

THE VOICE MAGAZINE

Volume 17 Issue 14
April 10, 2009

Unveiling Egypt

Napolean's scientists

Puppy Love

Learning Linux

Adam's Apples

How deep is your love

Plus:

*On the Hill,
Porkpie Hat,
From Where I Sit,
and much more...*



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**The Voice
Magazine**

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The Voice is published
every Friday in HTML
and PDF format

To subscribe for weekly
email reminders as
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see the 'subscribe' link
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Special thanks to
Athabasca University's
The Insider for its
frequent contributions

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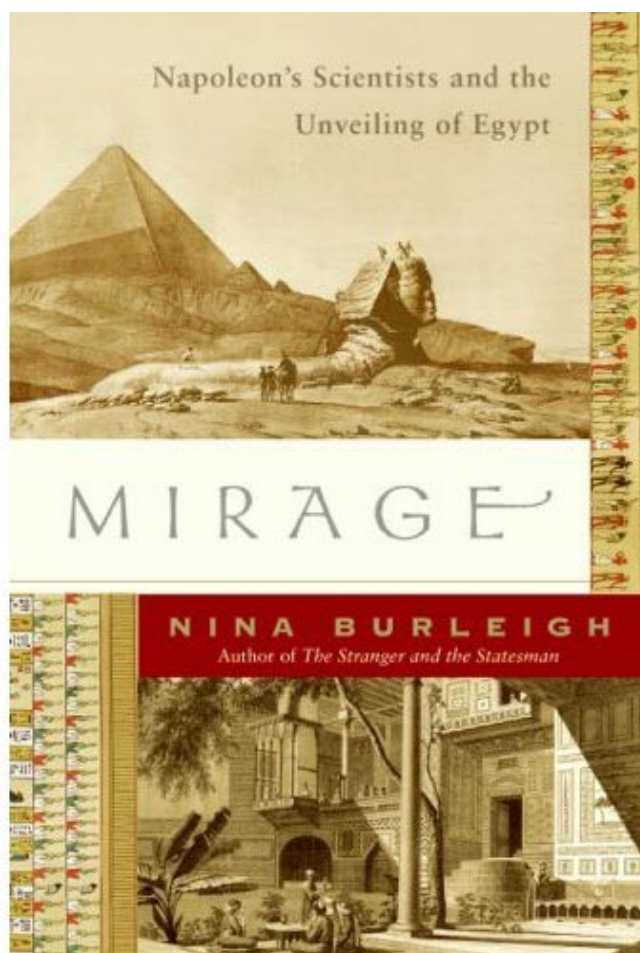
LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

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indicate if we may publish your letter.



PAGES

John Buhler



Mirage: Napoleon's Scientists and the Unveiling of Egypt

In *Mirage: Napoleon's Scientists and the Unveiling of Egypt*, New York-based journalist Nina Burleigh recounts the invasion of a Muslim nation by a Western military force, giving the reader a sense of *déjà vu*.

It seems so familiar: the story of Napoleon Bonaparte's incursion into Egypt bears at least a few striking parallels with George W. Bush's disastrous invasion of Iraq.

In each case, the ostensible justification for the invasion was pure fiction. The Bush administration's 2003 invasion of Iraq sprang from the "War on Terror" declared immediately following the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001, but had morphed into a hunt for Iraq's alleged "Weapons of Mass Destruction."

Having found no evidence to link Iraq with international terrorism, or any sign of the elusive WMDs, the invasion was finally repackaged as "regime change." What, then, was the real objective? As Canadian journalist Linda McQuaig wrote, *It's the Crude, Dude*; the real

impetus for the war was control of the region's oil reserves.

Similarly, France, according to Burleigh, claimed that its incursion into Egypt would deliver "French-style culture and democracy to Arabs ruled by non-Arab tyrants." As with the US's war in Iraq, the real objective had little to do with democratic ideals. The 1798 invasion of Egypt was in fact intended to give France control over trade, resources, and territory.

Furthermore, in the US invasion of Iraq, as with France's invasion of Egypt, the foreign military presence was highly unpopular among the very people the Westerners claimed to be liberating.

As philosopher George Santayana warned, "Those who cannot remember the past are condemned to repeat it."

There is, however, one important difference between these two ill-fated offensives: the intellectual climate within each of the aggressor nations. The modern would-be conqueror, former US President George W. Bush, was famously "incurious."

He drew much of his support from the anti-intellectual religious fundamentalist movement that accepts the Biblical description of creation as science, while dismissing global warming—in spite of overwhelming evidence—as groundless speculation.

In stark contrast, Revolutionary France—after the Terror—encouraged discovery and enquiry. Napoleon's invasion force included 151 carefully selected *savants* with specialties ranging from natural science to musicology. These scholars would measure and sketch Egyptian ruins, study Islam and the Arabic language, dissect mummies and the Nile's aquatic animals, advance the nascent fields of biology and archaeology, and produce *La Description de l'Égypte* (The Description of Egypt), a 23-volume encyclopaedia of their observations of what Europeans thought of as an exotic and mysterious land.

Mirage also includes a wonderful selection of illustrations. They portray some of the important individuals who took part in the expedition, as well as exotic Egyptian landscapes, half-buried ruins, and Cairo street scenes.

In *Mirage*, then, Burleigh interweaves two remarkable and engagingly written stories; a disastrous invasion of a foreign land and alien culture, and a visionary scientific expedition that helped develop a wide range of human enquiry.

That the French expedition was disastrously ill-equipped for this undertaking is a recurrent theme throughout Burleigh's book. Aside from the lack of drinking water, they were unprepared for the heat, tropical diseases, and war with the combined forces of England and the Ottoman Empire.

Dysentery, insects, sandstorms, blinding eye infections, and armed insurgents were additional sources of hardship. Bubonic plague would also stalk the French during their time in Egypt.

In spite of these adversities, Napoleon then led an unsuccessful attempt to invade Syria, and during the withdrawal had his wounded soldiers euthanized with opium. After returning to Cairo, and with his soldiers nearing mutiny, Napoleon cowardly slipped away, boarded a French ship under cover of darkness, and returned to France.

Most of the scholars finally returned to France two years later, in the fall of 1801, after the French were forced to relinquish control of Cairo and Alexandria, and admit defeat. "Of the 151 French civilians who had arrived in Egypt in 1798," writes Burleigh "twelve left before surrender, twenty-six died in Egypt, and five more died shortly after returning to Europe."

