

THE VOICE MAGAZINE

Volume 17 Issue 23
June 12, 2009

AU Options

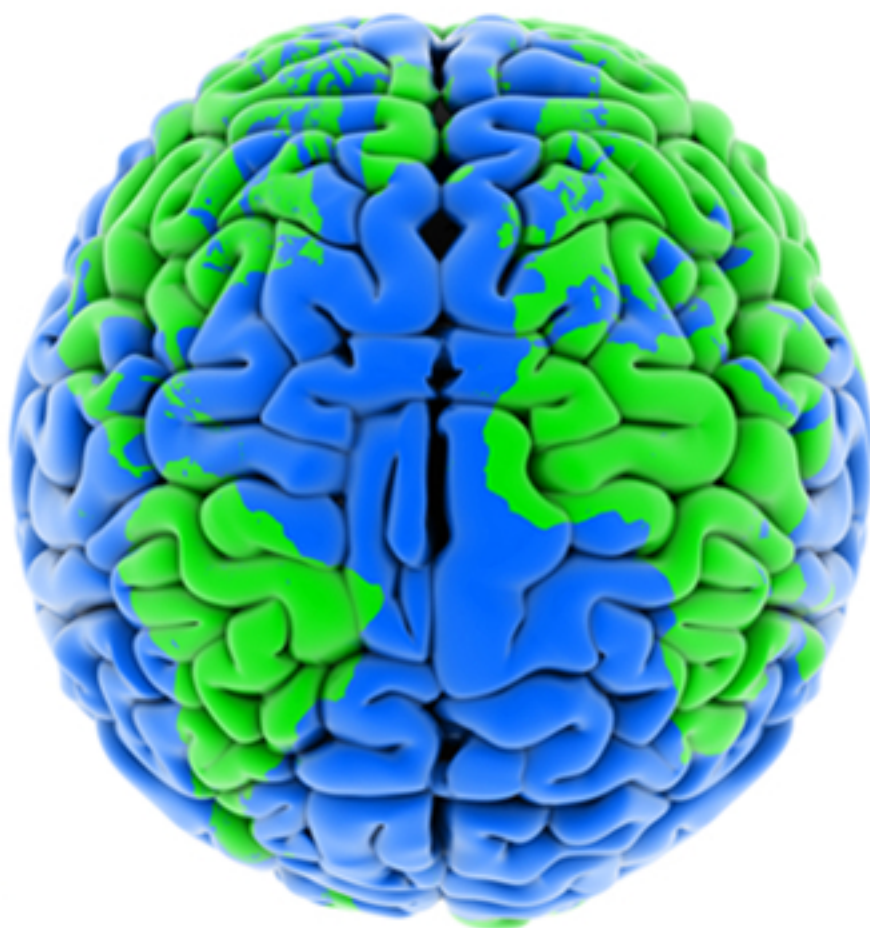
Psychology

Step by Step

On a mission

Spoooky Ruben

Mechanical Royalty



*Plus: The Interviewer, Dear Barb,
The Mindful Bard, and much more...*

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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
frequent contributions

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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

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



AU OPTIONS

Bethany Tynes



Bachelor of Arts in Psychology

According to the university's [About AU](#) page, Athabasca University currently serves over 37,000 students and offers more than 90 undergraduate and graduate programs. This wide range of programs presents AU students with a great number of choices in a variety of fields. Just one of these options is a Bachelor of Arts in Psychology.

Athabasca offers both a three- and four-year degree in psychology, and both programs are “designed to develop or expand [students’] knowledge of the broad

field of psychology” and “provide grounding in foundational courses central to psychology as a science.” In addition to foundational psychology courses, the university also offers a number of electives in the areas of Psychology, Career Development, Educational Psychology, and Counselling. Students in the three- and four-year psych programs have the option to either focus their degrees on one of these individual areas or take classes from more than one psychological stream of enquiry.

Though the three- and four-year programs have many similarities, one key difference between the two is the number of further educational options available to graduates. While students who graduate with a concentration in psychology do have a number of options for further related post-secondary education, their choices are not nearly so broad as those of students who graduate with a major in psychology.

Students who hold three-year psychology degrees are eligible to apply for AU’s Master of Arts - Integrated Studies and Master of Distance Education programs, among others. Students who complete four-year degrees, however, are not only eligible for the MAIS and MDE programs, but also AU’s Master of Health Studies and Master of Counselling programs, as well as to graduate studies at other universities.

