

# THE VOICE

## MAGAZINE

Volume 17 Issue 41  
October 30, 2009

### **Creature Feature**

Saturday night at the  
(spooky) movies

### **Haunted Houses**

Location, location

### **Better the World**

One click at a time

*Plus:*

*In Conversation With, 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 II.. 3  
Better the World: Making a Difference, One Click at a Time .. 7

## Articles

Eras in Education: Colonial and Modern Masquerades..... 9  
Stigmatized Properties: Haunted Houses? ..... 11  
In Conversation With: Girl + the Machine ..... 15  
AU Options: Geology 313 ..... 17

## Columns

Dear Barb ..... 19  
The Mindful Bard..... 20  
From Where I Sit ..... 22  
Sister Aurora..... 23  
AUSU This Month ..... 24

## News and Events

Click of the Wrist ..... 6  
Did You Know?..... 18  
Education News ..... 27

## From the Readers

Letters to the Editor ..... 2

**The Voice  
Magazine**

[www.voicemagazine.org](http://www.voicemagazine.org)

1200, 10011 109th  
Street NW  
Edmonton AB  
T5J 3S8

800.788.9041 ext. 2905

Email

[voice@voicemagazine.org](mailto:voice@voicemagazine.org)

**Publisher**

AU Students' Union

**Editor-In-Chief**

Tamra Ross

**Managing Editor**

Sandra Livingston

**Regular Contributors**

Hazel Anaka

John Buhler

Christina M. Frey

Barbara Godin

Bethany Tynes

Wanda Waterman St.

Louis

*The Voice* is published  
every Friday in HTML  
and PDF format

To subscribe for weekly  
email reminders as  
each issue is posted,  
see the 'subscribe' link  
on *The Voice* front  
page

*The Voice* does not  
share its subscriber list  
with anyone

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

© 2008 by *The Voice*

# 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 II

Last week, we featured old movies where human monsters were the focus. This week, we'll look at a different type of monster: the otherworldly creatures that might evoke sympathy, horror, or something in between. We'll then end our spooky series with a smile by seeing what happens when humour and horror mix.

Early "monster" movies were almost exclusively produced by Universal Pictures (they're often referred to collectively as "Universal monsters"). Both beloved, familiar characters and lesser-known creatures, these classic monsters seem to be united by a surprisingly sympathetic aspect. They're frighteningly hideous, and they're feared primarily for their appearance. Their behaviour is also monstrous, but their actions are often motivated by ignorance, misunderstanding, mistreatment, or even love and misguided passion. Frequently, there's a whiff of tragedy in the air.

The most famous example is, of course, Frankenstein's Monster (usually inaccurately referred to as "Frankenstein," the name of its creator) in 1931's classic *Frankenstein*. The story is familiar to most: a scientist experimenting with raising the dead creates a monster out of dead body parts sewn together, brought to life by electrical stimulation. The Monster (played by

Boris Karloff) strangles and drowns people, yet he's not so much a killing machine as a creature who has learned to mistrust humans. The Monster is a bit of a tragic character: he's almost like an overgrown child who doesn't know his own strength. It's not scary by modern standards, but *Frankenstein's* influence on both horror films and popular culture make it a must-see.

*Trivia:* Much of the Monster's "look" is attributable to the legendary makeup expert Jack Pierce. To make Frankenstein's Monster as accurate as possible, he consulted anatomical and surgical texts to determine how the skull would have been opened and then stitched back together to receive its new brain. The bolts on either side of the head were, of course, to conduct the electrical pulse that brought the Monster to life.

Similarly tragic, although slightly creepier, *The Mummy's* (1932) bandaged monster actually appears in his familiar wrappings only in the pre-story. Boris Karloff also plays the titular mummy, the lovelorn ancient priest Im-Ho-Tep. Resurrected 10 years earlier by the reading of a spell, Im-Ho-Tep is now in pursuit of the spell-containing scroll in order to resurrect his long-lost love. His sacrifices of the past and belief that true love can overcome time and death give him a romantically sympathetic personality. However, his single-minded obsession with the woman he believes to be his reincarnated lover makes him a little too creepy for comfort. This, combined with the close-up shots of his dark-eyed, undead face, make this monster-drama a mildly thrilling Halloween experience.



*Trivia:* When King Tutankhamen's tomb was opened in 1922, it created a fascination with all things Egyptian. Hoping to capitalize upon the public interest in both Egyptology and the growing horror genre, Universal Pictures sought a literary work or treatment that could be turned into an Egypt-themed horror film. *The Mummy* was the result. Note that the *Mummy* movies in the 1940s and 1950s were not sequels to the original, but completely different movies with different casts and characters.

The horribly disfigured Phantom from 1925's *The Phantom of the Opera* also invites sympathy, but it's pity mixed with horror. The film's Phantom isn't the suave charmer of the popular musical. The original novel on which the story was based is a horror thriller, and this silent film follows suit. A young opera singer, Christine, is coached by a mysterious "Phantom" who demands her love in return. When the Phantom discovers that Christine has another lover, he loses his already tenuous hold on sanity. Although the lack of spoken dialogue makes it difficult to invest in the picture (especially for those familiar with the modern musical), it's worth seeing just for the Phantom's makeup. When he's first unmasked, even modern viewers will jump in their seats. His despair when he realizes how much his face has horrified his love is tragic, but his manic behaviour and gleeful murderousness make him a little less than sympathetic.



*Trivia:* You'll notice that the Bal Masque scene is presented in early Technicolor; it stands out among the tinted black-and-white photography of the rest of the film. Film historians believe that more of the movie was originally in colour, but only the Bal Masque scene has survived.

Not all monsters have a sensitive side; many are horrifying to the core. One of the earliest examples is the German film *Nosferatu's* (1922) Count Orlok (a thinly veiled imitation of Count Dracula). It's another silent film, with grainy footage and overly dramatic acting. However, it packs a punch: amazingly, nearly 90 years later, this vampire tale is still scary. Although the written dialogue is weak, the film's fantastic score, good use of shadows and lighting, and above all Count Orlok's disturbing physical appearance create an eerie sense of horror.

*Trivia:* *Nosferatu* heavily copied from Bram Stoker's *Dracula*, but its producers failed to obtain film rights to the novel. Stoker's estate successfully sued for copyright infringement and obtained a court order requiring the destruction of all the film's copies. Fortunately for art and cinema, some copies survived! It's hard to believe that what is now considered one of the most influential horror films of all time was almost once lost.

If one creature intent on death and destruction could be menacing, how much more a whole crowd! *Night of the Living Dead* (1968) first introduced the concept of the modern zombie: flesh-eating, reanimated corpses



solely bent on murder and mayhem. The plot is simple: several people barricade themselves in a house while marauding zombies attack. Although *Night* has its share of gruesome scenes (it's not a kids' movie!), it relies less on its production values to create suspense; instead, it allows the horror outside the house, largely unseen, to create tension within. The elevation of suspense by television and radio broadcasts, the increasing panic of the characters, and the breakdown of interpersonal relationships contribute to the drama. There are countless theories as to the deeper meaning of the film—it's often seen as heavily critiquing post-Vietnam America—but at Halloween, it should be enjoyed for the chilling horror film it is.

*Trivia:* Unlike most of the classic horror discussed here, *Night of the Living Dead* was an independent film directed and produced by three friends whose prior experience had been directing commercials. Its low operating budget meant very basic props and camera work, but this actually contributes to the "I-was-there" realistic feel of the footage. Because the ending wasn't Hollywood happily-ever-after, many distributors passed on the film, but the producers refused to back down and the movie was eventually screened as originally intended.

