

THE VOICE MAGAZINE

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November 13, 2009

Lest We Forget

More than two minutes

Earth As Self

Buddhist education

AUGSA

Open house



*Plus: In Conversation With, Dear Barb,
The Mindful Bard, and much more...*

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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

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AU GRADUATE STUDENTS' ASSOCIATION

Bethany Tynes



AUGSA Holds Open House

The Athabasca University Students' Union has long provided services to and represented the interests of undergraduate students at Athabasca University.

But graduate students at AU have until recently remained without official representation, relying on the voluntary services of AUSU. With the inception of the Athabasca University Graduate Students' Association, or AUGSA, graduate students now have a voice of

their own.

On Thursday, November 5, AUGSA hosted its first open house, giving students the opportunity to learn about the history of the association as well as current projects.

Participants in the open house included current members of the AUGSA Executive, AU graduate students, and representatives from external organizations. Acting AUGSA President Ron Jagmohan welcomed over a dozen participants to the teleconference, calling the evening a "historic event" for the organization. AUGSA's "journey has only just begun," he said.

Students currently involved with the Association radiated enthusiasm throughout the evening. Heather Clitheroe, the AUGSA secretary, said that she was "thrilled" at the number of participants, while treasurer Amanda Nielsen told participants she was "excited to go forward" with the organization.

Robbie Chernish, AUGSA Coordinator, gave students an in-depth look at the history and formation of the association, explaining that while a steering committee was set up a few years ago to create an association for Athabasca's graduate students (in accordance with Alberta's Post-Secondary Learning Act) the distance nature of AU gave rise to a number of problems, and "progress was slow." After an initial council was elected by acclamation, though, AUGSA drafted its initial bylaws. It became an official organization in the fall of 2008 and began to charge membership fees in September 2009.

AUGSA is in the process of raising awareness of their existence and activities. To this end, AUGSA is preparing to launch a new website, and is also conducting a logo-development contest. Students were asked to submit their original logo designs by the end of October. Entries will be available for viewing on the new website when it launches, and AU graduate students will have the opportunity to choose their favourite design in a voting period at the beginning of December.

After Mr. Chernish's discussion of the logo contest, participants heard from Kristy Kutanzi, the Executive Director, Communications, of the Alberta Graduate Council. She discussed the benefits of membership in the AGC, whose member associations include the universities of Alberta, Calgary, and Lethbridge.

Also up for a vote in December will be health and dental plans being considered by the Association. Bryan Boechler and Cory Wright, representatives of Gallivan and Associates, attended the open house and gave a short presentation about the different options available. Wright explained that all the plans being considered would work much like, and be able to coordinate with, employee benefit plans. In the December referendum, students will have the opportunity to choose what level of health and dental coverage, if any, is most desirable.

During the same voting period in December, graduate students will elect a new AUGSA student council. Nominations are currently being accepted for representatives from all graduate programs, as well as for AUGSA president, vice-president, secretary, treasurer, and student services liaison. The Association is especially seeking representatives from less-common graduate programs, including graduate certificate and diploma programs, as well as Athabasca's new doctoral program. Several students at the open house voiced their interest in joining AUGSA's student council.

Acting President Ron Jagmohan closed the evening by thanking participants for their attendance. "There was so much energy on the call, and so much participation," he said. "We've reached a turning point, and I'm very pleased."

More information on the AUGSA can be found on [their website](#).

DID YOU KNOW?



CanLearn

Pursuing your education can be a complicated (if exciting) venture: choosing a university, filling out enrolment forms, picking classes.

And it's even more daunting if you're trying to navigate the complex world of student loans.

If you're new to the process (or still wondering if student loans are right for you), [CanLearn](#) is a government portal that may help make the process easier.

From loans to grants to scholarships, CanLearn offers a variety of tools to answer your questions. A short video on the homepage outlines the basics of the student loan system, and there are tools to help you estimate just how much your education will cost before you even begin applying for loans.

Other sections walk you through the details of repaying student loans after graduation. The Continuing Education section includes a Q&A database geared toward adults thinking of returning to school.

There's a wealth of information here, and even if the site doesn't answer your specific questions you'll find links to other resources that might, including a variety of partner organizations and the National Student Loans Service Centre.

