

THE VOICE MAGAZINE

Volume 17 Issue 06
February 13, 2009

Northern Adventures

Studying in Nunavut

NeverOddorEven

Talking to Theset

The Interviewer

Underground station



Plus:

*Porkpie Hat, The Mindful Bard,
On the Hill, and much more...*

CONTENTS

WELCOME TO THE VOICE PDF

The Voice interactive Table of Contents allows you to click a story title to jump to an article. Clicking the bottom-right corner of any page returns you here. Some ads and graphics are also links.

Features

On the Hill 3

Articles

In Conversation With: Martin MacPhail of Theset 4

AU Profiles: Eloise Campbell 6

Columns

The Interviewer 9

Porkpie Hat 10

The Mindful Bard 11

From Where I Sit 13

AUSU This Month 14

News and Events

The Voice 2008 Writing Contest: Update 8

International News Desk 16

Click of the Wrist 17

Education News 18

Did You Know?: Assess Yourself 19

From the Readers

Letters to the Editor 2

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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

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



ON THE HILL

Sandra Livingston



Show Me the Money

Millions and billions and trillions, oh my. With all the news about billion-dollar spending packages and trillion-dollar debt, it's easy for the average Canadian to feel a little like Dorothy Gale—disoriented in a strange land after being dropped out of the sky by a financial twister.

But being a trusting lot, we're reassured by the \$40 billion dollars in stimulus spending. Along with tax credits for things like home improvement projects, a whopping \$12 billion is going to be shovelled into

infrastructure. That money includes \$4 billion for an Infrastructure Stimulus Fund—funds earmarked for municipal, provincial, and territorial “renewal” projects that would get underway in 2009 or 2010.

Sounds good. It's a staggering amount of our money, but it's going to be used to create jobs, generate spending, and get the economy back on solid ground. Or is it? As a recent Industry Canada report reveals, even while the feds are announcing massive new expenditures, millions of dollars in infrastructure funding is already sitting idle.

The report provides the federal government with details on how well Industry Canada is performing—and it's a worrisome snapshot of what might happen to the stimulus money once the photo ops and speeches are over.

As the *Financial Post* reports, “under a handful of programs designed to provide direct financial transfers to business-related activities, slightly more than \$50-million went unspent.” And the Liberal party has added an interesting observation: almost half of the \$3.62 billion planned for infrastructure projects in 2007-08 is still unspent.

Which raises some very interesting questions about just how effective the Conservative government is going to be when it comes to turning that \$40 billion into practical results. And why everyone is so keen on putting more money into infrastructure spending when it seems so hard to part with the funds already set aside for that.

The problem can't be put down to spending scandals. Instead, it's plain old bad planning and government red tape. One example is the \$21 million scheme intended to boost Canada's shipbuilding sector. Peter Cairns, president of the Shipbuilding Association of Canada, told reporters that gaining access to those funds “can be very laborious.” One roadblock is that the program gives money to the buyer instead of the builder; in effect, a rebate program. That can be a hard sell, and in the long run it's easier for shipbuilders to secure private financing.

In the 2009 budget, the government admits that the approval process is hampered by “duplication and inefficiencies in administration.” Hardly encouraging now that they've got to muddle their way through getting an unexpected \$4 billion out the door.

It's all well and good to talk about programs like the home renovation tax credit, but Ottawa needs to remember one thing: if the economic stimulus is going to work, they have to *show* us the money too.

IN CONVERSATION WITH . . .

Wanda Waterman St. Louis



Martin MacPhail of Theset

Theset, from Victoria, British Columbia, originally came together to write and perform one set of songs as an emo spoof.

They gradually transmogrified into a progressive alt rock act producing serious, thoughtful songs with intricate, driving melodies. They've recently released their second album, NeverOddorEven (look for more palindromes inside).

Theset is currently touring Canada. The following are notes from a conversation between lead singer Martin MacPhail and Wanda Waterman St. Louis.

"What if the world is a living imitation of art.

Then where are we going and where did we start."

from "No Such Thing As Stars," *NeverOddorEven*

Origin of the Species

Throughout high school our guitar player, Elliot, and I were both in bands together and playing on different projects. The rest of us didn't really meet until after we graduated. We decided to get together to play this one show; we were being tongue-in-cheek about it because we were only going to perform one musical set, which is how we came up with our name.

We created the project to make fun of the emo music that was becoming popular. We wore really tight clothes, straightened our hair, wrote songs about our girlfriends, and just got up on stage and made a big joke about it. (You'd be amazed at how many things in my life have started from jokes.)

Once we got on stage together we realized we had really good chemistry and a lot of fun playing together. So we decided to take our project a lot more seriously. We started writing songs that meant a lot to us and pushed our music forward, then we released our first album, *The Philosophy of Time Travel*, in 2006.

NeverOddorEveNeverOddorEveeverOddorEveeverOddorEveN

On this album we've been much more methodical. *NeverOddorEven* is very detailed in terms of the lyrical concept, and the palindromes are indicative of the theme.

We're definitely not a singer-songwriter get-up; we write as a band. For each song on the album a different member may have brought forth the idea or the riff in the beginning but the words and the music are all written collaboratively. I write most of the lyrics but the band has input into that just as I have input into the music.

It's different for each song but for me it's usually the melody that comes first. I know different people write in different ways but for me when we're jamming I like to hum along and create different melody ideas to

find something that I like and that will give me a structure to put the lyrics into. The lyrics depend on the mood or the atmosphere of the song and what it says to me.

