

# THE VOICE

## MAGAZINE

Volume 17 Issue 42  
November 6, 2009

### **Pep Rally**

Leading the cheer

### **AU Profiles**

Alyssa Fann-Chiang

### **Maza Africa**

Alex Kajumulo

*Plus:*

*From Where I Sit,  
The Mindful Bard, Dear Barb,  
and much more...*



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# LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

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



# AU Profiles:

## AU Profiles: Alyssa Fann-Chiang

Christina M. Frey



AU's students are spread across the globe, but its international student community isn't limited to Canadian and American expats. In this week's profile, we find out why Alyssa Fann-Chiang, a native Taiwanese and Bachelor of Political Economy student, chose to study with Athabasca University.

She also explains how her multicultural experiences have paved the way toward her future goal of international work, and describes her tactics for overcoming the challenges of distance learning.

What caused Alyssa to pursue her studies at a school on the other side of the world? The same reason many international students choose AU: the language barrier at local universities. Alyssa, although born in Taiwan,

grew up in Indonesia attending English-speaking international schools. When she returned to Taiwan, she found that her English skills would actually be a liability at local universities, where instruction was all in Mandarin. "We spoke Mandarin at home," she explains, "[but] I couldn't read or write [it], let alone do it academically at university level."

Because she couldn't afford to study abroad, she explains, "the only way I could get a university education in English was . . . online . . . I spent months Googling for online universities." After a lot of research, she decided to register with AU, starting her first course in 2003.

However, at the time, distance study was not well accepted in the local community. That, combined with full-time work and a lack of familiarity with independent study, caused her difficulty. "I quit my first two courses at AU," Alyssa says, "[but] a year later I came back." She returned with a new attitude, and hasn't looked back.

"I had a hard time at the beginning, but I didn't have the option of just giving up and applying to a traditional university," Alyssa says. "Because AU was my only option, I was determined to find a way to work with it."

She decided to focus on political economy and international issues, two areas particularly close to her heart. "I have an outsider yet insider perspective to many things," she says.

She was the product of several social and economic cultures—she was born in Taiwan, grew up in Indonesia, and studied at British and Indian schools—and was exposed to many more during her school years. After high school, she also spent time working in India, where she lived from paycheck to paycheck. “There was a time when I lived on 10 rupees per day,” she says. “I had to plan only one meal a day—dinner or lunch.”

Her experiences have helped her understand her global issues studies a little more clearly, “although not in the grand scale that poverty or [other] issues are experienced,” she says.

And her studies have helped her understand a little more about life. “There was a lot of self-growth involved: there’s nothing forcing you to sacrifice for your degree,” she explains. “You have to do it by yourself.”

In fact, the self-motivation that distance learning requires has become an advantage of this mode of study, Alyssa feels. “I’ve grown to . . . love [that] . . . aspect of AU!” she says. To stay on target, she’s come up with a unique study approach: instead of studying several courses at once over the space of several months, she focuses intensely on a single class until it’s completed, usually in about a month.

“Everyone has their own method and I guess I finally found mine,” she says. It works well for her because it minimizes distractions and the temptation to procrastinate. “When I took my time and spread out [my] studying energy, I didn’t get . . . great grades,” she says. Now, it’s different: “I’m . . . consumed entirely in the subject matter,” she says. “The pressure churns out my best work.”

Other aspects of distance education presented a different sort of challenge. “I found it difficult to have to sacrifice my socializing time with my friends,” she says. “In high school, you [have] this image that college life will be all about partying.”

However, when she weighed the pros and cons, she decided that focusing on studying would be worth it in the long run. “It was basically deciding whether I want to go out to make new friends and stay longer at this degree, or clench my teeth and finish this degree so I can just relax and make new friends,” she says.

She decided to stick with it, and it’s paid off: she hopes to graduate this winter. “It all feels so worth it,” Alyssa says. She plans to take a working holiday in Australia for several months, and then begin studying in a master’s program abroad. Although she’s considering the University of Glasgow in Scotland, Monash University in Australia, and several other Australian schools, she’s currently favouring Glasgow.

“The Glasgow rep . . . already knows AU and considers the quality of AU students reputable,” she says. “[That] feels really good!”

Either way, she plans to focus on international studies: “I want to work internationally, either for the UN or as a watchbody for it,” she says. She’s especially looking forward to researching gender issues. “I hope that women’s opportunities can be increased and their work and strength be given credit,” Alyssa says. “So many strong women . . . have a lot of barriers because of the social structure.”

In the meantime, she’s grateful for the opportunities she’s had. “AU allowed me . . . to go back and complete what I had dreamed of,” Alyssa says. “My story . . . it’s like a spider web.” And she’s looking forward to seeing what direction it will take her next: “I’m just so excited about the future!” she says.

