

THE VOICE MAGAZINE

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Hero Worship

The Assassination of
Jesse James

In Conversation With

Elisa Albert

Careers

Dental Hygienist



Plus:

*From Where I Sit, Music to Eat Lunch To,
The Interviewer, 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



The Sky's the Limit

For most air travellers, the biggest worries when they hop on a plane are whether they'll get to their meeting/holiday/connecting flight on time, how much the in-flight snacks cost, and whether or not there will be a crying baby in the next row.

With the rising cost of fuel and industry cutbacks, an extra worry is whether that budget return fare will actually return them anywhere, but on the whole passengers aren't too worried about safety, blithely confident that the bits of the airplane are bolted together just fine, thank you.

That may all change, though, as Transport Canada's hands-off approach to inspections comes into effect, a move that, in the words of retired justice Virgil Moshansky, is akin to "putting the fox in

charge of the hen house."

The concept is called Safety Management Systems (SMS), a short description for a big change that the CBC sums up nicely: "the federal department will do fewer direct safety audits of air carriers, instead keeping watch over safety checks done by the airlines themselves."

In May of this year, an Auditor General's report included a general outline of how responsibilities will shift under the new system.

The traditional approach is that Transport Canada inspectors are "regulatory compliance auditors." In other words, they inspect "aircraft, records, and personnel directly," making sure that airlines are complying with specific safety regulations.

Using the SMS approach, inspectors will only evaluate whether an airline has a system set up to inspect itself—the same sort of deregulation that isn't exactly inspiring confidence in our food inspection system.

So should airline passengers be concerned? Yes, in part because of the rationale behind the move.

It's part of a directive from the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO), of which Canada is a member. As the CBC reports, the ICAO's position is that "the rapidly expanding aviation industry and the limited resources of oversight authorities make it increasingly difficult to sustain the existing approach to managing safety."

The answer, then, is to have airline companies take over much of the responsibility of managing their own safety inspections, a solution that member countries are expected to have in place by 2009.

But that expectation comes at a time when airlines are already feeling the squeeze. Fuel prices keep rising, large carriers are cutting staff, and smaller airlines are shutting down, in some cases so suddenly they're leaving passengers stranded. In short, an industry that's already under pressure must now carry the keys to both vaults: one marked "profits," the other "regulation."

It's a situation that critics charge is a disaster in the making, and only time will tell if they're right. But as airlines continue to cut back in order to stay competitive, let's hope passengers aren't in for more than a bumpy ride.

IN CONVERSATION WITH . . .

Wanda Waterman St. Louis



Elisa Albert

*Elisa Albert writes fiction and teaches creative writing at Columbia. Her first novel, *The Book of Dahlia*, (see [Voice review here](#)) was recently published by Free Press, a division of Simon & Schuster.*

*Albert previously authored the critically lauded short story collection *How This Night is Different*.*

The Origins of *The Book of Dahlia*

I was influenced by Susan Sontag's *Illness as Metaphor*, as well as by the death narrative of Tolstoy's *The Death of Ivan Ilyich*. I also read a lot of feminist theory in college, and it transformed how I see the world and my place in it.

I wanted to explore via fiction Sontag's brilliant catalogue of social/cultural responses to and opinions about cancer, while at the same time echoing what I thought was a very real, very heartbreaking truth in *Ivan Ilyich*: that we, the living, just can't freaking deal with death, and so the sick/dying are fundamentally left pretty much to their own devices.

At the same time, I liked the idea of playing with a (mostly) unrepentant, totally unsympathetic female character, given that so many very repentant, very "sympathetic" female characters are shoved down our collective throats at every turn in this society.

What do we learn from watching a downward spiral, the terrible flailings of the cosmically doomed? And how much do we want to separate ourselves from that doom by distancing ourselves from said flailing?

Conditions for creativity

I think there are a lot of things that can be extraordinarily helpful—a room of one's own, a nice money cushion, supportive environs and peers, an Aeron chair, room in the budget for a personal masseuse, etc.—but I like to think we're all really hardy creatures, and can/will make do with a broad spectrum of conditions.

