

# THE VOICE MAGAZINE

Volume 17 Issue 18  
May 8, 2009

## Timeless Gifts

Mother's Day

## The Interviewer

Time and money

## AU Profiles

Laura James



*Plus: Porkpie Hat, Dear Barb,  
On the Hill, and much more...*

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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,  
see the 'subscribe' link  
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page

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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](mailto:voice@voicemagazine.org), and please indicate if we may publish your letter.



**Re: "Drive-Through Decorum" by Kimberley Sanders, v15 i16 (2009-04-24)**

I'd just like to say how very much I enjoyed Kimberley Saunders article on courtesy. I wish everyone would not only read it but take it to heart as she's right on the money!

Over the years I've had many experiences that validate her thoughts and while each made me happy they were sad at the same time. One year I called the butcher shop that I'd bought ground pork to make a traditional festive dish with and told them how pleased I was with their meat, not to mention their always excellent service, and the person I spoke to said I'd made Christmas for them and he'd be sure to let everyone know. Very rewarding, certainly, and yet rather tragic even at that time of the year this was so special to a well run, wonderful little shop.

A few weeks ago after getting an exceptional pizza I called back and thanked the person who answered the phone and told them how much we enjoyed it. The gentleman on the phone was taken aback and when he finally found his voice said that had never happened to him before in his 34 years in the business.

All very nice for me, this opportunity to make people happy, though I hadn't thought of that at the time when I was doing it and it makes me sad that saying thank you to people for making my life a little easier, a little better, should surprise someone so. It says far more about the people who don't, as Kimberley said, have enough common courtesy to realize that the people they meet in the course of their day are exactly like them, doing their best to make their way in the world and a little human kindness and understanding would go a long way to make everyone happier.

Hopefully we'll be reading more from Ms. Saunders in the future, I truly believe she has some wisdom to offer.

Thanks again,

Pax

## ON THE HILL

Sandra Livingston



## Showing Some (Seal) Skin

Usually, the news that every MP in Ottawa has managed to agree on an issue would be cause for celebration.

Common sense has prevailed, you'd be forgiven for thinking, and our well-paid public employees have stopped scrapping over the spotlight long enough to work together.

Well, MPs from all parties *did* agree unanimously to a motion this week, but once again we're left wondering about the unique brand of lunacy that seems to pervade Parliament Hill.

Apparently, all our MPs agree that it's a grand idea to reveal a little more skin as part of Canada's Olympic uniforms at the 2010 Winter Games in Vancouver—sealskin, that is. As a way to protest the recent European Union ban on seal products, the MPs voted yes to the Bloc Québécois motion that would see Olympic athletes used as pawns to promote a political stance.

The idea, as this [CBC](#) article reports, is that "the international sporting event in Vancouver next February should be used to promote products from the annual seal hunt on the East Coast, including the possibility that Canada's Olympic uniform include at least one seal product, likely skin."

Besides the fact that Olympic athletes are amateur competitors whose efforts aren't (or shouldn't be) open to manipulation by corporate or government interests, this desire to mix politics and Olympic Games is a curious reversal from last year. Just 10 short months ago, as protests erupted around the world over the 2008 Olympic Games in Beijing, Canada's government was clear on the issue: the Olympics were no place for political forums.

While French president Nicolas Sarkozy openly considered a boycott, former president George W. Bush toyed with the idea of a no-show at the opening ceremonies, and both John McCain and Barack Obama claimed that they would have boycotted if they were in the White House, Stephen Harper insisted that Canada had no plans to boycott the Games. Nor, he added, did he expect other countries to do so.

As the CBC noted, Harper's position was that "such boycotts are often ineffective and would only harm the athletes who have trained for years to compete in the Olympics." He was also quick to point out that his absence from the opening ceremonies was due to scheduling, not politics. (Defence Minister Peter MacKay made a few noises about not ruling out a boycott, but that line was quickly backtracked on.)

The head of the Canadian Olympic Committee immediately denounced the idea of adding sealskin to athletes' uniforms, and thankfully the parliamentary motion is non-binding.

Faced with questions on the issue, Bloc Québécois Leader Gilles Duceppe defended the plan, saying "We need a campaign. Our adversaries conducted one heck of a campaign, and Canada did not conduct a major one on the promotional level."

Sorry, Mr. Duceppe, but instead of worrying about political campaigns our athletes should be left alone to focus on the one they've already started: making Canadians proud.