ON THE HILL

Sandra Livingston



More Than One Way

"In Canada, men and women are equal under the law. Canada's openness and generosity do not extend to barbaric cultural practices that tolerate spousal abuse, 'honour killings,' female genital mutilation, or other gender-based violence."

So reads the new Citizenship and Immigration Canada study guide, *Discover Canada: The Rights and Responsibilities of Citizenship*.

Strong words that need to be said; especially when Canadian women still struggle for safety and equality every day. A 2002 report from the Canadian Research Institute for the Advancement of Women (CRIAOW) notes that "29% of Canadian women have been assaulted by a spouse," while "four out of five people murdered by their spouses are women murdered by men."

The authors of the *Discover Canada* guide should be applauded for sending such a firm, unequivocal message. Yet there's another message being sent by the Guide—one that reveals just how deeply ingrained the idea of women's second-class status in this country remains.

In the early sections of the Guide, it's understandable that the overwhelming glory of Canadian accomplishments falls to the men. Canadian women weren't even considered "persons" until 1929. Their opportunities for military victories, scientific breakthroughs, and sports milestones were pretty much non-existent. New Canadians studying the guide will see only a couple of notable women from our early history, such as Mary Ann (Shadd) Cary, the first black female editor and publisher in North America.

But what's the message new Canadians will get about women's role today? Sadly, that half the population is still relegated to a footnote. Take the Guide's section on "Modern Canada." It's a who's who of artists and athletes, including Donovan Bailey, Terry Fox, Wayne Gretzky, Mark Tewksbury, and Rick Hansen. Chantal Petitclerc is the only woman in the group. The Canadian women's 2002 and 2006 Olympic gold victories are notably absent, as are Hayley Wickenheiser (first woman to compete in a professional men's hockey league) and Cindy Nicholas (first woman to complete a double crossing of the English Channel).

The Canadian Space Agency and Canadian astronauts also receive a mention, along with such notable male scientists as Gerhard Herzberg, John Polanyi, Sidney Altman, Richard E. Taylor, Michael Smith, and Bertram Brockhouse. Roberta Bondar, the first Canadian woman in space and the first neurologist in space, has apparently disappeared into the ether.

In film, Canadian newcomers will learn that Denys Arcand, Norman Jewison, and Atom Egoyan are important figures. Deepa Mehta, the award-winning female filmmaker, doesn't make the list.

It's ridiculous to think that every noteworthy Canadian will land a spot in a 62-page guide, especially one that covers everything from our justice system to how to register to vote. But even as the *Discover Canada* guide speaks out against physical abuse, it reinforces a more subversive—but no less damaging—message of inequality. Hopefully, that's one lesson on Canadian culture our new citizens won't learn.

IN CONVERSATION WITH . . .

Wanda Waterman St. Louis



Alex Kajumulo, Part II

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. (For the first part of this interview, click [here](#).)

Entering the World of Sport

After my uncle left the village we never heard from him again, and we couldn't find him. My uncle loved soccer, so it occurred to me that if I played soccer maybe I could find him.

When I got a little older my mother called me and I went to the city (the capital of Tanzania, Dar es Salaam) to stay with her. People who saw me play soccer started to pay attention. And I went on to play soccer all over the world. Now I teach kids how to play soccer.

In order to be creative I simply observe and analyze things. I make up a song in my head and when I am ready I go into the studio and record it. I don't write anything down; I have a bush head. In the bush you have to program everything into your head because you have nothing to write with.

I don't want to say that songwriting is easy, because that sounds cocky. But it does come naturally to me. Right now I'm working on an album called *Never Surrender*, with 12 songs, which I wrote in one month. The recording takes longer because I have to hire different people to play the different instruments. All my music is live, none of it computerized. I play a lot of instruments but I'm not super good at any except percussion.



Politics

I grew up with socialism in Tanzania, during the time when Nyerere was president. Now I live with capitalism.

Socialism is very good. You care for other people. Capitalism is about me me me me me me me. I do a lot of work for free. I coach soccer for kids for free. If they have no money I give them a scholarship. But the people who grew up here, they don't do that kind of stuff. They want money. When you are socialist you look after your neighbour. In America there are a lot of greedy people. The music corporations, they wanted to sign me, but I refused. Now I have my own record label.