Not all monsters are frightening; in fact, some are downright funny. Spoofing monster and horror movies isn't a modern invention, but began early on as the horror genre grew in popularity. An example is 1948's *Abbott and Costello Meet Frankenstein*. It's technically a horror film in its own right, but it has a lot of humour thrown in. The comedians play baggage clerks who bungle the handling of two crates destined for a horror museum. Contents of the boxes: Dracula and Frankenstein's Monster. The creatures escape to Dracula's castle, where they join forces with Costello's girlfriend in an attempt to recreate Frankenstein's Monster. What follows is a zany caper—part Marx Brothers-style wit, part Three Stooges slapstick—as Abbott and Costello work with the Wolf Man to stop the evil plot. The hilarious ending even sets the stage for a sequel, *Abbott and Costello Meet the Invisible Man* (1951).

*Trivia:* Dracula is Bela Lugosi, who played the legendary vampire in the original *Dracula* film; the Wolf Man is played by the original *Wolf Man* star Lon Chaney, Jr. (son of the Lon Chaney who was the original Phantom of the Opera). Boris Karloff, the original Frankenstein's Monster, was approached to reprise his role for this film, but declined. In fact, although Karloff was involved to a limited extent in the film's promotion, he considered the movie to be an insult to the classic horror films and refused to see it.

*Young Frankenstein* (1974) technically falls just outside my "old movie" cutoff,<sup>1</sup> but its black and white production, old-movie-style credits, use of the original *Frankenstein's* lab and props, and parodying of 1930s and 1940s monster movies make it too good to miss. Dr. Frederick Frankenstein (comically pronounced

<sup>1</sup> I consider the era of modern film to have begun with 1972's *The Godfather*.



Fronk-en-steen)—grandson of the original creator of *Frankenstein's Monster*—adamantly insists that life, once gone, cannot be brought back to a body. In fact, he's almost fanatical about it. However, when he's summoned to his grandfather's hometown to receive his inheritance, Frederick gradually becomes interested in the elder *Frankenstein's* experimentation. It's a hilarious parody of the original *Frankenstein* film (with a happier ending!), with nods to *Frankenstein's* sequels and even *King Kong*.

*Trivia:* *Frankenstein's Monster* is Peter Boyle, Raymond's cranky dad from the TV show *Everybody Loves Raymond*. While filming, Boyle met his future wife, a reporter, on set. He asked her out while still in full makeup; would that make her the bride of *Frankenstein*?

The development of the horror film genre—from classic to cheesy to the modern slasher flick—can't really be encompassed in a single article. There are countless other old horror movies worth watching: for example, *Dracula* (1931), *The Wolf Man* (1941), and *The Birds* (1963) are on many must-see lists. However, hopefully the films I've reviewed in this two-part series will serve as a springboard for further viewing enjoyment. Happy watching—and remember that old horror films need not be limited to October, but can be appreciated year-round!

## CLICK OF THE WRIST – Haunted

It's Halloween, time for all things scary and spooky. There are vampires and werewolves and witches, but perhaps the scariest of all are ghosts. After all, you never can tell when they're right in the room beside you. This week, we take a look at some haunted happenings.

### Most Famous Ghosts

This top-10 list includes human ghosts like the Vanishing Hitchhiker (that ever-popular campfire story) and Casper, and even such modern incarnations as Slimer from *Ghostbusters*. Not all ghosts are human though; there's also the Flying Dutchman, the "seventeenth-century merchant ship said to haunt the high seas."

### Ghosts Caught on Film

There are plenty of humorous "ghosts on film" clips on YouTube. But the people in this program (including professional videographers) are convinced that the events caught on film are the real thing. Good Halloween viewing, whether you believe in spooky happenings or not.

### Top 10 Haunted Castles in Britain

With its long, rich, and often bloody history, it's no surprise that Britain has its share of haunted castles. This site offers brief histories on 10 of the best known ones, including the spooky visitors that are said to roam Windsor Castle—like Henry VIII and Anne Boleyn.

### Real Haunted Places

If you're in the mood for a little ghost hunting of your own, there's no shortage of supposedly haunted places. Along with a list of ghostly locations, you can also pick up tips on successful ghost hunting, including basic tools and cemetery etiquette.

### Castle of Spirits

Ghost stories, ghost photos, urban legends: all these and more are waiting inside the Castle of Spirits. For the earthly minded, there's a primer on the history of Halloween as well as a very interesting story of the jack-o'-lantern's beginnings.

## BETTER THE WORLD

Sandra Livingston



### Making a Difference, One Click at a Time

It's an interesting conundrum of student life. You're broadening your understanding of the world, becoming more aware of the issues facing it and (hopefully) looking for ways to make a difference.

Yet for many students, finding the time to volunteer can be hard. And with money being

spent on books and tuition, there's rarely such a thing as spare cash.

That's where Better the World comes in. It's a website that lets you raise money for worthwhile causes around the globe—just by surfing the web. Every time you go online, you can help the Lewa Wildlife Conservatory preserve Mount Kenya's rich biodiversity. Or assist youth volunteers working to provide clean water. Or support War Child Canada as they provide education for children in Darfur and The Democratic Republic of Congo. Or . . .

Sound impossible? Read on.

Kristen Petri is part of the Better the World team, and she explains how the project got started.

"The company was founded in May 2008 and the website was launched February 12, 2009," says Kristen. "It was founded on research that was begun at the Richard Ivey School of Business, where three of the founders were taking their EMBA. Essentially it started out as a school project! All the founders (and others who work here) have a history of working and volunteering with charities—they all care about making the world a better place."

So who can get involved with Better the World? As Kristen explains, "Anyone with access to the Internet! It's great for people who are already donating to charity but want to give more, and also for people who don't have the cash to donate (in other words, great for students!)"

But how, exactly, does it work? It's as easy as logging on. Once you've created a username and password, there are several ways to help the cause of your choice.

The main one is to use the Better the World sidebar. It's a simple plugin for Firefox or Internet Explorer that displays ads for charities and socially responsible companies while you're surfing the Net. A couple of examples are Red Dot Campaign (a campaign aimed at reducing the waste from junk mail) and Orenda (a consulting firm that promotes corporate social responsibility).

Companies pay to have their ads displayed in the sidebar, much like they might pay a newspaper to publish an ad. But with Better the World, 90 per cent of that money is allocated to the charity the member has chosen.