*“I hope that women’s opportunities can be increased and their work and strength be given credit. So many strong women . . . have a lot of barriers because of the social structure.”*



## ON THE HILL

Sandra Livingston



## In Theory

The idea of a non-partisan civil service is sort of like watching a Little League game. In theory it's about skills like fair play and teamwork, but what most people *really* want is for their team to win.

And the chasm between theory and reality got a little wider this week with the announcement of a new twist to a government program.

The initiative is called the Accelerated Economist Training Program (AETP). It offers participants "one of

the most unique and privileged opportunities to begin a career in the federal public service." The application process is, understandably, rigorous. And the pressure just went up a notch now that applicants have to offer their personal opinions on their potential boss' performance: a thousand-word essay on the federal government's Economic Action Plan.

The Action Plan has become a major part of the Conservative party's promotion efforts and, as one article notes, "is at the heart of election campaigning." In dozens of cases MPs even went so far as to put the Conservative logo on economic stimulus cheques, a highly partisan move that's prompted calls for an ethics investigation.

Now, potential AETP candidates are being asked for their views on the "implications" of any two of the government's stimulus measures. In short, to comment on current government policy as part of the hiring process. It's the first time that such an essay has been required for entry to the AETP.

As Leslie Pal, professor of public policy at Ottawa's Carleton University, told reporters, "It places an unfortunate implication of inviting people to write glowing things about the economic recovery plan."

The Conservatives aren't alone when it comes to partisan games. Not by a long shot. But this move heightens the political pressure on the people who most emphatically *shouldn't* be partisan: federal civil servants. Even before the essay requirement, there were calls for a "formal charter of ethics to protect them from improper political pressure." That recommendation comes from former Quebec Superior Court judge John Gomery, who led the inquiry into the Liberal sponsorship scandal. Such a charter would "empower public servants to say no to their political masters."

The essay requirement doesn't mean that only Conservative supporters will land the coveted spots. After all, there's no guarantee that an applicant's essay will reflect their political beliefs. It's easy enough to put a flattering spin on just about any company (or government) when you want the job. The point is, it's the very thing civil service applicants should be discouraged from (and there are plenty of other essay topics that would demonstrate an understanding of economic policy without veering into contentious political territory.)

In fact, the Public Service Employment Act, which came into force on December 31, 2005, espouses a public service with "a staffing system free from political influence and in which recruitment, hiring, promotions and terminations are based on merit."

Which all sounds great—in theory.

## ERAS IN EDUCATION

Jason Sullivan



### Grandma Paul Waving the Pompoms: Cheerleading's History in Terms of Gender

Occasionally during my high school years a bulletin would go out to teachers proclaiming a “pep rally” that all students were to attend. Usually this occurred on a Friday afternoon right before a big basketball game. A mild cheer would erupt amongst us students, in many cases because it meant we could skip out and start our weekend a few hours early. For some, the excitement was palpable and authentic; they actually wanted to embody school spirit. This interest in “pep” was by no means confined to the female gender.

Whether excited or ambivalent, none of us could have imagined that the originators of that most stereotyped of activities, cheerleading, were exclusively male.

It all started at an Ivy League school, Princeton, where a student named Thomas Peebles became so enamoured with leading rousing choruses of his school’s fight songs that, upon graduation, he decided to export them with his arrival at the relatively frontier-like University of Minnesota. In 1898, a medical student there named Johnny Campbell grabbed a megaphone to rally the school’s football team. His cheer went “Rah, Rah, Rah! Ski-U-Mah! Hoo-Rah! Hoo-Rah! Varsity! Varsity! Minn-e-so-tah!” (On a side note, their mascot, Goldy Gopher, recently made continent-wide news for allegedly ridiculing a pious member of the opposing football team who chose to perform a pre-game prayer directly in front of the Minnesota cheer squad.)

Organized “rah-rah” took off like wildfire in Minnesota, yet until 1923 was a male-only domain. At this time a few women broke through the gendered curtain but it wasn’t until the 1940s, when “so many college-aged men went off to fight in World War II” that most cheerleaders were female. Many crucial props of traditional cheering, such as “the spirit stick and the pom pon,” were actually invented by men. Unlike today’s cheerleader stereotype, consisting of a ditzy demeanour and an hourglass body type, males saw themselves as fulfilling a man’s role by passionately rooting for their school’s team.

In autumn of 1936, in the heart of cowboy country, students at Texas Tech University named Arch Lamb, Paul “Grandma” Bowers, and Bud Thompson started a school spirit club that they named the Saddle Tramps. The name was chosen because in traditional rancher lingo a saddle tramp was a cowboy hired for a temporary period “on the basis of his ability and willingness to tackle any task assigned to him”. He was, in short, an exemplar of the timeless masculine role of handyman.

