

# THE VOICE MAGAZINE

Volume 17 Issue 44  
November 20, 2009

## The Front Row

WWI on film

## No-Drama Rule

Saving it for the stage

## AU Options

Contemporary  
Feminist Theory

*Plus:*

*From Where I Sit, Dear Barb,  
Sister Aurora, and much more...*



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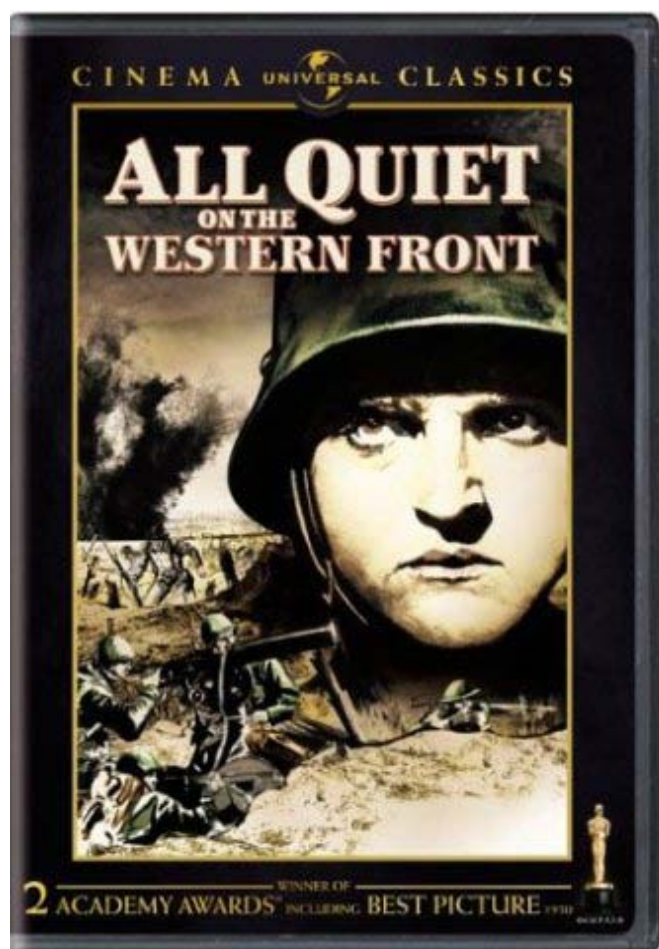
# LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

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



## SATURDAY NIGHT AT THE (OLD) MOVIES

Christina M. Frey



## We Will Remember Them: World War I Films

During the month of November, we pause to remember the sacrifices of men and women who fought—and still fight—to defend freedom. Yet as time passes, their labours may seem a more distant memory, something out of a history book. This year marks the 95th anniversary of the outbreak of World War I, a conflict so bloody and history changing that people thought it would end all wars. Only three verified World War I veterans remain<sup>1</sup>, all over 108 years old, but their experiences need not fade into history.

Films offer us the opportunity to immerse ourselves in an era long gone, to understand what it was really like to fight during the First World War. The anti-war film, the patriotic thriller, and the love story have all drawn inspiration from, and give a human element to, this more-than-just-historical event.

One of the most moving war dramas of all time, *All Quiet on the Western Front* (1930), follows the fortunes of a group of naïve young German men who eagerly join the army, inspired by the noble idea of fighting and dying for their country. But when they reach the battlefield, the reality of war sets in: death; dirt;

hunger; pain; callousness; remorse, and all for a few inches at the front. War changes their young spirits and ages them emotionally, separating them from the young fellows they were before they left. In fact, their life on the front becomes more real than anything home offers, with its lies about the nobility of war. Produced without a musical score—unusual for that day—the film's background of shell noise and the black and white production give it a stark realism. It's a tragic film, but a must-see.

*Trivia:* When the film was released in Germany in the early 1930s, Nazi agitators protested what they considered to be anti-German and anti-war messages in the film by releasing rats and stink bombs in theatres during showings. Later, when they rose to power, the Nazis banned the film outright.

Another tragic story of life at the front is Stanley Kubrick's first major film, *Paths of Glory* (1957). Loosely inspired by the early practice of placing men in front of firing squads to set examples, the film pits the idealistic Colonel Dax against the opportunistic Generals Mireau and Broulard. Even by the film's end, the generals fail to see that their main problem is their treatment of the soldiers as expendable equipment rather than as human beings. The contrast between their attitude and Dax's more humane treatment of his men is a sad commentary on misguided authoritarianism, something that's relevant in many more fields than the battleground.

<sup>1</sup> Those who joined prior to the Armistice.



*Trivia:* The film was shot mostly in Germany, but its battle for the Ant Hill didn't take place in former trenches. The production team used a farmer's field, paying rent and compensating the owner for the crops he'd lose that season. They then proceeded to create a battlefield: eight cranes, 60 crew members, and three weeks of almost round-the-clock effort later, they had the authentic scenery.

The French film *Grand Illusion* (1937) conveys its anti-war message a little differently by avoiding the fighting and instead exploring human relationships among those affected by war. Two Frenchmen are shot down by a German officer, then invited in for dinner. As the prisoners of war interact among one another and with their captors, there's a growing sense that war has been thrust upon its players, setting up walls where there should be none. German and French aristocrats have more in common with one another than with their "bourgeois" compatriots; yet because of their nationality, they must be enemies. And men on the same side fail to really understand and appreciate their fellow allies, because they have no common background. It's a thought-provoking film, and its ability to raise deep questions about war without showing a single battle is brilliant.

