

# THE VOICE MAGAZINE

Volume 17 Issue 20  
May 22, 2009

## **John Lennon**

A Life

## **Merit Pay**

The Interviewer

## **Humble Pie**

Move over, Mr. Heep



*Plus:*

*From Where I Sit, Dear Barb,*

*In Conversation With, and much more...*

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**The Voice  
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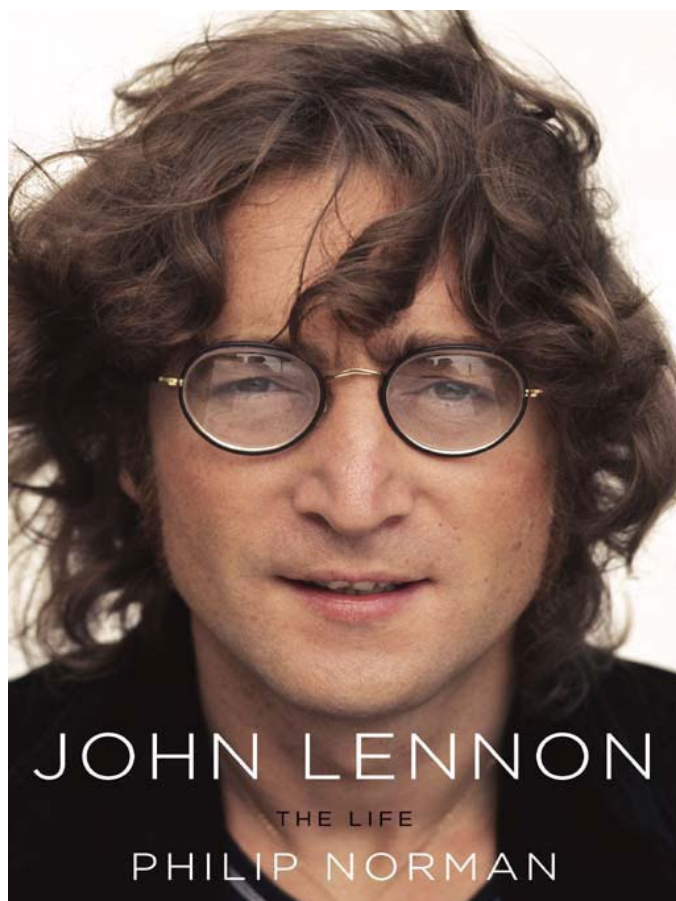
# LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

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.



## PAGES

John Buhler

**John Lennon: The Life**

*The Rutles: All You Need is Cash*, was a 1978 television mockumentary that parodied the Beatles, with John Lennon spoofed by the fictional Ron Nasty.

In *John Lennon: The Life*, biographer Philip Norman shows us the real Lennon, who could be quite nasty indeed.

We learn about the many instances, sometimes even on stage, in which Lennon ridiculed disabled people with his portrayals of “cripples.”

During the Beatles’ stretch in Hamburg’s infamous Reeperbahn, Lennon engaged in an ongoing orgy of casual sex, yet demanded unquestioning faithfulness from his then-girlfriend Cynthia Powell, back home in Liverpool.

It was also during the Beatles’ stint in Hamburg that Lennon would suddenly stop playing, and call his young German audiences “Fuckin’ Nazis”.

Later, after photographer Bob Freeman found a London flat for him, Lennon, according to Norman, had an affair with Freeman’s wife and sang about it in “Norwegian Wood.”

Lennon also ridiculed the religion and sexual orientation of Beatles’ manager Brian Epstein. The song “Baby You’re a Rich Man” includes the lyrics “Baby, you’re a rich man, too” but which, during practice sessions Norman tells us, Lennon sang as “Baby, you’re a rich fag, Jew.”

And though he was a critic of society, he was capable of his own stunning hypocrisies. At the same time that he was seeking a divorce from Cynthia on the grounds of alleged infidelity, his lover Yoko Ono was pregnant with his child.

In contrast to these nasty aspects of Lennon’s character, he was, nevertheless, a peace advocate and human rights supporter. His opposition to the US’s bloody and pointless Vietnam War, in fact, almost cost him the right to take up permanent residency in the States.

