

THE VOICE MAGAZINE

Volume 16 Issue 46
November 28, 2008

The Zookeeper's Wife

Flying from nest to nest

God is Green

A child's-eye view

Health Matters

Depression



Plus:

*Porkpie Hat, The Interviewer,
Music To Eat Lunch To, 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.



ON THE HILL

Sandra Livingston



Power Play

Just when you thought it was safe to put away the election signs, the whiff of a non-confidence vote is in the air. Introducing legislation that seems tailor-made to provoke another election may look like a step too far on Stephen Harper's part, but in truth it's a hard-nosed political manoeuvre that will benefit the Conservatives no matter how the chips may fall.

(Not that it will necessarily benefit Canadians, but that little detail doesn't seem to have given Harper pause here.)

At issue is the fiscal update the Conservatives released this week. As the world's economies struggle to come up with stimulus packages that will prevent recessions from spiralling into depressions, the Conservatives are doing the opposite. In fact, Finance Minister Jim Flaherty is predicting that \$6 billion in planned cutbacks will result in a budget surplus next year, albeit a slim one.

The move has a lot of factions crying foul (especially the auto industry), but that's not what really has the other parties in a lather. No, Harper's blatant power grab has accomplished that: the update includes a plan to eliminate public funding for political parties, a move clearly intended to decimate Harper's opposition.

Right now, political parties receive \$1.95 in funding for each vote received. Personal donations are capped at \$1,100 annually, while corporate and union donations are banned. The change would save the government less than \$30 million a year—and effectively silence, or kill off, any viable opposition in the next election. In the face of such blatant hubris, how does Harper prosper? There are three ways.

First, the fiscal framework is considered a matter of confidence. If the opposition parties vote against it, they could trigger another election, and that won't go down well in public opinion. With the financial future so uncertain, Canadian outrage could well turn on the parties that trade \$30 million in funding for a \$200-million election. Harper wins (and that plum of a majority government must look very tempting).

Harper also knows full well that the other parties haven't (to their own detriment) created a solid donor base. And without changing the rules on corporate (and private) donations, it will be years before they can generate enough fundraising momentum to challenge the Conservatives. Harper wins.

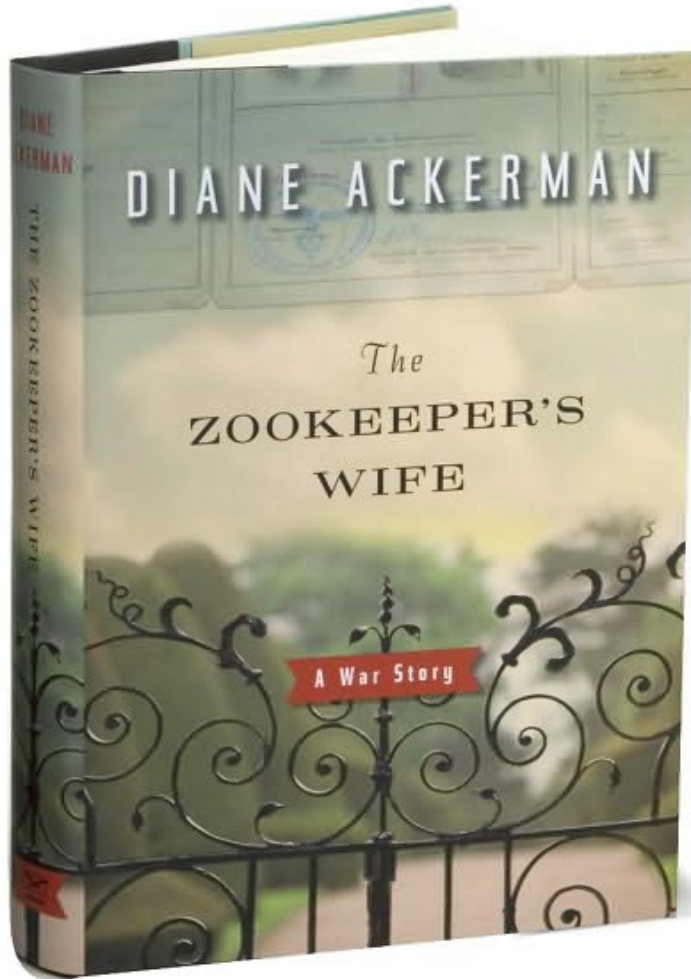
The other choice is for the opposition parties to form a coalition, an ungainly result at a time when the Liberals are rudderless without a solid leader. In the confusion sure to follow, coupled with growing financial turmoil, it would be easy for the Conservatives to stand back and say, "See what a mess these guys have made of things?" Again, Harper wins.

The final choice? For the opposition to let the fiscal update pass, a decision that would throw the political landscape into a dangerous imbalance, with little meaningful resistance to the party in power.

In the end, the question isn't about whether it's more democratic to fund the political parties or let them prove themselves on their own. There are pros and cons to both sides. Instead, it's about the timing, and a prime minister that seems hell bent on putting himself before the people he's supposed to serve.

PAGES

John Buhler



The Zookeeper's Wife: A War Story

In *The Zookeeper's Wife: A War Story*, Diane Ackerman presents us with the fascinating and true story of Jan and Antonina Żabiński, zookeepers at Warsaw's zoo during the Second World War. Working from memoirs, interviews, and photographs, Ackerman develops an exquisitely detailed literary portrait of a Polish Christian family who put themselves at risk to save Jewish lives.

The Żabińskis care for the remnants of the Warsaw zoo's animal collection, hide Jews and members of the Polish underground, while they themselves sometimes only narrowly escape the arbitrary violence of their Nazi overlords. The reader is especially drawn to Antonina, the zookeeper's wife of the title, whose great empathy for all creatures gives her deep insights into the psychology of both animals and humans.

The story opens dream-like, on a summer morning in 1935, as daylight breaks upon the zoo. Dappled light and the sounds of exotic animals provide an atmosphere that recalls the Garden of Eden. But too soon, this paradise is swept away. Poland, squeezed between Nazi Germany and the Stalinist

Soviet Union, is inevitably thrust into war, and even after its defeat, danger is always close by.