*Trivia:* *Grand Illusion* was received well in North America; it was the first foreign-language film to be nominated for an Academy Award for Best Picture. However, the film was almost lost. During World War II, Nazis seized the original negatives and transported them to Germany, where it was believed that they were accidentally destroyed during an Allied raid. It was not until the early 1990s that the film was discovered intact!

If war can inspire fear, confusion, and power-mongering, it can also give rise to courage, patriotism, and heroic actions that suggest that it is possible to rise above evil. While many World War I films deal directly with the wrongs of war, *Sergeant York's* (1941) focus on a few good men is an uplifting and refreshing change. Based on a

true story, the film introduces Alvin York, a wild-living farmhand in Tennessee, whose encounter with love, religion, and eventually patriotic pride, lead him to heroics on the battlefield. Although the movie's climactic charge scene may seem over-the-top, it really happened as played out in the film. If *All Quiet on the Western Front*, *Grand Illusion*, and *Paths of Glory* focus on the oblivion of those "responsible" for the war and the helplessness of those involved in it, *Sergeant York* shows that people have the capacity to transform themselves, and their situations, for the good.

*Trivia:* The real Alvin York, on whose diary the film was based, had been approached for years to license the rights of his story to Hollywood. He refused to cheapen his military service, saying that "This uniform ain't for sale" (similar to what he says toward the movie's end). However, with the outbreak of World War II,



producers convinced York that his story would inspire American patriotism at a critical time. Allegedly, York insisted that Gary Cooper play him in the film as a condition of allowing the movie to be made.

Amid—and often because of—the hell of war, romance could still bloom. A classic example is 1932's *A Farewell to Arms*, based on the Hemingway novel of the same name. When a wartime ambulance driver meets a young nurse, it's love at first sight, but their passionate romance is overshadowed by the realities

of war and duty—and the jealousy of others. Although the novel has a more pessimistic tone, the film version's focus is on the romantic. What unfolds is a tragic and somewhat melodramatic, but satisfying, tale of undying love.

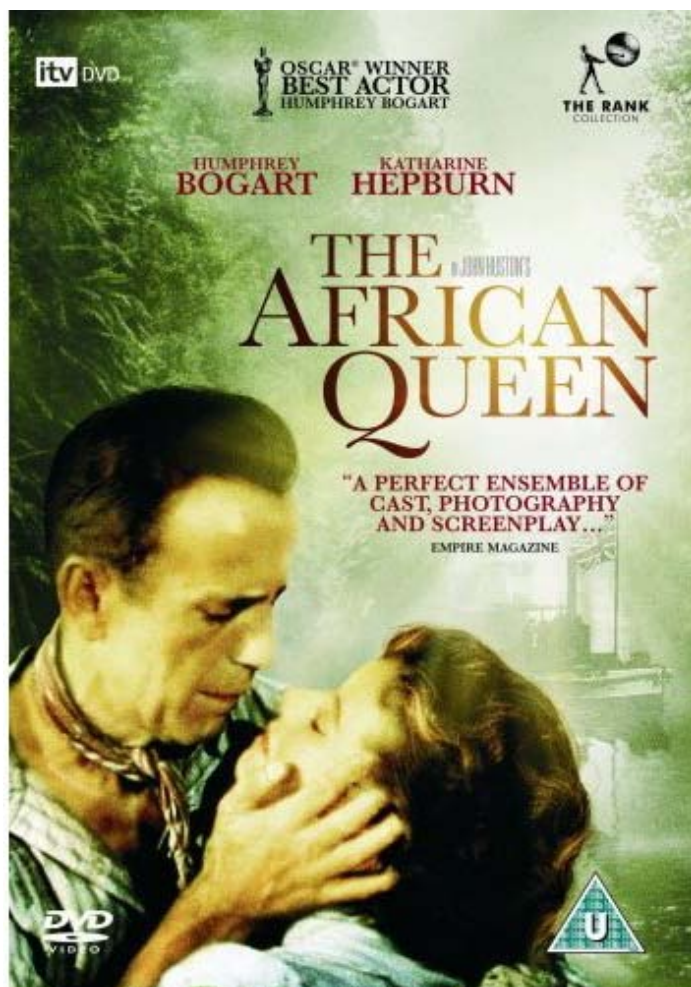
*Trivia:* If it seems as though there's an incredible height difference between the Lieutenant (Gary Cooper) and the Nurse (Helen Hayes), you're correct: Cooper was 6'2", while Hayes was just 5 feet.

Another WWI-inspired romance, *The African Queen* (1951), takes place far from the European battlefields, transporting viewers to the jungles of Africa in 1914. Prim British missionary Rose (Katharine Hepburn) lives with her brother in a peaceful native village in German East Africa. When the war starts, German soldiers invade, burn the village, capture the natives, and beat Rose's brother to death. Rose is soon rescued by the coarse boatman Charlie (Humphrey Bogart), who insists they'll have to hide in the jungle until the war is over, perhaps for years. Rose has other ideas. Learning that the German ship *Louisa* is blocking British passage in and out of the area, she concocts a plan: sink it mid-river. What follows is their wild

adventure, part *Indiana Jones* and part *Pirates of the Caribbean*, as they battle mud, river rapids, leeches, mosquitoes, hippos, German snipers, and even each other, to reach their goal.

