

# THE VOICE MAGAZINE

Volume 17 Issue 46

December 4, 2009

## Christmas Classics

Frosty and friends

## AUSU Awards

Returning students

## Cynthia Sayer

Jazz Attractions



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

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**The Voice  
Magazine**

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

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Athabasca University's  
*The Insider* for its  
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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.



## STUDENT AWARDS

Bethany Tynes



### Three Winners Chosen for AUSU's Returning Student Award

The Returning Student Award is AUSU's newest student award, and was first offered in May 2009. The award is "intended to recognize the courage of students who return to university after two or more years away from formal schooling," with preference given to those students who "have been away from formal education for longer periods," as well as to those who "have overcome or are in the process of overcoming significant hardship in pursuit of their education."

While AUSU generally offers two of these awards each year, one every November and May, AUSU has decided to offer six of the awards this fiscal year. AUSU has lately been unable to hand out their Academic Achievement Awards due to difficulties in acquiring a properly drawn winners list from the university, and AUSU council decided that it would be best to use these designated awards funds for their intended purpose: student awards. As recently reported in *The Voice*, AUSU will be giving out four additional Computer

Bursaries, Returning Student Awards, Student Service Awards, and AUSU Bursaries this fiscal year, with any remaining funds allocated to Travel Bursaries.

As a result of this decision, three Returning Student Award winners were chosen from the November 1 awards deadline applicants. Congratulations go out to Pauline Morris, Denise Sandberg, and Dawne Price, who will each receive a three-credit AU undergraduate course, and were all kind enough to discuss their recent win.

Morris is naturally reserved, but explains that in her essay for the Returning Student Award, she discussed her struggles with social anxiety. "I've struggled with social anxiety for most of my life," she says, and this has "been a major factor in my delaying post secondary education."

"I was thrilled to win the award," Morris continues. "Because social anxieties aren't always visible, the difficulties are not acknowledged. So for me, the reward is a validation of my challenges."

Denise Sandberg, meanwhile, is a 43-year-old mother of two who had been away from formal education since graduating high school in 1984. "The day of my high school graduation, my one-month-old daughter was very ill," says Sandberg. "I left the hospital to attend graduation and receive my diploma along with my peers . . . There was just enough time to dance once with my Dad and then dashing back to my daughter's side. That was the memory that stayed with me of my ending (or so I thought) education."

After cancer claimed the lives of both Sandberg's parents, she married, thinking that "anything was better than being alone." Sadly, "he was a very abusive, alcoholic man," she says, and though the marriage lasted "10 long years," she eventually wound up "once again, a single parent, now with two children."

In addition to these struggles, Sandberg was also “diagnosed with Graves’ disease, a thyroid disorder.” This autoimmune disorder has caused many health complications in her life.

In 2000, Sandberg remarried, and explains that her husband “was and is the key” to helping her “realize [her] dream and step into the university world.” She has now completed 15 credits through AU, and expects to see her name on the 2009 Honours List when it is released. Sandberg is “literally ecstatic” to win the Returning Student Award. “In a few words,” she says, “it’s humbling.”

Dawne Price, finally, says that her “future plans had always included obtaining a bachelor’s degree.” After marrying, she and her husband “worked together . . . through the many challenges of farming, to create a fabulous place of work and a wonderful home for our family. Our oldest son was born in 1993 and was followed by a second son in 1995. I had set the goal of the fall of 2004, when my sons would be in grades 4 and 6, to start on my degree and an end date of 2011, which would be my fiftieth birthday,” says Price.

*“I admire anyone who is able to complete a post-secondary education, but for those who do it after a life-altering event, I have great respect.”*

In August of 2004, Price’s youngest son was diagnosed with osteogenic sarcoma, the same form of cancer that took the life of Terry Fox. “The next 10 months were spent travelling from our home community,” in rural Alberta, to Edmonton for her son’s treatments. “During that time, we had to make the painful decision to have his leg amputated in an effort to increase his chance of survival. Signing the consent form was one of the hardest things I ever had to do,” says Price.

Her son went into remission in May of 2005. “Life seemed to be falling back into a bit of a routine, with great hopes, not only for his future—but mine of ‘going to university.’”

Unfortunately, “in September of 2005, we received the most devastating news that any parent could ever hear. His cancer had returned, had moved to his lungs, back and his other leg, and there was nothing they could do to save his life,” Price says. “He had spent so much time in the hospital during his treatments that he wanted to die at home. With the help of our home community medical team, we cared for him, until he died in his own bed on November 26, 2005, at the age of 10.” Price eventually self-published a book about her family’s journey.

“My main goal in pursuing post-secondary education was the legacy my son left me,” Price says. “He was wise beyond his years and amazed me with his knowledge. I hope that he would be extremely proud of what I am doing.” In his honour, Price has “set a goal of finishing [her] degree in 2013, the year he would have graduated high school.”

“This award means a lot to me,” Price says, “as I know there are many people who have overcome difficulties or hardships in their pursuit of their education after a lengthy absence. My story is only one of many that are out there.

“It is easy to say that you will take a few years off and then work towards a degree, but you never really know what life is going to hand you. I admire anyone who is able to complete a post-secondary education, but for those who do it after a life-altering event, I have great respect,” Price says.