First Clothing a Maple Leaf

I love Canada. When my uncle came to Toronto he sent me a Canadian T-shirt. I used to walk around buck naked and that T-shirt was my first clothing.

When I was coming to North America I arranged to land in Toronto, because I thought that if I could just go outside the airport I would see my uncle somewhere. I bought a Canadian flag T-shirt from the Toronto airport so that when I came across the Canadian border into the US I would be wearing the Canadian flag.

When I finished my first album I sent it to the 89.5 radio station in Toronto. That was the first area I sent it to, and the first area in which it became a hit. So I'm connected to Canada.

Throwing Stones at the Golden Arches

I wrote a song called "Super Size People." There's a big corporation that is angry about this song—McDonald's Corporation—because in it I said that the big corporations are killing our children with junk food. When you want to go to McDonald's and buy some food they expect you to say please when they are selling you their poison.

Belief Systems

One day when I was young I stole a mango from my neighbour's tree and the guy caught me, held onto my hand, and took me to my grandfather. My grandfather was very mad. He said to me, "I'm not punishing you because you stole—I'm punishing you because you got caught! The man was old! How could you let yourself be caught by an old person? You embarrass me! You're not smart enough!"

He sent me to confession. In the confessional booth I opened the little window. I went back to my grandfather furious, and said, "You lied to me! That wasn't God—I know that guy!"

That was the last time I went to the Catholic Church.

In Tanzania most people know my music, but even there some people have a problem with my songs. We black people fight so hard not to be hated, and then we hate other people! That's just stupid. I have one song, "One Love is the Law," and another song called "What is Love?" in which I talk about gays and lesbians. The Catholic people are very angry about these songs. They have the power to stop my music from being played on the radio because [a] lot of the radio stations are Christian.

***In the confessional booth I
opened the little window.***

***I went back to my
grandfather furious, and
said, "You lied to me!
That wasn't God—I know
that guy!"***

ERAS IN EDUCATION

Jason Sullivan



The Earth as Specimen vs. the Earth as Self: Perspectives on Ecosystems in Korean Buddhist Education

When I was in the seventh grade, our class undertook a project to improve a salmon stream that flowed past our school's football field. For what seemed like countless spring afternoons we hauled wheelbarrows of gravel to improve the salmon laddering system that would allow the fish to complete their journey home to their birthplace.

As a reward, each of us received bonus marks in science class for our time spent. We also spent innumerable hours learning about the biology of salmon. When it was time to dissect specimens we each had to remove various gall bladders, gills, and fins and place them on a photocopied chart in the appropriate places. It was a very dry and dispassionate way to get in touch with nature. As it turns out, it was not the only way we could have developed a deeper affinity with the natural world.

On the other side of the world, a Buddhist monk in South Korea named Dobeop developed a "farming school" in 1999 that taught students academics and agriculture. Above all, they learned to see themselves as spiritually connected to the earth.

Since entering a Buddhist monastery at the age of 17, Dobeop came to the conclusion that regular education tended to lead students away from a true appreciation of the natural world and their place embedded within it. He is quoted as stating that "so far, education in general has failed to let students understand the true meaning of life while exclusively emphasizing subject-based competition." Certainly as we seventh graders worked on those salmon ladders our bonus marks came to us as individuals, not as collective manifestations of a divine universe. Perhaps more importantly, we learned about salmon as something biological, not so much alive like us humans but reducible to various mechanistic organs. We learned to appreciate the salmon's existence, but certainly not to see the fish as extensions of ourselves.

In Dobeop's Buddhist school students are taught the term *Indramang*, which translates as "all phenomena (objects) exist only interdependent on other phenomena." In this way, "I" and "You" appear more as abstractions than as realities. From this viewpoint the "ecological destruction and human alienation" implicit in today's world seems completely unacceptable. Rather than change the physical world alone, Buddhist education in Korea involves a change in the student's mindset, leading pupils "to view the Earth as one organic body." While my class would race for the door when the end of day bell rang, Dobeop's students would first join hands and bow to one another, an act symbolic of the theme "You and I are one."