Just as Ackerman can deftly conjure a scene of supreme beauty, she can also show us horror, and nothing portrays the senselessness of war like the bombing of a zoo. Caged animals, many foreign, exotic, and perhaps already endangered as a species, are helplessly swept into the indiscriminate destruction of modern warfare. Enclosed by bars, glass, behind barriers of earth or water, they do not even have the slightest chance of seeking cover from the explosives and incendiaries that rain down upon them.

Ackerman presents a hellish vision: "Glass and metal shards mutilated skin, feathers, hooves, and scales indiscriminately as wounded zebras ran, ribboned with blood, terrified howler monkeys and orangutans dashed caterwauling into the trees and bushes . . ."

Though they are zoo keepers, Jan and Antonina Żabiński also care about the human victims of the Nazi invasion. With Poland's defeat, the Jews are gathered in ghettos, and their fate is sealed. We learn about the passages leading out of the ghetto, the bunkers, safe houses, and forgers who help to protect Jewish Poles. Eventually, the Żabińskis also become part of this elaborate network.

While the Żabińskis try to save the lives of Jews, and Jan works with the Polish underground, they are forced to deal with Nazi officials and careerists such as Lutz Heck, the director of the Berlin Zoo. Through a

process of back breeding, Heck hopes to use Polish animals for his plans to “resurrect” the extinct ancestors of Europe’s present day bison, tarpans, and aurochs. He also covets other prize animals, and the Żabińskis have no choice but to allow Heck to ship their zoo’s stock to Germany. The elephant is sent to Königsberg, camels to Hanover, hippos to Nuremberg, Przywalski horses to Munich, and the “lynxes, zebras, and bison” to Heck’s zoo in Berlin.

His relationship with Heck, however, makes it possible for Jan to carry out clandestine work. Heck allows Jan to start a pig farm, giving Jan a legitimate excuse to move about the occupied city. Ostensibly collecting scraps to feed the animals, he can maintain his contacts with the Polish underground, and plan acts of sabotage against the Germans.

Over the course of the war, the Żabińskis also save hundreds of lives, and all of these “guests” are given animal names. Magdalena Gross, a famous and internationally known sculptor, came under the protective wings of the Żabińskis. Though she was Jewish, Gross refused to obey the Nazi order to move into the Warsaw ghetto. Thereafter, “flying from nest to nest,” moving from one safe house to another, she is given the name “Starling.”

**. . . “flying from
nest to nest,”
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given the name
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For some guests it becomes necessary to hide their non-Aryan features. When Antonina uses peroxide to lighten the hair colour of the Kenigswein family, leaving them with hair the reddish colour of European squirrels, they become known as the “Squirrels.”

Ackerman displays a great breadth of knowledge to fill out the story, drawing upon the disciplines of history, biology, ecology, zoology, genetics, entomology, art, and even Nazi philosophy. Surprisingly, however, she characterizes the Nazis as “ardent animal lovers.” As support for this conclusion, she reports that “a leading biologist was once punished for not giving worms enough anaesthesia during an experiment.” Though Ackerman provides extensive citations elsewhere, she oddly offers no reference for this particular incident. (I did email the author about this oversight, but received no response.)

It seems rather likely that she was referring to a dissection performed by the zoologist Karl von Frisch. The incident is noted in Boria Sax’s book *Animals in the Third Reich*, though Sax indicates that the Nazis were in reality rather “erratic” in their enforcement of animal protection laws.

Monica Libell, in *Morality Beyond Humanity: Schopenhauer, Grysanowski, and Schweitzer on Animal Ethics*, provides an assessment of animal protection in the Third Reich which starkly contrasts with Ackerman’s assertion. Some laws, like the one regarding the slaughter of animals, were simply anti-Jewish, attacking kosher practices rather than reflecting a desire to treat animals humanely. Furthermore, Germany’s independent anti-vivisection movement was outlawed and brought under state control in 1935. The Nazis then produced their own—rather flexible—definition of vivisection. Moreover, ownership of pets was discouraged, while the use of animals for research in Germany continued throughout the Nazi period.

Both Sax and Libell indicate that Nazi training sometimes involved deliberate cruelty to animals in order to teach recruits to suppress humane instincts. Libell, for example, reports that recruits were forced to strangle dogs with which they had spent months training.

The stark dichotomy of mass murderers as protectors of animals does provide a fascinating story device, but the reality is actually much more disturbing. According to Libell, the Nazis had an interest in propagating

some wild animals (those which displayed Nazi ideals of strength or power, for example), but Nazi philosophy saw the world in terms of a purely Darwinistic struggle, rejecting any humane impulses, and ruthlessly destroying anything that they perceived as weak.

In effect, the Nazis did not have an overriding animal rights agenda. And, as Ackerman herself writes, Heck uses the remaining zoo animals as game for his New Year's hunting party. So much for the Nazi love of animals.

In spite of my problem with Ackerman's statement concerning animal protection under the Nazis, she really has written a truly wonderful book, a harrowing and gripping story full of remarkable personalities. She weaves history, personal stories, and science into a seamless narrative. *The Zookeeper's Wife* is suspenseful story, told with fantastic descriptive ability that adds colour and texture to every scene.

The Zookeeper's Wife: A War Story is published by W.W. Norton & Company.

CLICK OF THE WRIST - Putting on the Ritz

The newly opened Dubai Atlantis resort is reported to have cost \$1.5 billion dollars to create, and one of its luxury three-bedroom, three-bathroom suites (complete with 18-seat dining table) is yours for just \$25,000 a night. It isn't the only opulent getaway around, though, so shelve your credit crunch woes and check out the view from some of the world's richest resorts.

Dubai Atlantis

Billed as "a magnificent, oceanic tribute to a mythological age," The Palm Atlantis is luxury personified. Not everyone is impressed, though, including animal rights activists who objected to the capture of a rare whale-shark for one of the resort's displays.

Ritz Paris

If you're going to stay at a Ritz hotel, why not choose the City of Lights? With an average of three hotel staff taking care of each room, any one of the luxury accommodations should do fine. I'm rather fond of the Hemingway suite, myself.