With this album we decided to create a kind of cinematic experience. I experience music very visually. When I listen to my favourite bands I play scenes in my head. This is definitely the way this album was written—I pictured it like a movie.

I really enjoy movies and shows myself and one of the things I pick up on is the clever use of music. I just saw *The Wrestler* last night—the music in that movie is very minimal but very effective. It's just simple guitar lines but it really brings out the emotion in the scene.



String Theory

I did the first year of a degree in astronomy and physics at the University of Victoria. I'd love to finish my degree sometime but can't right now with all the touring. Most of the books I read tend to be about general relativity and quantum physics and modern string theory. This plays a role in the scientific, sci-fi element in our music.

One book I would recommend to anybody is *The Elegant Universe* by Brian Greene. It starts with Einstein's theory of general relativity, moves into quantum physics, and then describes how those two theories aren't compatible. The nice thing about this book is that it's written for people who aren't educated in this field.

The way I think about the world definitely affects the way these songs come together. It fits the general public perception that we're on a downward slope with the world heating up. *Never Odd or Even* is specifically about the sun going out.

Music a Powerful Medium

Music to me is like a painting—there are just so many words and feelings associated with it. But I think of music as the most powerful art form or medium because you can close your eyes and it will totally take you somewhere else visually and emotionally.

I think that I would be creating music in any circumstances. It's something that comes naturally to me and to the other members of the band. For us it's a very natural expression of life. I think that one of the important things about our music is that it's interesting because of the group of people that created it. It's totally the band's chemistry that makes the music what it is. That to me is the most important thing.

AU Profiles:

AU Profiles: Eloise Campbell

Christina M. Frey



When her boyfriend—now fiancé—took a teaching job in Nunavut, Athabasca University student Eloise Campbell moved from Moncton, New Brunswick, to a remote northern community of 350 on the shores of Hudson Bay.

A huge culture shock? Definitely. But according to her, absolutely worth it.

During our chat—disconnected several times by the 70-k.p.h. blizzard conditions there—she explained how distance study means she can experience a new culture and lifestyle while pursuing her educational goals. She also described life in the far north, and why she loves living in such a remote area.

Andrew and Eloise in front of buckled sea ice by the shore

For Eloise, enrolled in AU's Bachelor of Arts in Psychology program, distance learning is all about flexibility. When she first moved north, she expected jobs would be scarce, and decided to take the opportunity to earn her degree. Given the remote location, distance study was an obvious choice, and AU's reputation made the decision easy. "I heard from many people who had taken AU courses that it was an excellent and challenging school and that they offered complete programs," Eloise says.

She began intending to study full-time, but found that the opportunity to work wasn't as limited as she had thought. "I have cut back my studies to part-time because I am now working full-time," says Eloise, who works at the community's equivalent of the town hall.

Working full-time while studying can be a challenge. "I find procrastination to be a huge problem for me," she says candidly. "I find it tough to hit the books after a long day at work."

To help self-motivate, she'll remind herself how much easier it is to work a little at a time rather than dealing with the stress of cramming as the course contract date approaches.

She's also become more conscious of her limits. "I have . . . learned to take on only as many courses as I know I can handle and no more," she says. "[I am] enrolling in only one course at a time, but I would like to finish them in two or three months." She adds, "I just try to do as much as I can."

Looking to her longer range goals is also important. "I would be happy to finish five or six courses every 10 months," she says. "My long-term goal is to complete an education degree and work as a resource teacher."

While living in New Brunswick, she worked with autistic children, a job she found "very challenging, but extremely rewarding."

In fact, that's the direction she's hoping to eventually pursue. "My true passion is working with children with special needs," she says.

Finally, preserving a sense of balance is essential. "I usually keep my Friday nights for me to prevent stress and to decompress after the week," she says.

Any challenges, however, are secondary to the opportunities distance learning has opened up. "I do find the non-traditional method to be more of a challenge, but I . . . appreciate the freedom and luxury to pursue my education at my own pace," Eloise says. Best of all, studying via distance is allowing her to experience northern climate and culture first-hand.

What is it like to live in Nunavut? Well, of course, it's cold. "I have a touch of frostbite on my face from a walk last weekend when it was 'nice' out!" Eloise says.

The weather wasn't the only thing that required adjustment. "It was a huge culture shock," she says. "You really have to come up here with an open mind and a willingness to learn." But if you do, she says, you'll be rewarded.



Getting around by dogsled on the vast tundra



A traditional Inukshuk

Eloise, who's lived in the area for just over a year now, loves it. She finds the tight-knit community inspiring.

"People are . . . willing to help others in need in any way they can," she says. "For example, several homes are without power right now, and other families are opening their homes to them until they get power again."

It's an attitude that embraces newcomers, too, and she didn't feel like an outsider when she arrived: "Everyone is always eager to see a new face in town!" she says.

The area is also rich in cultural history. "Learning about Inuit culture has been a pretty incredible experience," says Eloise, who's studying Inuktitut and participating in traditional crafts. "I . . . am learning how to make sealskin kamiks (boots)," she says. She's also considering taking AU's course on Inuit culture, although she points out that she's already learning it by living it!

