

THE VOICE MAGAZINE

Volume 17 Issue 28
July 24, 2009

AU Options

Journalism in conflict
zones

Cheap Thrills

Free and fun

Ian McKay

Looking forward



Plus:

*The Mindful Bard, Dear Barb,
Sister Aurora, and much more...*

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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



Journalism in Conflict Zones

For students seeking to hone their journalism skills while gaining a better understanding of the military, AU may have just the course: Communications Studies 451 - Journalism in Conflict Zones. This course is offered in partnership with the Canadian military, and features a three-week on-site practicum at CFB Wainwright, near Edmonton, Alberta.

At CFB Wainwright, Canadian soldiers undergo training to prepare them for service overseas. This training is “extraordinarily intense,” as “situations and conditions in Afghanistan” are

replicated “as faithfully as possible,” explains Captain Tom St. Denis, the Exercise Media Operations Officer at Wainwright. Two weeks of each Maple Guardian exercise is devoted to “‘force-on-force,’ during which time the troops are, for all intents and purposes, ‘in Afghanistan’ 24 hours a day, seven days a week.”

To help simulate conditions in Afghanistan as closely as possible for soldiers, civilians are hired to portray Afghan villagers and refugees during exercises, while other Canadian troops portray the Taliban and other Afghan insurgents.

To help give soldiers media relations experience, and to provide them with “insight into how they and their mission are being portrayed to the Canadian audience and to the local, Afghan audience,” journalism students also participate in Maple Guardian exercises, portraying both the Canadian and Afghan media. Previously, “second- and third-year journalism students from about 14 colleges and universities across Canada” were recruited for the program, explains Capt. St. Denis.

Dr. Evelyn Ellerman, course professor for CMNS 451, says that recently, however, the Canadian military approached Athabasca University for help “finding slightly older, more mature students than they had attracted” from other Canadian universities, and seeking “journalism students who could best approximate the hard-hitting questions that professionals ask.” The AU course Journalism in Conflict Zones was born.

CMNS 451 is a six-month course that aims to increase students’ awareness of and proficiency in the contemporary practice of journalism in conflict zones. Three weeks is spent on-base at CFB Wainwright. Upon arriving at Wainwright, students are first given an orientation to Afghanistan, and then participate in the two weeks of force-on-force training. During this period, students are mentored by two experienced former war correspondents, usually former CBC journalists. These mentors act as news producers, and ensure that “students role play to the standards of any broadcast newsroom,” says Dr. Ellerman.

Each evening, teams produce evening newscasts and printed newssheets, and these are shown to the troops the next day so that soldiers can see how their words and actions are reported. During the course of their practicum, students are given the opportunity to act as both embedded Canadian journalists and as local Afghan media, taking turns in different roles and rotating every few days.

Though students may come to the base prepared for excitement, they should also be prepared for long days filled with hard work, Capt. St. Denis cautions. "Anyone contemplating registering for the course should be aware that they'll be working very long hours (typically 15 to 18 hours a day) and that there are no weekends and no time off." Furthermore, students must be physically fit, as they are "expected to keep up whenever the soldiers are on the move," as well as to carry their own cameras, "batteries, tapes, a microphone and cords, plus a sleeping bag, a rucksack, a camp cot, change of clothing, toiletries and so on."

... the course "provides our students with an opportunity to see if they can handle working in war zones, as well as professional development for those who know that they want to direct their careers towards war reporting."

Journalism students can also be "wounded or killed" during exercises. In Maple Guardian exercises, all participants wear special electronic vests, and soldiers shoot each other with electronic pulses, similar to a game of laser tag. Journalism students, too, are fitted with these vests, and therefore face the same "life or death" perils as soldiers and other exercise participants.

In spite of the hard work and long hours, however, former students have found the course very rewarding. Capt. St. Denis reports that "the journalists we have had in the programme all say that it helped them develop a serious appreciation for the Army's culture and its people, and that it dispelled a lot of stereotypical thinking about soldiers." Dr. Ellerman, meanwhile, points out that the course "provides our students with an opportunity to see if they can handle working in war zones, as well as professional development for those who know that they want to direct their careers towards war reporting."

