

THE

# VOICE

MAGAZINE

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## Mardi Gras

Laissez les bons  
temps rouler!

## Final Thought

Taking it home

## The Capes

Up to the challenge



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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.



## MARDI GRAS

Christina M. Frey



*The author in her Mardi Gras mask*

### **Laissez les bons temps rouler!**

*Laissez les bons temps rouler!* Roughly translating as “let the good times roll,” it’s become a catchphrase for Mardi Gras in New Orleans: a huge celebration of tradition, music, and food and drink, mixed with rollicking good fun.

What’s it like in New Orleans during Mardi Gras season? I decided to take a trip down there to find out!

It might come as a surprise that these festivities, known for their excesses, actually have religious roots. The celebration of Mardi Gras is intimately connected with New Orleans’ French Catholic heritage.

Mardi Gras, sometimes referred to as Carnival, is the day before Ash Wednesday, which begins the Catholic season of Lent.

This seven-week period was traditionally a time of fasting and penance, and even today Catholics keep to tradition by “giving up something for

Lent.” Because parties and dances were traditionally frowned upon between Ash Wednesday and Easter, Mardi Gras was seen as the last opportunity to party until Lent is over. It certainly wasn’t a time for moderation!

The modern celebration of Mardi Gras is more than a one-day event restricted to a small section of the city, however. It’s a whole season, one long state-wide party that goes on for several weeks.

Traditionally, the Mardi Gras season begins on January 6 and lasts until Mardi Gras day, “Fat Tuesday,” the day before Ash Wednesday. During that time, it’s round after round of parties and balls, and people decorate their houses and businesses with streamers, lights, and wreaths in the traditional Mardi Gras colours: purple, green, and gold.

The festivities can even rival Christmas, right down to the Mardi Gras trees! Although New Orleans is more famous for its Mardi Gras celebration, the season is celebrated in the same way—on a smaller scale—in both cities and small communities across Louisiana.

The highlight of any Carnival festivities is the parade, and nowhere can this be better seen than in New Orleans. There, parade season begins 12 days before Mardi Gras day. In New Orleans and its neighbouring parishes (the Louisiana equivalent of a county), more than 70 parades roll through the streets in the weeks prior to the big day, and still more occur in other parts of the state.

But who puts on these entertaining and sometimes fantastic shows? We can thank the Krewes, social organizations made up of private citizens.



*A float in the Krewe of King Arthur parade*

Traditionally, Krewe membership was exclusive and often kept secret. Most Krewes are now open to anyone who can pay the club dues, which range from \$20 to several thousand dollars, depending on the Krewe's activities. Although some Krewes are involved in charity work, the primary purpose of most is social, especially during Mardi Gras season. There are balls, and occasionally fundraisers, but the culmination of a Krewe's activities is its Mardi Gras parade.

Each Krewe hosts its own parade, providing its own floats (either created by members or rented), beads and trinkets for throwing to paradegoers, and costumes.

The number and complexity of the floats depends on the size of the Krewe, and the annual theme varies with each Krewe, although popular culture usually figures prominently. Marching bands from local schools round out the parades.

During parade season in New Orleans, thousands of residents and tourists line up along the parade route to wait as long as several hours for the parade to roll through. The party atmosphere is high: almost everyone wears beads, some wear masks, and a few are even in full costume. There's lots of eating, and, particularly in the evening, drinking. Once the beginning of the parade rounds the corner, the crowd erupts into cheers. That's quickly followed by cries of "Throw me something, Mister!" as everyone crowds the barriers to try to catch beads and other throws from the floats.

Tossing strings of purple, gold, and green beads has become one of the most well-known aspects of Mardi Gras in New Orleans, but bead throws weren't always a part of the parades. In the 1920's—after nearly 100 years of Mardi Gras parades in the region—the Krewe of Rex first tossed glass bead necklaces during their parade, and it's been a tradition ever since.

And beads are only one of many items parade-goers can catch. Although most of the throws are bead necklaces (now plastic!), Krewe's also include other items, such as toys, trinkets, or medallions with the Krewe logo and year.