Through Norman’s in-depth examination of John Lennon’s early years, we can start to make sense of this talented, creative and socially conscious, yet insecure, vulnerable and controlling individual. The book includes extensive research into his parents’ unstable relationship, his father’s long periods away at sea and his mother’s infidelities.

He was, in fact, raised by his aunt and (mistakenly) believed that he had been abandoned by his father. The young John Lennon was deeply affected by the deaths of his mother, his uncle George—a father figure in his

young life—and art school friend Stuart Sutcliffe. These events, Norman suggests, had a profound influence upon Lennon's character.

***Most significantly, this book may change readers' assumptions about Yoko Ono and her relationship with Lennon. Ono is unfairly blamed, as the Barenaked Ladies remind us in their song "Be My Yoko Ono," "for breaking up the Beatles."***

Lennon's artistic influences, however, ranged from *Alice in Wonderland* to Elvis Presley, and Philip Norman's writing is at its best when he describes the processes by which Lennon and the other Beatles brought their groundbreaking original music to life.

We see how producer George Martin helped combine diverse elements, brought in extra studio performers, experimented with the existing recording technology, and turned Lennon's raw ideas into figurative and literal gold. The reader is swept along as Norman describes the creative ride behind selected tracks.

Most significantly, this book may change readers' assumptions about Yoko Ono and her relationship with Lennon. Ono is unfairly blamed, as the Barenaked Ladies remind us in their song "Be My Yoko Ono," for "breaking up the Beatles."

In Norman's portrayal, she is herself a victim of Lennon's possessiveness and jealousy, yet it is Lennon who is eventually transformed through his relationship with her. From uninvolved parent and misogynist, he became a devoted father to his second son, Sean, a prototypical househusband, and an advocate of women's rights.

Though he was murdered in 1980, John Lennon's life and music are still a source of intense interest. Norman, of course, will not have the last word on the subject. In fact, a film biography of Lennon's teenage years, *Nowhere Boy*, is in the works.

Younger music fans, nevertheless, may not appreciate the tremendous influence that the Beatles have on today's popular culture. While British rockers Oasis have performed Beatles' songs, included Beatles references in their lyrics, and acknowledged the influence that the iconic '60s group have had upon their music, more subtle reverberations can be seen throughout the entertainment industry.

Innovations made by the Beatles and their contemporaries are still being used by artists in recording studios and on the dance floor. Though the methodology may have changed from analogue to digital, the sampling and continuous loops used to enhance the richness and variety of sounds in the Beatles' *Tomorrow Never Knows*, for example, are an important feature of today's techno.

And although transistor radios may have given way to personal music devices playing Internet downloads, one can still hear provocative compositions, such as Green Day's *American Idiot*, carrying the echoes of John Lennon's social and political activism.

Diehard Beatle and John Lennon fans may be disappointed by *John Lennon: The Life*. It is not a flattering portrait. In spite of this, it is a well-researched, highly readable, entertaining, and informative book about an important and influential musical and cultural figure.

*John Lennon: The Life* is published by Doubleday. 851 Pages, ISBN: 978-0-385-66100-3

## ON THE HILL

Sandra Livingston



## Move Over, Mr. Heep

"Oh, no! I'm a very 'umble person," says Dickens's Uriah Heep, that writhing, obsequious character in *David Copperfield*.

And one might be forgiven, with all the wiggling and evading going on at the Oliphant inquiry these days, for thinking that Uriah Heep himself had taken the stand.

But no. Instead of Uriah's memorable brand of flattery, we've been greeted instead by the self-

righteous gaze of former prime minister Brian Mulroney. In spite of the questions being levelled, you'd be hard-pressed to find a lot of self-reproach here.

Indeed, the story being sold (although not very successfully) is that Mr. Mulroney has been the victim of circumstance, buffeted by forces beyond his control. The basics are this: between 1993 and 1994, Mulroney accepted three separate envelopes of cash from a lobbyist named Karlheinz Schreiber. The total was \$225,000 or \$300,000, depending on who you believe. Mulroney claims the cash was a retainer to promote light-armoured vehicles to international buyers.

Not so, says Schreiber: Mulroney took the cash in return for lobbying domestically, to promote a German company that wanted to build a light-armoured vehicle plant in Canada and win "a contract to sell military vehicles to the Canadian government." In essence, a kickback for manipulating government contracts.

