

# THE VOICE MAGAZINE

Volume 17 Issue 40  
October 23, 2009

## **Thrills and Chills**

Saturday night at the  
(spooky) movies

## **1950s Lesotho**

Learning about love

## **Street View**

Up close and personal



*Plus: Gregor's Bed, 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

Saturday Night at the (Old) Movies: Seriously Spooky Stuff I ..	3
Google Street View: Are You Ready for Your Close-Up? .....	6

## Articles

Eras in Education: Learning About Loving .....	8
In Conversation With: We Are the City .....	10
AU Options: Master of Arts - Integrated Studies .....	13

## Columns

Gregor's Bed .....	15
From Where I Sit .....	16
Sister Aurora .....	17
Dear Barb .....	18
AUSU This Month .....	19

## News and Events

Click of the Wrist .....	12
Did You Know? .....	14
International News Desk .....	22
Education News .....	23

## From the Readers

Letters to the Editor .....	2
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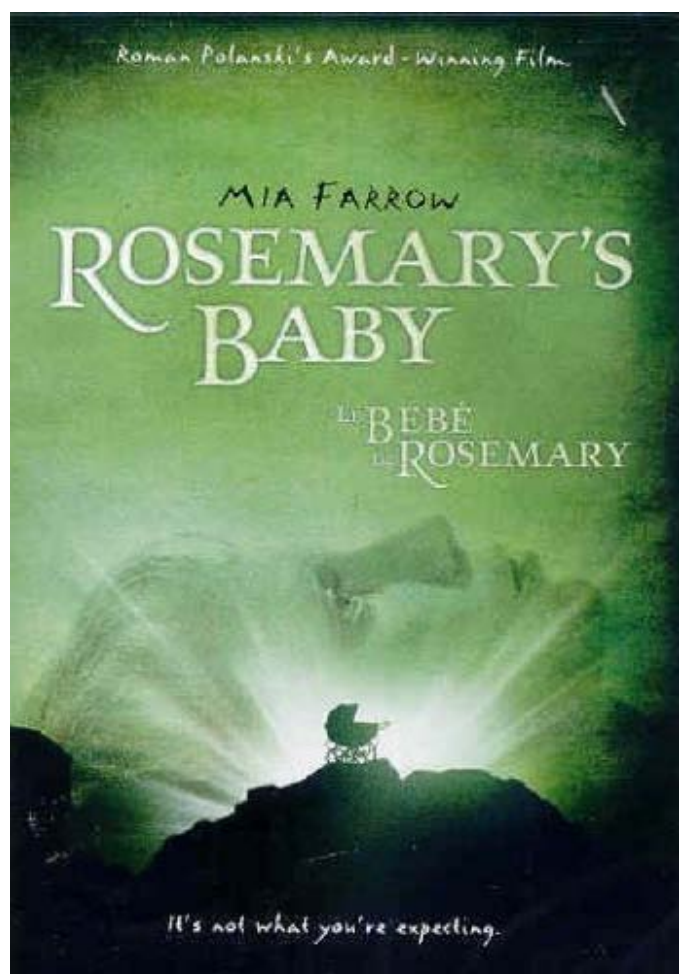
# LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

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



## SATURDAY NIGHT AT THE (OLD) MOVIES

Christina M. Frey



## Seriously Spooky Stuff, Part I

With Halloween around the corner, the focus is on the frightening. But it's not necessary to head to the theatre for the latest slasher flick; the world of old movies offers plenty of eerie thrills! Monsters—man-made, human, animal, and supernatural—scared generations of moviegoers long before the age of computer-generated special effects and gore.

In this two-part feature, I'll highlight some of the better old movies that have shaped the modern horror genre. In next week's (Old) Movies instalment, I'll look at some of these beloved, frightening, or frankly unlovable monsters that have become synonymous with October.

But this week, I'll focus on something more realistic: villains who are human monsters, ordinary people whose minds have been twisted until they've become a little less than human. True horror isn't solely the province of lumbering, bolt-headed experiments, hairy beasts, or brain-seeking zombies. As this week's films reveal, evil exists in the human heart, and it's there all year round.

A good starting point is 1932's *The Old Dark House*, an early horror movie released the year after *Dracula* and *Frankenstein* brought the horror genre into the popular sphere. It's a moody film, both through the plot (the bad weather, dreary house, and strange, psychotic behaviour of the house's inhabitants) and the production values (flickering lighting, soundtrack of pounding rain and intermittent thunder, rooster crowing, etc.). Two groups of travellers, stranded by a rainstorm and mudslide, seek shelter at the titular house. Their hosts are the Femms, a strange and creepy family that seems a precursor to the Addams Family. All the Femms have been twisted by various forms of fear—fear of discovery, of God, of the dark secret they carry—and their behaviour means a long and uncomfortable night for their guests.

*Trivia:* The Femm family patriarch is actually played by a woman (her voice gives it away), since none of the male actors applying for the role looked old enough to pull off the hundred-year-old Sir Roderick. Also of note: the lovely Margaret is played by a (much, much) younger Gloria Stuart, who received an Academy Award nomination in 1997 for playing the elderly Rose in *Titanic*.

Fear and family are also themes in *What Ever Happened to Baby Jane?* (1962). Here, jealousy and hatred create a deadly rift between actress sisters. Decaying former child star Baby Jane Hudson is bitterly jealous of her once-unknown older sister, Blanche, whose adult acting career left Jane far behind. Now Blanche, crippled by an "accident" that cost her the ability to walk, is physically dependent upon her scheming sister. Brilliantly played by Bette Davis, Jane both looks and acts the part of an unhinged, resentful old



woman. But it's not only Jane's sinister plans and gleeful abuse of her sister that make this film creepy. Jane's desperate longing for her glory days and her desire to once more *be* that famous little "Baby Jane" create plenty of chills.