Every religion influences education in its own way. Since its introduction to Korea in 372 CE, Buddhism has become deeply ingrained in education institutions. Although most monks remain secluded in mountain monasteries, "some come down to the cities to spread their religion" and a significant number conduct "religions research" at universities. This connection between monastic and educational life has been

historically supported by elite powers in Korea, an interesting contrast to neighbouring China where Taoism was traditionally favoured on account of its being of Chinese origin.

Buddhism originated in India, yet because it teaches that we are all part of a whole greater than ourselves, it is useful in upholding earthly authority in any country. Giving people a sense of belonging allows them to comfortably go about their lives, even if they are experiencing oppression or living amidst inequality. While working on co-operative farming projects and receiving an education, Dobeop's students also learn the theme that *"without a star in the sky, not a single flower can blossom on earth. Supporting other beings is the forming of my life . . . My life is connected and supported by and through them. With these relationships, I can live. It is the truth of my life."*

Perhaps my seventh grade teacher would have questioned the causal connection between stars and flowers, but that is because Western civilization's scientific mindset downplays metaphorical or spiritual connections between things. After all, our sun is a star in the same way the stars are all suns. Perhaps they are linked by their similarities and who is to say that the stars aren't just as important for life as the sun is? No science experiment can remove the constellations to see what happens. Maybe most importantly, seeing everything as linked provides solace to people in the face of difficult circumstances.



The idea of social solidarity going beyond an "excessive concern with the distribution of economic rewards" is expressed by the theories of Émile Durkheim. Economic reality can be likened to empirical scientific data; an external, rather than internal, indicator of overall happiness and life satisfaction. Durkheim's conception of a "collective consciousness," or "totality of beliefs and sentiments common to average citizens," is explicitly tied to religiosity. For Durkheim, the history of morality and laws reflects the evolution of religion: "Law is essentially religious in its origin."

Unlike in pre-modern times, industrial capitalist civilization places great emphasis on individuality and competition. Though he wrote a century ago, Durkheim was already able to note that "each individual is more and more acquiring his own way of thinking and acting, and submits less completely to the common corporate opinion." For Dobeop it is necessary for people to live within a "world idea" that takes the collective origins and destiny of people into account. This collective mindset does tend to naturalize inequality, yet at the same time provides a sense of harmony rather than strife. In Durkheimian terms, collective solidarity provides "a sense of obligation and contribution . . . a feeling that one is serving something."

This feeling of harmony was what Durkheim envisioned when he wrote of "organic solidarity" as an outcome of modern division of labour. Despite vast differences in the type of work undertaken, social solidarity is possible when people have a sense of the whole they are a part of. When people do not feel like they belong, usually because "mutual contributions and obligations are denied or overlooked," "anomie"

develops. Students in Dobeop's farming school feel close to the earth. By participating in projects with names such as Back-to-Farm, Saving Mt. Jiri, and Small School (an alternative school) solidarity is clearly being fostered.

In my seventh grade class, we too felt like a part of something, although not in spiritual sense. It is the separation of spiritual from scientific realms that characterizes modern society. This split is illustrated by Durkheim's reference to "egoism and individualism" as "the two beings within us" and Dobeop's position that "we have ignored our life, misunderstood it for too long."

Ironically, by reducing our lives to "ourselves" we may have missed out on the most valuable educational outcome of all: seeing our lives as part of the greatest self of all, the planet earth.

CLICK OF THE WRIST – Coffee

Java, joe, brew, mud. All these and more are nicknames for one of the most popular beverages in the world: coffee. We make it at home, wait in drive-through lineups for it, and warm our hands around it in hockey arenas. So pour a cup and enjoy a closer look at this ancient brew.

World Community Coffee

Sometimes, it can seem like taking that first sip of fresh, hot java is the most important part of the morning. But coffee means so much more than that to so many people. This video takes a look at the ways fair-trade coffee is allowing farmers to better their lives.

Coffee Creations

No idea if artist Karen Eland drinks coffee, but she *does* do something far more interesting with it: recreates famous masterpieces with espresso instead of paint. She's reproduced artists from Da Vinci to Van Gogh, and often adds a cup of coffee to her famous subjects' portraits. Whistler's Mocha, anyone?

Coffee Art

Artists Andrew Saur and Angel Sarkela-Saur also paint in coffee, but their online gallery goes beyond portraits and includes conceptual themes, nature themes, wildlife themes, and more. The idea of using coffee as a medium struck them when an upcoming show was planned to take place in a coffee house. You'll be amazed at the results.