When presented on three separate occasions with the clearly dodgy prospect of doing business by meeting in hotel rooms and taking wads of cash in envelopes (a fact he later urged the *Globe and Mail* not to publish), it seems that Mr. Mulroney was merely being cooperative. That was simply how Mr. Schreiber did business. No fault of Mr. Mulroney's.

And when Mulroney was questioned in 1996 about his involvement in the Airbus scandal, it wasn't *his* fault that, in sworn testimony, he didn't reveal those envelopes of cash he took from Schreiber. It was all very simple, really: the lawyers neglected to ask him.

And even when Mulroney finally did decide that, just maybe, he should come clean and declare that extra quarter of a million in income, it certainly wasn't *his* fault that his tax lawyers managed to finesse things so that he only had to pay taxes on half of it.

Even though he'd personally taken the money, and probably had a fairly good grasp of the obligation of paying taxes on it, he had "no involvement" in any of the arrangements.

"It had really nothing to do with me, if I may," this lawyer and former PM said. "I had no involvement in this whatsoever. I understand my name was not even mentioned in any circumstances. This was an anonymous taxpayer."

He just paid the taxes he was told to pay.

A very 'umble person, as Uriah Heep might say. A very 'umble person indeed.

## IN CONVERSATION WITH . . .

## Wanda Waterman St. Louis



## Rah Rah

*Rah Rah is a new band from Regina whose recently released first album, Going Steady, is already a hit on campus radio and CBC 3.*

*The following are notes from a conversation that took place a week into their cross-Canada tour, between Wanda Waterman St. Louis and the band's lyricist, Marshall Burns.*

## Where We Got Our Name

A former band member, Kyrie, came up with the name. I heard on the radio that in Haiti a rah-rah is a

kind of street jam.

## Saskatchewan: Breeding Ground for Hopped-up Musical Geniuses

We were all born and raised in Regina. Saskatchewan bands have been doing some really great things in the last few years. There's a lot of member-sharing; Library Voices musicians played on our record. Even though the bands on Young Soul Records all sound different we all sort of share a mentality and come from the same sort of spot. From necessity you stick with the people whose music is honest. (There's a lot of metal bands here.)

Regina has a pretty vibrant arts scene. My parents are pretty involved in it so I've always been around that. There's an older generation of really good musicians here who have always been supportive of us younger people. They're always finding us gigs and helping us record and lending us guitars and stuff like that.

## Fearlessly Moving East

It was the band's decision to take the tour all the way to the east coast. We're really excited about going there. Some of us have been to Nova Scotia but we've never played there. None of us has ever been to Newfoundland.

## The Process

It's a pretty big band so often not everyone's there for rehearsals. But different people bring different ideas to the table, like a keyboard riff or a guitar riff. Then we start jamming it together, trying it several different ways and working out a melody. The songs come together surprisingly quickly—in an hour or two. We work really well together; everyone's so involved, and all our ideas get heard.

*"If not for the language barrier, I might marry her, I might marry her.*

*If not for the geographical obstacles, I might marry her, I might marry her—*

*Although—she has tentacles.*

*I'm in love with the tentacles."*

*"Tentacles," from Going Steady*

## The Lyrics

I try to find unique ways of talking about things. Everyone has pretty similar experiences, I think, and the same songs have been written over and over. So if you're going to write about something like a relationship you've got to find your own way to talk about it.

## Stuff I Like

I'm a really big Neil Young fan. And a big Wilco fan. Bob Dylan, Leonard Cohen, those guys who just seemed so straightforward in their songwriting.



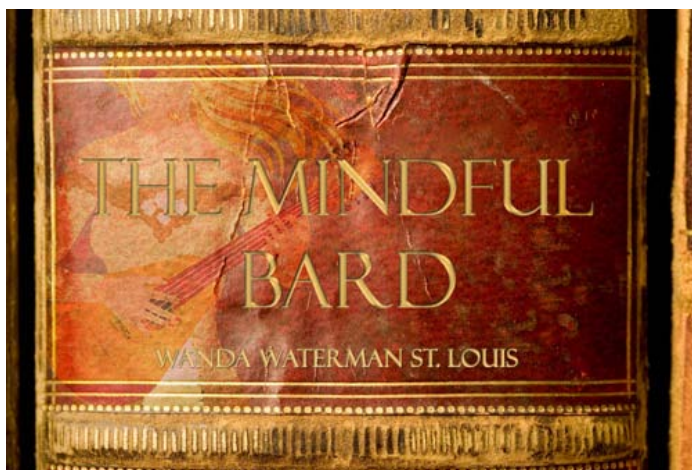
There are a lot of painters I really admire, too: Rousseau, Miro, Rothko. They were all finding new ways to express the same old stuff.