Amanpuri Phuket

Surrounded by the waters of the Andaman Sea, the Amanpuri (on the west coast of Phuket, Thailand) offers private pavilions connected by elevated walkways. If the partial ocean view and coconut palms aren't enough, though, you can always choose a six-bedroom villa with private pool.

Necker Island

This 74-acre tropical paradise is on Sir Richard Branson's private island. Choose to stay in the main house or one of the secluded Bali Houses. The island may be a little hard to get to, but don't worry—the private launch will complete your journey in style.

Fairmont Chateau

There may not be an ocean view from the Fairmont, but this luxury getaway on Canada's own Lake Louise gets top marks for privacy. The Gold Floor, a "hotel within a hotel," features an exclusive lounge with private check-in and a dedicated concierge. They'll even take care of your dinner reservations.

God is Great, God is Green

Adam Thackeray



From the boy's low-angle perspective of the world, his teacher, Miss Campbell, is a monstrously imposing presence. She wears bulging, flowery housedresses with flowing silk scarves, bright blue eye shadow, smeared like war paint, and penciled-in eyebrows, raised in a crooked and perpetual state of surprise.

Her crowning glory, though, is a fiery red bouffant that readily complements her short temper and sudden bouts of rage. Certainly, she is not averse to a strict regimen of daily admonishments and humiliations.

She is ever ready to overturn a messy desk with Herculean strength, or turn over a disobedient student on her expansive lap.

She often speaks to the class about the goodness of God, but the boy has difficulty seeing the goodness in Miss Campbell.

One day, Miss Campbell calls upon the students to paint their own interpretations of God. The boy, being more familiar with pop culture than with religion, believes the title, God, to be the short form of Godzilla; thus, he assumes Jehovah and the Japanese monster to be one and the same.

This being so, he proceeds to paint God with bold, vibrant strokes of green. Indeed, the finished piece rivals Michelangelo's *The Creation of Adam*—the only difference being the inclusion of scales, claws, and sharp teeth.

One of his classmates laughs hysterically at the portrait, and the rest of the class joins in for good measure. At this point, the boy slowly begins to comprehend the scope of his divine faux pas. He knows that some of the other students attend Sunday school on a regular basis, and he now realizes that they likely have a better-informed opinion as to God's skin colour.

The boy's own skin colour turns many bright, burning shades of red. But, surprisingly, Miss Campbell does not say a word. She simply takes the boy's portrait of the false, green god, folds it neatly, and drops it into the wastebasket.

The boy walks home from school that day somewhat enlightened, but still confused. For his six-year-old mind cannot grasp the concept of God being part of his life. As far as he is concerned, he has something much more powerful that resides in his own home; to be sure, there are two demigods who sleep right across the hallway from him. Though, in truth, his parents are only mortals, they have far more impact on him than any abstract, ethereal presence could ever have. For the boy, salvation comes from them alone.

Salvation comes when he wakes from a dark dream, panicked and crying; his mother is there, performing late-night puppet shows, easing him back into golden slumbers. She is there in the pool, at his first swimming lesson, as he struggles and splashes fearfully in the water. She is there when he awakens; she is there when he falls asleep. She is omnipresent.

Salvation also comes when he runs home in fear of the bullies; his father is there, scouring the neighbourhood in pursuit of pint-sized tyrants. He is there to hold the airsick boy after his first flight, ignoring the fresh trail of vomit running down the back of his new business suit. He is there with answers, and advice, and altruism. He is omnipotent.

The boy may not know the colour of God in Heaven, but he does know that if his mother and father are made in His image, God must be good.

HEALTH MATTERS

Behdin Nowrouzi



Depression: An introduction

Introduction

Stress and misfortune are ubiquitous and, at some point, everyone experiences feelings related to unhappiness.

Many people experience transient depression when they have difficulties or problems in their lives, and may undergo temporary feelings of self-blame, guilt, sadness, disappointment, and emptiness.

These outcomes are normal, and they usually pass after a short time. This is not the case with depressive illness.

Epidemiology of depression

Depression is recognized by a depressed mood and or lack of interest in most things, along with other symptoms (all lasting at least two weeks). These symptoms include lethargy, changes in appetite or sleep patterns, problems focusing or concentrating, feelings of worthlessness, and/or suicidal ideation.

Depression is often implicated as the key emotion behind suicide, and over 60 per cent of persons who commit suicide are identified as having major depression.

According to both Health Canada and Statistics Canada, approximately 8 per cent of adult Canadians will experience major depression or anxiety at some point in their lives, and around 5 per cent will do so in a given year. This mental health illness persists and is one of Canada's fastest-rising diagnoses. Between 1994 and 2004, visits for depression and anxiety made to office-based doctors almost doubled.

Currently, most health professionals consider depression a chronic illness that requires long-term treatment, much like diabetes or high blood pressure.

Furthermore, they are able to recognize signs of depression in different populations, including children and adults. Some researchers, such as Aaron Beck, have classified depression into three stages of severity: mild, moderate, and severe.

Types of depression

In mild cases, the depression varies; the individual may indicate that some of the joy or zest in their life has disappeared. However, they can function and overcome the feelings of depression through some or much of the day. There may be an increased tendency to cry.

While some individuals experience one episode of depression, most have more than one depressive episode throughout their life. Effective diagnosis and treatment can help curb the number of episodes.

In moderate cases, the depression is more persistent. The individual enjoys fewer things and there is a decreased enjoyment of normal activities or satisfaction within activities.

The individual may state that they feel bored most of the time and experience feelings of self-doubt and self-reproach (i.e., the feeling that one has failed and let others down).

With moderate depression, the person may feel a broad sense of being “blue,” and they may cry easily or much of the time.

In severe depression, the person may be totally immobilized. In these cases, the person may stop eating or engaging in normal activities of daily living. They may withdraw to bed and refuse to leave their room. Moreover, the depression often needs immediate medical attention because this immobility can lead to death.

Hopelessness and rigidity

There are other emotional and cognitive factors that compose an emotional profile for depression. For example, diminished self-esteem most often leads to hopelessness. In addition, not only is the person in a condition that seems uncorrectable, they may also have a chronic illness (e.g., arthritis, multiple sclerosis).

Rigidity is often demonstrated in the thinking of suicidal individuals. Often, others view the person contemplating suicide as relatively inflexible and unable to shift roles. The individual may view their participation in activities in terms of success or failure, not in terms of enjoying the process or the opportunities for socialization.

