

THE

VOICE

MAGAZINE

Volume 16 Issue 42

October 31, 2008

Ghosts of '82

Haunting echoes

In Conversation With

Del McCoury

This World

Yellowstone

Plus:

Porkpie Hat,

The Interviewer,

From Where I Sit, and much more...



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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

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



THIS WORLD**Christina M. Frey****Across the Continent in 22 Days****Part V: Gardiner, Montana to Yellowstone National Park, Wyoming**

This is the fifth instalment in a series chronicling the adventures of the author; her husband, Adam; and two-year-old daughter, Kiersten, as they travelled by car from Alaska to Louisiana in summer 2008.

**Day 15: Gardiner, Montana to Yellowstone National Park, Wyoming**

We get up late today, but it doesn't matter. We've started the vacation portion of this trip! Each year, more than two million tourists flock to Yellowstone National Park to see its sights, and for the next three days we'll be among them. We'll be spending our nights in a primitive campground overlooking Yellowstone Lake.

At the front gate, we're surprised to learn that there are forest fires in the Park, but they're distant enough that they shouldn't affect us. In fact, during the summer there are nearly always fires somewhere in this vast area. Unless the fires are a danger to visitors or landmarks, rangers generally allow them to burn,

especially if they were started by natural causes like lightning. Fire, we learn, is vital to growth and rebirth in the ecological cycle of the forest.

After crossing the Montana - Wyoming state line not far from the entrance, we begin noticing how different the landscape here is than in Glacier National Park. There is a lot of reddish, striated rock, and the climate seems very dry, with arid grasses and sagebrush everywhere, but very few trees. We'd expected that the home of Old Faithful would be much wetter.



Forest fires darken the sky

During a brief break at one of the visitor centres, though, we learn that because of Yellowstone's vast size—2.2 million acres—it is home to a widely varied landscape, from dry plains to rocky formations to lush waterfalls to hot springs.

After lunch, we're on our way again. We'd been looking forward to a break from driving, but it takes several hours to reach our campsite! Yellowstone's size allows for incredible diversity, but it also means that getting anywhere takes a long time. Of course, part of the problem is our guidebook, which notes all the sights and vistas along the way. We hate to miss anything good, so we stop umpteen times and take scores of pictures: waterfalls, the Continental Divide, canyon vistas, and a petrified tree.

Wildlife also causes delays. If we were concerned about the lack of animals in the early days of our trip, we're more than making up for it here. In less than an hour, we see deer, elk, and bison. In fact, a whole herd of buffalo holds up traffic in both directions for a good 20 minutes as it crosses from a wallowing pond to a nearby field.



As we slowly make our way toward the centre of the Park, the elevation and landscape change. We're seeing a lot more forest now, and from the higher elevations we can see panoramic views of the plains below, as well as billowing smoke from fires far in the distance.

We're camping near Yellowstone Lake in a tree-heavy area. Hopefully, the trees will help hold the heat and we won't have a repeat of our last camping trip's frigid nights. Despite what we were told a few days ago, we can't believe it will be so cold here tonight. Right now, we're sweating in the 70-degree sunny weather. It makes us wonder momentarily how we're going to handle the temperatures further south.

For now, though, we're focused on setting up camp. Things come together again quickly, and before we realize it, night begins to fall. It seems to come earlier than at Glacier, which surprises me as we aren't that much further south. However, the trees may be contributing to the effect. Because we're so far into the Park, there's very little light pollution, and the night is blacker than black. Even with a flashlight, I can only

see a few feet in front of me. All I can think about is Yellowstone's famous grizzly bears as I make my way back through the dark from the restrooms. Thank goodness for our propane lamp, glowing like a small sun in the darkness!

The dark sky also means a lot of stars, but there's so many visible here that, even with our newly purchased constellation guide, we can't identify anything other than the Big Dipper.

Eventually, we give up and decide to head to bed. Our air mattress works really well, and although the temperature has dropped, it's only just below 50 degrees.

Compared to Glacier, that's warm. If it stays steady, we just might have a comfortable night!

Day 16: Yellowstone National Park, Wyoming

We made it through the night! In the early morning it's still 47 degrees, and we marvel at the difference 10 degrees can make. We don't linger to enjoy the weather, however.

Although we saw some fantastic views along the road yesterday, we haven't yet visited Yellowstone's "must-sees." Today, we'll tour the geothermal areas of the Park. This is one of Yellowstone's most well-known features, and it's not limited to Old Faithful; there are countless other geysers, as well as bubbling pools, steam vents (fumaroles), and mud pits.

First, we head for the bubbling pools. They are amazing. Random pools of water or mud, often multicoloured, literally bubble up out of the ground. Some of them were formerly geysers, while some may eventually show geyser activity. And they're *hot*—the air around some is significantly warmer. We're walking along a boardwalk built because the ground is so unstable. Apparently, these pools can and do spontaneously appear; in another area of the Park, a pool formed and destroyed a nearby boardwalk, injuring a tourist.

We see bubbling coming from Yellowstone Lake, and wonder whether there's new activity there. It's quite possible, as geyser activity has increased recently due to earthquakes earlier in the summer. Yes, earthquakes! Yellowstone experiences thousands of small earthquakes each year, including one 4.2 quake this past March.

All this talk of ground instability reminds us that our firepit was smoking slightly when we arrived, and continued to do so despite our efforts to quench it. For a few foolish moments, we entertain the thought that a thermal vent might be pushing through. Doesn't "Frey Geyser" have a nice ring? Our dreams are dashed, however, when a ranger assures us that the steam was the result of careless campers who stayed there before us.

After lunch, we head for the main geyser basin, home to Old Faithful and scores of other, lesser-known geysers. Old Faithful goes off every 75 to 90 minutes, and rangers can predict its eruption time within a 10-minute window on either side. We wait some time for the next eruption, and after a false start, it goes off!

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Kiersten, initially thrilled, spends most of the eruption time trying to run toward the water that's running in rivulets in front of the geyser. After it finishes, everyone presses forward to feel the stream, and it's warm to the touch.

Although it's exciting to witness the real Old Faithful—in person and not on a postcard—we're slightly disappointed, as the geyser wasn't as high or forceful as we were expecting. Later, we find out that Old

Faithful's output varies in intensity, and we happened on a weaker cycle.

We see a later eruption from elsewhere in the geyser basin, and it's definitely impressive despite the distance.

