

THE VOICE MAGAZINE

Volume 17 Issue 09
March 6, 2009

Voice Writing Contest

Shut My Mouth

Ex Machina

Into thin air

AU Profiles

Natalie Parnell

A hand holding a yellow sticky note with the word "Censored" written in red. The sticky note is partially covering the person's face in the background image.

Censored

Plus:

*The Interviewer, From Where I Sit,
Music to Eat Lunch To, and much more...*

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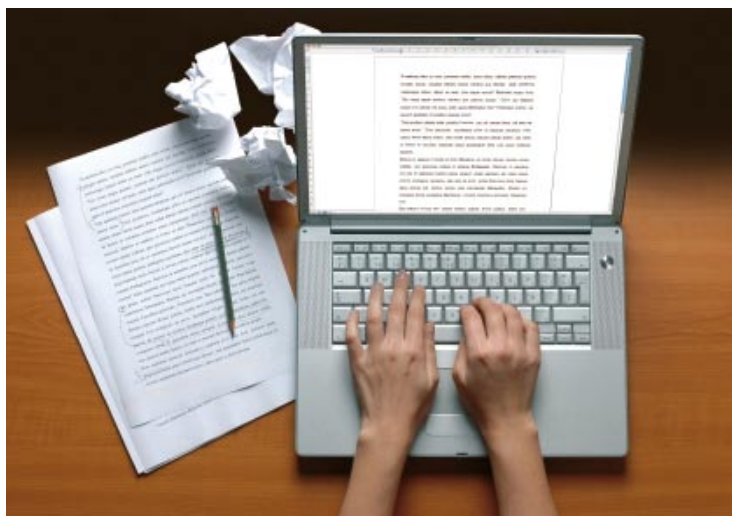
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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

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



THE 2008 VOICE MAGAZINE WRITING CONTEST!



And the Winners Are (Part II) . . .

Last week, we brought you the winning fiction entry in the 2008 *Voice* writing contest, "Snowmagedon" by Pamela Wagner.

This week, we're pleased to publish the non-fiction winner, "Shut My Mouth" by Adam Thackeray.

Entrants in the non-fiction category were asked to write about any issue affecting freedom of speech.

In "Shut My Mouth," Adam's exploration of self-censorship offers an honest and insightful look at the far-reaching (and sometimes unexpected) consequences of stifling free expression. We hope you enjoy it.

Thanks to the judges for their contribution of time and energy, and all the wonderfully creative writers who submitted their work!

Shut My Mouth

I was the boy who sat at the back of the classroom, praying not to be called on by the teacher. I was the boy who was always afraid of giving the wrong answer, always certain of my uncertainty. So, naturally, whenever questions were posed to the class, I would find creative new ways to avoid eye contact with the teacher: a wad of hard, old gum stuck under my desk would suddenly need my immediate attention; a perfectly timed drop of the pencil would require my bending low for an unnecessary length of time; a shifting of my position behind a classmate would keep me just shy of the teacher's line of sight; and, sometimes, in extreme circumstances, a combination of these tactics would be essential.

Indeed, I worked hard to keep my mouth shut. As long as I could make myself invisible, there was always another student quick to raise a hand, speak up, and gain all the glory in the process.

In grade four, when it came time to complete my personality test (a test designed to determine one's inherent extroversion or introversion), it was not surprising to discover that I fell under the category of introvert. Yet, I remember feeling ashamed of the results, and wishing that I had falsified my answers. I had never even heard of the term "introvert" before that day, and here I was being labelled as one.

However, the one means of reckless abandon I would allow myself in the fourth grade came by way of my vocabulary workbook. In these books each student would write out the word of the day and its definition, then use the word in a sentence of his or her own construction.

With this exercise I had found a miraculous release for my inner extrovert. With these exotic new words I had the opportunity to form wonderful new thoughts that would then in turn be read to the class. Being just a boy, though, my wonderful new thoughts extended only so far as the gross-out factor, often involving

some form or other of bodily fluid or function. Many times, my sentences would draw gasps and guffaws from the class, and, of course, I began to savour every moment.

Unfortunately, my teacher, Mr. Niewland, did not fully appreciate my artistic endeavours and warned me on several occasions to tone down my material. Although I was never one to ruffle the feathers of those in authority, I continued on with my “creative” writing; the response I had been garnering from my classmates was far too much of a high to abandon.

However, it was not long before I was in the principal’s office, threatened with the fact that I had narrowly avoided “the strap” (a punishment of legendary proportions that had only just been revoked the previous school year). This close call had put the fear of God into me and, as a result, I toned down the sentences in my vocabulary book. Here I had finally found a way to have my voice heard, and it was stifled before it had a chance to fully resonate.



This self-censorship continued throughout my school years and well into adulthood; even now I hesitate too often before opening my mouth. Interestingly, though, my four-year-old son has inherited none of my introverted qualities. I know that when he reaches the fourth grade he will be scoring off the chart on his personality test, attaining grand new heights of gregariousness.

Many times I find myself trying to repress his excessive sociability when, instead, I should be repressing my own repression. I have come to realize that I need to cheer his affability and confidence more often. He has already encouraged his slightly more reserved twin sister to speak her mind—now if only he could encourage me to be so brave.

DID YOU KNOW?



Join the Club

If you’re looking for ways to connect with your fellow AU students, AUSU Clubs and Social Groups are a perfect place to start.

Club members “interact through websites and discussion forums, while social groups meet in cities around the world and have forums to keep in touch.”