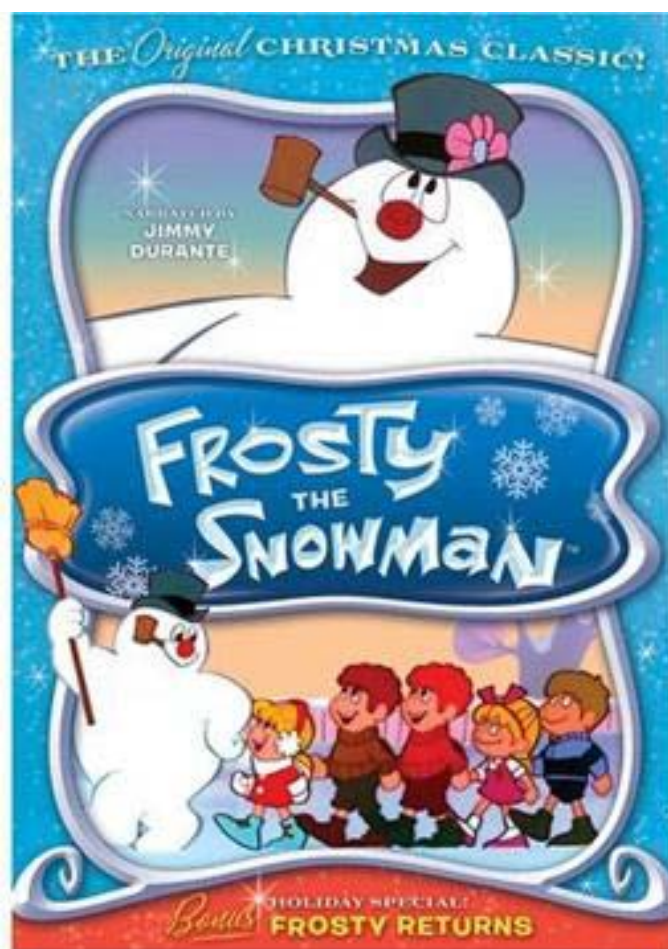
“I think it is marvellous that AUSU offers such an award, to recognize those who are able to work towards a diploma or degree after being out of school for many years.”

AUSU and *The Voice* congratulate all three November 2009 Returning Student Award winners!



## SATURDAY NIGHT AT THE (OLD) MOVIES

Christina M. Frey



### A Classic Christmas for the Kids—and the Kid Inside Us!

In our fast-paced society, with December packed full of commitments and high expectations, it can be hard to find that elusive Christmas spirit. Relaxing with an old Christmas classic can give a few minutes of respite from the seasonal rush. Add a hot cocoa and bowl of popcorn to the mix, and you might have the makings of a holiday tradition!

The Christmas season gives a unique opportunity to introduce the kids to old movies. In fact, there are very few “modern” Christmas classics out there. From the old animated TV specials of the 1960s, to heartwarming classics like *It’s a Wonderful Life*, old holiday films are family friendly and full of Christmas spirit.

A good starting point for introducing kids to holiday classics is the old Christmas cartoons we remember from our own childhoods. These short “films,” which premiered as animated television specials, began airing during the 1960s and have become a holiday television staple over the past 40-plus years.

It’s no surprise. Although the animation isn’t anywhere near the quality we see now, that isn’t always a bad thing. Along with the jerkier style is a gentler pace, with characters that are a little less slick than their modern counterparts. There’s also the opportunity to learn a little about older filmmaking techniques, like stop-motion animation using puppets (*Rudolph the Red-Nosed Reindeer*, for example).

The specials are easily accessible, too. All have been released on DVD, but you don’t need to run to the video store. Check your local network and cable listings, as these holiday classics are played several times during December.

Winter weather brings fun and games in the snow, but most snowpeople don’t magically come alive. *Frosty the Snowman* (1969), loosely based on the popular song of the same name, is the story of one who does. A magical hat brings a little girl’s snowman to life. She’s determined to keep him from melting come spring, and who could better solve the problem than Santa Claus? The girl and Frosty set out toward the North Pole, pursued by the hat’s former owner (who now realizes his folly in discarding a magical hat). It’s a cute story about friendship—and a warm way to enjoy the snowy weather!

*Trivia:* The credits incorrectly list June Foray (the voice behind Lucifer the cat in *Cinderella* and Rocky Squirrel and Nell Fenwick in *The Rocky and Bullwinkle Show*) as the voice of the little girl. Although this

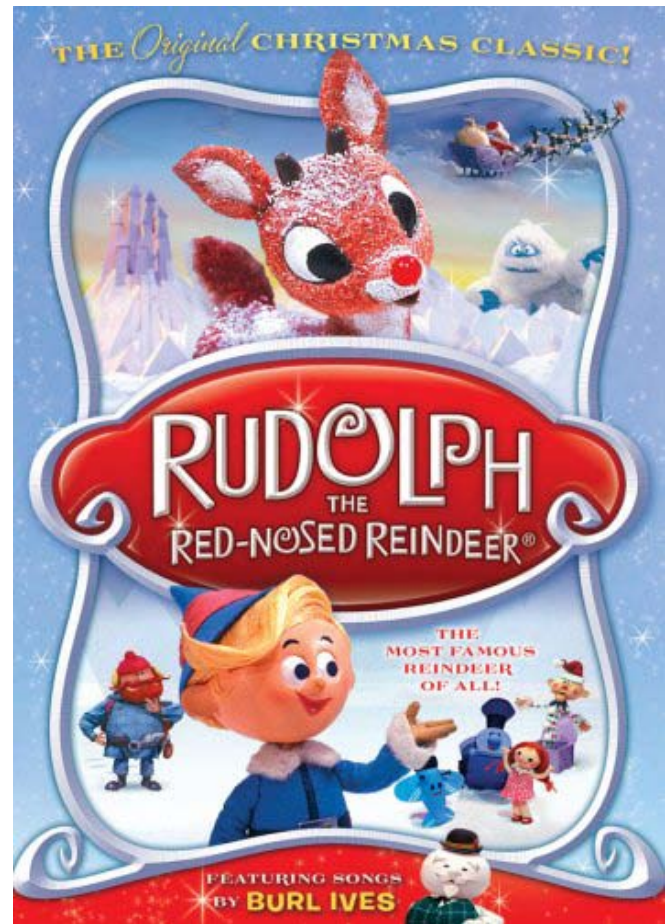
voice actress recorded the parts her recordings were not used, and those of another, uncredited actress substituted. To this day, it's unknown whose voice is actually heard in the special.

