

THE VOICE MAGAZINE

Volume 17 Issue 21
May 29, 2009

Rite of Way

Cue the tiara

Rah Rah

Going steady

Horse and Cart

Out of order



*Plus: The Interviewer, Dear Barb,
From Where I Sit, and much more...*

CONTENTS

WELCOME TO THE VOICE PDF

The Voice interactive Table of Contents allows you to click a story title to jump to an article. Clicking the bottom-right corner of any page returns you here. Some ads and graphics are also links.

Features

Rite of Way	3
On the Hill	5

Articles

In Conversation With: Little Foot Long Foot	6
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Columns

Dear Barb	8
The Mindful Bard	9
From Where I Sit	11
The Interviewer	12
AUSU This Month	13

News and Events

Did You Know?: AU Collaborations	4
Click of the Wrist	10
International News Desk	16
Education News	17

From the Readers

Letters to the Editor	2
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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

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



RITE OF WAY

Kimberley Sanders



"I never teach my pupils; I only attempt to provide the conditions in which they can learn."

Albert Einstein

Rituals. We all have them. There are physical rituals (your partner brushes his teeth using a weirdly rigorous technique). There are emotional rituals (your colleague plays BTO's "Taking Care of Business" before every staff meeting). And there are spiritual rituals (your mother smudges her home with cedar, sage, and sweet grass before and after every family event).

And for some of us, there are even academic rituals—deliberate actions that bring us into character for a specific educational purpose.

I presume that most of you have figured out that the distance-learning gig isn't for the weak-willed. Not only are distance students an exceptionally conscientious genus of learners (brazen compliment intended), they're also highly adaptable and remarkably resourceful. Since most distance learners have career, family, and community responsibilities, they are also master doers.

But the "doing" thing isn't so easy when your body is screaming for a nap. So it is precisely for times of low-to-no energy that I created my own ritual to spark an errant academic flame. As embarrassing as it is, I freely admit to the following ritual because it works for me; these 11 steps motivate me to manifest the mindset that I require to succeed as a student.

So, here you are; my unreasonable rite of way to reason, logic, and learning:

One, turn off the phone. Two, make solo espresso or green tea rice-milk misto, as required. Three, locate beaded cat ears and place on head to pull back hair (I have also been seen wearing moose antlers, a tiara, and a flamboyant red top hat I wore in the Vagina Monologues).

Four, layer up to combat the 10 p.m. to two a.m. chills. Five, light votive candles and Tibetan incense. Six, play Hildegard von Bingen or Rammstein CD, as required. Seven, sort books and readings into strategic piles.

Eight, pat the dog that has materialized by my feet. Nine, take the helm of my "command centre" (a.k.a. the desk). Ten, visualize successful outcome(s).

And 11, begin learning.

Silly enough? Well, let's face it: when avidity is waning, a large part of the whole "success" thing is simply creating a climate for learning.

I hate to badger, but the right mindset can make the difference between an absolutely divine paper and an oh-my-god-this-really-bites paper. Truth be told, motivating myself was a whole lot easier when I was in a

“regular” classroom. Inasmuch as I love the virtual classroom (I can, after all, wear a kitschy top hat), this long-distance and, dare I say it, long-suffering educational pursuit has left me so isolated and unmotivated at times that my cranium-embellished ritual has become a PFD as I drift about my own little sea of indifference.

Create a ritual that’s just for you. Be bold. Be eccentric. This journey (academic or otherwise) is what you make it, so why not make it fun?

Since there is no corporeal connection for distance education students, no face-to-face interaction with other learners to mirror our progress, many of us have had to find ways to create an appropriate climate of learning. And who determines what’s “appropriate”? Well, you do.

In one of my AU philosophy courses I learned that philosophy moves us in the direction of wisdom, along the path of perspicacity, if you will. But (pay attention here) studying philosophy does not impart knowledge necessary to become a wise woman or man.