*Trivia:* Most of the movie (except the swimming scenes) was filmed on location in Africa. Hepburn's whimsical account of the filming (*The Making of the African Queen, or How I Went to Africa With Bogart, Bacall and Huston and Almost Lost My Mind* (Knopf, 1987)) gives an insider's view of their adventures filming in a remote locale. It also sheds some light on just what it was like to work with legends like Humphrey Bogart and (director) John Huston.

Although these films run the gamut from tragic and depressing to thought-provoking to inspiring to comical, all have one thing in common. They portray the reality of people in a war that, nearly one hundred years later, still moves us. Better still, they remind us of the sacrifices made over the course of history by those that were willing to fight, and even die, that future generations might be free. Happy—and thoughtful—watching!



## IN CONVERSATION WITH . . .

Wanda Waterman St. Louis



## Rita Shelby, Part I

*Rita Shelby is a Los Angeles-based jazz singer-songwriter known as much for her wisdom and indomitable spirit as she is for her incredible voice and brilliant songs. She recently released the CD A Date With a Song, for which she wrote melodies and lyrics while Willie Daniels created the musical arrangements. She is also an author and an actress. Rita recently took the time to talk with Wanda Waterman St. Louis about creativity, faith, and boundary setting.*

## How to Create Amid the Busyness

I've got to be able to hear, to be connected, to be able to listen to what is going on amongst the noise and busyness of my life. When I say *hear* I mean to hear from a spiritual perspective, because for me the link with creativity is the Creator. All creativity stems from the Creator.

Sometimes creativity does come upon you in the middle of the night when the world is silent. You hear the still, small voice and you wake up and get out of bed and grab a pen or turn on the computer to document what it is you're feeling.

But there have been times when creativity has spoken to me in something else that was going on. There was one time when Willie—my co-composer—and I were in the middle of working on one song and I heard another song. So in my left ear this one thing was happening and in my right ear another melody was tingling. So I said, "Sorry, Willie! I don't mean to disturb you, but I've got to get this down."

I grew up in a faith-based household and am very happy to have been introduced to a faith-based way of life. But I did not make the connection between the Creator and creativity until I was writing my first book, which is called *Dictation: Plays, Poems, and Monologues for African Americans*.

It's titled as such because some of the writings are specific to our experience as people of colour in America, but the book isn't void of poems and bits of prose that anyone can relate to, especially one called "Here's to the Artist," and another called "Feeding the Creative Beast."

The book was called *Dictation* because when I write, whether it's verse, prose, commercial copy, or a song, it's like taking dictation; I'm writing what I hear. There's a little speaker plugged into there. The only way that I can explain it is that it is the great spirit of the creator choosing to be expressed through me, in that way, at that time.

## Staying Strong

I surround myself with positive people, people who have a positive outlook on life. (I'm talking about your core contingency here; you don't get to walk around in a bubble!)

But when those who help to build your foundations or who support you when your foundations are weak are positive people then that's respective of the type of person that you are.



You don't just zap up the spirituality and the positive energy just for yourself but you're also able to give from a wellspring that's a lot more balanced and more full.

### No Non-Union Acting!

I have a *no drama* rule in my personal life. I'm also an actress and I believe that the drama should be saved

for the stage. I'm a member of the Screen Actors Guild so if I've got drama at home, that's non-union drama. It's unpaid, nobody's getting credit, the audience isn't there, and you're not in costume.

I believe in a little saying that my Aunt Mary used to say: *Live and let live*. I don't require anyone to change to be around me or to be with me. And if it's too much of a stretch for someone not to be mutually supportive then I'm usually the one that says, *It's okay, we can coexist; you will get respect and support from me*.

I demand it and I don't settle for less. If conflict ensues because of this demand, they see the back of my head. I will quote another dear, wise woman in my life, my godmother Claudia: *That's the time to vote with your feet*. So I vote with my feet.

### Letting Go

You recognize that people in general are all on different points of their own development, on an interpersonal level, a spiritual level, a moral level, a political level.

I enjoy watching PBS because they have so many inspirational and informative types of programs. Lately whenever Doctor Daniel Amen has been doing a series on the brain.

He understands the brain like I understand chocolate and shoes. In his scans of various people's brains he showed that there are people walking around with nutritional or chemical imbalances that make them horrible to deal with. You never know what it is that drives someone, what makes him or her click with some people and not click with others.

I'm at a point now that if I'm in disharmony with a set of circumstances, that's a sign that it's time for one of us to grow. And if growing independently is most healthy for both of us then I support that.

*To be continued...*





## AU OPTIONS

Bethany Tynes



### WMST 401 - Contemporary Feminist Theory

AU's WMST 401, Contemporary Feminist Theory, is a senior-level, three-credit social science course. It is offered through the Centre for Work and Community Studies and has no prerequisites, though WMST 266 is recommended.

Contemporary Feminist Theory gives students the opportunity to learn about feminist theory and women's movements around the globe, as well as providing "a critical discussion of varieties of feminism as they pertain to issues such as gender violence, reproduction, work, families, and sexuality."

Alyssa Fann-Chiang, a Taiwanese AU student, recently completed WMST 401. Fann-Chiang says one factor that attracted her to the class was her previous experience in AU women's studies classes. She had previously taken several similar classes through AU and "enjoyed all of them," she says. "I thought that this one wouldn't be that

much different in terms of what to expect and what is expected."