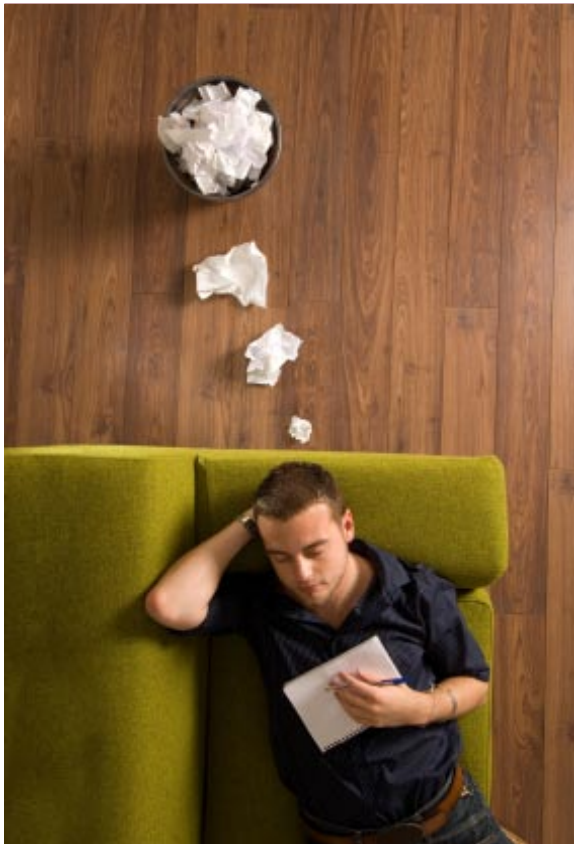
How long will she stay in the far north? As of yet, she's not sure. She'll be getting married this summer and hopes to start a family soon, and raising her children in such a culturally rich area is appealing.

"We are eager to have our children exposed to the culture and would love for them to grow up with three languages (English, French, and Inuktitut)," Eloise says.

Regardless, she's not in a hurry to leave Nunavut. "We have no real timeline," she says. "We both love the adventures and learning up here."



One of the many incredible sunsets in Nunavut



THE VOICE 2008 WRITING CONTEST

The entries are in and the judging is underway, and we'll be announcing the winners of the 2008 *Voice* writing contest soon!

Entrants were allowed to submit in both the fiction and non-fiction categories. First-place winners will each receive one AU undergraduate course.

We received some remarkable submissions this year and our judges are hard at work selecting the winning entries. A big thank-you goes out to them for all their time and energy.

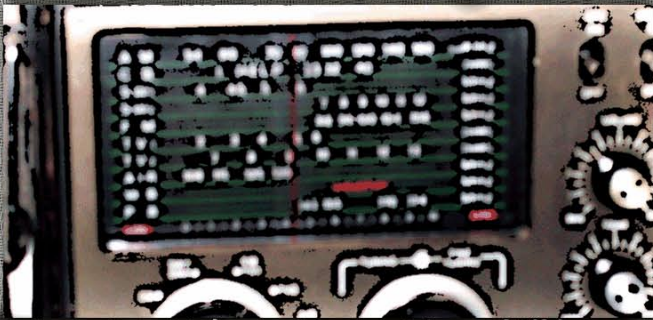
Be sure to watch the next few issues of *The Voice* to find out who the winners of the 2008 writing contest are!

The Interviewer

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

written and illustrated by Wanda Waterman St. Louis

Rockhead #10: Underground Station

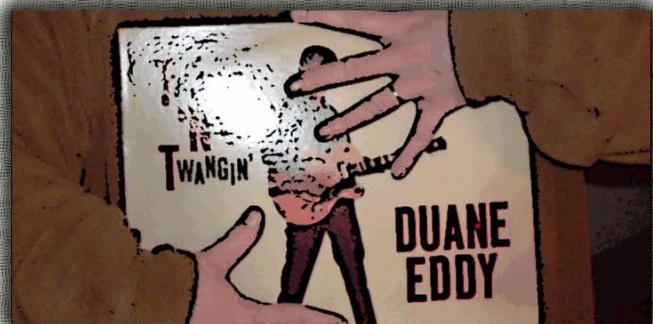


...in bed at night trying to pick up ANY underground stations on his radio...



...but it was hard to pick them up in Nova Scotia and even FM played only top forty.

...and the people who had the good ones were loathe to give them up.



He'd gotten so desperate he'd raided his mother's record collection and gone through this folk trio phase which was both delicious AND nutritious.



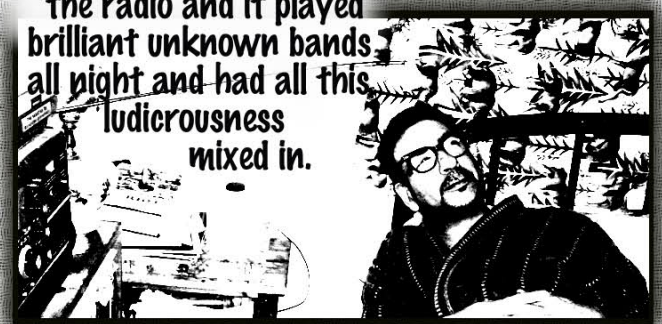
Gettin' ready for a hot date!

So he'd given up listening to radio.



Sure, he'd kept on collecting sixties records but records were expensive back then, even the secondhand ones...