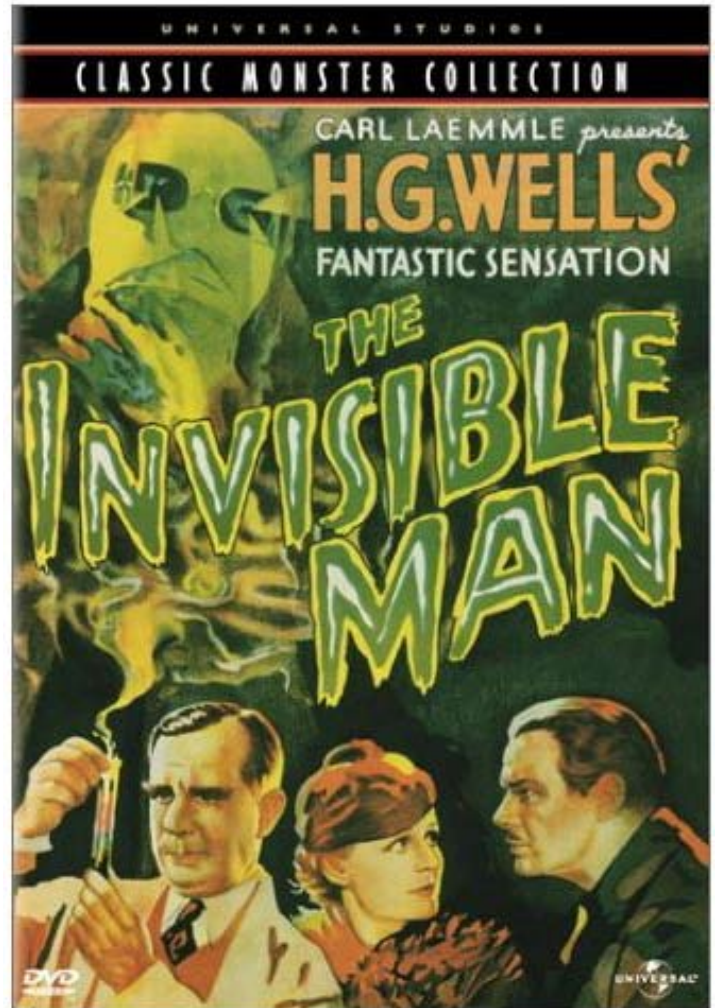
*Trivia:* The ill will displayed between the sisters may not have been entirely an act; Davis and Joan Crawford, who plays sister Blanche, allegedly despised one another. In fact, when Davis was nominated for an Academy Award for her portrayal of Jane, Crawford campaigned against her nomination—despite the fact that winning it would have brought greater royalties to both. Framed by this real-life drama, the movie's shock ending leaves you pondering to what depths jealousy and a desire for love can drive a person.

Ambition gone too far is also a driving force in the Roman Polanski-directed *Rosemary's Baby* (1968). Here, Mia Farrow's neurotic Rosemary, pregnant with her first child, deals with a growing terror that her baby is being groomed as a future sacrifice for a local coven of witches. Although the whole coven-of-senior-citizen-witches aspect seems silly rather than scary, it's certainly an unsettling film. Rosemary's dream sequence is eerie, as is the idea of the double lives led by many of the outwardly harmless characters.

Most chilling, though, is the behaviour of Rosemary's husband, Guy, who lies to her, rapes her, poisons her, and lets her carry the spawn of the devil in her womb for nine months—all for an acting break. He's the real monster in the movie. In the book on which the movie was based, the ending was ambivalent: was the whole thing a product of Rosemary's pre- and post-partum paranoia, or did the diabolical plot actually exist? The movie's ending is more cut and dried, and as such, doesn't pack the novel's disturbing punch.

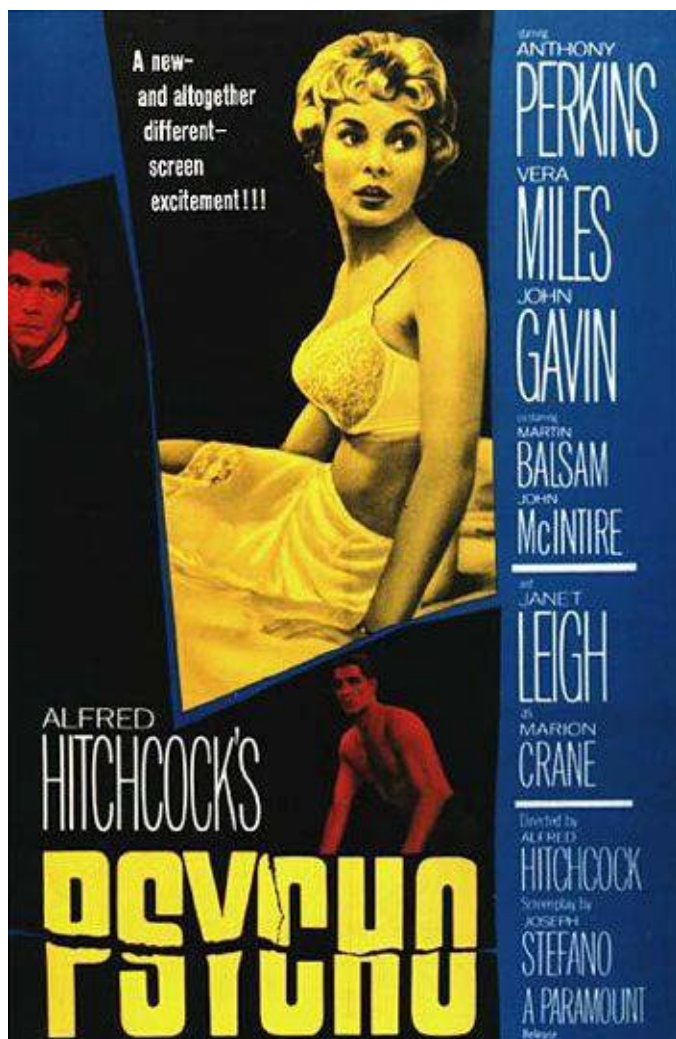
*Trivia:* The film's setting has a creepy connection. Did you recognize the haunted apartment building? The exterior shots were filmed in front of the Dakota in New York City, the apartment where John Lennon would later live and die.

Sometimes, the monster isn't evident—or even visible—from the beginning. For someone who remains unseen in all but the last few seconds of the film, the mad scientist Dr. Griffin from *The Invisible Man* (1933) is plenty frightening. First, there's his sepulchral voice: "Leave me alone," a line repeated throughout the film, sent shivers down my spine. Second, there's Griffin himself. The invisibility-inducing drugs have affected his mind, and Griffin is focused on world domination, at whatever cost. He's more than a mere crazy scientist: he's a sinister, psychotic killer. Anyone who stands in his way is a potential victim, even his old colleague. He delights in creating mayhem (while reciting nursery rhymes in a few creepy sequences),



and even takes a sadistic pleasure in murder: the glee in his voice as he describes to his former friend the manner in which he'll die is good, scary stuff.

*Trivia:* Claude Rains, who plays Griffin (although mostly under wraps or off-screen), was a struggling film actor who was hired solely due to his voice. While unsuccessfully auditioning for another film, he was overheard by casting coordinators and booked in the role of the Invisible Man. Rains later went on to play *Casablanca's* Captain Renault. While watching the film, take note of the special effects, which seem especially good when you consider that silent pictures were the norm just six years earlier. In fact, the sequence in which Rains finally materializes—first bone, then muscle, then skin—seems surprisingly modern.



In other films, the villain's identity isn't discovered until the movie's final moments. These films are more frightening than the others, since the lack of knowledge is disconcerting. Combine this with the early elements of a slasher film and you'll end up terrified. A prime example is one of Alfred Hitchcock's most famous films, *Psycho* (1960).

As the story begins, a young woman on the run from the law checks in at a small roadside motel. But after the infamous shower murder scene, the story takes a completely different track. The murder is disturbing but, gore aside, the real terror in the movie comes from the unknown. Norman Bates, the Bates Motel's owner, seems such a meek, callow young man—a weak-willed mama's boy.