I sort of self-isolate, on and off. I find it useful to be able to unfurl, as it were, within an undetermined set of hours. I like to have only myself to answer to/for—it's unsettling to have dinner plans, for example, because I can't switch



MARION ETLINGER

on/off so easily.

I feel the need for space—the physical and the emotional kind—and the freedom to indulge myself however is necessary to get where I want to go. It's not the most practical methodology, but when it works it's really fun.

... I can still remember the hope and recognition I felt at the prospect that righteous anger was a worthy thing to voice, no matter how "unpleasant" others might find it.

When you were writing the passages in which Dahlia vented about her Jewish family and peers, did you ever fear you might be fuelling anti-Semitism?

No. The freedom of the novelist to write openly about real or imagined problems in any real or imagined racial/ethnic/cultural group is integral to the existence of the novel.

Inspiration sources

I read books, watch films, and listen to music—basically I'm a happy consumer of art that I find creatively nourishing. And, of course, fun normal non-writing things like yoga and cooking and hanging out with loved ones, etc., too.

The prose of Lorrie Moore and Philip Roth, in particular, inspire me enormously. Stacey Richter's short stories make me want to scream with joy, and Alicia Erian's *Towelhead* is a perfect example of what can be done with an unreliable narrator in a totally skewed, ultimately unjust universe.

I'm not into "happy" endings, which is to say any ending wherein there's definitive resolution. I was hugely moved by Alan Ball's *Six Feet Under*, which I watched about three times in its entirety.

As a teen, Ani DiFranco spoke to me really profoundly, and I can still remember the hope and recognition I felt at the prospect that righteous anger was a worthy thing to voice, no matter how "unpleasant" others might find it.

DID YOU KNOW?



New Academic Research Centre Website

Plans for AU's new Academic Research Centre are in full swing, and you can check out all the details on the project [website](#).

There are news releases from AU, along with links to [media coverage](#), as well as a history of the project. You can also view the floor plans and see an artist's concept of the building in the image gallery.

With an expected occupation date of spring 2010, the research centre will meet the goal of creating "a unique and distinctive design that captures the innovative essence of Athabasca University and integrates the building with its surroundings in the boreal forest, balancing rural beauty with the building users' high-tech needs."

Watch the project website for all the latest news!

CAREERS

Behdin Nowrouzi



Consider a Career as a Dental Hygienist

What is a dental hygienist?

Dental hygienists remove deposits from teeth, educate patients on techniques to healthy oral hygiene, and provide preventative and health promotion strategies regarding dental care.

According to the College of Dental Hygienists of Ontario, a dental hygienist is an oral health professional who is a registered member of a governing body.

Their responsibilities include clinical therapy, education, administration, and research. Dental hygienists are part of the dental health care team and often work with dentists, dental assistants, and other health care members.

Education and training

Like many health professions, dental hygiene is governed by a provincial regulatory body. Prospective dental hygienists must graduate from a recognized dental hygiene diploma or baccalaureate program in Canada.

Furthermore, they must register with their appropriate provincial licensing body. The law requires dental hygienists practice safely and ethically, and promote the safety and well-being of their patients.

Admission requirements

College Program

Diploma programs are found in Nova Scotia, New Brunswick, Quebec, Ontario, Manitoba, Saskatchewan, and British Columbia. For a complete listing, visit the CDHA website.

University programs

The following schools have degree programs in dental hygiene: University of British Columbia, University of Alberta, and Dalhousie University.

Dalhousie University's program is a one-year degree completion program.

Students take courses that emphasize and examine oral and clinical science, public health (health promotion), radiography theory and laboratory, human anatomy and physiology, theory of dental hygiene practice, health status assessment, oral histology and pathology, and effective communication. Clinical practical opportunities allow students to apply what they learn from the classroom in a clinical setting.

Students that matriculate at a school accredited by the Commission on Dental Accreditation of Canada (CDAC) are permitted to sit for the National Dental Hygiene Certification Board exam.

