

THE

VOICE

MAGAZINE

Volume 17 Issue 10

March 13, 2009

Food for Thought

Running the grocery
marathon

Creative Commons

Yours, mine, or ours?

25 Things

Getting to know you

Plus:

Editorial, Porkpie Hat,

The Mindful Bard, 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

Running the Grocery Marathon	3
Editorial: Love Bytes	6

Articles

In Conversation With: Tina Piper of Creative Commons Canada	7
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Columns

The Interviewer	9
Porkpie Hat	10
The Mindful Bard.....	11
From Where I Sit	14
AUSU This Month.....	15

News and Events

Did You Know?: Join the Club.....	5
From the Gallery.....	13
International News Desk	17
Education News	18
Click of the Wrist	19

From the Readers

Letters to the Editor	2
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Magazine**

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The Voice is published
every Friday in HTML
and PDF format

To subscribe for weekly
email reminders as
each issue is posted,
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Special thanks to
Athabasca University's
The Insider for its
frequent contributions

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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.



RUNNING THE GROCERY MARATHON

Christina M. Frey



In a poor economy, it seems that the only businesses doing well are those promoting survival in a poor economy.

Everywhere I look, I see the same advice on how to lower your grocery bills: clip coupons, clip coupons, clip coupons.

Here's a twist: I've also got tips on how to save a lot on your grocery bills, but I *won't* tell you to clip coupons. In fact, I'm going to recommend that you don't!

Intrigued? Read on.

Get Ready

The real way to save money at the checkout is to know *why* you're buying what you're buying. This means that planning is essential. If you invest a little time every week, it can mean the difference between plenty of savings and none at all.

- Make a menu. The single best way to make sure you don't overspend your grocery budget is to create a menu for the week, and use it to build your shopping list. Then *stick to it*. If a week's worth of planning seems daunting at first, try three days' worth instead.
- Check the weekly grocery ads ahead of time (they're almost always available online if you don't get a hard copy in your mailbox), and write down the items that you could potentially use. Use these lists to populate your upcoming menu, and from there make your grocery list.
- Go online to find bargains. Websites like [My Grocery Deals](#) allow you to "subscribe" to several stores at once. You can run searches by store, category, or item to see who has what on sale this week. It's especially handy when you're searching for a specific item.
- Make sure your grocery list is detailed. The fewer trips you need to make, the less temptation you'll have to make impulse buys.
- Commit to sticking to your list; it will make a difference. Try one shopping trip in which you don't put a single item in your cart that's not on your list. At the same time, add up the cost of the items you would otherwise have thrown in. It's quite an eye-opener; those extras that you don't need can double your grocery bill.
- Consider using multiple stores. If you have to drive all over the city to take advantage of sales, you'll use up the savings on gas, but if you're creative you'll probably be able to combine errands. For example, if you pass by a grocery store on your way home from your daughter's ballet class, consider its sale flyer. Are there any savings worth the extra stop?

Get Set

As important as planning is to grocery savings, it's not enough on its own. When running a marathon, you won't succeed if you're not physically and mentally prepared, regardless of how good you look on paper. Grocery shopping is no different.

- Don't shop on an empty stomach. When you're hungry, pre-prepared foods and snacks are especially attractive. Unfortunately, they're also the most expensive (not to mention bad for your waistline!).
- Again, stick to what's on your grocery list, and realize that it won't be easy. I frequently toss an impulse item in the cart, then stop and mentally remind myself why I need to return it to its shelf. If you like checking out new things, limit yourself to one impulse buy per trip.
- Arm yourself with a calculator; it will not make you a nerd. Well, actually, it might. But if the price-per-unit comparisons on the shelves are hard to figure out, a calculator will be helpful. And at least you'll be the nerd with the fatter wallet!

Although precut cauliflower may cost a dollar more than the equivalent amount of fresh, if the fresh vegetable always rots before you get around to cutting it, it's not a better deal.

Go!

The aisles of a grocery store are filled with traps to make you spend more than you need. If you think through some of the following pitfalls, you'll be well on your way to savings.

- Ask yourself, for each item, whether you really and truly need it.
- Remind yourself over and over that your grocery list is set in stone. It's easy to forget with that delicious fresh bagel scent wafting through the store. Stay strong!
- Put the cellphone down. Distractions make impulse buying a lot easier; paying attention to what you're doing will save money!
- Shop the perimeter of the store as much as you can. There's a reason why you have to pass by the crackers, chips, and salsa on your way to the milk or bread aisle; enticing prepared foods are common impulse buys that raise your bill.
- Don't completely discount prepared foods, though: they might be more cost-effective than fresh foods, particularly when it comes to produce. Although precut cauliflower may cost a dollar more than the equivalent amount of fresh, if the fresh vegetable always rots before you get around to cutting it, it's not a better deal.
- Beware of clearance. There's no place more vital to second-guess your impulses than the clearance section. Yes, that bag of Valentine's candy is 75 per cent off, but that's still three dollars you don't *need* to spend. And while soon-expiring produce and meats are often a steal, they aren't worth the savings if they're just going to go bad in the fridge

- Beware of coupons! Yes, I know. You've been told a million times that you simply must clip coupons. It's what people who save money do, right? Wrong. In principle it can work, but in reality it's often a money waster.