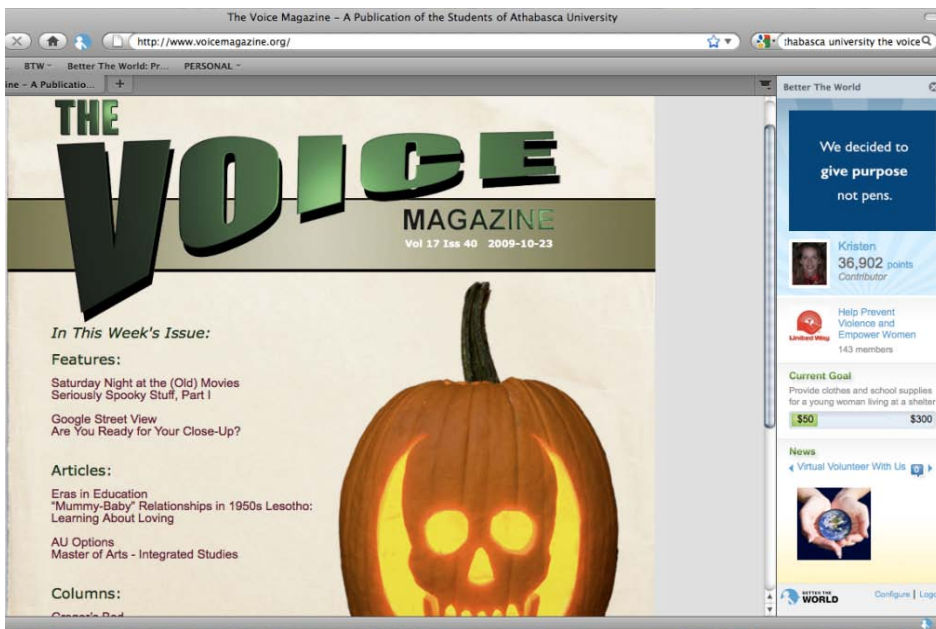
You can also add a widget to your own blog or webpage, put a badge on your Facebook page to tell your friends about the cause you're supporting, link to your Twitter account, and more. There are also monthly contests, like The Final 4, which lets the winning school choose a charity to donate as much as four thousand dollars to.



Still, there are plenty of scammers out there on the Internet. How do users know that the funds they help raise will actually make it into the hands of the people who need it?

"Firstly," explains Kristen, "we work with many really well-known charities who have, of course, checked us out before coming on board! They wouldn't work with us if they weren't certain. Secondly, we are the first B Corporation in Canada, which means that we've gone through an extensive vetting process to ensure that we meet comprehensive and transparent social and environmental performance standards." (You can read more about B Corporations [here](#).)

Some of the charities involved with Better the World are The Canadian Foundation for AIDS Research (CANFAR), Habitat for Humanity, the Children's Miracle Network, and the Kids' Internet Safety Alliance. A



full list of causes is available on the website.

And Better the World's 90/10 policy also ensures that the money is going where it should. The policy means that "90 per cent of the money goes directly to your charity (no other costs to the charity)," says Kristen, "which is an amazingly low cost/earnings ratio for *any* fundraising format!"

Incredibly, it can take as little as \$15 to make a big difference. That's all it costs to fund one hour of research and support for clean water initiatives. And \$25 lets War

Child Canada provide milk powder to one family for three months, while \$100 allows Trickle Up to help women "take their first steps out of poverty, providing them with resources to build micro-enterprises."

Better the World's members have already been part of several success stories.

"If you look on our [Impact page](#)," says Kristen, "you can see the goals we've achieved." Some of the successes of the past few months include providing two nights of shelter for a person in need; paying to send a child to school for a year; X-raying a child with a broken arm; buying milk to feed an orphaned rhino for a month; and providing counselling sessions to a woman escaping violence.

The Better the World community is well over five thousand members strong (and growing), and there are more developments on the horizon.

As Kristen explains, "We are always working to develop new tools and methods that our members can [use to] raise money for charity in new and innovative ways! Currently we are working towards providing a search tool enabling people to raise money for charity, shopping (people can buy ethical products online and part of the proceeds go towards charities), and more social networking on the Better The World site so our members can interact and discuss more."

For millions of people, the Internet has become an important part of their daily routine. They work, shop, chat, study, and play. Now, they can Better the World while they're at it.



### Colonial and Modern Masquerades: School is in . . . Disguise

Be it at kindergarten or college, October 31 is one of the most anticipated dates on the calendar. From spending a whole school day eating candy and making arts and crafts, to an evening out trick-or-treating, toilet-papering houses, egging automobiles or partying, Halloween has something every student can be excited about. As an institution endorsed by schools and elders, Halloween combines individual rebellion with social solidarity.

The day releases tension from the daily grind of fitting into one's prescribed social roles, roles taught and accentuated by the education process. I recall in elementary school us students running amok with sugar-fuelled excitement while the PA loudspeaker blared garish sound effects. They were piped into every classroom as though to remind us that the temporal authority had momentarily been usurped by the energy of the moment.

I remember one exasperated teacher attempting to deaden the cacophony of cats, witches, and moans by taping pieces of orange and black construction paper

over the offending speaker. Most teachers seemed to relish Halloween, however. While allowing for a sense of individual expression by way of masquerade, the day also unites students through its unique ambiance.

Centuries ago, and in traditions carried forward to the present, trick-or-treating was an institution that served to foster community trust and to enforce social expectations. However, Halloween's history and historical associations, despite being carried out by young people, are rarely discussed in class. It is possible that schoolteachers avoid the subject because of Halloween's sketchy relation with Christianity (vis-à-vis all the witches, demons, ghosts, and devils involved), but similar activities in past eras reveal the importance of momentary lapses in social normalcy, particularly for school-age youngsters.

In one recent Philadelphia fifth grade classroom, a tradition known as "mumming" was actually demonstrated during a Christmas pageant. Originating in the Old World and brought to Newfoundland in the early 17th century, the tradition saw young townsfolk disguise themselves and go door to door asking "Any mummers 'lowed in?" Their outfits were as outlandish as possible; in the Philadelphia classroom this translated into one athletic-minded boy wearing a size 42 bra. Such gender reversals proved not to be a problem given the playful and only subtly subversive nature of mumming. The teacher noted that "to my surprise, I did have boys dress up as girls and vice versa." In the end, everyone goes back to "normal," perhaps with a renewed belief in exactly what normalcy entails for them.

Philadelphia itself has a history of mummering dating back to 1642, when Swedish immigrants would sing the following carol on neighbourhood doorsteps: *"Here we stand before your door/As we stood the year before/Give us whiskey; give us gin/Open the door and let us in."*

These mummers were dutifully rewarded with cakes and ale.

Meanwhile, in Newfoundland the song was of a somewhat darker nature. Mummers "threatened the hosts with physical and sexual violence," which it seemed the hosts could only avoid by successfully guessing their assailants' identities. If the guess was successful, the mummers removed their masks. If not, they simply left. No harm was ever done.

It seems that mummary was "a way for community members to prove their trust and commitment to each other."

A century later, in 1837 Quebec (then called Lower Canada), high school-age youth of both sexes participated in a ritual known as the "charivari." A contemporary account of a charivari describes a troupe dressed as "sailors, old men, Catholic priests" carrying a coffin to the door of "any old gentleman" who had committed the social faux pas of taking a young wife. Standing outside the home of this "invader of the laws of love and nature" the youths would bang pots and pans and shout a "mock service" for the too-aged groom. If he invited them in for a drink or gave them money, they departed. If not, they returned nightly with a "fresh ludicrous composition" that they would sing.

It seems that the charivari was a "protectionist impulse of bachelordom." However, the goals were at times more political, such as to protest a disliked English official, or religious, to condemn a convert to Protestantism. The charivari became an "all purpose weapon" of social control. Rather than hearing songs or jeers, "the first notice one villager had of his charivari came in the form of a whip lashing across his face."

***The charivari became an  
"all purpose weapon" of  
social control. Rather  
than hearing songs or  
jeers, "the first notice one  
villager had of his  
charivari came in the form  
of a whip lashing across  
his face."***

Trick-or-treating, mummering, and the charivari all bring to mind the Mannville, Alberta-born sociologist Erving Goffman. Goffman's "dramaturgy" of life is based around the fact that on a daily basis "people perform for their social audiences." Impressions are managed in order to convey a consistent identity. Only at a time such as Halloween is a "Front," consisting of "items of expressive equipment," altered or discarded.