No single factor causes depression and the etiology of depression is poorly understood. However, the following factors may make some people more prone than others to react to a loss or failure with clinical depression: specific, distressing life events; a biological imbalance in the brain (i.e., serotonin, dopamine, and other neurotransmitters); and psychological factors, like a negative or pessimistic view of life.

For more information on depression, visit the [Canadian Mental Health Association](#).

In moderate cases, the . . . individual enjoys fewer things and there is a decreased enjoyment of normal activities or satisfaction within activities.

AU Profiles:

AU Profiles: Beth Nixon

Christina M. Frey

Beth Nixon has her hands full: four kids aged two through eight, full-time studies, a disabled husband, aging parents, and strong involvement in volunteer work. How does the accounting student manage it all? In this week's profile, Beth speaks realistically about her interests, long-term personal goals, and family issues—and how she juggles all these competing responsibilities. Regardless of what's on her to-do list, she feels a balanced lifestyle is essential to sanity!

Beth, who earned her Bachelor of Business Administration (BBA) years earlier, became interested in upgrading to an accounting designation after her long commute to work became tiresome. "I tried to find a way to get a job closer to home, but they all seemed to be a difficult fit," she says. "Either I didn't get paid enough . . . or I had to take on an hour commute."

"AU answered my prayers—literally," Beth says. She was already familiar with Athabasca and distance education, having taken several AU courses for her BBA degree. She enrolled in AU's University Certificate in Accounting program, and completed it this past September. Now she's studying for a University Certificate in Advanced Accounting, and eventually plans to transfer her AU courses into a provincial accounting designation.

For Beth, having a sense of balance and perspective is key to keeping it all together. "All my decisions are about my kids and how I can still meet my goals and my goals for the whole family," she says. That attitude creates a more balanced, focused life than she experienced while working full-time with a long commute.

"Part of my decision to come to AU full-time was for my health . . . my other life was so crazy it was killing me," she says. "I had no time for myself, little time with my kids." She adds, "Just working before was creating a life of fast food dinners, running the roads, and not a lot of fun." Although she'll have student loans to pay in the future, she feels it's worth it. "Not having time with my kids while they are young would be worse," she says.

Beth is happy with distance education and the flexibility it gives her. "For me, going to AU is all about the lifestyle and flexibility I can have while taking care of my kids, parents who are older and live nearby, and while dealing with a husband, who while is great, is limited by disability," she says.

The possibility of studying anywhere means she's been able to integrate her class work into whatever new challenges her life brings. For example, this past year her father had serious health problems. "I was the gal at the hospital with the stats or auditing textbook!" she says. And because she lives in a rural area—halfway between Moncton and Saint John, New Brunswick—she doesn't need to worry about commuting. "Not having to travel has been great!" she says.

Cutting out the commute has also allowed her to become involved in volunteer work. Her association with the Canadian Injured Workers' Society, an advocacy organization, hits close to home: her husband broke his

neck in a work-related incident 11 years ago. “We are lucky he can walk,” Beth says. “But he suffers from chronic pain, muscle spasms, and memory problems . . . so on a bad day he can’t look after the kids.”

Based on their difficulties trying to obtain compensation for the accident, Beth is anxious to help change laws to protect workers and their families. “One of the tragedies of getting injured at work is that if you have a long-term injury, Worker’s Compensation Boards generally do not pay you,” Beth says. “Instead of business covering the costs, the general public does through Medicare, CPP, etc.” She’s heard countless horror stories from workers unable to collect long-term compensation, even when they’ve been permanently disabled. “[It’s] horrible,” she says. “[It] tears apart families . . . I tell [my husband] he’s lucky to have me!”

Worker advocacy isn’t Beth’s only volunteer interest. She also works with the Fundy Renewable Energy Park Action Committee, a local initiative trying to bring in a “green” industrial park—one that uses only renewable energy sources. “[It] is good news stuff!” says Beth, who chairs the committee.

Currently, Beth is enrolled in five courses. Once she’s finished, she’ll take four province-specific courses with the CGA—also offered online—and will return to AU to finish the final course needed for the Advanced Accounting Certificate. At that point, she’ll choose a specific accounting designation and continue with the process.

One strategy that helps is power-studying: making the most of short time periods available.

The accounting designation process is more complicated than one would expect. The designation is more of a professional certification than a college accounting course, and sometimes Beth is frustrated by others’ lack of understanding. “I tell people there’s almost as much training to become an accountant in Canada as it takes to be a doctor!” she says.

Even after all coursework is completed, there are still additional requirements: a certifying exam, and two years of experience, which has to meet certain standards. “Accounting designations need more respect!” Beth laughs.

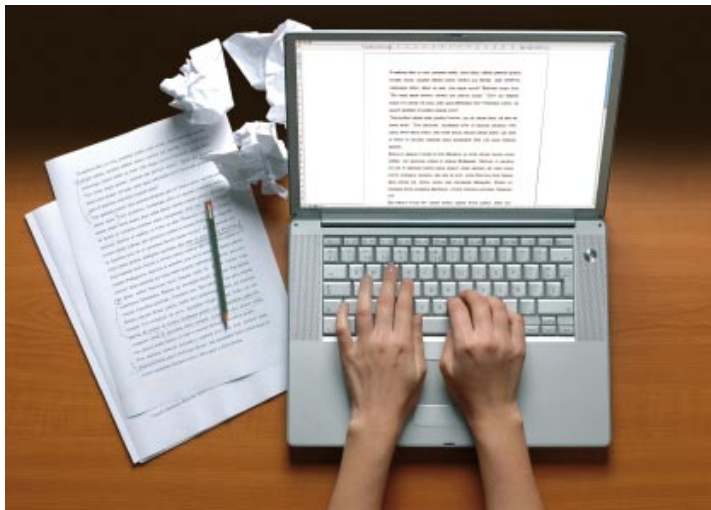
Beth’s long-term goals are in place, but how does she juggle school and family? It’s not easy. Sometimes, she admits, her studies get put on the back burner.

