

THE

# VOICE

MAGAZINE

Volume 17 Issue 04

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## Human Statues

The power of doing nothing

## AU Profiles

Heather Mallard

## Dog and Fish

White peacocks and jewelled trees



*Plus:*

*From Where I Sit, On the Hill,  
The Mindful Bard, and much more...*

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# LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

We love to hear from you! Send your questions and  
comments to [voice@voicemagazine.org](mailto:voice@voicemagazine.org), and please  
indicate if we may publish your letter.



## ON THE HILL

Sandra Livingston



## Buyer Beware

In Ontario, consumers have certain rights that are clearly spelled out on the Ministry of Small Business and Consumer Services [website](#).

Whether you signed a cell phone contract or bought a cemetery plot, there's plenty of information explaining what to do if you haven't received the goods you paid for (or didn't receive all of them).

What you won't find, though, is a category labelled "Education," and that raises some interesting questions for all Canadian post-secondary students, not just the 50,000 York University students who have been locked out of classes for 12 weeks.

We could go back and forth on the merits of each side's position all day. The *Globe and Mail* reports that York's striking teaching assistants are "the country's most well-paid," a group that turned down an original offer of a 9.25 per cent pay increase over three years. They also shot down a revised offer that included additional benefits and wages. On the employees' side, one of the major issues is that, even though contract workers may have been employed at York for over a decade, they still have to apply for their jobs every year. As contract workers know, this can have a serious effect on such essential things as getting a mortgage.

York staff have been legislated back to work, but that doesn't address the problem: What consumer protection do some of the poorest consumers have when it comes to one of the largest investments they will ever make? (In Ontario alone, [tuition fees](#) are reported to have increased in 2008 "between 4% and 8%, after a 200% increase over the past 15 years.")

Sure, each college and university has policies for refunds when it comes to course withdrawals, but what happens when students are denied a large portion of the time and instruction they've laid out big money for? On January 24, York University spokesman Alex Bilyk was standing firm on that point. Students will not receive refunds on tuition. As he told reporters, the school will "still squeeze in a complete academic term, cancelling reading week, condensing exam time and extending the winter term to June 2." In other words, a lot like those ads that warn the product may not be exactly as shown.

In some cases, Canadian universities have paid compensation to students after a strike. St. Thomas University in Fredericton did so in 2008 after a labour dispute cancelled a month of classes. For York students, there's hope in a class-action lawsuit that's been launched.

But they shouldn't have to resort to that. There should be clear legislation on this issue. Ontario Premier Dalton McGuinty is now considering it, talking about measures to protect university and college students during strikes, including "an agency that would determine when their education is in jeopardy."

It's an issue that needs to be tackled sooner rather than later, because an even bigger strike is more than just a vague worry. One of CUPE 3903's sticking points is that it wants a two-year deal, not the three-year one offered. If they get it, agreements across many Ontario campuses will expire in 2010—giving them a much bigger collective stick to bargain with. And the way things stand now, it will be university and college students who end up getting hit with it.

## IN CONVERSATION WITH . . .

Wanda Waterman St. Louis



## Jeff Bryant of The Human Statues

## The Power of Standing Around Doing Nothing

*Jeff Bryant is half of The Human Statues (the other half being Zachary Stevenson), a British Columbia folk duo as notorious for their static performance art as for their retro-style folk songs sung in tight, crystal harmonies. Their expressed mission is “spreading jubilation across the nation,” and their debut CD was recently reviewed by The Voice [here](#). The Human Statues are now based in Toronto.*

## The Sculpting of The Human Statues

I'd been aware of busking in Victoria, having grown up there, and I'd dabbled in musical busking, so when I met Zack I thought he and I would make a good musical duo and could do that as a summer job.

The first time we went down to the Inner Harbour to visualize and discuss playing music we saw a human statue performer. We started thinking about doing that ourselves and we got so excited about it that when we were walking up Government Street we decided to see if we could hold a freeze.

There was this huge fake stuffed bear outside of a gift shop so I suggested we stand next to it as still as possible. As people walked by they kept stopping, thinking they were getting in the way of a photo shoot. They would look for a camera across the street and then look back at us. They could see we were real people and couldn't imagine why anyone would do this unless they were insane, so they would walk away with trepidation. That experience was hilarious and fun and planted the seed for what we're doing now.

## More Double Takes

We came up with our name sort of by default. I think most people are pretty insecure about their band names. When we first got asked what our band name was we'd be like, “Uh— um— The Human *Statues*?” But we've forged an identity with it and have heard people using it so now we're completely comfortable with that name.

When we started out we posed as human statues to make money, but now we do it just to promote our brand. It's always a surprise to our audiences; every time I perform I get to see all these fresh faces that are like, “What the *hell*?!”

## The Power of Nothing

There's no better promotion than us standing there in our statue costumes just doing *nothing*, which seems so ironic to a musician. It's really effective in generating brand new fans from scratch, which is a very hard thing for any young band to do.