Right now, wherever you are, I invite you to meditate on the following bit of wisdom from Henry David Thoreau: “If a man does not keep pace with his companions, perhaps it is because he hears a different drummer. Let him step to the music which he hears, however measured or far away.”

What “music” compels you? Just as I am the creator of my academic environment, having developed motivational vices and virtues as needed, so, too, are you the creator of your environment.

I encourage you to do whatever it takes to establish the atmosphere you need to succeed as a distance student. Why not allow yourself the freedom to be a little outrageous? Tap into the source of wonder within you and get a little crazy.

My rite of way is just that: mine. What will yours look like?

I hope you allow the kindergartener in you to take centre stage. Create a ritual that’s just for you. Be bold. Be eccentric. This journey (academic or otherwise) is what you make it, so why not make it fun?

Besides, who’s going to see you?

DID YOU KNOW?



AU Collaborations

As AU students know, distance learners are a vibrant community of people working and studying together. And the teamwork doesn’t end there.

AU “collaborates with hundreds of institutions and organizations in Alberta, across Canada, and around the world to make university education more accessible and flexible for students everywhere.”

From collaborative programs to transfer credit arrangements to professional development agreements (and more), check out AU’s [Learning Services Collaborations](#) page to discover some exciting ways to enrich your education experience.

ON THE HILL

Sandra Livingston



Horse and Cart

Build it and they will come. That seems to be the premise Governor General Michaëlle Jean is going on as she lobbies for a university to be built in Canada's north.

She delivered a sharp rebuke to Ottawa recently, saying that Canada lags some 40 years behind other nations who've brought higher learning to northern areas.

On the face of it, her argument has merit. Rather than having northern students travel south, provide the opportunity for an education in their own communities. The adjustment to university life can be hard enough: living away from home for the first time, the new adult responsibilities thrust on those fresh out of high school. For northern students, leaving small towns or reserves to face bustling cities is often an added, overwhelming stress.

The governor general's intentions are, I'm sure, good. But she seems to have forgotten a simple piece of logic that's proven remarkably useful in everything from politics to farming: never put the cart before the horse.

It's all well and good to build a university, be it an enormous, ivory-towered edifice or several satellite campuses. But with an abysmal primary education system in the north, who exactly does our GG expect to fill those university classrooms?

The lack of a decent primary education for aboriginals is well documented. According to 2006 data from Statistics Canada, a mere 15.99 per cent of aboriginals over the age of 15 attend school full-time. Of those aged 25 and over, only nine per cent have graduated from high school.

In the north, just getting kids into the classroom is a struggle. In Old Crow, YT, overall attendance sits at 13.5 per cent. In Baker Lake, NU, it's 12.43 percent. In Iqaluit, it's 15.71 per cent. Similar numbers exist across the north.

And for those who do make it into class, a meaningful education is often still out of reach. Innu children in Labrador are one example. As early as grade one, the majority of children begin falling behind grade and age expectations. The pattern only gets worse as they get older: as one report shows, "66% of seven year olds were estimated to be at least one to two years behind grade level, and this pattern of decline continued to a point where 66% of 16 year olds were at least five years behind."

That doesn't mean they're not intelligent. Systemic corruption, alcohol and drug issues, poverty—it all plays a part. But it *does* mean that the primary school system as it exists is not working, and it's definitely not giving the vast majority of northern students the skills they'll need when it comes to university exams, essays, or science labs.

In short, dear Governor General, it's all well and good to provide that beautiful, sleek-coated horse for the people of the north. But if a broken cart is standing in front of it, they're still not going to get very far.

IN CONVERSATION WITH . . .

Wanda Waterman St. Louis



Little Foot Long Foot

Little Foot Long Foot is a Toronto-based rock duo comprising vocalist-guitarist Joan Smith and drummer Isaac Klein. On May 26 they released Harsh Words, an album of bluesy, hard-driving songs in classic rock style. The band is currently on a tour of Canadian cities.