“My dad had two very serious health crises since I started . . . it was very difficult to focus on my studies,” Beth says. “I have had to take two course extensions over . . . the last 12 months.” But she’s staying positive; life may get in the way of studies temporarily, but in the long-term she’s confident things will work out. “I just have to do my best,” she says. “And I am making progress.”

One strategy that helps is power-studying: making the most of short time periods available. “I take the text with me,” she says. “If I am heading for the grocery store . . . I read the text for 15 minutes before going into the store.” When her children go to Cubs or Brownies, “I drop them off and go park in a parking lot and study for an hour,” she says. It works well for her: “[In] those short studies I can pick up as much as I do in a whole afternoon sometimes.”

Beth feels that the concept of small steps is important for all students, and that’s her strongest piece of advice. Most AU students come to the classroom with many different responsibilities that the typical 18-year-old student doesn’t have to deal with. “Cut yourself some slack,” Beth says. “Doing one step at a time is better than not doing any!” She compares it to beginning an exercise program. “One 30-minute walk isn’t going to make a big difference,” she notes, “but if you keep doing it, you have success!”

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.

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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 your 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?



Holiday Exam Requests

Planning on writing an AU exam as the holiday season approaches? If so, there are a couple of important things to keep in mind.

If your course contract ends on December 31, you'll be allowed some extra time to schedule your exam. As the AU calendar explains: "All examinations for courses with a contract end date of December 31 must be completed no later than January 15 of the following year." Remember, though, that all your other coursework, including assignments and quizzes, must be completed on or before the December 31 course contract end date.

As well, the university will be closed from 3:00 p.m. December 24 until January 2. For all the details, check out the [AU calendar](#) online.

The Interviewer

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

written and illustrated by Wanda Waterman St. Louis

Rock Head #2: Noxious Insect



The sound booth opens into the record library and that's where your head can really get fried.



There's all manner of good stuff in there even though some of the student volunteers can get hostile.

Across the hall is the office area...



...beyond which is the little room in which the news readers edit Canadian Press copy.



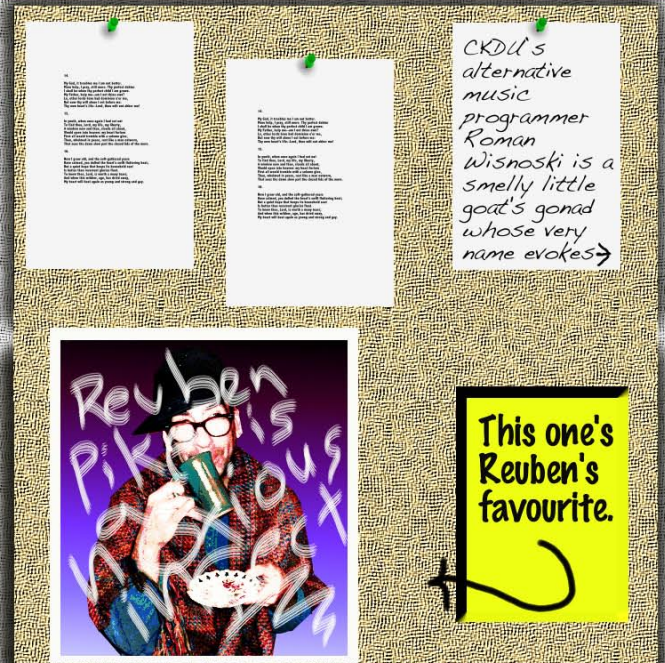
I'm the loose woman your youth pastor keeps warning you about.

E.g. you'll sometimes find a cover stapled shut or pull a record out to find a boot print on it.

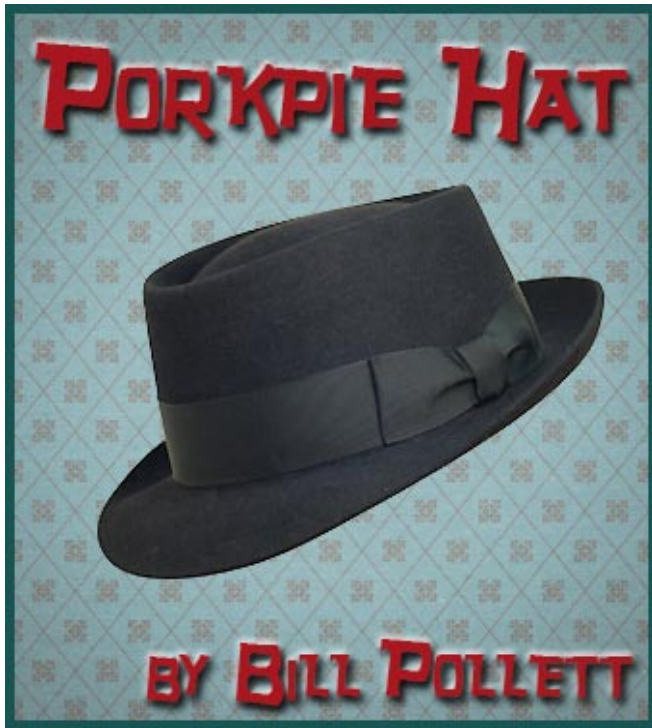


The library walls are papered with defaced posters.

On the bulletin board over his desk Reuben posts the most malicious hate mail the station receives.



next: The Hall That Separates



A Small Renaissance

I can blow a smoke ring and bake a Boston cream pie. I can write a sonnet, if it doesn't have to be a good one.

I can't fix a toaster, I can't skate backwards. I can play foosball, and fingerpick "House of the Rising Sun." I've never been good at geometry. Because I've paid attention, I know all your names.

You can turn a cartwheel and make a perfect paper crane. You can peel an apple in one long piece. You can't stay awake for late-night shows. You remember melodies perfectly, but never the singers.

I know all the words to "Hallelujah," and "Send in the Clowns." I can drive a stick shift, balance dishes to the ceiling, and make you laugh when you least expect it.

I can do the hokey-pokey, and tell you which actress played Frankenstein's bride. I can't do the Macarena

and I can't work a crowd. For some reason, I happen to know the Russian word for snow.

You can shoot three-pointers, and find your way around strange cities. You can read my mind, and make me laugh at myself when I don't really want to, both of which sometimes piss me off. You can identify obscure constellations. You can't fall asleep when there's something on your mind.