## The Jubilation Factor

Zack and I are both analytical guys. I went to school for arts management, so it's part of my character to be very cerebral and pragmatic, but I'm also an artist. Zack also has both of these aspects to his character. We wouldn't be doing this if we couldn't figure out ways to share it with people.



We're not guided by some adolescent fantasy about fame and wealth but we are definitely motivated by the prospect of creating a life for ourselves. Getting by doing things that are relevant to us is a huge dream, because it's hard enough to find something you can be passionate about, let alone to find some way to pay the bills doing it. The motivating factor for us is jubilation.

### Spheres of Influence

In my teens I had a friend named Billy Reid who I know was a huge influence on the way I think today. You can find out more about him at [verytasteful.com](http://verytasteful.com). He was a big influence on everybody. We did a lot of theatre together in high school in Victoria. He was very popular because he was a very engaging person. Usually that kind of power at that age is abused but he was so confident at such an early age that he didn't

subscribe to any of that. He treated everyone with respect.

At parties, picking up a guitar was always about having fun. Our concept of "jubilation" started with him. What I'm trying to do is to propagate his sense of joyful inclusion.

I'm very interested in collaborating with people who are good at what they do, but this is less important than their character and intention.

If I trade off our values for a quick fix and work with people who are not sound in their intentions then it's only a matter of time before everything

disintegrates. So we try to take the time to make sure all our relationships are sincere ones. It's the same with my personal life; if I want to make my life easier I just have to make sure the people around me are the right people.

### Apropos Obama

I'm excited. I believe that the '60s were a warm-up. It's now incumbent on all of us to borrow lessons from that era. Right now there is a growing recognition that our planet is in peril. Not to make some contribution while you're on it is a missed opportunity. Obama is suggesting that now we have an opportunity to work very hard to make things better. I think we might be on the verge of a new era of the arts and of art contributing to social movements.



# AU Profiles:

## AU Profiles: Heather Mallard

Christina M. Frey



Every year, thousands of adults decide to pursue degrees at home through distance education. And every year, thousands of parents decide to educate their children by home-schooling.

Heather Mallard, a second-year student in AU's Bachelor of Arts in Psychology program, is doing both.

"It is going better than I could have ever expected," Heather says of her dual-schooling lifestyle. "AU has been a great complement. If I had to go to school in town it would be a lot harder."

Having a supportive family has been key. "My husband is awesome!" says Heather. He works shift work, and when he starts work in the early evening, "I have all morning and again on the weekends to work on school," Heather says. "He teaches the kids when he is on afternoons, which

they absolutely love, and I teach them when he is on days."

Although teaching both self and kids might sound challenging, Heather doesn't get burned out easily. For her, the secret to success is her desire to learn.

"I really enjoy it," Heather says. "I have been saying for the last year that I thrive so much on learning it is unbelievable!" It helps that now, for the first time, she's become enthusiastic about learning. "I . . . [was] a child who never liked school, but I think it was because of the environment I was in," Heather says. Now, it's different: "I am constantly trying to learn and expand my understanding of the world around us," she says.

It's a love she's keen to pass on to her kids, aged six and three. In addition to using a set curriculum to home-school them, she and her husband try to provide a hands-on experience to enhance learning. For example, she says, "shopping can teach math, organization, budgeting, and socializing."

They also make a point of investigating the outdoors—"We try [to] spend a lot of time in nature," she says—and have the kids enrolled in music and karate.

Heather and her husband began home-schooling their daughter midway through her junior kindergarten year, after bullying by other students made her attending school impossible.

Although in the following year there were no similar problems in the classroom, home-schooling was still the right choice for the family. "We . . . knew we needed to home-school her," Heather says. Now in first grade, their daughter is "excelling," she says. "She embraces life with open arms . . . she doesn't have these ongoing fears anymore."

While deciding to continue home-schooling her daughter, Heather began to consider returning to school herself.

***"Be patient with yourself  
and your children,"  
Heather says. "It can be  
very overwhelming . . . we  
need to remember to be  
kind to ourselves."***

"I . . . never got an education, but always knew I could do more," she says. Initially, she had planned to major in psychology, but it wasn't the best fit. "I really enjoyed it to a point . . . but there seem[ed] to be something lacking," she says. "There needs to be definite meaning in what I am learning and doing."

She's considering switching her major to anthropology, something she's begun studying recently and has found fascinating. "There is something about learning of different cultures in our world . . . and how we have evolved," she says. "It is really . . . quite intriguing."

The flexibility of studying via distance has been the primary drawing ticket for Heather. "I can manage my life around my school work," she says. "My kids don't have to go to daycare, and we can sometimes work on our school work together!"

She also likes being able to go at her own pace within the course contract dates. Every week she sets goals, but she's flexible about when and how to reach them. "I know each week what I need to accomplish," she says. "If something comes up . . . I can be flexible, as long as I get it done that week."

