into a textbook buyback program. "I think [it] would save students money, and would be good for the environment—books won't get dumped in the garbage," she says.

She's also open to the suggestions of fellow students. "Because I am new, I am still learning what students' concerns are," Emily says.

In addition to participating in the [AUSU forums](#), she's available in the AUSU website's chat room on Tuesdays between 10:00 and 11:00 a.m. MST.

"I want to hear what other students think and feel," she says. "I think it creates a connection between council and the student body."

Emily's happy to be able to make a difference in the AU community. "I think Athabasca is a great organization," she says. "I want to give back to an organization that has helped me to live my dreams."



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

DVD: *INLAND EMPIRE*

Release date: 2007

Written and directed by David Lynch. Starring Laura Dern, Jeremy Irons, and Justin Theroux.

"... as a rule the images of the unconscious are not produced by consciousness, but have a reality and spontaneity of their own. Nevertheless, we regard them as mere marginal phenomena."

Carl Jung in *Memories, Dreams, Reflections*

I'm one to jump up and take notice when Lynch puts out a new film, mainly because of the cultural significance of his work, but also because his screwed-up visions are just so engaging. Oh, and they stimulate creativity, no question.

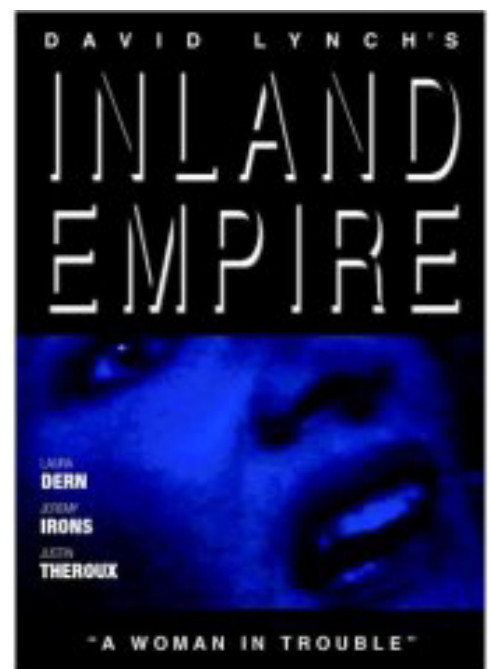
Is the actress Nikki (played by Laura Dern) confusing herself with her character in the movie she's acting in? Is she having a mental breakdown? Is this about the absurdity and artifice of the silver screen? Is this all one long nightmare? If so, who's having it?

Unlike conventional action sequences, there are many things in this story that we simply don't need to know. On the other hand, knowing wouldn't hurt.

There is an interesting scene on the second disk involving a young Polish girl and a middle-aged Polish watch seller. They are negotiating a sale, but this is no ordinary transaction. The watches bring good luck—and the girl very much wants good luck in her life right now—but they will cost her 25 dollars (which the girl ultimately pulls from a highly symbolic shoe) and two seconds of handholding.

This watch seller is one of many terrifying images of the self in this film. The girl is in fact bargaining not for good luck but for the initiation of a process that will ultimately be meaningful and redemptive, a process summed up by a shiny timepiece. She proffers the 25 dollars but is reluctant to give of her substance; in the end her hand is clutched by force.

The device of the movie-within-a-movie is often a statement about reality. In this case the device is embellished by the fact that the movie Nikki is starring in now (enigmatically named *No More Blue Tomorrows*) turns out to be, it is discovered, a remake of a movie done years ago in Poland, one that never made the screen because of a crime committed during filming. And so the actors are being asked to relive a tragic myth in the hopes that the ending will not be tragic this time around. Sound familiar? If so, you better see a shrink.



Many scenes in this movie are readily recognizable to most of us as having nightmare content, and *INLAND EMPIRE* is clearly taking seriously the role of film as the dream state of a culture. Some recent dream research has indicated that dreams play an important role in the forming of memories; it is as if the sensory input of the day is slowly dropped into a series of open file folders, each image or event landing in whatever place it fits until the formation of a narrative acceptable to the ego.

This dropping of input into categories seems to be the method by which Lynch parades his series of sordid and absurd scenes before our eyes. Eventually our conscious minds will sort them out. Maybe. What is more likely to happen is that our conscious minds will take a back seat.

"Inland Empire" describes a region of southern California. There is only one mention of the title in the entire film; some organized criminals are talking about an inland empire as if it had a physical location. We know better. If you don't believe me, pay careful attention to the lyrics of the song sung at the beginning and toward the end of the movie.