Current clubs include AUGSS (AU Gay Students’ Society), AULS (AU Literature Society), AUBSA (AU Business Students’ Association)—and many more!

You can find a complete listing on the AUSU Social Groups and Clubs page, [here](#), and information on social/coffee groups is [here](#). To take part in coffee group conversations, just sign in to the AUSU Discussion Forums.

ON THE HILL

Sandra Livingston



Bring in the Clowns

Our court jesters, from Rick Mercer to Jon Stewart and beyond, serve society well. They dare to expose the imperfections of the court, pointing out when the emperor's pants have fallen down—or when he isn't wearing any at all.

Admittedly, the joke sometimes backfires, as in the recent shambles of a mock interview by Geri Hall. (In character for *This Hour Has 22 Minutes*, the comedian tried to make light of Dalton McGuinty's five-foot rule as he was taking reporters' questions about job layoffs.)

In the main, though, these Fools' antics hold a lot of truth. They point out the absurdity of all the hot air swirling around Ottawa or Washington, and can serve as an antidote to the self-importance that so often leads to abuses of power.

And if rumours about the approaching flood of political attack ads are true, we're soon going to need our court jesters as much as ever.

Apparently, the honeymoon between Liberal leader Michael Ignatieff and the federal Conservatives is over: the Tories are planning to unleash a barrage of attack ads against their rival.

As one *Globe and Mail* article reports, the Tories have been "combing through a lifetime's worth of musings from his career as a public intellectual" to gather ammunition. This includes the books Ignatieff wrote, the BBC programs he hosted, and every C-Span call-in show he took part in. The attack ads are expected to launch in the summer.

For the Liberals' part, they're "prepared to fight back," and odds are good they've got their own team readying the cannons to sling mud in the direction of the Conservative camp. But unlike the sly truths of the court jester, this perpetual cycle of political attacks benefits no one—and comes at a very high cost.

Conservative or Liberal, those countless hours of research demand real money. (For the current crop of attack ads, the Conservatives admit they've had a team of researchers gathering material on Ignatieff for the past three years.) Then there's the issue of producing the ads. There are production crews to pay, air time to buy, catering, transportation: all the expenses you'd expect in creating a regular commercial. It's true that political parties exist on donations as well as public funding, but spending it on attack ads smacks a little too much of those highly paid CEOs and bankers that have spent years tossing money around for no one's benefit but their own.

Then there's the social cost. Attack ads are just what the name implies: streams of vitriol whose sole aim is to insult an opponent. They have nothing to do with truth or context or information. On the contrary, they distort, mislead, and confuse, for the sole purpose of consolidating a party's hold on power—exactly the sort of thing that leads people to throw their hands up in futility and stay away from the polls.

Still, our politicians have developed a taste for relying on the ads and it appears that the next election won't be any different. Cue the court jesters.

AU Profiles:

AU Profiles: Natalie Parnell

Christina M. Frey



In 2003, Natalie Parnell graduated from Athabasca University with a Bachelor of Arts in Sociology. Five and a half years later, she's back for more!

The student from Timmins, Ontario, explains how she initially chose distance education, and why, several years and a second bachelor's degree later, she's decided to return to AU.

She also sheds light on how she juggles school, work, and family, yet still finds time for herself.

Life's circumstances led Natalie to AU back in 2000, when she was finishing her first year at Lakehead University in Thunder Bay, Ontario.

"It was by chance that it all worked out," she says. Her boyfriend—now husband—had recently lost his parents, and Natalie felt that she needed to be nearby to support him. The problem: their hometown of Timmins, Ontario, had no university.

"I . . . knew that I needed to get my B.A. done somehow," says Natalie. "I wanted to find a way to do it closer to home."

Although initial research was somewhat frustrating—"distance programs weren't common at that time," she says—she was happy to find AU, "the most comprehensive option out there."

She started out with one course, and found that distance learning worked so well for her that she transferred her Lakehead credits and forged ahead with AU's program. "I work very well on my own," Natalie says. "Some people need that classroom and professor, but I tend to get frustrated when I have an interest I can't pursue because the class is waiting to do something else."

The flexibility of independent learning was another plus. Not only did it allow her to study anywhere, but also at any time. "[It's] very handy with full-time work," she says.

After graduating from AU, Natalie obtained a Bachelor of Education in North Bay, Ontario, while working full-time as a special education and literacy teacher. This May, she plans to begin the University of Calgary's distance-based Master of Education in Applied Child Psychology. She was short two psychology prerequisites, but the decision of where to obtain those last courses was easy. "I knew AU was the best place to go back to!" Natalie says.

Although she's currently taking only two courses, in the past she's combined a full course load—"and sometimes more," she says—with full-time work and raising her young daughter. It was a very busy time, but she was prepared.

"I had everything planned out from the beginning," says Natalie. She knew in advance where she wanted to be in her courses, and stuck to her deadlines. "That meant times when I slacked off . . . I had to make up for it!" she laughs.

Having specific, long-term goals has also helped as a focusing tool. Natalie planned to obtain her Bachelor of Education after the AU degree, and applied before completing it. It was a source of motivation: "the pressure was on!" she says, adding that she really needed to push to finish those final few courses on time.

Now, she's leaning toward child psychology after her work as a resource teacher has heightened her interest in that area. "I'm at the point where I want to do more, but am limited because I don't have that grad degree in Psych," she says. "I would like to practice independently as a psychologist."

But nothing's set in stone: "Psychiatry would be a longer road, with med school and all," she adds, "but I haven't ruled it out!"