As an added benefit, she's able to model lifelong learning to her children. "When I was talking about going back to school, they didn't quite understand, because I am mommy," she says. Now, "they can see me [studying] all the time . . . [it] shows them that age is never a restriction on life."

Sometimes, procrastination can be a stumbling block. "I think it is a part of being human," Heather says. But she's seen the results of both steady work and last-minute scrambling, and it gives her the added boost she needs to stick with her studies.

"I . . . learned my lesson last semester," she says. "I did not manage [the] classes—I just flew by the seat of my pants and I paid for it in the end." The last week of courses was a nightmare: "I had to study for four exams, do two research proposals, two term papers, and I still had a couple of chapters and quizzes to do . . . ouch!" she says. "I learned my lesson!"

Studying while raising kids brings its own set of challenges and, of course, distractions. "Be patient with yourself and your children," Heather says. "It can be very overwhelming . . . we need to remember to be



kind to ourselves.” For her, staying organized and setting up a routine is essential to staying on track. For example, “they know mommy does school when daddy is home during the day,” Heather says.

As for those inevitable interruptions—a regular occurrence, particularly with her three-year-old—she recommends staying consistent. “I remind him that he needs to have his quiet time right now, and I will be able to play and talk after my school work is done,” Heather says.

One trick she uses to avoid interruption during study time is to make sure her kids are occupied ahead of time. “When my son is interrupting a lot, it is because he is not engaged enough himself,” Heather says. “Find[ing] good, independent activities . . . is probably [the] best first step.”

“It doesn’t take a super-person to take on home-schooling, or distance ed for yourself, or even . . . both of them at the same time,” Heather says. The secret, she believes, is “dedication and patience.”

“You can do anything you put your mind to,” she adds. “You just need to follow your heart!”

## CLICK OF THE WRIST - And Baby Makes Ten

This week, a couple in California welcomed eight little bundles of joy into their family—six boys and two girls. Since one new baby is enough to make even the sanest parents long for a full night’s sleep, it’s hard to imagine dealing with eight newborns. Here’s a look at some other large families that know a thing or two about it.

### The Dionne Quintuplets

The public was fascinated with these five little girls since the moment they were born in 1934, especially because at the time they were the only quintuplets to survive for more than a few days. This site also leads to several links that include original news clippings and photos of the event.

### 18 and Counting

Their TV show was called “17 and Counting,” but the Duggar family may have to rename it with the arrival of Jordyn-Grace last December—baby number 18.

### Jon and Kate Plus 8

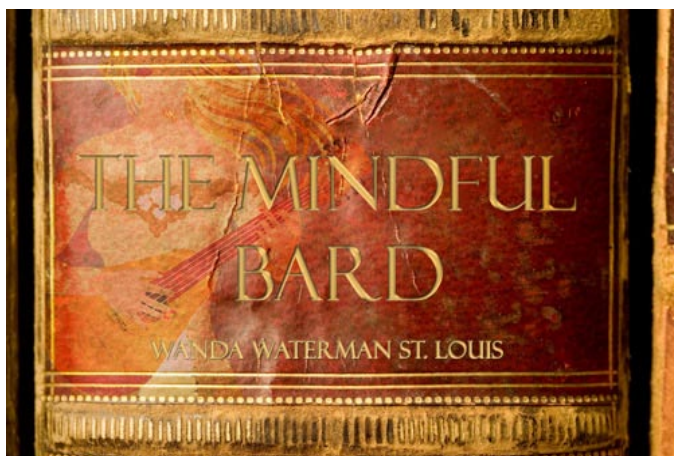
First there were twin girls. Then came the sextuplets—three more girls and three boys. If you haven’t seen the Gosselins in action on their reality television show, this site gives you a glimpse into their busy world.

### Lillian Gilbreth

While the adventures of the large Gilbreth clan (12 children within 17 years) have been fictionalized in movies like *Cheaper by the Dozen*, it’s the accomplishments of matriarch Lillian that are especially interesting.

### In Pictures

This photo gallery from the *Telegraph* offers a look at some of the world’s octuplets, septuplets, sextuplets, and other multiple births.