INLAND EMPIRE lives up to eight of The Mindful Bard's criteria for films well worth seeing: 1) it is authentic, original, and delightful; 2) it confronts, rebukes, and mocks existing injustices; 3) it makes me want to be a better artist; 4) it gives me tools which help me be a better artist; 5) it displays an engagement with and compassionate response to suffering; 6) it is about attainment of the true self; 7) it stimulates my mind; and 8) it poses and admirably responds to questions having 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. For a list of criteria, go [here](#). If I agree with your recommendation, I'll thank you online.

DID YOU KNOW?



Program Plans

Are you getting close to completing your degree and want to make sure you've covered all the requirements? Thinking of switching majors but not sure which courses will carry over? Or a new AU student trying to decide which program to enrol in?

You can check out the requirements for all AU programs with the online [Program Plans](#). Each plan is a handy checklist of core courses, electives, course levels (e.g., junior or senior), and examples to help plan your degree, certificate, or diploma.

There are also Practice Program Plans, templates available in Word format that you can download and fill in. Depending on your initial enrolment date, program requirements may vary, and plans are available for the past 10 years.

If you need help selecting courses it's always best to speak with an AU advisor, but the online program plans are a great place to start!



*From
Where
I Sit*

Hazel Anaka

The Open Road

Dear reader, I have a confession to make. I've been keeping something from you. I was hoping to have a good news, happy ending, victory-over-defeat story to share this week. Alas, it was not to be.

Last year Roy bought a Honda Gold Wing motorcycle, thereby living out a dream. He took the Alberta Safety Council course and earned his Class 6 rating. My brother-in-law Todd made a purchase and did the course a month or so earlier. My other brother-in-law has been riding for over 30 years.

At the motorcycle show in early January some of us succumbed to the idea of making this new pastime a family affair. That night two sisters, two of our daughters and I registered for the basic motorcycle course. It would be a fun-filled girls' weekend out.

In the ensuing months I've alternated between being pumped about taking on a new challenge and thinking ohmigawd, what have I done.

All of us survived the course with varying degrees of scarring. Only two of us were confident enough in our abilities to attempt the Class 6 skills exam. Of those two, only Hilary passed the exam. I had my doubts by Friday night. Fighting a week-old head cold with Flonase and Cepacol lozenges, coughing my head off, and blowing my nose didn't improve either my comfort level or mood.

The course is brutal. Twenty-one hours of unrelenting course and classroom time spread over two days and one evening. It was physically demanding, mind-numbing, information overload. It didn't at all help that our chief instructor was some sort of power-tripping, paramilitary, hard ass, tough love, I'm gonna whip

these recruits into shape, know-it-all arrogant jerk.

I soon discovered that having repetitive stress injury (RSI) in both forearms made this an extremely painful process. I wore braces the entire time, but holding the clutch lever and throttle for that many hours has caused a relapse back to the time I needed physiotherapy to get through the day.

I will be following up with a formal letter of complaint about the class size (24 split into two groups), seemingly crappy bikes that needed to be taken out of service, and the chief instructor's approach to adult learners. I will also be suggesting they add a buyer-beware clause to the registration form, saying "Having the following diseases/conditions may impact your ability to successfully complete the course." Instead, they cover a list of conditions (including RSI) on Friday night. A little late, in my opinion.

I know that my attitude, mood, skill level, ability to handle the rigors of the course, et cetera are all my responsibility. Maybe I'm too old to be trying something like this.

The good news is I have a whole new respect for anyone who can ride safely and well, the patience of the instructors, and the secure knowledge that someday when Roy is ready I will be a well-informed passenger. When the scars of the weekend heal I intend to keep riding our Rebel and take the road test locally when I feel I'm ready. The open road still awaits, from where I sit.

The Chronicles of Cruiscin Lan

by
Wanda
Waterman
St. Louis



IN CONVERSATION WITH . . .

Wanda Waterman St. Louis



Gareth Jones, Lead Singer of People in Planes

People in Planes is a five-piece Welsh band known for its lush sound, spirited vocals, and sensitive lyrics. The band has recently started a tour in advance of the upcoming release (June 24) of their second album, Beyond the Horizon. The video for one track, "Pretty Buildings" can be seen [here](#).

Their official website can be found [here](#), and their Myspace page is [People in Planes](#).