Viewers know there's some dark secret afoot, but can't guess what exactly is going on, even as the body count climbs. The tension from the ambiguity makes for thrills—and then some. I didn't sleep well after seeing this one!

*Trivia:* Even before *Psycho* began filming, it created waves of controversy in Hollywood. Paramount, under contract with Hitchcock at the time, refused to green-light the project because of its shocking nature. Hitchcock, determined to make the movie, funded it himself (although even he shot it in black and white,

partly to reduce the gore). Maybe because he was financially as well as emotionally invested in the picture, Hitchcock was especially insistent that *Psycho's* plot remain secret. During the filming, he went to great length to buy up as many copies of the original novel as possible so as to keep the story unspoiled for his viewers.

Watching a few of these old horror movies should put viewers in the proper mood for some scary fun. Just in time for Halloween, next week's instalment will showcase some of the classic monster movies: old favourites like *Frankenstein* and some lesser-known creatures. The feature will end in a lighter vein with some old horror parodies. 'Til then, happy—or frightful—watching!

## GOOGLE STREET VIEW

Sandra Livingston



### Are You Ready for Your Close-Up?

New technology is a double-edged sword. It brings convenience, productivity, and sometimes just plain fun.

With that come the inevitable trade-offs. We love our cars but the lack of exercise contributes to obesity. Phones are great yet we loathe telemarketers. Usually we've got a choice: embrace the new technology or toss it aside.

An interesting innovation has struck at the very core of that choice and it's stirring up controversy

from small-town streets to the largest cities on the planet. It's Google Street View, and it's now providing high-resolution, street-level images of 15 cities across Canada including Ottawa, Toronto, Montreal, Halifax, and Vancouver, as well as other cities around the world.

If you haven't seen it yet, you may want to get acquainted with Pegman. He's the little yellow character on Google maps who lets you take a virtual drive around town and zoom in for a close-up. How close? Close enough to read the signs in store windows, see what kinds of drinks people are carrying in their hands, and even peer at the contents of open garages.

All of which has plenty of people feeling very exposed and asking a worrying question: is Google Street View (and similar technology) an invasion of privacy and a threat to safety?

Let's take a look at the pros and cons—and then we want to hear from you.

When it comes to privacy, millions of people are eager to splash personal details and photos across social networking sites. So goes one of the arguments in defence of Street View. True, except that *users* control what they post on social networking sites. Not so with Street View; if the camera captures you, it could be months before you realize that the world knows which fast-food joint you frequent.

So where's the harm in that? Well, one issue that's been raised is that the information on Street View could give criminals a wealth of data. Burglars could case potential targets; pedophiles could find out what streets have schools or parks on them; petty criminals could target convenience stores and other small businesses according to how isolated nearby streets look.

In reality, Street View is probably the *last* place criminals would go to get that information. Let's face it—if a burglar is going to survey potential targets, he's hardly likely to rely on a single snapshot in time. It would take a seriously daft person to believe that it's a great way to find out whether there's a dog in the yard or a security system in place. And if you're concerned that, at the very least, Street View will alert thieves to luxury properties they hadn't known about, well, millions of online real estate listings offer a much bigger jackpot of information (including tours *inside* houses).

As for the locations of schools and parks, those details are easily found online or even in the local phone book. In this case, services like Street View aren't giving away anything that isn't already freely available.



But where a service like Street View *could* cause problems is in the cases of men or women who have fled abusive relationships. Say, for instance, a woman has left a violent spouse. She's settled with her children in a distant city or even another country. Then, one day, her image or her children's is captured and posted online, complete with details about the street she was on. (There's at least one recorded case where this has already happened in the UK.) That information could easily put someone's life in jeopardy.

Google's rebuttal is that their technology blurs faces and license plates. That's a flimsy privacy measure given the high level of detail the service provides. It's not a problem if a total stranger's face is blurred. But if a photo of a dozen of your closest friends and family is put in front of you, it's ridiculous to think you wouldn't instantly recognize them—or an ex you're chasing—blurry faces or not.

The same thing goes for vehicles. The license plates may be concealed, but most people's cars are personalized extensions of themselves. Odds are you'd recognize that window decal or rear-view bauble anywhere.

Although the service only launched in Canada on October 7, assistant privacy commissioner Elizabeth Denham has already cited serious concerns about the consistency of Google's face-obscuring tools, telling MPs that "we've found many instances where people's faces aren't blurred."

But is the face-blurring issue really that big a deal? Not when you consider that you could easily be captured as part of a crowd shot and wind up on the front page of a newspaper, on somebody's Facebook page, or on some other website. In the example of a news photo, you wouldn't even have the option that Street View offers: Google claims it will remove photos within 24 hours of a complaint.

So what are some of the pluses? Besides the fact that it's cool to check out places you know, Street View can be incredibly useful. Thinking of buying a house? It can be a real time-saver to virtually drive around neighbourhoods to help narrow down a list of showings. Visiting a strange city? Get familiar (and avoid getting lost) by "driving" the route ahead of time and looking for landmarks. Locate parking facilities, scout out nearby restaurants before meeting friends, and see if the beach is really as close as the resort says it is—*before* you book your holiday.

Google has already faced legal challenges over its Street View service and won. However, the bottom line is that customer (or user) loyalty goes a long way in determining a service's success. And Google has already irritated more than a few people by trespassing on private property. As the *Press Democrat* reported in 2008, "from Sonoma County to Humboldt County and as far away as Australia, the Internet giant has already posted photographs taken on private property." In some cases, Google cameras deliberately ignored No Trespassing signs and intruded as far as 1,200 feet up private roads to photograph houses.

As we venture further into the uncharted waters of mass electronic surveillance, the issues surrounding services like Street View will almost certainly reappear in the courts. In the meantime, smile. You never know when it's going to be your turn for a close-up.

***What do you think of Google Street View? Email your comments to [voice@voicemagazine.org](mailto:voice@voicemagazine.org) by November 6 and we'll enter your name in a draw for 1 of 3 Voice USB hubs. (Your email must include permission for us to publish your first name and comments.)***





## ERAS IN EDUCATION

Jason Sullivan



### “Mummy-Baby” Relationships in 1950s Lesotho: Learning About Loving

In my early years of elementary school we would periodically troop down to a classroom full of “big kids” in order to meet with our “big buddies.” Ostensibly, they were to provide guidance to us young whippersnappers. I of course learned when I became a big buddy myself that being in Grade 6 rather than Grade 2 did not provide one with a bounty of additional life wisdom. Later, in high school, this process of exchange was known as

peer counselling. Peer counselling gave us opportunities to socialize with older students who, whether they had reams of additional life experience to gloat about or not, did an admirable job of seeming worldly and experienced. If the peer counsellor was of the opposite sex, the process was further complicated by the gravitational pull of their aura of matured pubescence. It turns out that in other cultures and other times this process of peer exchange yields more fruitful interactions.