Stunningly, this number does not include the "several hundred officers' wives and other female camp followers" that Burleigh mentions earlier in her book. Like a mirage, they have simply vanished. The fact that the French women who travelled with the expedition are treated by Burleigh as nonentities is a glaring and frankly bizarre oversight.

Burleigh's examination of the extraordinary scientific expedition, however, and its influence upon numerous fields of study is an impressive work. We learn about many of the prominent scholars who took part in the expedition, and who, in spite of overwhelming adversity, produced groundbreaking theories and opened new areas of study as a result of their time in Egypt. Indiana Jones has nothing on Napoleon's Egyptian archaeologists.

Mirage also includes a wonderful selection of illustrations. They portray some of the important individuals who took part in the expedition, as well as exotic Egyptian landscapes, half-buried ruins, and Cairo street scenes. The zoological studies, rendered in exquisite detail, are from the hands of the expedition's

naturalists Geoffroy Saint-Hilaire and Marie-Jules-César Lelorgne de Savigny. The images even include a couple of contemporary British cartoons ridiculing the work of the French scientists.

This book is a must-read for anyone with an interest in French or Egyptian history, the history of science, or the history of European-Muslim relations. Nevertheless, it is meant to appeal to a very broad audience.

The account of the French expedition in Egypt, the author tells us, is taught in French and Egyptian schools and studied by Egyptologists, but outside of these realms, it is little known. What a shame. Fortunately for us, Burleigh sheds some light on this fascinating episode in history.

Mirage: Napoleon's Scientists and the Unveiling of Egypt is published by Harper. 286 Pages, ISBN-10: 0-06-059767-4, ISBN: 978-0-06-059767-2

CLICK OF THE WRIST – Easter Egg Hunt

It's Easter, which means there'll be bunnies and chocolate and, yes, decorated eggs galore. But instead of searching for the hard-boiled kind, we've got an Easter egg hunt of our own—from the electronic ones hidden in DVDs to the exquisite craftsmanship of Fabergé and beyond.

Fabergé Eggs

It's hardly an exhaustive look, but these images of original Fabergé eggs offer a glimpse at the exquisite craftsmanship that turned the creations of jeweller Peter Carl Fabergé into the stuff of legend. Most of the delicate artworks are now in museums, and valued at several million dollars apiece.

DVD Easter Eggs

From secret stocking stuffers in *The Polar Express* to hidden anime in *Sin City*, this site offers directions to find the extras (and errors) in a long list of popular films.

Amazing Easter Eggs

Traditional hand-painted eggs are dandy, but how about ones covered in fabric? Or ones that look like Lego? This astonishing array of artfully decorated eggs will make your Paas kit look like child's play.

EggZotica

These delicately carved egg sculptures are amazing—especially since each one is handmade (the jigsaw-puzzle rhea eggs are particularly interesting). Just choose from the links on the left to read all about the painstaking process that goes into creating each one.

New York City Easter Parade

Okay, so there's not an Easter egg in sight, but New Yorkers certainly know how to do things in style—and that includes their annual Easter parade. Feast your eyes on some of most fantastical millinery you'll ever see.

ON THE HILL

Sandra Livingston



Everyone's a Critic

"To avoid criticism do nothing, say nothing, be nothing."

Elbert Hubbard may not have been talking about stimulus spending when he said that, but his words certainly fit these times—especially when it comes to the flurry of opinions criticizing Ottawa's choices in doling out that \$40 billion stimulus package.

One of the latest examples comes courtesy of a *Globe and Mail* [article](#). The lead, which notes that Harper's

stimulus package will "end up" giving money to the Calgary Stampede, has a pursed-lips tone of disapproval; the kind you might get from a parent after you spend your allowance on something frivolous, not to mention unsavoury.

(Applications for the new \$100-million program are still open, but the Stampede isn't alone in seeking funding. Upcoming approvals are expected for 10 festivals, including the Shaw Festival, Vancouver Jazz Festival, and Montreal Jazz festival, among other prominent events.)

Message boards at the *Globe* (and elsewhere) lit up. It's ridiculous, charge the critics. The Calgary Stampede is a highly successful organization; they don't need the money. Besides, why not spend it on long-term initiatives helping all those Canadians who've lost their jobs in, say, manufacturing, instead of pouring taxpayer money into a 10-day festival?

Honest opinions, but if we subscribe to the notion of sprinkling a healthy measure of doubt on them, it's easy to see how such fiscal decisions are anything but simple, especially in times like these.

Don't give money where it isn't needed, says one camp. Use it to save jobs by bailing out companies that are failing.

Don't reward failure, says another crowd. If corporations are broke because of poor planning or bad management, why should our tax dollars prop up their mistakes? Put the money into creating new jobs elsewhere.

The decisions also have to go beyond the immediate, and the Stampede is a good example. Investing the stimulus package in organizations that are financially healthy could actually be seen as a smart investment. If an outfit can float through this upheaval with their heads safely above water, there's a better chance that taxpayers will see a return on their investment when times are good—smarter than losing money by prolonging the demise of a company that's no longer truly viable.

Then there's the issue of speed. Spend it fast, some say, using words like "injection" to convey the image of a life-saving procedure. No, no, no, says the opposition. Ottawa needs to slow down, take its time, make sure it's weighing all the options.

With the clock ticking and \$40 billion in extra funding up for grabs, Ottawa is bound to make mistakes. But I'm betting that even the harshest critics would prefer that over the alternative: watching our elected leaders sit back and "do nothing, say nothing, be nothing."

IN CONVERSATION WITH . . .

Wanda Waterman St. Louis

Adam Boyle of Left of Zero

Left of Zero is a Toronto-based progressive rock band consisting of Jade Lamarche, Luis Figueroa, Derek Edwards, and Adam Boyle. Their music is avant-garde and polyrhythmic, their performances bursting with energy and good chemistry.

The band released their debut album in 2008 and have just released an EP titled Blame the Gun.

The following are notes from a conversation between the band's drummer, Adam Boyle, and Wanda Waterman St. Louis.

**Getting Together**

We have a rehearsal space that we rent from The Rehearsal Factory, which is a pretty popular local business; they have three 30-room buildings in the city. If you walk down a hall in one of these buildings you'll hear anything and everything at the same time.

We jam twice a week and practices involve a fair amount of beer. When we're getting ready for shows we try to keep it pretty straight to focus on the material but during rehearsals beer loosens us up and helps us come up with some good ideas. The challenge is to remember those good ideas the following week.