People in Planes, in Planes

We just finished the first part of our tour this week. We're doing some acoustic shows here in the U.K., working with agents, doing a bit of industry work over the next few days. Then we're going down to L.A. to the Viper Room, which we've never played before and which is steeped in history. Isn't that the place where River Phoenix died? We're going out there so I guess that will be the highlight of the week.

And from there we'll be flying up to Vancouver. I'm really looking forward to getting back into Canada. I haven't been to Vancouver for a while and it's my favourite city.

Song Sung Blue

Writing a song can happen in different ways. There's no definite way of doing it. If Pete writes something his way of writing it is sort of jamming, being outrageous for a bit, and it builds from that. Then the guitarists and the drums thrash out the sections. I just sit down at the piano.

With "Pretty Buildings" we sort of wrote half the song each. I wrote the piano verses for it.

For my verses I was trying to come up with a narrative, a story about a girl, told in a free-flowing thought process. It's got a relationship connotation, and it goes on a journey.

Our songs tend to be less obvious but more personal. We're really upbeat people, but we tend to write in minor keys. I don't really know why that is. We're really quite happy, balanced people. Maybe we should be a bit more depressed—it would be a good reflection of what we write. I suppose we're channelling misery.



Roots and Branches

My parents are musical. My mum's a pianist and Dad sings. In Wales they're really big on male voice choirs with close harmonies. And we've all been in various bands in our home town. In smallish towns there isn't much to do so we all played in different bands.

As for the writing, I started young and it just developed. I'm not nearly as prolific as Pete, who writes most of our songs. Pete didn't have a family background in music except that his brother played in a band, like my brother.

The town Peter and I grew up in is Porthcawl, between Cardiff and Swansea. It's a little town; something like 20 thousand people. There's not much going on. You have to go 30 miles up the road to the city to do anything. It was a great town to grow up in, low crime and really safe. It's right on the Bristol Channel. You can see across to southwest England. Back in the fifties and sixties and earlier it was a fun-fair kind of place but now it's more residential.

Right now I live just a few miles from Porthcawl. Pete just moved to New York and John lives in Bristol. Chris and Ian are thinking of moving to New York as well, I think. There's talk of all of us moving to New York. Even though it's so easy to travel now I think there's a sense that we could move forward better if we were all in the same city as our label. Everything seems to be happening in New York for us. I don't know how flawed that logic is.

How It Works

Creativity just clicks sometimes. You encapsulate emotion in what you play, I think. It's like a spark out of the blue. When it happens it's like channelling, although that may be a bit pretentious. You come up with something you really like and it just feels right. You can play the same chord sequence on two separate occasions and on the one time it could be the best thing in the world and on the other, not.

The only condition I require to be creative is that I definitely need to be on my own, no doubt about it.

"I'm really looking forward to getting back into Canada. I haven't been to Vancouver for a while and it's my favourite city."



Feeding the Muse

Lately I've been listening to *Park Avenue* by Plants and Animals. They're from Montreal, I believe. I saw the album on iTunes and gave it a listen.

I was really into Neil Young and there are some Neil Young elements in it. There's also a real hippy vibe to it. I just love it. It's an amazing album.

I think most bands now are sitting around in vans with laptops watching whatever they can get. A

lot of movies get passed around in our van. Loads of movies, television series. I like *There Will Be Blood*, which was incredible. Also *Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf?*

The Heart of Things

How you feel about everything does come out in your lyrics and music. We're living in a pretty fucked up time right now, aren't we? America is out of control, Britain is out of control. It's a really worrying time right now, so I guess it's in the back of your mind and influences what you're doing. I think you'd have to be really ignorant to not be worried. It's right there, and you have to really pull the shutters down to miss it.

You worry that something's going to come to a head. It's not just the environment, though that's bad enough; there's nuclear war, monetary problems, wealth imbalance, stealing from oil-rich countries, our occupation of Iraq and how we get away with it. It's terrible.

I just had a child. A boy. We had a week off so some of us came home to Wales. It's been different being away on tour with that. It's good to be home. Wales is a fairly safe place to raise a family. Just like in Canada and the U.S., there are safe places with free and open societies. Wales is great; we grew up here and there's lots of community feeling. Maybe that's a luxury that's afforded to Westerners at the expense of others. But we've got security. We really are lucky people, but when you have children you can't help worry that they're growing up in a troubled world.

AROUND AU



Convocation 2008

It's almost here! On June 12, 13, and 14 the AU campus will be buzzing with the excitement of Convocation 2008.

The AU [website](#) has all the info you'll need to get ready for the big day, including travel information, schedules, a convocation checklist, and more. You can also find out about the 2008 recipients of AU's honorary doctorates.