Familiar characters take the stage—with a twist—in another song-turned-show, *Rudolph the Red-Nosed Reindeer* (1964). Rudolph is mocked by family and friends because of his unusually red, bright nose. He joins forces with Hermey, an elf who'd rather be a dentist than make toys like his fellow elves, and the two set off on a journey of self-discovery. Encounters with the Bumble (think Abominable Snowman), a Yukon prospector, the unloved toys on the Island of Misfit Toys, and Santa himself lead to a satisfying ending in which Rudolph saves the day and everyone finds a place to belong.

*Trivia:* *Rudolph* was created using the stop-motion technique with small puppets made of wood, wire, and felted wool. Regrettably, most of the puppets have been lost to history, but two from this special have a sweet lost-and-found story. The Rudolph and Santa puppets were given to the children of an employee of the production company. For years they were loved almost to pieces, then forgotten. Forty years later, a relative found the puppets in an attic; they were lovingly restored and placed on display. For more information on the restoration process, visit this [link](#).

The written word inspired animated Christmas classics, too. *How the Grinch Stole Christmas!* (1966) is the familiar tale of the holiday-hating old grouch whose heart was “two sizes too small.” It closely follows the Dr. Seuss book on which it was based, often quoting verbatim from it. The titular Grinch, determined to stop Christmas celebrations in neighbouring Whoville, concocts a cruel plan. But though he succeeds in taking away the Whos' Christmas gifts, he can't quite do away with their holiday spirit.

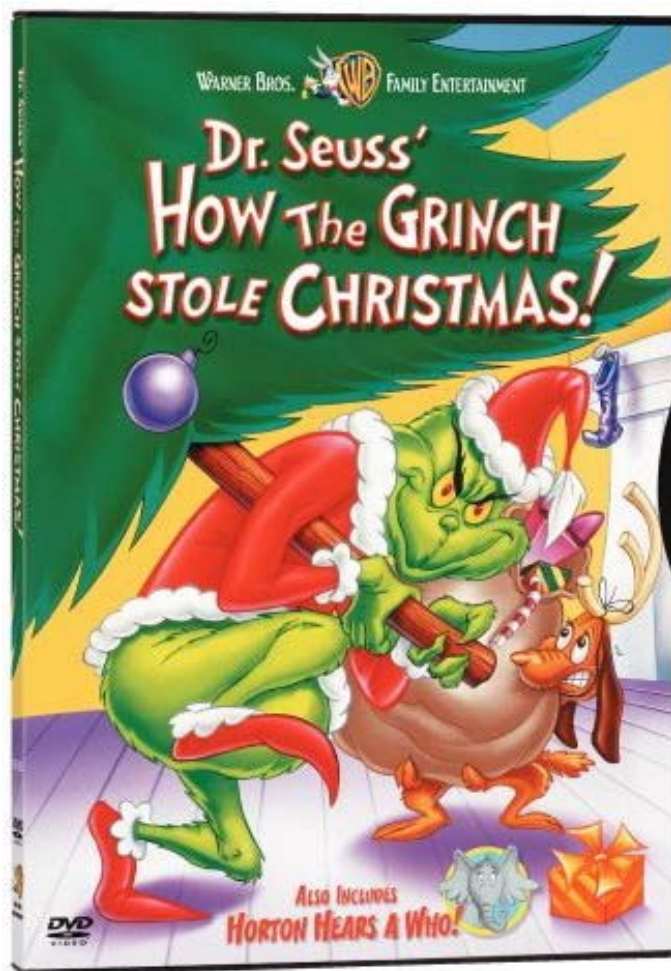
*Trivia:* The villainous Grinch is voiced by none other than Boris Karloff, the original Frankenstein's Monster. Karloff also narrates the special.



Another spin on Christmas spirit, the much-beloved animated special *A Charlie Brown Christmas* (1965), follows Charlie Brown's search for a more meaningful Christmas. Disgusted by the commercialistic attitudes of his friends, he tries to bring a little heart back into the season. It's a touching story that reminds all of us what Christmas is all about.

*Trivia:* It's ironic that a movie emphasizing the over-commercialization of Christmas was originally sponsored by, and used as an advertising vehicle for, the Coca-Cola Company. Product placement in an old kids' show? That's right; in the original televised version, there were several verbal and visual references to Coca-Cola, although they've since been removed. For example, in the original version, Linus knocks down a Coke can with his blanket; it's now a generic can.





Finally, no Christmas movie canon is complete without a retelling of Dickens' *A Christmas Carol*. *Mister Magoo's Christmas Carol* (1962) is an animated musical which is, according to the credits, "freely adapted" from the original story. It's a play within a movie; the cartoon characters are actors playing the parts of the Dickens characters on a Broadway-style stage, so there are two stories going on at the same time. It's a good first adaptation for young kids, with enough slapstick and characterization for the whole family to enjoy.