## IN CONVERSATION WITH . . .

Wanda Waterman St. Louis

## Rose Laughlin

*Rose Laughlin is a folk singer of traditional American and Celtic songs. Her soulful interpretations have captivated audiences all over the United States. (Watch The Voice for an upcoming review of her latest CD, The Chicago Sessions.)*

*The following are notes from a conversation between Rose and Wanda Waterman St. Louis.*

## Obsessions, Private and Public

I was obsessed with the Judy Collins album *Colors of the Day* for a couple of years; every



time someone would come to my house it would be playing.

I am very inspired by underproduced work, work that sounds organic. I recognize the beauty in simplicity. I am very inspired by Susan McKeown's work; her voice is so unusual and beautiful. Also, every song she does is really interesting in terms of the instrumentation she chooses to complement her songs.

## Social Concern

A little while ago I learned Woody Guthrie's "Pastures of Plenty." Before I would allow myself to learn it though I read the book that it was based on, John Steinbeck's *The Grapes of Wrath*, and watched the movie as well (Guthrie was actually inspired by the movie, or so I read).

I introduce this song as a piece of American history and explain that it was about the dust bowl. One night after singing it I realized that the song was quite timeless. Sure it was about migrant workers picking fruit in the 1930s, but if you translate that into a worker of today, it represents the common worker and corporate greed, which obviously is a very relevant song to be singing in today's economic climate.

During the Bush years our country seemed to be so unevolved compared to Europe and other parts of the world. I didn't understand the aftermath of 9/11; if we were out to get Osama Bin Laden why in the world did we go to Iraq? So many things didn't make any sense to me.

When Obama addressed these questions, I thought, *Wow, he gets it!* During the Bush years, the cultural schism in our country was so severe I felt completely unrepresented by my government. I was embarrassed to be an American. Now, for the first time in my adult life, I am actually proud of to be American. I feel represented and I trust our president. However, there are always going to be those who don't feel the same way.

## Musical Roots

I've always sung, though I really don't have formal training besides the teachers I have sought out and studied with. There have been many guitar teachers but only two voice teachers.



The first one was an East Indian classical voice teacher, Chandana. I studied with her for a couple of months in 2002 and then when I moved to Chicago to pursue my study of Irish music, I met June Shellene at the Old Town School of Folk Music. She became my music mentor. I still go to her when I have questions about the business or a music question.



I've also gone to a few music camps over the years. I don't usually learn much there because I don't learn quickly as I can't absorb much in one week. But these camps have served to inspire me and keep me on my musical journey.

### Way Back When

I grew up in Seattle. In my early twenties I lived in France for seven months and a few years later I lived in Juneau, Arkansas, for six months. In my early thirties I moved to Chicago and lived there for four years.

I had a great childhood. I was born in 1970 and feel lucky to have had my childhood before the computer age. There was a lot of playing outside and using one's good ole imagination for play time.

## On Duo Partner Mike Kirkpatrick

I met Mike at the Old Town School of Folk Music in Chicago. He was the teacher in an Irish guitar class I had signed up for. He learned I was a singer and was impressed that I really took the time to learn these traditional songs and asked if I had ever considered a professional career.

Mike and I worked together as a duo for two years before we recorded this album, so this was very representative of what he and I had worked on. We had a lot of fun recording *The Chicago Sessions* and playing gigs together. He is a good friend of mine. He is awesome in the studio and just such an interesting guitarist and multi-instrumentalist. He let me have my own way all of the time with the songs, and he just came in and complemented my interpretation.

## After Hours

I have a day job, so when I go home it's practice time for me. It can be difficult to have two jobs, as it takes a lot of energy to sing at the end of the day. At the same time, it brings me joy. I am continually learning and trying to stretch myself in small ways. I believe in baby steps, and then bam, one day, you're actually where you set out to be.

## FROM THE GALLERY

**Sandra Livingston**



There was plenty of activity in the reports section of council's May 4 meeting, but first here's an update on several action items that were approved.

Motions were passed on amendments to two Council Governance policies: 2.01 - Conflict of Interest and Bias and 2.02 - Students Council Responsibilities. (If you're interested in reading these or any other AUSU policies, you can find them online in the [Operating Policies](#) section of the website.)

Another interesting note is that council accepted amendments to the policy for AUSU's Points Program, so we're sure to be hearing more about this new program soon.

And if you've ever thought about running for council, you'll want to know about a proposed policy on potential bias. With the AU Graduate Students' Association (AUGSA) up and running, council discussed issues that could arise if students were elected to both the AUSU and AUGSA councils. It was generally agreed that AUSU councillors should not serve on both at the same time.

As we reported last time, AUSU has been gathering feedback from students about the MyAU portal and Executive Director Tamra Ross noted that the info was welcomed by the AU committee reviewing the site.

In awards news, the VP External reports that AU's student awards committee is working on creating awards that are available to a wider array of students. And in council's own awards report, it was noted that a high number of applications have been received for travel awards, and all current funds have been given out.