Dr. Ellerman proudly refers to Journalism in Conflict Zones as "the only opportunity in Canada to discover what it is like to report from a battlefield (without actually being on a battlefield!)."

More information on CMNS 451 - Journalism in Conflict Zones can be found using the contact information on the [Communication Studies](#) homepage.

DID YOU KNOW?



AU Starter Kit

If you're a new AU student (or are thinking of becoming one), a great resource to get you on the right track is the [AU Starter Kit](#).

The kit includes links to information on how to enrol in undergraduate courses, ways to access financial aid, and how to apply for graduate courses.

Studying at an AU partner institution, or just want to take courses but not register in a program? You'll find links to that info too, as well as help on changing from inactive to active status.

And if you can't find the answers you're looking for, just head to the Counselling Services link for all the tools you'll need to build your educational future.

IN CONVERSATION WITH . . .

Wanda Waterman St. Louis

Ian McKay, Part II

Ian McKay is the author of Reasoning Otherwise: Leftists and the People's Enlightenment in Canada, 1890-1920 (see Voice review [here](#)), the winner of 2009's Sir John A. MacDonald Prize.

McKay, who teaches history at Queen's University, recently took the time to answer Wanda Waterman St. Louis's questions about the book.

Personal Connections

The closest connection between the book and myself comes with the stories in it that come out of

Springhill, Nova Scotia. I interviewed many miners in that coal mining town who first went down the mine as children; they were sometimes so little that they needed help to climb into the coal cars, and some miners told me that when they started work they still believed in Santa Claus. I was deeply affected by my research on the coal miners, and some day would like to return to their stories.

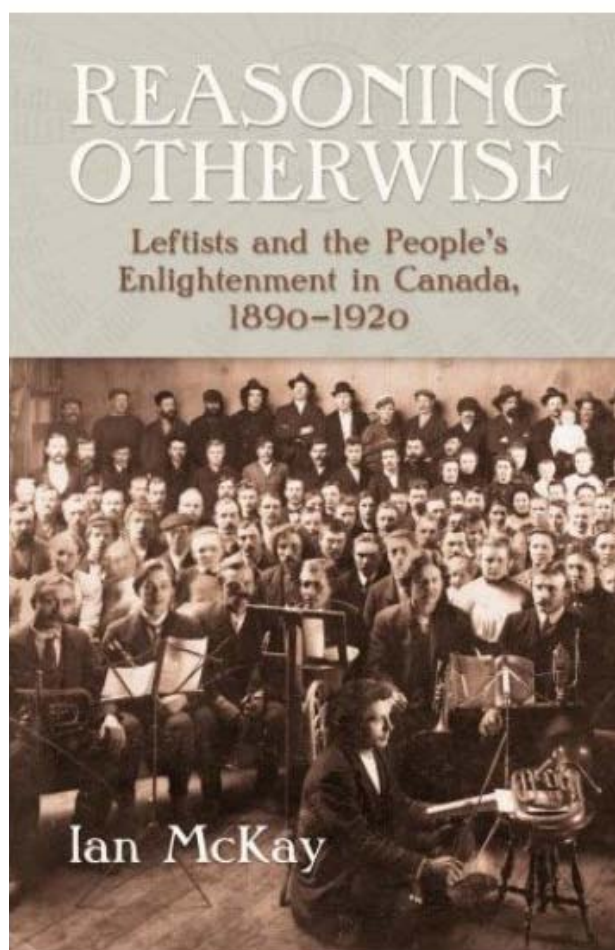
Reconnaissance and Resistance

I have found the strategy of "reconnaissance"—essentially, seeing oneself as part of a collective struggle to make sense of the past, paying particular attention to underlying structures of thought and action—to be very liberating because it essentially says, "Don't worry about having the last word on this subject, and don't delay writing until you are in a state of certainty about it."

