

# THE VOICE MAGAZINE

Volume 16 Issue 32  
August 15, 2008

**Shhh!**

Library Voices

**Best of Times**

A modern  
troglodyte

**Rock Hunting**

All that glitters

*Plus:*

*The Interviewer,  
The Mindful Bard*

*AUSU This Month, and much more...*



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**The Voice  
Magazine**

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*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  
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page

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

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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



## It's All About Me

Part of what keeps our society (reasonably) civil is the somewhat nebulous notion of the greater good. In general, we're aware that our actions affect everyone around us, and we do our best not to be self-absorbed, insensitive clods.

But every so often, a story pops up that demonstrates how incredibly obtuse some people can be when it comes to the idea that, sometimes, a clear benefit to our community is more important than our own desires.

A case in point is a recent article in the *Toronto Star*. A woman named Sandra Cassidy lives in a custom-built home in an upscale Ajax neighbourhood. This lovely location came with a hefty price tag—one that included a \$100,000 premium to look out over Lake Ontario. As Cassidy told the *Star*, "We paid a lot of money to have the only custom-built home in a very special subdivision."

Apparently, Cassidy believes that having paid a bundle for her house entitles her to deny municipal services to her neighbours; namely, a two-kilometre bus route that she doesn't like passing in front of her home.

Cassidy is lobbying Durham Region Transit to reroute the buses, complaining that they're too loud and she "can't even hear the TV when a bus goes by."

Never mind that neighbours are now able to leave their cars at home and use the bus in an effort to be environmentally friendly. Never mind students who may rely on the route to hold down after-school jobs. Never mind that rider numbers are good (an average of 34 riders per hour, compared to the standard of seven to 28, according to DRT's deputy general manager of operations).

And never mind the senior citizens who rely on it to remain independent. (Cassidy dismisses their needs as inconsequential, saying "I'm sure there are a few elderly people who want it.")

When the transit commission's executive committee meets to consider the matter on September 3, Cassidy seems confident she'll get her way. Her husband, Wayne, is an architectural technologist who designed the subdivision and, as Cassidy told reporters, he "has some clout with local politicians who know him through business and charity events."

"Not to sound like I'm bragging or anything but we have more (influence) than the average person," she said.

Perhaps she does, but instead of using all that time and influence to serve her own needs, maybe Cassidy could put it to better use. Maybe she could lobby for cleaner, quieter buses, or use some of that clout with local politicians to set up an innovative, benchmark municipal transportation system, one with improved bike routes and carpooling.

Not everyone has the money or influence to effect major change, and it seems like an incredible waste when those who do, pursue personal desires to the detriment of the broader community. Because in the long run, on a planet shared by more than six billion people, it isn't all about them.

## THE BEST OF TIMES

Greg Ryan



I'm a troglodyte. However, I've embraced modern distance education with a passion.

It's a tumultuous affair carried out over vast distances interjected with—or so it seems to me—long periods of silence. There are days when my email inbox welcomes me with a cryptic “There are no messages in this folder” as I wait expectantly for my latest assignment's return.

Each morning fills my day with good intentions that drain away untested. Distractions, inertia, and procrastination devour my time. I allow complacency to set in, knowing that tomorrow my cup will overflow with good intentions once more.

For a troglodytic, self-employed husband and student, good intentions are as prolific as red-pencilled editorial notations on a manuscript.

Some would even say that a refusal to embrace technology is a form of procrastination. I promise my daughter that I'll dispense with my quixotic aversion to modernity. She wants me to learn how to use her cellphone so that she's not

embarrassed by my fumbling attempts to dial in front of her friends. I don't own a laptop, DVD player, digital camera, or an iPod. A shaving mug, brush, and a non-electric razor sit atop my bathroom vanity.

I persist in writing with a fountain pen that stains my fingers blue. I also cook, wash the laundry, and vacuum the carpet because the demands my wife's career place upon her, combined with my office-at-home lifestyle, make it feasible for me to do so.

As well, I'm studying English literature at Athabasca University and participating in its thoroughly modern approach to education. I am, in some respects then, quite the modern man, but being modern is challenging.