And finally, councillor Heather Fraser noted that the media committee has been active and ideas are flowing for ways to bring audio and video podcasts to members.

The next general meeting will take place July 13, so contact AUSU for info on how to attend!



# AU Profiles:

## AU Profiles: Laura James

Christina M. Frey



In this week's profile we meet Laura James, who's been studying in AU's Bachelor of Commerce program for nearly a year.

What's the biggest advantage of distance study? "Being able to stay home with my son," says Laura, whose 27-month-old son and part-time work at his daycare keep her on her toes.

Here, she explains how organization keeps her sane, and what she relies on to combat distractions and the temptation to procrastinate.

Laura, an accounting major, was first introduced to Athabasca University by her dad. "A lot of people from his work go through [AU] to do their upgrading," she says.

Its non-traditional delivery was appealing to Laura, who had completed part of her high school diploma via distance study.

That experience encouraged her to continue learning independently; in fact, she's found that independent

study and the ability to schedule her own study time suit her learning style better than classroom-based schooling.

"I have to be . . . in the right mind state to [study]," she says. "I have never been able to sit and listen to lectures." During high school, she says, "I couldn't pay attention [and] ended up skipping all the time." With distance learning, school is available when she is.

Although Laura enjoys the method of study, she acknowledges that there are downsides to distance education. For her, dealing with distractions is a challenge. Laura has found that the non-school-related tasks on her to-do list sometimes keep her from fully focusing on her studies.

"I think of something else I have to do [and] then it bugs me until it's done," she admits. Fortunately, she has a supportive fiancé who provides accountability.



In the past, she says, he's sat down with her while she was studying to make sure she kept focused: "I remember one time he sat at the table for three hours flipping [the] pages because I kept getting up to [do housework]," she recalls. When it comes to staying on track, Laura says, "my fiancé has a lot to do with it!"

She also finds organization to be the key to successful studying. "I live by charts and routine," Laura says.

At the beginning of each week, she sets up a weekly calendar listing what she needs to accomplish each day, and keeps it on her fridge. It's a visual record of where she's at: "After each task is completed, I highlight it," she says.

She also has several planners in various locations, such as her purse, kitchen, and study area. Is it overkill? Not according to Laura, who finds it easier to concentrate on studies if she has constant reminders. "It's always there," she says.

How does she stick to her schedule? She schedules in personal time every week, and if she doesn't finish her studies or housecleaning tasks before then, they encroach on that time. It's a big motivator for Laura, whose busy life means she especially values that downtime: "I hate having to put schoolwork [and] cleaning on the 'me' days!" she says.

Although in the short term she hopes to work as an accountant, Laura's long-term plans involve starting her own business. In the meantime, she'll get a little practice in entrepreneurship: over the next few months, she plans to offer daycare out of her home, starting with three or four children.

Distance learning may be difficult at times, but the end result is going to be worth it, she encourages.

"Just . . . keep faith in yourself, even when the times are rough," Laura says. "There's always a light at the end of the tunnel."

## CONVOCATION 2009



### Don't Miss the Deadline to RSVP!

Preparations are in full swing for AU's Convocation 2009, and you'll need to RSVP soon if you're planning on being there to cross the stage and receive your hard-earned degree!

The deadline to RSVP is **Friday, May 15**, so be sure to mark it on your calendar if you haven't already responded.

(And don't forget that all final grades and Application for Graduation Forms must be received by the Office of the Registrar by May 12).

For all the info you'll need to plan your trip (whether you're attending from five or 500 kilometres away), just visit AU's [Convocation page](#). There are dates and schedules, a convocation checklist with step-by-step instructions, driving directions, a map, airline info, and more.

See you at Convocation 2009!



# The Interviewer

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

*written and illustrated by Wanda Waterman St. Louis*

## Rockhead #22: Brad's Interview



I wanted to talk a bit about the newsletter you designed for the student union.

How long have you been working on it?

Ever since last summer, actually. Just something I picked away at in my spare time.



It looks really great. I guess this sort of thing is the wave of the future. But you'd know all about that. You're a journalism major, right?



Yup. Oh, yeah, and absolutely, newsletters are the wave of the future. Some day every business and organisation will have one.



So, there's money in designing these things?

Oh, of course. I've actually started my own business designing them. This newsletter was kind of a test run. It worked out, so now I'm open for business. I call it "Brad's Newsletter Design".



How creative. So you were working on this all last fall as well?