Latte Art

The professional baristas make it look so easy: those fun and intricate designs on your latte. If you've got an espresso machine at home, why not create some of that art yourself? This Monkey See series offers great step-by-step guides to everything from extracting the perfect espresso to pouring an inverted rosetta.

Beyond the Buzz

National Geographic goes beyond the basics of your mocha machiatto to 800 CE. That's when, as legend has it, an Ethiopian goatherd named Kaldi "noticed his herd dancing from one coffee shrub to another, grazing on the cherry-red berries containing the beans." Follow the history of coffee, check out maps of the world's coffee regions, and find out just how those green beans become liquid gold.



More Than Two Minutes

This morning Roy and I joined about two hundred other people for the 2009 Remembrance Day ceremony in Andrew. With about 30 or 40 military personnel from One Service Battalion Administration Company in Edmonton, it was an impressive sight. The program at the community hall followed the parade to the cenotaph, two minutes of silence and the laying of two wreaths. Nearly 30 more wreaths were laid in the hall by groups and businesses. Two Mounties in red serge, several young air cadets, fire department personnel, MP Leon Benoit, and Mayor and Council were on hand for the program. A hot meal and beverages were then served to all present.

A similar program played out in communities across the country. In every locale and in every speech there is reference to the phrase "lest we forget." I feel confident forgetting is not the issue. Each year there seems to be increased emphasis on the importance of the day. The recitation of "In Flanders Fields" and the wearing of a poppy are all I remember doing as a school child to mark the occasion. Today children are part of letter writing campaigns, have military personnel visit their schools, and attend services in their communities. Some older students had the chance to research fallen soldiers and be part of the Vimy Ridge Memorial dedication ceremony.

On pleasure trips to Europe people seek out historically significant places. Our daughter has visited Vimy Ridge. Our son and daughter-in-law have visited Auschwitz.

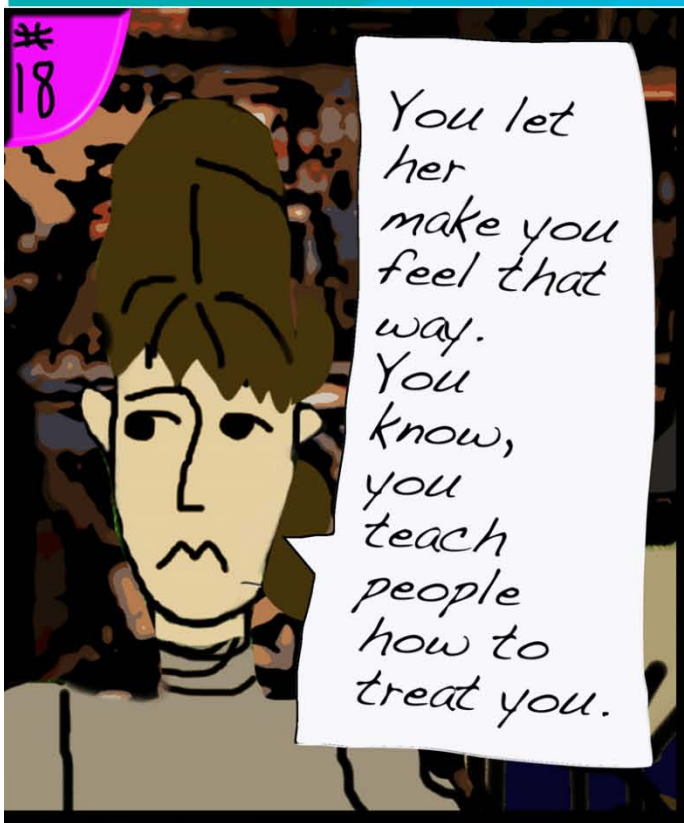
Today, in addition to the traditional red poppy, we can buy a white poppy to signify peace, a Vimy Ridge pin, and magnetic I Support the Troops ribbons for our cars. We can tie yellow ribbons around trees, we can line highways and bridge decks during repatriation ceremonies. We can lobby to have roads renamed the Highway of Heroes. We can admire the murals being painted to honour each fallen Canadian in the Afghanistan War. We can wear red on Fridays in support of the troops.