The Centre for Psychology estimates that of the roughly 5,000 students who register for AU’s psychology courses each year, about 900 are enrolled in either three- or four-year psychology degrees at AU, making psych degrees a popular choice for AU students. Centre for Psychology tutors are also very popular with students: AUSU’s most recent Tutor of the Year contest saw 19 psychology tutors nominated, more than from any other department. Psychology major Tia Siewert says that so far she has been “impressed with most of the staff at AU” and found them both “helpful and friendly.”

One of these Centre for Psychology staff members is Dr. Lyle Grant, Professor of Behaviour Analysis at AU. Dr. Grant believes that online resources and technical innovations are among the greatest strengths of the psychology program at AU. While the department began by using primarily “telephone tutoring coupled with print-based self-instructional materials,” the 1990s brought the realization that much greater efficiency could be achieved by making use of the Internet. Printed study guides were found to be “readily adaptable to Web-based instruction,” and helped pave the way for the creation of many other online resources, including “interactive tutorials, glossaries, study guides and evaluative tools like online quizzes and exams.”

Dean Mah, a technical support staff in AU’s Centre for Psychology since 1997, has an active role in the maintenance and development of these online resources. “In the past,” he explains, “most of our online

efforts have been in adding interactive elements to all of our course offerings." Interactive tools, especially those which give instant automatic feedback, have been an important focus for the Centre.

Recently, though, the department has also begun to branch into the world of social networking, working "to become more active and visible on sites like Twitter and Second Life," as well as on Facebook, explains Mah. Facebook users can now check out the Centre's Daily Psychology Term application, which opens the department's psychology glossary to more people and aims "to expose it to the AU students who may not have known about it."

And while resource developers obviously hope that students will derive educational benefits from these online tools, Mah hopes they will also be fun and engaging. "We want you to be able to share your enthusiasm and experience of being a Centre for Psychology student," he says, "and we want to make that easy. We want students to be able to connect with each other," without being forced to use any one manner or medium. The Centre is also eager to hear feedback on what students like, dislike, or would like to see in future.

Feedback so far has been overwhelmingly positive. In fact, Dr. Grant notes that "data show that students evaluate our Psychology courses more highly than any other discipline at AU."

In light of students' satisfaction with psychology courses and tutors, as well as the Centre's dedication to developing innovative new ways for students to interact, it seems that AU's Bachelor of Arts in Psychology, available as either a three- or four-year degree, is an option well worth examining.

IN CONVERSATION WITH . . .

Wanda Waterman St. Louis

Spoooky Ruben

Spoooky Ruben is a recording artist, composer, and filmmaker, a singular talent infamous for having written songs in the style of progressive rock, among other '70s genres. (See the Voice piece in this issue on his new CD, Mechanical Royalty.)

While touring in Saskatchewan, Spoooky took some time to chat with Wanda Waterman St. Louis.

Roots, Geographical and Musical

I always felt like Canada was home. I've had a passport since I was a little kid. Even when I lived in

Germany or the States I felt like as soon as I got back to Canada life would get sorted out.

Gentle Giant, Frank Zappa, early albums by Rush, those really influenced me. I was into current bands as a teenager but I was also into older music. My older brother was a music fanatic so I was always asking about his records.

When I was nine and 10 I was really into any type of pop music. When I was 11 I started taking classical guitar lessons and got more into guitar, which led me to heavy metal. The first album I ever bought was *Ghost in the Machine* by The Police. I was really into Level 42 and Saga. I was into the very clean-sounding



bands that had lots of keyboards and ultra melodic sounds. Getting into the guitar got my interest into bands like Metallica.

You say that a lot of the old prog rock bands got made fun of because they took themselves too seriously; I feel the same way about a lot of these indie bands. It's like MSTRKRFT; they're standing on a stage and their fingers are fighting over this iPod and there's millions of people there watching. I just don't understand that. I don't understand how that's cool. I would be embarrassed if that was my show.

The Crux

What's important to me as a musician is making music that I feel is missing in my life. To me music is that one thing that's not about going through the grind, about having a career. The music is more important to me than having a career as a musician. I also do work as a composer. I'm kind of able to juggle my own music with my work. I guess I'm privileged that way.