*Trivia:* If you're curious about the behind-the-scenes production of an animated cartoon, check out animation director Darrell Van Citters' recently released *Mr. Magoo's Christmas Carol, the Making of the First Animated Christmas Special* (Oxberry Press, 2009).

I feel in the Christmas spirit already! And animated holiday specials are just the start. The Christmas season is a perfect time to introduce the whole family to the joys of old movies. In the next two issues, we'll look at some "live-action" Christmas films, from popular classics like *Miracle on 34th Street* to lesser-known romantic comedies like *The Shop Around the*

*Corner*. Since the Christmas feeling is a common link with the past, these movies are also more accessible to modern tastes than other old films might be. Call it the magic of the season? Happy holiday watching!

## CLICK OF THE WRIST – Matchless

Last week we looked at the hidden beauty in tendrils of smoke. This week we get a little closer to the source of that smoke: the humble matchstick.

### Painting with a Matchstick

Sometimes, it pays not to think big. It can even pay to think very, very small. As small as the end of a matchstick. That's what Devon artist Annie Drew does, applying "thousands of dots of paint with a stick." The results are astonishing.

### Matchstick Marvels

Artist Patrick Acton doesn't paint with matchsticks, but he does build incredible things with them. In this case, it's a model of J.R.R. Tolkien's City of Kings, Minas Tirith. After two years of construction, the model contains 420,000 matchsticks—and it isn't even finished.

[More Click of the Wrist . . .](#)



## IN CONVERSATION WITH . . .

Wanda Waterman St. Louis



## Cynthia Sayer, Part I

*Cynthia Sayer is a New York-based jazz banjo phenomenon whose latest album, Attractions, on Plunk Records, was recently reviewed in The Voice. She recently took the time to talk with Wanda Waterman St. Louis about her childhood, jazz banjo, and why she decided against a legal career.*

## The Childhood

My early childhood was in Massachusetts, but we moved to Scotch Plains, New Jersey, when I was in second grade and stayed there, so I consider that to be my hometown.

I had an active childhood, with lots of interests in the arts. My parents were very culturally supportive. They also had their own artistic passions—my father for art and photography, my mother for singing in choral groups.

I played piano, guitar, drums, and viola. I took dance lessons off and on in various forms including ballet, tap, and jazz. I was very involved in art and won an art scholarship as a child. I did a summer musical for kids every year, performed in school plays, and as a teen performed in community theatre.

I also loved writing, and I kept journals. I enjoyed numerous arts, and music didn't stand out in any way for me. If anything, theatre was probably my main involvement. I remember how odd it was the first time I played in the pit for a show instead of being in it!

## Why Plectrum Banjo?

I started taking banjo lessons at age 13 from Patty Fischer. At the time I had no idea that it was unusual for a female to play the four-string banjo, so it was quite a coincidence that one of the few around happened to live nearby. She said she could get me started on tenor, plectrum, or five-string banjo, but could take me the furthest on plectrum since that's what she played. So I promptly chose plectrum.

I liked the sound of the tenor and the plectrum equally for many years. But then over time I came to prefer the tighter chord clusters of the plectrum.

Also, I'm left-handed, but Patty said it would be easier for her to teach me right-handed instead of upside down and backwards, so I agreed to that without much thought as well.

## The Career

My parents encouraged me to go to law school. Since I did well in school and didn't know what I wanted to do, it seemed like a good idea. While at college I signed up to take the LSATs (the entrance exams for law school). To my surprise I experienced a huge sense of foreboding the night before that was so profound it made me decide to skip the exams. I assumed I would just try it some other time.

But then I started thinking; I had dreamed of having a life of travel and adventure, of being professionally independent instead of working for someone else. I wondered whether my adverse reaction to the exam was

something inside of me asking me to try to fulfill that for a year or two first before becoming a responsible adult by going to law school and getting a proper job.

I had always enjoyed playing gigs during summers and weekends, but it had never occurred to me to become a professional musician. When I tried to think of ways that I could support myself with this lifestyle goal, music was the only thing I could think of that might make it possible.



That's why I initially became a musician; it was simply a means by which I hoped to experience a fun lifestyle for a while.

I gradually fell in love with the art of it, made a personal connection to jazz, and worked hard to improve. I liked the entrepreneurial aspects of working as a freelancer as well. It took me several years to admit to myself that this was what I wanted to do. I never did take those LSATs.

**What conditions do you need in your life in order to be creative?**

I wish I could answer that question. I struggle with creativity. Sometimes I seem to just fall into it and am instantly on a roll, and sometimes there is a huge, often painful hurdle to get past before I can get connected. I might be inspired to work after hearing other players who moved me in some way. Also, a sense of peace and time might get me into that creative zone.

## AU OPTIONS

Bethany Tynes



## Learning French, Part II

While most AU students enjoy the flexibility of distance education and the freedom it gives them from the confines of scheduled classes, there are also inherent difficulties in the process. For example, when learning French by distance education, how are students to cope with distance education's lack of face-to-face interaction?

"An essential aspect of language training consists of in-class oral interaction between students and instructors in the target language," says Dr. Vina Tirven-Gadum, Assistant Professor of French Language and Literature at AU. "As we are a distance institution, it is not always easy to replicate this face-to-face interaction with our students; we must therefore find alternatives to replace this important aspect of language learning."

One such alternative method is the use of interactive technology, such as Horizon Wimba. Wimba is "an online communications tool and an oral assessment builder which allows students and tutors to interact one-to-one," using such tools as voice email and discussion boards.