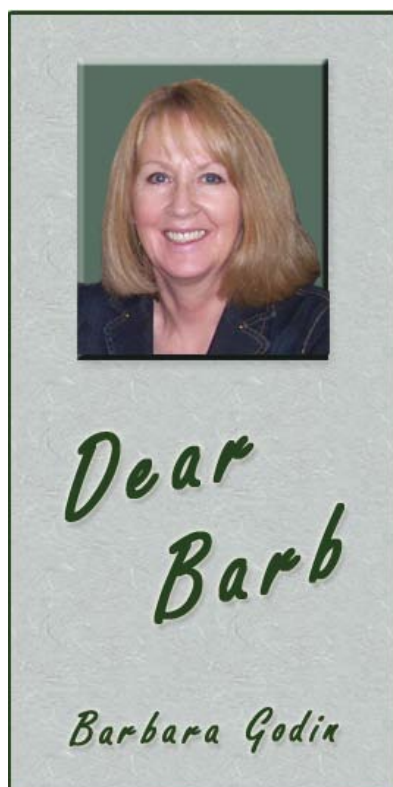
Many of us can and do find a way to remember the past and honour present sacrifices. Not long ago I went up to a table in an Edmonton restaurant where five military personnel from nearby Edmonton Garrison were eating. I simply laid my hand over my poppy and said "Thank you for what you are doing." We can also listen when these people speak. Today a man who was drafted into the Vietnam War at age 18 still remembers the terrible impact it had on his life.

I don't know if we should be in Afghanistan or not. I don't know if the 133 lives lost to date is a small price to pay for the overall good of the world or not. I do know I'm eternally grateful some people are willing to risk all for the rest of us. I don't intend to forget. The survivors and colleagues of the current fallen and injured personnel will ensure they too are remembered. Remembering and honouring isn't limited to two minutes once a year, from where I sit.

Sister Aurora

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





Gambling Addiction Puts Future at Risk

Dear Barb:

I am so upset, I don't know what to do! I have been married for five years and I thought everything was great. My husband and I dated for several years and when we finally got married it was a dream come true for me. Our problems began when a casino opened in our city. Chris and I began gambling a little. At first it was so exciting we really looked forward to going on Friday nights, but after a while I began to lose interest and worry about the amount of money we were spending.

I thought Chris felt the same way until I looked at our savings account and discovered most of the money was gone. This was money we were saving to buy a house. When I confronted Chris he was very remorseful and said the gambling just got out of hand. He says it's not a problem and he will be able to control it. I want to believe him, but I have my doubts that he will be able to stop it. I feel it must be a problem since he kept it hidden from me. Is it possible for someone to just stop gambling without any help? Looking forward to your reply.

Brenda

Hi, Brenda. It does seem that your husband has a problem, due to the fact that he secretly took money for gambling that you both had planned to use for something else. He showed no regard for this money. Obviously his desire to gamble took precedence over plans for your future.

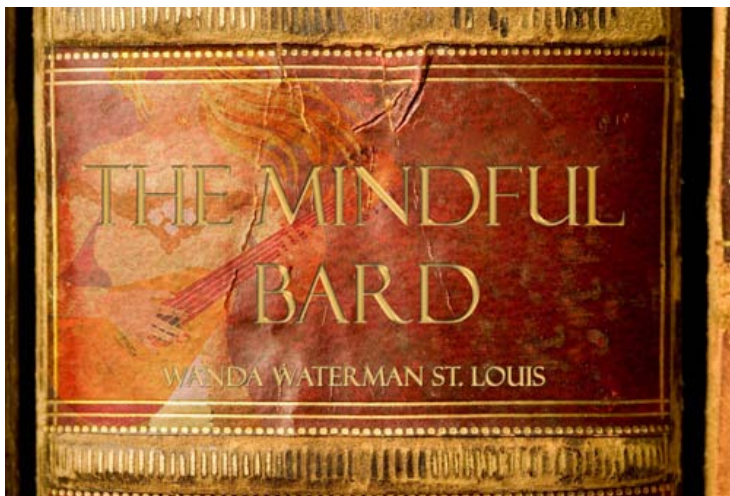
As far as your husband quitting gambling on his own, anything is possible, but statistics indicate that people are more successful in overcoming any type of addiction with professional help.