*Everyone's ready for the beads and throws!*

Everyone wants to catch beads, but it's these rarer "prizes," as they're called, that are really sought after (and in some cases, fought after). The Krewe-specific items are particularly coveted. Probably the best prize we ended up with was a plastic sword and sheath thrown during the Krewe of King Arthur parade and caught one-handed by my husband—truly an Excalibur moment!

Of course, the bead throwing is usually associated with rowdy or bawdy behaviour, but that's exaggerated as far as many of the parades go. Although there's definitely competition over the prizes and special throws, I never saw any sort of fighting or flashing. (I will not comment on whether or not I held up my cute daughter on one or several occasions in the hopes of scoring a prize.)

I've heard that some of the nighttime parades can get a little more adult—particularly with all the cheap liquor available on the street corners—but the ones we saw were completely family friendly. The parades are a happy event, and there are enough throws that everyone leaves with something.

Mardi Gras festivities have been so integrated into the life of the city that normal operations and parades have found a way to work together.

Whole streets—including trolleys—are closed down for the duration of the parades, and businesses in the parade districts tend to close early (or stay closed all day) on parade days. And Mardi Gras day itself is a city-wide holiday!

On the other hand, once the parade passes through, things go back to normal very quickly. We were amazed at how fast the police department moved the barriers, had the sweepers go through to remove broken beads and garbage from the street, and rerouted traffic.

A short time later, the only remains of the parade were the strings of beads around revellers' necks—and the memories they'll carry with them.



*Who says Mardi Gras can't be kid-friendly? The author's daughter, Kiersten, models some of her beads*



## ON THE HILL

Sandra Livingston



## A Star is Born

This week, Canada is revelling in Obama-mania. Ever since the new US president announced that his first official foreign visit would land him in Ottawa, the media (along with countless security personnel) have been building toward the big moment when the plane door would open and Obama would appear.

What would he say? What would he wear? How would he and our notoriously rigid prime minister get along?

The excitement is understandable. It's been a long, painful dry spell since our southern neighbours have

been blessed with a leader who is that rare combination of intelligence, common sense, charisma, and, dare we say it about a politician, principles. (Even the Kennedy glamour was tarnished by JFK's many affairs.)

It's no surprise that Canadians are excited as well. Compared to the juvenile partisanship that passes for Parliament Hill these days, Obama seems to hold the promise of a leader who can rise above time-wasting antics and get things done.

In fact, some of that aura has already started to rub off on one of our own politicians: Liberal leader Michael Ignatieff. But even without a shaky minority government and the lingering threat of an election, appeal-by-association is a dangerous thing.

There's no doubting that Ignatieff is intelligent. He's studied at Oxford and Harvard, and has taught at universities around the world. He's well versed in humanitarian law and minority rights, and has won the Governor General's award for non-fiction. He's also no stranger to hard work, having started his political career over 40 years ago by knocking on doors for Lester B. Pearson.

If an election is called (and if Ignatieff still happens to be Liberal leader), *those* are the qualities we should be judging him, or any other leader, on—not the six-degrees-of-separation game.

Stéphane Dion's seat had barely cooled before the media were playing up the Obama-Ignatieff associations, no matter how tenuous they were. As the *Globe and Mail* reports, "the two politicians . . . have several close friends in common." These include Lawrence Summers, former president of Harvard and head of the White House National Economic Council. Summers and his wife have reportedly vacationed with the Ignatieffs in the south of France.

Ignatieff himself isn't shy about promoting the ties. "I just pick up the phone to some of my friends in his administration," he said on CTV's Question Period about his White House connections.

When it comes to dinner parties or grabbing a plum Senate seat, those associations do matter. Ignatieff and Obama may well have long, friendly chats on the phone. They may even share common ground when it comes to foreign policy. But with the very real possibility that a non-confidence vote could take us back to the polls at any time, we'd do well to remember that *knowing* someone is not the same as *being* someone.

Liberal, Conservative, or Green, Canadians need real, effective leadership now more than ever. And it really shouldn't matter whether those leaders make it onto the new president's BFF list.