First, don't buy something just because you have a coupon for it. (That's the real reason the manufacturers pass out the coupons—there's no altruistic motive here!) Only use them for items you frequently use and/or were already planning to purchase. If you don't normally buy pizza rolls, or if you already have three jugs of dishwashing detergent, then your coupon "savings" will be the opposite.

Toss them, share them with a friend, or join a coupon swap. And use the remaining coupons very, very carefully: at the store, compare per-unit amounts (a calculator helps). Other brands, including store brands, are often cheaper, even when you factor in the coupon.

- Resist the urge to stock up. While sometimes there will be a case lot sale or a fantastic meat reduction, be wary: most of those "stock-up" sales are ploys to get you to buy more than you need or want. Once you start reading the ads, you'll begin to recognize what goes on sale, and how often. You'll frequently find that every few weeks, a given item will be on sale in at least one local grocery store, so stocking up isn't always as necessary as the store wants you to believe.

Finish Line

Cutting down your grocery budget is a work in progress. It will take time; I still occasionally come home with items that I know I shouldn't have purchased. That's okay! There's no magic finish line to cross. Doing your smartest to save your family money is success enough in itself. However small, the boost to your finances is the best reward.

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.

EDITORIAL

Sandra Livingston



Love Bytes

I love technology. I love the fact that MRI machines can provide astonishing images of the human body, helping physicians diagnose illnesses. I still marvel at the concept of air travel; as one comic puts it, “sitting in a chair in the sky.”

And when it comes to communication, hook me up to high-speed and sign me in for web conferences and chat sessions. I get how useful these tools can be, and I love it.

But there’s another side to all this technology that I *don’t* get: people who happily allow themselves to become addicted to it.

It’s bad enough when employers demand 24/7 availability via cellphone and email, although sometimes it’s a necessity (especially if you’re the employee with the code

to the safe or the pilot standing by to transport that donated kidney).

But how in the name of Gutenberg do people become so fixated on the constant feed of useless information that they can no longer function without it? And are they aware of when that subtle shift happens, when they stop using the technology and the technology starts using them?

It’s already proven that people can become addicted to their BlackBerries and cellphones. In one example, researchers noted that addicts would “get up in the middle of the night and pick up messages on their PDAs two or three times a night.”

And now there’s Twitter, a micro-blogging app that lets users “stay hyper-connected to [their] friends and always know what they’re doing.” In 140 characters or less, you can share every inane thought that pops into your head or every mundane action you perform—all day long, if you want. (Hopefully, the folks at Twitter get the absurdity of their claim that the app is “a modern antidote to information overload.”)

Like pagers and cellphones and email before it, Twitter is already the techno-drug of choice for millions of people who get anxious if they haven’t had their fix for an hour. Or, in the case of microblogging, a few minutes.

The problem isn’t the technology. It’s useful and entertaining and all kinds of other wonderful adjectives.

The problem is, what happens when you can no longer bring yourself to turn it off? When the waiter leaves to put your order in and instead of talking to the person you’re dining with, your first instinct is to reach for your cell and check for the latest tweet. Or when the airplane is landing and for the entire 10 minutes your electronics are turned off, you’re fixated on whether you might be missing a call.

Perhaps the most important thing to remember about the information superhighway we’re on isn’t how fast we can go or how much there is to see. Maybe the real trick to making it all work is remembering where the exits are.

IN CONVERSATION WITH . . .

Wanda Waterman St. Louis



Tina Piper of Creative Commons Canada

Creative Commons is an international movement that aims to free up access to creative works by providing creators with alternatives to traditional copyright arrangements. Creative Commons licenses have been drafted by the national organizations to help artists announce the specific rights they grant along with the public release of their work.

They also provide a burgeoning number of works of art, music, and literature that are freely available for enjoyment and for the creation of derivative works.

Tina Piper, a barrister working for Creative Commons Canada, recently spoke with Wanda Waterman St. Louis on the potential benefits of Creative Commons licenses. Wanda presented Tina with a hypothetical case: a songwriter who wants her song to be heard by as many people as possible but also wants to be credited as the song's writer and to receive the bulk of any revenues the song generates.

Who Owns the Copyright to My Song?

Once you create the song you immediately own the copyright to that song. It's up to you what you choose to do with your copyright. If you like, you can register the song with SOCAN, one of the better collective licensing agencies in Canada. In addition to getting your song registered with SOCAN you can also get a Creative Commons attribution, non-commercial license for your song, which would ensure that you get credited as the song's writer and that if the song is ever used for commercial purposes you can legally demand a portion of the revenues.

There's a lot of ambiguity in the law right now regarding what kind of rights inhere in music, particularly because in the US there have been a number of decisions at various levels of the court saying that taking *any* portion of a piece of music is a copyright infringement; even sampling a two-second fragment of a song, if it's sufficiently recognizable, would be a copyright infringement. A Creative Commons license would allow others to use your song more freely, knowing exactly the terms and conditions under which they should be using it.



How Do I Get a Creative Commons License for My Song?