In the small South African country of Lesotho, young women in the 1950s began to participate in what became an institutionalized peer counselling system. Girls in their early teens were appointed or selected a “mummy” who was about five years older. The “mummy” would guide her “child” through a process of initiation into womanhood.

Rather than a hazing or day-camp experience, however, this initiatory experience took the form of an emotional and intimate bond that in many cases lasted a lifetime. Importantly, the “mummy” would provide much-needed “advice on sex and protection from aggressively courting young men.”

The mummy-baby relationship resembled what we might term puppy love in that, from an adult perspective, the participants are practicing for later adult relations. “The couple treat the friendship like an affair, or romance; hugging, kissing and sexual relations are part of it.” From the perspective of Lesotho society, these relationships were considered harmless. They were merely “part of the romantic drama of growing up and learning the pleasures and responsibilities of relationships.”

The mummy-baby institution also provided a valuable educational purpose because in Lesotho it was taboo for mothers to talk to their daughters about sex. Without their “mummy” to learn from, young women would have to learn valuable life skills by trial and error. When the time came for marriage, the mummy-baby relationship often continued and was seen as “neither an alternative nor a threat” to the man-woman relationship. This fact is interesting in comparison to the beliefs of our culture, where a person is expected to only have one intimate relationship, normally of the heterosexual variety.

The term for mummy-baby participants was “motsoalle” or “special friend,” an apt title considering the level of intimacy involved. The participants shared a deep level of heartfelt understanding which they would not necessarily find in later marriages to men. One woman described her motsoalle experience as follows:

*“It’s like when a man chooses you for a wife, except when a man chooses, it’s because he wants to share the blankets with you. The woman chooses you the same way, but she doesn’t want to share the blankets. She wants love only. When a woman loves another woman, you see, she can love her with a whole heart.”*

The game of life, acted out for the audience of others, can be seen as something that we learn to play from childhood onward. In Lesotho the mummy-baby relationship resembled puppy love between North American teenagers. During our teenage years we “play at love” with the common result that parents tell us that we aren’t “really” in love because we “don’t know what love is.” The fact that being in love is something that the community decides is explained by the sociologist George Herbert Mead’s theory of the “generalized other.” A self is only accepted by others when s/he acts according to the generalized other, meaning “directed by the attitudes common to the community.” In this way coercive socialization prevents young lovers in our society from being taken seriously. Their incipient love happens prior to economic independence and/or arrival at an arbitrary age of maturity and therefore is not acceptable to the generalized other.

The way our selves form depends on the norms of our society. For Mead, our mind is “an inner conversation with one’s self” wherein we hear “the community as a whole.” Our sense of self, the “me,” involves an ability to “take oneself as an object.”

This process is arrived at in two stages: the play stage, during which we “play at being someone else” in order to learn how others see our behaviour, and the game stage, during which we “take the role of everyone else involved in the game.” In many ways the mummy-baby relationship was like the play stage. Young women played at being in an adult relationship as preparation for the game stage when they would marry men and become accepted as adults.

In Lesotho, the motsoalles were able to play at love within a context acceptable to the Generalized Other. They learned from one another’s shared experiences as young women, with the older one taking the lead. Unlike in our society, where heterosexuality is the prescribed norm, a degree of homosexuality is tolerated in this setup. A parallel exists in our society’s homosociality endemic to most people’s teenage social tendencies: boys and girls hang out in separate groups.

As Mead noted, there are many generalized others to correspond to the many types of people. “Each self receives unique biographical articulation . . . People therefore have multiple generalized others and, as a result, multiple selves.” (Gilles Deleuze’s theory of “multiplicity” also reflects this creatively fragmented definition of what it is to be a “me.”)

The fact that mummy-baby relationships continued past marriage is a manifestation of this many-selved reality. Rather than causing conflict with one another, parallel fluid selves coexist peacefully. Young women in Lesotho benefited from a relationship based on a shared subject position; they were both young women. It gave them a strong groundwork of solidarity which they maintained in contrast to the opposite subject-object reality of marriage between people socialized according to different gender norms.

Probably the most important aspect of peer relationships is the way they provide guidance. Whereas my experience of having, or being, a “buddy” was not especially useful, it seems that young women in Lesotho had positive experiences with their motsoalles. From these formative experiences they went on to experience average lives illustrated with a positive backdrop of shared closeness with their special friend.



## IN CONVERSATION WITH . . .

Wanda Waterman St. Louis

**We Are the City**

*We Are the City is an indie rock band from Kelowna, BC, who put up an online donations page to successfully raise enough money to record their latest album, In a Quiet World.*

*Their music is known for being a delightful experiment in blended influences, grounded in a deep spirituality.*

*The band recently took time to answer some questions from Wanda Waterman St. Louis.*

**Childhoods**

CAYNE: I grew up in Westbank, lived in one house my whole life, and still live there to this day. I loved Pokémon cards—I literally caught them all. At one point I had five Charizards, something I'm still proud about. I hated piano lessons.

DAVID: I loved skateboarding as a kid. Any sport really. I was a pretty cool kid, almost the complete opposite of me now.

ANDREW: I lived in Peachland and was really into top 40 music during elementary school. I loved the Backstreet Boys and did an air band at my school every year and each year was a different BSB song. I loved *Star Wars*; I would rent crates of books from the library on *Star Wars*.

**Musical Backgrounds**

CAYNE: I had piano lessons, which again, I hated. I took them until I was 14.

DAVID: I've had no lessons, but I studied the first *Back to the Future*, when Marty plays "Johnny B. Goode." I later realized that he was just acting and not really playing.

ANDREW: I was in a screamo band when I was in middle school. Black hair, tight pants, all of it.

**Inspiration**

ANDREW: We can all agree that a local Kelowna band completely inspired us. They were called AlphaBaby (now known as Yukon Blonde) and every show that we went to blew our minds. They had us mesmerized.

DAVID: A few years ago, when we started the band, Coldplay's *A Rush of Blood to the Head* and Muse's *Absolution* were inspirational. But now I find inspiration with music just in general.

CAYNE: David and I have similar influences. A pivotal band for me was Pink Floyd, all the albums. I started listening to them around the same time I started to genuinely enjoy playing music.

This week—and all of the tour—has been a real potpourri of music. Our official tour song is "World Waits" by Jeremy Enigk, but we've been filling our heads with Said The Whale's new album *Islands Disappear*, Yukon Blonde's new EP *Everything in Everyway*, Kingdom Cloud's EP *Jubilee*, and way too many others to mention.



## That Sound

ANDREW: Cayne started out on guitar, David on bass. Then Andy joined the band and after loads of practicing we went from a more instrumental style of music to what we are now.

## The Band Name

The name actually came from a verse in the Bible that goes “a city on a hill cannot be hidden,” which basically means that one cannot hide the light of God if they have it inside.



## Writing Songs

It's really hard actually; one of us will come to the table with an idea, whether it be a verse, melody, chord progression, or a lyric, and from there we'll simply try everything. Every suggestion. It's a gruelling process, having three people with very different thoughts in one room trying to finish a song. It seems like it takes forever at the time, but it works.