## IN CONVERSATION WITH . . .

Wanda Waterman St. Louis



## Dustin Dopsa of Final Thought

*Final Thought is a pop-punk band from Barrie, Ontario. Their latest EP, Take This Home, was released on January 27.*

*The CD release party was held at the Native Friendship Centre in Barrie on January 30 (check out the band's [site](#) on MySpace).*

*The following are notes from a conversation between Wanda Waterman St. Louis and the band's lead vocalist and songwriter, Dustin Dopsa.*

## School Daze

I definitely wasn't into music as a kid. I played a lot of sports, hockey and stuff like that. I was a jock, I guess, the captain of every team at my school.

My childhood was very different from the life I live now. My parents got divorced when I was in grade four or five so I don't know if that was what spurred me into music. I don't think the divorce influenced my songwriting directly but it does influence the kind of person I am and that's what my songs come out of. Living with one parent—my mom—made me a totally different person than I would have become living with two parents.

## Musical Roots

My grandpa wanted to teach me guitar when I was in grade six but he passed away before I really got into music. Later I got together with this dude from hockey and played a little bit. He showed me his guitar and taught me a couple of songs I liked that were easy to play, and it kind of grew from there. I've been playing guitar ever since then.

I started the band three years ago. I just wanted to be in the battle of the bands in my school so I hooked up with some friends and it kind of just grew from there.

I started singing because I knew if I wanted to be in a band somebody had to sing. Once a band is formed everyone wants to talk to the singer but when the band is forming no one wants to *be* the singer.

After the band got going I did take a couple of really basic singing lessons but that was the only musical training I've ever had. I taught myself piano.

I just started learning drums this summer and it's amazing for songwriting. Instead of trying to sing the rhythm I want the drummer to play, I can just play it for him. And you have more of a sense of where the song is going and what needs to happen with it. It's not necessarily starting with a beat as knowing what beat should go where.

We put a lot of time into recording *Take This Home*. We were playing the songs live for a while before we even got into the studio. All six songs are awesome songs in our eyes. And on this EP we did everything we wanted to do.

## Songwriting

I still write everything. I'll sit down and take a song idea and take it through the motions, so to speak, then record it and take it to the band and then we'll go from there. Everyone has input. This EP was the first one we did some co-writing on. Me and Emmett, the other guitarist, we wrote "Take You Home," the lead single of the record, together. Obviously it worked out well because we came up with probably the most catchy song on the record.



It was good to be able to do that. I had always written songs on my own but I think we're going to do more co-writing from now on.

Writing a song is different every time. Sometimes it starts with an influence from another song or a lyrical idea, but most times it just starts with a melody, an idea of what the hook or the chorus is going to be like.

Once you have an idea you can take some lyrics that you've written or a topic you've been thinking about and sit down and work for a couple of hours and just go for it. Sometimes it starts with a bit of a beat or a catchy rhyme but usually it starts with a melody and gets built off that.

The first part of the song is a light bulb thing. It can happen anywhere. The initial idea for "Take You Home" was just a memo on my cellphone, me humming into it. The rest of the creation process is a more personal thing, when I need quiet time.



From  
Where  
I Sit

Hazel Anaka

## Up to the Challenge

After having been to Puerto Vallarta on our previous two trips to Mexico we knew we wanted a change this time. Last October when we seriously began looking at other options a number of factors came into play. Could we fly WestJet, hopefully non-stop, to somewhere on the west coast of Mexico with an affordable all-inclusive deal?

If I work my vacation around month-end reporting duties could I get time off work? Would my sister and soon-to-be brother-in-law check the farm, water the plants, feed the family of cats? Would Roy be between trucking jobs?

After we determined it was all systems go, we booked a week at San Jose del Cabo at the southernmost tip of the Baja California Peninsula. San Jose, on the eastern side of the peninsula, is the lesser-known sister of Los Cabos. A 20-mile tourist corridor lined with first-rate resorts and top-notch golf courses separates the two centres. San Jose is a traditional quaint Mexican village with a mix of art galleries, jewellery stores, and specialty shops.