We get along really well and that's a huge bonus. I've been in lots of bands and this is a really fun one to be in for me. I've really grown musically with them. In bands in general you don't want to be the weak link, the one that's holding the others back.

On the first couple of practices I was extremely intimidated. I thought, "Man I hope I can figure this out because I really like these people." So it forced me to step up. Now I feel like we're all on an equal playing field.

A Network of Resources

My background in technical theatre helps with our live performances; we can always have great lights, great sound. We're doing a video soon. The company I work for, Midnite Hour Productions, does lighting and sound for all kinds of people. Luis is also a lighting technician with the company. If we ever make it big we'll have access to good gear. Derek's good with graphic design so he does flyers and posters for us. And we all have hookups.

Lighting the Creative Fires

This past year the Radiohead *In Rainbows* album has been a huge inspiration. I think that's true for the whole band. We all fell in love with that album. When I first heard *In Rainbows* I hated it but now it's one of my favourite albums. It's really complex, with lots of good rhythms. Lately I've also been listening to Air, Arcade Fire, and The Beta Band.

Casting Bread on the Waters

One thing I started supporting with the band was a local group called IndieCredit, which is part of a bigger group called Kiva. It's a lending tree where I can donate money and choose where I want my money to go. For instance, if there's a lady in Africa who's trying to start a store and she needs \$2,000 for supplies our group lends a portion of that money. Later it gets repaid to us so we can put it into other projects. Also, on April 11 we're doing a benefit concert for cancer research.



Name Wars

(Recently a brief conflict ensued when a band in Michigan with the same name tried—unsuccessfully—to legally force the Toronto group to change its name.)

When we chose our band name we assembled it from random lists of words. We just wanted it to capture a bit of what we were about. We always have a hard time answering the question: "What does your band sound like?" We've never had anyone pinpoint our sound yet, and the name reflects that. We just thought it was a really cool name.

We found out that there was a band in Detroit with that name but if you go on MySpace you'll find tons of bands with the same names.

They sent us an initial message saying it was *their* name and we just ignored them. So they sent us a cease-and-desist letter and threatened us with legal action. The whole thing was poorly written and they really

left themselves open to a counterattack but we just let it go. I told them that if they wanted to spend the time and the money they should go right ahead.

I said, "Look, if we ever play Detroit we'll be Left of Zero X—don't worry about it." (Like Bush and Bush X.) We never heard back from them. Online they called us "Canadian douche bags." I think now if you search "Left of Zero" online most of the sites will be about us.

Looking Ahead

This year we're pretty proud of the product we have. Hopefully we're going to record something new at the end of August or early September. Every time we write a new song I say, "We have to record this. This is better than what we've already recorded."

The band grows with new music. Instead of waiting to have a full album I think I'm just going to do the three- or four-song EPs and just keep fresh music in people's hands as often as I can.

THE BLUE SCREEN OF DEATH

Greg Ryan



I know the signs; I've seen them before. In the beginning the hints are subtle; there are slight hesitations before agreeing to do as I ask.

The hesitations last no longer than the taking of a deep breath, but they seem to last for an eternity.

It's not outright mutiny I'm facing, but an inclination to rebel that lurks somewhere beneath the surface.

When a relationship begins to slide into the abyss there's a plethora of emotions to endure: frustration,

despair, hopelessness, and anger.

Why can't we agree to exist harmoniously? Let's try and work things out. Do I make too many demands? I don't know.

I tinker with the mechanics of our affair hoping for the perfect solution. Perfection is an ephemeral quality that many seek and never find.

Our time together is over when logging on to my computer the monitor mysteriously flashes on, off, turns black for a moment, and I find myself sitting before the "blue screen of death." I moan, yell, curse, kick the wall, and throw my hands in the air, but all to no avail.

I contemplate the possible alternatives now that it's time for a new beginning. I re-evaluate what it is that I'm seeking in a relationship. My conclusion is that I desire a sweet system that's difficult to find; it's speed as well as the basics that I yearn for.

Will it drive my peripherals and provide word processing and spreadsheets? Will I be able to enjoy music and movies? Questions, questions, questions, too many questions, but as a part-time student experience has taught me that diligent research provides answers.

Every university student understands the reliance that I place upon my computer in order to function academically. Whatever the age my electronic mate is, I need it to perform flawlessly in order to succeed. For instance, without my keyboard in front of me, I labour under a psychological burden when beginning a critical essay. I'm intimidated by the blank sheet of paper sitting atop my desk.

A computer only does what I tell it to do. Computers don't possess the cognitive abilities that I have, although they may in the future. An enterprising scientist in Europe has successfully fused "living brain cells and silicon circuits." In years to come, my organic desktop system will advise me when our relationship needs intervention, such as a component replacement or a maintenance session.

Throughout these past two years, I've managed my affairs with a ubiquitous operating system I'll leave unnamed (though I quickly conclude that I'm a "V— victim"). I feel victimized and this recent bout of emotional turmoil convinces me to sever our partnership.

Budgetary constraints decree how exotic my new partner will be. A trip to the local computer store proves to me that purchasing off-the-shelf software and hardware isn't an option.

For one thing, I'm not certain what the root of our problem is. Did the disk fail? Is there a file corruption disabling the system? Is the CPU long past its prime? How am I, the computer illiterate, able to diagnose an electronic malaise?

The first thing I attempt to do is reinstall my old operating system. However, after a frustrating afternoon I turn to other sources for help. Perusing the Internet, I'm offered several possible solutions; there's an abundant amount of advice available, but some sources are questionable and caution is therefore advised.

Hours later, after attempting several fruitless procedures, I quit. I don't count these spent hours as a loss, because I'm now more computer literate than I was before.

I hit on the notion that replacing the hard drive, even if the problem isn't solved, will be a worthwhile investment. The installation is straightforward and simple. I note how the old drive is connected and duplicate the same with the new drive, taking special care to avoid electrical shock (you can never be too careful when working with electrical equipment). Furthermore, nothing is gained by frying sensitive electronic components.

Harm to myself and the computer circuitry is avoided and the installation is accomplished without incident. The drive is formatted and ready to receive the operating system. However, when I try to install my old system, numerous messages tell me that a particular file is corrupted and must be replaced.

The previous forced shutdowns and restarts, cursor hangs, indecipherable error messages, and other idiosyncratic behaviours have turned me into a thoroughly disgruntled customer already. I now pledge never to return to the fold. I turn to the Internet again.