I can imitate Columbo and Truman Capote. I can tie a sheepshank and hold my breath a long time underwater. I can tell a pretty good ghost story around the campfire, and make shadow puppet rabbits. I can't set the clock on the DVD player, but I can cover it with electrical tape, so the flashing doesn't bother us.

You can knit a sweater and play the ukulele. You can charm the cranky merchants in Little Italy. You can follow instruction manuals while you paint your toenails. You can read road maps, but you can't re-fold them.

We can talk for hours about everything and nothing. We can swim naked when no one is looking. We can get people dancing at boring office parties. We can make friends with unlikely people. We can see the magic in snowbanks and compost. We can read books until four in the morning. We can't do without coffee. We can't find the car keys when it's time to leave. We can't stay on top of budgets or laundry.

We can spend forever getting a little bit better.

MUSIC TO EAT LUNCH TO

Mandy Gardner

Rise Against – *Appeal to Reason***Released:** October 7, 2008**Label:** Geffen**Tracks:** 13**Rating:** 9

"We're all okay until the day we're not" (from "Audience of One").

Simple, succinct, and although just as clever and thoughtful as any Rise Against lyric ever written, this is a somewhat melancholy, retrospective album theme for the band.

Appeal to Reason is not the thrash-punk record that Rise Against fans know—you won't find songs like "Nervous Breakdown" or "To Them These Streets Belong" on *Appeal to Reason*; instead what you will

find is a penetrating, baser feel to the songs, much more akin to "Swing Life Away" but also much fiercer.

In listening to this album, I've come to feel that this band, so much the inspirational, activist group of men, has become angry at the lack of mobilization throughout the populace, especially within the ranks of their fan base. Or maybe that's just my own guilty conscience emerging. Sometimes these things are impossible to tell.

Although the music on this CD isn't so piercing and hard-core when it comes to the writing and performance, what you will find is a fundamental punk core that keeps the flow natural and alive while the band members produce songs that are, as always, incredibly moving and meaningful.

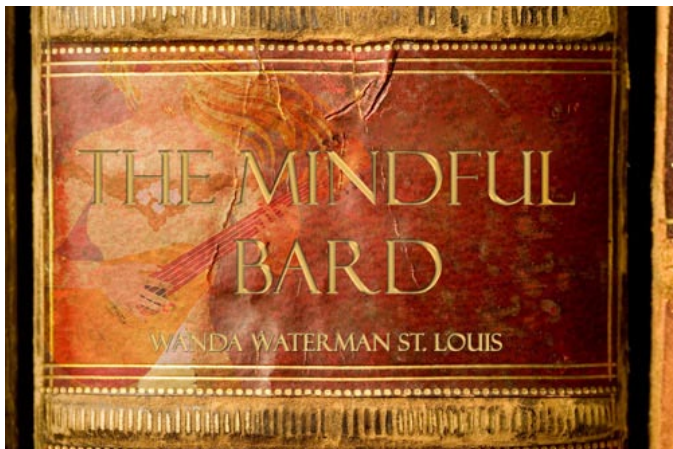
"Savior" gets to the root of the constant Rise Against theme, albeit in a softer and more individually tragic way: *"I don't hate you boy, I just want to save you while there's still something left to save."*

If any band, punk or otherwise, knows how to convey the hardships of keeping your morality and presence in this world (especially since the departure of Good Riddance) it is Rise Against, and regardless of tone differences between *Appeal to Reason* and other records like *The Unraveling* or *Revolutions Per Minute*, the message is still clear: get up, get out, and do something to make the world better.

To me, the star song on this album is "Re-Education (Through Labor)." It's one of the edgier tracks: harder, seamless, and the best bet for the makings of a great mosh pit. Of course, it's the lyrics that really pull me in and get me hooked:

"What we are is the sum of 1000 lies. What we know is almost nothing at all. What we are, well we are 'til the day we die, or 'til we don't have the strength to go on" (from "The Strength to Go On").

The band is, per usual, doing a massive tour to support the new record and is currently on the Canadian leg, so get out there and see them live!



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

CD: The Iguanas, *If You Should Ever Fall On Hard Times*

Release date: 2008

Label: Yep Roc Records

A Remnant of the New Orleans Diaspora Returns Home and Picks up the Thread

You're a warm sun inside of me.

You glow, you glow, you burn softly and you grow.

You're a warm sun inside of me.

from "Warm Sun," *If You Should Ever Fall On Hard Times*

The first time I heard of the Iguanas was on the film *New Orleans Music in Exile* by Robert Mugge, on which they do a touching performance of "When I Get Home." The spicy mix of musical flavours was alone enough to lure me in. But at the time I was convinced that New Orleans could never again be what it was before Hurricane Katrina. The only thing that would change my mind, I decided, was seeing the Iguanas back in their hometown recording a new album.

The Iguanas weren't in their native New Orleans when Katrina came ashore. They were in Massachusetts, partway through a tour. Thanks to some nice folks in Texas they set up base camp in Austin, settling their families there, and performed occasionally in the city while continuing their tour of the country.

The songs on this album were written in Austin and eventually recorded back in New Orleans.

Apparently, despite initial prophecies of doom (including my own), and despite the terrible aftermath for so many of the city's residents, the hurricane didn't really do more than knock the wind out of the New Orleans music scene.



Note similarities to the expulsion of the Acadians from Nova Scotia in 1755: families were split up, many lives were lost, some stayed where they were sent, others came back, some were helped by strangers and some were not, and the flowering of a rich cultural heritage was put on hold. But whether they returned home or stayed away for good, the displaced enriched culture wherever they put down their feet.

None of that changes the fact that the expulsion was a crime. Neither do the post-Katrina restoration and rebuilding of music venues and historical buildings change the fact that Katrina was a monstrous tragedy.

However, in the end, is it really possible to lose your culture?

Sure, you may be forcibly separated from your culture; you may even deliberately reject it. But when you return to it you will recognize yourself in it and desire to participate in it once more. Thus cultures continue to grow and change despite natural disasters, genocide, oppressive rule, and the temptations of a mass culture.