From a tourist's perspective it was great not to be besieged by time-share salesmen or panhandlers. With only one exception, every merchant we dealt with was friendly, good-natured, and seemed to enjoy the give and take of the bartering. One vendor was insulted by my lowball offer on a bracelet and thumped the floor with the tip of her cane to register her displeasure.

Before this shopping trip was over Roy had circled back to buy me the bracelet at her price. I guess we showed her!

By far the best advice I'd offer is don't buy the first one of anything you see unless, of course, price doesn't matter. For me it's the thrill of the hunt.

The *Gringo Gazette* is Baja's English-language newspaper and a look into the community. It offers local news, classified and display ads, news items, and pieces directed at tourists. No matter where I travel, I always pick up the local paper because of what it reveals about the place I'm visiting. If you visit, search out this publication. If you're there on a Thursday, check out the self-guided tour of the art district.

Be sure to get to Cabo San Lucas, walk along the marina, and take a boat ride to El Arco, the dramatic arch at Land's End where the Pacific Ocean and the Sea of Cortes meet. Puerto Paraiso, the mall located at the marina, is a collection of exclusive, high-end shops and a couple of stores with a cross-section of all things Mexican—tequila, pottery, jewellery, T-shirts, postcards, hats, linens, glassware, leather goods.

I can see us returning to "the capes" because there is more exploring to do. The geography is unique, with the juxtaposition of desert and sea. There's more shopping to be done, more food to enjoy, more lolling about to be done. We're up to the challenge, from where I sit.

# The Interviewer

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

*written and illustrated by Wanda Waterman St. Louis*

## Rockhead #11: *Dancing Like a White Woman*

The seventies hadn't been a total waste. 'Superstition' had been one of Reuben's UK songs, and still brought him happy memories.



Back in high school the girls would bump to that song and it was better than ballet. →

One time Reuben's ma had come to chaperone one of the school dances. To Reuben's wonder--



Mrs. Gagnon, we'd really like it if you'd come and bump with us.

Okay!!!



...until one of the girls said kindly,

Mrs. Gagnon, you'd better move to the outside; I think we're slowin' you down.

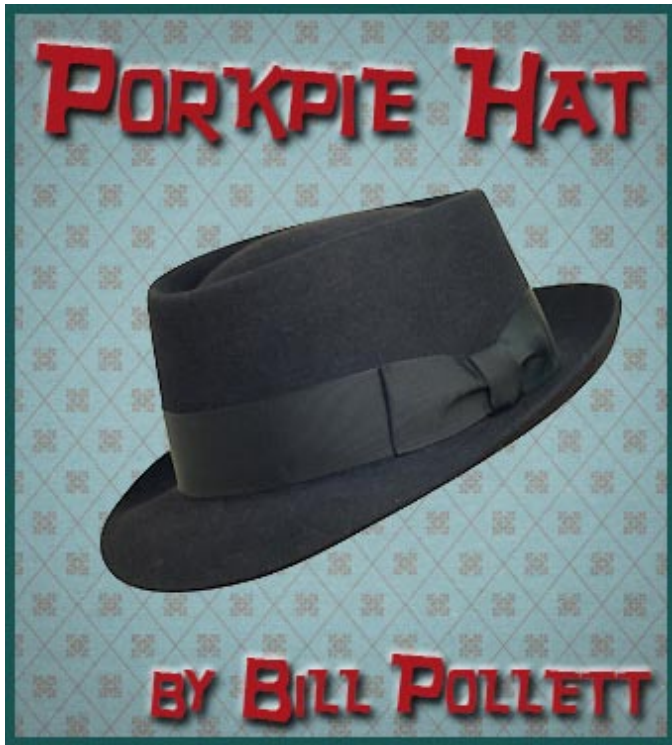


So there was his ma, dancing like a white woman...

Reuben can't listen to 'Superstition' without remembering this historic occasion.