They include an Honorary Doctor of Laws to be conferred on Professor Patricia Anne Monture, Director of the Aboriginal Justice and Criminology program at the University of Saskatchewan, whose work in Indigenous Studies, Women's Studies, Law and Sociology has been recognized world-wide; an Honorary Doctor of Science to be conferred on Dr. Janice Morse, well known for her work in qualitative methodology; and an Honorary Doctor of Athabasca University to be conferred on Dr. Mary Lou Jepsen, Chief Technology Officer, and co-founder of One Laptop per Child, "a non-profit company whose humanitarian mission is to deliver low-cost laptops en-masse to the disadvantaged children of developing countries."

Of course, the highlight of convocation is the awarding of parchments, but if you plan to take your place in the graduands' procession this year, the deadline to register is fast approaching.

As the website says, "All final grades and Application For Graduation Forms must be received by the Office of the Registrar by May 9, 2008, in order to participate in the June Convocation ceremonies."

So make sure your application is submitted before the deadline, and see you at Convocation 2008!

AUSU This Month



Meet Your New Council

The AUSU Council and staff have added and updated their bio pages. If you're curious about who these nine people are, you can go to our [council page](#) to find out more, or meet our Councillors in the AUSU chat room at the times announced on the front page of the AUSU website.

Also, on May 26, at 6:00 p.m. MST, the new AUSU Council will be having their first council meeting open to public attendance. See the people you elected in action. Contact ausu@ausu.org or phone 1-800-788-9041, ext 3413 for details on how you can attend.

New Addition to Council Family

The VP Finance and Administration, Sarah Kertcher, was not able to participate in the most recent AUSU executive meeting, but her absence was understandable. The night before, Sarah had a baby boy by the name of Nathan Ross Kertcher. Nathan came into this world at 7 lbs. and 13 oz. AUSU sends its congratulations out to Nathan and his parents, and looks forward to the day when he's an Active Member.



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.

You can download the catalogue in PDF from the link on our home page, or go to <http://www.ausu.org/services/store.php> to see the catalogue online. 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. We are in the process of selecting more product of good quality and use for our members, and some of these should start to be available soon. Suggestions as to other products are welcome.

AUSU Lock Loan Program

If you take exams at the Calgary or Edmonton campus, you can participate in our Lock Loan Program. Under this program, you can borrow a lock to secure your stuff while you take your exam, then return it at no cost and with no deposit. If you're not in Calgary or Edmonton, or would like to purchase a lock to keep, we are keeping the price close to our cost in the spirit of this program. However, to do this means we rely on you to return the borrowed locks, and to make sure the combination is reset to 0-0-0 when you do.

Employment Site Nearly Ready

Big news! AUSU has nearly completed the final testing of the new employment site developed in co-ordination with the Personnel Department. This site will be available to all of our members and their family or friends, and will help them to find employers looking for their skills.



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

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.

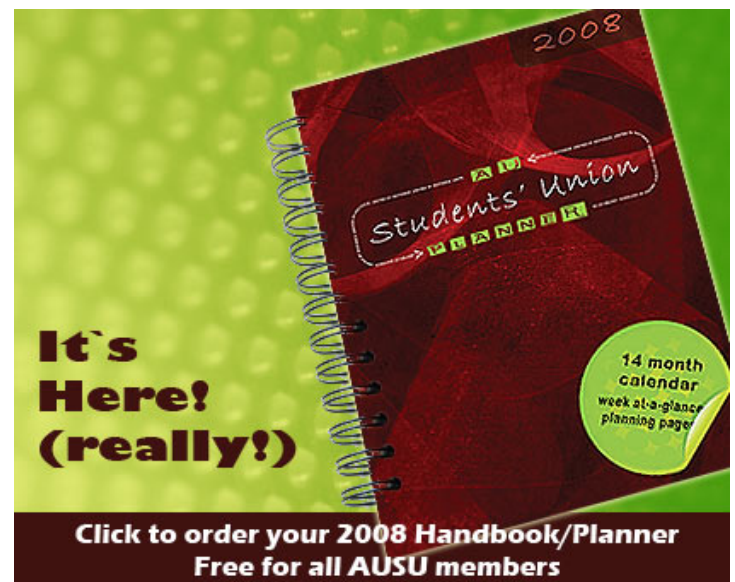
For any course that requires charts that cannot be easily created in Word or Excel, this should be a real time saver and make it easier to submit all portions of an assignment by email. Remember, though, that you should always check with your tutor to find out if there is a specific format he or she 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.