I just saw this film about Wilco called *I'm Trying to Break Your Heart*. It goes through their whole process of making an album, losing band members, and trying to feed their families. Their label drops them and they have to find a new one.

## Where I Stand

I'm more or less left-leaning in my politics, for fun, mostly, because I like to shock people. In the recent provincial election the Conservatives got a huge victory. Before that Saskatchewan was NDP for 15 years. And Saskatchewan is where the NDP was born, of course.

I believe in being truthful. In my songs I sing about heartbreak, loss, and love, but those are things everyone shares. We all have similar experiences. We aren't that different.



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

CD: Rose Laughlin, *The Chicago Sessions*

Label: Ramblin' Rose Records

Release date: 2008

Where the Cold Rain and Snow Meet the Wild Mountain Thyme

*"The most enduring themes in the traditional song canon seem to be of relationship and love (returned*

*or unrequited), parting and love of homeland, life and death . . . The universality of the human experience in these songs are what continue to beguile me."*

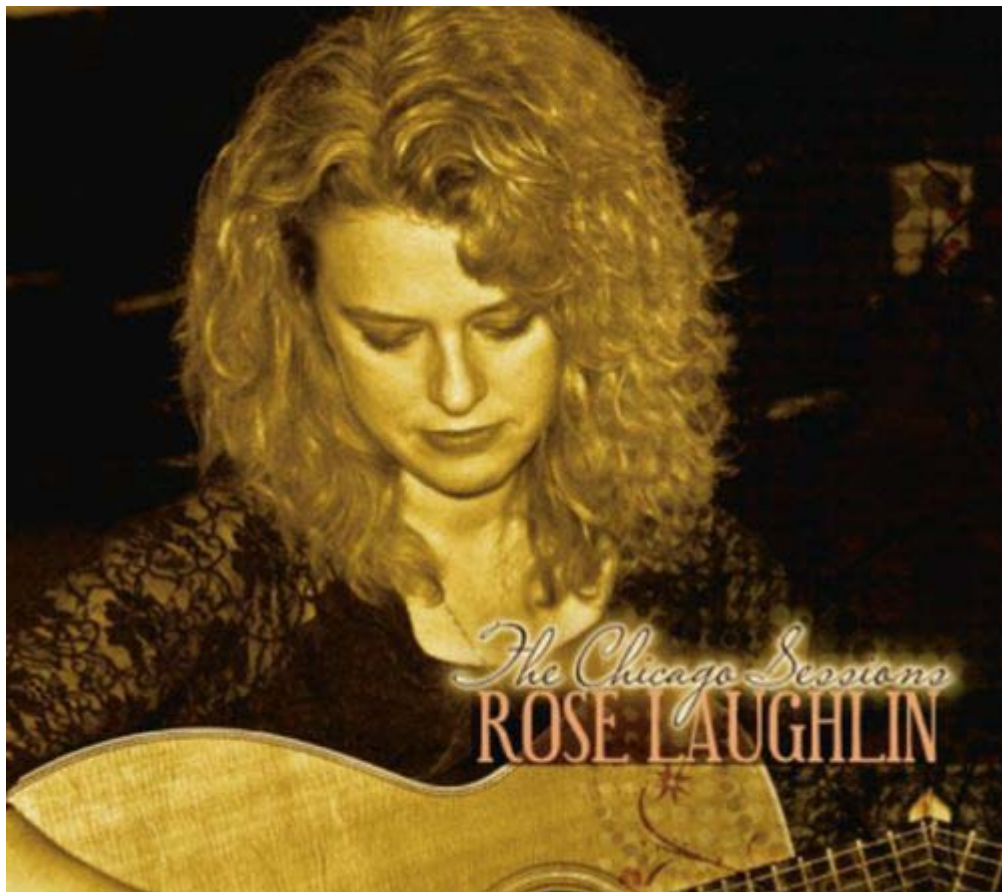
Rose Laughlin, liner notes, *The Chicago Sessions*

I have dim memories of folksingers of my youth, minstrels smelling of wood smoke and patchouli and wearing long hair and long, plaid flannel jackets, both harbouring dry leaves.