The first step in any form of recovery is acknowledging that you have a problem. This can be very difficult to do and it does not appear that your husband is ready to admit that he has a problem. Until he is ready to acknowledge his addiction and work to resolve it, I don't know that there is a lot you can do to help him.

When he is ready to take the first step towards recovery there are many treatment options, including Gamblers Anonymous, a 12-step program similar to Alcoholics Anonymous. As well, there are many counsellors and therapists who specialize in gambling addictions. This works well for individuals who prefer the one-on-one approach as opposed to a support group.

Perhaps if your husband is unsuccessful in tackling this problem on his own, he will be ready to accept professional help. In the meantime, I would suggest you take the necessary steps to protect yourself and your assets. Best of luck, Brenda.

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



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

CD: Cynthia Sayer, *Attractions*

Label: Plunk Records

Release date: 2007

Jazz

Wrap Your Chops 'Round *This* Stick o' Tea!

*"Daddy said that love is just in songs
And dreams are just little bits of sleep.*

*Daddy said the blues'll tag along
And love's just a dream that doesn't keep."*

Cynthia Sayer, from "The Gift," *Attractions*

One of the things that first impressed me about jazz banjoist Cynthia Sayer was the gal's extreme coolness. Check her out [here](#) and note how solicitous she is toward her young nephew (not a bad musician either), who is playing the djembe. Such graciousness in a musician tends to nudge her into the Bard's favour and warrant a good hard listen.

The jazz banjo (four strings, not five) has a history and culture behind it of which, generally speaking, only seasoned jazz junkies are cognizant, and it's sometimes hard for the average listener to separate it from the five-string fingerpicking that has comprised the vast bulk of North American banjo music since Bill Monroe invented bluegrass music in the '40s.

But as glorious and rich a genre as is bluegrass, there is so much more to the banjo than "Orange Blossom Special."

I usually only recommend albums that came out within the last 12 months but when *Attractions* was first released two years ago it fell many miles below the radar, and recently this New



Orleans-style jazz album has begun to garner enough positive attention to bump it into the spotlight for the first time, which I think justifies treating it like a new release. Besides, it's such a smokin' doobie of an album it deserves all the attention it can get.

Sayer's band (which includes the inimitable Bucky Pizzarelli on guitar) is very much attuned to her aesthetic. The rhythms are so tight, the call and response so effusive, the improvisations so playful and imaginative, the tones so resonant, the song choices so nobby . . . and she *sings!* Beautifully, in a strong, clear, emotionally bounteous voice.

A few of the high points:

A fire-spitting version of Liszt's "Hungarian Rhapsody"

A really neat arrangement of "Over the Rainbow"

Two phenomenal tangos

"Dark Eyes." Just listen.

Recently there's been a bit of a jazz banjo revival going on; banjo orchestras have been forming and young people are actually lining up to study jazz banjo. But there aren't a huge number of performers recording with the four-string banjo.

Not to blame them really; the jazz banjo can sound pretty scraggy if it isn't played just right. But in Cynthia Sayer's hands the banjo is a jubilant rooster crowing to the rising sun—joyful, consummate, and achingly beautiful.

Attractions manifests four 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 my art; and 4) it provides regenerative respite in a cruel world.

Cynthia Sayer was recommended to The Mindful Bard by John Malmström of Bear River, Nova Scotia.

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

AUSU 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.

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.