Natalie is motivated, but sometimes struggles with cutting back. "I'm not good at relaxing," she admits. However, she makes an effort to factor in some downtime so she doesn't get burned out. "I like to read, write, and watch a few of my favourite TV shows with my husband," she says.

Will her approach change when she begins the master's program? Currently, her plan is to continue working full-time while studying, although she acknowledges that plan might be difficult in practice. "I think the master's is going to be a real challenge as far as expectations go," she says candidly. "That might be a reality shock for me in terms of balance and planning."

Regardless, she'll find a solution to keep things in perspective, and encourages other students to do the same.

"Find a method that works for you, and don't let people tell you that it can't be done," she says. "It can take a while to get used to working by yourself, but once you find what works, you'll be flying!"

"Find a method that works for you, and don't let people tell you that it can't be done."

IN CONVERSATION WITH . . .

Wanda Waterman St. Louis

**Andy Flinn of T@b, Part II**

T@b is a Nova Scotia-based folk-jazz duo (comprising Ariana Nasr and Andy Flinn) that writes fiendishly clever songs to wizardly accompaniment and engages its audiences in mesmerizing performances.

They've also made a name for themselves as music promoters, offering local musicians a venue in Night Kitchen, their weekly variety show in Wolfville, and the AMP (Acoustic Music Producers) festival.

You can read the Voice review of their new live CD, New Teeth on Stage, [here](#). The following are notes

from the second part of a conversation between T@b member Andy Flinn and Wanda Waterman St. Louis.

Part II: The Care and Grooming of an Insurgent Songwriter**What Do You Need to Be Creative?**

We probably need some space. And each other.

We need Wolfville. I think there is no higher density of artists per capita than here in Nova Scotia. What we like about Wolfville is the community thing. We feel pretty damn stimulated by this town in terms of gender, society, alternative economy, alternative growing. Most of our friends are second generation hippies.

I don't think we've ever flourished artistically as much as we have in the last three years. Wolfville is certainly more stimulating than Toronto was. In Nova Scotia you can't piss somebody off or burn your bridges because there's plenty of others out there who can pull the same stunts on you.

The urban environment is very forgiving of social dysfunction; in Toronto we could have gone on and on with our shoe-gazing, but here we basically have to get along with everybody, and it's cool. We discovered stuff here that we didn't know we needed.

The Thunderings and Rumbblings of a New Music Economy

We've talked to artists who came, say, from Montreal, to play at festivals here and they've said, "Yeah, we were paid two thousand dollars to get here and we spent seventeen hundred on the flight." Then there were other expenses. So the military-industrial complex ended up with 80 per cent of the grant money for the festival and the artist only got 5 per cent.

So right now we're working on the AMP (Acoustic Music Producers) Festival.

This is a new baby. Basically it's a Night Kitchen on steroids. It has the same pay scheme as Night Kitchen except all performers are recorded on a digital 8-track, shot with multiple cameras. Like Night Kitchen no one gets a set larger than three songs.

We favour local artists in that we don't pay for travel. Your own community is the most stable network in your life. If somebody is in that phase of their lives when they wander and happen to pass by, then you're likely to be very welcoming, but you probably won't accept the financial burden of Air Canada shipping them from there to here.

At the AMP Festival everyone has to play original music, because that's not legally encumbered, and all performers sign a release form to allow all the professional photographers to use the pictures any way they want.

Also, the photographers sign a release allowing the *performers* to use their photos for CD covers, etc., without paying. And the performers don't have to pay a sound engineer to record them. It's basically a barter framework of artistic services.



It's like creative commons, only event-bound. It's only one event, but unions form: a photographers union, a musicians union, an entertainment-staff-and-door-people union, and they all sign up for an AMP accord. With this you can now upload stuff to YouTube that is 100 per cent legally publishable.

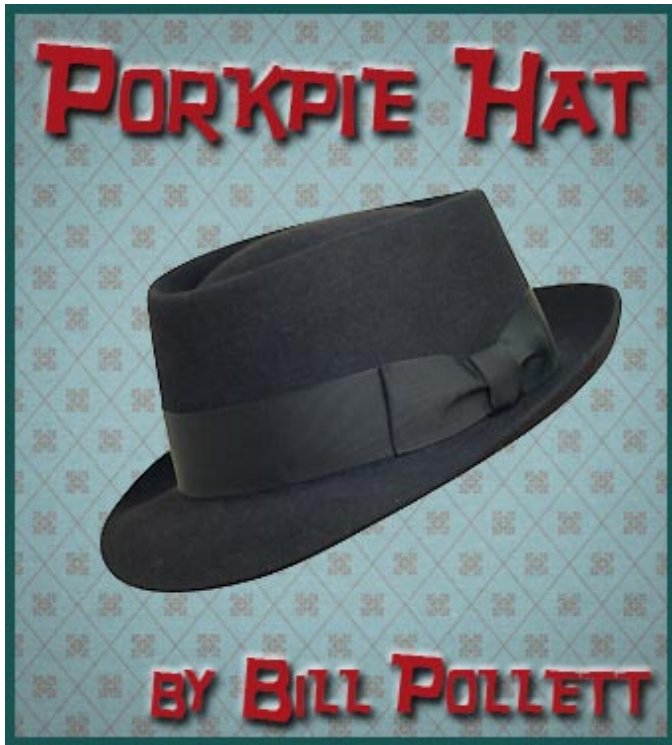
The website doesn't look as subversive as the concept is.