Mechanical Royalty

When it comes to *Mechanical Royalty* it was something I had always wanted to do. I'm staff composer at a company in Los Angeles. After all the composing work I do, when I make my own album it really has to be an album that I want to make. I had always wanted to do some kind of prog rock epic thing, something that you'd talk about for fun in rehearsals. Actually doing it was a whole nuther thing.

Where my music comes from is I'm a pop vocalist but I'm a metal guitar player. It's a kind of inner conflict. As a vocalist I just want to sing pretty melodies and as a guitarist I want to jar people, give them an uncomfortable feeling.

The Playground

Spokey Ruben's Dizzy Playground is a webisode series shown on Exclaim! TV. Every episode is like a short surreal, comedy, fairy-tale kind of film. A kind of musical sitcom. In every episode we have a musical special guest. Instead of me interviewing the guest I get them to play a role in the story. The first show, *Omen of the Goblet*, was a medieval-themed show. We had Brendan Canning of Broken Social Scene as a knight and I'm like a king sending him on a mission to save O.G. Biggs, this big furry owl.

How Did I Get Here?

I actually went to film school. The way I got my first record deal was I recorded a song to get a [VideoFACT](#) grant from MuchMusic. That's what started the whole Spokey Ruben thing. I wrote a song, submitted it, and actually got a grant from MuchMusic. Then I made a video and they started playing it a lot.

Eventually [TVT Records](#) got hold of my demo tape and I signed a deal with them when I was 22 years old. Then I had a series of bad experiences with record labels and got almost overwhelmed by life as a composer, which brought me to *Mechanical Royalty*.

To be creative I need to be unsatisfied. It sounds kind of depressing, but I'm never done saying what I want to say. Every time I make an album I try to clarify my point of view.

Right now I'm finishing up an eight-minute piece on Ernest Shackleton, a South Pole explorer. Sometimes I see a kind of parallel between doing that and going on tour and being a band leader and trying to keep everyone happy. It's like this crazy adventure.

The Origin of a Beautiful Species

If I had to put a label on it I'd have to say I'm a Darwinist. I'm proud of the fact that I'm a member of the animal kingdom. At one point I was a sperm cell and I made it to my mother's egg, competing with 40 million other sperm cells. Just knowing that makes me so psyched. That's my religion right there. I think people tend to lose the plot and need to be reminded that we are animals. It gives you a good perspective. It's a great thing. We are beautiful animals.

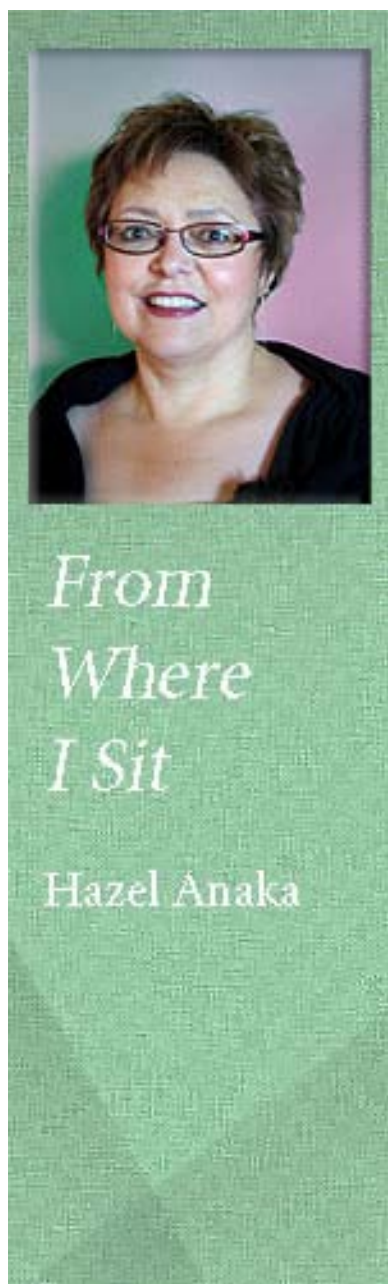
DID YOU KNOW?



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.



Step by Step

On February 28 I began, in earnest, a walking program. You may think I suddenly became aware of the benefits, health and otherwise, and dove right in. You would be wrong. Like many sedentary people I was intellectually aware of all the good reasons to walk and still did nothing.