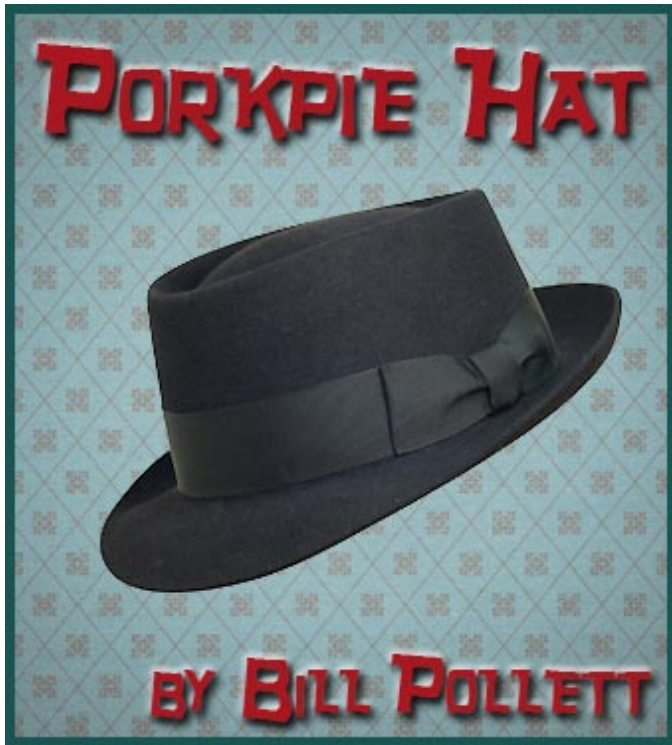
But NOW there was this great alternative show on the radio and it played brilliant unknown bands all night and had all this ludicrousness mixed in.



He'd heard that the host was a real schlemiel but he wouldn't believe it because the show was a garden of earthly delights, an insomniac muse wafting elan into Reuben's jaded soul.



next: dancing like a white woman



The Palace of Love: A Cautionary Tale

The Empress of Love is sitting on her throne in her distant palace. The walls of the palace are made of cellophane and tinsel and paper as white as snow. The full moon (the moon is always full in this strange land) creates a pen-and-ink drawing of the heavily wooded imperial gardens.

The gardens are rampant with night-blooming flowers, filling the air with sticky, sickly sweet scents of renewal and decay. There are many foxes and many rats. There is an eerie susurrus of crickets, and the far-off sound of a single saxophone crying.

There are enormous frogs that were once foolish princes, unwise enough to piss off passing witches. The frogs are waiting by the side of a stagnant pond, croaking and munching on night bugs. They can no longer recall who or what they have been so endlessly waiting for.

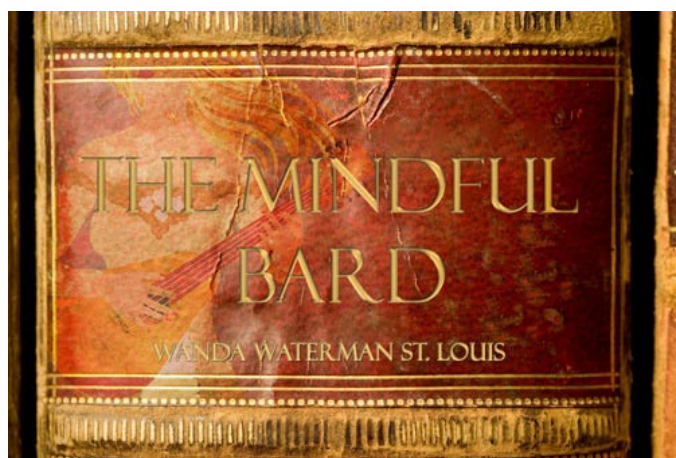
There is a golden ball at the bottom of the pond, dropped by a careless, frivolous barefoot princess. The ball has been long-since forgotten, lost forever in the weeds. There are bruise-coloured fish with row upon row of nasty-looking teeth, circling about beneath the surface.

There are assorted cursed lovers sleeping under trees, holding each other tight for a last few precious moments before being devoured by the tigers that are always prowling through the woods.

Every day, more travellers are moving toward the gates of the palace. They are coming by leaky boat and hot-air balloon. They are coming by broomstick and gondola. They are walking with raw, blistered feet on a road of jagged stones. Some are somersaulting, others are crawling, or turning each other about in a slow and stately dance.

In the grand palace, harlequins and fools surround the empress. She has advisers who study poisons, and others who read the stars. Her throne is decorated with scarabs and rare stones and human skulls. Her golden goblet is filled with what might be wine, might be blood. The great hall is bathed in amber light, preserving every moment for all eternity. She is watching dancers removing veil after coloured veil, and acrobats tie themselves in impossible knots.

There are threadbare poets reciting endless epics filled with treachery and unlikely events. There is the sound of harp and flute, exquisitely played, and just loud enough to drown out the strange wailing rising from the dungeons far below.



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

Book: Peter Doggett: *There's a Riot Going On: Revolutionaries, Rock Stars, and the Rise and Fall of the '60s*

Publisher: Canongate, 2007

Part 2

I Shall Be Released—So Get Off My Back!

“. . . a lesson has been taught which will not be learned. It is that one should not try to found a revolution on musicians; because the delicate instrument of their body can all too easily be damaged, they are all prone to desert.”

Grace Slick, as quoted in *There's a Riot Going On*, by Peter Doggett

In the summer of 1971 A.J. Weberman was in Greenwich Village rooting through Bob Dylan's garbage. Dylan's wife, Sara, stuck her head out a window and screamed, among other things, "Get the hell out of my garbage! You filthy animal!"