After watching Old Faithful, we decide to view the rest of the geyser basin. The area is home to hundreds of geysers, some small, some large, some regular, some sporadic, some frequent, and some that haven't erupted in months or even years.

There is a boardwalk winding among the geysers and bubbling pools. Some of the smaller geysers are only a few feet away from the boardwalk, and we're sprayed by warm water when they go off.

It feels more exciting than Old Faithful, since we're much closer to the action.

When not erupting, many of the geysers are frothing, boiling pools. I can't get

over the bizarre sight of a sinkhole full of water that looks like it's in a pot on a stove—I keep thinking that it's time to throw in the pasta! The sulphur smell is slightly off-putting, though.



The geysers are all different, too. Some erupt straight in the air like Old Faithful, while others send spray outwards. One sucks all its water back in with a loud slurping sound; it sounds like some monster from *Star Wars*. We head back to our campsite around dinnertime, exhausted by the walking and the newness of everything we've seen today. We need to slow down our pace somewhat. Today's sightseeing was a little hard on Kiersten, who is overwhelmed—and we're not far behind.

Dinner puts us in a better humour, though. I'm really enjoying cooking outdoors, and the best part is that we get a homemade, hot dinner. Cold sandwiches in the car have been standard fare on this trip, and this is a refreshing break.

After Kiersten is in bed, Adam goes to attend the campground's evening program, while I attempt to fight moths while writing in my journal. After losing the battle, I decide it's time to retire early. Tomorrow, we're hoping to catch a ranger-led hike, which begins at 9 a.m. A little extra sleep now couldn't hurt!

CLICK OF THE WRIST - Halloween

It's Halloween, the time of year when all sorts of things keep us peering wide-eyed into the night: things that go bump, scary movies, and too much candy. But don't feel bad if all that frightful fun keeps you awake. In the words of Edgar Allan Poe, "Sleep, those little slices of death; Oh how I loathe them."

Halloween Around the World

The French don't celebrate it; the Austrians leave bread, water, and a lighted lamp on the table to welcome returning spirits; and in Korea, an occasion similar to Halloween is marked in August. Now if only I could remember the words to the Punkie Night Song.

Classic Horror Movies

If you're looking for some classic movie creepiness this Halloween, look no further than where it all started. Some great (and probably forgotten) films are here, from the 1922 classic *Nosferatu* to *The Shining*. Run, don't walk, to the dusty shelves in the back of your video store.

Why Pets Hate Halloween

Some of these have already done the email rounds, but they're somehow even funnier with "Tubthumping" playing in the background. That poor, poor Weimaraner.

Trick or Treat

There are a lot of Halloween recipes offered online, but these ghoulish treats from Hershey's are probably one of the safest bets. If you don't think your kids will score enough sugar in their plastic pumpkins, you can add to the fun with everything from Spooktacular Chocolate Cupcakes to Eerie Eyeball Cookies. Yum.

Photoshop Jack-O'-Lanterns

No pumpkins were harmed in the making of these Photoshop jack-o'-lanterns.

ON THE HILL

Sandra Livingston



Penny Wise

When Prime Minister Stephen Harper announced his new cabinet this week, the naysayers were quick to be heard, and one of their main arguments surrounded the extra seats at the table.

Indeed, it may seem like a curious decision in this economic climate for Harper to increase his cabinet by six members, from 32 to 38.

Especially in the face of recent comments by Finance Minister Jim Flaherty, who vowed to rein in the government's operating expenses.

As the [CBC](#) reports, business leaders meeting in Toronto heard about Flaherty's intention to put government operating expenses "under the microscope of responsible spending."

Departments will be given "what they need to fund essential programs and services and no more," and public-service salaries are clearly within Flaherty's sights. Federal wages, he said, should "not add pressure to businesses that are already feeling the pinch of an economic slowdown."

So how does this square with the extra expense of all those new cabinet slots? In the narrow view, it doesn't, but a look at the bigger picture shows that there may just be some logic to it.

First, it's not as though the extra members translate into the additional cost of six full salaries. The cabinet members were elected as MPs (or sitting in the Senate), meaning that your tax dollars are paying their salaries whether they're sitting in cabinet or not.

The main expense comes in the difference between an MP's salary and the additional money that's tacked on for the duties of a cabinet minister. (Following a 2.4 per cent increase in 2006, MPs were already in the [top two per cent](#) of Canadian wage earners.)

The question, then, is whether the extra hands on deck will result in better effectiveness. Will we be getting our money's worth, in the form of increased focus in areas such as Status of Women or the Sport portfolio? Does the shuffle of responsibilities mean that key economic portfolios, such as Industry and Finance, will be more effectual because there are more players on the team?

Not necessarily, especially when several of those players are rookies. A notable case is the high-profile Health Ministry, now headed by new MP Leona Aglukkaq of Nunavut. As the former health minister for the government of Nunavut, Aglukkaq comes with experience but there's no denying the move to the federal level comes with a learning curve.

Overall, though, Harper's decision to increase his cabinet seems to have been made shrewdly. Sometimes, as the saying goes, you have to spend money to make money. Now it's time to see if the investment pays off.

GHOSTS OF '82

Adam Thackeray



Halloween, 1982, and three brothers race through the darkness of a haunted suburban landscape. Frenzied in their quest, the boys cut a determined, unceremonious path across the well-manicured lawns of their little world. Their footfalls are crisp atop forgotten piles of long-dead leaves. They trample prized gardens slowly receding into dormancy. They pillage with all the vitality of their Viking ancestors.

The youngest of the three has fashioned a particularly unimpressive Spider-Man costume for himself: baggy sweat pants; red and black face paint smudged into an indistinguishable grey mess; magic markers on a blue cotton T-shirt, the webbing crooked and unfinished. He follows close behind his siblings, terrified he will lose sight of them, for, in truth, there is no actual radioactive blood flowing through his veins—he is brave tonight because of them.

The middle brother is Superman. This is difficult to ascertain at this point in the evening since the cheap elastic headband has already snapped away from the hard plastic pseudo-likeness of Krypton's noble hero. However, beneath this mediocre visage is revealed the very likeness of Clark Kent—

kind, honest eyes magnified through thick prescription lenses. And although the mask's cruelly placed staples have scourged the middle brother's temples, he moves forward, undaunted.