In the Philadelphia classroom, for instance, the boy wearing a bra set aside his normal Front of basketball shoes, shorts, and T-shirt in order to shock the audience and produce "a dramatic effect arising . . . from a scene that is presented." For Goffman every social setting is a scene, making very real the well-known Shakespearean line "All the world's a stage."

Halloween is one of the only times of year that the veil of normal dress and behaviour is lifted. Perhaps it would be more accurate to say that the social stipulations on what is acceptable are relaxed. For students, Halloween is a blessed relief from the tedium of the fall semester. Judging by the gusto with which many teachers embraced the holiday, it seems that October 31 was a welcome reprieve for instructors as well. In the end, student and instructor return to normal life and studies, refreshed from a day of carnival-like delirium.



## STIGMATIZED PROPERTIES: HAUNTED HOUSES?

John Buhler



When my wife was a child, she used to visit a friend who lived in an older home where years before a young man had committed suicide. Though the whole neighbourhood knew about the death, my wife's young friend and his family seemed to be have been unaware of the violent incident.

Some buyers might refuse to purchase a home in which this kind of event has occurred, fearing that murders and suicides leave some kind of psychic imprint on a home. Though the knowledge that someone died in the home of course does not change the physical building in any way, it may change a subsequent owner's perception and enjoyment of the home. In the real estate market, such homes fall into a very broad category known as *stigmatized properties*.

Stigmatizing events may make it difficult to sell a home and may even force the owner to sell at less than normal market value. What constitutes a stigmatizing event, though, is highly subjective and to a large extent a matter of one's personal perception and beliefs. Knowing that the previous owner died peacefully in the home, for example, might not disturb potential home buyers in the same way that a murder or suicide might.

In many North American jurisdictions, home sellers aren't required to inform potential buyers that a death took place on the property. California's disclosure laws, however, are particularly clear. The state's legislation requires that all deaths that occurred in a home during the last three years prior to its sale must be disclosed. Three years, though, is only a short period when one considers, for example, the long and potentially dark history that may be associated with a Victorian-era home.

Alberta's provincial legislation is less stringent than that of California, and doesn't require sellers or real estate agents—unless they're specifically asked—to inform prospective buyers about a death that occurred on a property. Owners, on the other hand, may hesitate to share information about a home's history, as the disclosure of potentially stigmatizing events might force the property to sell for less than market value.

According to Bonnie Wegerich, president of the Calgary Real Estate Board, "Routinely realtors would not likely ask if someone had died in a home unless they had heard about something in the news or heard from a neighbour. In the event where a person was murdered in the home, the family often tells the realtor so that there is no surprise to the buyer. But that is not required by law."

Realtors might, however, ask questions about estate sales. "If a realtor sees that a home is an estate sale, then the realtor will get the information from the listing realtor. The listing realtor will ask about the history as well. For some (buyers) a person passing away in a house may not be an issue if it was from



natural causes. If this is a concern for a buyer," suggests Wegerich, "they need to let their realtor know so that they can ask the right questions.

"Personally I am not aware of any homes where a buyer bought a stigmatized property and found out after the fact . . . I do know that once it is a firm sale they would need to talk to their lawyer if that is important to them. But," warns Wegerich "ultimately they are in a valid contract."

"There is no legal requirement to disclose a death unless asked," confirms Andrea Snow of the Edmonton Real Estate Board. "Caveat emptor (buyer beware). Of course the buyer's agent will discuss the buyer's needs, wants, and concerns to ensure (that he or she) understands what's important to the buyer.

"Whether the death is natural or not, the neighbours will undoubtedly know and share with the new owners," suggests Snow, "so it is the seller's decision on whether to disclose up front." Nevertheless, like Wegerich, she is not aware of any instances in which buyers complained that they had not been informed of a death on a property, only to learn about it after purchasing a home.

Prominent Edmonton real estate agent Don Sutton, however, was involved with one sale in which the seller had been unaware of a stigmatizing event in the home's history. "The buyer discovered it through talking to one of the neighbours. Although the conditions were removed . . . the seller gave the buyer his deposit back. The property sold to someone else shortly after that.

"Good advice for any buyer with these concerns," adds Sutton, "would be talk to the neighbours. There is always someone on the block who knows everything."

For home buyers concerned about the history of a home, the message is clear: ask! Ask the agent, ask the seller, ask the people next door.

For some people, however, it's not simply the knowledge of past events that's disturbing. Sometimes, the buyer may feel that, as a result of a death on the property, his or her material, solid, tangible asset is subject to something immaterial, ethereal, and somewhat intangible. In other words, they might believe that the house is actually haunted by the spirit of the deceased. In fact, a reputation for being haunted is another issue that may stigmatize a property.

Although a seller's failure to disclose information about stigmatizing events could lead to a lawsuit, proving that one has unwittingly purchased a haunted house may be difficult—though not impossible. In a famous case in Nyack, New York, a couple placed a deposit on a property only to learn afterward that the house had a reputation for being haunted. According to the Illinois Business Law Journal, the New York Supreme Court ruled that, as the alleged haunting had in fact been publicized by the sellers, the house was "as a matter of law" considered to be haunted. The buyers successfully recovered their deposit.

Sutton reports that in 34 years in the business, he has never heard of any haunted houses in the Edmonton real estate market. He has, however, dealt with a stigmatized property as the listing agent for a home belonging to a murdered drug dealer. Potential buyers didn't seem worried about the spirit of the deceased



causing any trouble. Instead, they were concerned about possible visits from the drug dealer's former clients who may not have known about their supplier's death.

Still, many people are fearful that spirits of the dead do indeed linger in homes. It has long been the perception, according to Owen Davies, author of *The Haunted: A Social History of Ghosts*, that hauntings were often associated with places where someone had died. Prior to our era of extensive medical interventions (in which many people breathe their last in hospitals), most died in their homes, frequently in



the bedroom. According to Davies, a University of Hertfordshire social historian, this room in particular was often considered the focus of ghostly activity. A ghost might appear at the foot of the bed or rudely awaken a sleeper by violently pulling the covers off.

Davies also cites historical instances in which hauntings had an impact upon a home's resale value. Sometimes ghosts even rendered houses completely uninhabitable: in 19th century London, several homes thought to be haunted were simply left derelict.

In any case, people who have an active interest in studying ghosts tend to report experiences that are generally more subtle than those portrayed in popular and sensationalistic films like *The Amityville Horror* or *Poltergeist*. British ghost hunter and television personality Jason Karl assures his readers that ghosts actually tend to be benign. In his book *Jason Karl's Great Ghost Hunt: A Spectral Journey Through Britain's Haunted Realms*, he does however indicate that some malevolent spirits may physically assault people, and that pop celebrity Sting was driven from his haunted London mansion by a knife-hurling supernatural entity. The ghost hunter nevertheless reports there are "no recorded incidents of ghosts killing anyone."

Ghosts are, according to Karl, "for the most part harmless—simply a reminder of the past that in some cases becomes a rightful member of the household." In other words, don't worry if you seem to be sharing your home with the spirit of a former resident.

But "a rightful member of the household"? Believe it or not, there are people who seem to have no problem living with ghosts.