*next: OED*



## The Soundtrack of My Life – Track 1

I'm sitting in the back seat of my father's turquoise Plymouth. I've just been expelled from school for a list of offences including (but not limited to) smoking pot, ditching classes, and vandalizing miscellaneous articles of lab equipment, textbooks, acoustic tiles, and an overhead projector.

He hasn't said a word since we've been driving. There is piano music on the radio. Years later I will hear that melody again in the apartment of a friend, a serious girl with bubble-gum pink hair who wore kimonos and painted watercolour pictures of umbrellas and cats, and I would instantly recognize it.

I will discover the piece of music is Satie's *Gymnopedie No. 1*. But perhaps that is neither here nor there.

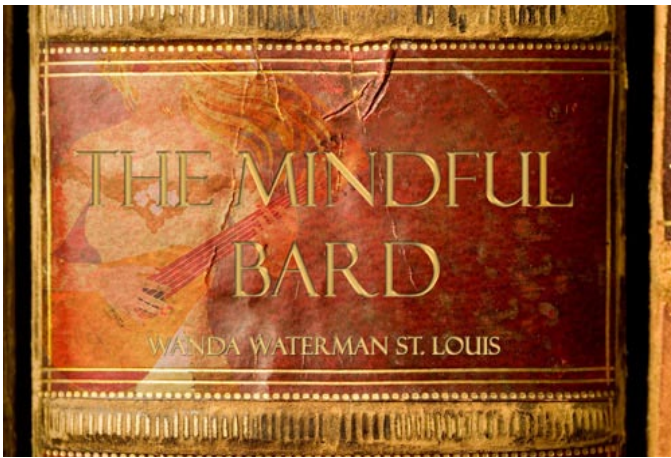
At that moment in time in my father's car, the piano notes are falling through the pitch-black atmosphere like bright flakes of mid-winter snow. The notes are somehow creating a breach in time and space. They are throwing off some sort of weird emotional radioactivity. Things are changing, other possibilities taking shape. We are entering a dreamtime. My father is taking a long route home, not saying anything. There is no immediate judgement or condemnation.

We are navigating through a part of town I have never been before, making seemingly random turns down unfamiliar streets. I have a clear understanding that everything will be okay as long as we keep driving, keep trespassing into the unknown, never reaching our destination. To this day, I despise the moment of my arrival in airports, ferry docks, driveways. I am convinced that anything worthwhile in life happens en route. The journey is mystery, anticipation, and escape. Arrival means facing up to consequences.

Inexplicably, we pull into the parking lot of a doughnut shop. Without a word, my father leaves the car, and returns a few minutes later holding a brown bag and two paper cups. There is steam rising from the cups, and the sharp smell of coffee. The bag is stained with doughnut grease.

We sit in the car and drink hot, sweet coffee. We eat chocolate doughnuts and stare straight ahead at the rain-washed sky and the neon sign reflected in a large puddle. The piano notes have turned into a human voice. I have a vague recollection that the voice was warning about some vague threat or another, perhaps a coming storm, or indications of escalating world conflict.

For the moment, though, we are safe, and silent, and I am savouring the taste of chocolate on my tongue.



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

**DVD:** *Intervention*

**Theatrical Release:** 2007

**Production Company:** Scion Films

**Starring:** Colm Feore, Jennifer Tilly, Rupert Graves, Andie MacDowell, Donna D'Errico, Gary Farmer, Ian Hart

**Director:** Mary McGuckian. A UK/Canada Production

### The Pursuit of Happiness as Highway to Hell

*"There are four universal healings in every culture, and that's singing, dancing, storytelling, and silence."*

from *Intervention*

Harry joins Mark, who is having a cigarette on the balcony of a classy rehab facility in the Arizona desert. Mark's wife *and* his mistress, both staying at this facility (allegedly to help him with his recovery) have been fighting over him like dogs in heat.

Mark asks Harry if it's possible for a man to love two women at the same time. Harry says that it is. He says also that it's possible for two women to love one man at the same time and that Mark himself is living proof.

But then he speculates that perhaps Mark is not *really* loved by both women. Harry goes on to say that you don't really have a choice about who you love.