The Care and Grooming of an Insurgent Songwriter

I really despised war, but I was raised a soldier. I was drafted into the Swiss army when I was 18 or 19. And soldiers are people too, right? It takes decades to get over that kind of thing.

Then I met Ariana, who came from a Quaker background. They're a bunch of pacifists. At the time that I met her, this was the only organized religious group that never offended her, that didn't have a sour taste for her. And none of us is really a Quaker because Quakers don't evangelize. Ariana and I are potluck Quakers at best, but we love those guys and we go to their weekends. We do music with the kids while the adults do their business meetings.

Our biggest fans are toddlers, interestingly enough. Toddlers, I think, are more open-minded. A lot of our friends have kids and they're always being exposed to our music, at farmers' markets and at Night Kitchen. There's never a Night Kitchen where you don't hear a baby howling.



Ex Machina

Whether he met his end through mischief or dementia is anybody's guess. I suppose we shouldn't really have been surprised. After all, he spent so much of the time off in his own little world, anyway. It was as though he was, at any moment, on the verge of disappearing. Always staring out the window, he was, always muttering to himself, reciting what might have been scraps of doggerel or bits and pieces of old lectures he'd given in that broken English of his, always distracted by some vague fancy or other. Still, we thought it was quite inconsiderate of him to just up and vanish the way he did, and under such weird circumstances. I'll explain it to you the same way I told it to the papers and the police.

In the morning Merle and I came to fetch him, just as we always do. It was his day for the shops and the barber, and then off to the food fair for apple pie and soft ice cream. When we walked in his front door,

though, we sensed right away something was not quite right. Somehow, even as we were calling for him, throwing our voices up the stairs and down into the basement, we knew he was gone.

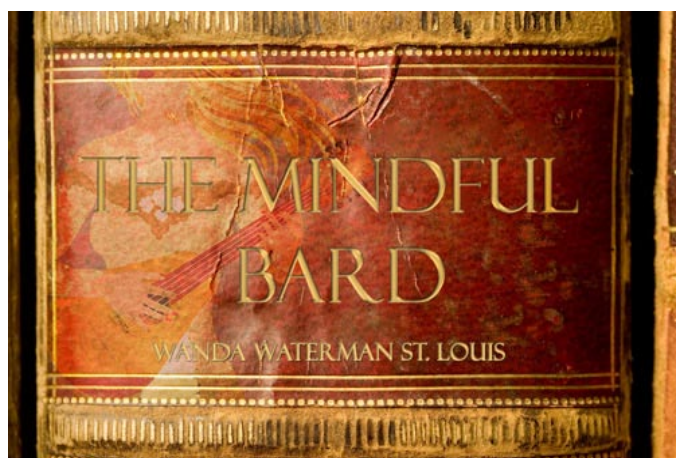
Strangely, the coffee was still hot in the cup. The eggs in the frying pan were on low heat, and still slightly runny. His morning cigarette was only half burnt, and balanced on the ashtray's lip. I remember thinking that this must be how it was for the first ones who boarded that ghost ship out in the middle of the ocean.

Without a word, we set about searching the house for clues, looking for anything out of the ordinary. Of course, our anxiety became worse when we discovered his outdoor shoes still in the closet, and his wallet still on the sideboard. I suppose at that point we were looking for signs of suicide or struggle—blood on the walls, a tooth stuck in the floorboards, that sort of thing. Every time I opened a door, I half expected to find him hanging from the ceiling, or else see his feet jutting out from beneath a piece of furniture, or his limp hand hanging over the edge of a bathtub filled with bloody water. He always did have a morbid streak.

The only thing remotely out of the ordinary, though, was a small black notebook lying on the covers of his freshly made bed. Blocking it from Merle's sight (she has a habit of "over the shoulder snooping") I flipped through the pages in search of . . . well, I'm not sure what I expected to find.

There was little of interest, though. There was a hand-drawn map with what appeared to be odd-sounding place names none of us recognized. Loose between the pages were a lock of light blond hair, and a very old, blurred photograph of a woman turning away from the camera. Most of the pages seemed to be filled with weird, nonsensical drawings. Merle said the scratchings looked like hieroglyphs, or sketches of things you might see under a microscope. I thought they looked more like mechanical bits and pieces, like technical drawings, like plans for some impossibly complicated and impractical machine.

I expect he will turn up, one day, in a shallow grave, or the waiting room of some inner-city hospital. The likeliest explanation, I suppose, is that he simply wandered off to find himself a quiet place to die, content to have his passing as uneventful and unremarkable as his long and quiet life.



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

DVD: *Fugitive Pieces*

Theatrical release: May 2, 2008

DVD Release: October 14, 2008

Starring: Stephen Dillane, Rade Sherbedgia, Rosamund Pike, Ayelet Zurer

Produced by Robert Lantos, Serendipity Point Films.
Written and directed by Jeremy Podeswa.

Based on the novel by Anne Michaels.

Instructions on Living, from the World of the Dead

"I did not witness the most important events in my life. My deepest story must be told by a blind man, from behind a wall, from underground."