Fann-Chiang's favourite part of the course was "the straightforwardness" of the reading materials and assignments. "Many people worry when they see the word 'theory,' as it usually involves complex, abstract concepts," she says. "Even the Study Guide for this course outlines at the beginning that students may find the theories difficult to grasp and reassures us that it is fine if we don't get it the first time. However, I personally found the course very straightforward."

Fann-Chiang also feels that the course helped her learn "how to critically consider" the decisions that face her from day to day. "For example, I did my research paper on feminist considerations regarding reproductive technologies. While we all welcome the advances made available to us, I think after my paper, I am more capable of considering the various aspects of such technologies. In other words, I feel that if I were to make a decision, it would be a much more informed choice."

Dr. Donica Belisle, Assistant Professor of Women's Studies at AU, feels that the course not only helps students "gain a deep understanding of both Canadian and international feminist theory," it also aids students to "develop strong critical thinking, research, and writing skills;" skills which are "essential for graduate studies and for the workplace."

This is particularly applicable for Fann-Chiang, who will soon begin her graduate studies. "I want to focus on gender issues when I do my master's," she says, and plans to "start a career in an international organization

dealing with international development/relations, and hopefully in a department dealing with gender issues."

As an international student, Fann-Chiang says that "the course was great because it involved feminist movements from *all* over the world—from Africa to [the] Middle East to East Asia to South America to Europe. It truly includes feminist movements from other places . . . I tend to feel that Asian experiences have not been covered in depth by the feminist discourses in the WMST courses I have completed so far, but this course provides a much more global perspective."

One thing that Fann-Chiang would like to see more of, "not just in this course, but in feminism generally," is detail about "the experiences of Asian women within Western societies," and recognition of the different struggles faced by women of various Asian cultures. "I have not come across that in great detail yet," she says, "and in the few cases where I read about Asian experiences in Western societies, I find that Asian women tend to be generalized as a group. However, as we are all aware, there are vast differences between East, South, and South East Asian cultures, which mean there would be experiences and issues specific to these women, as would the experiences of these women in Western societies."

***"I would recommend the course for someone looking for a more global perspective of feminism or just seeking to understand the diversity of feminism."***

On the whole, though, Fann-Chiang says that "the course shows students that the feminist issues of today are incredibly diverse and complex, and it invites greater appreciation and comparison of the feminist discourse. Moreover, it makes a seemingly complex subject very readable and approachable."

According to Dr. Belisle, Contemporary Feminist Theory "is a senior-level course that encourages students to think critically and to write effectively." Though she cautions prospective students that the course "is challenging," she notes that it is "also very rewarding."

"It's not as scary as it looks," says Fann-Chiang. "I would recommend the course for someone looking for a more global perspective of feminism or just seeking to understand the diversity of feminism."

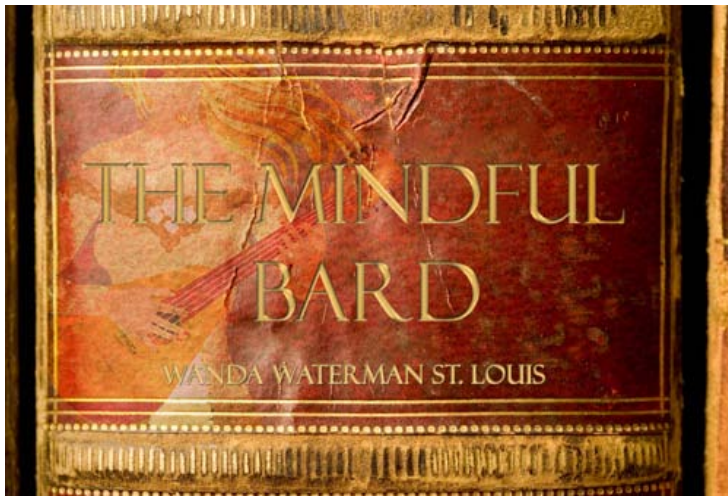
## THE MINDFUL BARD: DESPERATELY SEEKING BRIAN



In last week's Mindful Bard, readers were treated to the incredible talents of jazz banjoist Cynthia Sayer. Her graciousness as a musician was highlighted in a clip of her playing a house concert that included her nephew Brian on djembe.

But if you found yourself wondering where the young musician had disappeared to, the answer is simple: we sent you to a different clip!

So here are Cynthia Sayer, [her nephew Brian Sayer](#), and other talented musicians performing "Diga Diga Doo." Enjoy!



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

DVD: *Faubourg 36*

Theatrical and DVD Release: April 2009

Written and directed by Christophe Barratier

Starring Gérard Jugnot, Nora Arnezeder, Clovis Cornillac, Bernard-Pierre Donnadieu

Song lyrics by Frank Thomas, music by Reinhardt Wagner. Comedy, France

Life is a Stage and God an Impassioned,

### Working-Class Theatre Company

*"People came. And came in droves. They rushed to cheer these unemployed workers and their show. We were making money at last."*

### *Faubourg 36*

It's 1936 in Paris and the short-lived Popular Front government has just been elected. Workers are now limited to 40 hours work a week, with Saturdays off, allowing them to take their families to the beach for the first time.

But it's still a turbulent time. The Chansonnia music hall must close because of unpaid rent. Pigoil the stage manager has several motives for getting it up and running again, not the least of which is his desire to regain custody of his son, the accordion-playing Jojo (played wonderfully by the charming Maxence Perrin) for which cause he needs a respectable job and an income. And so he must make the Chansonnia a success.