"I definitely enjoy living with *the right* spirits," confirms Morgan Knudsen, who happens to live with the spirit of a cat she calls Horatio. Knudsen is the cofounder of EntitySeeker, which she established with Stephanie Wertz. The organization is involved with paranormal research and investigations, so Knudsen obviously knows a thing or two about dealing with spirits. "It can be a great experience and they can be great company. I'm definitely not alone in that either—our investigator, Matt, lives with two (spirits) that are always very busy around the house being that one of them actually built the home when he was alive."

And for people who believe they are being victimized by unwelcome spirits in the home, EntitySeeker can offer help. "Our program, Teaching The Living," reports Knudsen, "is a brand new way of thinking in the field. We're really proud we've had so much success with it."

Explains Knudsen, "we are all spirits (with physical or non-physical bodies) and we interact with each other—therefore, we can influence how one treats us and vice versa. Lots of spirits stay for the location, absolutely, including some of the negative ones. Some love their home and want to see it go to someone positive or they had good memories there."

According to Knudsen, it is not only the spirits of people who died in the home that can take up residence. "Negative entities who are extremely possessive (something that causes them often to act aggressively) will (also) be drawn to locations."

"In a haunted location," warns Knudsen, "spirits will figure out quick what their relationship with you will be like (as we do with the living) and often conduct themselves accordingly. If they break a glass wanting you to leave the room and you run away, you've just sent the message that if they break something, they can make you leave."

From Knudsen, however, one gets the impression that ghosts do not routinely break glass or throw knives, but instead make their presence known through other means. "Each type of haunting comes with different warning signs, but noises that are unaccounted for, movement of objects, smells that don't correspond with the area (and) voices are signs that something might be up."

Rather than attempting to banish or exorcise spirits, EntitySeeker teaches people how their behaviours and attitudes affect their relationship with the spiritual world. "We teach people to begin to create and inspire the behaviour they want, and stand up (against) what they do not want," explains Knudsen. "Often, when we get a haunting that is dangerous or a negative spirit has intruded, it's not usually 'why,' but 'why not.' Those kinds of entities often follow upset, vulnerable, chaotic situations or places where the energy (due to past or current events) has been that way. We teach balance rather than 'fighting against,' because anything you 'fight against,' gets worse. If you are balanced emotionally, mentally, physically, and energetically within yourself and your environment, negative entities have nothing to play with."

EntitySeeker gets many requests to investigate haunting situations, but don't assume that Knudsen and her colleagues blame spirits for every unusual situation they encounter. "Many natural explanations can account for strange happenings, including electromagnetic fields, the age of the home, medical illness, etc... the list goes on. We do extensive interviews with family and witnesses, ensuring consistency in stories, medical facts, drug use, etc. The equipment we use is to monitor the environment, trying to assess the situation and get as much on film as possible for an objective look."

Though Knudsen and her colleagues are armed with modern technology and employ a modern psychological perspective (she in fact makes reference to Dr. Phil), they are part of a very long tradition in which the spirits of the dead are believed to haunt the living. Their investigations may, to a large extent, be seen as an effort to explore the impact that a home's former residents have upon the present. Like the potential buyer enquiring about a home's history, they are attempting to discover certain aspects of the building's past.

"To be haunted by a ghost is to be haunted by the past," writes John Potts, Associate Professor in Media at Sydney, Australia's Macquarie University. But the manner in which one may be "haunted" can take many

*Nevertheless, is the real estate industry's concept of stigmatized properties . . . really so far removed from the notion of haunted houses?*

forms. Some people believe that the investigations of ghost hunters, delving into energy fields, bumps in the night, and disembodied voices demonstrate that the spirits of the dead are with us. That world may appear to be in stark contrast with the realm of real estate sales that focuses on square footage, location, and modern upgrades. Nevertheless, is the real estate industry's concept of stigmatized properties—in which past events leaving no physical affect on a home can result in lawsuits and influence real property value—really so far removed from the notion of haunted houses? The spectre of stigmatized houses and the investigations of ghost hunters each seem to suggest that the lives, and especially the deaths, of a home's former residents may indeed have an effect upon the living.

## IN CONVERSATION WITH . . .

**Wanda Waterman St. Louis**



### **Girl + the Machine**

*Girl + the Machine is a Toronto-based experimental rock and multimedia fivesome known for ecstatic delivery and a wealth of engaging musical and visual ideas. They recently released Hello Earth on the Aporia label (see Voice review [here](#)). Lead singer Jackie recently took the time to answer some of Wanda Waterman St. Louis's questions.*

#### **Childhood**

My childhood was very simple and fun. I enjoyed all the singing contests in elementary school. I grew up in

Toronto from the age of 11 years. Before that I was in Malaysia.

My musical background was in voice and a little bit of flute. My instruments are my voice, different dialects, and my computer.

#### **Creative Inspiration**

Books: subjects related to vegetarian food, well-being, and spirituality. Music: *Viva! La Woman* by Cibo Matto, Bjork, Portishead, world music. Film: *Swallowtail Butterfly* (Japan).

#### **Holding on to Good Energy**

Being happy is important. I try to be a “responsible” vegetarian, eating five colours of veggies and fruits. I exercise, do Chinese energy practice, stretch, and get massages whenever I can.

#### **About Aporia**

Aporia has been wonderful! We have an affinity. Aporia saw our performance years ago and today we are with them. They don't BS and waste time. They are very supportive and give us a lot of freedom and space in our direction. We love working with Aporia.

#### **Social Conscience**

We secretly insert social conscience messages into our music and lyrics. We would like to share and promote positivity and energy.



## Writing a Song

Sometimes the visual image comes first. Sometimes the beat inspires a song. Sometimes the lyrics come first. Then the group gets together and completes the song.

## The Typical Girl + the Machine Fan

Someone who plays our album on their iPod repeatedly, recognizes the message behind our music, and finds peace and comfort in them.



## The Band's Name

Originally it was me and my machine (the computer). I do all my creative work with the computer and cannot live without it, hence the name Girl + the Machine. Then the real machines joined (the big boys).

## Rehearsals

We joke, we share health tips, eat Asian snacks, and then start playing. Or mix it up.

## Beliefs

Western and Eastern philosophy, vegetarianism, environmentalism.

## AU OPTIONS

Bethany Tynes



### Geology 313 - Our Physical Resources

Geology 313 - Our Physical Resources, “explores the nature and uses of numerous physical resources.” This senior-level science class has no prerequisites, and thus attracts a wide range of students.

Dr. Ken Munyikwa is an Assistant Professor of Earth Sciences, and currently coordinates Geology 313. “Our Physical Resources examines the occurrence and exploitation of major Earth resources used by modern society, including energy, metallic resources, non-metallic resources, water, and soil,” he says. “In addition to highlighting the geological Earth as the ultimate source of most (if not all) materials used by humans, the course draws attention to the deleterious effects associated with the exploitation of natural resources.”

And though Geology 313 is most definitely a science course, the knowledge it imparts can make it a valuable elective for all students. “The quality of life in modern society is inexorably linked to the voracious exploitation of natural

resources,” says Dr. Munyikwa. “There are few professions or pursuits in life that involve activities unrelated to the consumption of materials. Hence, skills and knowledge acquired from GEOL313 are applicable in many fields of human endeavour and should be invaluable to any graduate.”

Michelle Bonnier, a recent AU graduate, agrees. “I think it was important to learn a lot of the material just for everyday life—things like how oil is refined and where it comes from, and our other geological resources,” she says. “It made me feel like I got a broader view of the world.”