Conversely, those who graduate from a non-accredited school must first submit their curriculum of study to the CDAC in order to ensure they meet the Commission's standards, and the student is then allowed to write the national examination.

In both cases, upon successful completion of the examination, applicants can register with their respective provincial licensing college.

Where do dental hygienists work?

Generally, dental hygienists work alongside dentists (general practitioners or specialists) in providing oral care to their patients. With experience and additional training, they may also conduct screening procedures of patients including assessment of oral health conditions, review their oral health history, examine for oral cancer, and perform dental charting.

Dental hygienists are responsible for cleaning teeth (e.g., removing stains and plaque) and the application of fluoride.

They also take and develop radiographs or X-rays, provide oral education to patients, and provide diet and healthy nutritional counselling.

Salaries and demographic information

Dental hygienists earn an average of \$24.88 per hour in Canada (Technical Occupations in Dental Health Care, according to the National Occupational Classification), which is above the national average of \$18.07.

The employment outlook in this field is considered good and the majority of dental hygienists are women.

In Alberta, their average salary was \$69,900 in 2004, while part-time or full-time workers overall earned between \$31,800 to \$122,200 per year.

For more information regarding a career in dental hygiene, please visit [The Canadian Dental Hygienists Association](#) website.

2008/09 AU CALENDAR



AU's new 2008/09 academic calendar is now in effect, and it's your official resource for all the latest info on courses, programs, fees, and more.

The undergraduate calendar is available [here](#), and you can link to the graduate studies calendar from the same page or click [here](#). Course fees and regulations are effective September 1, 2008, to August 31, 2009.

Whether you're signing up for new courses, choosing a program, or thinking about becoming an AU student, the online calendar has it all!



From Where I Sit

Hazel Anaka

A Moving Experience

It's Monday night of the Labour Day weekend and I've just gotten home from Edmonton. Our daughter bought her second condo and took possession six short days ago. She also needed to vacate and clean her original condo in time for the new tenants—two international students attending the University of Alberta—to move in on the 30th.

To say that many of us have worked like dogs is an understatement. I hurt in places I didn't know I *had* places. My back aches from the countless boxes I've moved over the last several days.

At the new place there's a ramp leading up to a security gate securing a cobblestone courtyard with plantings and central elevator. We've been using a wheeled dolly, a small wheeled hand truck, and a larger wagon with casters and a backstop to move dozens of boxes. I should have worn my pedometer to measure the miles I've made. My arms and calves have gotten a real workout.

In addition to the actual move we did a great deal of painting at the new place. Good thing I've got a bionic shoulder; November will mark two years since my surgery. Three closets (including a walk-in), two bathrooms, a master bedroom, and an office have all gotten two coats of paint.

The master was trickier because the bulkhead was painted one shade lighter than the wall colour. Can we all say "I hate cutting in" in unison? The far larger kitchen/dining/living area is on hold for now as far as repainting goes. I think Hilary is secretly waiting for us to recover before launching into the next big thing.

And let's be clear, the place did not need to be painted but our family always likes to put our stamp on things, so paint we did. My mom was indispensable in this area.

I think what's harder to swallow than all the hard work done in such a short time is the way some sellers leave the property.

What sort of people don't leave even a square of toilet paper behind? Or even all the pieces of the holder? Or patch a fist-sized hole in the drywall?

Did they know the kitchen faucet would break off in Hilary's hand on day one? Did they know that the lock to the powder room would finally work when no one was inside? And that the lock couldn't be picked or the door removed from its hinges? We always change the lockset on the exterior door whenever she moves. With this place, every single one has been, or will be, replaced.

What kind of people can't or don't tighten the screws on the cupboard hinges? What kind of people live with a bathroom faucet that has the temperatures reversed and don't get it switched? I've gotta believe that karma kicks in, in cases like this. I don't know who they are or where they've gone, but I do believe what goes around comes around.