Although I've been pleased by the reception to *Reasoning Otherwise* so far, I anticipate it will ultimately generate extremely fierce resistance, both from my fellow leftists and from liberals, since it takes up so many positions and looks at so many topics that are deeply controversial. I only hope these controversies themselves arouse new interest and new research in left history.

Looking Forward

I think the left in Canada is on the verge of a renaissance, one aspect of which will be to knit together the worlds of science and human values—almost following in the footsteps of ancestors a century ago (although undoubtedly not coming up with the same positions). I can't imagine a revolutionary solution to the environmental catastrophe confronting humanity that



does not combine, in to-be-debated proportions, Darwin and Marx—i.e., a sense of a species struggling to understand and to change its evolutionary pattern, which if left unchanged will lead to catastrophe, along with the equally powerful sense that without changing how our societies are structured, such changes in the species are impossible.

It's early to tell, but I suspect the intertwined crises of global environmental transformation and capitalist meltdown will spell the end of the neo-liberal consensus that has been so powerful since the 1970s. As one Québec writer has recently said, *"Pour sauver le monde, il faut sortir du capitalisme"*—in order to rescue the world, you have to exit from capitalism.

This used to be a fringe position. Now I can see it quite rapidly becoming the basis of a powerful new left. I talk to quite mainstream, liberal people who have no difficulty at all in linking the survival of humanity with a revolutionary transformation of all the ways we make things and relate to each other.

There is a *huge* audience for a genuinely revolutionary left-wing program. It seems to me we are in the early stages of a vast cultural change. To navigate a moment like this one helpful tool—hardly the only one, but a helpful one—is an accurate, clear-headed sense of how people in roughly similar situations of crisis in the past crafted movements similar to the ones we need to shape today. We are not the first leftists who have had to re-invent ourselves in the face of a fast-changing world.

CLICK OF THE WRIST – 'Pop' Culture

A bottle of liquid, a plastic wand, and it doesn't take long for the magic of bubbles to captivate adults and children alike. These images preserve the ephemeral beauty of bubbles to be enjoyed again and again.

The Moment a Bubble Bursts

This astonishing photo captures the precise moment that a bubble bursts. Using a 1/500th of a second shutter speed, the photographer took the image on a day "when weather conditions were 'absolutely perfect'"—just like this shot.

The Amazing Bubble Man

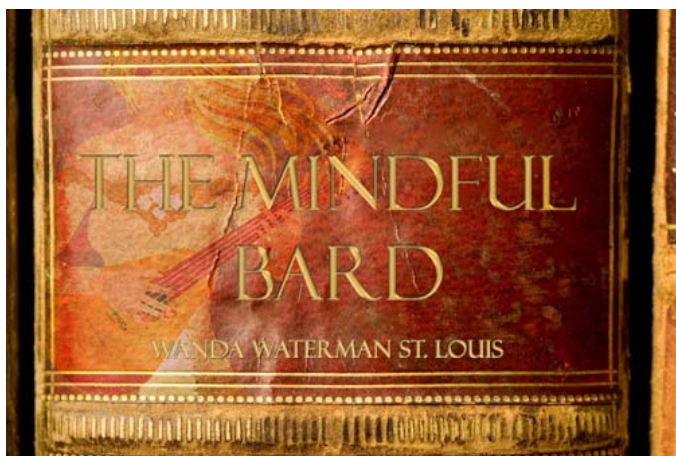
In this musical montage, Louis Pearl captivates his audience with truly amazing bubble artistry. Pure magic, whether you're five or 55.

Dolphin Bubbles

These dolphins in Japan aren't just playing with rings placed in their tank; instead, these graceful creatures are blowing bubbles and chasing the rings in a beautiful underwater ballet.

Largest Free-Floating Soap Bubble

For purists, "a bubble is not a bubble until it is freely floating through the atmosphere, attached to nothing." At Extreme Bubbles, Inc. this philosophy led to a Guinness world record, for a soap bubble that, if filled with water, would weigh 3.2 tons and hold 788 gallons.