## Rehearsals

We walk in to find that our gear has been defecated on by Cayne's dog. After cleaning, we'll practice a few songs to tighten up a set if we have an upcoming show. We try to get in as much writing as we can but lately we've had a lot of shows so not much has been done in that department.



## Belief System

You could call us Christian guys. Our spirituality has a huge impact on our music and it's something that really pushes us as a band.

## Favourite Part of Canada?

To be honest, that's a tough, tough question. We've all fallen in love with different cities, and each show has been spectacular in its own way. There's just so much love across Canada. And so much to love.

## CLICK OF THE WRIST – Hoax

Last week, millions watched and worried over the fate of a young boy supposedly trapped in a helium balloon. Authorities now say the whole ordeal was a hoax. This week, we take a look at some other memorable deceptions.

### Piltdown Man

In 1912, parts of an ancient human skull were discovered in the English village of Piltdown. The fossils set the archaeological world on fire: scientists believed the skull fragments were the missing link between humans and apes. Forty years later, it was discovered that Piltdown Man was an elaborate hoax.

### Literary Hoaxes

This collection of literary hoaxes includes a couple you may recognize from recent headlines. But literary fakers have been around since at least 1769, when a teenager named Thomas Chatterton wrote poems and passed them off as the work of a 15th-century monk.

### Famous UFO Hoaxes

If you believe that alien life forms are hovering in the skies, waiting for the right moment to make contact, you may want to steer clear of this site. It lists the (entirely subjective) top 10 UFO hoaxes, including such classics as Area 51 and a link to H.G. Wells's radio play *War of the Worlds*.

### Greatest Hoaxes

This video debunks some of the most famous hoaxes, including the 1967 film of Bigfoot, the well-known footage of the Loch Ness monster, and a dinosaur roaming London in the 1980s. The truth is out there.

### Apollo 11

No, the Apollo 11 moon landing isn't a hoax, but the rumours have been swirling ever since that historic day over 40 years ago. National Geographic takes on the most famous hoax claims here, disputing them with something that sometimes seems rarer than the Loch Ness monster: common sense.

## AU OPTIONS

Bethany Tynes

### Master of Arts - Integrated Studies

Athabasca University's Master of Arts - Integrated Studies (MAIS) degree offers "a unique opportunity to engage in a program of study that spans the arts, humanities, and social sciences," and allows students to design their own learning plan which is "comprehensive in scope but specific in focus."

This ability to integrate multiple areas of study was one aspect of the program that caught the attention of student Amanda Nielsen. "I had dappled with studies in a couple different areas: political science, philosophy, human resources, conflict resolution, and risk management, to name a few," she says.

"The MAIS program is integrated, and allows me to explore many different disciplines and apply my varied knowledge. This is exciting, and I feel it allows me to gain a more holistic understanding of the different research questions that I am interested

in exploring."

Nielsen is actively involved in the Graduate Students' Association and the Journal of Integrated Studies, and enjoys the ability to interact with her classmates even when separated by great physical distances. "My favourite part [of the program] has been learning from my fellow students from our online discussions," she says. "The diversity of student experiences and insights is a real strength of the program."

Dr. Angela Specht, a faculty member with the Master of Arts - Integrated Studies program, also feels that the diversity of the student body is a great strength. "The people (students, faculty, and staff) really make MAIS and Athabasca University a great community of which to be a part," she says. "Our students in the MAIS program bring a wealth of personal and professional experience to the table."

Nielsen says that "everyone from the MAIS program has such a different background . . . Owing to my classmates, I find myself considering angles that I would never considered on my own!"

When asked if there are any weaknesses in the Master of Arts - Integrated Studies program, Nielsen notes that "student services are, in my opinion, sometimes lacking. The MAIS program seems a bit understaffed, so it sometimes takes way longer to get back to phone call and email inquiries than what seems necessary."

Dr. Specht admits that "the most significant challenge" for the program is its incredible growth rate. "Rapid and sustained growth can put a lot of strain on your resources. So at times, it's hard to keep up with issues like staffing, administrative and financial resources, keeping apace of program development and so forth."

In spite of the strain, faculty and staff "have done a really good job of addressing these issues, looking for productive solutions, and also actively planning and managing for the future," Dr. Specht says. And though it



presents logistical challenges, the “tremendous growth is encouraging because it shows that Athabasca University and the MAIS program are doing things right.”

The success of MAIS graduates certainly also indicates that the program is “doing things right.” According to Dr. Specht, graduates with this degree have successfully pursued “advanced degrees (e.g., PhDs) and professional degrees (e.g., Law, etc.).”

While Nielsen hasn’t yet decided what she plans to do after graduation, she says that she would “one day love to complete a PhD!”

“I think the program provides a lot of benefits for students’ future studies or employment,” Dr. Specht says. The program can not only be used as a stepping stone to further education, but also “provides academic credentials that can advance students’ career goals.

“The MAIS program helps students to develop critical and creative thinking and research skills, as well as writing and communication skills that employers and other academic institutions value . . . The distance, asynchronous nature of our courses, as well as the reality that many of our students have full-time work and family commitments, mean that our students learn how to manage their time, and work closely with other students in order to successfully complete their courses. These kinds of management skills are very relevant in today’s workforce.”

Nielsen would recommend the MAIS program to any prospective students considering studies at Athabasca University. “I’ve enjoyed my time as a MAIS student,” she says, “and suspect that it is a good option for many others out there who are interested in pursuing a graduate degree.”

## DID YOU KNOW?



### Athabasca River Basin Research Institute

The average AU student may never see the university campus until it’s time to graduate. And some may never make the journey to Athabasca, Alberta at all. But a new initiative can help students explore one of the main features of their university’s hometown.

The Athabasca River Basin Research Institute (ARBRI) is “an innovative interdisciplinary research centre that studies the Athabasca River Basin and its people from a broad range of perspectives.”

The ARBRI site explains the importance of the 1,538-km long Athabasca River (Alberta’s longest undammed river and its second largest by volume) and its basin.

The photo gallery offers a look at the basin’s natural beauty, as well as the effects of human activity, and other links provide info on Alberta’s many lakes and rivers and the UN Water for Life program.

Whether you’re interested in science, conservation, or just want a peek at AU’s natural surroundings, the ARBRI is worth a look.



## Intriguing New Developments in Alternative Music

*"The function of genius is to furnish cretins with ideas twenty years later."*

Louis Aragon, "La Porte-plume," *Traite du style*, 1928

If Kate Bush Had Headed Pink Floyd in the Sixties

Girl + the Machine

*Hello Earth*, Aporia Records, 2009

Intense, driving acid rock anthems and beautifully

constructed experimental arias rendered in the sweet and slightly deranged sounding vocals of lead Jackie, whose voice is haunting to the point of eeriness. The melodic ideas alone are worthy of contemplation, but there are enough engaging accompaniments and diverse musical references to keep you coming back. Also a great morning-after-a-break-up album. Or morning-after-finding-a-new love. Really.