The following are notes from a conversation between Wanda Waterman St. Louis and Joan Smith during their Halifax stop.

The Place Where the Songs Come From

"Two Towns Over" is actually about the last time we were out east. We had a show in St. John and we were staying in St. Andrews by-the-Sea. After the show one of the bands said we could crash at their place but we said, "Nah, we have our own beds in St. Andrews and we'll just drive home from there."

They said, "Well, watch out for the mist," and so of course there was the thickest fog ever and we're like, "Great! We can't see anything and we could die." So that song is based entirely on experience.

Also we went to Springhill, Nova Scotia, to play and were staying at a campsite about 45 minutes away and we had a GPS system which suddenly, at three in the morning, decided to give us completely wrong directions. It was pointing down a road that looked like if we went down it we'd end up in Axe Murderer Town. So we made the decision to turn it off.

"Isolation Blues" was written from the point of view of the saddest, most deluded person on earth. I'm not the most depressive person but that song was written as if I were.

I was an only child and a bit of a weirdo. I got my first guitar when I was 14 and I was playing piano and French horn before that. I guess I was a loser. I didn't have a lot of friends, and when you're little, friends are like the most important thing. I went through a couple of tough years when I had no friends at all. That's definitely shaped who I am in terms of trying to be empathetic. That was probably when I was at my most sad. Now I'm a very happy person.

How It's Done

When I want to write a song I sit with my acoustic guitar, which is kind of difficult because I used to do singer-songwriter stuff and it's so easy for me to fall into those plaintive, Sarah McLaughlin-type, sad little songs, so I try to make them as aggressive as possible on the acoustic guitar and then usually the lyrics come after.

Sometimes the subjects come from conversations Isaac and I have had, like, "Remember that douche bag who totally thought he was a cowboy but grew up in Suburbia, Toronto, sitting in front of the Nintendo his whole life, pretending he milked cows every day?" And Isaac will say, "You should write a song about that," and so I do. And I try to make Isaac laugh with some of the lyrics.

I was never really in love with writing and performing acoustic singer-songwriter material. I didn't get a super response from it. Then I was out in Vancouver about three years ago with a friend who used to do music with the Manvils. He had this awesome semi-hollow-body guitar made in the late '60s by Yamaha.

He was like, "Dude, this would be perfect for you."

So I said, "Well, you're in debt and I have a little bit of money, so I'll buy this guitar off you."

I plugged it in and an awesome sound came out of it. From then on I got a way better response from listeners. I have a pretty aggressive way of singing and they said it worked for me better than the acoustic guitar.



What's in a Name?

"Little Foot Long Foot" is from a Dave Chappelle skit. It's the one where he's doing *Inside the Actor's Studio* and the guy is doing a fake retrospective of his career and one of the movies is a melodrama called *Little Foot Long Foot*. He has this really little foot and a really long foot and he keeps falling over and saying "I don't need any help!" I always thought the title of that movie was brilliant.

What Does It Take?

In order to be creative I generally need a room to myself. I have housemates so that can be difficult. Recently, being creative has also meant getting up in the middle of the night when I think I have a song and recording it into my phone. Actually I did that the other night and when I played it back in the morning it was just me breathing.

I'm a musician and I don't make a lot of money so nine-to-five jobs, when I do have them, are pretty non-conducive to creativity. I was the executive assistant to Ted Rogers of Rogers Communications. That was really stressful and *Little Foot Long Foot* did nothing during that time period. I hated my life. Being on tour encourages a lot more creativity because you're able to do just music.

We like to put humour into things. We love comedians like Dave Chappelle, Mitch Hedberg, and David Cross. They're brilliant with words.

As for movies, I loved *Harold and Maude*. That's my favourite movie ever. I guess it's an aesthetic.