Luckily, moving is like childbirth. Eventually we forget the pain of it all and have that second kid or help with another move. At least that's what I'm counting on, from where I sit.

The Interviewer

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

written and illustrated by Wanda Waterman St. Louis

Caramel Baby #9: Jumping Ahead



A month later
Reuben
returns
to his
room.

...The
Klan's
Halifax
chapter
officially
dis-
banded...



...following the ousting of leader
Wayne Casey.



The group's
split is believed
to have been
influenced by
the recent
public
awareness
concert
hosted by
local African-
Canadian and
Jewish
organisations.



Reuben has the tape of the interview
he did with Casey three weeks ago.



He keeps copies of all his interviews and listens to
them at his leisure, for self-improvement, he
rationalises to Kush, who accuses him of hubris.



And don't forget your dental hygiene!

He'd had a job convincing
the executive committee...



You are
NOT
interviewing
a white
supremacist
in this
studio!!!

What
about
freedom
of speech,
ya
FASCIST?!!!

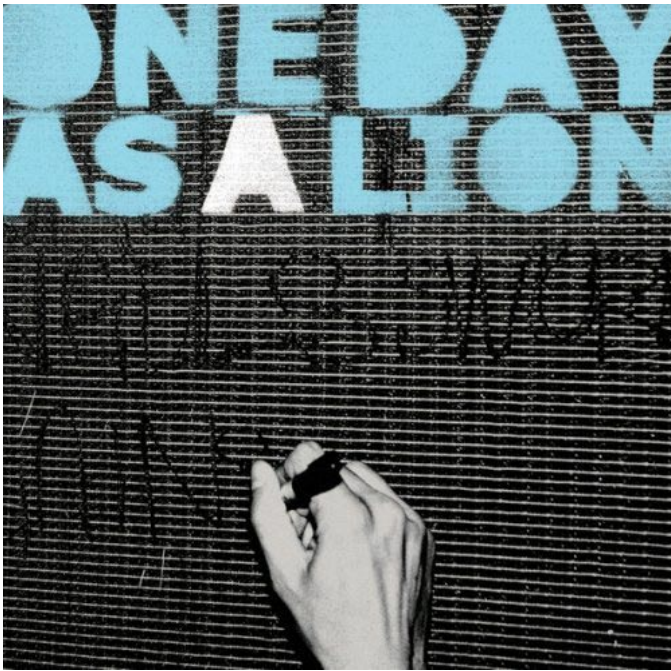


..and
had
ended
up
threatening
to
quit.

Next: In the Studio

MUSIC TO EAT LUNCH TO

Mandy Gardner

**One Day as a Lion (Self-titled)****Release Date:** July 22, 2008**Label:** ANTI-**Tracks:** 5**Rating:** 4

One Day as a Lion is a five-track introductory sampler for the musical duo sporting the same name as the album, and this 20-minute record features two artists who have made a name for themselves within the music world from their respective headlining bands: Rage Against the Machine and The Mars Volta.

While Jon Theodore is equated mostly with the work he has done with the latter band (which he split from after their 2006 album), the most recognizable figure

on *One Day as a Lion* is undoubtedly Zack de la Rocha, the voice and major character behind the seminal band Rage Against the Machine.

With Rage Against the Machine on hiatus for a few disappointing years, they have begun to write, record, and tour again; however, the front man has found another creative outlet in his duet career with Theodore and the product is something akin to Rage but with an obvious Mars Volta influence.

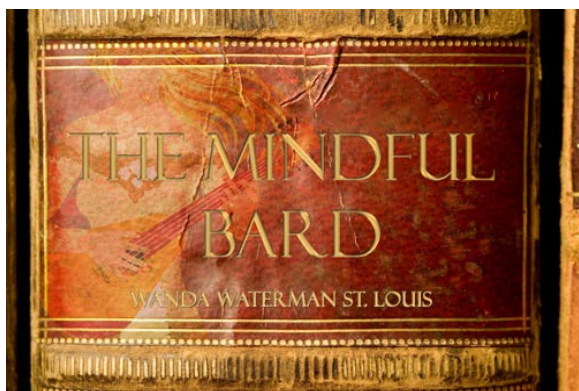
In my opinion, de la Rocha is the musician who sticks out on *One Day as a Lion* and who the fans actually want to hear from most, because of his incredibly inspiring funk background.