## Some Days Smell Like Dead Flowers

Patrick Brealey

*Mercury in Songbirds*, Boompa Productions, 2009

Don't be fooled—Brealey's überfolk musical accompaniment is an utterly incongruous backdrop to some of the driest, most tongue-in-cheek and even macabre country lyrics you'll ever hear. The song "Some Days Aren't Very Good," for example, houses the following gem: "Some days smell like dead flowers / Some fires go out / and leave you to scrounge through the ash." In our recent [interview](#) Patrick disclosed a personality as deadpan as Mr. Bean's and an utter inability to laugh at his own jokes. Great acoustic backup with nods to rock, bluegrass, rockabilly, cabaret, and blues, and a voice right out of early Sun Records. Think Flying Burrito Brothers if you must, but Brealey makes the old styles sound refreshingly eccentric.

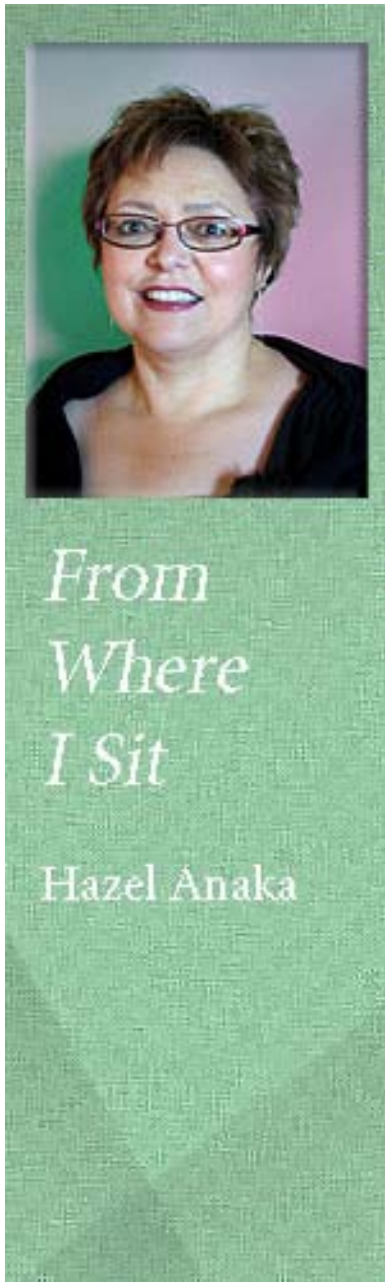
## Those Weird Kids You Went to Summer Camp With

Said the Whale

*Islands Disappear*, Hidden Pony, 2009

These people just don't seem to care that rock and pop have been traditionally urban. Sure you have the Beatles' "Mother Nature's Son" and Bob Dylan's "Maggie's Farm," and sure, many of the greats emerged from the backwoods, but rock has always been more pavement and streetlights than spruce and moose muffins. Said the Whale sings enthusiastically about adventures and misadventures in the Canadian outback, revealing a sense of being oddly out of sync with nature, which I suppose does fit into the rock sensibility (think Talking Heads). With glee-club tight harmonies, erudite lyrics, and romper room enthusiasm along the lines of nerd rock predecessors They Might Be Giants and the Barenaked Ladies, *Islands Disappear* does mull over love troubles but against a backdrop of observations on weather, geography, wildlife, and why anyone would want to go out into the Canadian hinterlands in the first place.





## Diversions, Distractions, and Dalliances

Oh, the number of distractions on a foggy October morning when a person should be writing! The gloom outside my window today permeates my mood and exacerbates the gnawing realization that our 55 acres of canola remains lying in swaths on the cold wet ground rather than in the grain bin. Or better yet, converted into about 12 thousand dollars in our bank account.

The forecast for the next several days isn't good. Any canola crop that overwinters is unsellable because of mouse-dropping contamination, so the spectre of loss is real as October inevitably turns to November. The rain we've gotten in the last few days would have been welcome in April, May, June, July or even August when crops and pastures needed it. Now it feels more like a slap in the face.

So can you blame me for seeking a diversion? So far this morning I've reformatted a ratty circa 2007 phone list that was taped to the inside of the kitchen cupboard door nearest the phone. Then I returned a phone call from a friend and talked grandbabies plus continuing education requirements for the life license we each hold.

I also checked out the website for the Humber School of Creative and Performing Arts. Last week I ripped an ad out of the *National Post* for their correspondence program in creative writing. There's a veritable who's who of professional writers offering students 30 weeks of help with a book-length manuscript. Everything sounded wonderful except the three thousand dollar tuition. With their track record of published students it's likely worth every penny. It's just a bit rich for this particular writer with 12 thousand dollars worth of canola lying on the cold soggy ground. Onward.

I then checked the Metro continuing education flyer from Edmonton. You see, I'm drawn to course schedules like a hummingbird to nectar. I ignored all the courses I would love to take (like the Thai it Up! cooking course) and spotted one my daughter might love: Stand-up Comedy. She has her parents' quirky sense of humour and a whole lot more chutzpah. It's five

Tuesdays starting in January and includes an optional chance to perform at The Laugh Shop. I quickly tapped out an email to her outlining the important bits and hit send.

All the while I've got my eye on the clock to make sure I tune in to CISN FM to get the tropical words of the day to enter into the contest for one of the trips to Huatulco, Mexico. I'm also doing the Westjet - *Edmonton Journal* print and online contest for other trips. Winning one, or any, of these trips would go a long way to forgetting the crummy weather—and did I mention the canola waiting to be combined?

We've now had lunch and watched half of the noon news. It's still dreary out there but thanks to distractions, diversions, and dalliances I'm only 50 minutes away from the next tropical word. Hope springs eternal, from where I sit.

# Sister Aurora

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

#14

I'm surprised he's even going with you. You suck at sports, you dress like a circus, and you're-- Catholic!

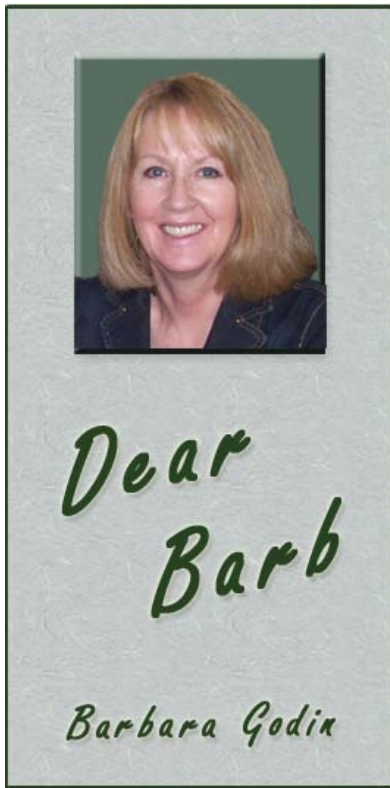
Funny thing about that: the more Catholic I am the better he likes it.

What for? My mother finally respects me.