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

**CD:** Jon and Roy, *Another Noon*

**Release date:** 2008

**Label:** Warner Music Canada

**Rastaman-Zen Guidance from a Young Old Soul**

*Music thank you so much, you're like a god to me*

*I flourish in your touch feel the blood rush,*

*The flow of a rhyme made in a new design, find a safer way to get high*

*And I'll give you all of my time*

Jon Middleton, "Thanks for That," *Another Noon*

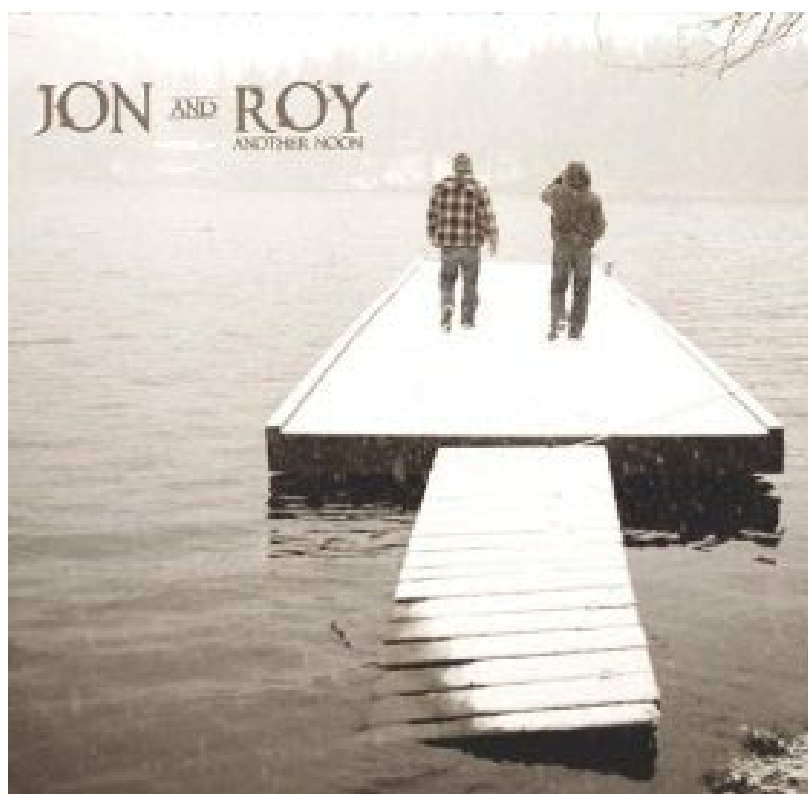
Jon Middleton writes the songs and plays guitar while Roy Vizer contributes a panoply of ethnic drum sounds. Together they make music as starkly beautiful as a snowflake on a frosty pane.

If you're an island dweller you'll surely melt at hearing "Oh, Baby Please," which describes that sensation that your soul is blowing away when you fall in love. It sounds weirdly like an old bluegrass gospel song and brilliantly expresses how the sensitive loner feels when threatened with infatuation—disturbed, unbalanced, and terrified.

The surprise of reggae themes, philosophies, attitudes, and rhythms in an unplugged coffeehouse folksinger package is actually quite delightful. In "Thanks for That" Jon carries the fullness of reggae stylings into a new day, right down to the rapid word triplets squirting out mid-phrase.

Jon Middleton sounds like one of those people you know is messed up but whom somehow you trust to work things out for himself and in so doing enrich us with his revelations.

His songs remind me of Cat Stevens's early records. It's not that they sound anything *like* Cat Stevens, but they seem capable of fulfilling the same need today that *Teaser and the Firecat* did for scads of sensitive solitaires back in the '70s. You could walk into a room where his album was playing and suddenly know all was right with the world and wonder what all the protesting was about. Then you'd sit back and listen to lyrics that gently challenged you to social consciousness.



Not every CD that The Mindful Bard recommends represents naked social concern, and not all CDs that represent naked social concern are recommended by The Mindful Bard. There is a balance to be struck; the most passionate principles can't stand on insincere, inauthentic art, and neither can the most beautifully crafted work expect to last if it divorces itself from the world's suffering.

We search for meaning in beauty and beauty in meaning; these fraternal drives are reflected in our questions about life, questions like, "How do I live?"

Some of the answers a songwriter provides are, however precious, so deceptively simple we almost pass them over:

*Another day comes, another day goes  
Another day comes, another day goes  
Another day it comes and another day it goes  
And it seems that only thing that I can propose  
Is going to the spot where you think clearly.*

Jon Middleton, title track, *Another Noon*

*Another Noon* manifests seven of The Mindful Bard's criteria for music well worth a listen: 1) it is authentic, original, and delightful; 2) it makes me want to be a better artist; 3) it inspires an awareness of the sanctity of creation; 4) it is about attainment of the true self; 5) it provides respite from the sickness and cruelty in the world, a respite enabling me to renew myself for a return to mindful artistic endeavour; 6) it stimulates my mind; and 7) it poses and admirably responds to questions which have a direct bearing on my view of existence.

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

## DID YOU KNOW?



### Read All About It

If you want to get the latest scoop on what's happening at AU, look no further than their [Magazines and Publications](#) page—the place to be for student news, links to scholastic journals, and newsletters.

You'll find *Open Magazine*, full of great articles and interviews (be sure to check out the fascinating history of AU in the latest issue).

There's *Viewbook 2009*, a "convenient guide to the more than 90 undergraduate and graduate degree, diploma and certificate programs AU offers," along with links to several scholastic journals, including *Aurora*, which features "interviews with leading thinkers and writers."

Newsletters, *AU World*, profiles in research—all this and more is just a click away, so why not check out AU's Magazines and Publications page today?



## From Where I Sit

Hazel Anaka

### Good Guy Neighbour

Never before have so many hopes by so many people been pinned on one simple man. Not in my adult lifetime has there been a more eloquent political speaker. Nor a man who could through word and deed galvanize a nation out of apathy and despair and into hope and action. That man is of course President Barack Obama.