Go to the Creative Commons [website](#), access and download the license you want, then attach the iconography of that license, that symbol, to your song wherever someone would download it.

You have various options for this license. You can choose commercial or non-commercial, derivative or non-derivative. If people see the Creative Commons logo they know that they can share and reproduce that material (under the specified conditions). They don't have to ask. And if anyone wants to post your song on another website, the icon (along with the terms and conditions) would have to be posted along with it.

Who Uses Creative Commons Licenses?

The US government has now attached Creative Commons licenses to all the materials on the White House website. I do a lot of work with the National Film Board and a lot of starting documentary filmmakers will only use Creative Commons music in their films because they have access to it. There are samplers and DJs

who will only use Creative Commons licensed work. There are also Nine Inch Nails and Radiohead, who both released work under Creative Commons licenses. They've really gone against the grain for popular music and as far as we can tell haven't suffered financially for it.

With Creative Commons even though you make your material available it doesn't mean you can't make money from it; it just means you can't make money from the song, which is the traditional music industry model.

You Mean I Won't Lose Money if I Have a Creative Commons License for My Song?

If you demand pay for downloads and then stop demanding pay and make the download freely available, then yes, you will lose money. Under a Creative Commons license fans can download your song for free. On the other hand, if someone with a club or a compilation CD wants to make money from your song, the Creative Commons license can demand that they pay for it. A Creative Commons license doesn't bar you from exercising your commercial rights.

This ends up helping artists because it means that for commercial uses they get paid and for non-commercial purposes, for promotion and for expanding their fan base, even though they're not paid they can exercise greater freedom and therefore be more effective in getting the word out.

With Creative Commons even though you make your material available it doesn't mean you can't make money from it; it just means you can't make money from *the song*, which is the traditional music industry model. It doesn't mean you won't make money off of other parallel uses like merchandise or access to a website or any other of a number of things.

Part of the idea behind Creative Commons is that the traditional model of copyright has been based on transferring the sharing of "the thing," "the thing" being the music, the poems, the song, the photograph, etc. We started to think that maybe it's not "the thing" that people want to pay for, but the experience. The other thing we found is that even if something is made freely available it's not that people don't want to pay for it. So you can make something available under Creative Commons and *then* under the terms of a pay-as-you-will kind of license if you want.

One of my colleagues refers to this as the tip-jar model, which is not necessarily a bad model for starting artists who, if they sign onto a label, don't see much money anyway in the first years (they might in fact be paying back the label for three or four years).

It's something each individual has to look at in terms of what they hope to achieve.

The Interviewer

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

written and illustrated by Wanda Waterman St. Louis

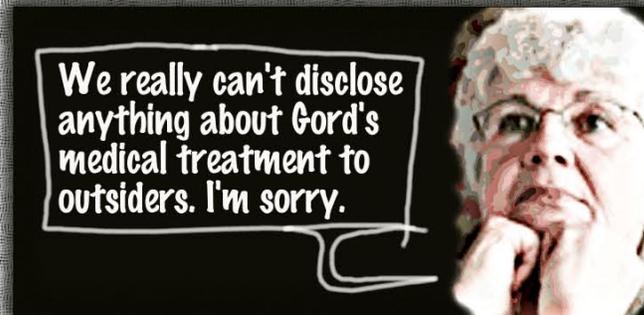
Rockhead #14: Confidentiality



So Reuben pays Francis a visit.



Gord's been different lately. What's up with that?



We really can't disclose anything about Gord's medical treatment to outsiders. I'm sorry.



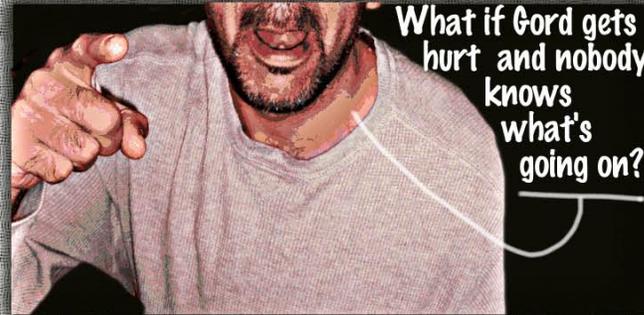
I'm not an outsider. Me and Gord? We're buds!



I loves my Frosty Fudge Fingers Breakfast Cereal! It's quummerific!



We have rules about confidentiality.



What if Gord gets hurt and nobody knows what's going on?