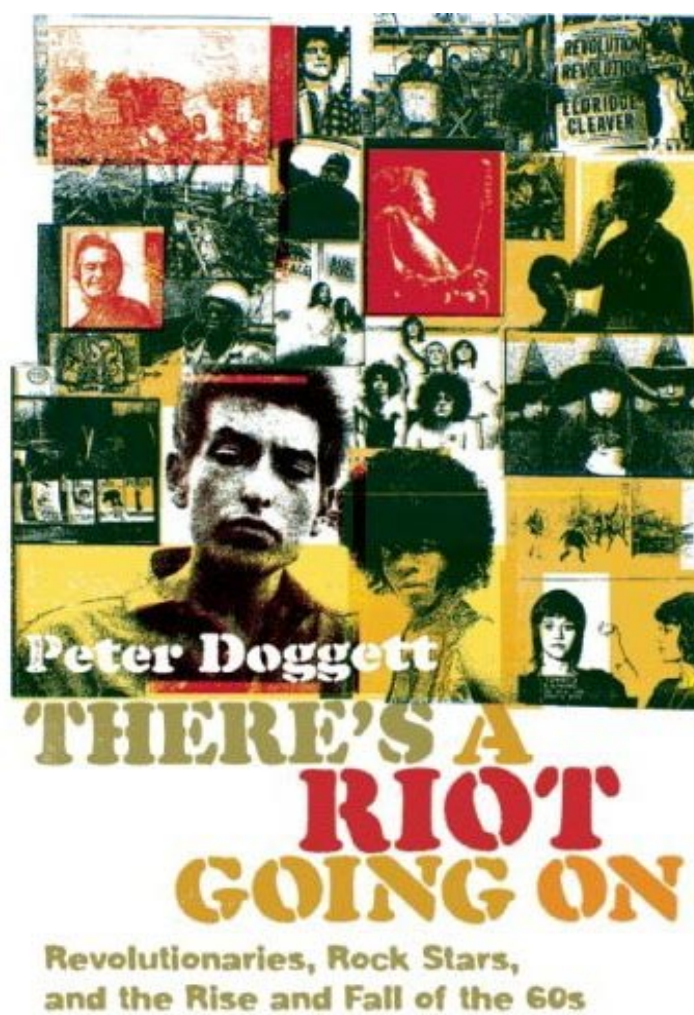
Later that day Weberman was walking down a nearby street when a cyclist stopped in front of him, grappled him around the neck, punched him, knocked him down, and started thumping his head against the pavement.

Some locals chased the attacker away. A local street person, assuming this was a mugging, asked, "Did he get much money?"

Weberman, still amazed, sputtered, "That was *Bob Dylan!*"

Earlier in the book Doggett describes a meeting at a commune of radical leftists at which peasant-skirted women flitted anxiously in and out of the kitchen while the men pounded the table with their fists and demanded that their dinner be served.

This image is not only a startling reminder that the radicals were no different in kind from dear old Dad (this "revolutionary" climate was the perfect incubation zone for the women's liberation movement) but also presents the perfect analogy for the attempted conquest of art by politics: political types pounding the table yelling at creative types to hurry up and deliver *their* revolution.



Weberman was the founder and leader of the Rock Liberation Front, whose manifesto was “Helping the movement through culture,” and of the Dylan Liberation Front, whose goal was to draw Dylan out of what Weberman saw as an overly self-absorbed phase in his career. He had been exploring Dylan’s refuse, as he had done on many occasions, in search of concrete, publishable evidence that Dylan had betrayed the counterculture.

There is nothing wrong with artists taking part in political activity that resonates with their personal views, but a society that demands this of them is an oppressive one.

Weberman had for years devoted his time and resources to compelling Bob Dylan to lead America’s youth into a glorious revolution, and dumpster-diving had been only the tip of the iceberg. We owe a heap of thanks to Weberman for so thoroughly—and sometimes hilariously—revealing the error of his decade’s ways.

There have been many attempts to psychoanalyze artists through an examination of their work, with no success, and for good reason; shrinks would be better off psychoanalyzing an artist’s cultural context.

The mistake lies in seeing the artist as the personification of his or her creative works, a mistake that led an entire generation to claim Bob Dylan as their very own peasant-shirted messiah, much to Dylan’s exasperation.

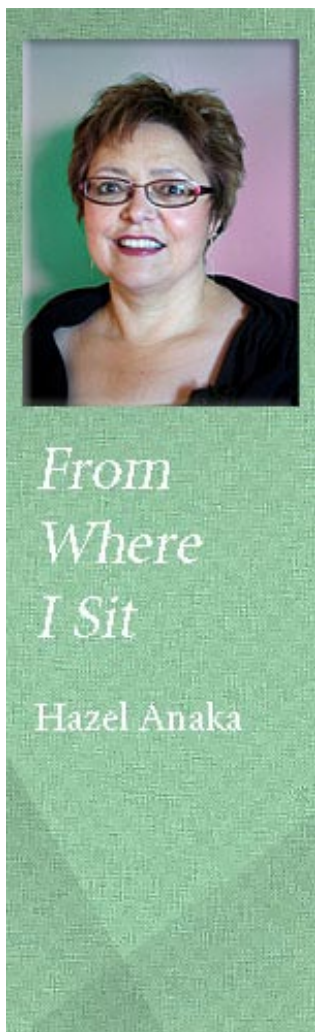
Simply put, Bob Dylan was not just expressing *himself* in his songs, he was also expressing the deepest responses and longings of the world he lived in, a world that may not have completely lined up with his own beliefs and values. And so it is with all artists who are authentic and sincere.

Failure to recognize this simple truth can have disastrous results for artists and also for the social activists who try to commandeer art’s content. Many who observed or emerged from the counterculture in the ‘60s believed the movement’s failure was rooted in the failure of musicians to rise above the temptations of stardom, but this misses the point; the movement didn’t fail because musicians sold out—it failed at least in part because its agenda was all but forced onto the shoulders of people who had no business carrying it.