The challenge is in keeping the various aspects of life in balance. My spouse teaches mathematics full-time, studies part-time at Ottawa U, and periodically augments her skills with supplementary courses through Athabasca University. Consequently, our relationship comes under siege at times; therefore, spending a few precious moments communicating with each other is critical.

We walk in the park and I listen carefully as she shares the events of her day. She listens to mine. My career, if I allow it, can be a relentless adversary that wants to consume me. Each workday offers eight hours and when a particularly demanding task crosses my desk, I restrain myself from sacrificing that evening's stroll. To lose a few minutes here and there appears innocuous, but the moments are irretrievable.



I set my own schedule, but with the demands put upon me by family, work, and school there's a paucity of time to waste. A family member's "I've run out of gas" plea interrupts a busy afternoon. A sister begs: "My mover didn't show. Will you rescue me?" A friend emails an invite for an espresso at Starbucks.

These are honourable defeats, but they remind me why I envy my mentor, father-figure Adam. He rents office space somewhere in town. The room is, according to Adam, small and dingy with a crack-checked window that looks out over an industrial wasteland. His office is sparsely furnished with a desk, chair, and bookcase, file cabinet and the ubiquitous coffee pot. There's no telephone, but he avails himself of a computer. His name isn't on the door or occupant list.

Adam spends his days immersed, without interruption, in his writing life. I envy him. However, he confesses that there are days when he envies me.

"You're lucky," Adam says. "It wasn't possible to combine school with working at home when I was young."

He's right, of course. I am lucky. My student/career/home life is exacting and sporadically arduous. I appreciate, however, the opportunity to learn under the guidance of skilled, readily available tutors. Clarity is the gift that these educators give me. My world view is clearer and maturer.

Periodically these responsibilities are daunting. I sometimes complain about the demands juggling family, career, and school place on me, but the rewards are incalculable.

Charles Dickens states my sentiments succinctly. As he proclaims in his novel *A Tale of Two Cities*: "It was the best of times, it was the worst of times . . . [but] we had everything before us . . ."

## DID YOU KNOW?

### 2008 Convocation Video Online!



If you want to relive those special moments from convocation this year (or if you're planning to graduate next year and want to see what it's like!), video of all three days of convocation 2008 is now available on the [AU website](#).

From the opening ceremonies on June 12 to the final procession of new alumni on June 14, you can choose to watch streamed video of the entire event, listen to the grad addresses, or just see that special graduate cross the stage—whatever you like.

And if you plan to be part of Convocation 2009, don't forget to check the AU convocation page closer to the date.

You'll find all the information you need to make it a memorable event!



## IN CONVERSATION WITH . . .

Wanda Waterman St. Louis



## Library Voices

*Library Voices is a 10-member band that formed in Regina in March and has been performing steadily ever since their third week together.*

*They've just recorded their six-song debut EP, Hunting Ghosts (see review in this issue), and are planning a full-length CD for release this fall. At the time of this interview the band was preparing for a tour of western Canada.*

*The following are notes from a conversation with the band's vocalist, guitarist, keyboardist, and lyricist, Michael Dawson.*

## Origins

Carl, the singer, had this tiny little basement where if you stood up you hit your head on the ceiling. He painted it a hideous yellow colour. We loaded all our gear down there and in just a few days came up with all this stuff. That's where we wrote that EP in its entirety and since then we've been moving around. When we can get enough people together for a real rehearsal we just try to find a place with enough microphones.

## About the Band

We all live within a few blocks of each other here in Regina and we've been involved in bands here for years. Carl and I have been making music off and on for close to a decade. We blended so well creatively that we were able to do things at a ridiculous pace.

We don't really have musical backgrounds. A couple of us have taken piano lessons.

## Day Jobs

Karla and I run a non-profit arts organization and concert venue here in Regina. Amanda and Carl both bartend at this place. Eoin works at another venue in the city.

Amanda is an artist-in-residence at a community organization for Aboriginal youth and youth in transition. She does art therapy, or art as therapy, to get them engaged in something besides self-destructive acts. On the other end of the spectrum, Brett has done a lot of work for sustainability in the community.

## What's in a Name?

After a lot of hubbub and debate we came up with a list and Library Voices was the best one. It was one of those childhood things, remembering back to elementary school when the teacher tells you to use your indoor voice, or your library voice.