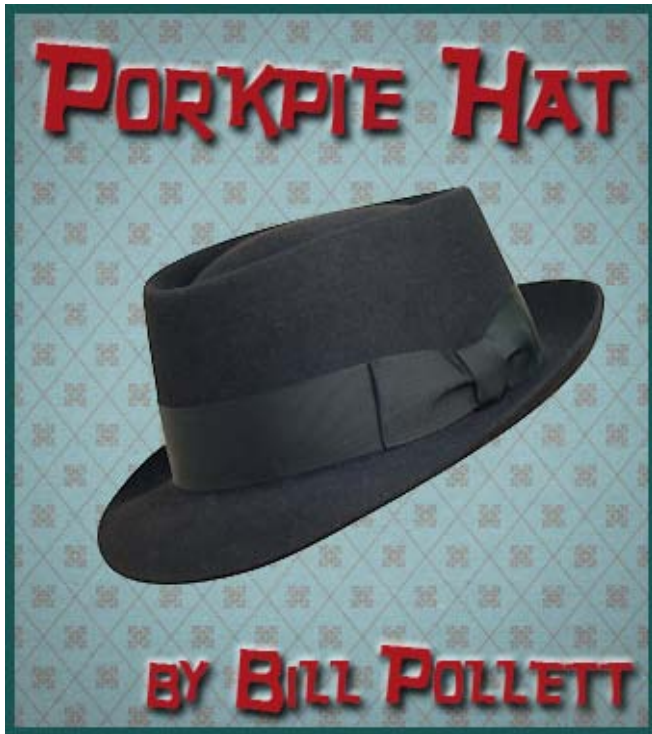
Fer sher!



Can't wait 'til Meatloaf Night!

next: Expecting Pay





## Hidden Things

When their time finally comes, there are secrets they will carry with them to their funeral pyres and their graves. They are all the small, vitally important things that no one will ever know.

These are the best things about them, and the way they lived. Cigarettes smoked on the fire escape of their first apartment. Years later, there was the smell of cut flowers and a peach pie cooling on the windowsill of an island cabin.

I am thinking of the way she loved the smell of burnt toast. Or that moment she pulled her hair back with one hand while she sorted through albums at the all-night record shop. I am sure there was nobody who noticed that except for him.

There were so many things, dust and crumbs swept under the rug of time. A girl loves goldfish and

wrinkles her nose while she sleeps. A boy saves some ants from drowning in a dog dish, and writes a bad country and western song every time there is a full moon.

One night they watch *Columbo* and eat fried egg sandwiches, wrapped in his grandmother's handmade Afghan. Another time they see strange lights in the sky above his parents' farm.

They never changed the course of history, or wanted to. In her red silk dress, she rode on the handlebars of his no-speed bike. They stood beneath a waterfall, swam naked in the creek, and caught tadpoles and butterflies in their cupped beggars' hands.

There are no preserved footprints, no archival footage, and no documents. Or none that matter, anyway.

There are snow angels and names drawn in the sand, and her reflection in a silver toaster. There are letters burnt, and negatives too old to print. There are Polaroids, maybe, lost in the hidden spaces of a Value Village couch.

Heights of grown children are recorded in pencil crayon on the door frame of a kitchen, beneath four layers of paint. There are unrecorded poetry readings and musical notes and laughter in the living room curtains and the cobwebs of long-abandoned houses.

I had a dream last night that I was a child again. I was standing on the edge of a circle of firelight, and the night sky was filled with a snowstorm of stars. I was reaching out in wonder, trying to capture all the billion tiny sparks drifting up from the bonfire. And I think that bonfire was the sweet crackling fuel of our days, and those sparks were the smallest of moments.

And you were there with me, right beside me, wide-eyed and laughing, watching them linger for a moment, then disappear as they landed like small, delicate gifts in our outstretched hands.





## Roommate Needs to Learn Responsibility

*Dear Barb:*

*I am a first-year university student, living on my own for the first time. My roommate is a friend that I grew up with and this is also his first time living away from home. I can't think of an easy way to say this, but my roommate is a slob!*

*He leaves his clothes all over the house, dirty dishes are everywhere, and the bathroom sink is full of toothpaste and hair. I won't even try to describe the shower. We have a cat and he never cleans out the litter, even though he was the one that wanted the cat.*

*When I bring other friends over, the smell from the litter is overwhelming. I can't stand it, but I don't know how to approach him. He is a great guy otherwise and we get along terrific. I don't want to lose him as a roommate, but I don't know how much longer I can live like this. What should I do?*

*Jim*

Hi Jim, thanks for writing. I can relate: while growing up my sister and I shared a room and she was also a slob. Now, as adults, her house is immaculate and mine is less so. Go figure!

My first suggestion is to tell your roommate how you feel. Choose your words carefully, as you don't want to put him on the defensive.