They would sing and softly pick out some Joni Mitchell, some Dylan, some Leonard Cohen, all of which I drank in like a thirsty pup. But sooner or later one of them would sing a song so strange and haunting it made the candle flames tremble.

These always turned out to be very old songs, preserved in amber in the Celtic, African, or American roots traditions.

I was soon persuaded that this is what music was about, that these songs were the zenith of my listening experience and that all else was dross.



Although she wasn't yet born back then, Rose Laughlin's album of traditional songs revived these memories for me and bade them dance.

Her craft is so meticulous you feel like you're listening to a meditation or a sung prayer. By her own admission in a recent interview Rose immerses herself in a song for months or longer, until she feels she can do it justice, and to do it justice she not only delivers a flawless performance; she sings every line as if she has lived it. Try to convince me that she hasn't.

Her artistry is expressed in a high, husky voice that could be compared to that of Marianne Faithfull or Stevie Nicks if Rose's weren't so much better. She utilizes a great deal of the kind of ornamentation typical of traditional Irish singing, with many notes to one syllable of text. Like Billie Holiday, she minimizes affect when the line is emotive and emphasizes lines that appear deceptively simple, drawing out their meaning.

All the songs on this CD are gems and it sounds like you're hearing them for the first time.

"Let No Man Steal Your Thyme" is jarringly beautiful. So is Rose's very innovative rendition of "Summertime" (the guitar is smokin', and there's actually a fiddle reel at the end).

Laughlin recorded this album just before leaving Chicago to return to her native Seattle. Her music partner, Mike Kirkpatrick, was a boon to the album for three reasons, one being his instrumental prowess, two being his keen understanding of Rose's musical objectives, and three being his willingness to give Rose creative elbow room. Kudos, Mike.

*The Chicago Sessions* 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.

## CLICK OF THE WRIST – Snack Time

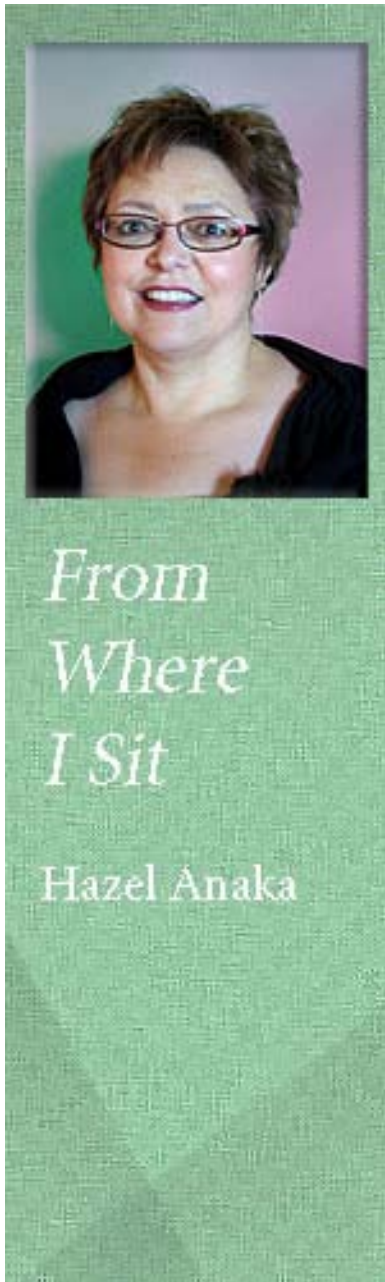
This week, erudite minds in Britain answered a long-debated question: are Pringles really potato chips? (Or crisps, in the vernacular there.) It seems they've been officially declared as such, "enabling the taxman to take a multimillion-pound bite of VAT." Ah, the joys of that universal pastime: snacking.

Favourite Weird Snack Combo - Dorm rooms have witnessed the invention of some of the oddest food combinations imaginable, and this Nutella and tortilla chips melding isn't terribly unusual. Readers' contributions are, though—such as the grapes and shrimp combo.