"Wimba also allows students to practice their oral exercises and listen to their own voices," explains Dr. Tirven-Gadum. "They can correct their answers and then send them to their tutor for feedback. They can re-record the answers and resend them as often as they like."

AU French student Christine Purfield has unfortunately found that while "the head of the department posts verbal questions and students are invited to reply . . . few students use it," perhaps because the lack of conversational spontaneity means that "you spend more time preparing what you're going to say rather than actually saying it!"

Some courses also make use of "live video streaming for the oral component of the course," says Dr. Tirven-Gadum. This video component "can be accessed anywhere in Canada," and "uses active participation to increase fluency in French, while introducing French culture. *French in Action* is excellent for self-directed French language learning." Students residing outside of Canada, meanwhile, receive audio and video cassettes, which they can then view at their own convenience.

Purfield has found, however, that the strong support she receives from tutors is a great strength of the program. "I enjoy the one-on-one work I've been able to do with my tutor," she says. "Traditional classroom tutors just don't have the time to concentrate on one student's issues in a class of 30 or 35 students at varying levels of comprehension."

"I enjoy working at my own pace," says Purfield. "What happened for me in traditional classrooms was I found that either I was rehashing the same old grammar and vocabulary because someone else in the class didn't 'get it,' or I was left behind because there was an element that I didn't 'get.' Studying through Athabasca means I get to skip the stuff I know and spend longer on my weak areas."

Dr. Tirven-Gadum agrees that “if anything, students at AU can get more individual attention in this sort of set-up. Tutoring is done on a one-on-one basis,” she explains. “Students do not have to compete with 30 other students for the professor’s attention. They can contact their tutor by email or by phone and will normally receive a response within the next 48 hours. This is more than students can expect in a traditional classroom setting.”

While Purfield would like to see more opportunities for spontaneous French discussion, her least favourite part of her French courses “has always been the oral sessions . . . While all my tutors have been terrific in taking this difficulty into consideration, I just hated doing them,” she says. Purfield “found they took up way too much time in preparation for the mark allocated. Instead of chatting about everyday events, you’re stuck with questions primarily about the texts which, while it meant you got familiar with the text, didn’t lead to the spontaneous chatting you would expect in a traditional classroom.”

Overall, though, “there are many pragmatic reasons for learning French at AU,” says Dr. Tirven-Gadum. Knowledge of a second language is often a requirement for many university degrees at both the undergraduate and graduate level. Since French is an official language of Canada it makes sense to take French in order to fulfill that requirement.

“Knowledge of French in Canada can open up employment opportunities in several areas such as education, business, foreign correspondence, the airline and travel industry, diplomacy, museums and art galleries, law, radio broadcasting, and (of course) the Federal Government, since many positions in public service at various levels require knowledge of both official languages.”

“Studying French means more than just learning a language,” though, and there are many other reasons to undertake this task besides those practical ones noted above. According to Dr. Tirven-Gadum, learning French “opens the door to a deeper understanding of another culture and another worldview.”

“By learning to speak, understand, read and write in French, students will gain access to the rich cultural heritage of the Francophone world, including great works of literature, theatre, cinema, art and music. They will gain an appreciation for the writers, artists, and intellectuals whose work has had a profound impact on Western thought and has helped shape Western culture.”

## **CLICK OF THE WRIST – Matchless (*Continued*)**

### **Matchstick Masterpiece**

This model galleon, crafted from thousands of matchsticks, is over 10 feet long and took more than seven years to build. The ship’s creator, Bernardo Casasola, can also build working musical instruments out of matchsticks. His next project? A 33-foot replica of the Titanic.

### **Matchstick Puzzles**

If you like brain teasers, look no further than this website and a handful of matchsticks. The best part is, there’s a link to the solution beside each puzzle.

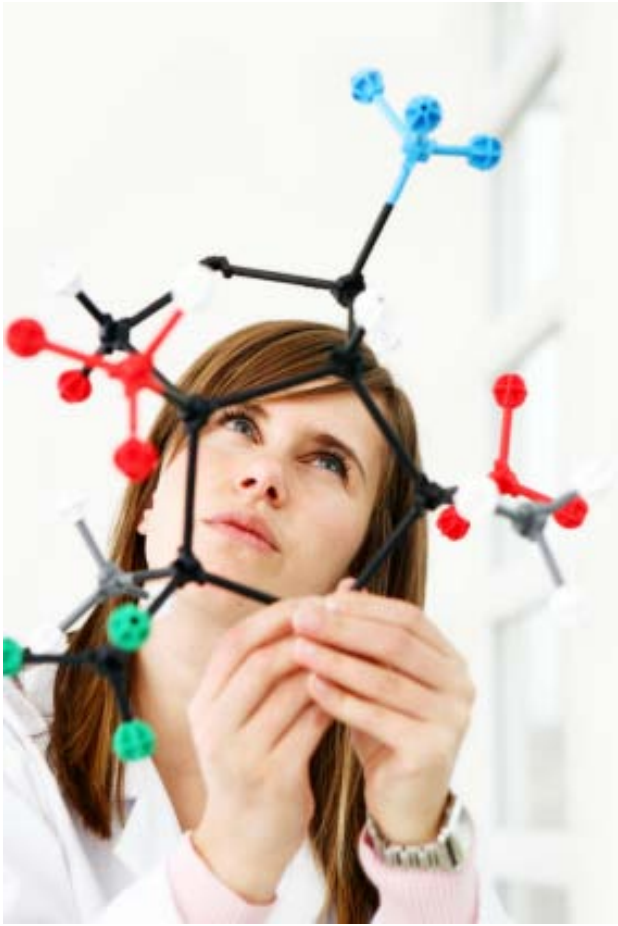
### **Toothpick City**

Okay, they’re not matchsticks. But these incredible creations by Stan Munro are definitely worth a look. Angkor Wat, the CN Tower, the Brooklyn Bridge—name a temple or tower and Stan has probably built it.