The fact that cheering other men’s sporting exertions seemed somewhat less manly than actually participating must have dawned on the early Saddle Tramps, however. (A nickname like “Grandma” suggests something along these lines.) Nonetheless, these young Texans could never have guessed that 60 years later a feminist grunge band called Dickless would sing a song entitled “Saddle Tramp” with lyrics like “I’m the champ! Better than a man! Yeah, I’m a saddle tramp!”

The use of cross-gender symbols and imagery may in fact be key to understanding cheerleading. No other school institution combines masculine norms of competitiveness with feminine norms of bodily expressiveness to such an extent.

The social theorist Judith Butler has written of how people usually conceive of gender as a “category of essence.” Instead of reduction to limiting categories, “we need to think about ‘woman’ as multiple and discontinuous, not as a category with ‘ontological integrity.’” In short, to be a woman is to be whatever one feels like being. To some feminists, “‘woman’ is on the margins . . . and is thus more free to play than man.”

In college athletics today (unlike at the dawn of the cheerleading era) it is perfectly acceptable for a woman to play on sports teams, or be on the cheer squad, or even both. Men, on the other hand, are likely to feel pressure to avoid any association with cheering and its attendant “gay cheerleader syndrome.”

A possible explanation of our society’s rigid gender expectations comes in the form of R.W. Connell’s theory of “hegemonic masculinity.” Hegemonic masculinity is an ideology that “subordinates” all forms of femininity and masculinity that do not fulfill its norms of “whiteness, heterosexuality, marriage, authority and physical toughness.” Varsity sports have traditionally been masculine pursuits; cheerleading has been marginalized and therefore is in a position to challenge masculinity’s privileged place within the educational system.

In a study of contemporary cheerleaders, Laura Grindstaff and Emily West looked at the impact that gender expectations had on participants. They found that just as in the 1930s, when a guy with a nickname like “Grandma” was cheering the toughest men his school had to offer, “cheerleading simultaneously challenges and reinforces the notion of sport as a male preserve.” Cheerleading combines traditionally feminine traits of “supportiveness and performativity” with traditionally male traits of “competition and athleticism.”

Cheer squads compete with one another and involve extraordinarily athletic stunts. However, male cheerleaders feel they must go to great lengths to emphasize their masculinity by lifting weights alongside members of the football team and using slogans like “Other sports use one ball, we use two.”

There is always the threat that one’s manhood will be discredited (a term used by the sociologist Erving Goffman in regard to identities that can at any time be challenged. Gender is discreditable because it is performed). Males spoke of how “trying to get the crowd pumped up for some other guys” felt “a little weird.” One stated that “they want me to run with the flag, and be happy, and that’s just horrible, horrible stuff.”

In general the more performative the behaviour, such as finger wiggling (“spirit fingers”), the less men want or are allowed to involve themselves. This fits into the ideology of hegemonic masculinity because what constitutes male power should never be too expressive or subservient. A man’s hands should be rigid and his smile should not be too inviting. When a “real man” wants something he takes it; he does not smile and ask in a singsong! In comparison, female students find new gender vistas being opened. On girls-only squads women can “base” or “fly”; in other words, perform either the traditional female gymnastics and acrobatics or the traditional male throwing and catching manoeuvres. And, as the song lyrics suggest, they just might do it “better than a man.”

As much as some of us in high school looked forward to pep rallies only because it meant an early start to our weekend, the study of gender roles suggests that more attention should be paid to how school spirit is constructed and performed. The fact that a rigid boundary exists between competitiveness and supportiveness is exemplified in the way cheering generally seems like something “girls do” while guys are out on the basketball court playing or else exiting school property as quickly as humanly possible.

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## IN CONVERSATION WITH . . .

Wanda Waterman St. Louis



## Alex Kajumulo, Part I

*Alex Kajumulo is a Seattle-based recording artist and producer at Babukaju Records. His song "Maza Africa" was a finalist in the 2007 International Songwriting Competition.*

*His songs and live performances are vibrant and joyful celebrations of love and justice. Kajumulo freely mixes musical genres in his songs and actively seeks collaborations with musicians all over the world.*

*He is currently getting ready for an African tour that will include stops in his home country, Tanzania.*

*Recently he took the time to chat with Wanda Waterman St. Louis about his life and his music.*

## A Maple Leaf in the Tanzanian Bush

I became interested in music because I had an uncle who played the guitar. He was the only one who paid attention to me. He left Tanzania to come to university in Toronto. I didn't know why but he left and never came back. After he left he sent me a T-shirt from Canada, with a Canadian flag. I was in the bush; I knew about Canada before I even knew about my own country.