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

CD: Ravi Coltrane, *Blending Times*

Label: Savoy Jazz

Release date: 2009

Blending the Then, the Now, and the From-This-Album-Forward

"My mother, Alice Coltrane, passed away unexpectedly on January 12, 2007. I cannot fully describe the significance of this loss . . . My offering to her memory and to her meaning extends from this album forward. I will spend the rest of my creative life humbly honoring her spirit."

Ravi Coltrane, 2008

What first struck me about this CD was its serenity. Then when I discovered that Ravi's mother, Alice, had died only two years ago and that this album had been composed and developed in the wake of a terrible grief, well, that made it hard to hear certain tracks without tearing up.

Ravi had been close to his mother, had even produced and performed on her last album, *Translinear Light*, in 2007. And her death had been unforeseen.

The music of Ravi's father, the late John Coltrane, if criticized at all, is criticized for being too cerebral, too intellectual, too polyrhythmic, and for *not being danceable*, this from people convinced from their soles to their crowns that being danceable is one criterion for "real" jazz.

But these critics are "of a certain age." Jazz has come to mean far more to younger boomers and generation Xers than a Saturday night Lindy Hop. Some of us actually listen to it during meditation and religious devotions, while painting, or we just give it our undivided attention while doing nothing, and for these purposes John's *A Love Supreme* stands within the pantheon of *la crème*.



In this sense Ravi has taken up the flame and yet he really can't be called imitative (if he were, his father's playing is only one among many influences). The name of the album is as much expressive of Ravi's mixing of jazz's traditions with its perpetual novelty as it is of his use of varying atypical rhythms (sometimes several at once).

***Their symbiosis is so tangible
you feel like you're one of
them, getting ready to make a
response to somebody's call,
adding a chord here, a brush
stroke there, and trying to
anticipate Ravi's next sound.***

From the first elysian piano chords and surf-like cymbals this album is a treasure trove to be opened again and again. At times Luis Perdomo's remarkable piano playing sounds eerily like Alice Coltrane on her recordings with John, and Ravi's tenor playing sometimes sounds so much like John's . . .

So much like, but not quite *like*. Forty years have passed since John's death and Ravi has been developing as a musician in a new era. What we hear in Ravi's playing is the John Coltrane aesthetic (calling it nature or nurture is irrelevant) interwoven with 40 years of Latin rhythms, Vince Guaraldi's Charlie Brown compositions,

Eastern melody lines, avant-garde composers, bebop, maybe even a little fusion. And whatnot.

Ravi seems deeply sincere as a musician/composer, and I sense that he's just as sincere as a person. In a genre in which band members turn over like fry cooks, Ravi has kept the same musicians for the last seven years. Their symbiosis is so tangible you feel like you're one of them, getting ready to make a response to somebody's call, adding a chord here, a brush stroke there, and trying to anticipate Ravi's next sound.

"For Turiya" is a song Charlie Haden wrote for Alice Coltrane and performed with her in 1976. The harpist Brandee Younger opens the track with a breathtaking and poignant harp solo (the instrumentation is especially apt given that Alice herself played harp as well as piano) that mixes angelic runs with Latin chords and comes to form an idyllic backdrop to Ravi's stunning tenor.

One area that engages The Mindful Bard is the question: *How does art respond to pain?* This album comprises a significant portion of the answer.

Blending Times manifests nine 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 that 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 the attainment of true self; 7) it provides respite from a sick and cruel world, a respite enabling me to renew myself for a return to mindful artistic endeavour; 8) it stimulates my mind; and 9) it poses and admirably responds to questions which have a direct bearing on my view of existence.

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.



Cheap Thrills

All the financial experts out there agree on one thing: hindsight is the only way to be absolutely sure the recession is over. It is only by looking back at markets, employment numbers, cost of living, inflation/deflation rates, the length of Bernie Madoff's sentence, the total number of scoundrels charged and convicted, GDP, and political posturing that we can be sure it's over.

So until that momentous day comes most of us need to find some way to make life in the new reality a little easier. I believe the number of people completely unaffected by the state of world finances is likely about three so this column isn't for them. Everyone else wants to know how to ride out these challenging times without declaring bankruptcy or committing suicide.