I knew that other than the cost of some good shoes walking is free. And easy. I knew walking is a key component of any sustained weight loss plan. Without being able to cite facts and figures, I knew walking would improve overall health and reduce risk factors for some of the big killers. Study after study shows walking lowers blood pressure, increases bone density, reduces the risk of heart disease and stroke, improves flexibility and coordination, reduces the risk of diabetes, and reduces high cholesterol.

Hippocrates, no less, said “walking is man’s best medicine.” The positive effects on mental wellbeing, stress reduction, and improved sleep habits are also worth noting.

Most of us have experienced the mind-clearing, problem-solving, insight-bestowing effect of walking. Thoreau said, “I think that I cannot preserve my health and spirits, unless I spend four hours a day at least—and it is commonly more than that—sauntering through the woods and over the hills and fields, absolutely free from all worldly engagements.” My walking time started with 15 minutes a day and led to an hour and a half each day. I frankly can’t imagine walking four hours a day.

Before the weather got milder, part of each day was spent checking the forecast and wind direction, planning my route, and deciding how many layers of clothing I would need. After a blizzard when our road was impassable Roy cleared a path for me with the tractor. For a few days I simply walked around and around a huge figure eight that included a path around the stack of hay bales across the road. When the weather was unbearable I walked at Edmonton malls. I needed fewer clothes and had better traction but decidedly more distractions. It’s a good thing I couldn’t stop and shop!

Each day I hated the thought of walking but each day I forced myself to do it. I felt better each day for having walked but I still dreaded the process itself. It took me weeks to begin to embrace it. I reminded myself I was blessed to have the time, space, and great outdoors in which to get fit and commune with God’s creatures. I reminded myself to look up and enjoy the blue sky, the sound of birds, the eventual budding of trees. One day I came face to face with a coyote and luckily he was more scared than I was and simply retreated back into the bush. I noticed the tracks and scat of various animals I share this world with. I began picking up a small stone or two each day as a sort of talisman and proof of my daily outings.

I had been pounding out each footfall resentful of the time and effort this was taking. I would get more than a little choked when my stopwatch would malfunction and I would lose credit for some precious seconds I had walked that weren’t being counted. I imagine I walked with clenched teeth and tight shoulders. These

weren't my proudest moments. Yet I hung in there. Given enough time I'm sure walking could transform a person.

I walked through hurt and discouragement, pity and anger, fear and insecurity—the typical negative thoughts that creep insidiously into our minds. Each time walking made me feel better by providing an answer to a problem or a fresh, more positive take on the issue at hand. Some say I tend to overanalyze, overthink everything but I'm not sure I agree because—ahem—I'm still thinking it about it.

I felt immense pride in my stick-to-itiveness. I was on a mission. I was facing an elective surgery and the surgeon strongly suggested I lose some weight to improve my outcome. I lost about 14 pounds, improved my overall health and stamina, and understand at a core level that I must (and more importantly, want to) continue to walk every day. I'm getting better, step by step, from where I sit.

CLICK OF THE WRIST – The Tube

On June 12, television stations in the US made the switch from analog to digital. In spite of a long-running advertising campaign, it's estimated that some 2.8 million homes are totally unprepared for the switch. Here's a look at some of the other milestones in the history of TV.

The First 75 Years

This site offers a look at TV's first seven decades. You'll have to navigate through a few layers, but the rewards include plenty of fantastic old print ads and photos of antique televisions from the US, Britain, and France.

John Logie Baird

If you've ever plonked yourself onto the couch, put your feet up, and whiled away several hours staring at your favourite shows, you should take a moment to thank John Logie Baird. His may not be a household name, but this Scotsman's invention has definitely become a fixture in most homes.

Television Milestones

No idea how accurate some of these "firsts" are, but this video covers just about every one you can think of, including the first soap opera, the first African-American performer, the first sitcom, and the first political broadcast.

How Television Works

The technology has come a long way since this film was made by General Motors in the '50s, but for an interesting blast from the past, check out this video that explains just how TVs used to be built—complete with "magic tubes."

The Future of Television

This CBC article gives an in-depth look at just how we might be watching television in the not-too-distant future—and it looks like the Internet is going to be the place to catch your favourites. None of the major players have figured out the fine points yet, but the race is definitely on.