## Tell Me About Your Childhood . . .

I grew up in a redneck, oil-field, coal-mining community and I was always wearing these ridiculous bright plaid pants and hair past my shoulders.

My parents used to drag me off on camping trips literally every weekend and I was so not interested in being there.

One time we were on this trip and my parents wanted me to decide whether I was going to skateboard or play hockey because they couldn't afford both. So they took me to this skateboard shop under this convenience store. It took most of the day to find it. It's great just remembering the kind of music they were playing down there, and the personalities and how helpful they were.

A couple of years later we had this friend who moved to North Dakota and got a job at a radio station there. He'd mail back all the records that didn't make it on the air. Then on these camping trips my dad would say I should really read *Helter Skelter* or some other bizarre book you don't normally recommend to 12-year-olds.

It wasn't a dysfunctional family or anything, but my dad was this guy with lots of tattoos and this huge record collection, telling stories about how he'd set up his own pirated radio station.

### Collective Soul

All of our records are released by a local collective call Young Soul Records. The music industry has become a little too competitive; there's only so many shows and so many bands so it becomes an issue of bands trying to get ahead of each other.

That's not really the case here. A bunch of people are having records coming out in the collective and we appear on a bunch of those records and those musicians will be appearing on our full-length CD when it comes out here in the fall.

Occasionally there are conflicts, but that's all part of the creative process, I think. You have to be ready to be fairly vulnerable, to voice your opinion when you think it's necessary and to suck it up when it's not. There's been nothing we haven't been able to sit down and resolve.

Lyrics: Kundera, Vonnegut, et al.

I think the lyrics add a degree of substance to the music. Sometimes I think if I can drop an obvious reference from some author or book it sort of solidifies what I'm saying in the song. Rather than spelling out what I'm trying to say I can sneak a reference in there.

I try to double up what I'm actually saying with some sort of underlying hidden messages. We all have a love of boisterous, fun pop songs. At the same time we don't want to be bubble gum.

### The Creative Inspiration of a Long, Depressing Winter

There's a tight-knit little community here. There's a lot of great bands around the city right now that all forge together. Most of us grew up either in Regina or the towns nearby. One member came from Ireland originally. We've all kept in touch, lived around the country, and ended up back here.

I think one of the biggest motivators for creativity here in Saskatchewan is that we have the longest, most depressing winter on earth.

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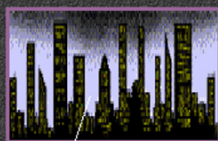


# The Interviewer

*It is the ninth decade of the twentieth century...*

*written and illustrated by Wanda Wafarman St. Louis*

## *Caramel Baby #6: Sweet, Pathetic Life*



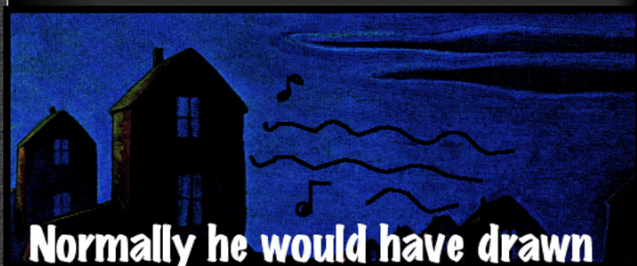
Reuben leaves Kush at her creaky old car and walks back through white rainshine on black city and rippling puddles.

Oh, how his heart soars.

Sweet,  
pathetic  
life, so  
awful  
in beauty  
and  
sadness.



Muted music is wafting from a frat house.



Normally he would have drawn closer to hear it but tonight he just keeps on walking.



Burnside is home waiting for him.  
Goin' down south, I'm goin' down south...

*The following evening at the grad club...*



When you get off work can you give me a lift home?

*next: Booze-n-Schmooze*





*From  
Where  
I Sit*

Hazel Anaka

## Diamonds Are Forever

August 11 marked our 35th anniversary. Did I mention I was a child bride? (How else could it possibly be true?)

For our 20th, we rented a country hall and treated friends and family to a party. For our 25th I wanted a gazebo. It never happened. The day before our 29th, our son was married.

About a week ago Roy announced that he wanted to buy me a ring for our anniversary. I'm proud to say that I didn't fight him on it; didn't ask if we could afford it, didn't ask how we'd pay for it. I was touched by the sentiment, and besides, what self-respecting girl doesn't love bling?