***I'm content and confident
that this one will work. So
confident, that I rescue an
old laptop from the storage
room, blow the dust from
the keyboard, purge the
hard drive, and install
Puppy Linux on it.***

And I discover Linux. There are numerous Linux-based operating systems available, and it's a matter of choosing which one best meets my needs. And they're legally free for the asking. I learn that Linux Ubuntu is available by download over the Internet or by ordering the disk. The disk is mailed free of charge. A disclaimer advises a 10-week wait, but my disk comes within 10 days.

I'm a neophyte when it comes to the Linux-based systems, but there are numerous Ubuntu sites with plenty of information to help me along. I now have a complete system that meets my needs. Not all is perfect, however. There are a few nagging problems for me to contend with.

For example, configuring my printer to work with Ubuntu appears to be straightforward, but isn't. Although my Brother laser printer is listed in the installation guide, the printer refuses to print. By searching through and trying other printer drivers, I discover an alternative that works. Problem solved.

However, I learn that configuring a wireless device is more problematic. A few devices exist that are Linux compatible right out of the box, but it appears that these aren't available in North America. There are alternative installation methods, but a perusal through numerous web sites and blogs convinces me that configuring a USB wireless device will be brutal, exasperating work.

I'm not ready for that task yet, but will be one day. Is there perchance a reader out there who can offer a simple solution? This wireless hassle is an unfortunate glitch in an otherwise rewarding experience.

Still, I'm a realist. The honeymoon is barely over, so I'm guarding against my expectations being too high. A month has passed and my new relationship is growing stronger. I'm content and confident that this one will work. So confident, that I rescue an old laptop from the storage room, blow the dust from the keyboard, purge the hard drive, and install Puppy Linux on it.

Puppy is a small distribution, 100 megabytes, that packs lots of wallop for its size; it gives new life to an old PC. Like Ubuntu, Puppy has a full slate of features. The basics are included with the initial download and other complimentary "puplets" are available through the official Puppy Linux website. Like its brothers, Puppy is free. Puppy is fun to take for a walk and its speed is exhilarating.

Printer configuration is approximately the same as Ubuntu. I'm surprised to discover that my USB wireless device connects to my router automatically. Puppy is friendly to "newbies" such as myself and has all the applications that I want in an operating system. In my short experience with Puppy, I can attest that getting some of the features to work requires research and effort. There's a learning curve to contend with, but that's endemic to every new operating system whatever its profile.

Puppy is a slimmed-down, functional operating system. I'm happy with my new Puppy; it's helping me meet my career and academic goals. I'm ready to tackle that essay now, but first I'll take my new puppy for a run.



The Interviewer

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

written and illustrated by Wanda Waterman St. Louis

Rockhead #18: Stun Gun Meds

Later Reuben asks Rob...

What is "confidentiality" and why am I expected to uphold it?



Forget about it. Only employees have that obligation.

So what the hell was Brad doing telling me I have to protect Gord's confidentiality?



I haven't met Brad yet but it sounds like his belt's too tight.



Now, where were we before the pressure cooker blew up?

The following day...

Is Brad a good brother to you?



Does he ever come visit you?

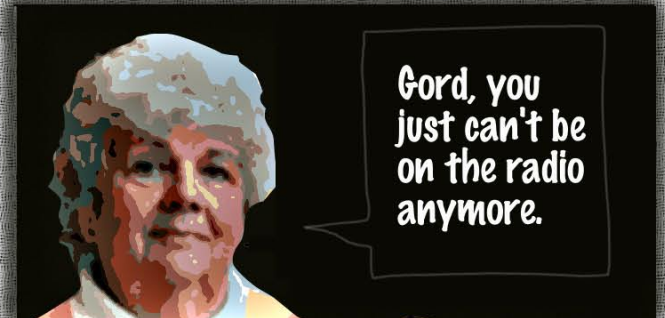


Oh, yeah!

No...

Brad finally comes for a visit, but not to see Gord. He speaks to Frances. With the following result:

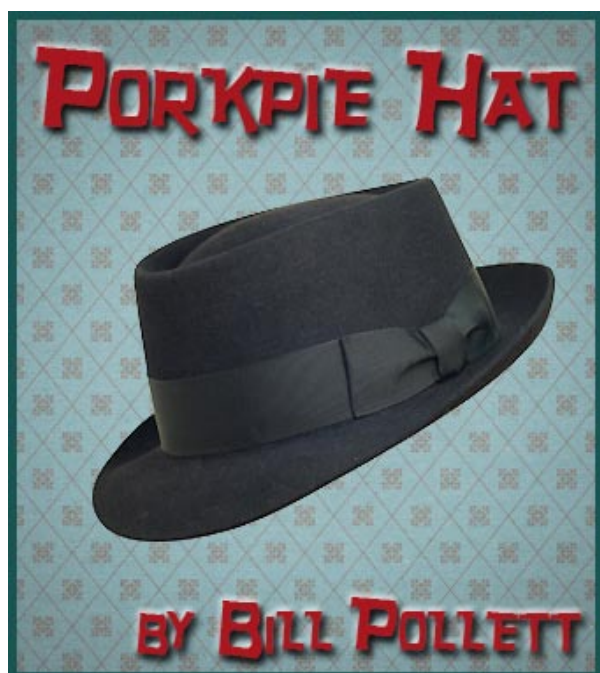
Gord, you just can't be on the radio anymore.



This makes Gord very sad which turns out to be good in a way because they reduce his stun gun meds for a while.



next: Looking for Mr. Dirtbag



I Saw You . . .

You . . . were sitting on the edge of the bed we once shared, combing your hair in the mirror. You were staring at yourself, past yourself, past the reflection of me.

I . . . was moving backwards in the darkness of the landing, drifting backwards down the stairs, floating backwards into the night.

You . . . were waiting for me next morning, ready to change the look of our home. You had your shirt sleeves rolled up, first thing, coffee on the stove, trowel and hawl in hand, smiling at me with white-flecked hair, saying "Well, mister, this wall doesn't seem to be plastering itself."

I . . . was too busy to help, too many things on the go, building bomb shelters and biospheres, fences to keep back the neighbours dogs, the changing tides. All night long I was filling notebooks with designs for unrealistic machines. I was

gone for long periods of time, off working in the clouds, or in unlit tunnels deep underground.

You . . . fell asleep in the TV room, night after night, with your head on my shoulder while the radioactive monsters chewed through city after city. You would sometimes laugh in your sleep, and I would wonder what it meant.

I . . . was afraid to move in case I woke you, so I stayed up through the late-night news—the real-life horrors, the atrocities in Winnipeg and the Middle East, the interviews with the victims' families—forgetting how to sleep. In the morning I told you about all the threats that could tear us apart: the psychopaths, the viruses, the bombs, the shifting tectonic plates.