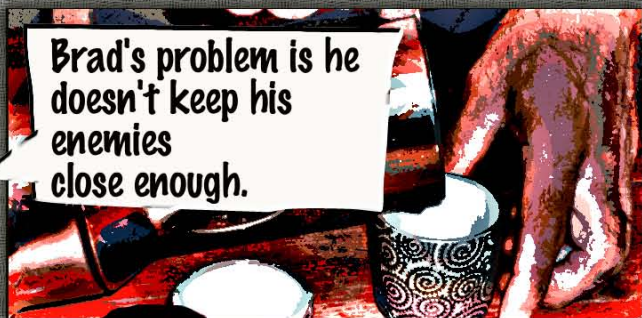
The Interviewer

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

written and illustrated by Wanda Waterman St. Louis

Rockhead #27: The Trouble With Bradley

Brad's problem is he doesn't keep his enemies close enough.



He thinks that by exiling and silencing them he's keeping himself safe.



If he'd just formed a closer partnership with the radio station...



...none of this would have hit the fan and sprayed his clean little preppy face.



But you just can't tell people.



They gotta ride to the school of hard knocks on their own bicycles.



If you have a friend on whom you think you can rely you are a lucky man
If you've found the reason to live on and not to die you are a lucky man
Preachers and poets and scholars don't know it
Temples and statues and steeples won't show it
If you've got the secret just try not to blow it
stay a lucky man! ~Alan Price



Now back to your gas problem.



next: Number 10 Spring Garden Road



Dear Barb

Barbara Godin

Wife Should Follow Moral Compass

Dear Barb:

I am in my early thirties and have been happily married for five years. At least I thought our marriage was happy until my husband approached me about joining a swingers club. I was totally shocked! I had no indication he was thinking this way.

My immediate reaction was no, but he is not accepting that. He continues to try to persuade me that there is nothing wrong with swinging and that lots of people do it, even some of our friends. I find this hard to believe. Now whenever I look at my husband I feel disgust and betrayal. I don't know if I can get past this and have a happy marriage again.

Nicole

Hi, Nicole, thanks for writing. I can certainly understand how you are feeling. Given your point of view, to hear this from your husband would be such a shock, let alone a betrayal.

Before you can attempt to resolve this, you have to ask yourself some serious questions. Do you believe your husband will be able to let this go? I'm sure he had thought about this for a long time before he

broached the subject with you. Did you sense that he was unfulfilled in your intimate relationship? It doesn't sound like you did, since you mention that you thought your marriage was happy.

I would suggest you both go for some marriage counselling. This is a major issue to work through and I don't believe you can do this effectively without professional help.

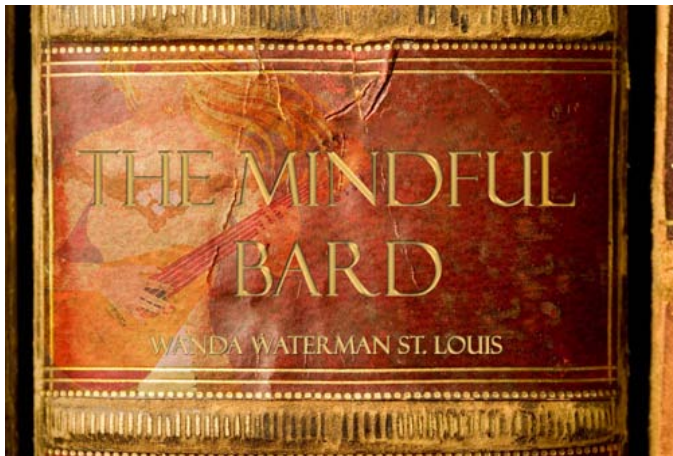
Since your husband told you that some of your friends are participating in this behaviour, they may have told him that their spouses had been willing participants, so perhaps he thought you would be as well.

If this is something you don't want to participate in, stick to your guns! When people are pressured into doing things that go against their morals, they are left with long-term regrets. It would likely be very difficult for you to get over the negative feelings that would come with an act such as this.

You didn't mention whether you have children. If you do have children, you and your husband have a responsibility to maintain the morals and values that you teach them at home.

Nicole, I hope you and your husband can work this out and bring some happiness back into your lives.