Unruly Kids Strain Sisterly Bond

Dear Barb:

My sister and I have always been close. When I got married I was anxious for her to get married so we would have children close in age. Fortunately my sister got married two years after I did and today we both have two young children who are close in age.

Well, things aren't going as I had expected. As mothers we are very different. I am much stricter with my children than my sister is with hers. When she comes over with her two boys they are completely undisciplined. My children are not allowed to jump on the furniture, but when Karen is over and her boys jump on the sofa, mine join in. They eat and drink in the living room, torment my cat, and to be honest some days I can't wait until they leave.

I don't want to ruin my relationship with my sister, but I am getting to the point where I am reluctant to invite her and her boys to my home. Barb, what can I do to resolve this situation without having it come between me and my sister? Help!

Connie

Hi, Connie. Wow, what a dilemma. Obviously you love your sister very much and you don't want anything to jeopardize that relationship.

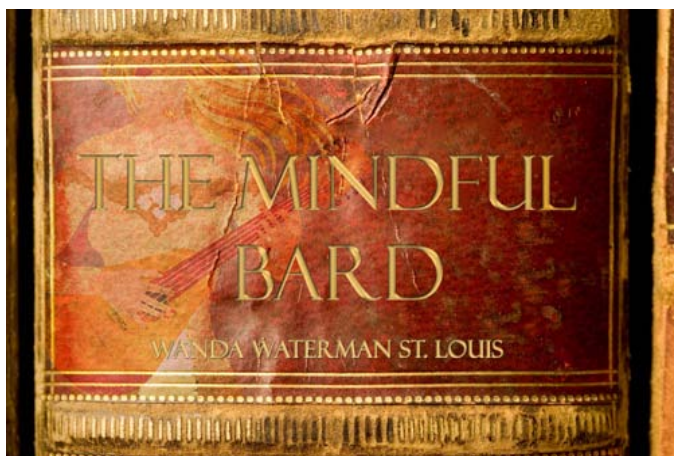
When we become parents we frequently have our own perception of what constitutes the perfect parent. Obviously you value structure and guidance, while your sister may place more value in allowing her children the freedom to do as they please. Which scenario is right or wrong remains a personal opinion and is often dependent on the personality and character of the children involved.

In either scenario, children have to be taught to respect other people's property. While in your home your sister should not allow her children to behave in a manner that she knows you would not allow your children to.

Although it may be difficult, you are going to have to talk to your sister about this. Explain to her that your children are not allowed to jump on the furniture, bring food into the living room, and whatever other rules you have for your children. Simply discuss with her that it is difficult for you to tell your children not to do something when they see their cousins doing exactly that. Also remind your children that the rules you lay out for them apply whether their cousins are there or not.

Be gentle and tactful in explaining this to your sister. Do not make it appear as though you believe her way of raising her children is wrong and yours is right. Perhaps she will be more responsive if you indicate that you and your husband together have chosen to implement these rules for your children. She may choose to believe this is coming primarily from your husband and may be less likely to be offended. Hope I was able to help. Thanks for the great question, Connie.

Email your questions to 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.



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

CD: Rah Rah, *Going Steady*

Label: Young Soul Records

Release date: 2008

Would It Help if Love Songs Weren't Just Meant to Get You Into Somebody's Pants?

"Many years ago

Somebody else stood right where I'm standing now.

Somebody drank the water that I drink.

Now that it's the new millennium

You just gotta stop yourself and think;

That's when I'll meet my demise.

That's when I'll finally look into your eyes."

"Castles" by Rah Rah, Going Steady

You older girls, remember that guy you once knew, the one who told you never to fall in love with him because that Meatloaf song ("Two Out of Three Ain't Bad") like, *totally* summed up the way he felt about you? Yeah, that guy.

Well, Rah Rah just ripped up that guy's words and fed them to him.