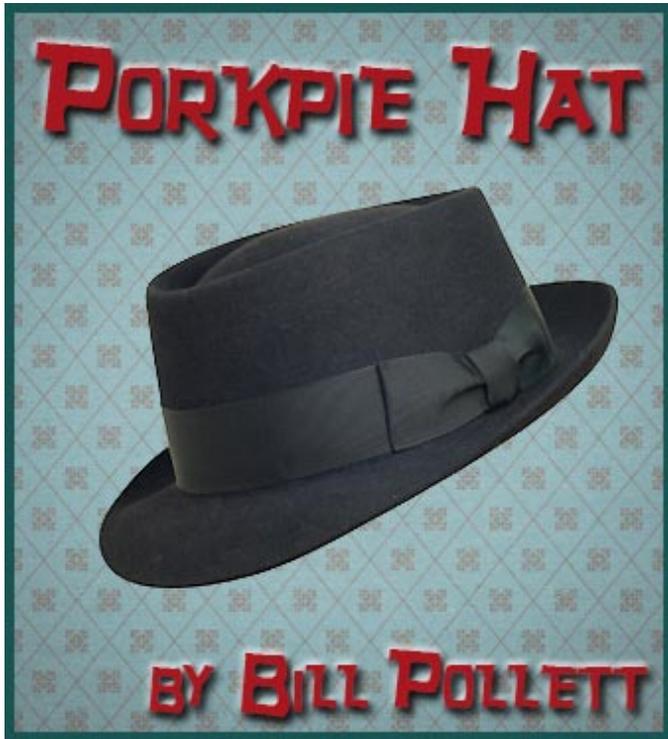
Reuben is starting to think "confidentiality" is a euphemism for "coverup".



We are very conscientious about defending our clients!

next: Normalisation





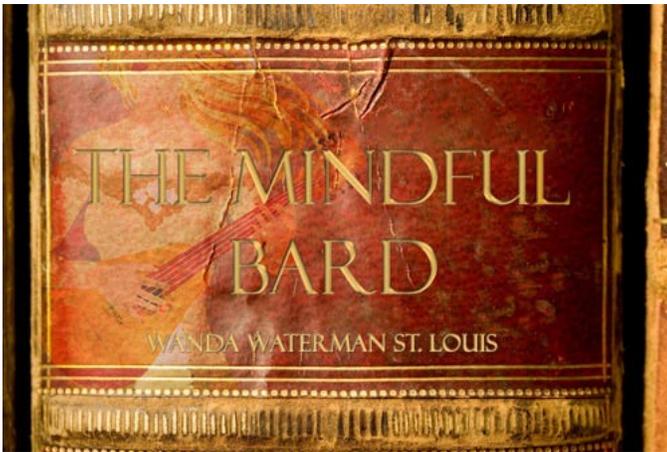
Some Good Things

There's this great scene in Woody Allen's film *Manhattan* where his character, Isaac, lists some of the things that, for him, make life worth living. He talks about Groucho Marx, Willie Mays, Flaubert, Louis Armstrong's "Potato Head Blues," The Jupiter Symphony, and "those incredible apples and pears by Cézanne."

Whenever I find myself bogged down with the blues, I find it a useful activity to come up with my own random, rambling version of that list.

The first week of March seems like as good a time as any, so here goes. (By the way, they are listed—it goes without saying—in no particular order.)

Wood-burning stoves, Gilbert and Sullivan, eggs Benedict, Robert Louis Stevenson, horses in the snow, the people I love, Madeleine Peyroux, Neil Young, Hockey Night in Canada, Calvin and Hobbes, Marc Chagall, dark ales, smoked meat, Lemony Snicket, Charles Dickens, the fact that there are tigers and whales, klezmer music, *Abarat*, garlic bread, carrot soup, *The Tempest*, Dr. Seuss, Peter Sellers, winter campfires, trickster stories, poutine, Anton Chekhov, kayaks, dark chocolate, Leonard Cohen, snowshoes, shadow puppets, dim sum, Emma Peel, candlelight, unexpected travel opportunities, Jeeves and Wooster, *The Threepenny Opera*, snorkelling, Brian Eno, five-pin bowling, fairy tales, Tin Tin, *London Calling*, *A Christmas Story*, *Moby Dick*, "Visions of Johanna," Picasso's "Night Fishing at Antibes," rose gardens, cornfields, Acadian fiddle music, antique fur hats, antique maps, outsider art, cats, bioluminescence, the Gaspé Peninsula, Robert LePage, meteor showers, art deco architecture, Van Morrison, penguins, old horror films, Dylan Thomas, ghost stories, sea shanties, the Kronos Quartet, Miss Vickie's, tobogganing, Tabasco sauce, Miles Davis, Tom Waits, scallops wrapped in bacon, greasy spoon diners, strong coffee, accordions, The Weakerthans, sheet lightning, Paul Quarrington, claw-foot bathtubs, P.D. James, Joni Mitchell, Frank Zappa, Bjork, chicken vindaloo, expensive writing paper, wind chimes, road trips, hardwood floors, Samuel Taylor Coleridge, fire jugglers, reading books in sleeping bags by flashlight, searching for owls, Irish accents, rooibos tea, roasted vegetables, Raoul Dufy, hand-knit sweaters, snooker tables, cross-country skiing, riddles, pirate films, Martin Scorsese, Paul Simon, Charlie Brown, the first snow of the year, fresh-shucked oysters, train whistles, blue cheese, Johnny Cash, libraries, Boston cream pie, unique tattoos, the smell of pipe tobacco, the sound of women laughing, "Amazing Grace," northern lights, gospel choirs, croissants, circuses, my no-speed bicycle, beachcombing, "The Lady of Shalott," toasted French bread and blackberry jam, free jazz, wrought iron balconies, narrow roads that lead to the sea . . .