## ERAS IN EDUCATION

Jason Sullivan



### Women in Lab Coats in 1920s Belarus: Revolution in the Classroom

In high school science classes, the moment when we chose lab partners was crucial. It meant deciding whether to pair off with a buddy who may or may not have technical competence with petri dishes, electron microscopes, and Bunsen burners, or to strike out on a perilous journey across the classroom in an attempt to latch on with one of the “science girls.”

These were an intimidating bunch, bound for future careers as doctors, researchers, teachers, and veterinarians. Their intelligence translated into a certain indifference or aloofness to boys such as me; they didn’t seem interested in us as specimens of inchoate manhood so much as examples of what to not let get in the way of larger life ambitions.

I am exaggerating here, of course. The “science girls” in my school were infinitely varied in personality and temperament. They were fascinating to talk to. To me what set them apart was that, unlike other students I hung out with, their world did not seem to revolve around personal interrelations and psychological intrigue. They

often seemed more content to ponder the periodic table than to analyze the emotional bearings of their friends.

Science itself has historically embodied a division between rational and emotional. Behind the Iron Curtain, deep in the heart of the Soviet bloc, women in the country of Belarus had opportunities following the October 1917 Revolution that their sisters in Canada at the time may never have imagined.

Belarus, also known as White Russia, has a long history as a proud East Slavic nation. As with the comparatively massive state of Russia lying just to the east, Belarus suffered Mongolian invasions between 1240 and 1480 CE. Associated with this were Grand Dukes of Moscow becoming the “tax collectors” for the Mongols, a reality that led to a deeply parasitic and authoritarian historical political climate. Belarus remained largely feudal until the 19th century, much later than Western Europe. With this history of domination and serfdom as a backdrop, the Russian Revolution swept the egalitarian ideology of Marxism-Leninism into power. Almost overnight, education and gender equality became crucial components of the emergent “worker’s state.”

Seven hundred years earlier the first rays of Belarus’ “cultural and spiritual dawn” were shone by a 12th-century princess named Efrosinia Polotskaya, who at the age of 12 became a nun and changed her name from Predslava. She went on to found “the first scriptoria” in convents and churches, which in turn provided textbooks for schools she founded.

In the early 1920s the new Communist state in Belarus played a “key role” in forming “social and gender equality making higher education free and available to all sections of the population,” as well as eliminating the gender divide that prevented women from entering certain occupations, especially the sciences.

The revolution of 1917 played the key role in formation of social and gender equality making higher education free and available to all sections of the population and repealing the prohibition against “male” professions, which was reflected in a number of legislative acts. Today Belarus is a land of complete literacy where 28% of population have a higher education, half of which are women.

In 1921, a Belarusian State University was founded, and by the end of the decade an Academy of Sciences came into being. Today 28 per cent of all Belarusians have a higher education, “half of which are women.” By comparison, 47 per cent of Canadians have “a postsecondary degree of some kind,” and in America this number is 39 per cent. However, Americans have more four-year university degrees per capita.

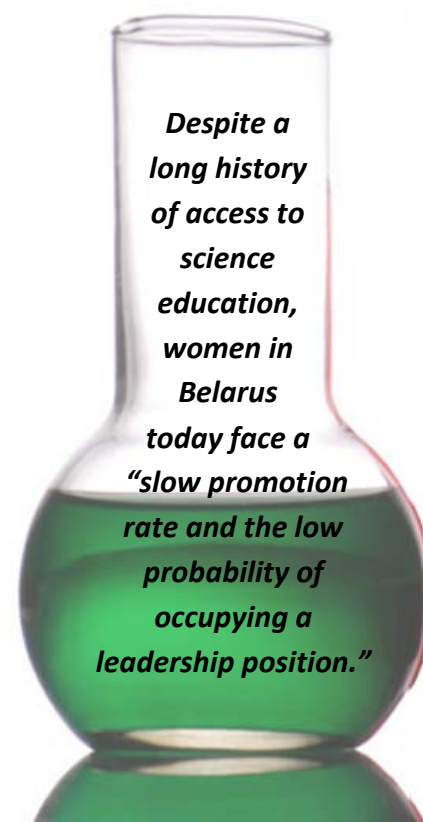
In Belarus the granting of physics degrees to women in the 1920s represented a sociologically important gender shift, which suffragettes in post-WWI Canada, the USA, or Britain would have had many debates about. As some writers have observed, physics tends to reflect “a de-animated, de-sanctified, and increasingly mechanized conception of nature.” Stereotypes of women as sensitive, emotional, intuitive, and flighty all contravene the expectation that women scientists can “tell the true story.”

The condescending line “Just the facts, ma’am” comes to mind when it comes to purely scientific empirical observation. Yet despite science’s traditional masculine bias, women graduated from universities in the Belarusian Socialist Republic and made important contributions in “such fields as laser physics, nonlinear dynamics of laser and optical systems . . . atomic and molecular spectroscopy, biophysics . . . crystal optics, thermo physics, nuclear physics, etc.”

The study of nuclear physics by women in Belarusian schools is particularly interesting in light of feminism’s historical focus on patriarchy’s desire for control and mastery over nature as a corollary of a deep masculine desire to “thrust into (female) nature’s secrets.” The fact that women were part of the most world-changing physics project of the 20th century, the harnessing of nuclear power for energy and warfare, is important.