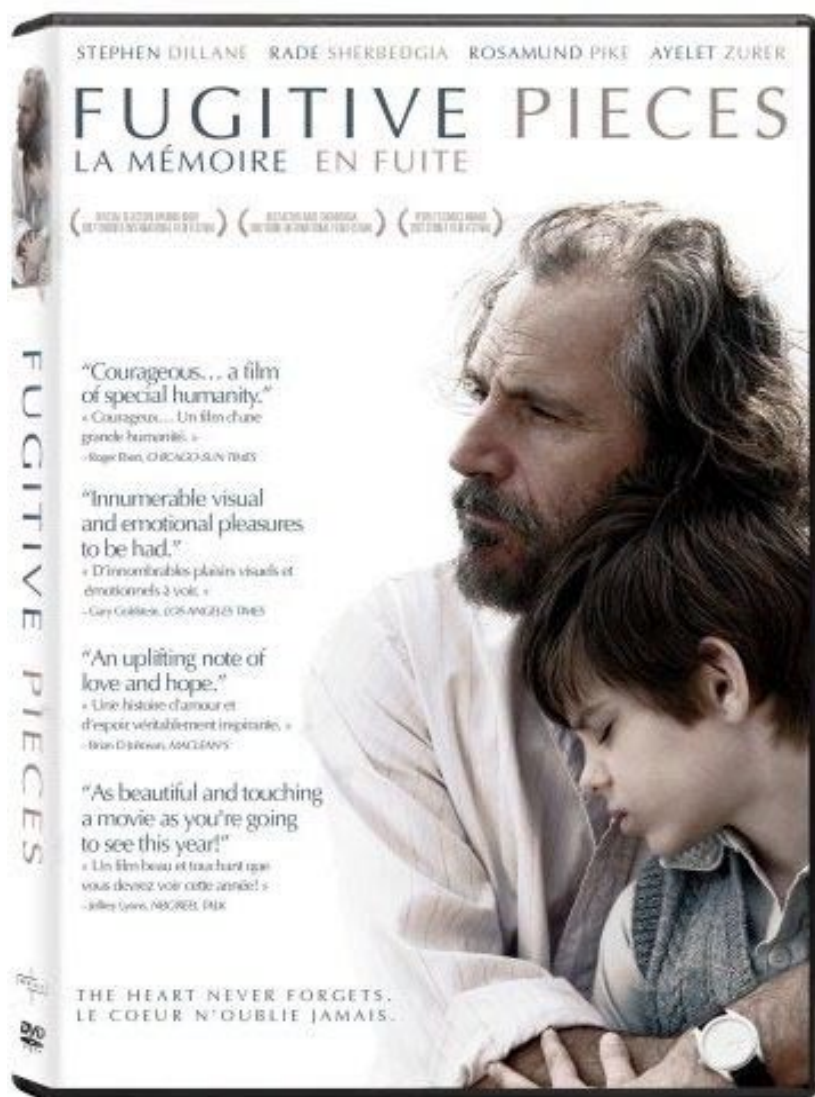
from *Fugitive Pieces*

The young Holocaust survivor Jakob Beer sneaks into a room at night to take a closer look at a sleeping Jewish baby, the child of refugees in Greece.

The moment is a poignant one. You ask yourself, *Granted the very existence of something so pure and holy as this child, how can a holocaust even be possible?* The cruelty and injustice of it flame out and make cinders of spiritual ignorance.

After Nazis kill his parents and abduct his beloved sister Bella, Jakob is discovered in a Polish forest by a kindly Greek archaeologist who brings him back to Greece. The Nazis are there as well, but kindly villagers help Athos feed and shelter the little boy. After the war Athos gets a teaching job in Canada and brings the boy along.

It is significant that Athos is an archaeologist; he bears witness to the sufferings of victims of the Second World



War, honours them, and keeps their memories alive. He is the perfect companion for a boy who faces years, even decades, of mourning, of learning how to mourn.

Athos never urges Jakob to forget his pain; he only offers a comforting hug and a kind affirmation: yes, we will honour the memories of these people by affirming their existence and telling their stories. This is a necessary part of healing—acknowledging that the event that destroyed our peace was both real and worthy of lament.

Jakob eventually marries the lovely Alex.

Alex is a prize—blond, sunny, intelligent, fun, and brimming with good intentions. And she is making Jakob miserable. Jakob is still learning how to grieve the loss of his family, and Alex knows only how to rejoice, to transcend sadness, and to leave misery behind.

Jakob is manifesting that conflict experienced by wounded individuals and communities now being told—and yearning to believe—that it's urgent to move beyond this wound *right now*, "to get over it," as so many insist. This is like telling someone with a severed leg that the solution is simply to get up and start walking.

In an interview about this film, producer Robert Lantos says, "I am the son of Holocaust survivors and both my parents survived because of the intervention of people who are now referred to as 'The Righteous of the Nations,' Christians who risked their own safety, their own lives, in order to save the lives of strangers. Were it not for that I wouldn't be here at all. That is the heart of *Fugitive Pieces*."

Film tributes to The Righteous Among the Nations are not uncommon (*Schindler's List* comes most readily to mind), but few afford the tenderness of the character Athos Roussos, and it's rare to find such sweetness and strength coexisting in a character the way they do in Rade Sherbedgia's portrayal.

All of the actors are brilliant, but Stephen Dillane's performance is spellbinding; his face holds oceans of meaning in its very stillness.

Fugitive Pieces manifests nine of The Mindful Bard's criteria for films well worth seeing: 1) it is authentic, original, and delightful; 2) it confronts injustice; 3) it renews my enthusiasm for positive social action; 4) it makes me want to be a better artist; 5) it inspires my art; 6) it displays an engagement with and compassionate response to suffering; 7) it inspires an awareness of the sanctity of creation; 8) it is about attainment of the true self; and 9) it poses and admirably responds to questions which have a direct bearing on my view of existence.

All of the actors are brilliant, but Stephen Dillane's performance is spellbinding; his face holds oceans of meaning in its very stillness.