Two years ago I lost the centre diamond and setting out of my 36-year-old engagement set. It wasn't insured. About a year ago we bought a lovely white gold band with 14 diamonds and a rather unique design at Ben Moss that's gotten me compliments from friends and strangers. I love that ring.

The original rings were a lovely, multi-diamond set from People's Jewellers and set Roy back between three and four hundred dollars—1972 dollars. There are still three- and four-hundred dollar sets out there but our budget has grown with the times.

After some initial Internet research Roy and I went ring shopping the other night. Goodness, there's a world of choices out there.

I like to think we're a bit more savvy this time around. We're paying attention to more than total carat weight. We're looking at clarity ratings (the fewer inclusions or flaws, the more desirable and expensive the stone). We're looking at colour (the closer to colourless, the more desirable and expensive the stone).

I've been leaning toward the emerald- or square-cut rings because I think they're trendier looking. Round cuts are so 1970s. Of course, it must be white gold or platinum and look like it belongs right next to my existing band. And finally, of course, budget matters.

Call me crazy but I also need to like the salesperson. There's that inexplicable vibe you pick up on that confirms you're doing the right thing—or makes you want to run screaming from the store.

Last night I felt reassurance at one place, a lack of professionalism at another, a sort of greasy-salesman vibe at the third, and a "don't be afraid of (blank) financing ma'am" turnoff at another.

I tried a gorgeous ring (set with coveted Canadian diamonds) at a big box store. The appraisal certificate values the ring at a thousand dollars more than the purchase price. Who doesn't want to get more for their money? But of course, downsizing can't be done on-site. And would there be any after-sale service? What's the real cost of another store's lifetime diamond guarantee and free inspection and cleaning?

These are important questions for an important purchase. All of this research and trying on rocks is a dirty job but somebody's gotta do it, from where I sit.



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

EP: Library Voices, *Hunting Ghosts*

Soon to be released on Young Soul Records  
(see interview this issue)

*Your existence is a pinprick on a paper continent.*

*The patron saints all patronize me.*

*Step off the map and float!*

*And you float and you float and you float and you ohhh . . .*

from "Step Off the Map and Float," *Hunting Ghosts*

I used to wonder what would happen to folk rock once the pantless, towheaded children of hippies grew up and decided to create their own music. What would they have to rail against? But when the bulk of the children of hippies did come of age there was still plenty to rail against, and they had the advantage of being cheered on by parents who were often more nonconformist than they were. Library Voices are a case in point.

Library Voices do not sing in library voices. They sing like drunks at an Irish wake (albeit drunks with perfect pitch). They sound like the punk offspring of The Incredible String Band. Their music is the kind that gets you through the worst depressions in your life by teaching you not to take that life so seriously.

I remember getting through one such episode in university with the help of The Nice, Godley and Creme, and They Might Be Giants. Their lyrics and arrangements were delightfully brilliant and exhibited an attitude of comic defiance of the oppression of industry and institutions, a defiance I really needed to hear.

I thought of them as my day-at-the-circus bands. Every generation of culture makers needs its day-at-the-circus bands, and I'm so glad this one hasn't been let down.

The *Hunting Ghosts* song titles alone are windows to a zany universe ripe with hidden meaning ("Step Off the Map and Float," "Kundera on the Dance Floor," "Things We Stole from Vonnegut's Grave," "The Lonely Projectionist" . . .), but have a good listen to the words.

Mike Dawson's lyrics are not designed to lull and suppress. These are danceable tunes for bookish sorts, especially those bookish sorts with an affinity for science fiction and '60s authors.

The music is upbeat, packed with space sounds, straight-ahead rock-and-roll riffs and rhythms, and Motown energy. The melodies are incredibly listenable and yet a perfect fit for the sometimes convoluted rhythms of the lyrics.

*Hunting Ghosts* lives up to five of *The Mindful Bard's* criteria for music well worth a listen: 1) it is authentic, original, and delightful; 2) it makes me want to be a better artist; 3) it displays an engagement with and compassionate response to suffering; 4) it provides respite from a sick world, a respite enabling me to renew myself for a return to mindful endeavour; and 5) it stimulates my mind.