You . . . said that if we are strong nothing can tear us apart, but that it wouldn't hurt to have an emergency plan.

I . . . said, "Just tell me where to wait for you, and for how long. Just tell me where we should meet."

You . . . said "How about the middle. Would that work?"

I . . . tried to find you when the disaster finally hit. But the phones stopped working, and the bridges all collapsed. I kept getting off the bus or the train at the wrong time, only to see your face again and again, always when it was in a window pulling away.

You . . . came to me in my restless dreams for so long, always holding out your hand to me, waiting in places I could never find you. You wrote out directions for me, and hid them inside the covers of old records. You drew maps for me in the steam of bathroom mirrors, in the dust beneath our bed.

I . . . remember the last time I saw you. It was at the beach. I was standing on the edge of an inland sea, trying to make out your face in the fog and hear your voice above the waves.

You . . . were sitting behind me on a blanket, packing up the picnic stuff, searching through your purse for the keys to your car.

We . . . looked into each other's eyes, before you stood up and walked away.



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

DVD: *Adam's Apples*

Theatrical Release: 2007 **DVD Release:** 2008

Starring: Mads Mikkelsen, Ulrich Thomsen, Paprika Steen, Nicolas Bro, Ali Kazim

Director: Anders Thomas Jensen

Danish (subtitles)

The Skinhead, the Rapist, the Terrorist, and the Country Parson

*"And the moment that you wander far from me
I wanna feel you in my arms again . . ."*

The Bee Gees, "How Deep is Your Love"

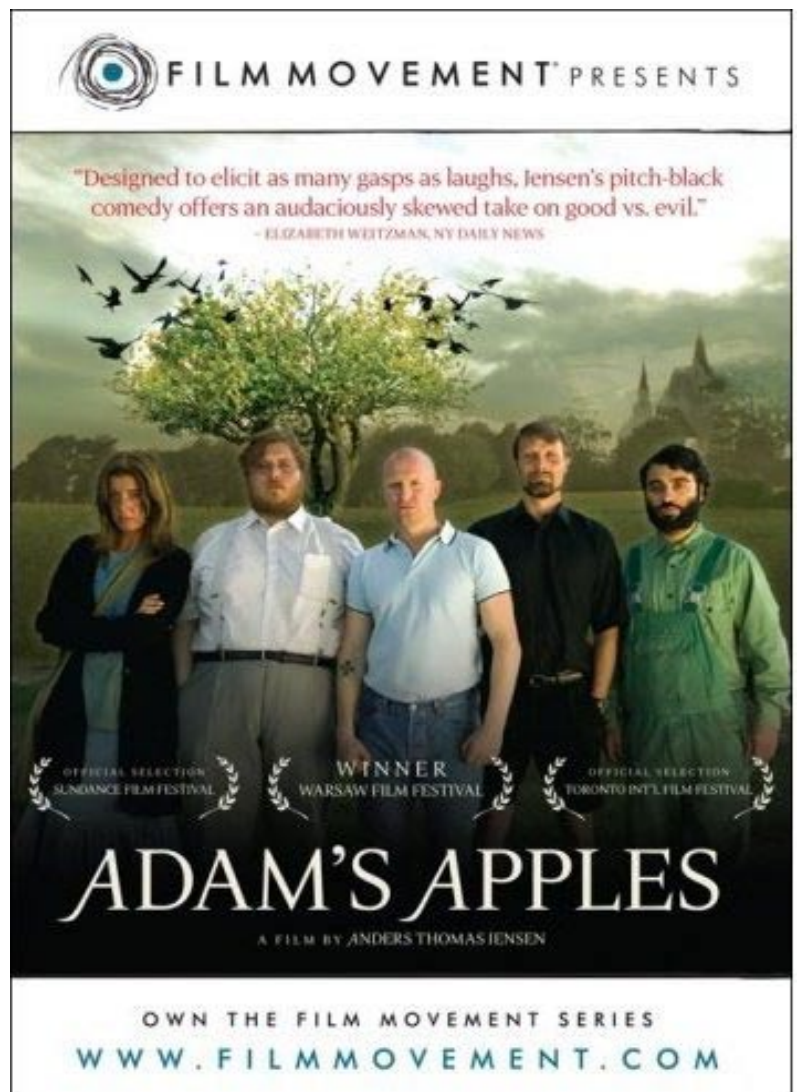
Pastor Ivan brings parolee Adam to a halfway house he runs in his church. On arriving at the church Ivan introduces neo-Nazi Adam to the garden's only apple tree (clearly a symbol for the tree of knowledge), brags up the tree's fruit, and tosses Adam an apple.

In a telling allegorical twist, he commands the aptly named Adam not to eat the apple because it isn't ripe yet.

The Bible in Adam's room keeps "accidentally" falling open to the book of *Job* until Adam finally reads it, warping its message to Ivan's undoing.

Ivan, like Job, refuses at first to acknowledge that the calamities that befall him are signs of a cruel and loveless God. In the face of Adam's conviction that all is evil Ivan calmly insists that goodness will always rule.

Here, for example, is Ivan's funeral oration for a parishioner, a former Nazi concentration camp officer: "Poul learned that it's futile to fight good because despite all the cruelty, screaming, and tears he had caused in his youth he realized in the end that this was just a mere moment. The ocean heaved, but it was a wasted effort. The world continued and good prevailed as always."



There are many other humorous illustrations of Ivan's infuriating detachment. On one occasion Ivan notices a picture of Hitler on Adam's wall and remarks, "What a handsome man! Is that your father?"

When forced to swallow the truth about his own terrible suffering Ivan bleeds from his ear. It's as if, like the God portrayed in some theologies, he is simply too pure to look evil in the face.

As the story develops it becomes obvious that Ivan is a wee bit wacko, hence has no proper spiritual guidance to offer, and is summarily dismissed and violently abused by Adam. (As Ivan takes hit after hit from the ham-fisted neo-fascist you can't help but cringe; Mads Mikkelsen, in addition to being a brilliant actor, possesses facial structure so fine and elegant that watching it get pounded is like watching a Ming vase getting smashed with a baseball bat.)

***This movie is all about the
terror and heartache in
confronting a great
mystery, of coming up
against that thin place
where spirit prevails upon
substance.***

This amazing film, directed by a former member of Dogme, received a surprising number of bad reviews from American critics, many from those amusingly dubbed "top critics" by Rotten Tomatoes. If there were a critics' purgatory such carpers should be condemned to watch *Adam's Apples* over and over until they get it.