Music has the power to transform the way people think and feel, so it’s pointless to demand of musicians that they join some political activity in order to change the world—they are already doing that in their own way.

There is nothing wrong with artists taking part in political activity that resonates with their personal views, but a society that *demand*s this of them is an oppressive one. Such a demand is necessarily part of a patriarchal agenda that aims to reduce to a commodity a thing which is essentially a pearl beyond price, its aim to bring art into the service of power instead of rightfully subjugating power to the dominion of beauty.

There’s a Riot Going On manifests eight of The Mindful Bard’s criteria for books well worth reading: 1) it is authentic, original, and delightful; 2) it confronts, rebukes, and mocks existing injustices; 3) it renews my enthusiasm for positive social action; 4) it gives me tools enabling me to respond with compassion and efficacy to the suffering around me; 5) it is about attainment of the true self; 6) it harmoniously unites art with social action, avoiding both seclusion in an ivory tower and slavery to someone else’s political agenda; 7) it stimulates my mind; and 8) it poses and admirably responds to questions which have a direct bearing on my view of existence.



Escapism at its Finest

There's a good chance Roy and I were the whitest people at the Mexican resort when we arrived January 31. As we departed one week later, not much had really changed. At least not colour-wise.

We had slathered on the SPF 60 sunscreen and sought out umbrellas and other shade structures. I realize this sounds kind of boring and hokey, but honestly, malignant melanoma has such an ugly ring to it.

There were those people at the resort lounging around the pool or on the beach for hours on end day after day. There were those people who had done this very thing many, many times for many years. They were the ones with the dark, wrinkled, leathery skin that looked like it belonged to a very old turtle. There were others who had no protection whatsoever and were lobster-red. So we played it safe and came home white.

The resort was a people-watcher's delight. I have one small question though. Most of us are aware of the seven wonders of the world; I'd like to suggest an eighth. Can we possibly add all those women who are older than 18 or 30 or maybe even 40 who don't have cellulite? It's a miracle. I saw it with my own eyes. More than once. A bloody miracle, I tell you.

The Royal Solaris at San Jose Del Cabo is a lovely all-inclusive resort and we had a wonderful week of kicking back. The food was incredible but I couldn't convince Roy to try the octopus or squid or cactus pads or a whole bunch of other different foods.

"Just try a tiny bit," I'd say. "If you hadn't tried the food you love now, you'd never know you love it, right?"

How nice to taste a morsel of this and a morsel (or more) of that: fresh papaya, pineapple, and watermelon; fish and seafood; build-your-own omelettes; desserts galore. And the Miami Vice drinks weren't half bad either.

We took a glass-bottomed boat out to El Arco and Lover's beach from Los Cabos and saw sea lions sunning themselves. For eight pesos we rode a refurbished American school bus downtown and moved from one small shop to another in search of gifts for some of our "peeps" back home.

Over the course of a week I found a couple of leather handbags for me. Some jewellery for me. Some art cards for me. A ring with a Mexican fire opal—you guessed it—for me. Roy got two key chains worth eight dollars. I just know he will parlay that into a hundred dollars worth of poor-me stories for friends and relatives!

I also read a novel by late-night host Craig Ferguson, a historical romance by *The Voice's* very own Sandra Livingston, an early novel by Joan Barfoot, and tried yet again to read Thoreau's *Walden*. It was a succulent week of words. Escapism at its finest, from where I sit.

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 already!

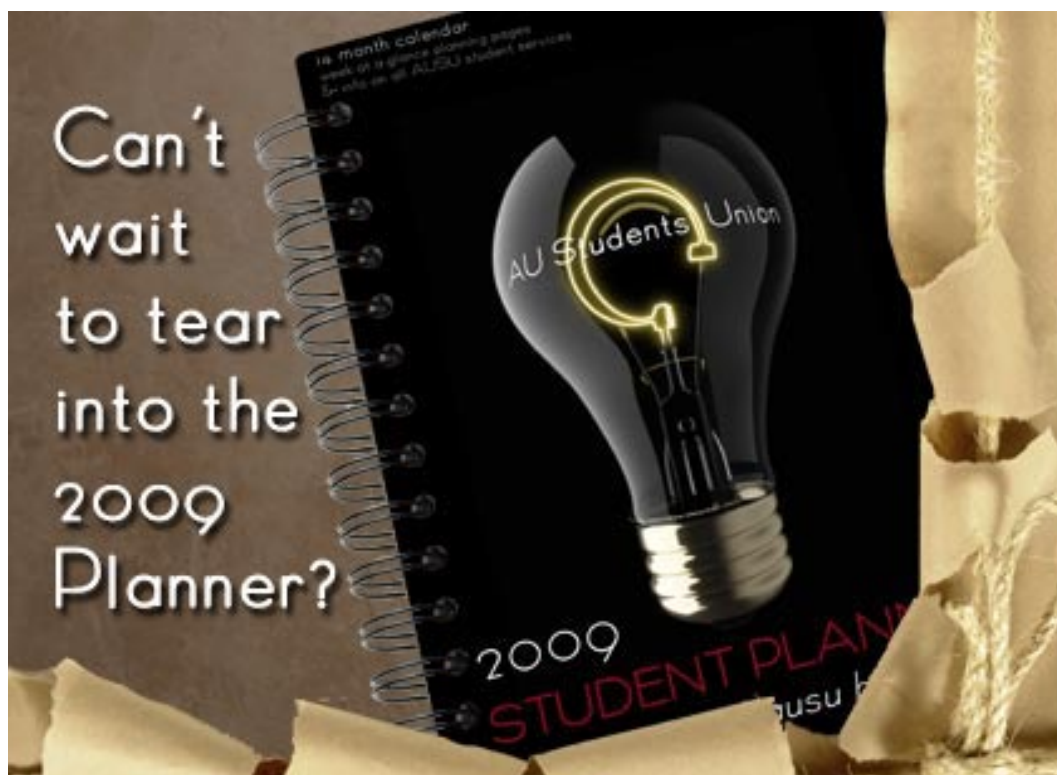
As always, we'll be excited to know what you think of the planner, and especially want to hear of any improvements you think could be made.