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

CD: The Handsome Family, *Honey Moon*

Release date: April 14, 2009

Label: Carrot Top Records

To Love is to Burn

"Love is like the hole torn right through the roof"

When that old sugar pine came crashing down last night

And above the broken beams and the shattered ceiling tiles

You can see starlight for the very first time"

Words by Rennie Sparks, from "Love is Like," *Honey Moon*

In the documentary film *Searching for the Wrong-eyed Jesus*, Brett and Rennie Sparks, the core and substance of The Handsome Family, are sitting within a cubic island of light. It is night. They are parked in an empty lot, Somewhere in The Deep South, arguing quietly about music.

This is how I imagine Brett and Rennie nearly every time I think about them: the lone couple in their car in the middle of an American nowhere.

The car in the parking lot is their temple, their argument one of the mythic underpinnings of a remarkable (and puzzling) creative partnership.

This album came out in the year of Rennie and Brett Sparks' twentieth wedding

anniversary and it effectively imparts a brutally honest view of romantic love, a love that looks especially precious against the rich emptiness of the modern landscape.



There are so many musical and lyrical allusions here that they can overwhelm the essential originality of these songs, vivid and pure in their own right, threaded together with an amazing level of thematic integrity.

***Are their songs of love in
despair and despair in love
brought on by some
exhilarating tension
between the two of them?
Do we really want to know?
In a way the mystery is
sweeter than any certainty.***

Brett and Rennie are both insatiable musical listeners, and they listen to be inspired and filled with that oceanic joy that transforms the listener. It's for this reason, perhaps, that their stylistically eclectic music never sounds derivative.

Brett sings Rennie's words as if he means every one of them with all his heart, adding radically fitting musical accompaniment. The tinge of dark drollery is not simply a product of the sometimes incongruous musical influences; it emerges from the lyrics, but the music is what turns the lyrics into a Lynchian world, making the songs blossom in a rural theatre-of-the-absurd.

As reflected in her own folk-art paintings that grace the CD, Rennie has a keen eye for her natural surroundings, zeroing in on details that escape the jaded eye and finding their simple charm:

Oh, you little sparrows on a swaying branch . . .

These vivid organic images are elegantly juxtaposed against industrial bulwarks:

. . . Singing to the cars up on the overpass

Modern poets are split into separate camps based on affiliation with either the natural or the urban environment, but Rennie has managed to blend the two in a way that honours the reality of mundane experience and draws out its inner splendour.

It's tempting to speculate about Rennie and Brett's relationship; there is an intense love-longing in these songs, and this from two people who, as far as I can tell, are with each other night and day, who collaborate artistically, who communicate openly, frequently, and vehemently, and who engage in highly stressful activities like touring, the doom of so many bandmates and couples.

Do the themes of their songs in some way reflect their own dynamic coupledness? Are their songs of love in despair and despair in love brought on by some exhilarating tension between the two of them? Do we really want to know? In a way the mystery is sweeter than any certainty.

These songs unearth the forbidden truth that love is not all hearts and flowers, that it cuts into you like barbed wire, chains you to train tracks, fills you with murder-lust, and sucks away your will to live. Pulled into love like moths to a porch light, we are released and transfigured by it.

Love transforms the wild wood as all things bow down in acknowledgement of the immensity of personal experience. Sexuality burgeons and becomes one with nature herself:

Even the wind leaned in to listen . . .

When you whispered what you whispered in my ear

Honey Moon manifests eight of The Mindful Bard's criteria for music well worth a listen: 1) it is authentic, original, and delightful; 2) it inspires my art; 3) it displays an engagement with and compassionate response to suffering; 4) it creates an awareness of the sanctity of creation; 5) it is about attainment of the true self; 6) it provides respite from a sick and cruel world, a respite enabling me to renew myself for a return to mindful artistic endeavour; 7) it stimulates my mind; and 8) it poses and admirably responds to questions which have a direct bearing on my view of existence.

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

FROM THE GALLERY

Sandra Livingston



The AUSU council meeting on March 9 was a full one, so let's get straight to the highlights.

First, several policies were up for review as part of council's regular activities, and they concerned everything from copyright to finances.

Of note is a change to policy 4.02, Copyright, which has been expanded to include multimedia in the list of contents covered. The update comes as AUSU continues to explore the possibility of bringing audio and video podcasts to members.

Another policy up for review was 6.01, General Financial Management. The policy was sent back to the

finance committee, however, after Council agreed it needed some minor revisions.

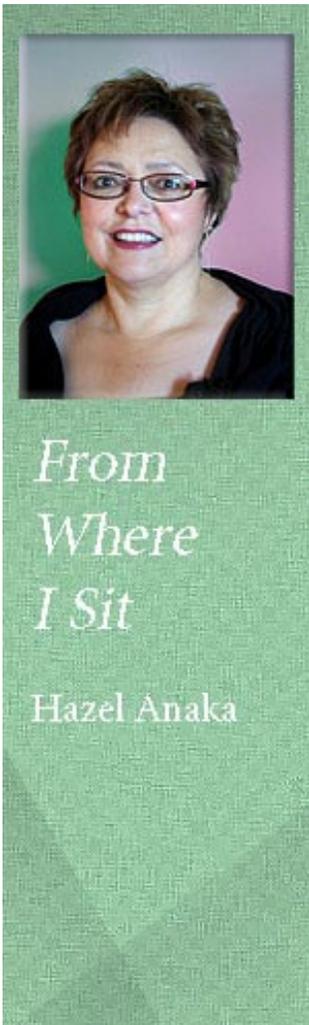
In other news, Barb Rielly, VP External, reported that *AU World* is being retired. The publication was Athabasca University's student news magazine, and archives are still available on AU's [Publications](#) page.