Staycation is the newest word in the hard-times lexicon. It is widely accepted as meaning a stay-at-home vacation and is the 2009 answer to saving money this summer. It is forcing people to explore attractions and activities in their own communities or on a simple day trip, thereby saving the high cost of accommodations. Local venue operators are happy, hoteliers less so.

In an ongoing attempt to provide not only thought-provoking content but actual useful information too, *From Where I Sit* is pleased to offer the following list of Cheap Thrills, in no particular order. To qualify—the standards were gruelling—the suggestion needed to be either free or cheap. Period. It is sheer coincidence that three out of four involved books and reading.

1. Amazon books has bargain books for under \$5. Is it a coincidence that both Dr. Phil and Robin McGraw had titles in this section the day I stumbled across it?

2. Many larger cities have a version of Edmonton's Movies 12, which shows older new releases for the unbelievably low price of \$3.50 all day and \$2.50 on Tuesdays. Showing right now is *Angels & Demons*, *Hannah Montana*, *17 Again*, *My Life in Ruins*, and eight others. Smuggle in your own treats and

save even more. Costco also sells a movie pack that includes first-run movies and snacks.

3. Parades. Every little hick town across the country has its annual rodeo/country fair/exhibition/sports day event and kickoff parade. If you walk to your local parade and scoop the candy intended for the kids in the crowd you actually come out ahead on this item.

4. The best year-round deal is a public library membership. In many communities it is free. In others, for the price of one hardcover book, you can read books or borrow movies for "free" all year long.

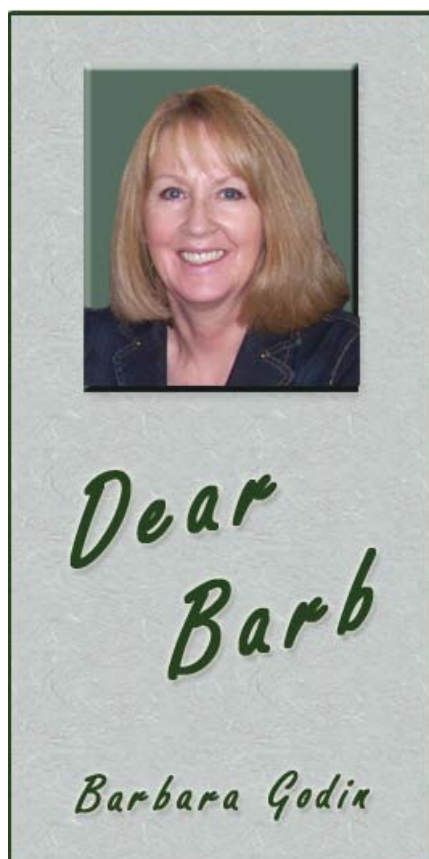
5. If you'd rather own your copies there are always garage sales, Salvation Army, Goodwill stores, and Value Village for exceptional used book prices. I picked up a mint hardcover of *Garbo Laughs* by Elizabeth Hay for 99 cents. Be still my beating heart.

Alas, I've come to the end of my word count. Stay tuned for more ideas, from where I sit.

Sister Aurora

There's a rainbow dancing in the sky tonight, and I think I'm gonna go outside . . .





Clear Roles Help Ease Transition

Dear Barb:

I am a single mother of three young children. Recently I met a wonderful man and we are planning on moving in together. I have some concerns about my fiancé's role in my children's lives. My children have a strong relationship with their father and see him regularly. At times when my fiancé has reprimanded my children I felt somewhat uncomfortable. I didn't mention anything to him about it because it really hasn't happened very often. I know things will change once we are married. How can I bring this new man into my children's lives without causing a lot of difficulty?

Thanks, Francis

Great question, Francis, and one I'm sure many new families will be facing.

First of all, have you had discussions with your children about how this marriage will impact their lives? The transition will be much easier if the children are adequately prepared. If you don't feel competent to do this I would suggest speaking to a family counsellor who may suggest a couple of sessions with or without your fiancé.