This is one of many instances in which Mark, who has chosen his Barbie doll mistress over his hot-blooded wife, bristles at the intrusion of reality and retreats into his own rancour; he insults Harry, then carelessly drops his burning cigarette into the sage brush.

The characters in *Intervention* have a tendency to smoke when threatened with undesirable knowledge. This minor addiction (minor compared to alcohol and crack) turns out to be the harbinger of the final conflagration during which the characters are all forced to gaze on the fruits of their own depravity.



The Native American characters are largely in the background, but their significance flashes out like lightning. Seemingly sprouted up from the desert landscape itself, they're steady and serene while the whites, even the therapists, are all unbalanced, unaligned, and wobbling precariously in everything they attempt while looking absolutely farcical in their attempts to justify themselves.

***In one heated exchange,  
Bill and Kelly both  
misinterpret their clients'  
weaknesses by  
transferring onto them  
the weaknesses in their  
own relationship.***

This Native American theme is supported by motifs: eagle feathers hanging from a tree, a sweat lodge, teepees; there is even the statue of an Indian chief holding court over the marriages fragmenting in the lounge.

The primordial wisdom of the Native American characters is in marked contrast to the contrived compassion and erratic psychobabble of Bill and Kelly, the two married therapists. It's hard to listen to them gleefully holding forth on "I language and you language" without being sickeningly reminded of how deeply the psychological professions fail us.

In one heated exchange, Bill and Kelly both misinterpret their clients' weaknesses by transferring onto them the weaknesses in their own relationship. Bob, the Native therapist, asks them, "Excuse me, I have

to ask— who are you two talking about here?" In another contentious session between Bill and Kelly, Bob brings out his harmonica and begins playing a blues riff.

The acting in this film was improvised within a narrative structure, and the results are spectacular. Improvisation ensured that the actors' individual experiences informed their characters in ways that couldn't be dictated (hence limited) by the director.

In Christian mythology natural depravity carries within it the seeds of death. In *Intervention* too it is hard to separate death and depravity; both dance though the story like nimble partners while the patients jump through hoops to avoid watching.

The characters also avoid dealing with human profundity, which was made gloriously manifest in Jennifer Tilly's performance as Jane, Mark's estranged wife. Looking into her profound love for Mark and her intense rage at his behaviour is like looking into a bottomless well in which love and hatred are swirling downward into a blur. Such things can't be explained, only witnessed.

The 12-step process is historically and ideologically rooted in Christ's teachings about humility, grace, repentance, and forgiveness. As a continuation of this director's enchanting tendency to embed meaning in casual details, we see a telephone pole on a hill, framed to look like a crucifix.

But narrow is the gate and few are those who enter in. In the end, is love *our* crucifixion?

*Intervention* manifests seven of The Mindful Bard's criteria for movies well worth watching: 1) it is authentic, original, and delightful; 2) it gives me tools enabling me to respond with compassion and efficacy to the suffering around me; 3) it displays an engagement with and compassionate response to suffering; 4) it inspires an awareness of the sanctity of creation; 5) it is about attainment of the true self; 6) it stimulates my mind; and 7) it poses and admirably responds to questions which have a direct bearing on my view of existence.