## AUSU This Month



### Merchandise Still for Sale

We still have some locks and memory keys available for sale. Both of these were designed with ease of mailing in mind, which means they're small enough to be easily stored pretty much anywhere. The wristband USB key is a unique way to carry around your assignments, online materials, and even emails while you're on the go. With a 1 gigabyte capacity, it can even handle a good chunk of your music collection, and the design means you no longer have to worry about losing it. *The Voice* memory key has less capacity (512 MB) but the dark, flip-top design is classy enough to accompany you anywhere.

### AUSU Lock Loan Program

Still running, and still popular, the lock loan program can allow you to rest easy knowing your valuables are safe if you're taking an exam at the Calgary or Edmonton campus. The locks can be set to any combination, and are loaned to people without any deposit, but we ask that you please remember to reset them to 0-0-0 before returning them so that we can continue this program.

### Employment Site is here!

Many of you will already have seen the link to our new employment site on the front page, and while there are not a lot of employers in evidence yet, it's a great opportunity to get your resume, skills, and talents in there. The Personnel Department is busily working on finding employers who could use your unique abilities as a distance education student. Be sure yours are available to get the early opportunities!



### Appointments

AUSU VP External, Barb Rielly, has stepped down from her position as chair of the AUSU Awards Committee, and new Councillor Bethany Porter has taken on the role. Council wishes Bethany good luck in this position, which can involve making some hard decisions.

Increasing AUSU's representation within AU, VP Finance and Administration, Sarah Kertcher, has been appointed to AU's integrated learning centre steering committee. This committee will examine the possibility of integrating all AU sites in the Edmonton Area into one building. Sarah will ensure that the committee keeps concerns of our members with respect to ease of access and exam conditions as well as AUSU's own special needs for storage and physical office space well in mind.

The MyAU steering committee sees two new AUSU representatives, President Karl Low, and VP External Barb Rielly, joining to provide their input on how MyAU could be better structured to meet your needs. If there's something that's been bugging you about the MyAU system, now is a great time to call or email our office and let them know. We'll be sure to bring your concerns forward.

### SmartDraw Program Continues

If you haven't yet, you might want to download a copy of SmartDraw. 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.

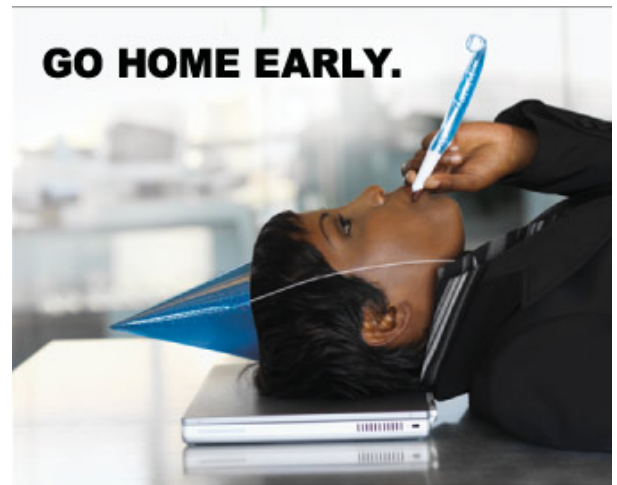
### AUSU Handbook/Planner 2008 has a few copies left!

We still have a number of copies of the 2008 AUSU planner available. We're getting closer to the end of the year, however, so our supplies are steadily decreasing. 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, and especially want to hear of any improvements you think could be made.

### Chat with a Councillor

Have a beef? Want to know where your \$8 per course goes or who's trying to make it work for you? Check out the AUSU chat times on our front page. Every Councillor has agreed to spend an hour each week making themselves available to you for your questions, concerns, or just to shoot the breeze while you take a break from your studying. It's not only a great way for you to learn more about what AUSU can do for you, but for us to learn what you want from AUSU. We hope to see you there!



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**SmartDraw**



## INTERNATIONAL NEWS DESK

Mandy Gardner



### At Home: Foreign-trained doctors not finding work in doctor-starved Canada

While Canadians suffer from a severe shortage of medical doctors across the country, many immigrant doctors are finding it difficult to find work in the medical field here.