Bonnier enrolled in the class to help add variety to her program. “I needed another senior-level science credit,” she says, but “was running out of options.” Since her “entire degree revolved around human biological sciences,” Our Physical Resources piqued her interest.

Bonnier’s favourite aspect of the course was its logical structure and organization. “It was very clearly laid out—you went through all the different geological processes . . . It was great getting to learn more about how it all works,” she says.

Bonnier took five months to complete the course, writing her final exam after four months, and handing in her final paper afterward. “Had it not been at the end of my degree, having fewer courses (I consistently balanced six courses at once) made it possible to finish quickly,” she says, “but I have no doubt it would have normally taken me the full six months.”

According to Bonnier, the course covers a massive amount of information. Her least favourite part of the course “was probably the amount of work with the density of the assignments, plus a mid-term, final and paper. The whole course was a lot of work.”

But even though “the assignments were a bit long,” she explains, they really did help to review all of the concepts and material.

Having completed the course, she reflects that “it definitely is a science credit I would recommend to others,” and that while “not insanely difficult,” it is very challenging. “It does take dedication, more than other classes,” she says.

Students with a weaker science background are not likely to experience undue difficulty, however. “We see students from both science and non-science backgrounds thriving in the course and the feedback we get is most reassuring,” says Dr. Munyikwa. “It appeals to a broad spectrum of students.”

And in addition to appealing to a great range of students, Dr. Munyikwa believes that Our Physical Resources is a course that can benefit all students. “This is a very informative course and I encourage all students at the university level to contemplate doing it,” he says. “The topics covered are not only instructive, but they help train graduates with a heightened awareness of the origins of the materials they use in their daily lives as well as of issues related to the exploitation of Earth resources. These are topics whose importance has increased steadily over the last few decades and will continue in the future.”

## DID YOU KNOW?



### Athabasca River Basin Research Institute

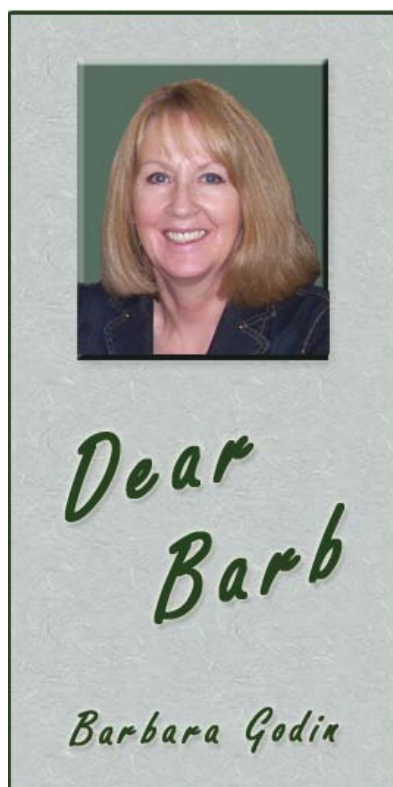
The average AU student may never see the university campus until it's time to graduate. And some may never make the journey to Athabasca, Alberta, at all. But a new initiative can help students explore one of the main features of their university's hometown.

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.



## Different Worlds Can Find Harmony

*Dear Barb:*

*I am a professional woman in my mid-thirties. I am single but would like to find the right guy and settle down and have a family. Recently I began dating a really nice man who is divorced and has two children. We have been seeing each other for a couple of months and get along great. Because he works in a factory my family and friends are cautioning me about becoming too involved with him.*

*They say we are from different worlds and won't be able to find any common interests. I'm not sure this will be a problem. I believe if two people love each other anything is possible. Am I being too idealistic in wanting to take a chance with this guy?*

*Maria*

Hi, Maria. I agree that if two people love each other anything is possible, but you have to be prepared for the roadblocks.

Being a professional woman has probably exposed you to many more experiences than a factory worker, simply by the nature of your job. A large part of being a successful professional involves being able to socialize with people from diverse backgrounds, which may include CEOs of large companies, as well as middle- and entry-level employees.

As a person who has worked in a factory your boyfriend mostly likely has not had these same experiences, at least not within his employment situation. That's not to say he would not be able to conduct himself well in these situations, but he may not feel as comfortable as you do. Fortunately these are all things that can be discussed and worked out between the two of you.

As for common interests I'm not sure that where you work would have a great bearing on your interests outside of work. For example, hiking is an activity that can be enjoyed by everyone—as well as bowling, skiing, curling, etc. Together you can find and create activities that you both enjoy.

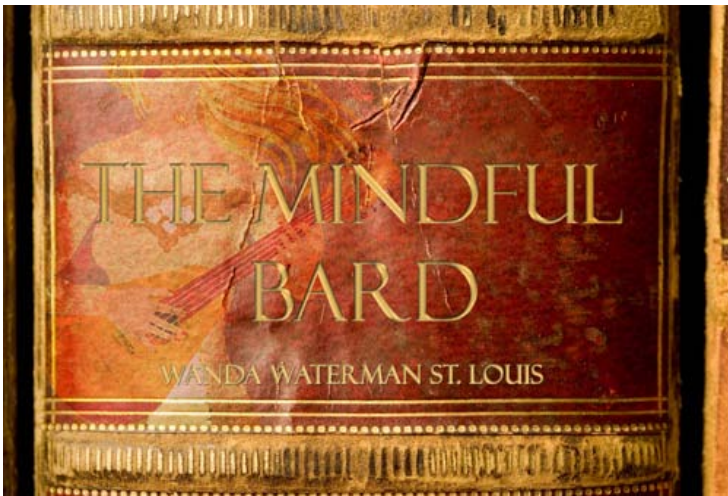
Just because someone works in a factory does not mean they are not intelligent or well read. Many people with university degrees find themselves working in factories for a variety of reasons.

If you have found someone that you have a connection with, I say go for it! Your friends may be making comments based on generalities; however, each person is unique in their own right, as every relationship is unique and dependent on the two people involved.

Take your time and enjoy each other. Thanks for writing, Maria.

*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.*





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

CD: Sam Baker, *cotton*

Label: Music Road Records

Release date: 2009

Folk/Country

"A Welder Sparks Dry Grass"

Here's what's culturally significant about Sam Baker: he represents an anomalous, oft-silenced

group of American voices—victims of terrorism who come out the other end of the dark tunnel embarking (albeit stumbling a little) on a journey toward deep, compassionate understanding of the human condition. Of these, Baker's voice may be the most eloquent.

*Mercy* and *Pretty World*, the first two albums in the Baker trilogy, each contained songs that recalled Sam's experience on a train in Peru when it was bombed by Shining Path guerrillas. In *cotton* I find no mention of this incident, yet Sam would be the first to admit he only became serious about writing after his long (and iffy) hospital recovery.

In an interview with Dan Forte for *Wood and Steel Magazine* Sam explains the change: "It was an interesting time. Very introspective. The only thing that came in loud enough to really get through that haze or fog or internal trauma I was dealing with was the raw suffering of others."

In all three albums he turned his trauma-hewn craft and deepened insights to the winnowing of personal observations, the commonest details infused with that gentle seriousness that results from a brutal encounter with mortality. Things once resisted are now accepted (the isolation, misery, and abiding dignity of marginalized peoples, for example), and things once unquestioned are now held to account (e.g., religion, relationships, old grudges).