Along comes the aptly named *Douce*, a lovely young girl in need of work, who shows herself to be a well of talent and charm. Douce represents that sweetness of life over which the rich claim control (and which they exploit mercilessly) but to which the poor are clearly most entitled.

Douce is wooed and won by the passionate young stage hand Milou. She is also courted by the rich, ruthless kingpin Galapiat, whom she obviously loathes but does not wish to alienate because of the Chansonnia's dependence on his goodwill.

Sandwiched between the two eras portrayed in this film is of course the Second World War, but except





for hints at the racial and labour struggles that were part of the climate that lead to that war you wouldn't know the war ever happened.

It would be too facile to label this portrayal escapist; the thought seems rather to be that the show really does go on despite the horrors of human contentions, and also that even without wars the struggles of the working poor remain the same.

Pigoil's wife has been repeatedly unfaithful and has finally abandoned him. When she ends up with a well-to-do husband she sends the authorities (who agree that the boy would be better off in a more affluent household) to fetch their son Jojo. Pigoil is heartbroken, and seeks every means possible to maintain a link with his son.

Pigoil's separation from his son is another instance of precious things being withdrawn from the poor, as if people in want are to blame for their circumstances and so cannot be trusted to raise their own children.

But the talent is up for grabs by those with money. Jacky Jacquet, who thinks he is an impersonator and whose trademark is a series of absurd jackets, actually sells himself into wage slavery providing entertainment (they demand that he mock Jews) for a white supremacist group. But he loses his job when he ridicules the fascist organization from the stage, and he returns to the Chansonnia to work for nothing.

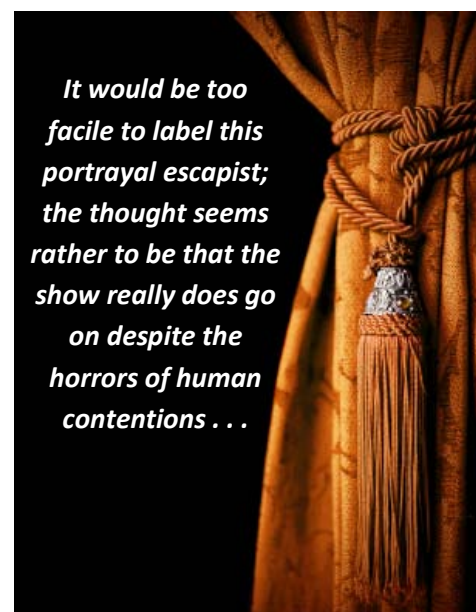
This film is quintessentially French. Every French community you find the world over bears traces of this peculiar brand of sweetness: the shy, tremulous lovers, the quick fights, the easy hugs, the emotive language, the love of joy and pleasure. Some of the most touchingly Gallic scenes involve friends singing up Jojo's accordion skills as the boy parades his music through the streets.

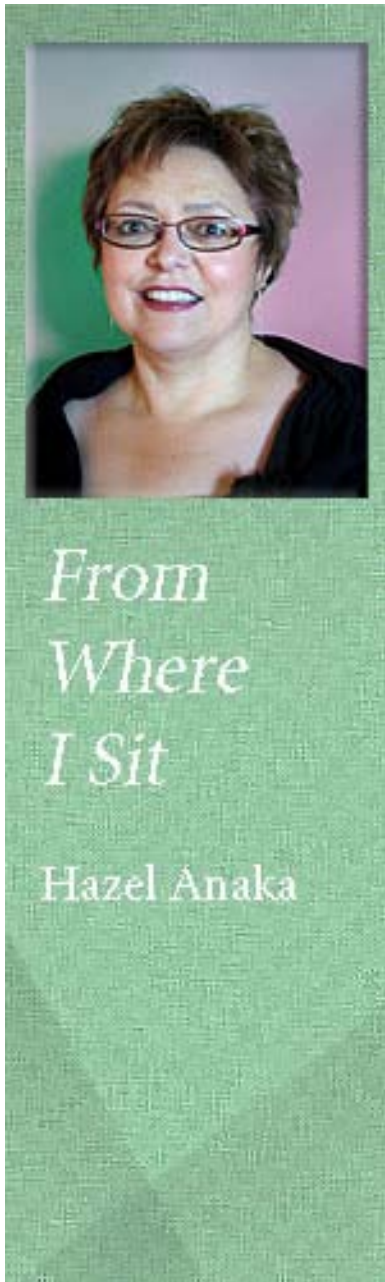
The songs themselves are purely delightful—commentaries on Parisian culture, critiques of violence and racism, etc. But the love songs are the best; these ditties take love apart piece by piece and spread it out on a silk coverlet, examining every facet and illuminating it with lovely words.

The joy inspired by the ability to go to the beach is a central theme of the film. The sea sums up what is desirable in—and missing from—the lives of these Parisian workers. A virtually limitless work week has so far precluded days off for family togetherness, but now it is possible to spend one day a week beside the ocean with all of its vastness and implied freedom.

*Faubourg 36* manifests 10 of The Mindful Bard's criteria for films well worth seeing: 1) it is authentic, original, and delightful; 2) it confronts, rebukes, and mocks existing injustices; 3) it renews my enthusiasm for positive social action; 4) it makes me want to be a better artist; 5) it gives me tools which help me be a better artist; 6) it displays an engagement with and compassionate response to suffering; 7) it inspires an awareness of the sanctity of creation; 8) it is about attainment of the true self; 9) it provides respite from a cruel world; and 10) it harmoniously unites art with social action, saving me from both seclusion in an ivory tower and slavery to someone else's political agenda.