As a Canadian I feel somewhat detached from the hoopla and Hollywood-esque star quality being thrust upon him and his every move. As one who leans toward cynicism, I hope that people everywhere realize that he is only human and only one man. Granted the most well-known and (perhaps) most powerful man in the world, but a man nonetheless. He seems too good to be true, especially after eight years of buffoonery. It is inevitable, in my opinion, that he will disappoint someone on some level.

For now, though, isn't it a thrill to watch the spectacle of it all? To see the millions gathered for his inauguration? To see the tears of joy and emotion, particularly on the faces of African Americans? Many ordinary, elderly people didn't believe this momentous event—electing a black president—would happen in their lifetime. Martin Luther King, Rosa Parks, Barack Obama: a triumvirate of history makers. I can only imagine what this event means to the disadvantaged and disillusioned.

I do know that no one has captivated my attention to that degree. Perhaps that is more a commentary on how blessed a life I've lived as an Albertan and a Canadian. I haven't needed a Barack Obama in my life.

I remember, as a 17-year-old, meeting Peter Lougheed during a campaign stop in beautiful downtown Andrew in the days leading up to his election in 1971. He seemed solid and grounded and inspirational and I was young. History has judged him one of our finest premiers and still at age 81 he commands respect.

I never did get the appeal of Pierre Trudeau. To me he oozed arrogance and elitism—the antithesis of Obama. Obama, who painted a wall in a shelter the day before his inauguration. Obama, who had part of his recently deceased Hawaiian grandmother's muumuu turned into the cummerbund for his tuxedo. Obama, who got a thumbs-up from his precocious young daughter.

On the surface he seems like Everyman. Beneath the surface he seems to have the compassion, smarts, and integrity to finally, thank you Lord, do the hard, right things for the right reasons.

Any thinking person knows the days ahead are going to be difficult for the entire world. So many, worldwide, are looking to Obama for leadership. As neighbours we want a good guy next door. I think we got that. May he raise the bar for all those who choose to serve. May he help all of us be and do better than we have been. At the very least, we owe him our support and our helpful action, from where I sit.



# The Interviewer

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

*written and illustrated by Wanda Waterman St. Louis*

## Rockhead #8: Chub the Bus Driver

It is a ratty hat but it has the Nova Scotia tartan on it...



...and Gord is loyal to his roots and won't enter the waking world without it.



Gord is buds with Chub the bus driver.

But Chub isn't allowed to kick the hat-grabbers off the bus like he wants to.



Why doncha just shut-up, ya buncha tame apes!



Rob rides the bus with Gord through the week so the tame apes will leave Gord alone.

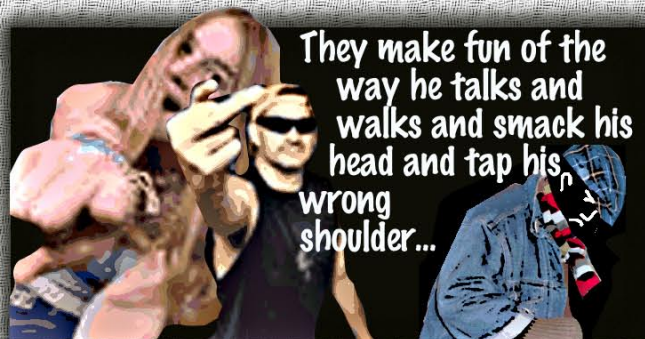
But on weekends he can't and that's when they pounce.



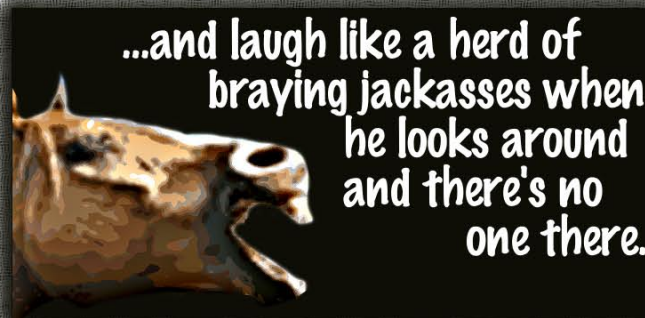
And they don't just take Gord's hat, they frisbee it down the dirty aisle and make Gord chase it.



They make fun of the way he talks and walks and smack his head and tap his wrong shoulder...