## Early Years

My childhood was terrible. I was a product of gang rape. My mother was only 15. The people in our village in Tanzania didn't believe she'd been raped, so she was punished. After that, she ran away and I was raised by my grandparents.

The people in the village called me "the bastard kid." The British had been there, and the Church, and they had made people feel that it was shameful to be born out of wedlock. Some people think that if you aren't born the way you're supposed to be born then you have no right to exist.

I grew up fighting for justice. I fought almost every day, but nobody gave me any credit. Because I was a bastard I was just a troublemaker.



My grandfather died when I was 10 and then I was on my own. I had to fight to stay alive.

### Motivational Speech

Before he died my grandfather said to me, "Those people aren't lying—you are a bastard. That's reality. But if you give up on life you will prove them right. Prove to those people that they are wrong. If you have hands and feet and are not handicapped you can turn your life around. Don't sit and wait for other people to help you out."

### Sung Desire

What I sing is real. I don't pretend. I started singing about love and respect because that's what I was looking for. I have to preach that or be a hypocrite.

### Perils of Independence

It's not easy to raise yourself up and teach yourself how to do things. A lot of people don't make it. The trouble with having to raise yourself is that you don't know how to open up for other people, and you become too complicated for other people. Relationships are difficult.

When people complain, "I need you for this!" I just say, "No, you don't—you can do that yourself."

I like documentaries. I don't watch movies; I think they're a waste of time.

I really liked reading Abraham Lincoln's biography. He had to fight hard to exist, and no matter what happened he kept moving. The only way to stop him was to kill him.

### 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.

## AU OPTIONS

Bethany Tynes



### IDRL 308 - Occupational Health and Safety

IDRL 308 - Occupational Health and Safety is a three-credit course offered by AU's Centre for Work and Community Studies. This course "examines issues of life and death on the job within their political and economic context."

Dr. Bob Barnetson explains that "the risk of workplace injury is typically thought to be minimal, unavoidable and acceptable. Consequently, safety should only be improved where the benefits exceed the costs. IDRL 308 asks students to question

these premises, starting from the basis that the most important consequences of injury are not economic—they are the maiming and killing of workers."

And workplace accidents are far more frequent than many people assume: "in 2003, six hundred and thirty thousand Canadian adults were injured on the job severely enough to limit their activity," Dr. Barnetson says. "Approximately 300,000 of these injured workers required time off to recover. This is, in fact, a serious underestimation of actual workplace injury levels due to reporting effects."

"IDRL 308 examines why this level of injury exists and what workers have done (over time) to reduce this number as well as how the state and employers have reacted to this pressure."

Occupational Health and Safety caught the eye of student Dawne Price when she first started at AU, though she waited until she had a few 200-level classes under her belt before attempting it. "Safety has been a big part of my life," Price says, particularly since she and her husband farm. "Safety on a farm is something that you must be very aware of. Often you are working on your own, and if you don't take precautions, there may not be anyone else around."

Price greatly enjoyed the course. "I found that by taking IDRL 308, I started to see the issues that employers and employees face, when there are differences on what is needed or necessary to protect workers," she says. "I also had a wonderful tutor . . . who was very approachable, knowledgeable and gave a considerable amount of feedback on my assignments. She really made the course enjoyable."

One concern Price had about the course was the age of information presented. "Quite a few of the readings were from the early 1980s and I thought there could have been some more up-to-date information . . . They were good, but it would have been nice to have some more recent information."

Dr. Barnetson says that faculty and staff are currently working to correct this weakness. "Currency is an ongoing issue with courses," he says. "IDRL 308 is presently in revisions. Among the changes will be brand new textbooks and updated readings."

One caution offered by Dr. Barnettson is that IDRL 308 “asks you to reflect on your own experiences in the workplace. Sometimes this reflection can be uncomfortable because it reveals or highlights our vulnerability in employment relationships.”

Overall, though, both he and Price feel that the course has much to offer potential students. “I think this would be a valuable course to anybody wanting to understand the conflicts that exist in the workplace and why safety is not always seen as an important part of the workplace,” Price says.

“I gained a huge perspective on why employers and employees often see the issue so differently.”

## CLICK OF THE WRIST – The Deep

The celestial sphere has been getting a lot of attention lately, what with the upcoming Atlantis launch and NASA bombing the moon. This week, though, we take a look in the other direction: deep, very deep, beneath the sea. Scientific knowledge may have ended belief in sea monsters but that doesn’t mean the watery depths are any less mysterious.