The eldest of the trio is Magnum, P.I. Jeans and a Hawaiian shirt complement the thick stroke of shoe polish across his hairless top lip while a Blue Jays cap suffices in place of the famed Detroit Tigers cap. He has reached the age where he draws contemptuous glances from neighbours eager to ration their crappy assortment of rocket candies and lollipops. He is passing from this realm of innocence, beyond the grasp of his brothers. In fact, in the eyes of his baby brother, he could very well be a mustachioed prime-time hero—the only difference being a Raleigh 10-speed bicycle in place of the Ferrari 308 GTS.

Porch lights and the flickering glow of countless pumpkins are extinguished. The brothers arrive home, bound in their conquests, their pillowcases stuffed to capacity. The spoils of triumph are dumped onto the shag carpet and inventoried. They calculate the precise number of chocolate bars that each brother has acquired (this item being the most coveted, of course.) They commence phase one of the gorging process, and then, once satiated, complete the annual ritual by each securing a viable hideaway for their hard-earned treasure. For, although the brothers are united in the evening's victory, they are not above ransacking each other's stash in search of the aforementioned coveted item.

Many Halloweens later, the children of Spider-Man, Superman, and Magnum, P.I. are plundering the neighbourhoods for the great glory of the almighty chocolate bar. The brothers are many miles apart now, separated by provinces and responsibilities. Despite the distances, though, the ghosts of the past will always draw them close. They can only hope that their children will one day be haunted in the same way.

IN CONVERSATION WITH . . .

Wanda Waterman St. Louis



Del McCoury

Del McCoury is a bluegrass performer who took up the banjo after hearing Flatt and Scruggs playing on a 78 record. Del has worked with Bill Monroe, Steve Earle, and Phish, among others.

Del's new CD, Moneyland, features famous country artists of all political persuasions working together to raise awareness of the plight of poor rural Americans. The following are notes from a conversation with Wanda Waterman St. Louis.

The Roots of Moneyland

The idea for the album actually came from the song "Moneyland" by John Herald, which appears on the album. About three years ago Artie Traum in New York sent me that song. I used to know John Herald but he'd passed away, and so has Artie since then. I really liked that song and I told my manager I'd like to record that on my next record. And he said, "We should probably do an album around that song." We wanted to bring attention to the plight of men and women in Middle America. Even three years ago they were having it pretty rough, and it's even worse now.

This record was finished maybe a year and a half ago but for some reason we just didn't put it out then. It timed its own self, I guess.

So many folks now can't afford medical it's just like it was back then. We're the richest country in the world and yet there are people who really need help in this country. And all we knew to do about it was just sing about it so that's why we put the record out.

We didn't want to get political or anything but actually in the long run we did get political. I don't know how to fix things but I don't think the people in Washington know how to fix things either.



Gittin' 'er Done

Sometimes we had a little trouble getting something released. Bruce Hornsby didn't really want to release that song "The Way It Is." He thought it had been played to death. So we said, "We got some ideas. How about we do something with it and send it back to you and let you listen to it?"

So we got The Fairfield Four to back him up. Now those guys are really good, and when that bass player sings those low notes, it makes the window panes rattle. We sent that to Bruce and oh, man, he liked it. He said, "Let's release that thing." So we did.

That song, "Carry Me Across the Mountain," that's a true story about a woman named Hazel. Her daddy had given up on her because she was real sick and there were no doctors around there and no medicine. But her mother walked, carrying her, over a mountain to get to a doctor there in West Virginia.

The Way It Was

We were from western North Carolina but I grew up on a farm in York County, Pennsylvania. My folks moved there before the war. Before the war there was a huge migration from out of the mountains to cities like Baltimore, Detroit, and Ohio, but folks from South Carolina all came to Pennsylvania to work in the Martin airplane factory, the shipyard, and the steel mill there. And after the war started all my kin folks came out there.

When the war started my dad decided to buy a farm so we could raise our own food. He thought we might starve to death after the war was over. The economy was good during the war but he thought he should invest in a farm for when it was over. He ended up dairy farming and that's what I grew up helping with. It was hard work. I didn't ever want to farm when I grew up so I started doing music.

Before too long I ended up playing with Bill Monroe. Bill was really open-minded. He was a man of few words, and he would never say, "Now sing this like this, or play like this." Musicians learned from his example more than anything. And I think he learned from the musicians he had in his band through the years.

The hardest thing for me was learning all those songs all at one time. One day I'd be the sideman playing the banjo and singing on a chorus here and there and then I'd be asked to play rhythm guitar and sing all the leads. That was the biggest challenge, but when you're young you like a challenge.

All Bill expected was for you to get out there and work really hard. If he found out a guy in the band was lazy he'd ride him until he quit. He grew up hard, and when he was out on the stage he expected all the musicians to really put it out there.

The Way It Is

I don't really know what happened here lately or how to fix it. We're getting ready to vote right now and we really don't know who to vote for. The politicians are saying what all they're going to do when they get elected, they're saying absolutely they can do this or do that. Now they *know* better than that! When they're in office they still have to convince the Senate and the Congress and all of them and they're not going to convince all those guys. That's probably what angers me more than anything.

America is the best place in the world. I've travelled all over the world and we are just so blessed compared to people in other countries. Even with the problems we're having now it's still the best country. But we still have to help the poor.

***It was hard work.
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HEALTH MATTERS

Behdin Nowrouzi



Traumatic Brain Injury: A focus on the pediatric population

Traumatic Brain injury (TBI), also called acquired brain injury or simply head injury, occurs when a sudden trauma causes damage to the brain. Brain injury can vary from mild (concussion) to severe (deep coma).

Worldwide, brain injury is the leading cause of death and disability. Each year, at least 1.5 million Americans sustain a TBI; this means an average of more than 4,000 individuals daily.

While one million of those patients are treated and released annually from hospital emergency rooms, more than 80,000 are left with lifelong disabilities, and TBI also claims more than 50,000 lives.

Although it seems society is more safety-conscious than ever, the number of TBIs among children may surprise you. For those less than 17 years of age, there are over 50,000 traumatic brain injury-associated hospitalizations in the United States each year. And among children under 14, over 2,500 deaths and over 400,000 emergency department visits occur annually.

In Canada, TBI is the leading cause of death and disability for people under the age of 45, and the Ontario Brain Injury Association reports that every year over 3,000 Ontario children sustain a TBI. In Toronto alone, over 1,700 children are hospitalized annually. Accordingly, annual hospital costs related to TBI admissions in Ontario are \$164.4 million.