## 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!

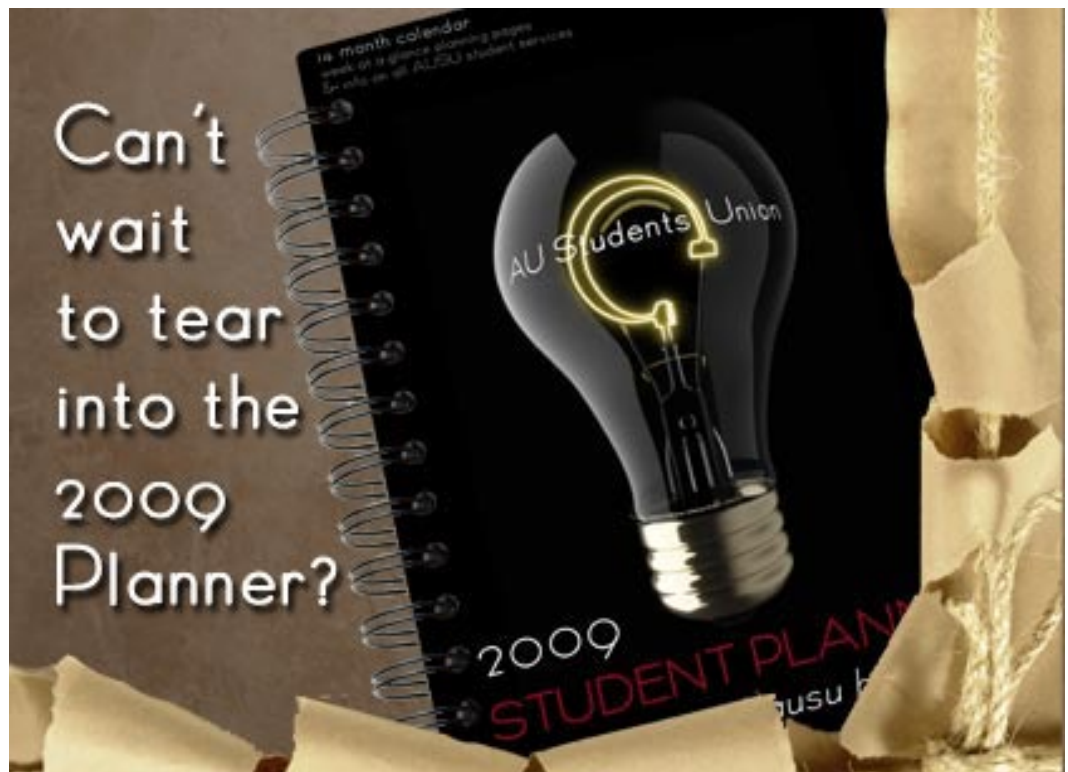
As always, we'll be excited to know what you think of the planner, and especially want to hear of any improvements you think could be made.

### 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



### At Home: RFIDs make it simple for drive-by hackers to sniff your personal data

If you're one of those people who doubt just how easy it is for personal data to be stolen, you might want to check out this short video on the [CBC](#).

Before you click, here's the background. The current wave in personal data tracking is Radio-Frequency Identification (RFID). RFID chips hold radio-scannable information about whatever product they're embedded in, such as shoes or enhanced drivers' licenses (EDLs).

In Canada, EDLs are being used in B.C. and are planned for a mass rollout in Ontario in 2009. Another use for RFID chips is in passports, such as the new US "passport cards."

The problem? It's possible for hackers to "sniff" the data on your documents. As the CBC article reveals, a white-hat hacker needed nothing more than "a \$250 Motorola RFID scanner, an antenna and a laptop," and within 20 minutes he had three distinct passport tags—all picked up while driving around in his car. The numbers can be used to create new, fake passports or "simply to track the number's owners."

Although governments and credit-card companies insist the data on RFIDs is encrypted, some [researchers](#) have already built scanners able to skim card information and complete unauthorized purchases. The suggested solution is to store RFID-enabled ID in foil-lined wallets. However, that doesn't solve the problem of how to protect your data when you take the credit cards out of your wallet to use them.

### In Foreign News: Saab won't get government bailout

While other governments are throwing billions at failing automakers, the Swedish government has refused to bail out Saab. The company's US owner, General Motors, has said Saab will need to file for bankruptcy protection unless the Swedish government steps in.

As [The Local](#) reports, that's not going to happen. Maud Olofsson, Enterprise and Energy Minister, told Swedish public radio that "Voters picked me because they wanted nursery schools, police and nurses, and not to buy loss-making car factories."

On February 17, GM presented their restructuring plan to the US treasury but it did not include help for ailing Saab. The company said last year it planned to try to find a buyer for the brand. As Olofsson told reporters, "I'm disappointed in General Motors, because they're abandoning Saab and are pushing the responsibility over to Swedish tax payers, and I think that is irresponsible."