One Day as a Lion is an ode to the famed caption photographed by George Rodriguez in 1970, "It's better to live one day as a lion than a thousand years as a lamb."

The best thing about this album is that the first impression it gives is that of a Rage record. After a mere few minutes, however, listeners are bound to be disappointed. This is, surprisingly, not a record or a band for hardcore Rage or Mars Volta fans, and unfortunately it becomes difficult to judge *One Day as a Lion* after the precedent of the original two bands.

De la Rocha takes keyboards as well as vocals on the record while Theodore sticks to his expert drumming. The essential soul of *One Day as a Lion* is a combination of political activist edge, the renowned rap style of de la Rocha, and a musical background that is regrettably dull and limp.

Lyrical speaking, these five songs are full of life, vigour, and inspiration. Coupled with a mediocre melody, however, neither lyrical prowess nor even the skill of both musicians are enough to cut it. *One Day as a Lion* will most likely only leave its listeners craving a full-fledged Rage song instead of a full-length album as the musicians would have hoped.



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

DVD: *The Assassination of Jesse James by the Coward Robert Ford*

Release date: February 26, 2008

Starring Brad Pitt, Casey Affleck, Sam Shepard, Mary-Louise Parker, Paul Schneider

Director: Andrew Dominik Screenwriter: Andrew Dominik

Composers: Nick Cave, Warren Ellis

“... my heroic idealism had to be abandoned, for there are higher things than the ego’s will, and to these one must bow.”

C. G. Jung, *Memories, Dreams, Reflections*

In one scene Jesse is placidly handling three snakes. He informs Robert Ford that he thinks of these as his enemies, and notes that they’re good eating. Then, without further ceremony, he beheads them with a jackknife. Their headless forms continue to writhe angrily around his arm as Ford looks timorously on.

The snake is an essential component of the symbolism of the hero myth. We see it in paintings of Siegfried, in *Billy Jack*, in the Old and New Testaments, in Greek mythology, and in world folklore. What does the snake *mean* to the hero? The answers vary, but in this story it represents the hero’s triumph and his terror, his victims and his predators.

Robert Ford is a rare and fascinating kind of predator; he worships what he’s doomed to destroy, mistakenly believing murder to be a means of absorbing the power and majesty of his idol.

We saw the same quality in Mark David Chapman’s obsession with John Lennon. In a recent interview Chapman remarked, “I just saw his face and it seemed like it all came together, the solution to my problem of being confused and feeling like a nobody.”



He could have been channelling Robert Ford. Ford too is overwhelmed by a psychological conflict and must seek out a suitable ego defence to help him cope with reality. What defence does he choose?

He chooses hero identification, building himself an inner fortress to house a hero. He knows he himself falls short, so he enters this fortress by identifying with a real live hero.

It's a defence that's brittle and easily shattered, one difficulty being that the hero as archetype is above law and morality. In reality, Jesse James was a despicable human being. But we're talking about Jesse James as an archetypal outlaw, and as such he could not be held to account for any of his sins. He was above all that.

And yet there is still that jeering pest, reality. The thing about archetypes is that they are only real as ideas; they just don't translate well into the muck of existence. The public loved Jesse James and despised the charlatan Robert Ford, but this had not prevented Jesse from living in fear and shame and dying the ignoble death to which the hero is highly susceptible. Once he was dead, this fear and shame became Ford's inheritance.

One of the more phenomenal aspects of this film is the portrayal of Robert Ford by Casey Affleck. Word by word, intonation by intonation, expression by expression, he sculpts a heartrending depiction of the lost boy who shoots Peter Pan.

Dominik has created a complex and beautiful modern morality tale. The stark but highly evocative cinematography employs tricks (note the blurry outer edges) that carry more meaning than excitement, which may be one reason why this film has not garnered the critical acclaim it deserves. At least not yet.