As part of his Executive Meeting report, President Karl Low noted that a small sponsorship has been approved for an MRC sports team. Still on the financial front, Sarah Kertcher reported that the latest audit shows all Council procedures to be in good shape, and the finance committee continues to look for ways to improve oversight even more.

Executive Director Tamra Ross noted that students provided plenty of feedback in response to questions about the MyAU portal, and a report has been prepared for the committee in charge of updating the site. As well, AU has asked AUSU to help gather student opinions about the Moodle learning platform.

And finally, Council has been working on several new policies. These include new awards policies, along with an update to the current Club Guidelines. Another key project is the development of a new AUSU reward points plan, so watch for updates on the site.

The next public meeting is scheduled for May 4 at 5:30 p.m. MST. See you there, From the Gallery!



My 25, Part I

Because I'm not a Facebook devotee, I didn't know they were encouraging people to write 25 random facts about themselves until I read about it in a piece in *The National Post*. Writer Gene Weingarten rose to the challenge and wrote 26. I say a resounding ditto to his number 19, about never stepping on a scale naked because that little bit of clothing can provide an excuse for any weight gain. His number 24, regarding poor spellers, also rings true for me. Honestly, how can you take these people seriously?

As I read his list, I considered the gauntlet dropped, so here goes with my take (in two parts):

1. The minute I get home I change into "farm" clothes. Clothes so old, worn, and unsightly that only farm animals could forgive them.
2. I love the colour, ways, and textures of fabric and have more bolts and remnants and good intentions than you can shake an upholstered stick at.
3. Since consulting a doctor of traditional Chinese medicine I no longer drink anything but hot water. Our ancient ancestors didn't have refrigeration, so at a cellular level our bodies are not equipped to deal effectively with icy cold drinks (or carbonated or caffeinated beverages either). Sounds crazy but is surprisingly easy.
4. I am inwardly horrified when people say "I seen," because there is no conceivable way on earth that could ever be appropriate. Ever. Yet I've never found a kind way to say anything.
5. The TV show *Criminal Minds* is a secret pleasure. Shouldn't I be embarrassed to admit that I'm fascinated by the depravity?
6. There are more books in my house, at this precise moment, than I can possibly read in the remainder of my life. That fact hasn't stopped me from buying four more on my last trip into Edmonton.
7. I will tolerate an embarrassing amount of dust and disorder if there's something better than cleaning to do. (PS - Anything is better than cleaning.)
8. Pears are, in my opinion, sensual. I have some gilded, decorative ones on a bookcase in the living room. I've done still-life pears in watercolour and acrylic. Hilary bought me a watercolour of five pears in Paris. *Vive la poire*.
9. I secretly love ironing, except when my sciatica makes my right leg go numb when I stand in one spot too long.
10. A herd of 12 mule deer just marched down the road and I'm still awed by the sight. Since our hay bales are being protected by a straw perimeter they must be wondering where their next meal is coming from.
11. I've had gel nails for the past several months and I love everything about them except the cost of upkeep.

Here are my first 11 "facts": not life altering, not revelatory, just fun. How about using the time between part one and two to generate your own 25? I'd like to see yours, 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!

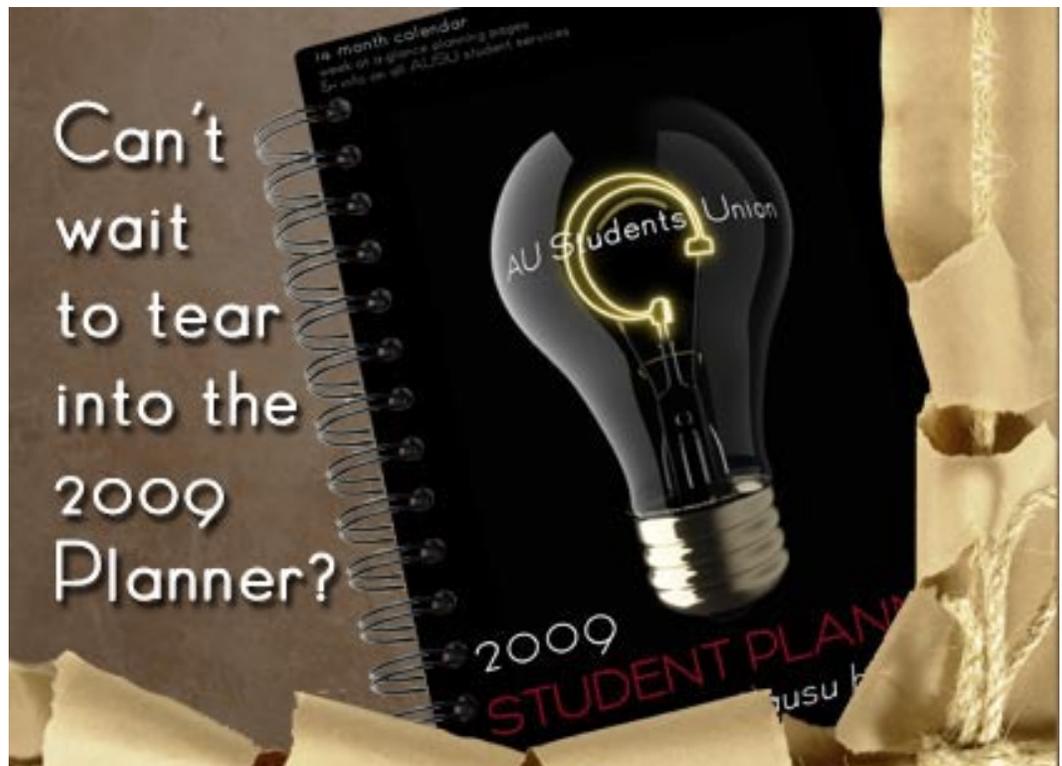
As always, we'll be excited to know what you think of the planner, and especially want to hear of any improvements you think could be made.