Although TBI in children and adolescents is common, they are less likely to be admitted to rehabilitation centers as in-patients compared to adults. Still, around 25 per cent of children and youth who sustain brain injury require rehabilitation services, including physical, occupational, and speech therapy.

Causes of TBI

According to the Centers for Disease Control, the leading causes of TBI are falls (28 per cent); motor vehicle collisions (20 per cent); struck by or against events (19 per cent), and assaults (11 per cent).

Disease sequelae

Anatomical changes from head injury may or may not be visible to the naked eye, depending on the exact mechanism and forces involved. Clinical symptoms vary greatly and in severity, making treatment difficult.

TBI injuries are typically classified as open or closed. Open injuries involve intrusion of the skull and underlying tissue in the brain (for example, bullets or knife punctures are considered open injuries).

Conversely, closed injuries happen when the head is struck, strikes an object, or is shaken violently, causing rapid brain acceleration and deceleration. Nerves, blood vessels, and brain tissue can shear or be torn. This can cause concussions, contusions, intracerebral or subarachnoid bleeding, or hemorrhaging.

Memory and communication problems are also variable across children; the problems depend on an individual's coping strategies, pre-injury ability, and the extent of the brain injury.

The effects of the TBI are generally greatest immediately following the injury. As brain swelling decreases, contusions may cause temporary damage. These types of damage are usually temporary and function is normally restored. Scientists and research tends to have difficulty accurately predicting the extent of long-term problems in the first weeks following traumatic brain injury.

One positive aspect of treating pediatric TBI is that children's brains are more malleable than those of adults and therefore have greater flexibility. Consequently, children who suffer TBI have a better prognosis than adults with similar damage.

AROUND AU



AU Store

Want to show off your AU pride? Looking for a Christmas gift for that special AU student?

Simple: just go to the [AU store](#) and check out all the latest gear.

There are some great AU branded items available, including women's fleece zip jackets in colours from green to orange to purple and more.

You'll also find men's fleece zip jackets, unisex pullover hoodies, men's and women's jackets, and a variety of golf shirts and other clothing.

There are some great little stocking stuffers too, and the always popular stainless steel travel mug.

To order items from the AU store, call 1-800-788-9041, extension 7285, Monday through Friday from 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. (be sure to have your credit card number and expiry date).

All items are shipped via Canada Post, but you can save the shipping charges by picking up your order at the main AU campus in Athabasca, at the Edmonton Learning Centre, or at the Calgary Learning Centre.

THANKSGIVING REVISITED

Greg Ryan



The turkey I stuffed this morning stuffed me this afternoon.

I lean back in the armchair and take a break from my reading of Dickens's *Bleak House* and massage my stomach.

I contemplate the contrast between my childhood and the existence that Mrs. Jellyby's ragged children endure.

Lucky for me to be born to parents whose eyes are fixed, not on the natives of Africa as are Mrs. Jellyby's, but on me.

Thanksgiving is the anniversary of the day I learned to be truly thankful and for a few moments I contemplate all that I have to be grateful for. I am fortunate to possess a family of my own. With all that is decently human within me, I will value their needs above mine. This is a legacy that my parents bequeathed to me and it's one I'll entrust to my children.

I love my wife and children and they love me back; it's a splendid equation that doesn't require any mathematical talent to prove. I know that this sort of love is freely given and that no matter what my moods or failures, the gift remains.

Yet there's so much more to be thankful for. I'm thrilled to be able to pursue a career and further my education by working and studying at home. I want to be mindful that for many it's a dream. I'm privileged to live my dream.

Above all, I'm alive. Life itself is a gift to be cherished.

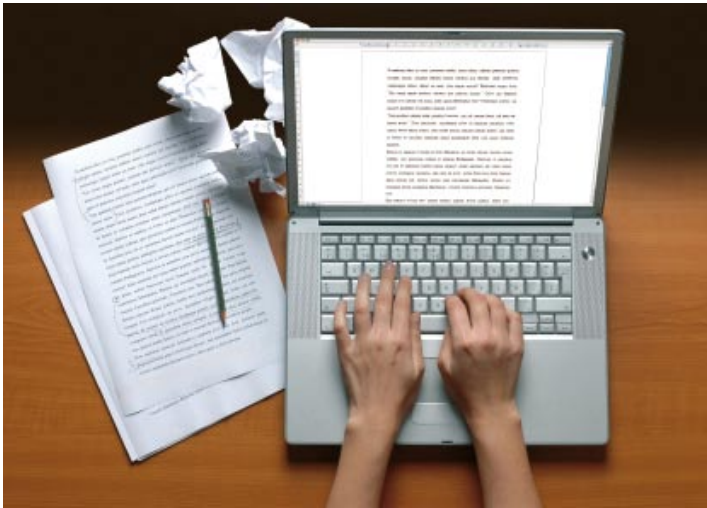
However, the Death Clock never stops ticking. As of this writing I have 929,620,615 seconds left to me.

Nevertheless, time eludes quantification. Whether or not I live my allotted seconds is a matter of chance. Perhaps, several years from now, I'll die surrounded by family and friends. Then again, this may be my last day or minute or second. Death is a mystery, but it's a mystery we are all destined to eventually solve.

Ten years ago, I anticipated the Death Clock's last chime. I entered the hospital on what was to be a one-way journey, but exited several weeks later on a Thanksgiving holiday. Every Thanksgiving weekend, I recall that joyful journey home; it's a lesson in gratitude that I'll not forget.

That's why this Thanksgiving Day, I lean back in my armchair and remember why I live a life of thanks. I do so because of the numerous wonders that surround me and for all those yet to come.

THE 2008 VOICE MAGAZINE WRITING CONTEST!



Write for *The Voice* and win money for your education!

The Voice is launching its 2008 writing contest, with categories for both fiction and non-fiction.

We've got over \$1,000 in prizes to give away: one winner in each category will receive a scholarship of one Athabasca University undergraduate course.

Please read the contest rules and regulations and submission guidelines carefully to ensure you are not disqualified.

It's free to enter, but the length limits are firm and all entries that go beyond these limits will be disqualified. Good luck!

Categories

Non-Fiction:

In 1,500 words or less, write about any issue affecting freedom of speech. You may write about issues in the press, in politics, or on a personal scale. You may focus on current issues of free speech, or take a historical approach. Feel free to use research or statistics in your article (with proper citations), or write a creative opinion piece.