*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.*





## That's Insidious

Dictionary.com defines insidious as: 1. working or spreading harmfully in a subtle or stealthy manner; 2. intended to entrap; treacherous; 3. beguiling but harmful; alluring; 4. developing so gradually as to be well established before becoming apparent.

It goes on to give some generic examples, as in an insidious plan, enemy, disease, pleasure, or misinformation. Terrorism, communism, ovarian cancer, television, and holocaust deniers are my easy examples. They simply put a more specific face to the concept. The list may beg for philosophical debate in some circles.

And that's great if you love thinking about esoteric stuff. However, if you are more concerned about the mundane, practical routine of your life consider what happened to me this morning. I was staring out the window as we rural Albertans are wont to do, what with our big sky and dependence on the weather. It's November 17 and we still don't have any snow.

That is both good and bad. Good because it shortens our too-long winters. Bad because it deepens the drought plaguing much of the prairies. Really bad because it hasn't covered all the unfinished projects and work "out there" in our yard.

When I look out the window I see where last weekend we hacked down the 25-year-old cotoneaster hedge that flanked our patio on two sides. The openness appeals to me. What's not so appealing is the presence of weeds (despite bark mulch, spot spraying, and digging up) now revealed. Oh sure, the little suckers appear dead and harmless. But I know better. Some are lying in wait ready to bolt upright from their roots come spring. For others, millions of seeds sown by wind and birds are waiting to germinate when the time is right. That's insidious.

I finish gawking out the window and am hit with something else. I stepped on the digital bathroom scale. Many of you know the horror of which I speak. Without warning or any effort on my part (pun intended) several pounds have crept onto my five-three frame and settled mainly in the midriff and bottom areas. I've read, heard, and spoken enough words about food, exercise, motivation, diets, solutions, and causes to last me a lifetime. And I'm sick of it. Over the course of a lifetime I've gained and lost—but always more of the former and less of the latter. If there was ever an enemy that needed watching it is this one. It is sneaky in its approach, relentless in its attack, and virtually unbeatable in its staying power. That's insidious.

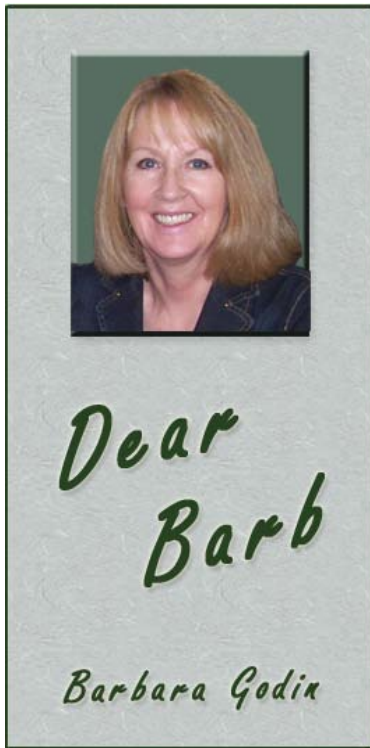
So like a good little soldier the battle resumes. In spring we will use landscape fabric and gravel mulch in more areas to beat back the advance of weeds. As for me, I've already done my 45 minutes on the recumbent cycle and have a healthy lunch planned. Because like rust and aging, weeds and weight need to be beaten back, from where I sit.

# Sister Aurora

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







## Old Connections Can Undermine New Relationship

*Dear Barb:*

*I am a widow. My husband died two years ago and a few months ago I met a widower who lost his wife one and a half years ago. We've been dating six months. At first we spent a lot of time talking about our late spouses, but no longer feel the need to do this. Ken and I get along great. He says he is over his wife and ready to move forward with his life. We've talked about perhaps having a life together in the future.*

*My problem is his connection with his late wife's family. They've made it clear that they want nothing to do with me, yet he continues to keep up daily contact with them. They invite him to birthday celebrations and he goes without me. Ken has recently joined Facebook and almost all his friends are his late wife's family and friends. I understand they were a part of his life for many years, but isn't this a little much? Even though I love this man very much, I do feel hurt by this situation. I understand him having the occasional contact with them (at weddings, etc.) where I would hopefully be invited as his guest, but I feel this regular contact may be impeding his ability to move on with his life. I'm not sure I want to share this man with his late wife's family. Am I being*

*unreasonable?*

*Lucy*

Hi, Lucy. I can understand why you are upset and feel this connection may be preventing you and Ken from establishing a life together. By attending these social events by himself, he could be sending the message that you're not that important in his life and that he's willing to maintain the relationship with his late wife's family whether you're included or not. It is up to Ken to establish boundaries with them. If he doesn't, they'll continue their relationship with him as it was when his wife was alive. It does sound like he is having difficulty letting go of his late wife's family, which could be interpreted as an inability to let go of his wife as well.

As you know, you never forget the people who have touched your life. Even when they're gone, they will always live within our hearts. But if they take up too much of our heart, there won't be room for anyone else. Perhaps you are more ready to move forward than Ken is. He may need more time. On the other hand, he may never be able to let go of that part of his life and you'll always be excluded. It is possible that the late wife's family may eventually come to accept you to a certain extent, but could you ever feel comfortable visiting their homes? There will probably be pictures of his late wife scattered throughout, as well as lots of memories for Ken. For some people this is okay, but only you know if this is a situation you can handle.