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.

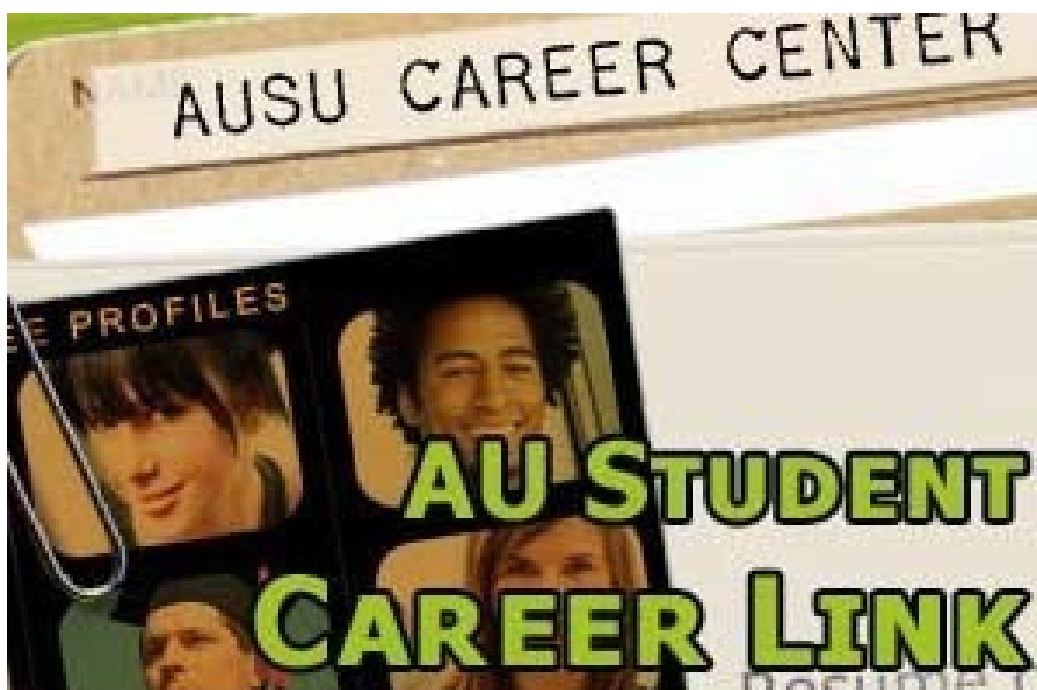
For any course that requires charts that cannot be easily created in Word or Excel, this should be a real time saver and make it easier to submit all portions of an assignment by email.

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



current financial woes around the globe.

If judicial raises are kept in line with those of other public service workers, it would mean a 1.5 per cent increase for each of the next three years.

The decision marks the second time that the federal Conservatives have rebuffed the commission's recommendations. In 2006, the Liberal government had supported a 10.5 per cent judicial pay raise, but when the Conservatives took office the amount was reduced to 7.25 per cent.

In Foreign News: 72-year-old former sprinter gives teen thief a run for her money

It's been a long time since 72-year-old Jean Hirst earned the title of All England Schools championship sprinter, but she still managed to give a teenage thief a run for her money.

When Hirst stopped her car to ask directions of three teenage girls, they insisted on getting in the car to show her the way. Hirst obliged, but soon realized that one of the trio was trying to escape with her purse.

As *The Telegraph* reports, the would-be thief made a run for it and Hirst reacted quickly: "Suddenly I felt 18 again. The adrenaline just kicked in and I seemed to turn back the years," she said.

The teenager had a head start, but as Hirst told reporters, "I covered 70 yards in about 15 seconds and was within two strides of her when she looked over her shoulder and saw me."

At Home: Judges lose out on 18 per cent pay hike

When it comes to a hefty pay hike, it's case closed for Canada's 1,000 federally appointed judges: a proposed 18 per cent raise has been turned down.

The decision was announced by Justice Minister Rob Nicholson, and it means that federal judges will not see the base pay of \$260,000 rise to \$307,000 by 2011.

The increase would, in part, have been the result of recommendations by the Judicial Compensation and Benefits Commission, an arm's-length body that called for salaries to be raised to \$264,300 followed by two per cent increases each year up to 2011. The raise would have been retroactive to April 2008.

In addition to those amounts, cost-of-living increases would have seen judges' salaries rise to approximately \$304,000.

But as the *Toronto Star* reports, judges have been told that the economic downturn will mean salary restraints for all public employees. As Nicholson told reporters, the 18 per cent pay hike would have been "unreasonable" in the face of

As Hirst continued to close the gap, the teenager threw the purse away and the 72-year-old widow was able to retrieve her property.

At the age of 17, Hirst was the Nottinghamshire County Schools 100 yards champion. She also qualified for the final of All England Schools Championship in Northumberland.