Fiction:

This category is open to your imagination! Write a 1,500 word or less fiction submission in any genre or format. Short stories, poetry, a scene from a play, even a comic. Be creative!

Rules and Regulations

- The *Voice* writing contest is open to anyone 16 years of age or older, with the following exceptions: AU, AUSU, and *Voice* staff and AUSU councillors are not eligible to enter the contest.
- Winning entries will be published in *The Voice*. *The Voice* reserves the right to print non-winning entries at a rate of remuneration in accordance with current *Voice* freelance submission rates. *The Voice* may use portions of non-winning non-fiction entries in a composite about perspectives on free speech. No remuneration will be provided for such use.
- All decisions regarding this contest and the selection of winners remain with the judging panel and are final.
- Entries will be judged by a panel to be selected by the *Voice* editors, and this panel may include: AU students, AU tutors, and/or AUSU councillors. The panel will include at least 3 members.
- *The Voice* editors will collect articles and oversee the judging, but will not be judges.

- Entries must be original works that have not been printed or published elsewhere (including online), and must not be course assignment papers or derivatives of.
- Entries must not contain any information that would make the identity of the author evident to judges. To ensure fairness, all entries will be forwarded to the judging panel with a reference number attached, but no personally identifying information. *The Voice* editors will keep the identity of the authors private until the contest closes. *The Voice* editors will keep a record of the authors of submissions, and will be the sole owner of this list.
- Entries will not be edited for grammar, spelling, or content, although *The Voice* editors may black out any personally identifying information contained within the submission. Otherwise, entries will be forwarded to the judging panel as is, with the exception that all entries will be converted to use the same file format, margins, font size, and font style to ensure that all entries are equally readable.
- The deadline for submissions in both categories will be December 31, 2008. The winners will be announced by February 28, 2009. *The Voice* reserves the right to extend either deadline if necessary.
- One grand prize winner will be selected in both the fiction and non-fiction categories. If no entries are received in one of the categories, the prize money will be returned to the *Voice* scholarship budget. Prizes will be awarded in the form of a certificate for one free Athabasca University undergraduate course. Prize certificates have no cash value.
- *The Voice* reserves the right to add additional, secondary prizes.
- *The Voice* is not responsible for lost emails. *The Voice* editors will confirm receipt of all entries by email. Please follow up if you do not receive a reply in two business days.
- All entrants agree to allow their name and city of residence to be printed, along with their submission, should it be selected as a winning entry. No further remuneration—beyond the contest prize—will be paid to the contest winner when their entry is printed.
- Winners will be asked to sign a standard Release and Indemnity form; each prize winner agrees to release the sponsor and its agents from any liability in connection with the prizes awarded in this contest.
- Any entrant found to be tampering with the contest results, or attempting to influence any of the judging members, or using any forums or other public communications media to advise others of which entry is theirs will be disqualified; or if *The Voice* editors determine, at their sole discretion, that any other form of tampering has been attempted, that entrant will be disqualified.
- No preference will be given to regular *Voice* writers. Entries will not identify the writer as a regular *Voice* contributor when sent to the judging panel.
- Where applicable, this contest is subject to all federal, provincial, and municipal laws. Contest void where prohibited.

***The deadline for submissions
in both categories will be
December 31, 2008. The
winners will be announced by
February 28, 2009. The Voice
reserves the right to extend
either deadline if necessary.***

Submission Guidelines

- Your submission must be an electronic file attached to an email and submitted to voice@ausu.org. Submissions sent as the body of an email will not be accepted. Contact voice@ausu.org if you require instructions on how to attach a file to an email.
- Submissions should be in Microsoft Word format [.doc or .docx], rich text format [.rtf] or plain text format [.txt].

- If you use footnotes or endnotes, type them in at the end of the document, rather than using the endnote feature of your word processor.
- If you use a word processor other than Word or work on a Mac computer, you can save a file in one of these alternate formats using the 'save as' function and selecting the desired format on the save menu. Contact *The Voice* editors if you require assistance in formatting your submission. Users of older Macs may have to send entries in HTML format.
- Each entrant may submit one entry in each of the two categories.
- All entries must be under 1,500 words due to judging time constraints. Length will be determined by the word count feature in Microsoft Word. Your references and citations section will not be included in the word count.
- References should be formatted consistently according to a standardized publishing style guide, such as the American Psychological Association (APA) or the MLA press style.
- Entries should not include unnecessary formatting such as drop caps, graphics (unless the graphic is integral to the work), or unusual fonts. Entries must be text; scans of handwritten or typed documents will not be accepted.
- The email should include the following information: Your full name, AU student ID number (if applicable), email address, telephone number, mailing address, the title of your entry, and whether you are submitting to the fiction or non-fiction category.
- Make sure non-fiction entries are based on the topic question detailed above. Fiction entries can be on any topic you like. Do not include your contact information within your article but be sure to include a title.

Entries will be judged on the following criteria:

- Non-Fiction entries will be judged on originality, creativity, accuracy, and how well you support your assertions with data or argument. You will also be judged on the presentation of your article, including professionalism, proper spelling, grammar and syntax, and readability. You may write in journalistic style or essay format.
- Fiction entries will be judged on creativity, entertainment value, and the originality of your writing style.
- Regardless of the genre you choose, you will be judged on the effectiveness of your piece and your technical writing skills.

Contact voice@ausu.org if you have any questions.

DID YOU KNOW?

Call for Nominations



Each year at convocation, AU presents the Honorary Doctorate and Order of Athabasca University awards, in recognition of those who (among other achievements) provide "exceptional contributions to the enhancement of the Canadian culture or society," as well as "leadership and inspiration by being a role model to our graduates."

Does that sound like someone you know? If so, nominations for the 2009 awards are now open. Nominations for both awards must be received by November 14, 2008.

You can find all the details by following the links on the [AU home page](#), and a complete list of past recipients can be found [here](#).



Happy Medium?

Why is it that there is no happy medium?

Not so long ago I had lots of time and not very much money. I've (re)discovered that when time seems to hang heavy there isn't much pressure to "put out." If I didn't do the laundry today, there was always tomorrow. Or perhaps the day after. Productivity plummeted but there was time to smell the roses or drop everything and go into Edmonton or help a daughter with one project or another.

There was time to craft a to-do list and time to ignore it if something more enticing came along. There was time to cook better meals but it didn't always happen. There was time to bear down and begin, for the umpteenth time, a sustainable, for-the-rest-of-my-life fitness regime.