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.

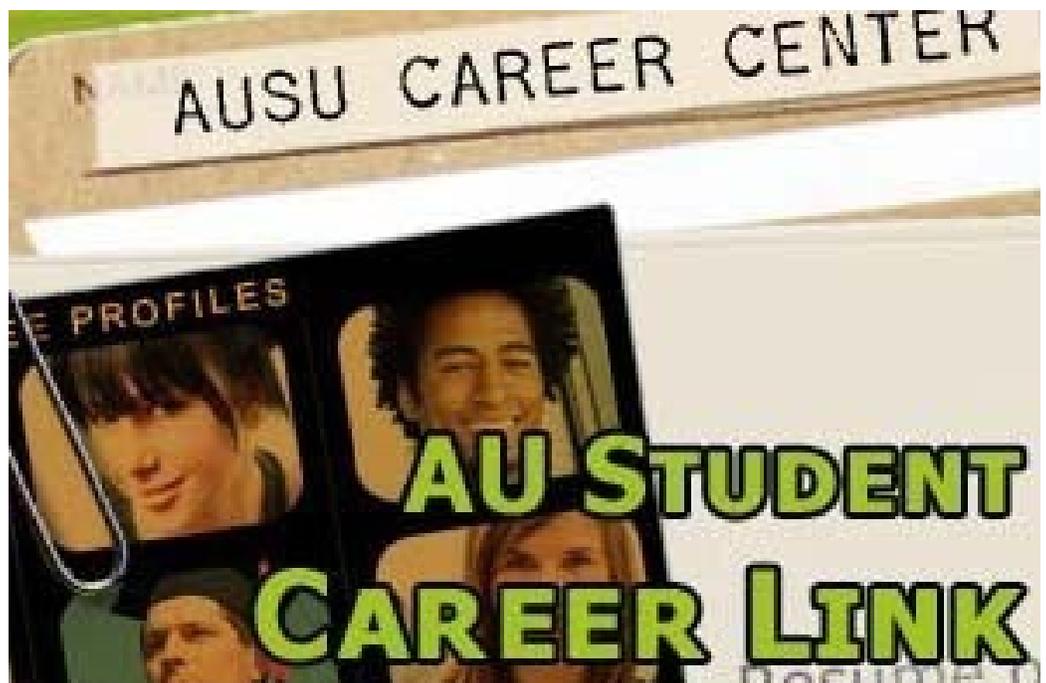
For any course that requires charts that cannot be easily created in Word or Excel, this should be a real time saver and make it easier to submit all portions of an assignment by email.

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



At Home: Government-brand beer gets controversy brewing

In an effort to stop people from crossing the border to buy discount beer, the New Brunswick government has launched its own brand of suds. But the subsidized brew has many people upset, including “local brewers and at least one Quebec business owner,” as the [CBC](#) reports.

Selection Lager and Light are the new beers being brewed exclusively for the New Brunswick Liquor Corp. (NBLC), which is a Crown corporation. Moosehead Breweries, based in Saint John, are doing the brewing.

In January, NBLC’s president Dana Clendenning told a legislative committee that the corporation was losing about \$12 million in sales a year. By crossing the border to Quebec, beer drinkers in New Brunswick can buy “24 cans of beer for as little as \$25.” In contrast, the lowest allowable price in NB is 12 cans for \$18.67. The province sets minimum prices on alcohol as part of a social responsibility program.

Many business owners, including microbreweries, claim that the move is unfair competition, especially given the size of

NBLC, which had nearly \$380 million in sales during the last fiscal year. As Shaun Fraser, president of Moncton’s Pumphouse Brewery, told reporters, “For the government to put one of their Crown corporations in direct competition or in business with their own citizens and their own entrepreneurs, you know, I mean whose money are they playing with when they do this?”