I guess you will have to decide where you want this relationship to go. Ken may be able to move forward and have a life with you, but he may always hold something back. I would suggest you give it a little more time. As I said earlier, perhaps you are just more ready to move forward than Ken is. As you know, a few months can make a world of difference for a grieving person. Thanks for writing, and good luck.

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

## AUSU THIS MONTH



### Annual AGM Held

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

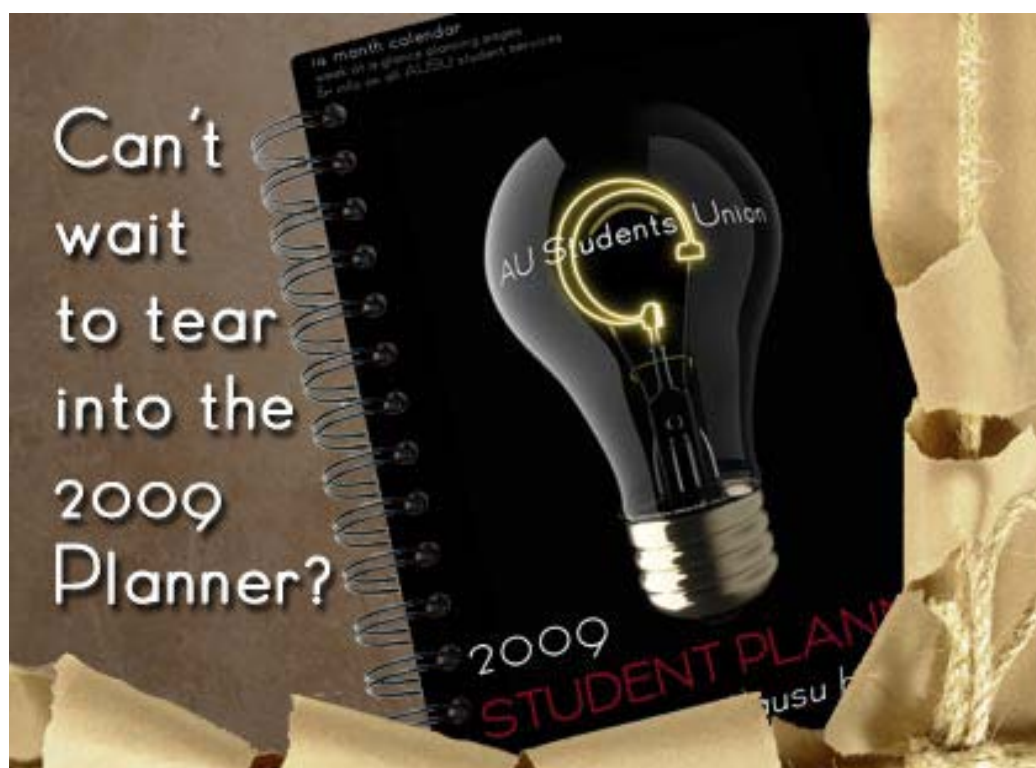
In that meeting a number of important revisions to the definitions of AUSU membership occurred, to make sure that the Councillors you elect are able to represent you during General Meetings and so that if you're a student in an AU collaborative undergrad program, you'll still be counted as an AUSU member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

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

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

### Media Committee Started

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



### AU Fees Increasing

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

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

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

## au.world Closes

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

## 2009 AUSU Handbook/Planners

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



## SmartDraw Program Continues

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

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

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

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

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



## Merchandise Still for Sale

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

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

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

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

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

## 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!

## FROM THE GALLERY

Sandra Livingston



The AUSU public council meeting on November 16 was a busy one, so grab your favourite mug and settle in because there are plenty of updates to share.

To begin with, the vote ratifications contained standard items like the purchase of a new mail meter and a new position policy on copyright. But there was another key item that members should be aware of.

AUSU policy 2.08 sets out the rules for council meeting attendance as well as absences. In accordance with that policy a vote was ratified to remove councillor Heather Fraser from Council, due to three full absences from monthly meetings in a one-year period. (You can

read the relevant policy section, 2.08.7, [here](#).)

And while you're in the policy manual, you may want to check out section 3.0 because the upcoming General Election date has been set. The election for the AUSU 2010-2012 Council will take place March 7, 2010, and the four-day voting period includes one weekend day. You'll find more details on the AUSU website as the election gets closer, so don't forget to check for updates regularly.

Another interesting note concerns the possibility of AU implementing plagiarism-detection software. The use of such software has generated a lot of debate both in the media and among students and educators. Council has appointed President Karl Low to represent AUSU on the AU Academic Council's ad hoc committee as it weighs the pros and cons of the issue.

In awards news, the latest [AU Honours List](#) is now online! Thanks in part to lobbying on this issue by Council, the honours list now uses "the last 30 credits that contributed to the 30, 60, 90 or 120 credit point" of an undergrad program to calculate a student's GPA. If you think your name should be on the list, or aren't sure if you qualify, check out AU's Undergraduate Honours List [policy](#) for details.

Still on the topic of awards, one item put forward during the meeting was from the Awards Committee, which requested that undistributed funds of \$14,500 from previous Academic Achievement awards be distributed in the form of additional AUSU bursaries, returning student awards, computer bursaries, and travel bursaries. Council approved the motion unanimously and the Awards Committee plans to notify recipients soon.