Bert, if you're not happy why don't you break it off?

I guess she can't remember what it was like being married to her own "Shane".





## Help Exists for Grandparents' Rights

*Dear Barb:*

*I hope you can help me with my dilemma. My youngest son and his wife have just separated and it was a difficult separation. They have two young boys and I'm having difficulty seeing my grandchildren. Their mother is so angry at my son that she is trying to keep the children away from our family.*

*I don't know where to turn. These are my only grandchildren and I have been babysitting them since they were born. I thought I had a good relationship with my daughter-in-law, but she barely speaks to me now. I really love my grandchildren and want to be a part of their life. My son is also angry and seems to have given up the fight to see his children. Do you know if I have any legal rights? I have heard that there are some organizations, but I don't know where to find information. I don't have a lot of money to spend on a lawyer. Thanks for any help you can offer.*

*Eleanor*

Hi, Eleanor. Being a grandparent myself I can definitely sympathize with you. I couldn't imagine losing contact with my grandchildren. Your son and his wife have allowed their anger to take over, and as a result they are not taking into consideration their children's best interests.

Children benefit on many levels when they have grandparents in their lives, especially during times of marital discord. Grandparents can provide a safe haven for their grandchildren, where they feel comfortable and cared for and are removed from the tension in their home.

Due to the rising rates of divorce and separation many grandparents find themselves in situations such as yours. Fortunately, several organizations have evolved to assist grandparents, not only emotionally but also to advise of their rights. There is an abundance of information on the web that I'm sure you will find useful.

A very good website that covers many aspects of this issue is [Cangrands](http://Cangrands.com). On this site you will find links to support groups in your area, and you can also subscribe to their online magazine. This site is definitely worth checking out.

Also, for a reasonable yearly fee you can join The Canadian Grandparents Rights Association. They have chapters throughout most Canadian provinces. The National Branch is located in BC, and a quick Internet search should provide contact information for the chapter nearest you.

Great question, Eleanor. Best of luck.

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

## AUSU THIS MONTH



### Annual AGM Held

As you probably already know from the AGM Report put out by the *Voice*, AUSU held its annual general meeting on March 23, 2009.

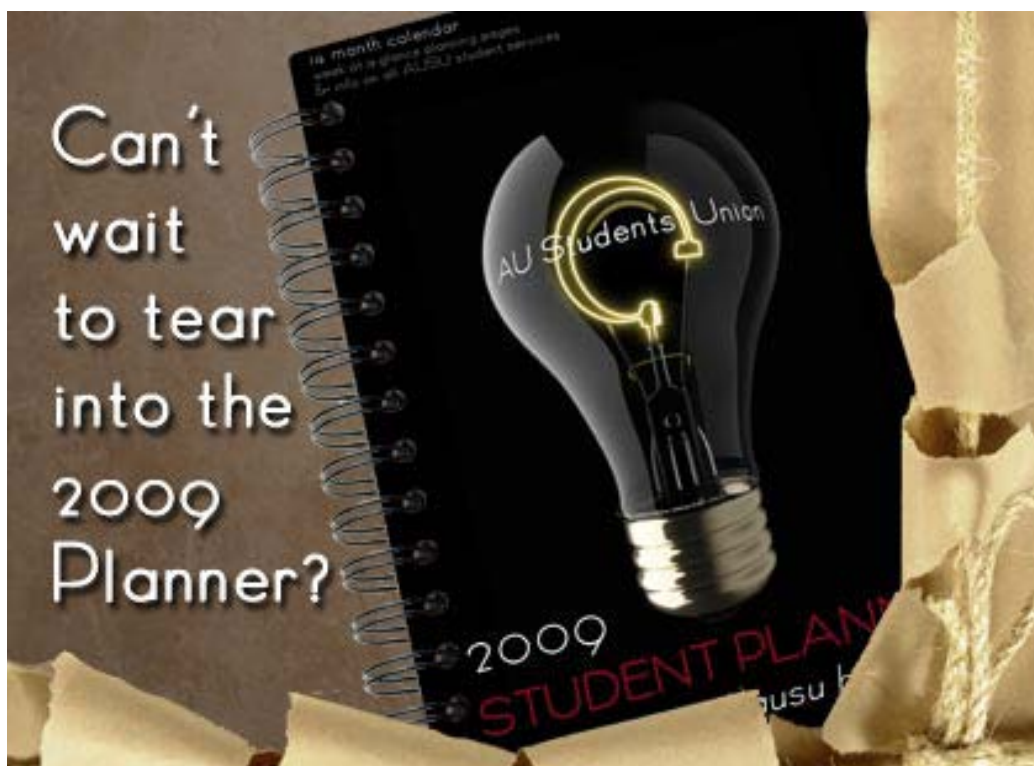
In that meeting a number of important revisions to the definitions of AUSU membership occurred, to make sure that the Councillors you elect are able to represent you during General Meetings and so that if you're a student in an AU collaborative undergrad program, you'll still be counted as an AUSU member even during a term that doesn't have any AUSU courses scheduled.

Also, our fees were changed from being \$8, \$16, or \$24 per course depending on the number of credits, to being a flat \$3 per credit, an increase of a dollar per course for most students. With this extra money, AUSU should be able to begin moving forward with a lot of desired programs that have been held up due to our staffing not being as big as our ambitions.

Also at the AGM, some good discussion was held with respect to email accounts, an issue we know a lot of you are concerned about, and we'll keep working with the university to see if a reasonable solution can be found among all of the priority issues AU needs to deal with.

### Media Committee Started

Council has approved the terms of reference for the new media committee. This group, including your *Voice* editor, will be working hard to deliver new multimedia content to you on a regular basis. Our hope is to bring forward a more engaging, interactive AUSU, one that can help you get everything you want out of your education.



### AU Fees Increasing

On March 27, the AUGC approved the new fees that will come into effect in September 2009. The bottom line is you'll be paying an additional \$29 per 3-credit course, including the increase to the AUSU fees. This includes an \$18 increase to base tuition and a \$10 increase to the Learning Resources fee. AUSU has noted



concerns with the university continuing to increase fees by the maximum allowable by Alberta legislation, but has agreed that lower quality service is not a viable alternative.

More concerning is the increase to the Learning Resources fee. AUSU will continue to press for details on how this fee relates to the prices the university has to pay for your textbooks and online materials.

## au.world Closes

AUSU has noted the closing of the au.world publication with sadness, and has brought this to the governing council of AU. In its place, AU has begun a new magazine called *AU Open* which, rather than being strictly student focussed, contains a mix of stories for alumni, investors, and students. We have strong hopes that AU will increase the focus of this new magazine to be at least as relevant to current students as the old au.world was.

## 2009 AUSU Handbook/Planners

Members are snapping up our 2009 AUSU Handbook/Planner. Now in full colour, it has more course tracking pages, brief guides to the citation styles you'll need for your essays at AU, and of course, all the important AU dates and addresses that you need to know. You can order your own copy by going to <http://www.ausu.org/handbook/index.php>



## SmartDraw Program Continues

If you haven't yet, you might want to download a copy of SmartDraw. AUSU has purchased a licence agreement to supply the award-winning SmartDraw software to all AUSU members (current undergraduate students). To access this deal and find out more, visit the front page of our website.