It didn't happen. I didn't spend more time visiting family and friends, reading the classics, taking on ambitious projects, or discovering the cure for cancer.

Perhaps I'm being overly harsh or dramatic. Obviously, I didn't lie about watching soaps and eating bonbons. I didn't become a burden on society. I did do things. I did produce stuff. I was a helpmate to my husband and a support to my children.

If we, as human beings, have value by virtue of simply being, then I had value. Still do, in fact. But I discovered I wanted more structure, more productivity, more impact, a bigger contribution to the financial well-being of our household.

Watch, as they say, what you pray for. I now have all of the above but it comes with a price. I wake up earlier. I scramble to make lunches and, God help me, a quick, easy, nutritious supper each night. I'm forced to get creative at managing

my time, saving steps, multi-tasking, and choosing what to leave undone.

Some days I run the dishwasher before the sun comes up. Some evenings I'm up and "doing" long after I should have laid my head on my pillow. Incidentally, I also know first-hand that the amethyst I slip under my pillow each night does help to quiet an overactive mind and let me fall asleep.

My days are jam-packed with satisfying, meaningful work but I bet my blood pressure is up. My wardrobe is better but my bedtime is sometimes nine p.m. I've got money for gel nails and quicker debt repayment but it's hard to connect with Roy, who's working equally hard.

The struggle now is to reward and balance all the hard work with some downtime and some goofing off time. To that end, today I booked a week in Mexico in January.

Cliche alert: Work will expand to fill the time available to do it. If you want something done, ask a busy person. Time management and setting priorities are the only way out. Someday I hope to find that middle ground where going from extremes of working crazy hard to being underemployed are a distant memory.

In the meantime, there are visions of Mexico, 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 #16: Sun Just Keep on Rising



Kush drives Reuben over to her place for supper.



Then they take Cass out trick-or-treating.

They pick up Cass's cousin and back home the two girls inhale candy and play Punk My Shirt.



After the kids are in bed they watch O Lucky Man...

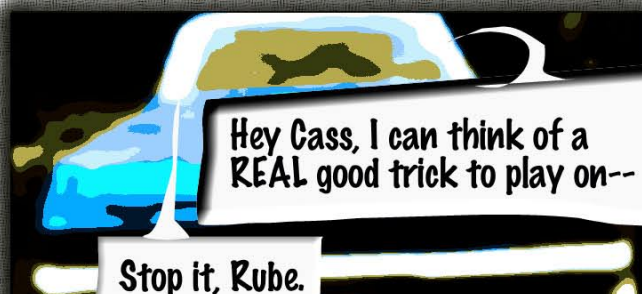


...on t.v. and drink a pot of espresso.

I love my family enough to bake with pure lard!



Cass is dressed as Dribble, one of her favourite alter egos.

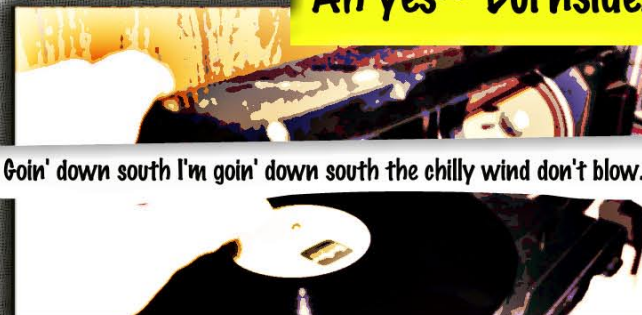


They drive by Wayner Casey's place.

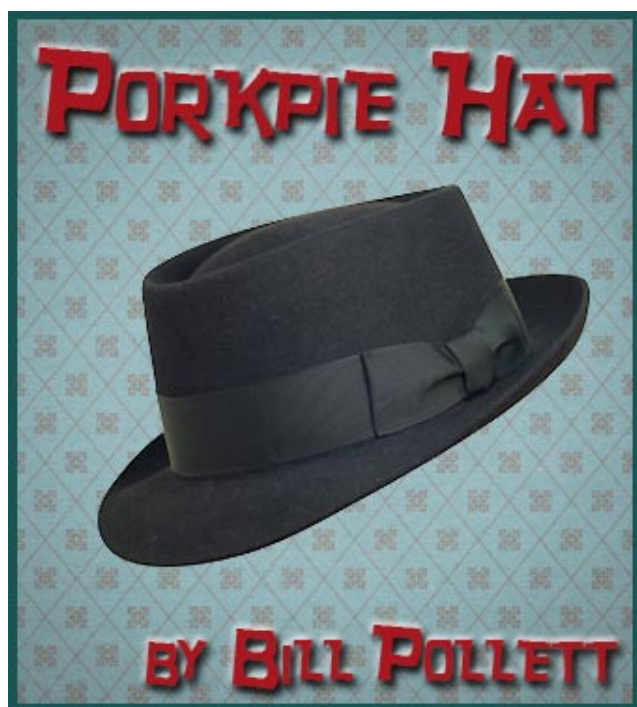
Back home Reuben makes himself a pot of coffee. The sun is coming up.



Ah yes-- Burnside.



next: last episode



Some Thoughts on Peace of Mind

As I get older, more realistic, more mature, I gain an ever-greater understanding of the fact that existence is a series of compromises made in order to keep the wheels (of finance, of society, of life itself) smoothly turning.

There is no such thing as “black” and “white”—only endless gradations of tasteful paint samples in Martha Stewart-inspired colors, such as *film noir* black, *French roast* brown, and *elephant graveyard* ivory.

To keep roofs over our heads, for instance, my formerly cynical generation has accepted work we had, in earlier and more idealistic times, found to be distasteful.

Some amongst my circle of acquaintances have resorted to working for “the man,” or even several “men.”

Putting down the Molotov cocktails of our high-octane principles, we have taken up bylaw enforcement, or the shilling of questionable life insurance products. Some have become mouthpieces of multinational tobacco and pharmaceutical corporations, or have even entered the field of real estate development.

At the fag-end of the post-industrial pre-apocalypse, we have showed up for work in YSL jackets and power ties, in lambskin shoes, in Mylar haz-mat suits, ready and willing to do whatever it is that must, at all costs, be done.