Various student awards may be getting a boost, but one service that's set to disappear is the Lock Loan Program. Through this program, students taking exams at the Calgary or Edmonton campus could borrow an AUSU lock to secure their valuables. However, large and continued losses made the program too costly to continue. Ultimately, the expense of replacing the locks costs all AU students, and Council regretfully passed a motion to cancel the program. These sturdy combination locks really are handy, so if you want to buy one (for a very reasonable \$4) just check out the latest AUSU [Student Gear](#) catalogue.

Other interesting plans are in the works though, including a newly created AUSU brochure. This small, colourful brochure will be packed with quick information bites on AUSU services and help promote them to

students. The 2010 AUSU Planners are well underway too, so don't forget to watch the AUSU homepage for updates on how to order.

And an item in the VP Finance report is sure to be of interest to students who get writer's cramp just thinking about exams: there has been some discussion about AU moving away from paper-based exams. It will likely be quite some time before (or even if) such a move becomes reality, but it would definitely be good news when it comes to essay questions!

The next public council meeting is scheduled for January 18, and all AUSU members are welcome. See you there, From the Gallery.

## **CLICK OF THE WRIST – Hotelier**

Whether it's a five-star luxury resort or the simplest accommodations, most hotels rely on the same basic equipment: bed, bath, and TV. But that doesn't mean there aren't some truly different hotels out there, and this week we venture into the strange world of theme hotels. Dibs on Poseidon Mystery Island.

### Poseidon Hotel

Next time you're in Fiji, why not book a room in the world's first seafloor resort and relax in a suite 40 feet under water? And if you get tired of the view, you can always keep busy "manoeuvring a 1,000-foot-capable personal Triton submarine through [a] glorious tropical lagoon (pilot training included)."

### Strangest Theme Hotels

What do the Beatles, fairies, pirates, and frogs have in common? All these (and many, many more) are the themes of hotels around the world. Whether you want to sleep in an antique Pullman car or channel Elvis at the aptly named Heartbreak Hotel, this site's got something for everyone.

### Weirdest Hotels

If you enjoy a little philosophy during your hotel stay, the Hotel de Filosoof in Denmark lets you choose from themed rooms, including the Nietzsche, Marx, and Aristotle. Or, if you're in the mood for something more spartan, you can check into a cell at The Old Jail, formerly South Australia's State Prison. You can check out any time you like . . .

### Hamster Hotel

After your stay in one of the philosopher suites, you may be able to analyze this interesting hotel in Nantes: it offers guests the chance "to become a hamster." A guest room inside the 18th century hotel has been fitted out like a hamster cage, complete with a giant exercise wheel and a feast of hamster grain.

### Capsule Hotel

Maybe you can't decide whether you prefer your bed above water or below. In that case, the Capsule Hotel in Amsterdam may be just the thing. Guests can spend a cramped night inside one of two "'refunctioned' escape capsules from an off-shore oil rig," luminous orange capsules afloat on a canal.



## INTERNATIONAL NEWS DESK



### At Home: Shrinking Canadian birth rate takes toll on transplant lists

In 2002, the average Canadian who needed a bone marrow transplant would have had a 54 per cent chance of having a sibling who was a suitable match. But thanks to Canada's declining birth rate, that same Canadian's odds would only be 37 per cent today.

And if the birth rate continues to shrink, their odds in another five years will drop to 25 per cent.

As the *National Post* reports, those are the findings reported in the journal *Biology of Blood and Marrow Transplantation*.

Except for a small blip in the late '80s, Canada's birth rate has been in a relatively steady decline since the 1960s. And smaller families mean that the odds of finding a matching sibling as a donor are also shrinking. The effects are clear to many in the health care system, who have seen the names on a "waiting list for bone-marrow transplants from non-family donors" nearly triple since 2004.

Dr. David Allan, an Ottawa Hospital haematologist, headed the research. As he told reporters, "Whatever the factors were that led to smaller families, it has impacted on our treatment options."

Another method of obtaining stem cells would be to set up a national umbilical-cord blood bank, a goal that Canadian Blood Services has been trying to achieve. Donations from non-related donors can be riskier and lead to serious side effects, but are still a viable alternative when a genetically compatible source cannot be found. Private cord-blood banks are also becoming a popular option, with blood being stored "for potential use by the baby or its family members."

### In Foreign News: Most Argentines believe AIDS patients face harsh discrimination

Attitudes toward AIDS have changed dramatically since the 1980s but many patients still face prejudice and bias. Argentina is no exception, and a recent poll reveals that as many as 80 per cent of citizens there believe that "people with AIDS are harshly discriminated against."

As the *Buenos Aires Herald* reports, a private poll was held just ahead of World AIDS Day, December 1. The results show that, along with the common belief that AIDS patients face discrimination, some 18 per cent of Argentinians do not believe that teachers with AIDS should be in the classroom.

As well, 15 per cent of those surveyed said they would "prefer not to know or to keep it as a secret if a member of their family has the disease." The poll was commissioned by L'Oreal Argentina and reported by TNS GALLUP.

About half of respondents believe that the next five years will see an increase in AIDS cases, while only 14 per cent believe that numbers will decline. In general, women were more informed about the disease, and youths (18 to 24) in higher socio-economic brackets consider themselves "correctly informed about it."

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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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