The Assassination of Jesse James by the Coward Robert Ford manifests five of *The Mindful Bard's* criteria for films well worth seeing: it is authentic, original, and delightful; it makes me want to be a better artist; it displays an engagement with and compassionate response to suffering; it stimulates my mind; and it poses and admirably responds to questions which have a direct bearing on my view of existence.

CLICK OF THE WRIST – On the Job

Last week, we took a look at some of the stranger aspects of education, that long, torturous journey that's supposed to lead to a rewarding career. But the daily grind can hold some surprises too, especially if it involves one of *these* interesting jobs.

Worst Jobs in History - The BBC's Channel 4 offers this lively look back at some of the worst jobs to be found throughout history on the sceptred isle. Can't think which would be worse: groom of the stool or leech collector.

Some Really Odd Jobs - Tired of cubicle life? Here's a list of some truly unusual careers for the ambitious modern-day worker, from dress designer for Barbie clothes to painting artificial eyeballs.

On the Side - If the idea of a little extra cash appeals to you, there are plenty of perfectly legal side jobs for those willing to look beyond the nine to five. Just make sure you read the fine print before signing up to be a medical test subject.

50 Funniest Short Job Descriptions - Forget the job descriptions in recruitment ads. Here are the straight goods on jobs, condensed into single sentences, such as "Make sure nothing ever happens: IT Security."

Rags to Riches Billionaires - This *Forbes* slideshow just goes to prove that, even if you start out asking customers if they'd like fries with that, there's no telling where a little hard work can get you.

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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INTERNATIONAL NEWS DESK



At Home: Green Party demands place in TV debates

With an October federal election expected, there's at least one topic already heating up in advance of the televised debates between party leaders.

The Green Party recently secured its first seat in Parliament, and they are ready to go to court to ensure they are included in the nationally broadcast debates.

Traditionally, participants in the debates are selected by the consortium of Canada's largest English and French television networks: CBC/Radio-Canada, CTV, Global Television and TVA.

As former party leader Jim Harris told reporters, the Greens are giving the consortium "the chance to do the right thing" and include party leader Elizabeth May in the debates.

"For the sake of democracy, she has to be included," he said. "Electors have a right to know where the Green party stands."

Currently, the federal Conservatives are attempting to keep May from participating. As the [CBC](#) reports, Conservatives claim that May and Liberal leader Stéphane Dion struck a deal "where they agreed not to run candidates against each other in their respective ridings," effectively preventing May from taking part in the televised debates.

It's been an accepted practice in the past for political parties to choose not to run a candidate against the leaders of a rival party.

That doesn't necessarily mean May should be barred from the debates, however. In a 2006 report, the CBC ombudsman said that House of Commons representation is an "indisputable" criterion for inclusion in the event. On August 30, Green Party leader Elizabeth May welcomed MP Blair Wilson to the party as the first Green Member of Parliament in Canada.

Other factors to be considered are the party's performance at the polls, as well as its ability to have candidates in all 308 Canadian ridings. In the 2006 federal election, the Green Party won 4.5 per cent of the vote, and a recently released national poll shows them at nine per cent, while the Bloc Québécois (which is represented in the debates) is polling at eight per cent.

The Green Party is prepared to lodge a complaint with the Canadian Radio-Television and Telecommunications Commission (CRTC) if they are not allowed to participate alongside the other parties.

In Foreign News: Pakistan's Prime Minister escapes possible assassination attempt

Just days before key elections are to take place, Pakistan's prime minister has escaped a possible attempt on his life. The [Telegraph](#) reports that the apparent assassination attempt against Prime Minister Yousuf Raza Gilani highlights "the country's instability ahead of presidential elections."

There are conflicting reports, however, on whether Gilani was part of the motorcade that came under sniper fire while travelling the main highway between Islamabad and the nearby city of Rawalpindi, the garrison headquarters of the army.