***Take a slow and
mindful stroll
through these songs
for one long,
strange trip.***

The Iguanas are only a fragment of the colossus that is New Orleans music, but a meaningful fragment holding a microcosm of New Orleans, the dreamy underworld of American consciousness. The deep, rich, expressive vocals and the skilful élan of the musicians put this band over the top. Take a slow and mindful stroll through these songs for one long, strange trip:

You'll start off in a smoky bar listening to a comely diva, then take a drive across the US-Mexican border in a pickup truck with Herb Alpert in the back, only to end up in another grimy dive bawling over a painful breakup.

Then you'll be in a shanty town keeping a stubborn old man and his dog company during a hurricane and thence drift into remembering another old man and his sad life, then take a walk through dark city streets on a clear night, stumbling on a mariachi band that forces you to sing a song before staggering into a strip club to watch the gyrations of a young beauty you once tried to rescue.

Then you're in a cheap motel room watching an old movie full of Vespas and go-go dancers before heading off down the road to Morgan City, 70 miles west of New Orleans, and then back home to New Orleans herself.

Once again that wanton city, now dishevelled and with a few teeth knocked out, opens her arms wide to whatever riches of wisdom and musical influence your travels may have won you.

If You Should Ever Fall On Hard Times manifests four of The Mindful Bard's criteria for music well worth a listen: 1) it is authentic, original, and delightful; 2) it displays an engagement with and compassionate response to suffering; 3) it inspires an awareness of the sanctity of creation; and 4) it provides respite from a sick and cruel world, a respite enabling me to renew myself for a return to mindful artistic endeavour.

The Bard could use some help scouting out new material. If you discover any books, compact disks, or movies which came out in the last twelve months and which you think fit the Bard's criteria, please drop a line to bard@voicemagazine.org. For a list of criteria, go [here](#). If I agree with your recommendation, I'll thank you online.

AUSU This Month



2009 AUSU Handbook/Planners

The 2009 AUSU planner pre-order form is up! You'll find the order form on the AUSU [home page](#), but please note, the planner will only be sent out when it arrives in our office in December.

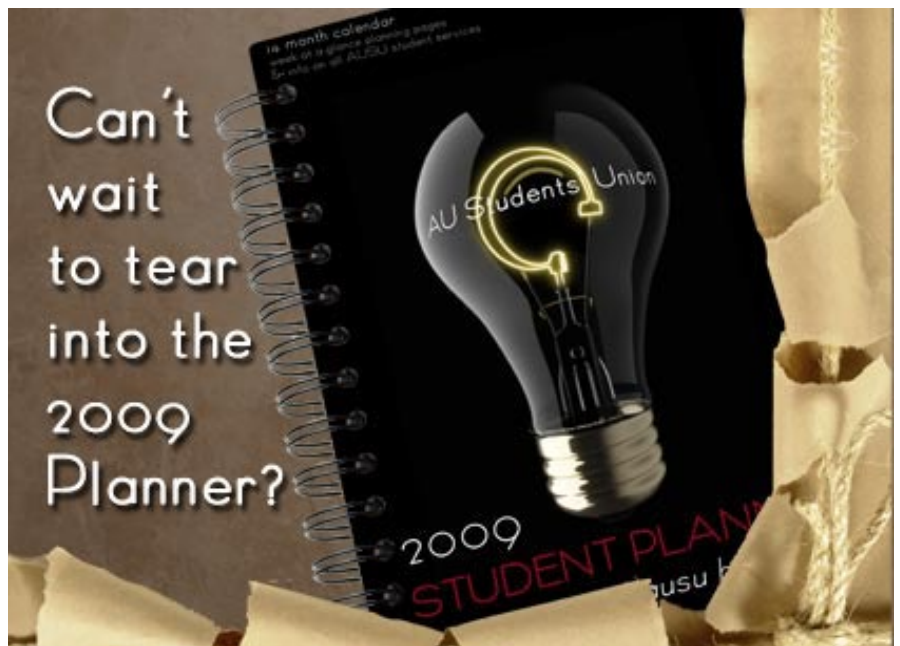
Anyone who pre-orders will be in the first batch of planners mailed out. If you order early, you should have your new planner by the time the January pages run out in the old one—and hopefully well before that!

As always, we'll be excited to know what you think of the planner, and especially want to hear of any improvements you think could be made.

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.

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.

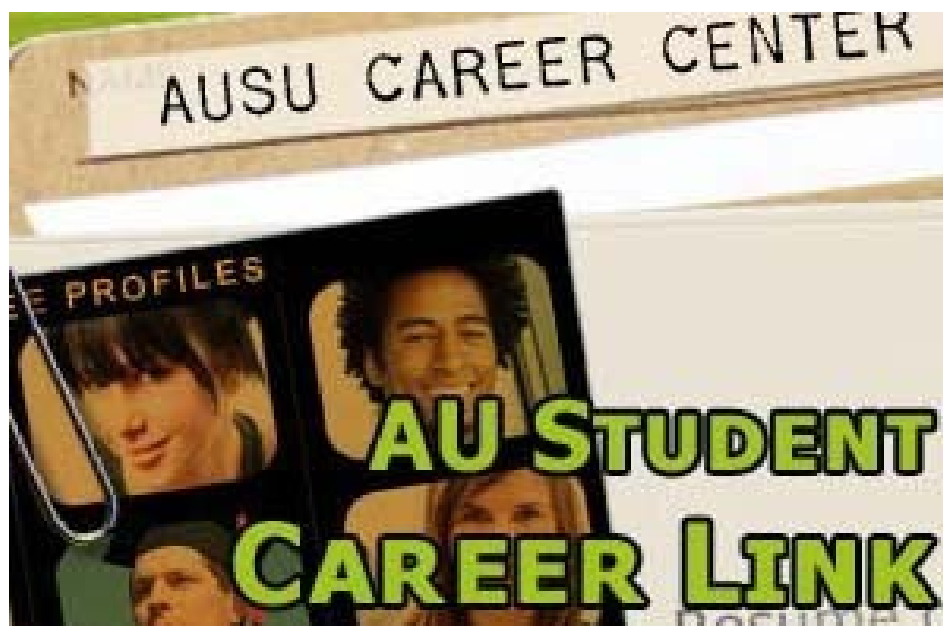
SmartDraw allows you to create a wide range of graphics for your assignments and submit them electronically in a Word file. You can also place your graphics in Excel or PowerPoint files, or export them as TIF, GIF, or JPEG files to make a web graphic or even a logo. Just a few of the graphics you can 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.