Since your children have an active relationship with their father my opinion is for your future husband to be a friend to your children, rather than taking on the father role. They do not need two fathers. However, your children have to treat their soon-to-be stepfather with respect. It will be your responsibility to show them how to treat your fiancé.

As well, you will have to indicate how far you will allow him to go as far as discipline when you are not present. For example, if one of the children is acting up you can give their stepfather the authority to send that child to their room, or whatever punishment you would administer. Before you leave, make sure that your children know this is how things will be in your absence.

The primary discipline and care of your children should be left up to you and your children's father. Their stepfather can have an active part of their life as far as enjoying family activities and assisting you as required.

You didn't mention whether your fiancé has children; if he does, you can undertake a similar role in their life.

Again, there will always be issues to work out in any relationship and if you are unable to reach a mutually satisfying conclusion, don't hesitate to seek counselling. Counselling works best as problems arise, rather than allowing them to simmer and accumulate feelings of resentment and anger.

Congratulations on your upcoming marriage and best of luck, Francis.

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.

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.

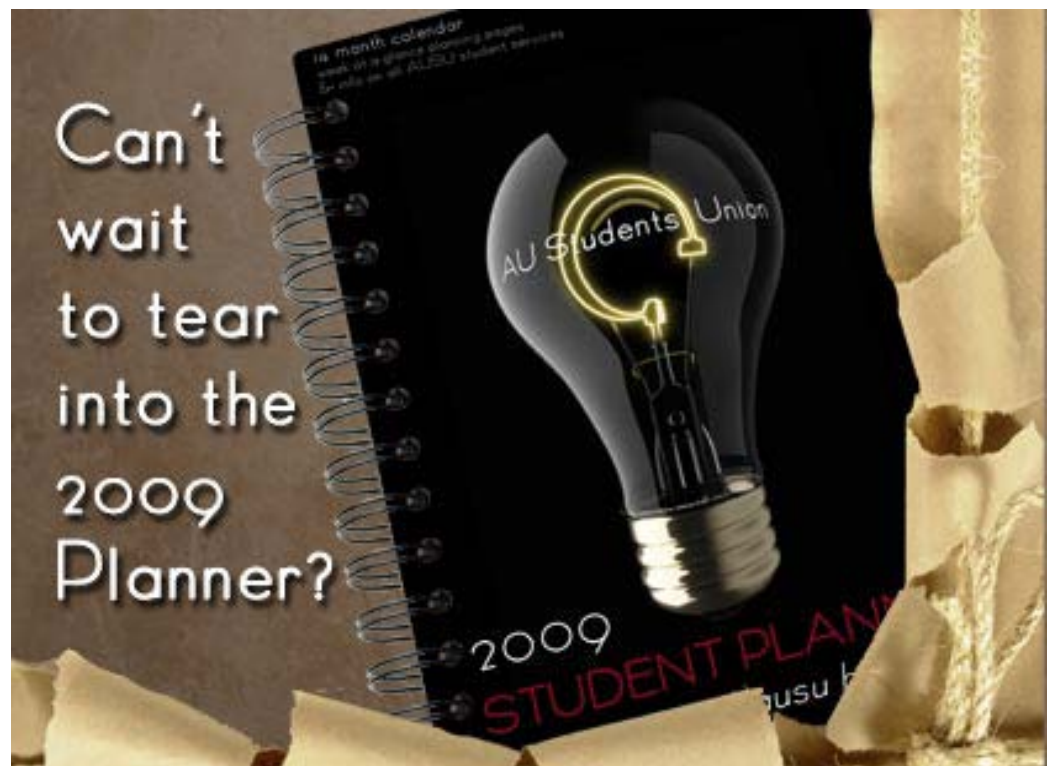
In that meeting a number of important revisions to the definitions of AUSU membership occurred, to make sure that the Councillors you elect are able to represent you during General Meetings and so that if you're a student in an AU collaborative undergrad program, you'll still be counted as an AUSU member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

After nearly a decade in operation, Canada's largest legal marijuana operation has closed down. Located in Flin Flon, Manitoba, the "ganja mine" was a partnership between Prairie Plant and HudBay Minerals.