But perhaps the blindness results in part from the fact that, in an age wherein the Bible has been reduced to a pietistic scimitar, a film like this is easily misunderstood. As Northrop Frye pointed out in reference to teaching the Bible to literature students (cogently arguing its place in the foundation of Western culture), conservative Christians resisted his teachings because they thought he was taking liberties with their orthodoxy, and atheists objected to the course material because they suspected Frye of trying to proselytize them. Both extremes missed the point.

This movie is all about the terror and heartache in confronting a great mystery, of coming up against that thin place where spirit prevails upon substance. It could very well have been given the same title as the Bee Gees song Ivan keeps playing on his van's tape deck (and which Adam keeps switching off). This '70s bubble gum ditty turns out to illuminate the meaning of *Adam's Apples* in a way no one could have expected. Whether or not you believe such things are real, these could well be the words of a loving deity yearning for communion with the children of Adam and Eve:

*"I believe in you
You know the door to my very soul
You're the light in my deepest darkest hour . . .
And it's me you need to show
How deep is your love."*

Adam's Apples manifests 12 of The Mindful Bard's criteria for films well worth watching: 1) it is authentic, original, and delightful; 2) it confronts and mocks existing injustices; 3) it renews my enthusiasm for positive social action; 4) it gives me tools enabling me to respond with compassion and efficacy to the suffering around me; 5) it makes me want to be a better artist; 6) it gives me tools which help me be a better artist; 7) it displays an engagement with and compassionate response to suffering; 8) it inspires an awareness of the sanctity of creation; 9) it is about attainment of the true self; 10) it provides respite from a sick and cruel world, a respite enabling me to renew myself for a return to mindful artistic endeavour; 11) it stimulates my mind; and 12) it poses and admirably responds to questions which have a direct bearing on my view of existence.



From Where I Sit

Hazel Anaka

Excel Rocks

In August 2008 I bought a new laptop. It's an HP with 17-inch monitor. I had no choice in the operating system that was installed. Despite all the bad press Windows Vista has had since it was launched in January 2007, it's not going anywhere and for better or worse that's what I got.

For the past several months it's been kind of hit and miss, trial and error, cuss and scream. Also installed was the 2007 version of MS Office. In my world, Word gets the biggest workout and I've muddled along using, I'm sure, just a fraction of its capabilities. Excel 2007 is very different from what I was used to and I was no hell with the 2003 version!

I've had experience with PowerPoint, but again, haven't used all the bells and whistles because I don't happen to like all the bells and whistles. I think some people go completely bananas with clip art, font styles, graphics, sound, cascading this, that, and the other.

It's akin to dangly earrings, multiple necklaces, many rings, and a few bangles thrown in for good measure. How about something simple and tasteful? Is the message being lost in the delivery?

But I digress. I really wanted to tell you I spent last weekend at NAIT taking the introductory course for Excel. The class was full and the instructor was incredibly patient, supportive, and thorough in making sure we were all keeping up. NAIT provides really good course notes and a blank CD to burn assignments onto so I won't have to rely on my memory or handwritten notes. Sitting next to me was a woman who has taught computer courses herself for years.

Excel has so many possible uses, so much capability, it boggles the mind. I'm thrilled with the built-in templates. Did you know you can track your menstrual cycle? Plan a party with guest list, menu, and budget?

Under the Calculators section you can figure out your credit card payoff or calculate the proceeds from a multi-family garage sale. Of course there are the expected business forms: invoices, expense forms, trackers, budget, time sheets, and more. From past experience I know I need to (very soon) use it or I'll surely lose it. Maybe I'll set something up today.

Because of the course I am more comfortable using the "ribbon," which is that band of command tabs, contextual tabs, and program tabs running along the top of the page. It's not nearly as intimidating as I once thought.

The commands are consistent within Word, Excel, and PowerPoint. If you open a dialog box launcher within a command group a whole realm of choices opens to you. The instructor also taught us countless keyboard shortcuts and raved at how many keystrokes (and consequently time) they can save. With a repetitive stress injury always lurking just below the surface, this is definitely something I'm willing to try.

With three more levels of Excel courses this is just the start, from where I sit.

AUSU THIS MONTH



Annual AGM Held

As you probably already know from the AGM Report put out by the *Voice*, AUSU held its annual general meeting on March 23, 2009.

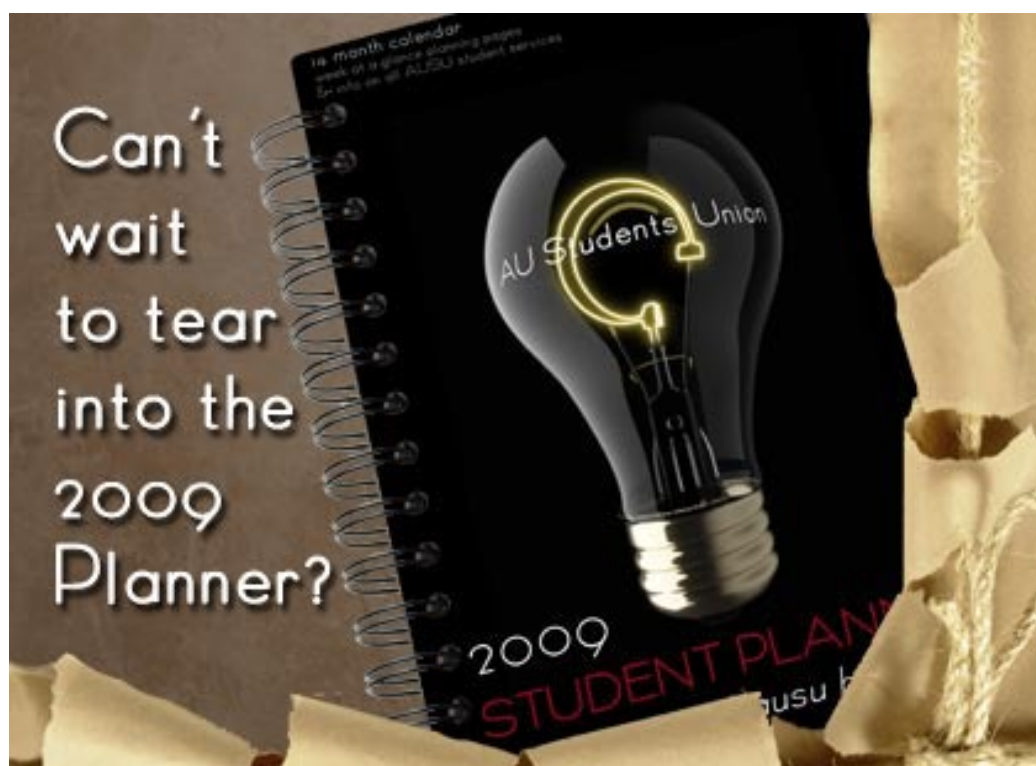
In that meeting a number of important revisions to the definitions of AUSU membership occurred, to make sure that the Councillors you elect are able to represent you during General Meetings and so that if you're a student in an AU collaborative undergrad program, you'll still be counted as an AUSU member even during a term that doesn't have any AUSU courses scheduled.