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: Spokey Ruben, *Mechanical Royalty*

Label: Hi-Hat Recordings/Sonic Unyon

Release date: 2009

Written and produced by Spokey Ruben

He Revived *WHAT?!*

*"Drawing circles in the sand with open-minded hands
The magic castle in your eye touches the sky
New companions mark the triumph on Magnetic Hill
Another chapter in our lives passes us by . . ."*

Spokey Ruben, from the title track of *Mechanical Royalty*

Is there any bygone pop music genre that hasn't been resuscitated at least once? When Brian Eno released *Music for Airports* I thought surely there was no other genre so offensively banal it couldn't inspire someone to breathe new life into it.

Yet here we find Spokey Ruben with a full-length glorification/satire of the music of the '70s, taunting all the smug boomers who, at the first appearance of the Ramones, tossed, with noses wrinkled, their Rush, Jethro Tull, and Yes albums.

Like Eno, Spokey has mastered the subtleties of musical drollery, defying all current standards of artistic merit and yet somehow able to talk about his music in an utterly deadpan manner, like a scientist who's discovered, say, the cause of nocturnal emissions and yet isn't the least bit giggly when discussing it.

The quality of these songs as pop music is superlative. "If You Wanna Know" is simultaneously a parody and a work in itself, satirizing a host of



'70s Top 40 love songs while clearly deserving to be played right alongside them, maybe someday even being hailed a rock classic.

"American Processed Cheese" nails hip hop, grunge metal, and the music industry's remorseless exploitation and covert oppression of the rebellious spirit of youth, rendering it as digestible as—well, you know.

Perhaps the thing that attracts the intellectually precocious to progressive rock and its tributaries is all the freedom and unfettered creative license the genre offers.

Like Jonathan Coulton, Spookey's voice is pop-dreamboat perfect and thus sets you up for something scandalous: in Coulton's case shockingly incongruous lyrics and in Ruben's case the fearless resurrection of historic musical kingdoms which, when they fell, fell mighty hard.

Why did the yacht rock, progressive rock, and heavy metal of the '70s take such a nosedive in popularity among record buyers? This is just an opinion, but one widely shared: it was time to strip down. We had gotten sweaty and heavy under all those sound layers and felt we had to throw them off in favour of the simpler tunes, straightforward lyrics, and staccato rhythms of punk, new wave, and the increasingly popular '50s flashbacks. That's all.

Perhaps the thing that attracts the intellectually precocious to progressive rock and its tributaries is all the freedom and unfettered creative license the genre offers. Just about any instrument could be used, any theme set to flowery verse, at least until it all got contrived and methodical and the musicians began taking themselves way too seriously. (I have an album by Rick Wakeman that almost makes me cry, I feel so embarrassed for the guy.)

So what was in progressive rock that a young musician/composer of the new millennium would want to revive? I imagine the teenaged Spookey to have often been, as you and I were, restlessly clawing through his older siblings' albums for something, anything, radically different from what *he* was hearing on the radio. And he found it.

Finding the radically different is almost a necessity for a creative type working in an industry only too eager to shove you into a stall and turn you into a helpless cash cow. As the title *Mechanical Royalty* suggests (mechanical royalties are royalties, carved up a dozen different ways, paid on sales of music recordings), taking something as astronomically fun as music making and reducing it to an accounting problem is a crime and a half.

For all you culture makers out there, look to this album as an example of what can be done with a little guts and the integrity to follow your own muse and nobody else's.

Mechanical Royalty manifests six 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 provides respite from a sick and cruel world, a respite enabling me to renew myself for a return to mindful artistic endeavour; and 6) it stimulates my mind.

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.

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.