Blackboard Biology - Does a Twinkie really last forever? Thirty-four years ago, a science teacher at George Stevens Academy in Maine put the myth to the test. He bought a two-pack, ate one, and saved the other Twinkie, still in its wrapper. The Twinkie's still there, but as one brand manager for Hostess said, "I wouldn't touch it with a 10-foot pole."

Weird Snack Gallery - The pictures say it all. Some aren't so strange, but then there's the Bacon and Cheese Crick-ettes. Yum. And why would anyone want their lemon-flavoured chips infused with caffeine?

Snacks from Japanese Convenience Stores - One person's Krispy Kreme is another person's taco sushi, I guess. Still not sure I'd go looking for the tiny, dried fish in the bag of Minnows 'n' Nuts, though.



## My Kind of Town

After I graduated from high school eons ago the logical location for post-secondary studies was Edmonton. Edmonton was only an hour away. I was interested in the field of social work but the only degree program in Alberta was at the University of Calgary. Grant MacEwan College in Edmonton had a two-year diploma program and seemed like the perfect compromise.

It was 1972, after all; the world was a lot smaller then and besides, I was in love! Could I move to Calgary for four years and leave Roy behind? Hardly.

So out of convenience and necessity Edmonton became my kind of town. I attended college there and got my first jobs there. I lived in two different basement suites near the 118th Avenue GMC campus. Then as now, the area was a bit seamy.

After Roy and I got married we lived in an apartment suite on 107 Avenue and 108 Street. It was on the flight path of the municipal airport and a couple of blocks from the ambulance headquarters. It was not a quiet time in our lives but we were young and apparently could sleep through almost anything.

Even after Roy got the call of the land and we moved back home to Andrew to begin farming, Edmonton remained our town. We've gravitated to the city for specialty health services, continuing education opportunities, shopping, and recreational pursuits. Both kids attended college and university there. Hilary lives there while Greg is in nearby Sherwood Park.

Through the years I've been a faithful reader of the *Edmonton Journal* and a viewer of local TV. That media link has kept me in touch with "my city." I've watched with interest all the political goings-on.

I saw Edmonton's first female mayor, Jan Reimer; smiling Bill Smith; and currently Stephen Mandel lead the city through good times and bad. I think Mandel is the right guy in the right place and when I had the chance to meet him I told him as much. I'm sure he sleeps much better knowing some non-

taxpayer country bumpkin approves of his leadership!

Besides politics I've gotten caught up in breaking news: the abduction of Punky Gustavson, the killer Black Friday tornado, the debate over the new art gallery design, the extension of the Anthony Henday, the state of the Oilers, lost dogs, missing seniors, shootings and stabbings, the beating of Dougald Miller. Or today's 13 ATB employees sharing in the \$49 million lottery win. I've cheered or cried as these events have unfolded because I am invested in the wellbeing of this town.

I watch the growth and progress of my town and decry those developments I don't agree with. I curse the potholes and adapt to the ever increasing traffic. I admire the volunteerism and generosity of the people. I recognize that despite its population Edmonton, in some ways, still has a small-town vibe and know that's not necessarily a bad thing. Edmonton is a fine place, from where I sit.

# The Interviewer

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

*written and illustrated by Wanda Waterman St. Louis*

## Rockhead #23: Expecting Pay

And you were expecting to be paid for it?



You say that like it's a bad thing! I'm providing a professional service. You wouldn't get work from a dentist and not expect to pay him.



Or her.



Yeah. Whatever.



So... you were working on this and expecting to be paid for it around the time of the first quarterly meeting?



Ye-ah.



The same meeting at which Della Chute presented the student union newsletter she had developed and which she was offering the student union free of charge?



Oh, that! Yeah, I guess.



*next: Persuasive Arguments*



*My date's waiting.  
Does my breath smell fresh?*



*Dear  
Barb*

*Barbara Godin*

## Smoker Needs to Quit for Himself, Not the Relationship

*Dear Barb:*

*I am a single woman in my early thirties. I have never been married, but have had lots of relationships. I would like to marry and have a family, but I'm having a hard time finding the right man. I recently met a man that I feel an attraction to. We get along great; he makes me laugh and we seem to have a lot in common. My biggest problem with him is his smoking.*

*I've tried to convince myself that this is not an issue, but it keeps popping up. He says he will quit if I really want him to. I'm not sure that I want him to quit smoking for me. I believe he has to quit smoking for himself, not because I want him too.*

*Should I continue in this relationship and hope he will quit smoking, or should I end it right now before I get too involved? I really like him and we do seem to have a connection. Please advise.*

*Michelle*

Good to hear from you, Michelle. Smoking is such a taboo in today's society. It is difficult for the smoker as well as those around them.