It suggests what feminist theorists Lynda Birke and Marsha Henry speak of when they note the “social embeddedness of all knowledge; even ‘good’ science is still science deeply enmeshed in particular social values.” Feminism points out that access to higher education does not always equal full equality. Barriers may remain, especially when women’s genetic proclivities are believed to make them unable to adopt leadership roles. As noted in Birke and Henry, “genetics can come in handy for letting institutions off the hook.” Belarusian women often found their areas of research, including those related to the development of nuclear weaponry, directed by male superiors.

Women in science programs face challenges in the 21st century, especially in comparison to women in arts or “humanitarian” educational pursuits. In a survey of female physicists in Belarus, 82 per cent reported



***Despite a long history of access to science education, women in Belarus today face a “slow promotion rate and the low probability of occupying a leadership position.”***

being married and 76 per cent reported having children. Yet despite being in a highly educated professional field they now struggle to juggle childcare and careers.

This reality may be attributable to Mikhail Gorbachev's late-1980s program of perestroika. Perestroika was a response to the overly bureaucratic nature of the Soviet state apparatus. It involved a deregulation process accompanied by an allowance for greater private ownership of businesses and a reduction in government social and welfare services. In Belarus and other soon-to-be former Soviet states, "women are among the principal losers in the restructuring process, both through the rise in conservative cultures, and through the economic imperatives of competing in a market-based system."

Despite a long history of access to science education, women in Belarus today face a "slow promotion rate and the low probability of occupying a leadership position." They also tend to experience "psychological pressure" stemming from occupying a traditionally masculine role. Meanwhile, women in the arts report a higher degree of personal satisfaction.

The fact that traditional gender roles are so slow to change in educational institutions is not a result of their timelessness or implacability. Gender power arises in society from material, political, and cultural power. With a challenge to ideologies that promote inequality comes greater liberation for students who challenge expectations.

Just as in Belarus, where Marxists in power encouraged a change in gender roles, the "science girls" in my high school classes occupied a social status made possible by their parents' generation's feminist overthrow of traditional gender roles. These young scientists, now just as 80 years earlier in the far reaches of Eastern Europe, represent manifestations of what the feminist theorist Donna Haraway terms a "polymorphous information system." This leads to greater freedom for purposes of self-fulfillment.

It is worth remembering that it was not long ago that home-economics classes were mandatory for girls while shop classes were required for boys. The fact that our schools now promote individuals to choose electives according to preference and taste reflects a process by which we all become part of a freer, more just, society.

## DID YOU KNOW?



### Academic Earth

Sometimes, a different explanation is all it takes to make a difficult concept stick or bring a dry subject to life. If you're looking for a little academic inspiration—or just love learning—you may want to check out [Academic Earth](#).

The site offers free video lectures from leading universities, including Berkeley, Princeton, MIT, Yale, and Harvard, and its goal is to build "a user-friendly educational ecosystem that will give internet users around the world the ability to easily find, interact with, and learn from full video courses and lectures from the world's leading scholars."

You'll find lectures on everything from Architecture and Astronomy to Psychology and Religious Studies, with plenty of subjects in between, and you can even search for lectures by individual professors.



# Sister Aurora

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

#  
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You know, Lynn, the goddess Aurora abducted her lovers. I don't think Jodi's brother would be that hard to abduct.

Call Glenn! Or Mike!  
Their hockey practice got cancelled tonight.  
Somebody caught swine flu.

I can't get a signal in here.

Go all the way outside!

I'll try the foyer.

I'll try the foyer. . .





## Balance Guidance with Independence

*Dear Barb:*

*I am a single mother of a 12-year-old daughter. We have always been really close, until recently. Melissa has changed so much over the last few months. She is hanging around with a new crowd of girls that I don't approve of. She has always been rather modest in her dress but now she is dressing suggestively and attracting quite a bit of attention from boys.*

*I know she is growing up, but she's only 12. I don't feel comfortable allowing my 12-year-old to dress like a 16-year-old. Is it just me or are girls growing up a lot quicker these days?*

*Susan*

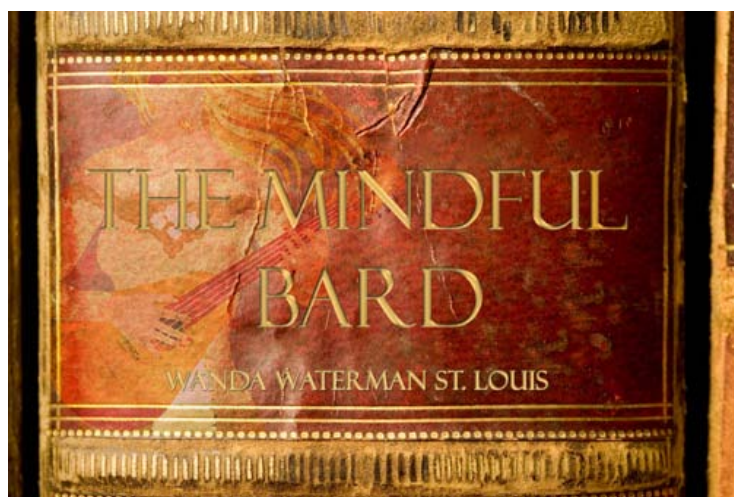
Hi, Susan. I believe you are right, girls and boys are growing up a lot quicker. In fact, according to an article in *The Wall Street Journal* the 12- to 14-year-olds of yesterday are the 10- to 12-year-olds of today. The differences are not only evident in the way 12-year-olds are dressing, but also in their attitudes and behaviour. They are taking on more of the risky behaviours associated with teenagers, including becoming sexually active at a much younger age.