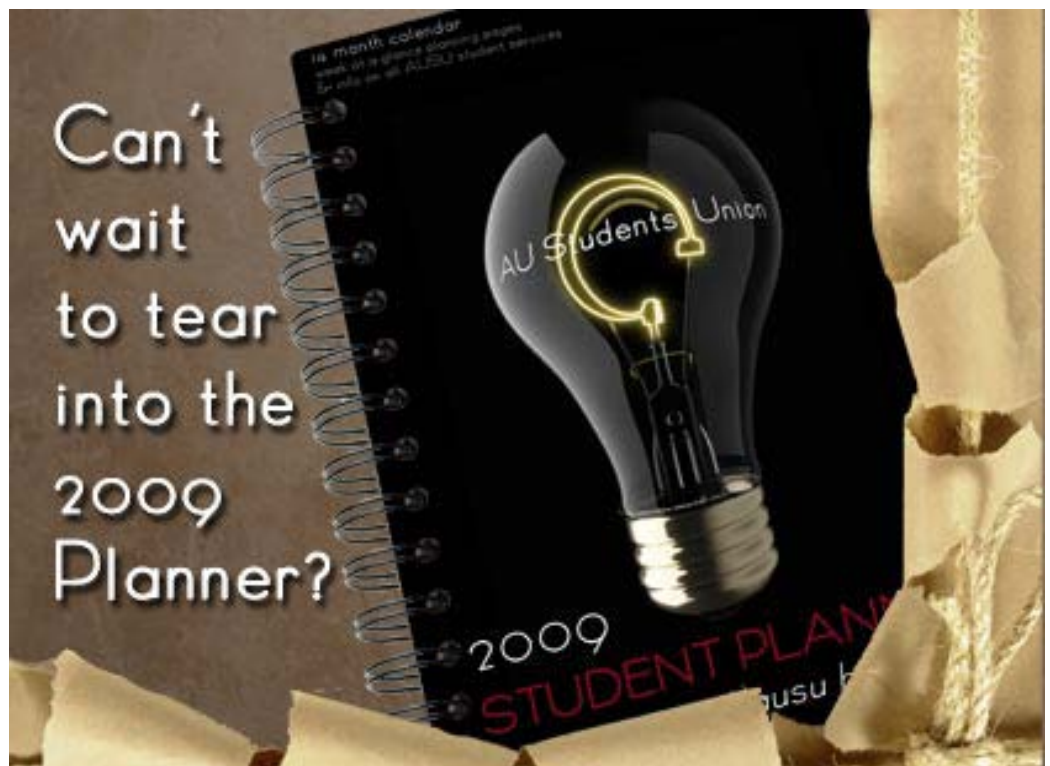
In that meeting a number of important revisions to the definitions of AUSU membership occurred, to make sure that the Councillors you elect are able to represent you during General Meetings and so that if you're a student in an AU collaborative undergrad program, you'll still be counted as an AUSU member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

On October 26, new legislation made Ontario the fourth province to ban cellphones while behind the wheel. And Saskatchewan could be next, with a new law expected as early as January 1, 2010.

As the [CBC](#) reports, the Saskatchewan government introduced legislation on November 11 that would “ban drivers from talking, texting and web surfing on hand-held cellphones.”

However, unlike in some other provinces the proposed law would mean different rules for different drivers. New drivers would be banned from using cellphones of any kind, while more experienced drivers would still be allowed to use their cellphones hands-free. The Ontario legislation goes beyond cellphone use to ban drivers from using any handheld electronic device, such as DVD players and portable video games.

Penalties also vary between provinces. The proposed Saskatchewan law includes a penalty of \$280 and four demerit points. In

Newfoundland and Labrador (the first province to ban cellphones while driving), the penalty is a fine of up to \$400 and four demerit points.

The “inattentional blindness” caused by cellphones is increasingly recognized as a problem that goes beyond driving. In a recent study at Western Washington University, a brightly dressed [clown on a unicycle](#) performed in the main campus square. About 150 college-aged people crossed the square, passing close to the clown. When questioned, those using cellphones “were less than half as likely to notice the clown as those listening to music players or single individuals without any electronics.”

In Foreign News: Australian breakthrough could regrow breast tissue

A new breakthrough by Australian scientists could allow women to regrow breast tissue after full or partial mastectomies. The “experimental stem cell breast-growing technique” is called Neopec, and it’s hoped that the technology “could replace breast reconstructions and implants within three years,” according to [The Telegraph](#).

The team of Melbourne scientists will test the experimental surgery at St. Vincent’s Hospital. Five women will undergo the procedure within two weeks of having mastectomies. The technique will see a breast-shaped chamber inserted in a woman’s chest. The chamber will be implanted with the woman’s own fat cells, which will multiply quickly and will be shaped by the chamber “to replace the breast tissue the woman lost.”

The technology has been successful in trials using pigs, and when perfected may allow women to regrow breasts within a period of months. The development holds a great deal of promise for those recovering from mastectomies, although it may not be ready for widespread use for at least 10 years.

CLASSIFIEDS

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

THE VOICE

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