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



Lo Siento

"Buenos días, Señora Rivera," I said one morning last week when my co-worker came in to work. This isn't quite as bizarre as it may seem at first blush. Mrs. Rivera is Mexican, my colleague, and my Spanish instructor. Hey, at that point I already had two hours of instruction under my belt.

I have total admiration for anyone who is fluent in more than one language. Heck, some days I admire people who are fluent in just one language. Since we have been to Mexico three times, Spanish seemed like the perfect choice to add to my repertoire of English plus (rusty) Ukrainian.

Having an expert one office over and the possibility of noon-hour classes was too much to resist. Plus we could spice up our coffee talk with words and phrases. And because she is trying to understand the quirks of the English language it is win-win for us.

Here's my thought process. Three hundred fifty million people in the Americas speak Spanish. It would enrich any travel experience we're likely to have in the near future. It looked like it would be easy to learn because there aren't any really strange looking characters in the 30-letter alphabet. It would help keep those old synapses firing in an aging brain. It could even be fun if I could let go of the pressure to do well, please the teacher, avoid being the "dummy" in class.

Like so often happens in my life, it seemed like a good idea at the time. Like so often happens, I commit to something worthwhile. Then a couple more worthwhile somethings. Inevitably, the demands of these commitments will converge at the most inconvenient time. Throw in a dash of real life. Sprinkle

with an emergency and you've got a recipe for aarrgh!

In addition to two lunch-hour Spanish classes per week I'm a literacy tutor every Wednesday at noon. Oh, yeah, I also work full-time and have a daily commute of 80 minutes.

So, Señora Rivera, this is my pathetic attempt at saying my dog ate my homework. Okay, so I don't actually have a dog. And there really wasn't homework as such assigned. We were just supposed to review the vocabulary for numbers, months, days, and colours.

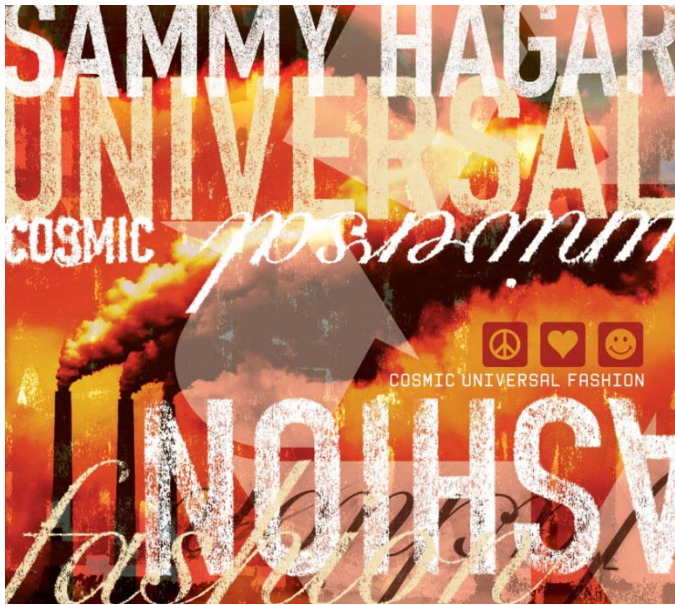
Truth be told, I didn't open my binder until this morning and tomorrow is the next class. It won't be easy to bluff my way through in a class of three students, especially since I already confessed at work today.

From now on, I promise not be *flojo* (lazy). Instead I will stay in my *casa* (house) and become an *estudiante* (student) of *español* (Spanish). I will take my *libro* (book) and a *lápiz* (pencil) and study until I turn *azul* (blue) in the face.

I will study from *Domingo* (Sunday) to *Sábado* (Saturday) in *Marzo* (March) and *Abril* (April). If I do my *tarea* (homework) there may be a glass of *vino* (wine) as a reward. In the meantime, *lo siento* (I'm sorry), from where I sit.

MUSIC TO EAT LUNCH TO

Mandy Gardner

Sammy Hagar – *Cosmic Universal Fashion***Release date:** November 18, 2008**Label:** Loud and Proud**Tracks:** 10**Rating:** 4

Sammy Hagar's *Cosmic Universal Fashion* was released near the end of last year to follow a long career of both solo and collaborative work by the singer, songwriter, musician, and star. Hagar has enjoyed fame and musical popularity since his affiliation with the band Montrose in 1973-74, as well as his years of work with the hit rock band Van Halen in the 1980s.

Sammy Hagar is, in fact, one of the shaping elements in American rock music and has had a clear impact on

modern rock and pop music playing on the radio today. Bands like Buckcherry have a clear Sammy Hagar-esque quality to them that has both helped the band to form as a unit and helped audiences to quickly identify with the new music.

As a solo artist, Hagar has not undergone any major changes in his musical style over the past few decades, and it is for this reason that *Cosmic Universal Fashion* has no real appeal to new musical audiences that are expecting newer twists on established classic styles like Hagar's.

Instead of catering to the evolved needs of new generations of music listeners, Hagar seems to have remained static in both his music and performance, as well as his decades-old audience that has also not evolved much at all since the Montrose and Van Halen days.

This record has a very classic 1980s rock and roll vibe to it. Sammy Hagar stays true to himself in that what he puts the most effort into is his own personality and characterization. Without his soliloquies, excited chatter, and shouts out to the crowd, this album would be, unfortunately, little more than an ordinary, outdated collection of music with one fun exception: the cover of the Beastie Boys' "Fight for your Right to Party."