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.

INTERNATIONAL NEWS DESK



At Home: Atlantic Lotto watching western lawsuit

If you're drawn by the lure of big-money prizes on scratch tickets, your odds of winning may be smaller than you think.

A lawsuit launched in western Canada is challenging the practice of selling scratch-and-win tickets after the top prizes have already been won, and the Atlantic Lottery Corporation will be watching the outcome closely.

Although similar lawsuits have been filed against lottery corporations in the US, Atlantic Lotto continues to engage in the practice.

Courtney Pringle, of Atlantic Lotto's public affairs and corporate communications department, told reporters that some customers will still want to play even if they have no chance of winning the top prizes.

"People play the lottery for a lot of different reasons," Pringle told the CBC. "In some cases certainly they play more for the

enjoyment of playing."

While there may be some who enjoy the thrill of scratching the cards with no thought of a big payout, others will clearly be hoping for the big win. If you're one of them, you may want to check the Atlantic Lotto website before you part with your money. For the past two years, info has been posted on the company's website showing the number of top prizes left for each series of scratch tickets.

Atlantic Lotto's website says it will pull tickets "when the top prizes have been claimed for games that feature significant or unique top prizes that represent a significant percentage of the total prize pool." A significant prize is considered to be \$500,000 or above, and only three scratch-and-win games currently fit that criteria.

In Foreign News: Australia hit by wave of ATM explosions

It started in the Netherlands, and bank machines in Australia are now under attack by robbers using a method called "plofkraak." The word means "blast breaking-in," and thieves have blown up 11 bank machines across Sydney since September.

Thieves drill holes in the front of cash machines, then remotely ignite a mixture of oxygen and flammable gas that is piped in. Plofkraak has become increasingly popular with criminals in Europe and Africa since 2005, and in the past week alone three bank machines in Australia were blasted in a single day.

Australian police have re-formed a special task force to combat the problem, and manufacturers are fighting the technique as well. They have redesigned their ATMs to include vents, which allow the gas to seep out as soon as it enters. But as one security expert noted, the technique is still "incredibly dangerous."

"An ATM is full of sparks even when it's sleeping," Richard Gould told reporters. "To inject concentrated gas is asking for trouble—all that has to happen is . . . one spark and there could be an explosion that causes injury to them or some other person."

That may have been the case in one of the Australian explosions, as *The Advocate* reports. The blast created a large field of debris and left the robbers without a getaway car. It was pelted with shrapnel in the explosion, "causing its airbags to be triggered and leaving it immobile."

EDUCATION NEWS

Lily Panamsky



Post-secondary world plagued with high drop-out rate

HAMILTON (CUP) - A recent study shows many students are dropping out of post-secondary institutes, and only a few are coming back.

Statistics Canada joined the Human Resources and Skills Department in a study tracking the educational pathways of 22,000 young adults. The six-year study began in 1999, when the subjects were between 18 and 20.

The results show that 15 per cent of students who attended a post-secondary institution dropped out before completion, and those students who chose to leave their respective schools more closely resembled those who initially decided against post-secondary.

The largest proportions of students leaving school were from Quebec, Manitoba, Alberta, and British Columbia; the lowest proportion came from Prince Edward Island.

The students were more likely to be male, married, and come from families with lower levels of education. They

were also more likely to have had lower grades and less involvement in high school.

Most started to consider dropping out in their first year of study.

The most frequent reasons cited for leaving school were to travel, to change institutions or programs, to take a break, or to work.

Only 10 per cent of the students who dropped out cited financial strain as the cause.

The survey differentiated between people who dropped out of school and people who quit school. The former returned to some sort of studies, while the latter become completely divorced from the post-secondary world.

Liz Marsden left Brock University in St. Catharines, Ontario, where she was studying recreation and leisure, and transferred to Georgian College to pursue a business program.

"There were two main reasons, the first being the program. Coming out of high school, I didn't really know for sure what I wanted to do. Recreation and leisure sounded interesting, so I decided on that. After some time in the program, I realized it definitely wasn't for me. The second reason was the class size. Maybe it's because of a certain type of learning style I have, but I cannot learn in a class with hundreds of students and where the teacher doesn't know my name," she said.

"In college, class sizes are smaller, much smaller—around 30 students. You get more one-on-one time with the teacher and get more personalized education," she added.

She says her time in university did not set her back a year, but aided her in achieving her college diploma more quickly.

"With my year's experience in university, I was able to put those credits towards my electives in the business program at Georgian College. I was able to fast-track through my program and obtained my business diploma in two years instead of three. I was able to secure a job right out of college thanks to the co-op program that was required through the program."

The rate of students returning to post-secondary studies after dropping out is still quite high, depending on their reason for leaving.

For example, 68 per cent of students who left school to travel came back within two years, and 47 per cent who listed changing their school or program as their reason came back.

However, only 28 per cent who left to work, and 29 per cent who left because their grades were too low, returned. The survey did not specify whether the students returned to their original studies or new ones.

Leaving post-secondary education is often closely related to a student's experience while attending an institution.

All students face the difficulties of adjusting to larger class sizes, heavier workloads, and the need to meet new people during their first year. If they are leaving home, they face new residences, new roommates, new rules, and new neighbourhoods, all while overcoming homesickness. Not everyone is cut out for the job.

On the bright side, Canada boasts the highest rate of post-secondary attainment in the world, and there has been a steady increase in college and university enrolment in recent years.

However, a discouraging factor in university attendance is the perceived uselessness of undergraduate degrees.

Newly graduated students often struggle to secure a well-paying job without pursuing a master's degree or post-doctoral studies.

The survey showed 14.3 per cent of youth aged 22-24 earning the least amount of money had university degrees, while 12.8 per cent did not have high school diplomas.

That puts a higher percentage of university graduates than high-school drop-outs in the lowest salary bracket.

CLASSIFIEDS

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

THE VOICE

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