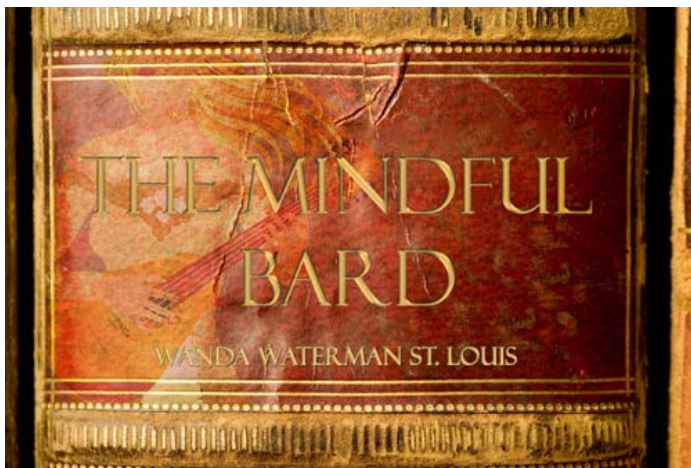
You mention that your roommate is a great guy and that you get along well. Therefore, you should be able to sit down with him and work out a housekeeping schedule. Take turns cleaning. For example every Monday you clean the bathroom, every Tuesday your roommate cleans the kitchen, etc.

Be specific; don't leave out any household chore. I assume you each have your own room. Keep in mind, if your roommate chooses not to keep his room tidy, there is not a lot you can do about it, since that is his personal space.

It may take a few weeks to get this schedule working effectively, especially if you have been doing all the cleaning up to this point. As your roommate begins to realize you are not going to do it, chances are he will. I'm not saying he will be happy about it, but hopefully he will do it. He probably grew up in a family where someone else did all the cleaning and picking up after him. He will soon realize part of being on your own is cleaning up after yourself.

Good luck, Jim

*Email your questions to [voice@voicemagazine.org](mailto:voice@voicemagazine.org). Some submissions may be edited for length or to protect confidentiality; your real name and location will never be printed. This column is for entertainment only. The author is not a professional counsellor and this column is not intended to take the place of professional advice.*



### The Homespun Poet Sisters of Mountain Soul

This is music that memorializes that green, fragrant, mossy twilight time when American hill folk were still singing their Celtic ballads while slowly creating amazing new genres and themes all their own.

The inspirational quality of this era in music history is all but immortal, sleeping between the ages in wait for clever minds and ardent hearts to revive it again and again.

Here in *Country E.P.* we have a shining paragon:

Anaïs Mitchell's baby-doll voice and Rachel's superbly trained singing go together like beans and corn, tinkling mandolins and sawing fiddles a poignant backdrop to songs exploring the personal transformations that arrive in the wake of romance troubles.

The CD package comes with an EP record whose cover exhibits two art deco style frames with sepia portraits of Anaïs and Rachel.

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

CD: Anaïs Mitchell and Rachel Ries, *Country E.P.*

Release date: September 2008

Label: Righteous Babe Records

*"Autumn's ashes, summer's embers on the sidewalk come September—  
Suddenly I can't remember any lessons learned.  
Now that I'm a migrant picker,  
Trouble-minded tin can kicker,  
I wish my skin was thicker . . ."*

*"Come September," by Anaïs Mitchell*



It's reminiscent of sheet music from the early part of the 20th century, or parlour portraits of grannies and maiden aunts.

Rachel Ries had classical training in singing, piano, viola, and violin and has been known to record on vintage mikes to get that old gritty sound.

Anaïs is known for her beautifully conceived lyric lines and insights into both individual personhood and the human condition

***Have a real good listen to these lyrics and the intuitively correct instrumentation that accompanies them; you'll feel all your old heartaches coming back sanctified and holy.***

She was signed to Righteous Babe Records by Ani DiFranco, a move that knocked the sandals off a young girl who had long seen DiFranco as an artistic mentor.

Both women have travelled extensively and lived in foreign lands. (Is this what it takes to embrace American root genres?) They both fail to take themselves seriously, so it all sounds playful and whimsical in spite of being extremely intelligent.

Each woman wrote two songs on the EP. They are both writing in older styles (which seems to be becoming quite the vogue) and yet the poetry of their lyrics is strikingly original. Both are inventive and literary songwriters.

Have a real good listen to these lyrics and the intuitively correct instrumentation that accompanies them; you'll feel all your old heartaches coming back sanctified and holy.

Anaïs Mitchell recently collaborated on the writing of *Hadestown*, a folk opera to be released on CD later this year. Watch *The Voice* for a review of this recording and for an interview with Anaïs.