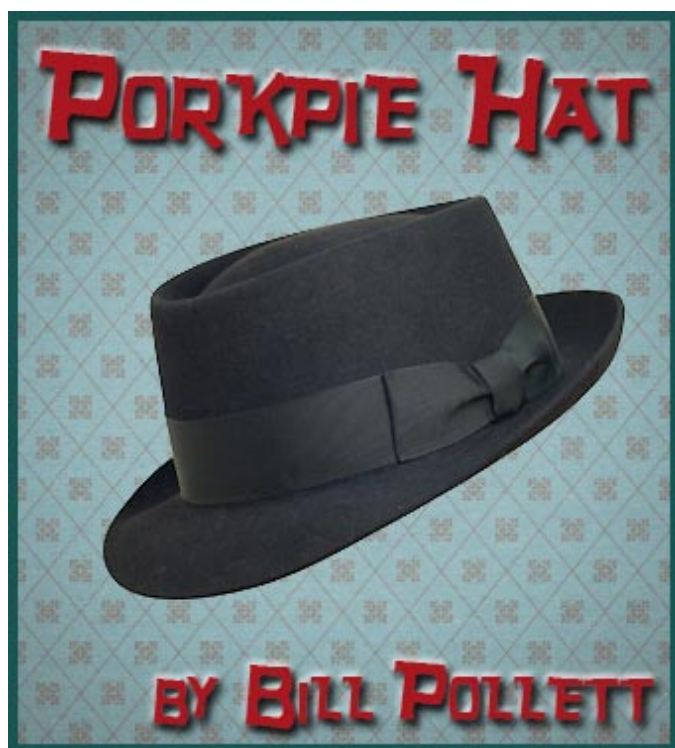
...and laugh like a herd of braying jackasses when he looks around and there's no one there.



Let's see - how much ambrosia will feed six dinner guests?

*next: French Roast*





## Dog and Fish

I was walking one day past a vacant lot beside a vacant factory on the outskirts of a vacant city. There was this big red dog staring at me from the shadows. Its hair was the colour of dried blood and crumbling brick, rusted bicycle chains and disused railway lines. It was so silent and still, just standing and watching me.

Not wanting to upset it, I gave it half a peanut butter sandwich from my backpack. I poured some strong black coffee into the lid of my Thermos, and watched its dull red tongue lapping and lapping. I fed it a photograph of a high school friend who had hanged himself, and a scrap of poetry about a dream I once had of white peacocks in the branches of a jewelled tree.

For a long time, we stood and looked into each other's eyes. I felt as though it had been waiting

there for me to come by, perhaps with some important message or other. But for the life of me, I could not figure it out.

When I began walking again, I noticed that the dog was following me home. It was at my heels, walking when I walked, stopping when I stopped. When I got home, I invited it into my house. I made it a bed in the attic out of pillows stuffed with shredded love letters and X-rays and obituaries. I let it drink salty water, and gnaw on the femur I broke when I was a child. I went to sleep that night and dreamt again of white peacocks. They were shivering beneath a coal-black sky. When I woke up, the dog was sitting on the end of the bed, watching and still.

That night after work, I took the dog for a walk on the beach. There was a great, dark fish that rose up from bottomless trenches to meet us. It was the size of my childhood home. It swam back and forth in the moonlight. It had glittering scales the colour of ice and ash. It sang a song that sounded like backwards cellos and freezing lakes. As a sacrifice, I killed the dog and threw its lifeless body into the dark god's immense mouth.

When I walked home, the great fish followed me. It disguised itself as city buses and boarded up shops. It floated above my head, pretending to be the moon. When we got home, I filled my basement with water, and watched it swim back and forth in its new home.

Each night now, when I can't sleep, I open the basement door and curl up on the top step. I close my eyes, and let the great fish's ancient, rusty song carry me to a land of dreams where the ghosts of white peacocks roost in the attic of my childhood home.

## AUSU THIS MONTH



### 2009 AUSU Handbook/Planners

The 2009 AUSU planner order form is up! You'll find the order form on the AUSU [home page](#).

Anyone who ordered early will have had their planner included in the first batch mailed out. If you did 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.