Differing reports have also been offered by Zahid Bashir, the prime minister's spokesman. In one account, he said the prime minister was not in the convoy when it was attacked, and that "The prime minister is safe, by the grace of God." However, Bashir had earlier said the prime minister was in the vehicle at the time.

Shortly before snipers attacked the motorcade, US soldiers had launched an "unprecedented" commando raid in Pakistan's border tribal areas. The helicopter-led raid targeted militants in those areas.

Whether the prime minister was in the convoy or not, Taliban militants have claimed responsibility for the attack. In the past, they have "repeatedly threatened to kill Pakistani politicians for supporting the US-led war on terror."

EDUCATION NEWS

Giuseppe Valiante



Keep the military out of classrooms, urge Montreal activists

National Defence funding does not dictate research, insists war studies director

MONTREAL (CUP) - McGill University student Cleve Higgins sees military funding on Canadian campuses as a threat to academic freedom. So he's taking a stand against it through the activist group Operation Objection.

The Montreal-based group spent the summer following the money trail from the coffers of the

Canadian Forces, to Canadian universities, all the way to the battlefield.

"Is [the military's] presence a neutral one? Can that be seen as impartial if they're receiving funding [from the military]?" asked Higgins. "It raises questions that are problematic about the role of universities influencing foreign affairs issues."

The group has been distributing flyers detailing their findings to Quebec students during university orientation sessions, and they hope their movement gains momentum nationwide.

Operation Objective formed last year and was active in trying to end military recruitment on Quebec campuses. This year they aim to educate students and lobby student unions to adopt policies condemning military funding.

Higgins says military-funded research in science and engineering helps produce weaponry. He also fears money aimed at political science and history departments produces political analysis that beats the drums of war, influencing public opinion toward a more militant foreign policy.

Marc Milner, director of the Gregg Centre of the Study of War and Society at the University of New Brunswick, disagrees.

"Never once in all the time that I have been involved in any strategic studies program . . . has anyone phoned me up from Ottawa and told me what to do," said Milner.

Milner says the Gregg Centre, which focuses on teaching modern military history, receives 25 per cent of its yearly funding, equalling \$120,000, from the military—the maximum amount a program can apply for.

While this may seem like a lot, Milner says it represents only a fraction of budgets for larger war studies centres across the country. He says funding from the Canadian Forces comes from the Security and Defence Forum (SDF), which was created in the late 1960s after Reserve Officer Training Corps (ROTC) shut down in Canadian universities.

ROTCs were established as a means to mobilize groups of young men and women for an anticipated third world war between NATO and the Soviet Union.

The growth of nuclear arsenals and the adoption of the theory of mutually assured destruction ended the need for ROTCs, Milner says, and the university training centres were closed.

If universities wanted funding from then on, they could apply to the SDF.

"The objective of the [SDF] is simply to get a rainbow of opinion across the country . . . outside of the Ottawa beltway," Milner said. "Most of the people I was involved with through the SDF were very vociferous against the Canadian deployment of troops to Afghanistan."

"From our perspective, we think it's a good thing that the Department of National Defence is actually looking for opinion outside of Ottawa," he added.

A full list of contracts awarded by the Canadian government, including the Department of National Defence, can be found on the government's website and goes back as far as 2005, though very few details are provided.

Operation Objection cites Dalhousie University in Halifax as having received the most funding from National Defence since 2006 out of all Canadian universities.

The Canadian government lists Dalhousie as having received over \$5 million in 39 contracts since October 2005.

Courtney Larkin, president of the Dalhousie Student Union, says the issue of military funding has never really surfaced on campus during her years in student politics.

"We have a very diverse population here," said Larkin. "There may be students with that concern, but at this point, it has not been brought to my attention."

But according to Higgins and the rest of Operation Objection, universities should not be in any way dependent on the branch of the government responsible for occupations of foreign countries.

"We oppose what military research implies," Higgins said. "The way that we're responding is by confronting it where it's associated with us."

Calls to the Department of National Defence were not returned as of press time.

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