The issue is that Canadian medical licensing bodies have not yet determined what kinds of training and degrees are acceptable in place of a Canadian medical degree. Other problems have also come into view as some municipalities take on doctor recruitment for themselves only to lose out in the end.

In Georgetown, PEI, the mayor recruited Dr. Soha Rizk, an immigrant from Egypt. There are as many as 700 people in the Georgetown community who have no family doctor and while both the town and their new doctor were happy about the arrangement, the Department of Health was not in agreement.

While Dr. Rizk completed her Canadian medical credentials in preparation for her new position, Georgetown was told that the neighbouring town of Montague needed the doctor more than they

did, despite the fact that this was a private recruitment.

On the other side of our country, the BC College of Physicians and Surgeons has not allowed naturalized Canadian Paola Fauerbach to work as a radiologist because they have not accepted her professional qualifications. Ms. Fauerbach's qualifications are recognized in Argentina (where she was trained), as well as in the European Union, but so far not here in Canada. This issue is now being addressed by the BC Human Rights Tribunal as a discrimination complaint.

Ms. Fauerbach had been refused entry to a fellowship at the University of British Columbia because the program was only open to Canadian-trained doctors or foreign doctors who would not be practising in Canada. In this case, this foreign doctor has not even been allowed to pursue Canadian training that could allow her to provide medical care to Canadians.

As Canadians deal with long hospital wait times and a shortage of all types of doctors, many capable and willing doctors are not within reach due to this lack of up-to-date regulatory standards to deal with immigrant doctors.

### In Foreign News: Cuba jails fewer political dissidents and signs onto UN covenant

While Cuban officials continue to deny the existence of political prisoners in that country, outside human rights watchers are reporting that there are fewer such detainees in the last year than in previous years.

Cuba has at long last agreed to enter into the UN International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights. As well, the country's repressive government allows the Cuban Commission for Human Rights and National



Reconciliation (CCHRNR) to remain in operation, despite the fact that it is illegal under current laws there. This organization tracks imprisonment of dissidents in Cuba.

The Cuban government refers to detainees as mercenaries and insists they are backed by the United States, whose goal is to maintain political unrest inside Cuba.

The CCHRNR has stated that the reduction in the number of political prisoners in Cuba may be due to the switch in the government's approach. Cubans who are planning on demonstrating or taking part in illegal meetings are more likely to be detained prior to the event, then released within a few hours without being charged with a crime. Previously, such people faced indefinite imprisonment for such activities.

Cuba's decision to sign the UN's covenant on civil rights came after Fidel Castro's brother Raul took the country's political reins. The move means Cuba has agreed to regular monitoring by the UN Human Rights Council.

Many Cuba watchers throughout the world are applauding these recent changes, and others that now allow Cuban citizens to use cellular phones and personal computers. Yet while many hope to see more freedoms for Cubans under Raul Castro, no major political changes are expected in the near future.

## **CLICK OF THE WRIST – Strange Inventions**

For millions of years, life pretty much carried on as usual without any new inventions. Some flints, a few carving tools, and you had the latest technology. Today, it seems there's a new piece of gadgetry or technology invented every minute. But as this week's look at odd inventions shows, quantity doesn't always equal quality.

### Voicemail

Sure it has its uses, but if you want to know who to blame the next time you're caught in voicemail hell, here's a brief history of the telephone answering machine.

### Pet Rocks

Okay, so rocks aren't technically an invention, but the idea to sell them as pets is certainly inventive. If you paid \$3.95 for one of these back in the 1970s, don't feel bad—at least it never chewed your favourite shoes.

### Flatulence Deodorizer

Now, there's always the possibility that this is a truly useful product for many, many people. But there's just something a little odd about wearing something to disguise the smell of . . . well, you'll see.

### Top 10 Useless Inventions

The TimesOnline has compiled a top-10 list of the worst inventions of the 19th and 20th centuries. See? Even those wacky Victorians probably would have gone for a Pet Rock.

### Arthur Paul Pedrick

Apparently, the pesky rules of physics didn't stop this prolific British inventor from coming up with some truly unique ideas—including placing bombs in Earth's orbit to prevent possible nuclear attacks.

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# 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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Barbara Godin, Behdin Nowrouzi, Wanda Waterman St. Louis

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*The Voice* is published every Friday in html and pdf format

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