In Foreign News: Casino fined for giving free chips to gambling addict

Australia’s Crown Casino has been fined \$15,000 for giving \$500,000 in free chips to a chronic gambler during a “marathon binge” at the casino’s baccarat tables.

Along with the fine, *The Age* reports that gambling addict Harry Kakavas “is suing Crown for more than \$50 million.” Kakavas had been playing in one of the casino’s private salons when he ran out of money. Although gambling regulations prohibit gaming chips from being given out unless they’ve been paid for, casino staff gave Kakavas free chips three times. Reporters were told that a senior employee at the Crown authorized the chips to be handed out.

Beginning in 2005, Kakavas had allegedly lost \$30 million at Crown’s baccarat tables in a “14-month gambling spree.” His lawsuit alleges that the casino’s management repeatedly tempted him back to gamble, even though he had banned himself from the casino in the past.

At least one observer objects to the fine as being too light. Mark Zirnsak, Chairman of Inter-Church Gambling Taskforce, told reporters, “This strikes us as a trivial penalty on the operation the size of Crown and does highlight the need for tougher penalties for these levels of serious breach.”

EDUCATION NEWS

Kirsten Goruk



Athabasca U chair to focus on tech-savvy teaching

EDMONTON (CUP) - In an age where technology dictates and influences every aspect of our lives, Athabasca University is moving forward with research dedicated to the creation of new technological teaching methods.

A big part of that initiative includes the appointment of a new position: the iCORE/Xerox/Markin industrial research chair for adaptivity and personalization.

Professor Kinshuk, director of the School of Computing and Information Systems at the university, accepted a five-year contract a little over two weeks ago when the provincial Department of Advanced Education and Technology announced his new position.

Xerox Canada and the Markin Foundation will fund research done under Kinshuk's leadership.

Kinshuk is no stranger to technology in the classroom. He says the challenge of introducing new strategies to traditional teaching methods involves implementing changes that engage and interest students.

"We found that the kind of learning that happens in the class is really very shallow—a teacher talks and the students listen and by the time they're out of the door, half of it is gone," he said.

"Learning really happens [when] students can relate to what they're doing or where they live," he added. "We started with Internet-based systems, using laptop and desktop machines, but these are still not very easy to take into the field."

But the days of lugging around a huge laptop from site to site are coming to an end, says Kinshuk, pointing to advances like smart phones.

"Nowadays, mobile devices have all those functionalities that can really provide very rich learning," he said.

As an example, Kinshuk paints the picture of two students, one in Alberta and one in New Brunswick, both of whom are studying similar topics and are able to share experiences and discoveries electronically.

Even though Kinshuk's position stations him at the Athabasca University in Athabasca, Alberta, he is confident that these changes will affect students all over the country, allowing for a collective learning experience.

"Athabasca is perhaps a perfect place because it is an open university. Our students are all over Canada and some of them are outside of Canada too," he said.

The university also draws in people who might not fall into that typical student pattern.

“A lot of our students are working and they do not have the possibility of [interacting in] a university environment. The kind of students we have fit directly with the kind of research that we’re doing,” Kinshuk said.

With those very students in mind, Kinshuk believes his research has two aims: to extend the overall access to post-secondary education, and to enrich the educational experience of all students.

“[Students] can learn wherever they are, in whatever situation, with what their behaviour or background is. According to that system, it will automatically provide them with the kind of education they need,” he said.

For Kinshuk, these new advances are the result of a changing world, one in which a university education has become almost necessary.

“It used to be that people didn’t want to come to university. After high school they would go straight to work because they could earn big bucks there,” he said.

CLICK OF THE WRIST - Tourist Trap

With prices on everything falling, it seems like there are incredible deals everywhere—including holidays. Along with packing the sunscreen and passports, smart travellers know it always pays to brush up on your destination, so here’s a look at the odder side of tourist life.

20 Stupid Questions Asked by Tourists

It may seem obvious to some folks, but apparently there are those who ponder such geographical mysteries as whether or not there are lakes in the Lake District, and whether Wales stays open during the winter.

Wrong Flights and Booking Blunders

Even if you’ve done your tourist homework, there’s no guarantee your travel agent has done his. As one resident in Lebanon, New Hampshire, claims, “visitors would arrive, only to discover that their luggage had been sent to Beirut.”

Tourism Victoria

While working for Tourism Victoria in the ‘90s, this writer fielded some truly strange questions from tourists, including one lost soul who was trying to find the number for Tourism Istanbul.

Adventures of a Stupid Tourist

Here’s a look at the tourist experience from the other side—the tourist herself. On a journey to Mozambique, this traveller learned at least one important lesson: when your hotel room comes with a copy of *Guide to African Water Snakes*, it probably isn’t a good idea to grab your towel and head for the lake.

The Best of Sign Language

Each week, *The Telegraph* chooses their favourite photos of odd signs sent in by readers. They include such gems as this one, spotted by a lake in Lijiang, China, warning visitors to “Fall into Water Carefully!”

CLASSIFIEDS

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

THE VOICE

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www.voicemagazine.org

The Voice is published every Friday in html and pdf format

Contact *The Voice* at voice@voicemagazine.org

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