### Top Ten Sea Monsters

They may not be monsters in the mythical sense, but these denizens of the deep certainly look the part. From giant squids and crabs to ferocious looking fangtooths, these beasts give Hollywood horror creations a run for their money.

### Great White Shark

No, these incredible creatures aren’t sea monsters. But they are one of the most feared—and misunderstood—predators of the deep, and this video helps dispel the myth that great whites prey on humans. So come on in. The water’s fine.

### Monsters of the Ancient Sea

This *National Geographic* feature takes you deep into the world of prehistoric underwater predators. The journey begins 251 million years ago, in the Triassic Period, and includes such creatures as *Temnodontosaurus* (“cutting tooth lizard”) and *Dakosaurus*, an ancient sea crocodile.

### Creatures of the Deep

According to the Census for Marine Life, about 230,000 species of marine animals have been described—and there could be a “total of between 500,000 and 10 million species in the sea.” This slide show looks at the more unusual ones, including the furry little Yeti crab.

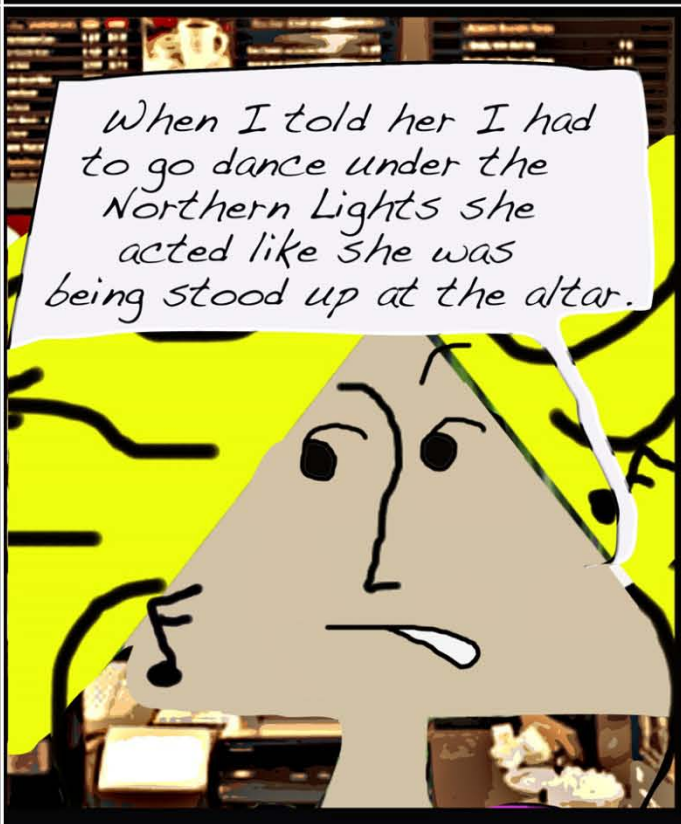
### Horrible Deep Sea Creatures

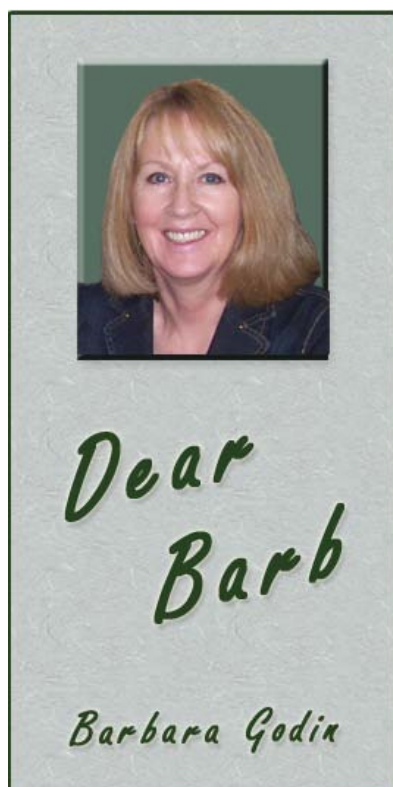
They may not be the *biggest* creatures in the ocean, but these are definitely in the running for the ugliest. There’s the viper fish, with its bulging eyes and spiky teeth, and the angler fish, also known as “the common black devil.” You’ve got to feel a little sorry for these fish, though. The extreme depths of their habitat force them to eat “only ‘scraps’ that sink down from above, or sometimes [eat] each other.”