As the *Globe and Mail* reports, the closure is a result of a disagreement between the two companies.

"We've moved out; we're gone," said Prairie Plant Systems President and CEO Brent Zettl of the Trout Lake facility. "It boils down to a disagreement between us and the senior management at HudBay."

HudBay is a mining company, and the owner of the high-security shaft where the marijuana was being grown; Prairie Plant is a Saskatoon-based pharmaceutical company. When the partnership began, Prairie Plant had just been awarded Health Canada's first contract to produce medical marijuana—specifically, to "deliver 1,865 kilograms in cigarette and dried-leaf form."

Although high security around the operation was required, it was issues of supply and demand that led to the closure. As Zettl told reporters, the demand for medical marijuana is increasing by 37 per cent per year.

"We had to expand," Mr. Zettl said. "That was the trigger for all this. Our monthly patient usage exceeded our monthly production."

Although the increased demand proved good for Prairie Plant (their Health Canada contract was extended by three years), around the same time HudBay announced plans to close the Trout Lake facility. Prairie Plant has now moved its operation elsewhere.

In Foreign News: Record number of US prisoners serving life terms

In the US, more prisoners than ever before are serving life sentences—140,610 out of 2.3 million prisoners nationally. According to a recent report by the Sentencing Project, the increase in life sentences is due to the declining use of parole as well as mandatory minimum-sentencing laws. As the *New York Times* reports, "the report tracks the increase in life sentences from 1984, when the number of inmates serving life terms was 34,000."

While most life sentences are handed out for violent crimes, some experts say that too many exceptions exist, including non-violent criminals whose third conviction results in a life term. One example is Norman Williams, 46, whose third crime was the theft of a floor jack from a tow truck (he eventually won an appeal on his conviction).

Increasing numbers of inmates also means a strain on corrections budgets. The California prison system, the largest in the nation, is in federal receivership for "overcrowding and failing to provide adequate medical care to prisoners, many of whom are elderly and serving life terms."

EDUCATION NEWS

Linda Givetash



Canadian fiscal problems minor, says professor

WATERLOO (CUP) - Finance Minister Jim Flaherty announced on May 26 that the federal deficit for the 2009-2010 fiscal year would be \$50 billion, up \$16 billion from the original forecast presented in January of this year.

The discrepancy between the forecasted and actual deficit has raised some alarm for Canada's long-term economic outlook. The cause for concern, according to David Johnson, a professor of economics at Wilfrid Laurier University, is rooted in the source of the

recession.

"Most recessions in the past 30 years have had really clear causes. They have been caused by short term tightening by monetary policy . . . because it was perceived that inflation was a problem," Johnson explains.

Policy and inflation are not, however, the cause of the current recession that mimics the Japanese recession of the 1990s, in which there was a large price fall in real estate and stocks.

"We don't have very many periods [in Western countries] in which asset prices have experienced the kinds of declines that they have," says Johnson.

Thus, the fear becomes a similar experience to Japan's "lost decade" where recovery was a long and slow process.

Despite these concerns, Canada's situation is not dire because of the economic stability the country had entering the recession.

"When the recession started, the budget was approximately balanced," says Johnson. "It's actually the Americans that have a big fiscal problem; we have a relatively minor one."

With Canada's deficit only reflecting about three per cent of the GDP, in comparison to the United States' deficit estimated to be between nine and 12 per cent, Johnson says that the recovery will be manageable.

Nevertheless, Canadians will eventually have to pay off the accumulated debt.

"In order to return to budget balance . . . you have to raise taxes slightly," says Johnson.

Regarding the discrepancy between the forecast and actual deficit, Johnson again explains it in relation to Canada's GDP.

"When you're forecasting a really big number, being off by, say, \$5 billion, is just not that big a deal because it's simply a percentage of GDP."

CLASSIFIEDS

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

THE VOICE

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