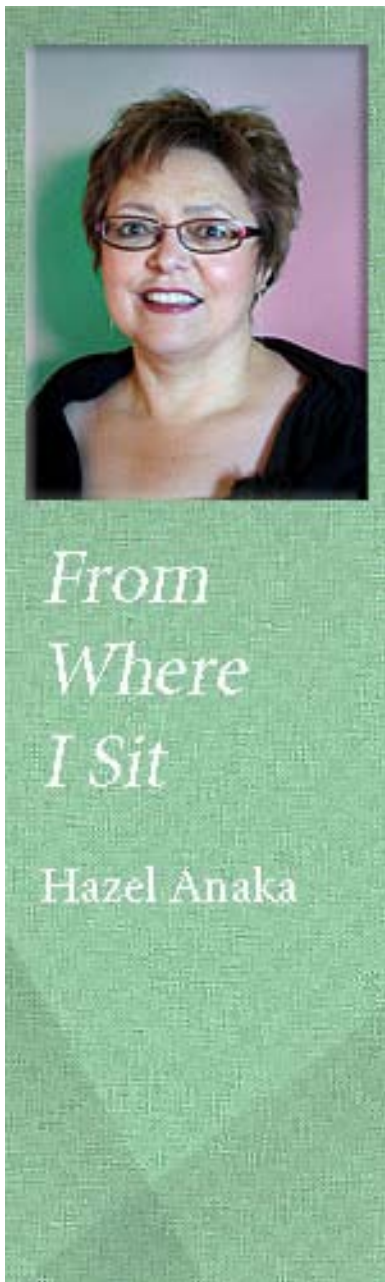
The uniqueness of these songs, plus the great blessing of hearing intelligent (but not dry and academic) country music, makes this EP a treasure. Here the common shows itself precious and beautiful; our everyday heartaches are lifted up, crowned with dignity, and eternalized in song.

*Country E.P.* manifests seven of *The Mindful Bard's* criteria for music well worth a listen: 1) it is authentic, original, and delightful; 2) it makes me want to be a better artist; 3) it gives me tools which help me be a better artist; 4) it displays an engagement with and compassionate response to suffering; 5) it inspires an awareness of the sanctity of creation; 6) it is about attainment of the true self; and 7) it provides respite from a sick and cruel world, a respite enabling me to renew myself for a return to mindful artistic endeavour.

This music was recommended to *The Mindful Bard* by singer-songwriter Jonathan Byrd.

*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](mailto:bard@voicemagazine.org). For a list of criteria, go [here](#). If I agree with your recommendation, I'll thank you online.*





## Happy Mother's Day

"A mother is the truest friend we have, when trials, heavy and sudden, fall upon us; when adversity takes the place of prosperity; when friends who rejoice with us in our sunshine desert us; when trouble thickens around us, still will she cling to us, and endeavour by her kind precepts and counsels to dissipate the clouds of darkness, and cause peace to return to our hearts."

Washington Irving (1783 - 1859)

Irving's quotation speaks to the timelessness of mothers and their impact on each of us. Only the stuffiness of the language hints at a time long past. The sentiment, however, is as true today as then.

Born youngest in a family of 11, Irving grew to become a famous American writer. According to biographer C.D. Merriman, he was born sickly and had ongoing health issues through much of his life. This background information illuminates the quotation. Our generation can only guess at the hardships endured in raising a family that size. Indeed, there may be a message there: if the eleventh child can so keenly love and appreciate his mother, how will we be rated by our one or two kids?

Are we, as mothers, our children's truest friend who can bring peace back to their hearts? That certainly is the intention, if not always the result, for most of us. We know there are bad and inadequate mothers. There are also evil, destructive mothers. But most of us are simply humans doing the best we can. In some ways we're only as good as the mothers we ourselves had.

At our best we offer help and guidance. We offer a port in a storm. We love unconditionally no matter the age of this offspring. We feed without ceasing. We swell with pride and applaud all the successes, from the first tentative steps to the unique marks our children leave on the world.

We cry (sometimes in private, sometimes openly) when they hurt. If we could, we would buffer them from every imaginable pain. We teach (and re-teach) those life skills we ourselves most value. If we're wise we also know when to step back, stay silent, and pray.

Mothers hope—first, last, and always—for a healthy child whether he is a newborn or a 30 year old. Mothers want their child to thrive and strive and find her way to meaningful work, lasting love, and real happiness. Mothers want their children to grow strong and confident yet possess the softness and warmth our world so badly needs.

We want our kids to love and respect us. We want them to need us. We want them to share their triumphs and their fears. We need them to carry our legacy proudly even as they add their own value to it.

This Sunday take time to thank your mother for all that she is and all that she does. And if you are a mother, take time to consider the incredible blessing of that experience. Embrace it, from where I sit. (Thanks, Ma!)