The thoughtful pop culture aficionado is never content with hearts and flowers and "Breaking Up is Hard to Do," partly because the sentimental lingo is common as dirt and partly because no individual experience of love can be poured into a mould. And one of the things we look for in alternative music is a way to stretch and de-stereotype our culture's views about romantic love.

Oddly, a CD called *Going Steady* by a band called Rah Rah sounds like a perfect receptacle for formulaic rhyming clichés about the meaning of love and loss.



It isn't; it's about feeling ugly, facing your mortality, feeling emotionally cheated, wondering why your urges seem so strange and perverted compared to everyone else's, never finding the right words, and the search for a real, enduring communion with another soul.

There is truly some delightful stuff coming out of Regina in general and Young Soul Records in particular. Rah Rah is as blithe and creatively fetterless as their friends (and Young Soul cohorts) Library Voices but with an emotional vulnerability that rides their comic arias like Lady Godiva.

There is nary a trace of that male egotism found in so many rock songs in which the male is just too broken, independent, or exceptional to be in a committed relationship.

Going Steady is about young love's shadow side. If Rah Rah's viewpoint is as legit as it looks, this shadow side is actually much more engaging and fun and real than the world of crimson and clover.

"If I was Cuba, you would be Peru." Just think about that for a minute.

Going Steady manifests five of The Mindful Bard's criteria for music well worth a listen: 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 is about attainment of the true self; and 5) it provides respite from a sick and cruel world, a respite enabling me to renew myself for a return to mindful artistic endeavour.

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. If I agree with your recommendation, I'll thank you online.

CLICK OF THE WRIST – All Secure

In Burma, pro-democracy leader Aung San Suu Kyi has been charged after a security breach that saw an American man gain access to her home. She may be at the mercy of a corrupt government, but even those with power (and freedom) have plenty to deal with when it comes to security.

Breach of Etiquette - The words "Buckingham Palace" usually conjure up images of polite tea parties and polo ponies, not unbalanced intruders rambling around in the Queen's bedroom at night. It seems that the royal family isn't quite as secure as they could be, as this recap of security breaches shows.

The Beast - And you thought a vehicle armed with tear gas cannons, night-vision camera, and oxygen tanks was purely the stuff of spy novels. Not if you're President Obama, it's not. His presidential limo, nicknamed The Beast, is said to be able to "protect against bullets, chemical attack, and even a missile strike."

Celebrity Stalkers - As this article points out, "Celebrity stalkers may seem like harmless nut cases on the evening newscasts," but it's a far different thing for the people they target. Celebrities or not, the constant need for vigilance and heightened security measures takes a very real toll.

FBI Famous Cases - When it comes to security, the Federal Bureau of Investigation has handled everything from the Lindbergh kidnapping to Enron. This site offers the official story on some of the most fascinating cases in the Bureau's history.



Just for Today

Anyone (and everyone) with email has received inspirational, motivational, tear-jerking pieces that tug at the heart strings. Often there is music or poignant images. Way too often there is the exhortation to send this along to ten or 12 people in the next seven minutes.

I admit that most of the time I read and delete. Sometimes I don't even open them for days or weeks because they are a huge time drain. I now have a folder that I save the exceptional ones in so I can reread them if I ever want to. Otherwise, they are gone.

Tonight as I write this I wish I had some trite, sentimental lessons for life to read and take comfort in. It is time for reflection, for pausing and taking stock, for making course corrections, for counting blessings. The reality is this: as much as we sometimes look longingly at other people's lives and luck or sometimes compare ourselves to others and find ourselves wanting, the life we have is the best possible life for us.

It is a mishmash of results of all the decisions we've made and the actions we've taken. It is the sum total of genetics, nature and nurture, karma, opportunities taken or missed, serendipity, dumb luck, and intention. Ideally, we are the heroes and heroines of our lives and the masters of our destinies.