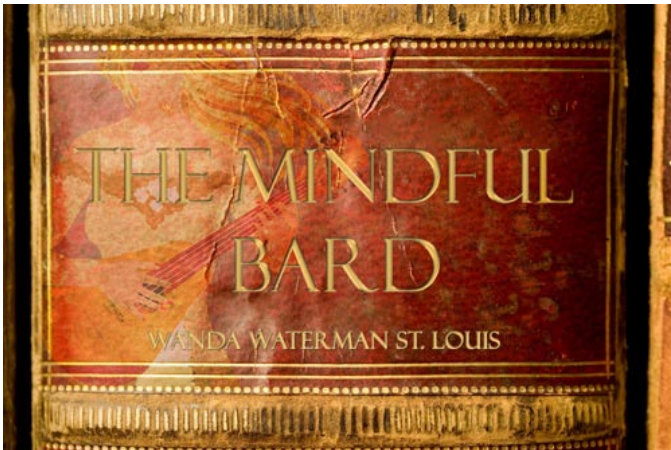
There was a time, of course, when I—pompous prig that I was—would have been swift to pass judgment. No longer. I begin to understand that sometimes the ends really do justify the means.

Most reasonable people would now agree that to live a better, happier, more secure life, we must make some pragmatic allowances, must demonstrate some flexibility in our ideals. If you want to make omelettes, as they say, you need to break some wholesome, factory-farmed, Vitamin D-enriched eggs.

To avoid having our throats cut in our sleep, we must install monitored alarm systems. To eradicate unsightly dandelions from our lawns, we must accept an ever-so-slightly increased incidence of bone cancer.

To stop our passenger planes tumbling from the sky, we must limit the quantities of potentially dangerous water and shampoo carried about. Above all, we must surreptitiously peer out of the corners of our eyes at suspicious-looking fellow travellers.

Remember, always, that freedom is just another word for “peace of mind,” and that the cost of this peace of mind is putting our trust in those who are in a position of authority, who know better.



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

CD: *Moneyland*

Release date: 2008, McCoury Music

Del McCoury, Bernard Smith, Marty Stuart, Merle Haggard, Mac Wiseman, Chris Knight, Patty Loveless, Emmylou Harris and Rodney Crowell, Dan Tyminski, Bruce Hornsby and the Fairfield Four

Mama's Hungry Eyes No Longer a Thing of the Past

*I'd rather live by the side of the road
And try to point souls to the blest abode
Than to be a king or a millionaire
And live in mansions in bright array . . .*

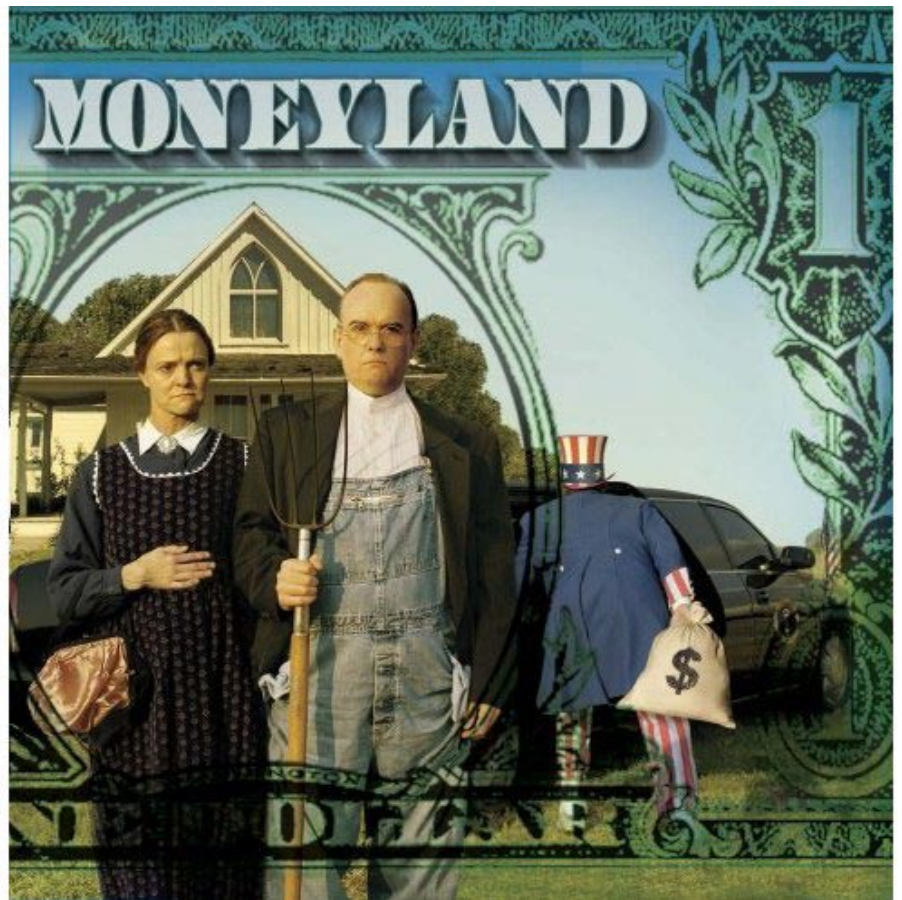
written by Albert Brumley, from a medley sung by Mac Wiseman on *Moneyland*

A few years ago Del McCoury's wife, Jean, lost the pension from her old job in Pennsylvania. Fortunately they weren't leaning on this income for their retirement, but their life was not the norm; the McCourys watched friends and family from small rural towns lose their livelihoods and retirement incomes as jobs disappeared and pensions went up in smoke.

These recent economic hardships had come after a long era of banks foreclosing on family farms, after country folks had made the long—and sometimes painful—adjustment from the family farm to jobs in factories.

The decline in living standards for rural Americans has for this album brought together performing artists from all shades of the political spectrum, united in their desire to rouse the country to respond to the worsening plight of rural Americans.

Moneyland came out before the announcement of the current crisis in the markets. The album's message would almost seem prophetic except that the crisis was already old among the rural poor in North America. Personally, when I heard about the



recent stock market plunge it was hard to muster up a sense of panic. All I could think was, *Well, now they might find out what us poor slobs have been putting up with for years.* I'm not alone.

If American CEOs and politicians had been paying attention to the widening gap between rich and poor Americans they might have sensed, as only a few pundits did, that it was only a matter of time before their number would be called. Exploitation of those in positions lower than your own is no one's birthright, and it certainly is not an infinite resource.

The current environmental crisis is another huge clue. In a mysterious way the fate of people who live off the land is closely tied to the relative prosperity of the land itself. As nature fares, so fare the common folk.