The opposition is calling for the government to provide a bailout to the automaker. Saab employs just over 4,000 people in Sweden, but unions say that, including suppliers, some 15,000 jobs would be lost if Saab fails.

## EDUCATION NEWS

Morgan Modjeski



### University residences at the forefront of green action

WINNIPEG (CUP) - Canadian universities are starting to make their campuses more environmentally sustainable by converting on-campus residences into green buildings.

"One of the largest cost-savings from doing a green building or an energy-efficiency retrofit is that the health and productivity of the people that use the building increases dramatically," said Nicholas Heap, climate and energy policy analyst for the David Suzuki Foundation.

"What I think is important is that universities invest wholeheartedly in energy efficiency and upgrades because of the cost-savings that result," he added.

The University of Ottawa recently changed residence lights to energy-efficient bulbs, cutting down on wasted electricity.

Jonathan Rausseo, sustainable development co-ordinator at the U of O, says the money spent on the "lightbulb swap" was made back in a matter of months.

"The payback is almost instantaneous," he said. "It was incredible."

The University of Ottawa also has a green residence committee where each residence building has a green representative. This committee is responsible for brainstorming and carrying out proposals to make residence buildings more environmentally stable and sustainable.

A number of incentives are taking place to make residences at the University of Calgary more environmentally friendly.

So far, the U of C has replaced lighting systems within all residence buildings, thereby using less energy.

The university is also in the process of installing low-flow programs by metering the amount of water usage within residence buildings.

As well, they have started a new recycling program in residence that includes composting.

"We want to be more environmentally conscious . . . reduce the footprint of campus and residency buildings," said Randy Maus, the U of C's associate director of housing and residence education.

The University of Victoria residence has a sustainability team made up of students who live on campus. These students work together to endorse environmental sustainability through events such as movie nights, and a clothing swap that saw about 400 students exchange clothes to reduce the amount of items being thrown out.

In 2008, UVic started a program giving free access to the Victoria car-share co-op to students who gave up their parking permits.

“The concept is instead of owning and operating your own vehicle, you borrow or rent vehicles from the co-op and you have access to 16 vehicles in the city, and four that are on campus,” said Sarah Webb, UVic’s sustainability officer.

Webb says this provides incentive for people to stop using their vehicles and rewards those who have already gone car-free.

UVic is also looking at getting carbon footprint calculators on campus and initiating bring-your-own-bottle events.

## **CLICK OF THE WRIST - Faking It**

Never mind lead-painted toys and melamine milk—this week, the latest consumer hazard is the lowly toothbrush. It seems that cheap knock-offs have loose bristles that are causing people to choke. When you’re done checking that your Colgate 360 is the real deal, here are some more oddities from the land of fake stuff.

### **Worst iPod Knock-offs**

Most of these rather dubious-looking items are satisfied with trying for a vague resemblance to a real iPod, but at least one of them actually has the famous Apple name plastered across its front. Apparently, they spent so much time getting the name right that they forgot to include the click wheel.

### **The Aretha Franklin Hat**

Yes, *that* hat. Love it or hate it, you can now buy an almost-identical copy. It isn’t strictly a knock-off because the original designer is selling them, but only the Queen of Soul gets the one with rhinestones.

### **I Can Has Happy**

All these interesting knock-offs were spotted in China. The logo imitations are pretty good, so you’ll have to look closely to make sure your Coca-Cola isn’t really Cala Cala, and that familiar Starbucks sign isn’t leading you into a Sunbucks.

### **Disneyland in China**

Well, it *looks* like Disneyland, complete with Cinderella’s castle, Donald Duck, and Snow White. But this theme park has nothing to do with Disney—and officials there claim the character that happens to look exactly like Minnie Mouse is just a big-eared cat. Sure.

### **Worst Fake Walkman**

We’ve come a long way from the Sony Walkman, but it really was a big deal when it came out in the ‘80s. Big enough that everyone was scrambling for one and if you couldn’t afford the real thing you might have ended up with something like this.

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## THE VOICE

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