# Sister Aurora

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





## Wife's Online Flirtations Must Be Discussed

*Dear Barb:*

*I hope you can help me. I have been married for 20 years. My wife and I were happy for several years. As our three children were born life got busy and we seemed to grow apart. We rarely sleep together anymore and my wife spends all her time on the Internet. I have tried to keep my marriage together for the sake of my children. I wanted them to have a happy home to grow up in.*

*Recently I learned something that has devastated me and made me wonder if I can keep my marriage together. People have told me that they've seen my wife on adult chat lines and she wasn't just talking to men, she was actually on the webcam exposing herself and doing other inappropriate acts. I am so distraught, I just don't know if I even love my wife anymore, or if I want to stay in this marriage. I haven't confronted my wife because I feel if I do I will explode and the marriage will definitely be over. What should I do?*

*Maurice*

Hi, Maurice. Unfortunately, I believe your situation is more common than most people realize. Many individuals are looking to the Internet as a way to connect with others. Rather than working at a relationship that may be difficult, they are turning to chat lines as a distraction. Often these relationships begin innocently enough, perhaps two people talking about the problems in their personal relationships, but eventually it evolves into more.

As far as your wife exposing herself on the webcam, there may be something else going on with her. She may be inclined toward exhibitionism and enjoy this type of behaviour. I'm not saying she is an exhibitionist, but she does seem to be looking for some attention.

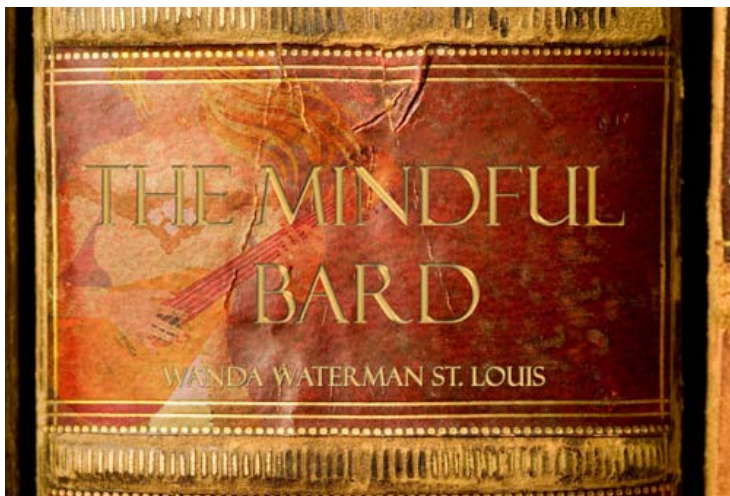
I think your first step should be to discuss this with your wife. Her initial reaction most likely will be to deny it, but if you remain calm and non-judgmental she may eventually feel comfortable enough to discuss things.

If you want to save your marriage I believe you will have to get into some sort of professional counselling, as this is a very serious issue. Through counselling, you and your wife may learn the skills you need to resolve this matter and possibly save your marriage. On the other hand, if your wife does not agree to counselling, it will be very difficult to save your marriage and bring it back to a happy state for all involved.

I hope I was helpful. Best of luck, Maurice.

*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: Garage á Trois, *Power Patriot*

Label: The Royal Potato Family

Release date: October 27, 2009

Jazz/Experimental/Instrumental

**I'm a Genius, You're a Genius—Why Don't We Just Cut Loose?**

*"Music is your own experience, your own*

*thoughts, your wisdom. If you don't live it, it won't come out of your horn. They teach you there's a boundary line to music. But, man, there's no boundary line to art."*

Charlie Parker

*I am a master. I am very great.*

These are two mantras prescribed by Kenny Werner in *Effortless Mastery*, a book for musicians. They are part of a series of meditations enabling players to put the deductive parts of their brains on hold in order to allow music to flow through them, free of pesky obstacles like fear of making a mistake.

This method of practice (actually best called *preparation*) can completely alter—in a good way—how a musician performs. I know this from experience, and I wouldn't have known it had it not been for a recent interview with Marco Benevento.

Benevento was also the first person to fill me in on circuit-bending toys. And he's a shining example of what a brilliant musician can do once he gets his brilliant mind out of the way. *And* he's a member of Garage á Trois, with whom he's in very good company.



These musicians' serious credentials may send up the red flag of pedantry but this music isn't boring for a second and the excitement just keeps building. It may not be the best music to listen to while painting, sculpting, or writing, but it's pretty darn inspiring to listen to just *before* engaging in any of those activities. It's music to rev the torpid brain, and its evocations of past musical eras will lift you out of this world.

This album comprises original instrumental numbers composed and played by advanced jazz musicians who've thrown themselves into aural experimentation with alacrity. Listening to *Power Patriot* is kind of like watching a bunch of nuclear physicists whooping it up on a waterslide. Stuffy musical pedants they ain't.