Moneyland opens with an excerpt from Roosevelt's fireside chat. Reassuring and comforting in its day, Roosevelt's talk comes across today as a reproach and a challenge to those who invoke the name of a freedom-loving America as a license to exploit and oppress the very people who form the country's lifeblood.

Let's look at the big picture country music has painted: our ancestors were pioneers who worked heroically to carve out a living with next to nothing. Mama suffered and we all went without but we had love and we knew honesty and hard work would eventually bring well-being.

When things got better it was easier to sing songs about those hard times, with some songs about cheating and divorce and fancy cars thrown in to spice up the stew.

But then things got tough again—depression, recessions, dust storms, wars, and bank foreclosures—we turned back to traditional songs, the same songs that sweetened the bleak hours back in the days of washboards and hand scythes. The new hard times bred their own songs, which would be sung when things got better once again. And on it goes.

When Emmylou Harris sings "Mama's Hungry Eyes" she's no longer singing about the dust bowl or the Depression—she's illuminating a state of affairs in America right now.

When Merle Haggard sings "If We Make it Through December" he's telling the story of countless retirees right now who worked hard and steady all their lives just to stare into next winter not knowing what they'll have to live on.

It has often been assumed that country music fans are all extreme right-wing nutcases with arsenals and a white supremacist agenda. This is partly just pig ignorance, but it's also a direct result of the fact that country music's inquiring minds are simply too much on the money to be tolerated by the mainstream.

Let's hope this album does something to change that.

Moneyland manifests seven of The Mindful Bard's criteria for music well worth a listen: 1) it is authentic, original, and delightful; 2) it confronts, rebukes, and mocks existing injustices; 3) it renews my enthusiasm for positive social action; 4) it gives me tools enabling me to respond with compassion and efficacy to the suffering around me; 5) it displays an engagement with and compassionate response to suffering; 6) it inspires an awareness of the sanctity of creation; and 7) it harmoniously unites art with social action, saving me from both seclusion in an ivory tower and slavery to someone else's political agenda.

***When Emmylou
Harris sings "Mama's
Hungry Eyes" . . .
she's illuminating a
state of affairs in
America right now.***

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.

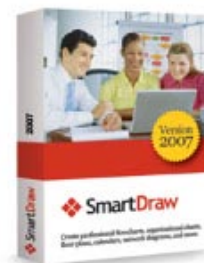
Chat with a Councillor

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!



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**

INTERNATIONAL NEWS DESK



At Home: Canada facing blood shortage

With all the turmoil people are facing on the economic front these days, taking time to give blood may not be high on their priority list.

It may not be the only reason people aren't donating, but Canada's national blood inventory is now at a critical shortfall. In the past two months alone, the on-hand reserve for the most common blood types has dropped more than 40 per cent.

As the [CBC](#) reports, the Canadian Blood Services notes the shortage means "hospitals may have to delay treatments or postpone elective surgeries."

"It may surprise Canadians to know that even in good times, we only carry four to six days supply of blood to meet the entire country's needs," said Dr. Graham Sher, CEO of Canadian Blood Services.

The supply of the most critical blood types is now at a two-day supply, says Sher, and that puts Canadians who depend on it "in a

vulnerable position."

As many as half of Canadians are estimated to be eligible to give blood, but in 2008 only one in 60 have donated. These numbers reflect the recent change in supply and demand. Since 2005, hospital demand for blood has risen by 3.3 per cent. At the same time, the number of donors has dropped by 0.7 per cent.

The agency has heightened recruitment efforts, but in order to ensure enough blood for emergencies or natural disasters, supplies to hospitals are being rationed.

In Foreign News: Oil-rich Qatar warned against rapid growth

Since 2007, the tiny, oil-rich nation of Qatar has attained the highest per capita income in the world. But in spite of its skyrocketing oil and natural gas revenues, officials there are warning about the risks this high growth rate brings.

The [Gulf Times](#) quotes Dr. Ibrahim B. Ibrahim, secretary general of the General Secretariat for Development Planning, speaking at the launch of Qatar Vision 2030, a two-day international seminar.

"We should not underestimate all the harm that will come from the very high rates of growth. We also showed the harm that will result from such high rates and this will result in inflation and affect projects, labour performance, environment, and the low income group," Ibrahim said.

It's a smart approach, and the effects that Ibrahim warns about may soon be seen right here at home in the oil sands of Alberta: with exports expected to be the front line in the current economic downturn, many homeowners who bought at inflated prices could be left staggering under high mortgages if oil-sands wages decline.

EDUCATION NEWS

Joe Kornelsen



Students graduate into an economic slowdown

Recession impacts students' job prospects, says prof

WINNIPEG (CUP) - The economic cycle is moving into a recession, which spells trouble for students about to graduate.

"We are seeing a short-term slowdown in a long-term growth pattern," said Hugh Grant, a professor of economics at the University of Winnipeg who specializes in labour economics.

Grant says the time when a student enters the labour market can have an impact on their long-term earnings.

"Enter a bad labour market—and here I mean a prolonged recession—you may get a job, but a lousy job," he said. "When the labour market improves five years later and jobs open up in your field, you find yourself competing with fresh graduates."

According to Grant, studies show that this "economic scarring" can be reflected in a worker's wages throughout their life. Russell Plett remembers well the recession in the '80s. He was shingling roofs in the early years of the decade and remembers the difficulty finding work.

"We didn't get to shop for jobs," he said. "I don't know that I ever turned a job down."

By 1983, Plett decided he would rather be in school than face the elements on rooftops throughout the seasons. He graduated with a degree in education in 1988 and began teaching in northern Manitoba. Today he spends his days writing.

"Keep your human capital up to date," said Plett. "It's about keeping your education credentials fresh."

Economies naturally cycle through periods of growth and decline. Decline happens when an economy shows two consecutive quarters of negative growth.

Some recessions can be short and shallow like in 2001, or they can be much longer and deeper like in the early 1980s.

Stephanie Barke graduated from the University of Winnipeg last April with a bachelor of arts, and although she didn't find a job in her field, by June she was working with a company developing information and communications software.

Barke recently received an email from the president of her company about the current financial trouble, saying that things will continue as normal, but that it's hard to predict the next six months.

"I'm not worried too much right now," she said. "[But] the phones aren't ringing off the hook like they were in July."

CLASSIFIEDS

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

THE VOICE

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