The disappointment in this album is the fact that, despite the 2008 release date, it may as well have been recorded in the mid-'80s. It seems all too clear that at this point in his career, after so much success as a solo artist and with other musicians, Sammy Hagar is really only interested in having fun doing what he's been doing the whole time—churning out old-school popular rock music and hanging out with his devoted fans.

For Hagar fans, following his work since the '70s or '80s, *Cosmic Universal Fashion* should be one more reason to listen to Sammy do what he does best. For those music fans who *aren't* too familiar with the great Sammy Hagar, however, chances are very low that they will find a new favourite musician with this record.

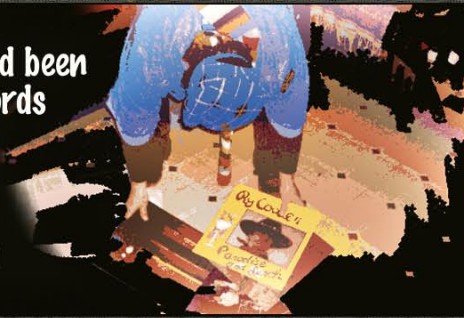
The Interviewer

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

written and illustrated by Wanda Waterman St. Louis

Rockhead #13: Trouble at the Mill

One of the students had been sorting records on the floor while Gord was tidying up.



Not now, Gord. I'm trying to get these organised. Why don't you go do the office first.



Gord couldn't handle this.

Rob said to pick up the records in here BEFORE the office!



Look, I'm just asking you this one time!



When Gord senses animosity he digs in his heels.



Gord ended up going back home all in a p... lather.

The staffperson on duty had just come back from bereavement leave and so was hardly ready for him.



I'm not paid enough to look after psychos!

I'll have to increase his Haldol.



I'm not supposed to be telling you this.



Let hubby think it's his idea!

next: Confidentiality

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!

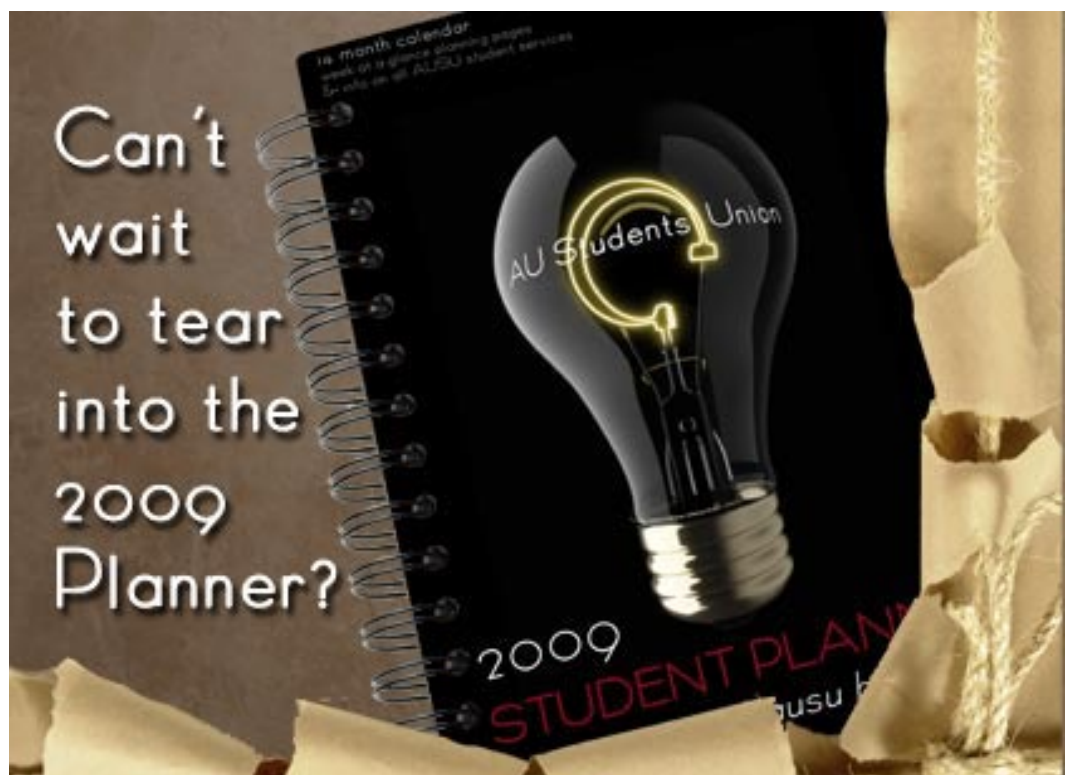
As always, we'll be excited to know what you think of the planner, and especially want to hear of any improvements you think could be made.

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: Website exposes tenants' private data

When the director of a tenants' hotline in Toronto was asked to help with a dispute, he discovered that not only was the client's personal information available on the Internet—so were private details about nearly 1,400 other tenants in the city.

Geordie Dent, director of the tenant hotline for the Federation of Metro Tenants' Associations, was sent emails exchanged during the dispute between a tenant and landlord. One of the emails was from a company called Landlord's Source Centre, a service that charges landlords to investigate tenants.

Noticing that one of the emails contained a case number with a hyperlink, Dent discovered that simply by changing the case number he could access files on almost 1,400 other tenants.

As the *Toronto Star* reports, that information included social insurance numbers, phone numbers, children's names and ages, and details on mental health issues.