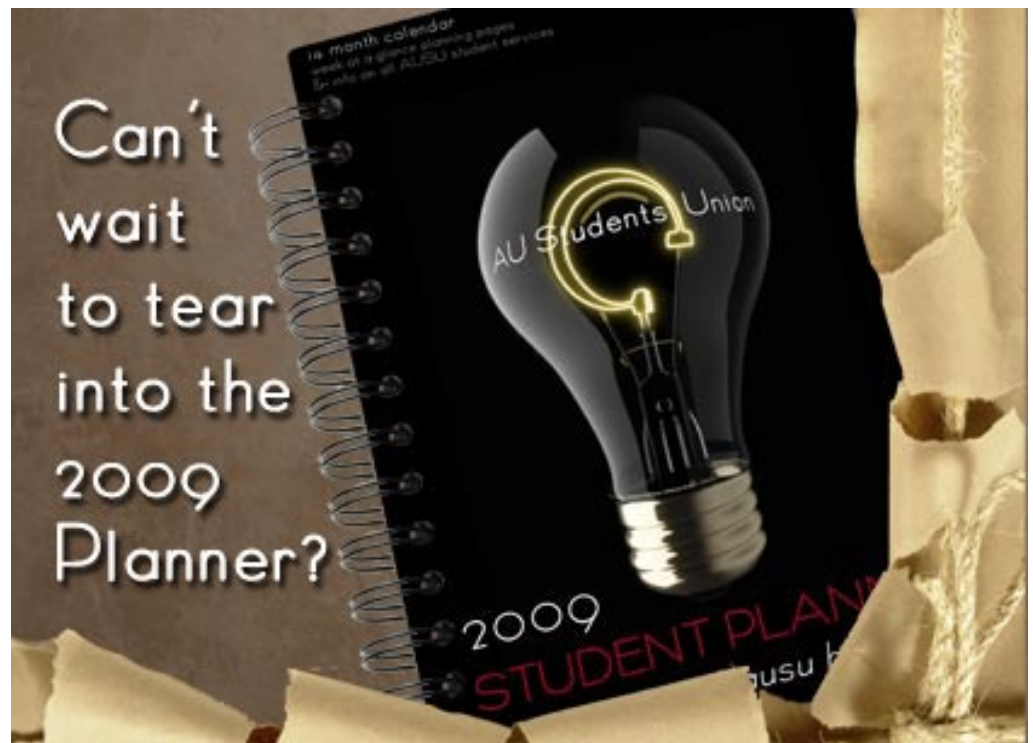
### Merchandise Still for Sale

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.

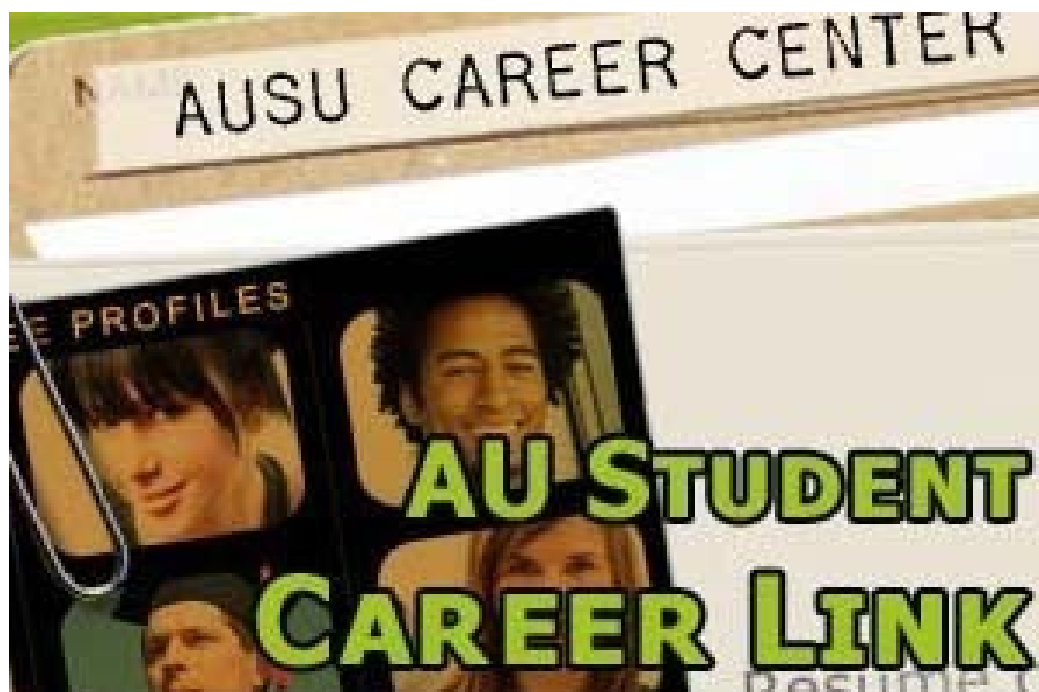
For any course that requires charts that cannot be easily created in Word or Excel, this should be a real time saver and make it easier to submit all portions of an assignment by email.

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!

## INTERNATIONAL NEWS DESK



### At Home: N.B. school stifles singing of O Canada

When the principal of Belleisle Elementary school in New Brunswick cancelled the daily singing of O Canada, few parents were made aware of it.

But the issue is suddenly front and centre after a Belleisle parent realized her daughter was forgetting the words to the national anthem—a fact that was especially disturbing to a family that had recently lost a cousin to a roadside bomb in Afghanistan.

Erik Millett, principal of Belleisle Elementary, cancelled the daily singing of the anthem in September 2007 in response to complaints from some parents.

News reports haven't said exactly what those complaints were, and the *Telegraph Journal* notes that Millett "didn't ask specifically if their issue was with the anthem and its tribute to Canada, or if it is the inclusion of God in the words."

In addition, Millett said the anthem was distracting to students as they attempted to start their day on time.

After consulting with teachers, Millett decided that O Canada would only be sung at monthly assemblies. That way, children whose parents did not want them singing the anthem could be easily excused. Currently, neither the school district nor the province has a policy outlining when the anthem should be played. The decision is left up to individual principals.