## 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.

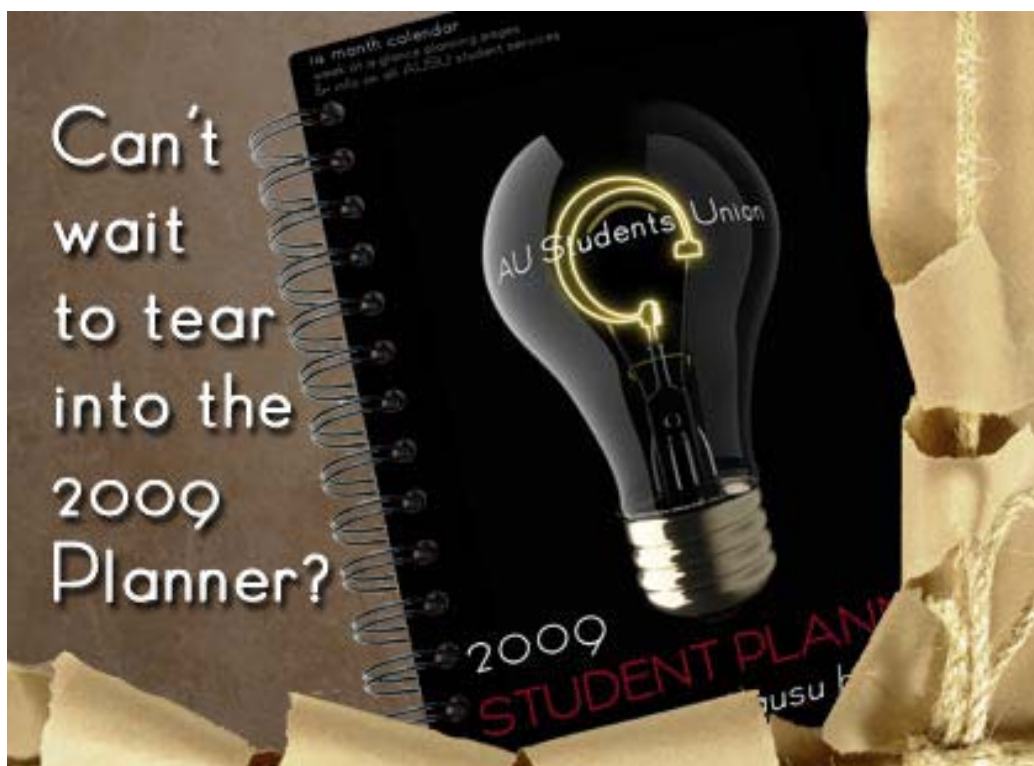
In that meeting a number of important revisions to the definitions of AUSU membership occurred, to make sure that the Councillors you elect are able to represent you during General Meetings and so that if you're a student in an AU collaborative undergrad program, you'll still be counted as an AUSU member 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: Discrimination charge over Ontario disability funding

A group of parents has launched a constitutional challenge against Ontario's McGuinty government, claiming that private, faith-based schools in the province are discriminating against disabled students by "refusing to fund certain ailments."

The parents, representing eight children, say funding in private, faith-based schools is available to their kids only if they have certain disabilities.

As the *National Post* reports, the parents claim that blind, deaf, or learning disabled children are being excluded.

Ira Walfish, a spokesman for the group, explained to reporters that "students are forced to make a choice between their religion and their disability."

The problem lies in a distinction between Ontario's Ministry of Health and the Ministry of Education. The education ministry only provides disability funding to public schools, while the health ministry provides coverage for all children. According to

the parents' group, children who are blind, deaf, or learning-disabled are "judged to be the responsibility of education, and thus are denied funding when they attend private schools."

A Toronto court is scheduled to hear the case May 27 and 28.

### In Foreign News: New Zealand city bans public display of gang patches

In a first for the nation, a city in New Zealand has created a law banning gang patches and other insignia in public. Wanganui, a river city 200 kilometres north of Wellington, has given police "the power to arrest, seize and fine wearers" of gang patches.

The *New Zealand Herald* reports that other cities with gang problems may enact similar laws. Michael Laws, the mayor of Wanganui, told reporters that banning patches "removes gangs' most powerful and intimidatory weapon."

The new law follows another recent anti-gang measure, this one in South Australia where gangs themselves have been outlawed.

Wanganui's mayor said that signs "designating gang-free zones" could be in place by July. An MP for the city, Chester Borrows, told reporters that the law would have a serious affect on gangs because their codes demand that members do not lose their patches for any reason. Wanganui has been plagued by gang problems. In a 2007 incident, a toddler was shot and killed during a gang dispute.