When I heard a few days ago that a woman I know, who's younger than me, is facing a double mastectomy I was stunned and saddened. It is another grim reminder that life can blindsides us at any time without a moment's notice. And while I hope her journey has a happy ending I can't help but think about what I would do with such a diagnosis. I want to take the life lesson from her misfortune and reap the benefits for myself and those I care about without having to live through this terrible ordeal.

At the risk of repeating what we've all heard and read before: I plan to burn my candles instead of saving them for some special occasion. Likewise for the best bedding and dinnerware. I'm going to forgive more (and sooner)

than I usually do. I'm going to spend more time this summer smelling the roses than weeding around them. I'm going to sleep when I'm tired and eat when I'm hungry.

I'm going to spend more time with family and friends. Laugh more, overanalyze less. Walk each day. Plan more mini getaways than the one big trip that may not materialize. Delight in the miracle of life as a grandbaby arrives. Bask in the job well done in raising two wonderful kids. Give thanks for my blessed life.

Never miss an opportunity to say thank you, to lift someone up with words of praise or encouragement. Shed those people, habits, things, and practices that don't enrich my life. Draw close that which does. Learn to accept what is rather than bucking life at every turn because today is the only day I'm sure of, from where I sit.

The Interviewer

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

written and illustrated by Wanda Waterman St. Louis

Rockhead #25: *Like it Matters*

I didn't know you had to walk to design a newsletter, but, hey, you learn something new every day. Being born female doesn't help either, does it?



There were grammatical errors-



Where?!



A couple. But you have plenty of grammatical errors on your newsletter, Brad.



You use apostrophes where they don't belong and leave them out when they do. You fail to capitalise proper nouns. You use the word "phallus" when clearly you mean "fallacious"--



Oh, like it matters! Just because I'm not a FARTS major--



But all that's neither here nor there. What concerns me is that while you were developing a newsletter, which, as you say, you intended to be paid for...



...you used your influence with the board to prevent someone else from granting the student union a free newsletter. That would seem to me to constitute a conflict of interest. Don't you think?



How can I stop feeling so jaded?

next: The Comforting Insularity of the Right Kind of People

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.

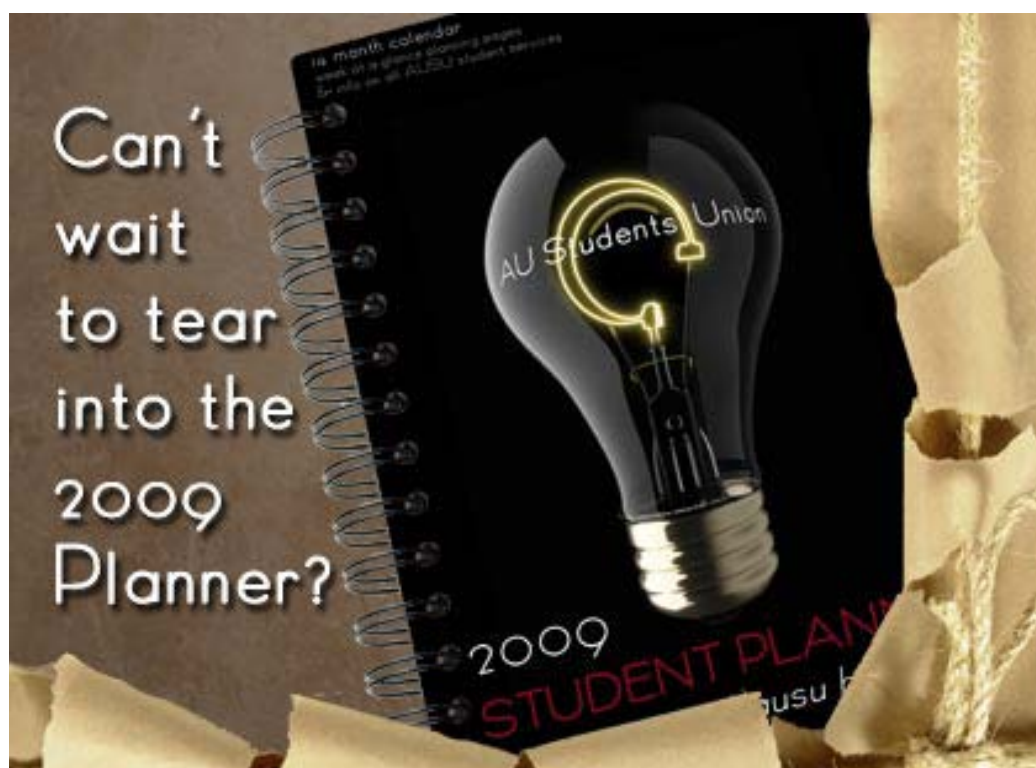
In that meeting a number of important revisions to the definitions of AUSU membership occurred, to make sure that the Councillors you elect are able to represent you during General Meetings and so that if you're a student in an AU collaborative undergrad program, you'll still be counted as an AUSU member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