Also, our fees were changed from being \$8, \$16, or \$24 per course depending on the number of credits, to being a flat \$3 per credit, an increase of a dollar per course for most students. With this extra money, AUSU should be able to begin moving forward with a lot of desired programs that have been held up due to our staffing not being as big as our ambitions.

Also at the AGM, some good discussion was held with respect to email accounts, an issue we know a lot of you are concerned about, and we'll keep working with the university to see if a reasonable solution can be found among all of the priority issues AU needs to deal with.

Media Committee Started

Council has approved the terms of reference for the new media committee. This group, including your *Voice* editor, will be working hard to deliver new multimedia content to you on a regular basis. Our hope is to bring forward a more engaging, interactive AUSU, one that can help you get everything you want out of your education.



AU Fees Increasing

On March 27, the AUGC approved the new fees that will come into effect in September 2009. The bottom line is you'll be paying an additional \$29 per 3-credit course, including the increase to the AUSU fees. This includes an \$18 increase to base tuition and a \$10 increase to the Learning Resources fee. AUSU has noted

concerns with the university continuing to increase fees by the maximum allowable by Alberta legislation, but has agreed that lower quality service is not a viable alternative.

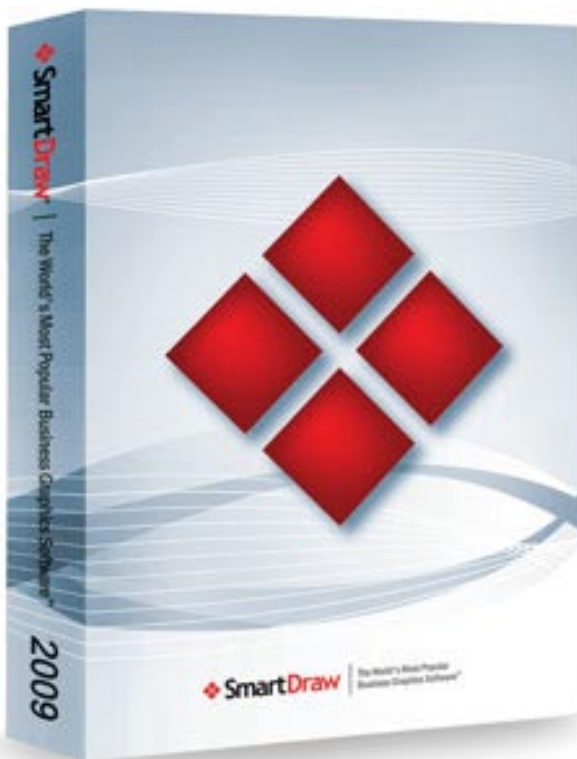
More concerning is the increase to the Learning Resources fee. AUSU will continue to press for details on how this fee relates to the prices the university has to pay for your textbooks and online materials.

au.world Closes

AUSU has noted the closing of the au.world publication with sadness, and has brought this to the governing council of AU. In its place, AU has begun a new magazine called *AU Open* which, rather than being strictly student focussed, contains a mix of stories for alumni, investors, and students. We have strong hopes that AU will increase the focus of this new magazine to be at least as relevant to current students as the old au.world was.

2009 AUSU Handbook/Planners

Members are snapping up our 2009 AUSU Handbook/Planner. Now in full colour, it has more course tracking pages, brief guides to the citation styles you'll need for your essays at AU, and of course, all the important AU dates and addresses that you need to know. You can order your own copy by going to <http://www.ausu.org/handbook/index.php>



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.

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.

In addition, we have recently purchased some steel water bottles. With all the concerns about BPA in clear plastic, the decision was made to go stainless steel. Cheaper and more environmentally friendly than purchasing plastic bottles of water, fill up your AUSU bottle to keep thirst away no matter where you're travelling.

AUSU Lock Loan Program

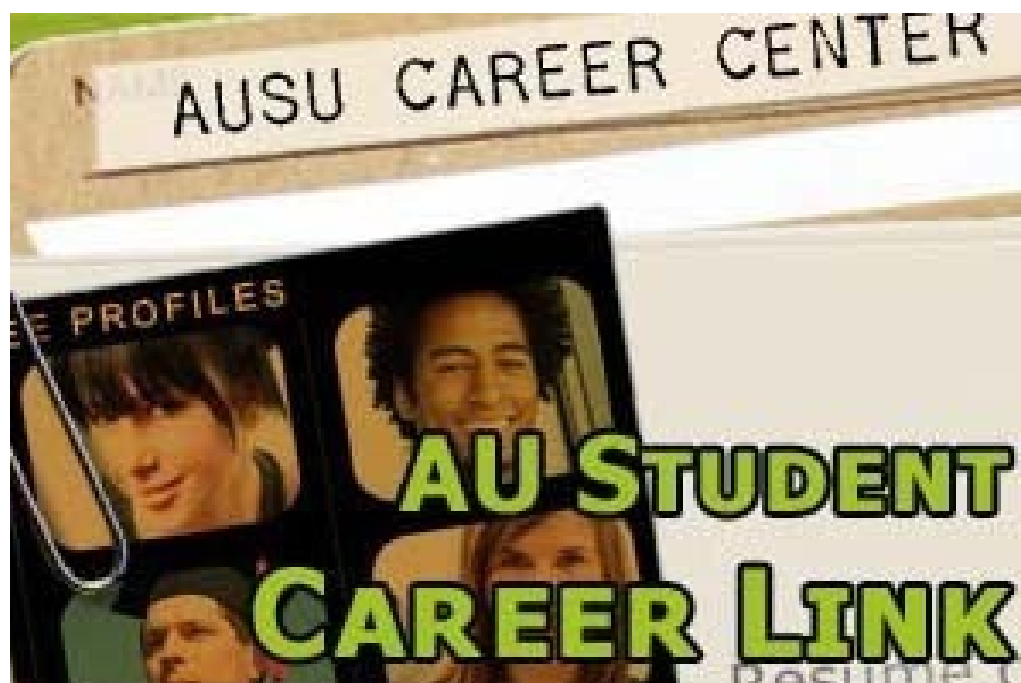
Still running, and still popular, the lock loan program can allow you to rest easy knowing your valuables are safe if you're taking an exam at the Calgary or Edmonton campus. The locks can be set to any combination, and are loaned to people without any deposit, but we ask that you please remember to reset them to 0-0-0 before returning them so that we can continue this program.