Along with new powers to arrest those wearing gang patches, police will be able to seize and destroy the insignia. Wearers can also be fined up to \$2,000.

## EDUCATION NEWS

Carl Meyer

**Tories unveil PSE budget items**

**Liberals stick to fact-checking in face of repeat budget announcements**

OTTAWA (CUP) - The federal government has been rolling out post-secondary funding announcements despite each announcement repeating figures contained in the January budget.

The Conservatives have spent much of the spring promoting Canada's Economic Action Plan, the 2009 budget brought in by Finance Minister Jim Flaherty after the government was prorogued in December.

Some of these announcements are aimed towards post-secondary students either directly through job creation or indirectly through university or associated funding.

For example, on April 15, Treasury Board President Vic Toews announced an increase of \$20 million over two years to hire up to 2,000 additional students into the federal public service.

The Federal Student Work Experience Program, the Co-operative Education and Internship Program, and the Research Affiliate Program all benefited from an increase to their funding streams by the budget in January. The Treasury Board released the statement separately.

Also, on April 8, Industry Minister Tony Clement announced "more than \$455.1 million in 29 projects at post-secondary institutions" throughout British Columbia.

That figure is part of the \$2-billion Knowledge Infrastructure Program contained in the budget, which aims to "support infrastructure enhancement at Canadian post-secondary institutions."

The separate announcement was released, according to Industry Canada, to "celebrate the first round of projects to qualify under the program."

Then there is Minister of State for Small Business and Tourism Diane Ablonczy's announcement on April 7 of \$17.5 million through 2014 for the Small Business Internship Program.

The program will hire 400 student interns annually to help with information and communications technologies. It is part of the Government of Canada's Youth Employment Strategy—funding of which was contained in the budget.

The Official Opposition isn't playing catch-up to the announcements, preferring instead to contradict government statements.

For example, the Liberal Party took issue with Minister of State for Science and Technology Gary Goodyear's frequent reference to budget money for science and technology.



On April 7, at an event in Waterloo, Ont., Goodyear announced \$50 million for the Institute of Quantum Computing. Promoting the event, Industry Canada stated: "Canada's Economic Action Plan provides more than \$5.1 billion toward science and technology initiatives."

"This is not the case," the Liberal Party announced on April 21. "The funding commitments the Conservatives cite to support this figure are not dedicated towards actual research projects, nor will the money necessarily even go towards infrastructure to create such projects."

The Liberals have been brandishing Statistics Canada figures they believe demonstrate that "science and technology research is not a priority for the Harper government," arguing that "when adjusted for inflation, federal funding for university research in 2008 was \$187 million less than in 2005."

## **CLICK OF THE WRIST – Weigh to Go**

With news of the latest weight-loss product on people's lips (literally—it's lip gloss that's supposed to suppress appetite), we couldn't help wondering about some of the other odd weight-management schemes that have come along. So pry your eyes off the scale and check out some of these interesting gems (interesting, though not necessarily recommended).

### **The Thin Line**

This site takes you on a tour of unusual dietary practices through the ages, from the Brussels sprouts diet to being a Breatharian (living on air, light, and little else). Anyone need to go to the vomitorium?

### **Diet Drinking Water**

Hmm, let's see: drink a bottle of Skinny Water an hour before each meal to suppress your appetite. No idea how much a bottle of this stuff costs, but since water is a natural appetite suppressant, you might want to reach for the tap before you reach for your wallet.

### **The Victorian Workhouse Diet**

Although the typical diet of children in Victorian workhouses (bread, cooked meat, rice pudding or suet, gruel, broth) wasn't meant as a weight-loss fad, it appears to be making a comeback: for the first time in more than 100 years, the Manual of Workhouse Cookery has been republished. Watery gruel all round!

## **25 Of the Most Ridiculous and Ineffective Popular Diets**

No surprise here. Although these "miracle" weight-loss plans vary from the tapeworm diet (swallowing a live tapeworm) to the Hollywood diet (subsisting on nothing but juice) and beyond, they all have one basic rule in common: limiting caloric intake. And to think people have made millions by marketing common sense.

### **Slow Food**

Slow food. Just the sound of it conjures up images of fresh, local produce, delicious aromas, and long conversations as you enjoy the sights and tastes of your meal. If you're scarfing down some fast food as you stare at your computer, push those French fries aside and savour a few minutes here.

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# CLASSIFIEDS

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Classifieds are free for AU students! Contact [voice@voicemagazine.org](mailto:voice@voicemagazine.org) for more information.

## THE VOICE

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Bill Pollett, Wanda Waterman St. Louis

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[www.voicemagazine.org](http://www.voicemagazine.org)

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*The Voice* is published every Friday in html and pdf format

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