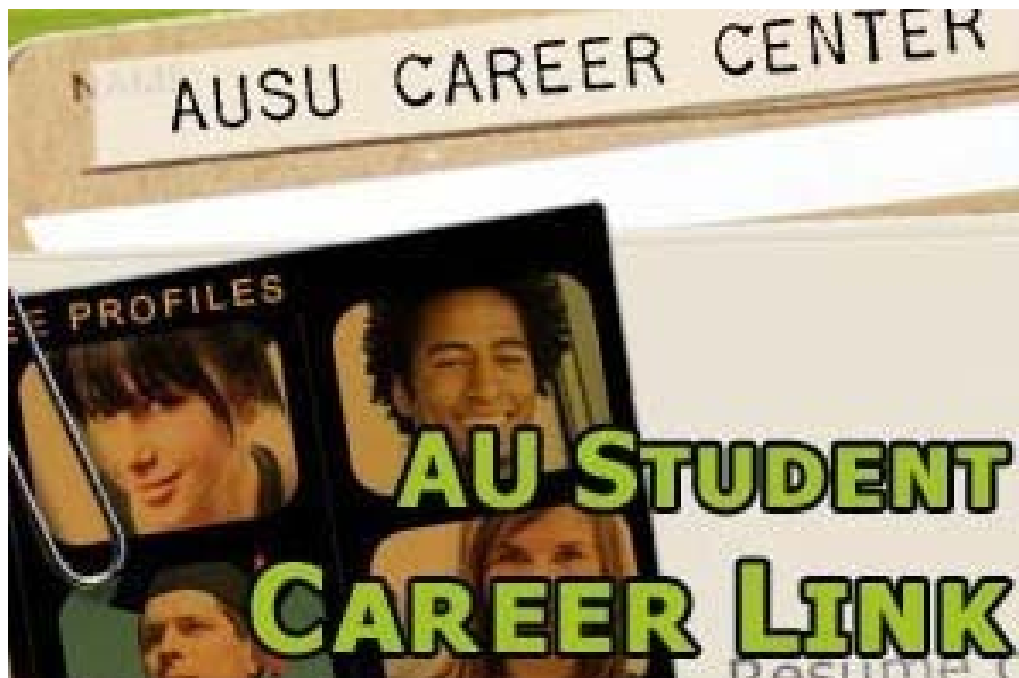
Still running, and still popular, the lock loan program can allow you to rest easy knowing your valuables are safe if you're taking an exam at the Calgary or Edmonton campus. The locks can be set to any combination, and are loaned to people without any deposit, but we ask that you please remember to 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: Arctic university on Governor General's agenda

Ottawa has labelled it a non-priority, but Governor General Michaëlle Jean continues to press for a university in the Arctic.

Speaking with The Canadian Press, Jean confirmed that she's not about to abandon her efforts to have a university built in the region. As the *Toronto Star* reports, Jean has described Canada as a "laggard" when it comes to providing higher learning for its northern population.