Each of the three album covers in the trilogy has the same format, the same elegant white background punctuated with exquisite black and white photos. Inside each cover is a cryptic message illuminating whatever step Sam was on at the time. *Mercy* was inscribed with: *Everyone is at the mercy of another one's dream*, a perceptive reflection on the anguish

S A M B A K E R



c o t t o n

he must have felt in the wake of the explosion. *Pretty World* bore: *How beautiful are these days*, which, like the album, conveyed a sense of the sweet virtue infusing each privileged moment of life.

*Cotton* has: *Think about forgiveness*. What does this mean? Sam makes one direct reference to forgiveness in the song "Snow," in which the tanned Texan is trudging through a Boston winter and seeing the frozen cityscape as an externalization of the retention of bitterness.

***"I try not to use a word like wrong***

***But I carry a torch***

***It burns my hand***

***I'd like to lay it down***

***In the promised land"***

**Sam Baker from "Angel Hair,"  
*cotton***

As incredibly good as *Mercy* and *Pretty World* were, they simply foretold *cotton*, so far the best evidence of the blossoming of a refined consciousness.

There is a liveliness, a stretching in *cotton* that was latent in the first two albums. The accompaniment here is as poignant and lovely as ever but on this CD there's more courage and verve—poetically, musically, and emotionally—and a greater willingness to face down the inner pain the ego tries to mask. As in the first two, *cotton* contains snippets of old Southern songs, lending a historic dimension and a sense of groundedness to Sam's saint and sinner tales.

Sam has a halting vocal delivery that often makes his music sound more like a poetry reading than a musical performance. You'd think this would seem incongruous with a Texas drawl and country backup but his albums sound so artistically *right* that you'll want to rescue them from the CD pile and stick them up on the shelf between Twain and Faulkner.

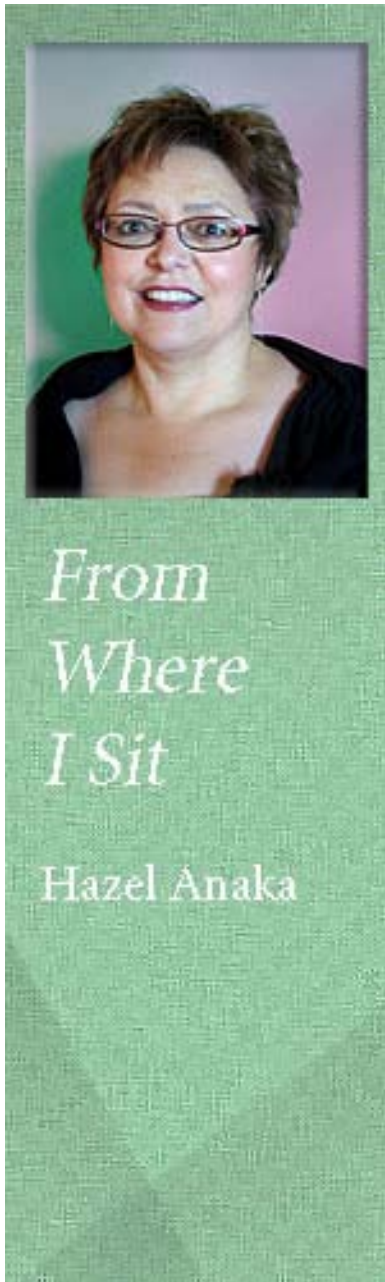
Sam began painting in January and several of his works, vivid expressionist portraits of characters Sam calls his "friends," grace the CD cover and liner booklet. He recently confessed that the paintings now populate his house, taking up space on the furniture.

When asked if he understood why he'd started painting his answer was: "No. Odd, I think. A prairie fire usually starts somewhere. A welder sparks dry grass. A trash burn gets away from an old man. I still don't see the welder's spark. Don't smell trash burning."

It's tempting for fans to guess at how much and in what way these songs are windows into Sam's personal life, but this will just distract you from their beauty. And if you've heard the first two albums you'll be ready to trust the integrity of Sam's empathy.

These story-songs have the same calm-after-the-storm quality you find in Cormac McCarthy's novels, a kind of oblique response to the question, *After all this, what's left?* We might go on to ask, *And what do we do with it?* But such a question is redundant; what is left is love itself, requiring no justification, desiring no further end.

*Cotton* manifests eight 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 improve my art; 4) it displays an engagement with and compassionate response to suffering; 5) it inspires an awareness of the sanctity of creation; 6) it is about attainment of the true self; 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 poses and admirably responds to questions having a direct bearing on my view of existence.



## Fundamentally Wrong

The adjective “homebody” could accurately describe me, at least in one-dimensional terms. No one would ever mistake me for an extreme athlete. I don’t ski or go sledding in the high country. We don’t know how to swim so boogie boarding, diving, white-water rafting, and other water sports are also out. I’m not a hiker or a mountain climber. I’d sooner bed down at Jasper Park Lodge than pitch a tent in bear country. I don’t speed or race motorcycles. We don’t do recreational quadding either.

We do, however, own a 1985 Honda Big Red trike. It became a sort of chore vehicle that was used to chase cattle who had escaped from pens. For the past 10 years or so you’d more likely find Roy using it to save steps around the yard. I hook up a utility wagon to it when I’m working in the flower beds.

Boring, you say? Live to see another day, I say.

I’m willing to bet a search and rescue team will never have to risk their lives to save mine. But if through no fault of my own they do, I hope they still exist. Now that is far less of a certainty than anyone could have imagined.

In February, according to media reports, a Quebec couple went out of bounds while skiing in the back country near Golden, BC. On the seventh day they were missing, the wife succumbed to hypothermia. Two days later the husband was rescued. To show his gratitude he has launched a lawsuit against the RCMP, the search and rescue team, and the resort they had checked out of. He contends that the SOS signs they had stamped into the snow were ignored, which led to his wife’s death.

The way I remember the press coverage at the time this couple was far from blameless in this outcome. They clearly were in an area they shouldn’t have been in. They hadn’t notified anyone of their plans. They left their car in the wrong parking lot, where it was overlooked by resort staff. They didn’t stay with their SOS signs but continued moving. I don’t remember if they

were properly dressed or carried any emergency provisions.

Hello? Is this man an idiot? This lawsuit has caused some search and rescue teams to suspend operations. These selfless unpaid volunteers don’t want to risk personal legal action and possible financial ruin because of people like this man. Some groups carry liability insurance. Others do not. According to Harry Blackmore, president of the Search and Rescue Association of Canada, \$6 million worth of services are offered free to Canadians each year.

There isn’t space here to explore all the facets of this complex issue but for starters . . . Where does the Good Samaritan law fit into this? How about billing these ignorant, reckless thrill seekers for the actual rescue costs incurred? And finally, where is personal accountability in all this?

I don’t know his motives (survivor’s guilt, a cash grab, an overzealous lawyer) but this just seems fundamentally wrong, from where I sit.



# Sister Aurora

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

#15

Bert, come on,  
your own  
happiness  
means  
**SOMETHING!**



Happiness isn't **THERE** for  
gals like me.

Don't  
argue  
with--  
???



Jodi!

Oh,  
here.



Don't  
argue  
with  
karma!

Karma shmarma.