Aside from the smell and cost, there is no doubt that smoking contributes to the development of many illnesses; not only in the smoker, but second-hand smoke affects the health of those around the smoker. Therefore, if you were to marry and have children, you would be putting yourself as well as your children at risk.

Only you know how strong your feelings are for this person, but this is a big issue. You are right that if he quits smoking for you it could lead to other problems in the relationship. He may have feelings of resentment toward you that could manifest in other areas of your life, thus leading to additional difficulties.

I think you need to tell him how you feel and how much you care for him, and that you don't want him to quit for your sake but rather for himself. If he insists he wants to quit because your relationship is that important to him, then he needs to get outside help through his doctor or the many quit-smoking programs that are available. By joining a program he will be receiving help to deal with all the issues that come along with quitting smoking.

If he agrees to this, I would suggest you give him the opportunity to prove to you that he really wants to quit. If he successfully completes the program, then make your decision whether you want to continue in the relationship. Sometimes all it takes is a nudge from the right person for someone to give up a bad habit.

Good luck to you both.

*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.*

## 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.

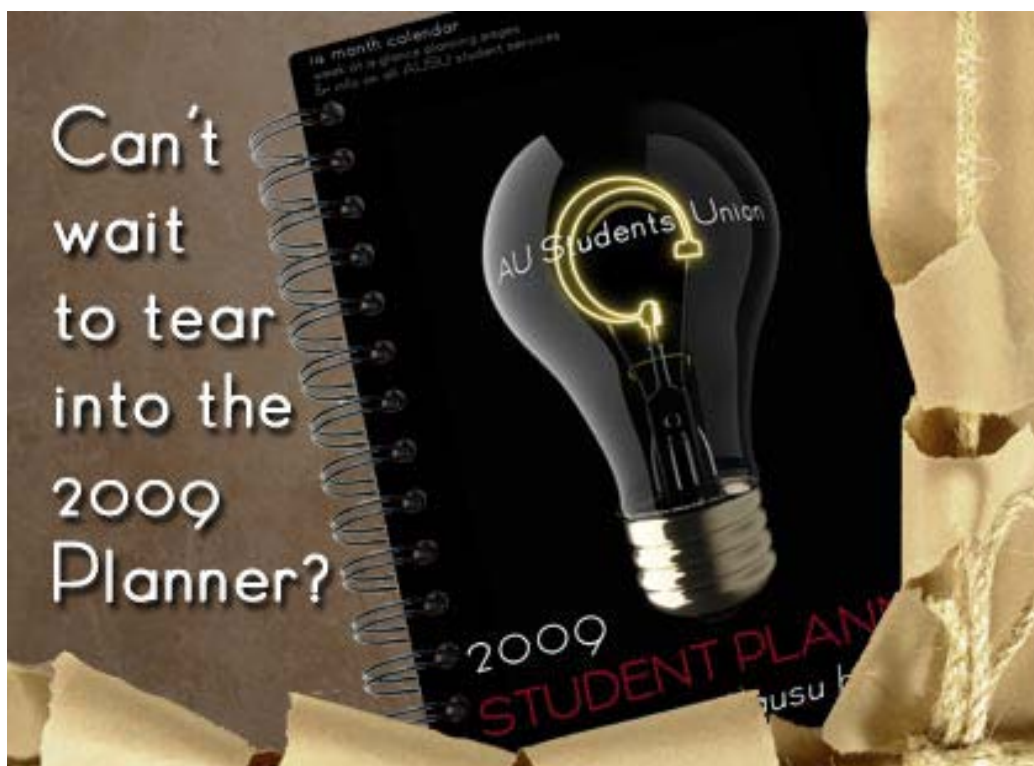
In that meeting a number of important revisions to the definitions of AUSU membership occurred, to make sure that the Councillors you elect are able to represent you during General Meetings and so that if you're a student in an AU collaborative undergrad program, you'll still be counted as an AUSU member 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: Safer communities law sees family ejected from home

Under Nova Scotia's Safer Communities and Neighbourhoods Act, police can shut down buildings known for gambling, prostitution, or as drug havens.