"Canada is at least 40 years behind," she told reporters. "Canada is the only northern state that doesn't have a university in the North. Canada is four decades behind Norway, Finland, Sweden, the United States."

The governor general's goal is the creation of an institution that would not only serve northern aboriginal residents, but also attract "non-aboriginal students and teachers to the North."

While many have applauded her efforts, detractors point out that there are other, more urgent education-related problems that should be addressed first. There's no point building a university, they say, when a mere 25 per cent of Nunavut children even graduate high school. As well, many graduates who do go on to university in the south "often require extra courses to catch up."

Statistics Canada figures show that, in that territory, only three percent of the population (aged 15 to 64) have earned a degree, diploma, or certificate from university—a total of just 455 people.

In Foreign News: Peru's inflation rate a staggering 216 billion per cent

If you think the economic news is bad in Canada, try these numbers on for size: measured over the past 45 years, Brazil has an inflation rate of more than 14.21 quadrillion percent. It doesn't sound any better expressed as 14,210 trillion or 14,210,480,006,034.800 per cent.

According to this *Journal Peru* article, the results come from a recent Bradesco study that looked at cost-of-living increases from 1961 to 2006. Among the top four countries were Argentina, Peru, and Uruguay, with Brazil leading the way for worldwide inflation rates. Following the launch of new initiatives in 1994, Brazil's inflation has slowly decreased, sitting at only 3.14 per cent in 2006.

The astronomical figures for the 45-year period are mainly the result of hyperinflation that hit South American countries hard in the '70s and '80s. Octávio de Barros, Bradesco's director for macroeconomic studies, reports that the numbers explain some of the reasons for "the enormous economic and social abyss that persists in Brazil and the rest of Latin America."

In the same 45-year period, the countries that ranked best for inflation rates were Norway at 916 per cent and Sweden at 922 per cent, with Australia and Denmark both scoring 1,018 per cent.

EDUCATION NEWS

Linda Givetash

**Changes made to Ontario student financial assistance**

WATERLOO (CUP) - John Milloy, Ontario's Minister of Training, Colleges and Universities, announced earlier this month that the province will see changes to its Distance and Textbook and Technology Grants, available to Ontario post-secondary students.

The new requirements only permit students who qualify and receive the Ontario Student Assistance Program (OSAP) to receive the grants.

This decision was made in light of the provincial budget released in March, which takes the world's current economic situation into account.

"We are going through some pretty extraordinary economic times," said Milloy during a conference call with the Canadian student media. With the new change to the grants, the provincial government will save just over \$100 million. Cuts are not isolated to the education sector.

"Certainly each ministry, including my own, took a hard look at where the pressures were and the resources that were available and we had to make tough decisions," said Milloy.

In addition to the requirement changes for the grants, the government will not be increasing the amount given. Originally, the Textbook and Technology Grant was meant to increase to \$250 per student annually as of the fall 2009. "The Textbook and Technology Grant will continue at the \$150 level, we will not be able to increase it," said Milloy.

Saad Aslam, chair of the Wilfrid Laurier University Students' Union board of directors, expressed his concern for students whose families have been affected by the recession. "There are a number of students whose parents may have lost jobs.... If they lost their jobs in May or over the summer they wouldn't be eligible for OSAP."

Aslam, who has also been involved with the Ontario University Students Alliance (OUSA) and the Canadian Alliance of Students Association (CASA), is concerned with ensuring that post-secondary education is accessible to all students regardless of their financial situation.

"It's not great to be cutting any sort of funding for post-secondary education and student assistance in a recession."

The effects that the grant changes will have on students will not be clear until the fall. They do, however, reflect the impact of the economic crisis on funding for post-secondary education. "We quite frankly don't have all the resources that we thought we had," said Minister Milloy.

However, Milloy maintained a positive attitude in addressing the issue, stating, "We're certainly trying to do everything we can to support students."

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THE VOICE

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