AUSU Handbook/Planner 2008 in stock!

The 2008 AUSU planner is still in stock. 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*.

As always, we're excited to know what you think of the planner.





At Home: Low-income Canadians continue to struggle with basic needs

According to Statistics Canada, the percentage of Canadians living in poverty has gone down over the last several years. Data from the 1995 census shows that 19.7 per cent of Canadians were considered to be low income. Data from the 2000 census shows that this rate went down to 16.2 per cent.

Proponents of increasing the funds available to low-income Canadians believe that meeting the basic needs of shelter and food remains a major challenge for people on social assistance.

According to the Ontario Association of Food Banks, the number of Canadians relying on food banks increased 123 per cent between 1989 and 2004. They also report that just over 13 per cent of those currently using food banks are employed.

The Association also states that as many as two-thirds of food banks across the country do not have enough supplies to feed people in need for more than five days per month. In

Charlottetown, P.E.I., the food bank has already noticed a drop in bread donations since the recent rise in the price of grain.

In Manitoba, the provincial government has announced that the number of Canadians living in poverty there has decreased. The government noted that the poverty rate for children in single-mother families dropped by 63 per cent between 1999 and 2006.

Manitoba is raising the amount of rent money it allows for welfare recipients by between 9 per cent and 18 per cent, depending on the type of benefits that apply. This generally means about \$35 more per month for rent but that only brings the shelter rates up to \$271 per month for single adults who are not disabled.

According to the Winnipeg Free Press, Gord Mackintosh, Manitoba's Family Services and Housing Minister, believes the poverty data is misleading. Although there's a positive trend in the numbers, Mackintosh noted the data does not include First Nations.

"That is unacceptable," Mackintosh said. "All Canadians should be included in a measure."

While some of the numbers indicate that poverty in Canada is lessening, food and shelter continue to be a major challenge for low-income Canadians.

In Foreign News: Zimbabwean opposition facing major obstacles to fair elections

Opposition to the ruling party in Zimbabwe continues to face violence and intimidation over the upcoming runoff elections there. In March, the Zimbabwean election failed to give the incumbent leader Robert Mugabe a big enough win to allow him to hold on to his 28-year political stranglehold.

The Movement for Democratic Change (MDC), Zimbabwe's opposing party, is led by Morgan Tsvangirai, who has been vocal about the less than conclusive results of the recent election. The electoral results in March

showed that nearly 48 per cent of voters supported Tsvangirai while only about 43 per cent supported Mugabe.

Experts watching the Zimbabwean elections have been calling for the United Nations to get involved in overseeing the runoff voting.

On May 5, the United Nations Secretary-General, Ban Ki-moon, spoke about how the U.N. could get involved in the election. Ban also made it known that he would discuss the matter with the African Union. It is hoped that pressure from Zimbabwe's neighbours in Africa can help convince Mugabe to accept the United Nations as an overseeing body for the election.

According to Reuters, Mr. Tsvangirai stated that Mugabe's government and supporters are engaging in a campaign of violence against the country's political opposition members as well as any citizens supporting or voting for the MDC.

A [*BBC* article](#) says there have been reports of beatings, arson, and even withholding food stores in order to frighten supporters who may vote against Mugabe. The ruling government prohibits anyone from accessing the food grains without a party card, a system that many feel is an effective way for Mugabe's government to hurt supporters of the opposition.

CLICK OF THE WRIST – Ship Ahoy

Yachts, catamarans, sloops, and cruisers: these names and others have been given to the vessels that sail the world's rivers and oceans. Get out the Dramamine and full speed ahead.

Navigating by the Stars

This site preserves some of the fascinating story of the early sailors of Micronesia, who could navigate the open ocean without instruments. You can even learn how to use your canoe as a compass.

History of the British Royal Navy

Step back in time for a tour of the ships, battles, and naval leaders of the U.K.—all the way back to the earliest known naval battle in British waters, a 719 skirmish between “factions of the Dalriata, the people who provided the rulers of modern Scotland.”

Model Ships and Boats

If you prefer the solid feel of dry land under your feet, these museum-quality model ships are almost as good as the real thing. The detail is amazing, right down to the miniature map spread out on the table.

Tall Ship Races

From Antwerp to Newcastle to Cadiz, the tall ship races are the place to be if you want to get in on the action. These photo galleries almost make you feel the salt spray.