That legislation was put to use May 19 as a family was evicted from their home in Sydney Mines, NS, a residence police say was a drug den.

As the [CBC](#) reports, police attended the home to make sure everyone listed in court documents left the building. The property will remain boarded up for three months.

Although no one in the home had been charged with drug offences, the Act allows courts to shutter a property for up to 90 days if activities there "pose an immediate threat to the neighbourhood."

In this case, George Clarke, a resident of the home, denied any wrongdoing and told CBC that frequent visitors were simply there to obtain clean syringes. "I try to protect my son's friends

by giving them clean needles," he told reporters.

The residence is the second in Cape Breton to be closed under the legislation, and several neighbours told reporters they were glad to see the family removed.

### In Foreign News: Congress to allow concealed weapons in national parks

Gun-rights advocates in the US are gearing up to declare victory, as Congress looks set to pass a provision allowing "visitors to national parks and refuges to carry loaded and concealed weapons."

President Obama is expected to sign the provision into law. The gun provision was piggybacked onto a popular measure making credit-card lending more consumer friendly, according to [The New York Times](#). Rather than derail that measure, Obama is expected to allow the gun provision to pass along with it.

According to some in Congress, the provision "is less about guns than it is states' rights." Currently, even in states where residents have been authorized to carry firearms, their weapons must be unloaded and secured while on national lands, such as parks and refuges. Failure to do so, even while passing briefly through such areas, could result in charges for a firearms violation.

Though many in Congress are lukewarm on, or opposed to, gun rights, they realize the difficulties they're up against. As Senator Barbara Boxer, Democrat of California, told reporters, "Either you are going to bring down the whole Senate and never do anything or you are going to swallow hard and say, 'I will just vote my conscience on those amendments and speak out until people get a hold of their senses.'"

## EDUCATION NEWS

Carl Meyer

**Education pays, debt delays**

OTTAWA (CUP) - Although a post-secondary education can secure a job quicker and with higher pay, getting there still requires an average debt load of tens of thousands.

So says Statistics Canada, which released the National Graduates Survey for 2007 on April 22.

The survey was jointly undertaken by Statistics Canada and Human Resources and Skills Development Canada, and tracked graduates from Canadian public post-secondary institutions for two years.

The study showed that for those working, their education paid off, as earnings rose with each level of education.

"The median annual earnings among those who were working full-time in 2007 was lowest for college graduates at \$35,000. This increased to \$45,000 for bachelor's

graduates, \$60,000 for master's graduates and \$65,000 for doctorate graduates," reads the study.

The study also showed that "more than 80 per cent of college and university students who graduated in 2005 and did not pursue further studies had found full-time employment by 2007."

Despite these employment figures, the study pointed out that "in 2007, two years after graduation, just over one-quarter of those who owed student debt at the time they graduated had paid it off."

Indeed, while graduates had lower average debt levels in 2005 than they did in 2000, it was by a small proportion, and debt levels also remain in the tens of thousands. In 2007, doctoral graduates had a \$22,500 debt on average, with master's graduates averaging \$19,500, bachelor's graduates averaging \$20,400, and college graduates averaging \$11,800.

Even so, the Canada Millennium Scholarship Foundation suggests the study showed post-secondary student debt levels had stabilized. The Foundation cites the survey's pronouncement that "between 2000 and 2005, debt levels of university graduates who borrowed for their education decreased by 0.9 per cent, while that of college graduates decreased by 4.5 per cent."

"We are pleased that this study from Statistics Canada confirms that the Foundation has delivered on its mandate to improve the financial situation of Canadian students," said Executive Director Norman Riddell.

The Canadian Federation of Students, however, does not see such a rosy picture.

"One in three post-secondary graduates reported difficulty repaying their student loan two years after graduation," the Federation announced after the study was released.

"This study confirms that there is a very disturbing inequality of access to post-secondary education in Canada," said CFS chairperson Katherine Giroux-Bougard. "Students that cannot pay up front are being driven deep into long-term debt."

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## THE VOICE

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