To give you an idea of what to expect, I was listening to *Power Patriot* while surfing for updates on the band and it took me a few minutes to realize that there was a different piece of music playing on the band's website while I was listening to the CD. The two disparate musical pieces together sounded like so much of the rest of the album (which positively swims with countercurrents) that I hadn't even noticed.

A few high points:

The mock-ominous bass building to what could be a sensational '60s-style movie anthem in "Germs"

The noir-funk-Hendrix stylings of "Fat Redneck Gangster"

The way chimes are employed throughout the album and made to sound so—*edgy*

The Glassesque modal passages in "Computer Crimes" (et al.)

All those lovely moments when a frenetic series of notes gives way to broad, slow vistas of serene, transcendent sound

*Power Patriot* manifests five of The Mindful Bard's criteria for music well worth a listen: 1) it is authentic, original, and delightful; 2) it makes me want to be a better artist; 3) it gives me tools which help my art; 4) it provides respite from a cruel world, a respite enabling me to renew myself for a return to mindful artistic endeavour; and 5) it stimulates my mind.

*The Bard could use some help scouting out new material. If you discover any books, compact disks, or movies which came out in the last twelve months and which you think fit the Bard's criteria, please drop a line to [bard@voicemagazine.org](mailto:bard@voicemagazine.org). If I agree with your recommendation, I'll thank you online.*

## AUSU UPDATE



### AUSU Public Council Meeting

Curious about the latest news from AUSU council? Want to get the scoop on upcoming plans and programs? If you're a current AUSU member, it's as easy as picking up your phone.

The next AUSU Public Council Meeting is scheduled for Monday, November 16 from 5:30 - 7:30 p.m. MST. Public council meetings take place via teleconference—and they're toll free! Just contact the AUSU office at 1.800.788.9041 ext. 3413 for more information or to register.





## From Where I Sit

Hazel Anaka

### From Bad to Better

After a long absence from canvas and paints I found my way back to my studio. A stew of good intentions, a promise made, and a conversation got me going again.

Good intention: I have too much money invested, not only in the thousand square foot free-standing building itself but the contents as well, to simply never pick up a brush again. Between brushes, paints, canvases, frames, mat cutters, books, and framed art the investment both financial and creative has been considerable. After major shoulder surgery in November 2006 painting was physically out of the question. I have long since recovered so there goes that excuse.

A promise made: Hilary was baffled by how to cut the outside light coming through an opaque glass window in her condo. Traditional window coverings didn't appeal. We brainstormed and she vetoed every suggestion I made. Finally it hit me that a custom-sized piece of original art for the opening would give her the desired light control. I needed an artificial deadline to make it happen. She picked Halloween. That day came and went; the piece is not complete but it's well on its way.

A conversation: actually more than one. Lately I've gotten kind words from the recipient of one of my art cards. I reconnected with an artist friend who was displaying her watercolours at a local show. I fell in love again with the purity of the pigments, the subject matter, and the gut-deep knowledge that I've done pieces equally lovely. Finally I visited a couple I will be marrying in a couple of weeks in their home. I loved all the books, the controlled clutter (a.k.a. signs of life well lived) and some original art. They spoke of the feelings the art evoked.

That is what art's all about. The attempt by an artist to capture and express emotion in the hope that the resulting painting, sculpture, photo—you name it—stir similar feelings in the viewer.

Like many new beginnings this one was not without challenges. My studio is a slant-roof, circa 1940s-50s portable school classroom that I had moved to our farm years ago. The wall of windows let in the purest north light. Built-in shelving, blackboards, and bulletin boards aid the creative process. The ugly green carpet invites (or at least doesn't object to) paint splotches. That's the good news.

The revolting, exasperating, and disgusting downside is the million flies that infiltrate this old building. I've tried caulking, an automatic spritzer with fly spray, and new siding on the entire building. The little buggers get in and eventually die but not before making a big mess. And there's the body removal process. On the revulsion scale it gets worse. I've also had *mice* get in. I hate mice. They are filthy, repulsive, damaging creatures that mean more cleanup. I've spent full days vacuuming, sanitizing, discarding, and organizing before finally beginning to paint.

I've also remembered an important aspect of the creative process. Every project—painting, manuscript, whatever—looks really bad before it looks better. Only faith and experience allow us to push through that stage to completion, from where I sit.