While a rep for Landlord's Source Centre flatly denied that the information was available, or even that such a database exists, the *Star* was able to access tenants' private details through the company's website, and notes that "subsequent phone calls and emails to [the company] for clarification went unanswered all day."

In Foreign News: Finland building self-heating homes

Although winters in Finland have their share of cold and snow, designers are convinced that self-heating houses are the wave of the future there. The experimental houses are being built north of Helsinki, in Tikkurila, and as the *Helsinki Times* reports, they are "semi-detached houses . . . without a separate heating system."

With designs focussing on compactness, density, and insulation, it's believed that the homes will be so cost- and energy-efficient that they can be heated "primarily from the people, household appliances and lamps" they contain. If necessary, it will be possible to supplement that heat with electric sources, but the houses are expected to cost a mere 350 euros per year in heating expenses, compared to an annual bill of 1,200 euros for a conventional single-family home.

The self-heating homes may be a hard sell, however. In the 1970s Finland responded to the energy crisis with a similar approach but people soon found their homes plagued with poor air circulation and mould.

Construction officials insist that those problems have been addressed, and Helena Säteri, the director general of Finland's environmental administration, has reassured Finns that the air circulation in the densely built housing will be "both thorough and effective."

EDUCATION NEWS

Joe Howell

Report pushes 25% tuition hike

TORONTO (CUP) - "It's a recession when your neighbour loses his job; it's a depression when you lose yours," US President Truman once quipped. So what's it called when you can't afford the education you need to get that job in the first place?

Massive tuition fee increases will likely be necessary over the next few years, cautions an educational think tank, or universities will have to start slashing programs and services.



A hike of 25 per cent would generate \$1 to \$2 billion dollars, necessary money that won't be coming from anywhere else.

A recent report by the non-profit Educational Policy Institute shows that while the recent recession has been tightening belts and lightening wallets everywhere, post-secondary education has not even begun to feel the pain.

Many universities can also expect hiring freezes, slashed library spending, fewer scholarships, deferred maintenance, and bigger class sizes in the years to come, according to a just-released study.

Titled "On the Brink: How the Recession of 2009 Will Affect Post-Secondary Education," it paints a grim picture of the future of PSE in Canada, but it also suggests steps forward.

The report suggests universities and colleges will be battered by converging circumstances, including weakened endowments, changing demographics, increased enrolment pressure, increased operating costs, and lessened government spending on PSE.

Co-author Ryan Dunn says that the 25 per cent number was part prediction and part prescription, and that he does not think universities should choose to cut services instead.

"We could get to that point . . . people can't be afraid to touch this politically hot issue. Quality must be maintained, but it costs."

John Milloy, Ontario's minister of Training, Colleges and Universities, told the *Globe and Mail* that it "is unfortunate if this has generated fear," adding that increases coming after 2010 would not prevent qualified students from accessing PSE due to financial need.

The University of Toronto assured the *Globe* that impending fee increases would be in the "single digits," but Dunn says the potential 25 per cent increase would happen "over three years."

"When you do the math, you're down to single digits," said Dunn.

Trevor Mayoh, President of the Ontario Undergraduate Student Alliance, said while there are "aspects of the report we agree with," the suggested fee hike is "a little bit silly."

"We're in a recession; this isn't the time to raise tuition," said Mayoh. "We need to start focusing on those who can't access post-secondary education at current [price] levels."

Mayoh takes issue with the report's assertion that average family incomes have increased, and can thus accommodate tuition increase. He suggests Ontario's provincial government should actually ramp up PSE funding, to ensure the region is ready for the post-recession "creative economy."

"There is money in the system that could be re-directed. It's about being more efficient," said Mayoh.

Dunn seems to agree. He says governments have to make sure they give institutions the "resources to handle the influx" of students, and that increased PSE participation rates would "allow us to move from more of a manufacturing economy to whatever comes next."

He predicts that many who lost their job in the recession will head back to college for two-year programs.

Zach Churchill, National Director of the Canadian Alliance of Student Associations, said in a press release that "it is important not to have a knee-jerk reaction to the report."

He warned that decision-makers might "pick only the ideas they want to hear, and ignore the essence of EPI's solutions, which is that a considered, holistic approach is needed to fix the problems our post-secondary education system will likely encounter."

CLICK OF THE WRIST - Colour My World

Crayons are a little like paper clips: one of those everyday objects that are so familiar they're often overlooked. These artists saw something more in those coloured sticks of wax, though—and their creations speak for themselves.

Amazing Crayon Art - Artist Christian Faur creates intricate images with crayons. But he doesn't colour with them. Instead, he creates pictures out of the crayons themselves, "packing thousands of them together so they become like the coloured pixels on a TV screen." Amazing indeed.

The Crayon Artist - Jeffrey Robert takes a slightly more traditional approach, actually applying the crayons to paper. The result is gorgeously detailed images that prove crayons are more than child's play.

Crayon Carving - If you prefer your crayon art in 3D, you'll enjoy these crayon carvings by Diem Chau. The commissioned works with accompanying photos are especially interesting.

Incredible Carved Crayons - Here's a different take on carved crayons, this time by artist Pete Goldlust. It's hard to imagine how he can virtually hollow out a crayon and create such incredible designs, but . . . well, see for yourself.

Crayola Art Techniques - If you're feeling inspired by the results that can be achieved with a box of crayons, it makes sense to go straight to the source for some tips: Crayola. The crayon maker's website offers hints for everything from using melted crayons to using a tjanting needle—and you don't even need to stay inside the lines.

CLASSIFIEDS

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

THE VOICE

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