## 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.

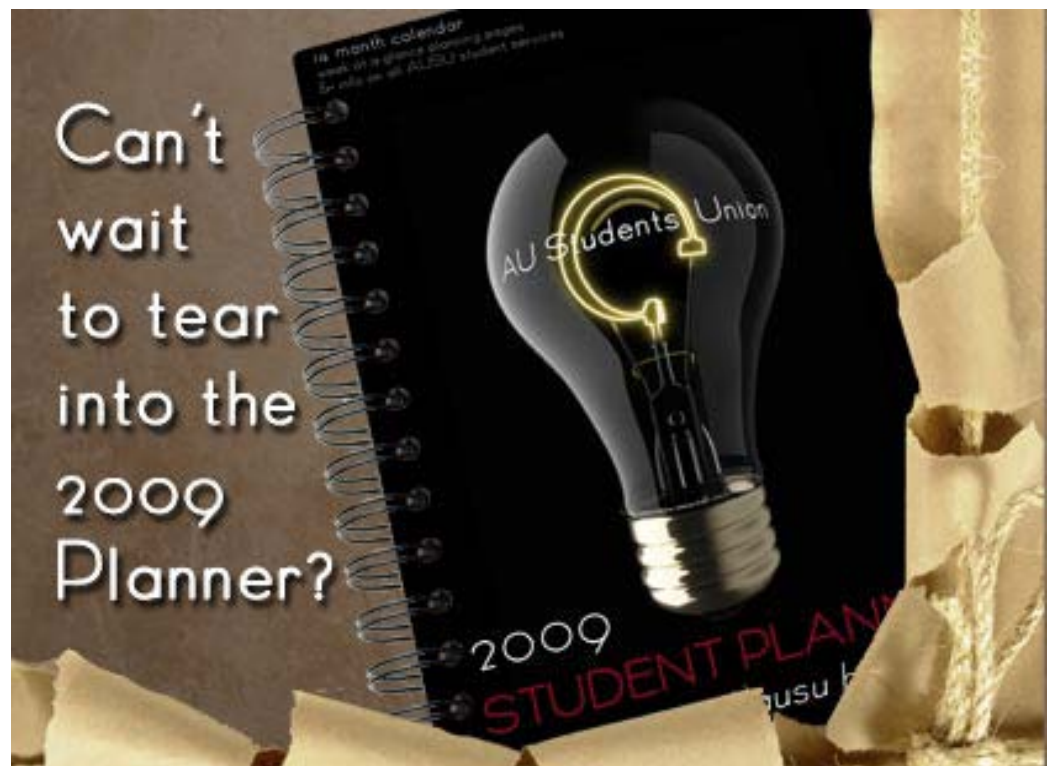
In that meeting a number of important revisions to the definitions of AUSU membership occurred, to make sure that the Councillors you elect are able to represent you during General Meetings and so that if you're a student in an AU collaborative undergrad program, you'll still be counted as an AUSU member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



## EDUCATION NEWS

Ashley Gaboury



### Globe survey shows students fairly satisfied with universities

WINNIPEG (CUP) - With the release of the *Globe and Mail's* Canadian University Report, editor Simon Beck says the survey can be a useful tool for students to gain insight on both the quality of life on Canadian campuses as well as which universities are improving student services. At the same time, some student union leaders have said the results may not accurately reflect the services each university has to offer.

With 38,000 students at 53 universities across Canada having participated in the *Globe's* survey, Beck says the survey is particularly valuable because it is based on student opinion rather than third party statistics.

"We always felt the value of our [survey] came from actually asking the students themselves what they think," says Beck.

Beck says the report looks to air criticisms about going to university and obtaining a degree. "There's criticism of universities because they get more and more expensive and some say that the standards go down and so is getting a degree worth it? My answer to that would be yes. It's still worth it," says Beck.

"You've got a much better chance of getting a good job and becoming a better-rounded individual if you've got a university degree under your belt. So to my mind it's still vitally important."

According to Beck, the report serves as a useful tool for high school seniors and their parents when trying to choose a post-secondary institution.

"You've got to pick your university wisely, so that's really what we're trying to do—is give students as much information as they can get before they make a choice."

As for the results of the survey and how universities ranked, Beck says that for the most part it was what was expected.

"The universities that are still at the top are largely expected because they seem to do an incredibly good job of satisfying their students in most areas. Western Ontario is one, Queen's is another, Guelph, Wilfrid Laurier and a lot of smaller ones like Mount Allison," said Beck.

He says large commuter universities have a hard time ranking well in student satisfaction. "By and large I think that the main thing is that the big urban universities obviously have a good reputation and provide a good education but because they're bigger and there are a lot of commuters at them, they never fare quite as well in student satisfaction because they have bigger classes and students don't think they have enough interactions with their professors. Whereas the medium and smaller universities tend to do better," says Beck.



Student union presidents varied on their opinions of the survey results.

Warren Kirkland, University of Saskatchewan Students' Union president, says he thinks the U of S performed fairly well in the survey.

"I think the U of S stacked up fairly well overall in each of the categories. We weren't topping the charts on any one in specific but always ranking considerably well considering our standings."

University of Manitoba Students' Union president Sid Rashid says that certain categories pinpoint where government funding is lacking.

"Buildings and facilities . . . the ranking in that is a clear indication that our provincial government needs to really look seriously at the funding levels that they are providing the University of Manitoba and post-secondary education in the province as a whole," says Sid. "It's not a secret that the University of Manitoba does have some aging infrastructure that needs to be addressed."

Jason Syvixay, University of Winnipeg Students' Association president, said that he expects results for the U of W to improve next year when students can take into consideration improvements that were made after the survey was completed.

"I think the results reflect a lot of last year. Obviously with the University of Winnipeg, a lot of our capital constructions have fast forwarded throughout the summer," he says.

The survey outcomes for the University of Regina did not accurately reflect the quality of programs the university has to offer according to Kyle Addison, U of R Students' Union president.

"The results we have are pretty much average right across the board but there are definitely some that I didn't think were really fair to the programs we offer," says Addison.

U of R has a very large co-op program, giving students high opportunities for job placement in their desired fields—but, says Addison, such highlights were missed by the average-score rankings.

He says that the results are unfortunate considering they are based on student opinion.

"We may have to do some internal promoting . . . It's just kind of interesting to see how students rate their school. It doesn't seem like everybody took into consideration the value that this school has to offer them," says Addison.

According to Beck, Canadian universities on the whole rank fairly well, with some consistently ranking the best. "If you look at the results of any given university, a lot of them are good at a lot of things and bad at others," says Beck.

"There are some universities that seem to be at good at everything across the board such as Western Ontario, which is remarkable given that is a large university. There are others that are up there that are pretty good."

Beck says that on the whole, students are fairly satisfied with their post-secondary investments, but are becoming more and more demanding customers. "And that's good," he says.

*... on the whole, students are fairly satisfied with their post-secondary investments, but are becoming more and more demanding customers.*

---

# CLASSIFIEDS

---

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

## THE VOICE

---

1200, 10011 109th Street NW, Edmonton, AB T5J 3S8 -- Ph: 800.788.9041 ext. 2905 - Fax: 780.497.7003 attn: Voice Editor

**Publisher** Athabasca University Students' Union  
**Editor-In-Chief** Tamra Ross  
**Managing Editor** Sandra Livingston

**Regular Columnists** Hazel Anaka, John Buhler, Christina M. Frey, Barbara Godin,  
Bethany Tynes, Wanda Waterman St. Louis

---

[www.voicemagazine.org](http://www.voicemagazine.org)

---

*The Voice* is published every Friday in html and pdf format

Contact *The Voice* at [voice@voicemagazine.org](mailto:voice@voicemagazine.org)

To receive a weekly email announcing each issue, see the 'subscribe' link on *The Voice* front page. *The Voice* does not share its subscriber list.  
Special thanks to Athabasca University's *The Insider* for its contributions