SmartDraw allows you to create a wide range of graphics for your assignments and submit them electronically in a Word file. You can also place your graphics in Excel or PowerPoint files, or export them as TIF, GIF, or JPEG files to make a web graphic or even a logo.

Just a few of the graphics you can make include Venn diagrams, genetics charts, graphs, organizational and flow charts, and Gantt charts.

For any course that requires charts that cannot be easily created in Word or Excel, this should be a real time saver and make it easier to submit all portions of an assignment by email.

Remember, though, that you should always check with your tutor to find out if there is a specific format he or she prefers. Your tutor does not have to have SmartDraw to view these graphics, however. Installations under this program are good for one year. The package includes both the Standard and Health Care editions of SmartDraw.

## Merchandise Still for Sale

We still have some locks and memory keys available for sale. Both of these were designed with ease of mailing in mind, which means they're small enough to be easily stored pretty much anywhere.

The wristband USB key is a unique way to carry around your assignments, online materials, and even emails while you're on the go.

With a 1 gigabyte capacity, it can even handle a good chunk of your music collection, and the design means you no longer have to worry about losing it.

The *Voice* memory key has less capacity (512 MB) but the dark, flip-top design is classy enough to accompany you anywhere.

In addition, we have recently purchased some steel water bottles. With all the concerns about BPA in clear plastic, the decision was made to go stainless steel. Cheaper and more environmentally friendly than purchasing plastic bottles of water, fill up your AUSU bottle to keep thirst away no matter where you're travelling.

## AUSU Lock Loan Program

Still running, and still popular, the lock loan program can allow you to rest easy knowing your valuables are safe if you're taking an exam at the Calgary or Edmonton campus. The locks can be set to any combination, and are loaned to people without any deposit, but we ask that you please remember to reset them to 0-0-0 before returning them so that we can continue this program.

## Employment Site is Here!

Many of you will already have seen the link to our new employment site on the front page, and while there are not a lot of employers in evidence yet, it's a great opportunity to get your resume, skills, and talents in there.

The Personnel Department is busily working on finding employers who could use your unique abilities as a distance education student.

Be sure yours are available to get the early opportunities!



## INTERNATIONAL NEWS DESK



### At Home: BC may refuse welfare for alleged criminals

Between Facebook, YouTube, and reality television, it seems that nobody's interested in keeping anything private these days. A new BC bill may just put that theory to the test, though. The province wants to deny social assistance or disability benefits to anyone with an outstanding arrest warrant, and officials plan to rely on applicants to tell the truth.

Rich Coleman, the province's minister for housing and social development, told reporters that the bill is mainly aimed at those who move to BC from other provinces. But as the [CBC](#) reports, the bill would also apply to "anyone with an outstanding warrant for an indictable offence anywhere in the country."

To be effective, the bill would require applicants to freely admit that they have outstanding arrest warrants against their names. Officials don't plan to search the national police database for such details.

Coleman told reporters that if an applicant admits to outstanding warrants, "they will be advised that they won't be eligible for social assistance until they clean up the warrant."

The bill includes a provision that applicants with outstanding warrants will be given transportation to return and deal with them. It's questionable how well this will work, though. After all, if someone moves to avoid being arrested, a free ride home may not be enough to make them change their minds.

### In Foreign News: Auschwitz Museum uses Facebook to educate

It may seem incongruous at first: a connection between a popular social networking site and the location of one of the most disturbing events in history. But when it comes to educating young people about the horrors of the Holocaust, officials at the Auschwitz-Birkenau Memorial and Museum are finding Facebook a surprisingly useful tool.

As the [Krakow Post](#) reports, the museum "recently launched a Facebook page as an attempt to educate younger people about the Holocaust."

Although the Facebook page only launched this month, it already has well over 10 thousand supporters (the page can be located by searching for "Auschwitz Memorial"). The Auschwitz-Birkenau Memorial and Museum is located in Oświęcim, Poland. It's on a site that has become a key symbol of the Holocaust; two Nazi concentration camps where over a million people perished during WW II.

Some have questioned whether Facebook is an appropriate place for such a memorial. But as a spokesman for the Auschwitz Memorial explained to reporters, "Facebook is a tool that young people are using to communicate, so if we want to reach them, we should be using their tool." The page includes discussions, information on visiting the museum, and historical background on the Holocaust and Auschwitz-Birkenau.

## EDUCATION NEWS

Gabrielle Kind

**More students doubling up on degrees**

**Some students taking second, more hands-on programs to complement classroom work**

VICTORIA (CUP) - To degree or not to degree, that is the question. But there's a third option that is increasing in popularity—to get more than one degree. Many Canadian students are doubling up on degrees, diplomas, and certificates, due in part to a slowing job market.

Camosun College student Stephanie Phipps is well educated about education. After finishing a bachelor of science in economics at the University of Victoria (UVic), Phipps immediately enrolled in the nursing program at Camosun. She is in her first year and will finish with a baccalaureate of science in nursing.

"I'll more than likely have job offers as a nurse shortly before I graduate," says Phipps. Despite her first degree, Phipps disagrees that a university degree is necessary to get a good career and make a decent living. "Nurses are so high in demand that I'll have a lot of flexibility as to where I want to work," she says.

In the 2006-07 academic year, 38 schools across all provinces except Prince Edward Island offered fast-track entry-to-practice nursing programs, allowing students to complete their nursing education more quickly, including in cases of second-degree entry into the programs.

Despite Phipps' years of formal education, she's certain previous work experience is way more valuable than a classroom education. She says employers use education as way to weed people out, but once they hire someone, it's all about that person's ability to do the job and not the degree they have. Phipps recalls attending classes at UVic alongside 200 other students, many with different aims after graduation.

"It's difficult to do hands-on stuff [in university] because a group of people graduating with the same degree may end up doing very different things," says Phipps. The nursing program she's enrolled in at Camosun offers a more hands-on educational experience than her economics degree because it has a specific outcome. Everyone in the program intends on becoming a nurse, so every skill learned applies to all students.

Teresa Tran graduated from Camosun's exercise and wellness program and is now completing a kinesiology degree at UVic. She also feels it's not necessary to have a degree to be successful. A degree "offers a different range of careers and is not suitable for everyone," she says.

Tran transferred to UVic to further her education and pursue a different career. She realized partway through the exercise and wellness program that the jobs she hoped to get from it, such as a lifeguard and swim instructor, would pay the same if she applied with or without a degree. Also, the certification for those jobs could be completed in one weekend "for less than a quarter of the price of tuition for four semesters of courses," she says. Tran's program at Camosun was much more hands-on, and she anticipates the later years of her degree at UVic will be as well.



# CLASSIFIEDS

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

## THE VOICE

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