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: Parents, educators divided over online school info

Schools from kindergarten to university have long been ranked by a variety of factors, including student/faculty ratio, library funding, and academic performance.

But a new feature on the Ontario government's website took things a little further: it included data on "the income, education and immigrant backgrounds of students' parents," according to the *Globe and Mail*.

The feature was scrapped after an outcry, but there are those who would like to see it return.

One such group is The Society for Quality Education, consisting of parents and educators. Doretta Wilson, the group's executive director, told reporters that demographic information (which will remain on the website) can aid families in poorer neighbourhoods as they search for the best possible education for their kids, whereas wealthier families have greater options to select and pay for a private education.

Annie Kidder, a spokesperson for the parent group People for Education, disagreed with posting the data. As she told reporters, "In small towns, it pits one school against another—the Catholic against the French, or the English against the Catholic—again based only on test scores in two subjects and the demographics of the parents."

In Foreign News: UK finance jobs pay women 60 per cent less than men

As Scotland's *The Herald* reports, women who work in fund management, futures trading, and stockbroking earn "on average 60% less than men." That figure, based on a report by the National Institute of Economic and Social Research on behalf of the Equality and Human Rights Commission, puts the wage gap in the financial sector at more than twice the national average.

One contributing factor may be that, although similar numbers of men and women work in the financial sector, women are less likely to work in London, the central hub where many head offices are located. As well, women are not as likely to hold managerial or senior roles, or to have a degree.

Overall, the average female full-time employee in the financial sector earns 55 per cent less per year and 39 per cent less per hour than full-time male employees (both figures based on gross income). The 60 percent wage gap in futures, fund management, and stockbroking was the worst.

While differences in education and managerial status are factors, the pay gap actually *increases* the higher women rise in their careers. In the lowest-paid jobs, the pay gap between men and women is only 16 per cent. But among the highest earners, "women earn 45% less than male colleagues." When it comes to bonuses the disparity rises even more sharply, with a difference of 79 per cent between men and women.

EDUCATION NEWS

Nathan Swyers

**Students not psyched for science**

HAMILTON (CUP) - "I just find it really boring the way it is taught," said high school student Chelsea Ladd.

Ladd is a Grade 12 student at Bishop Ryan Catholic Secondary School in Hamilton, Ontario, and her apathy is not uncommon.

According to a panel of experts speaking in a series facilitated by the Ontario Centres of Excellence, students are taking less of an interest in science-based curriculum because of negative stigmas, and this poses a problem at the university level.

Ladd says she finds the sciences boring because she is more of a hands-on person, but counsellor Laraine Byrnes says students are just taking the path of least resistance.

"They take the compulsory that they have to, but as soon as there's an opportunity not to do something difficult, they want to do something that's relatively easy," said Byrnes, head of student services at Bishop Ryan.

She says students are more likely to take another phys-ed course or sit in on a drama class instead of taking something harder, like chemistry or biology.

"If you look at the universities' acceptance for science at [Hamilton's McMaster University], it's 90s. The kids realize right away that they're not going, and they turn around and choose social sciences," said Byrnes.

She says when courses involve constant homework, studying, and memorization, students will opt for something else.

Reni Barlow, executive director of the Youth Science Foundation Canada, says it's not the students' fault.

"High school science is really boring. For the most part, kids don't have a particularly good experience," said Barlow. "It comes across as something to be memorized, that science is finished, and the answers are in the back of the textbook."

One project the YSFC focuses on now is called Smarter Science. Barlow says resources will be available both on the web and in hard copy to support the development of inquiry- and project-based science.

Barlow says science is actually a highly creative endeavour and is more than just memorizing and reading things out of a textbook.

"Ten to 15 years ago, there was a big swing in the curriculum that shifted the emphasis toward content and away from the inquiry skills, problem solving skills, and the connection to science in society," said Barlow.

He says that new changes have already been made this year in the elementary science curriculum that bring the focus more toward what makes science fascinating. Changes to the high school curriculum arrive next September.

"The new curriculum will help, but what's even more required is a set of master resources and frameworks to help teachers interpret that curriculum and offer it up as classroom experiences that are actually engaging," said Barlow.

Prerequisites for post-secondary are strict, and if students drop science in high school early on, they often have to change their plans for university.

Despite concerns at the high-school level, the Faculty of Science at McMaster is seeing more applications than last year.

The faculty recently split the program up into separate streams in an effort to make it easier for students to focus on exactly what they came to learn. This has resulted in slightly easier admission requirements, as not all of the sciences and maths in high school are required for each stream.

Applications in environmental and earth sciences have increased by almost 30 per cent this year, while the math and stats program has seen a jump of just under 20 per cent. The only science program with fewer applications is life sciences, which dropped 0.3 per cent, or about 20 students.

Post-secondary applications are up this year for all programs.

Graduating student Chelsea Ladd now plans to go to university for law or insurance, but her original plan to get into health has fallen by the wayside because of the science requirements.

"I wasn't really encouraged to take math and science," said Ladd. "Still, I almost wish that I talked to a guidance counsellor earlier, because I would have liked to get into health and nutrition."

DID YOU KNOW?



AU Library 2.0

If you still think libraries are dusty places with stern librarians, you might be surprised when you check out AU's [Library 2.0](#).

Along with all the regular features of the library, they've added some great new tools to help you find exactly what you're looking for.

One popular feature is the LibX Toolbar—just follow the links to the tutorial and FAQs.

The Library 2.0 page also has information on using Delicious links; the AU library Facebook group; Shelfari (a virtual bookshelf highlighting new and notable books); Tag Cloud; and more. If you want to get more out of the AU library than ever before, see what's new at Library 2.0 today.

CLASSIFIEDS

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

THE VOICE

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Bill Pollett, Wanda Waterman St. Louis

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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Special thanks to Athabasca University's *The Insider* for its contributions