Vikings

Where would the history of sailing be without the Vikings, those masters of the longboat? This PBS page offers a look at the always fascinating Norsemen.

EDUCATION NEWS

Nick Taylor-Vaisey

**Senate bill relaxes student bankruptcy conditions**

OTTAWA (CUP) - Student advocates are applauding Liberal Senator Yoine Goldstein for introducing a bill that will make it easier for student-loan borrowers to declare bankruptcy. Others, however, are questioning why going to school should force students into bankruptcy in the first place.

The Canadian Federation of Students (CFS), the Canadian Alliance of Student Associations (CASA), and the Coalition for Student Loan Fairness (CSLF) all support Bill S-205, which is currently being debated at the Senate Banking, Trade and Commerce Committee.

Currently, student-loan borrowers must wait seven years before they can apply for a discharge on a loan by declaring bankruptcy, as per the federal Bankruptcy and Insolvency Act.

That number is down from the 10-year period that was mandated in 1998, and S-205 hopes to see the waiting period lowered to just two years.

"It's really a relatively small demand of a student to be able to say they have to pay back their loan," said Goldstein.

"What I'm worried about is the student who becomes ill, who becomes unemployed, who becomes handicapped, who has a nervous breakdown, who is unable to obtain a job in their field or any other field, and who just can't pay back."

S-205 was originally introduced as S-227, but it was dropped at the end of the last session of parliament.

He re-introduced the bill a few months ago, and it was the subject of two hearings at committee on March 13 and April 3.

Goldstein approached the CFS and CASA last summer when he was drafting the bill. Both groups were enthusiastic.

"Technically, our position is that there should be no prohibition [of loan discharges], but in the political landscape today, a two-year prohibition introduced by a Liberal senator is a welcome dialogue about the harm that the existing legislation is causing," said CFS government-relations coordinator Ian Boyko.

CASA National Director Zach Churchill added his support, though with some reservation.

"It actually reflected a lot of our policy on bankruptcy issues, so we were pretty impressed with it," he said.

"But it's still going to make it an application-based process to be able to . . . get bankruptcy support. We would like to see one where students can automatically get it."

Critics have said that this bill will allow students who want to get rid of their debt to do so simply by declaring bankruptcy and washing their hands of money owed.

HRSDC spokesman Murray Gross said that the government does not support S-205. He argued that the government has already addressed the issue of student-borrower relief.

"Our Bill C-12 put in place debt management measures to help borrowers for the first seven years of repayment. Most borrowers are able to make reasonable payments within five years," he said.

Churchill disagreed with that assessment. He said that declaring bankruptcy only hurts students, but the option should be available.

"I think we need to give students the benefit of the doubt," he said.

"They are smart people. Presumably, they just received a post-secondary education and have the ability to think critically and understand that bankruptcy isn't a good thing for anybody. It's a last resort for students who are suffering the most."

For students who drop their debt irresponsibly, Goldstein offered criteria that a judge could consider when deciding whether or not to discharge either, part, or all of a borrower's loan.

"[Criteria] would include the extent to which the student's ability to earn a reasonable income in the foreseeable future is there, whether the student made an effort to reimburse during the course of the previous period of time, [or] whether the student took advantage of debt and interest relief provisions," he said.

The CFS and CSLF both praised Goldstein for his commitment to student loans.

"[Goldstein] has a track record in working on these issues, and I think he's generally regarded as one of Canada's experts in this area of the law," said Boyko.

"He brings a wealth of experience to this discussion that virtually most other Senators—or probably MPs—wouldn't be able to bring . . . to the table."

CSLF executive director Julian Benedict said that Goldstein was "one of the first stakeholders approached" by the coalition when it formed in April 2007.

"Goldstein has been a tireless advocate for student-loan borrowers. I don't think his party affiliation is as important as his passion for students," said Benedict.

Benedict supports S-205, but he pointed out that it doesn't help students avoid accumulating debt in the first place.

"It's a step in the right direction, but we still have to deal with fundamental problems with the existing system that puts people into bankruptcy," he said.

Benedict said that the entire student-loan repayment regime should have students and recent graduates pay less interest.

While the initial loans are hard to deal with, he said, what sends students over the edge—sometimes into bankruptcy—are the interest payments.

"Seventy-five per cent of people who default do so in the first three years of repayment," he said. "You pay mostly interest at the beginning of your loan, so actually it's the interest that is causing people to default."

Goldstein said that he has received support from a large number of senators, both in the chamber and at committee.

CLASSIFIEDS

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THE VOICE

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