## 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.

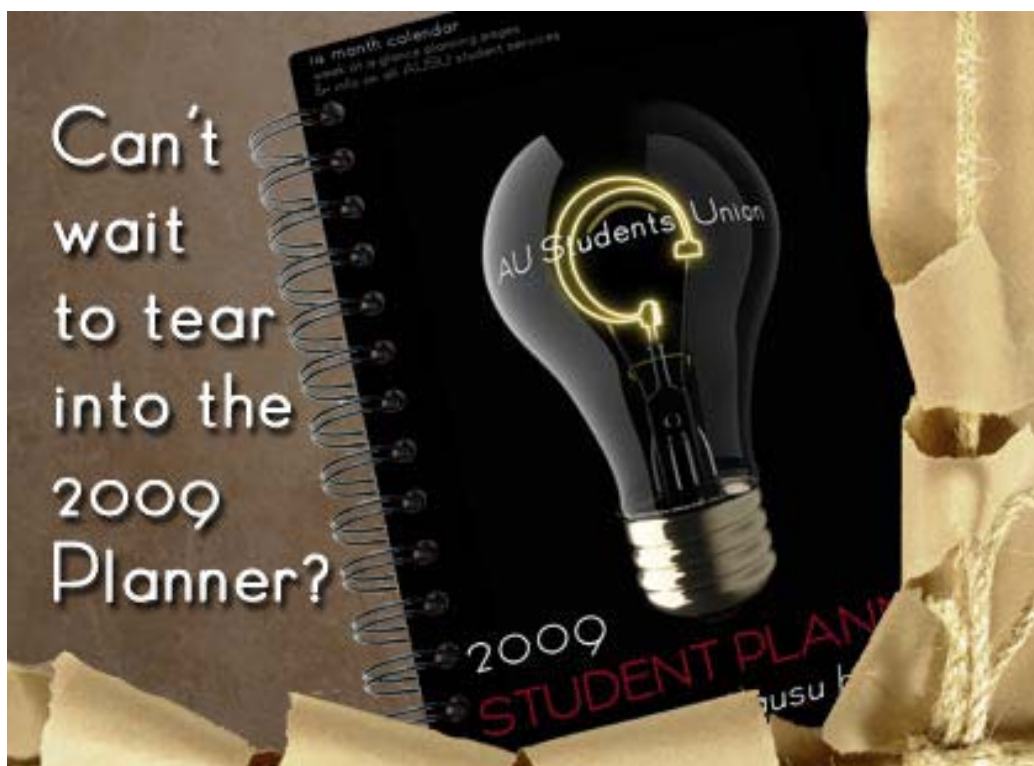
In that meeting a number of important revisions to the definitions of AUSU membership occurred, to make sure that the Councillors you elect are able to represent you during General Meetings and so that if you're a student in an AU collaborative undergrad program, you'll still be counted as an AUSU member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

When Robert Dziekanski was Tasered by RCMP officers at Vancouver International Airport, the incident was widely covered throughout the media. Now, one of the RCMP officers involved is suing the CBC for libel.

Constable Kwesi Millington was one of four officers who confronted Dziekanski at the airport. According to the [CBC](#), Millington “fired a stun gun at the man within seconds of arriving on the scene.” Dziekanski died shortly after.

Millington now claims that the CBC’s coverage of the incident (and subsequent inquiry) has defamed him, and he has filed for damages with the BC Supreme Court.

Among Millington’s claims are that “his reputation has been seriously injured, he has suffered embarrassment and distress,” and he has been “brought into public ridicule.”

None of his claims have been proven in court, and his lawsuit is not the only one surrounding Dziekanski’s death. Dziekanski’s mother, Zofia Cisowski, filed a lawsuit last month for damages against the Vancouver Airport Authority, the Canada Border Services Agency, and the RCMP, including the four officers directly involved in the Taser incident.

The incident led to the Braidwood inquiry, in which officers’ testimony often contradicted video proof of Dziekanski’s death.

### In Foreign News: Many American youth not fit for military

With no end in sight to the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq, US military recruiters face a hard enough time encouraging young people to enlist. And according to a new report, American’s “poor education system and the worsening obesity crisis” are making it even harder to find suitable new recruits.

As the [Washington Post](#) reports, poor education, being overweight, and other physical ailments have made as many as 75 per cent of US young people “unfit for the armed forces.” The study’s focus is youth between the ages of 17 and 24. Add in those who are unfit because of criminal records, drug use, and mental health issues and the country could soon be facing a threat to its ability to defend itself.

Although 2008 saw both the numbers and quality of recruits rise, senior military officials are concerned about future recruitment needs. Currently, about 25 per cent of potential recruits in the study’s age group do not have their high school diploma. Many of those who do “still fail the military’s version of the SAT, known as the Armed Forces Qualification Test.” As well, poor physical fitness and weight issues rule out about “a third of all potential recruits.”

Educators and military personnel are trying to combat the problem by advocating for more early-education programs. For young people already in the 17 to 24 age group, many recruiters are finding themselves in the roles of coaches and tutors, “helping with homework and whipping kids into shape.”

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# 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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