The only ill effects from the unplanned dash were a few aches and pains, and as Hirst told reporters, "My daughter turned to me and said it was because I didn't warm up properly."

CLICK OF THE WRIST - Very Superstitious

It's Friday the 13th, and that means people all over the world will be taking extra care not to walk under ladders or cross paths with a black cat. Luckily for us, it's nothing more than superstition. Or is it?

Superstitions Around the World

This site doesn't provide the country of origin for superstitions, but it certainly provides a long list of them. You'll probably be familiar with most, but some are just plain common sense, like the superstition that it's unlucky to lock yourself out of the house.

Japanese Superstitions

The number 13 might be considered unlucky in North America, but in Japan it's the number four, so don't be surprised if your Tokyo hotel doesn't have a fourth floor. Oh, and don't lie down right after dinner. Apparently, you'll turn into a cow.

Wedding Customs and Superstitions

As if there aren't enough things to worry about when it comes to planning a wedding, this list of superstitions covers everything from the luckiest month to be married in, to tying a hen to the bed to promote fertility. And don't forget to use a hawthorn branch for the proposal.

Evolution Keeps Us Superstitious

If you've ever felt just a little silly for avoiding a black cat or throwing salt over your shoulder, don't. It seems that superstition is built into our genes. This article gives an interesting take on why we'll never really overcome the need to whistle as we walk past the graveyard.

Superstitious Athletes

With multi-million dollar contracts on the line, it's no wonder these athletes are so obsessive about their superstitions. There's no way to know whether the routines paid off in better performances, but they're sure to have given at least one athlete better teeth: baseball player Turk Wendell's rituals included brushing his teeth between every inning he pitched.

EDUCATION NEWS

Carl Meyer



Tories craft PSE caucus

Conservative MPs to regularly meet with PSE lobbyists

OTTAWA (CUP) - The federal Conservative government has created a party caucus to better liaison with post-secondary education lobbyists.

On Thursday, February 6, Conservative MP Rod Bruinooge (Winnipeg South) rose in the House of Commons to announce the February 5 inaugural meeting of the Conservative post-secondary education caucus.

"This new caucus will focus on how our government, and we as MPs, can best serve post-secondary institutions," Bruinooge said.

"Colleges and universities are vital to our communities and our country, and I am proud to be a member of our government whose commitment to support them is clear."

Bruinooge was elected to chair the caucus at the inaugural meeting, says Myrrhanda Novak, his director of communications.

"The discussion focused on infrastructure, grants, and student bursaries," she said.

She declined to give a list of caucus members, however, stating that "as the caucus has only had one meeting, it would be pre-mature to send out."

The Peterborough Examiner reported that Peterborough MP Dean Del Mastro is also a member of the caucus, and that he stated there were about 18 MPs at the meeting.

Del Mastro also told the Examiner that the caucus will be seeking "delegations from student associations, such as the Canadian Federation of Students."

CFS National Chairperson Katherine Giroux-Bougard says she welcomes the creation of the caucus.

"We look forward to working with the caucus on issues of importance to our members, such as the 2009 federal budget's cuts to the federal granting councils," she said.

"In creating a space for Conservative MPs to discuss post-secondary education, the party seems to agree with our assertion that the federal government has a prominent role to play in improving the quality and affordability of Canada's universities and colleges."

The Canadian Alliance of Student Associations, another national student lobby group, says it is happy the caucus is being created.

"It speaks to the national importance of post-secondary education in Canada," said CASA National Director Zach Churchill.

“At a time when the country worries about the state of our economy, it is more important than ever to invest time, energy, and resources into making our post-secondary education system is accessible, affordable, and of the highest quality.”

The previous Liberal government had the Liberal post-secondary education caucus, which met regularly with spokespeople in the post-secondary world.

Although the Liberals are now the official Opposition, that caucus still exists, chaired by Liberal MP Mike Savage (Dartmouth—Cole Harbour).

In January, the Liberal caucus met with members from the Institute for Quantum Computing at the University of Waterloo.

The two national student lobby groups say they have been in contact with this caucus as well.

“In the past year, we’ve formally presented student issues to the Liberal [post-secondary education] caucus, after receiving an invitation to address the group,” said Churchill.

“We have been invited to present to the Liberal PSE caucus in each year it was active,” said Giroux-Bougard, adding that the caucus has not sat recently.

The NDP do not have a post-secondary education caucus, says party spokesperson Rupinder Kaur.

They do, however, have a post-secondary education critic—MP Niki Ashton (Churchill).

Giroux-Bougard says Ashton’s office has recently been in contact with Ian Boyko, CFS government relations co-ordinator.

DID YOU KNOW?

Assess Yourself



Are you trying to choose an AU program, but having a hard time deciding? Or are you thinking of trying a course in a new subject, and aren’t sure if you’ve got the basics down?

AU’s online [assessment tools](#) can help with those decisions. The “Mapping Your Future” link offers a self-assessment quiz that “will help you explore your own interests, skills, and values as they relate to potential careers and AU programs.”

If you’re new to distance learning, you can follow the “Am I Ready for AU?” link to help decide whether distance education is a good fit for you. And if you want to make sure you’re ready to enrol in that English, math, chemistry, or computing science course, check out the “Am I Ready for Studies in . . .” assessments.

You’ll also find information on education funding, career planning, and how to contact AU Counselling Services. So whether you’re signing up for your first AU course or making a career change, be sure to check out the site.

CLASSIFIEDS

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

THE VOICE

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