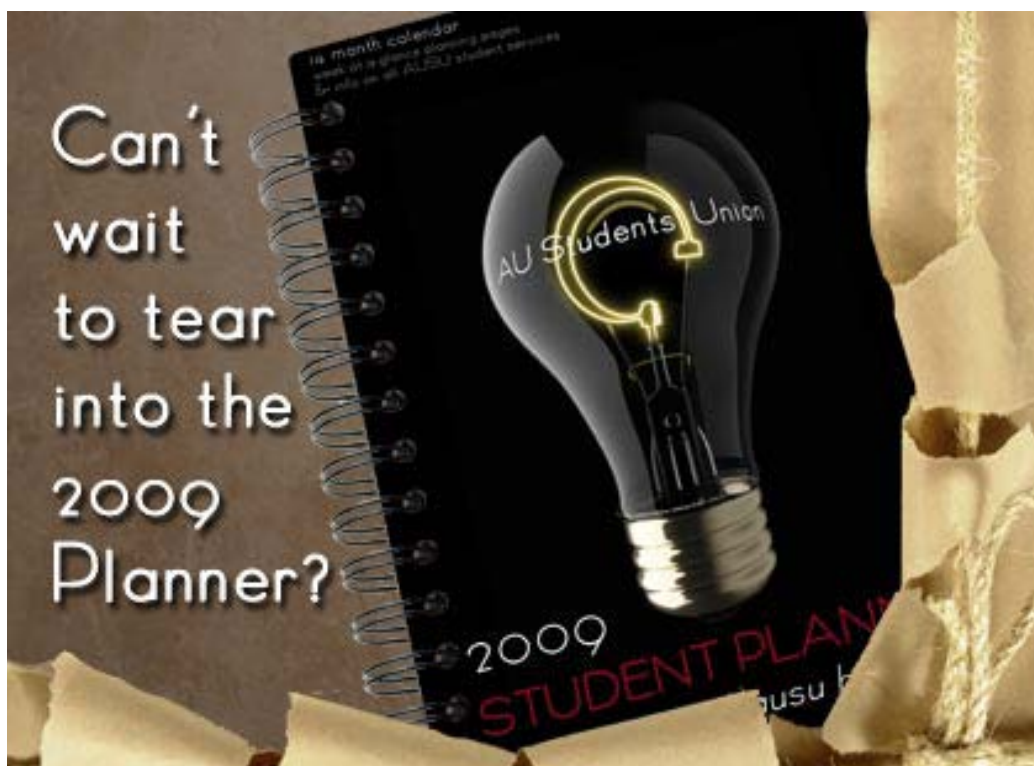
In that meeting a number of important revisions to the definitions of AUSU membership occurred, to make sure that the Councillors you elect are able to represent you during General Meetings and so that if you're a student in an AU collaborative undergrad program, you'll still be counted as an AUSU member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

After the deaths of 44 stingrays since last year, the Calgary Zoo is closing the beleaguered exhibit that features the animals.

As the CBC [reports](#), only 12 cownose stingrays remain at the exhibit. Zoo officials told reporters that the exhibit was never meant to be permanent, and that efforts will now go to replacing it.

"Since the exhibit was always intended to be temporary, we have decided to change to a new exhibit rather than invest more in this one," said Cathy Gaviller, director of conservation, education and research at the zoo.

The first stingray deaths occurred in May 2008, when 41 cownose rays died. Months of extensive testing revealed that the deaths were due to "a lack of dissolved oxygen in the water."

At the time, the exhibit was temporarily closed. It reopened in December, but one of the 10 new stingrays died of a parasite just a month later. Following that, another two

stingrays died "due to problems incurred while they were being shipped."

The 12 remaining rays will be placed in new homes and are expected to leave the Calgary Zoo over the summer.

In Foreign News: US Senate Tightens Regulations on Tobacco Companies

For the first time in their controversial history, tobacco companies face tough new restrictions from Washington. The bill cleared the Senate on June 11, and President Obama is expected to sign it as soon as it reaches his desk.

As the [New York Times](#) reports, the bill "will enable the Food and Drug Administration to impose potentially strict new controls on the making and marketing of products that eventually kill half their regular users."

Although the surgeon general declared smoking a health hazard over 40 years ago, the powerful tobacco industry has fought government controls on its products. The new law does not allow the FDA to ban smoking or nicotine, but it does give the agency the power to "set standards that could reduce nicotine content and regulate chemicals in cigarette smoke." As well, the law bans the addition of most flavourings to tobacco, a move that's expected to reduce temptation for new smokers.

Along with changes to cigarette contents, the law places new restrictions on tobacco advertising. Colourful ads will be replaced by black-and-white text, and no outdoor tobacco ads will be allowed within 1,000 feet of schools or playgrounds.

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THE VOICE

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www.voicemagazine.org

The Voice is published every Friday in html and pdf format

Contact *The Voice* at voice@voicemagazine.org

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