Susan Boyd is one parent who is lobbying to reverse Millett's decision. As she told the *CBC*, students should not only sing O Canada, but should also "talk about the anthem so the children will understand what it means, where it came from. What all the words [to the anthem] mean so they will know and take pride, and they should take pride."

Annette Pollock's grandson attends Belleisle and she's also concerned about the ban on O Canada inside the classroom, saying that her grandson goes to hockey and that "it's pretty bad when you have to wait for hockey to teach him O Canada instead of in the schools."

Almost all other elementary students in the district sing the anthem every day. A petition is being started to have the morning ritual brought back to the classrooms of Belleisle.

### In Foreign News: Transit woes hit Australia during record-breaking heatwave

While Canadians are shivering through icy blasts, Australians are wilting in extreme heat, with three straight days of record-breaking temperatures that have climbed as high as 46 degrees Celsius.

To make matters worse, the heat wave has come during a meltdown in Melbourne's rail service, and commuters have been left fuming after up to 300 cancellations in a single day.



As well, power blackouts have hit tens of thousands of homes and grass fires have been springing up in the extremely dry conditions.

Anger over the rail shutdowns has resulted in a row between the train drivers' union and rail operator Connex. As The Age reported, Connex claims that the cancellations were the result of "an aggressive 'fault finding' campaign by the union." The drivers' union angrily denied the accusation.

Thousands of commuters have been delayed or stranded in the heat as trains have malfunctioned, causing shortages. The executive chairman of Connex, Jonathan Metcalfe, has said that four out of five cancelled trains were safe to run, but that drivers were using high-pressure tactics in a bid for better working conditions.

On January 20, the government tried to ease the situation by offering free access to Victoria on buses, trams, and trains.

Temperatures in the Melbourne area were expected to hit 43 Celsius again on Friday, then drop to around 35 C throughout the weekend.

## EDUCATION NEWS

**Nathan Swyers**



### Post-secondary enrolment higher than ever

HAMILTON (CUP) - When the going gets tough, the tough get learning. That's what some experts say is the reason for the increase in post-secondary applications this year.

The number has not been higher since the double cohort in 2003, and the applicant increase percentage has doubled for winter college programs compared to last year's growth.

The number of applications for both colleges and universities has been growing every year. Compared to

last year, Ontario colleges received 10 per cent more applications, while universities saw an increase of just over one per cent. With a closer look, these numbers grow even more.

"We believe that it's a sign of the times in terms of the economic downturn," said Sally Ritchie, Colleges Ontario's senior communications. "We anticipate that more people will be taking advantage of the training and re-training provided by colleges."

The increase compared to last year in those not applying straight out of high school is nearly 12 per cent for Ontario colleges and almost 10 per cent for universities.

Ritchie says people look to higher education when facing a recession, and they might think upgrading with new skills is the best thing to do.

George Granger, executive director of Ontario Universities Application Council (OUAC), says this is a very good time to go back and get a better education.



"On one hand, you have the group in high school looking down the road, trying to prepare themselves for what lies ahead," said Granger.

"Then you have this other group. Many find themselves within the certain reality based on the way the economy is today. The jobs that were there a year ago aren't there now. The prospects of mobility that might have been there a year ago aren't there today."

With the increase in applications comes an increase in competition, but Ritchie says College Ontario will work with the government to ensure the colleges can accommodate these students.

"We certainly want to welcome them with open arms," said Ritchie. "But there's a limit."

More students in the classroom also means more classes, faculty, and potentially larger class sizes.

Deborah Calarco, associate registrar of admissions at Mohawk College in Hamilton, Ontario, says they are prepared for what lies ahead.

"Many of the schools plan additional sections just in case. With [the business program], we've used those sections," she said.

Calarco says there won't be any negative impact to the admissions cut-off, despite the substantial increase in applicants. She says Mohawk's applicant pool is currently 11.7 per cent higher than it was last year.

"There are places where we had demand, but we couldn't take more. In nursing, there is always a high demand and we could not accept everyone," said Calarco.

Sam Maga, president of the faculty union at Mohawk College, says he doesn't see there being a teacher shortage, even if the increase in applicants does translate into higher enrolment come September.

"As far as being able to put those students in classrooms and have teachers there, that never seems to be a problem," said Maga. "What category of teacher they will be in the classroom with is hard to say."

With increases in enrolment, the college will have to hire more part-time faculty, he says.

"I would prefer that they hire full-time, obviously, to make sure that they have good jobs. As opposed to being part-time, being paid about a third of everybody else that's full-time, without getting benefits, without getting job security or any protection of their rights," said Maga.

But he says that Mohawk is one of the best colleges when it comes to maintaining an acceptable full-time to non full-time ratio.

"When you look at some of the other colleges, there are twice as many non full-time as there are full-time," said Maga.

"The issue they have is funding. With the new economic challenge that we have in the country and in the world, that's going to be a bigger problem in the future [than having more students]. If people are coming back to school or entering school due to population shifts, then the government has to respond, and they really haven't."

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# CLASSIFIEDS

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## THE VOICE

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