This is likely due to their exposure to TV, movies, videos, and the Internet. Unfortunately there is not a lot we can do about this, as they are an ever-growing money-making industry.

As parents, I suppose the only thing we can do is try our best to educate our children and prepare them for what they may be encountering in the real world. For example, if a 12-year-old is going to dress as a 16-year-old, she needs to know what kind of attention she is going to attract. Sixteen to 18-year-old boys will be attracted to her and, as I'm sure you know, they have a much different mindset than 12- or 13-year-old boys.

You are in a difficult position. If you come on too strong and try to restrict her she will only rebel and move in the exact direction you don't want her to. I would suggest you try to find a happy medium. Give her a bit of freedom, but perhaps limit where she can go. You don't want her going to places where she will be confronted with older boys. I suspect she may be trying to express her independence even as she really does want guidelines and structure, though she may never admit it. Thanks again for the great question, Susan.

*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

Book: *New World Coming: The Sixties and the Shaping of Global Consciousness*

Publisher: Between the Lines

Publication date: 2009

Eds. Karen Dubinsky, Catherine Krull, Susan Lord, Sean Mills, and Scott Rutherford

The Other '60s

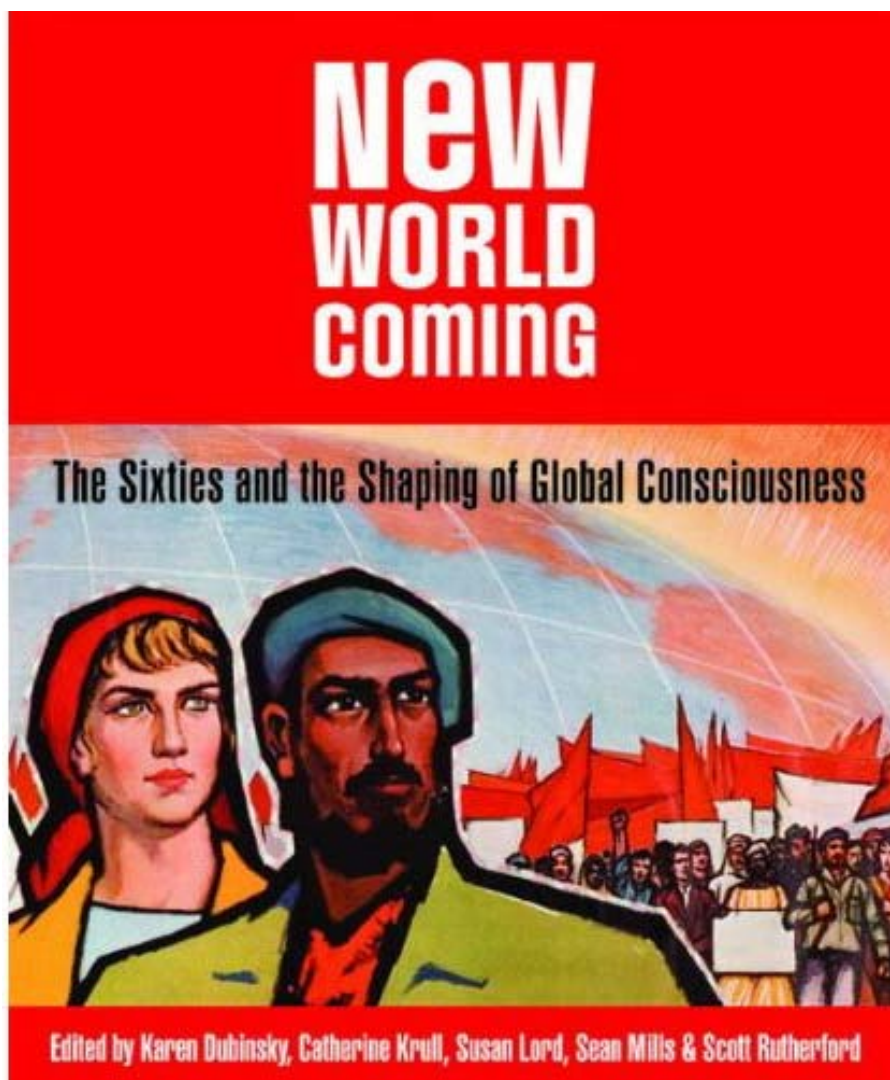
*"From Brazil to Vietnam, from the Dominican Republic to Algeria, from Mali to Indonesia, from Bolivia to Greece, US fleets, air force, and intelligence networks were undermining the achievements of the post-war period and arresting the tide of history. The 1960s were indeed America's decade."*

Leila Khaled, as quoted in *New World Coming*

Insofar as American social activism in the '60s failed to achieve world peace and justice, it failed for the same reasons that it failed to achieve justice at home.

A few of the problems, on both fronts: 1) ignorance of the truly pressing social issues both at home and abroad; 2) self-righteousness; 3) a false sense of heroism; 4) an acquiescence to an end-justifies-the-means mindset; 5) an attachment to a Western, patriarchal model of resistance and activism; and 6) the success with which states guarded their misdemeanours until it was too late to reverse them.

But it took an awful lot of hubris to assume that world peace was dependent on one nation, region, or people. And just as Western youth were demonstrating against Vietnam, racism, and male chauvinism, they were blissfully



unaware of how their government was undermining self-determination and liberation the world over, and of how they were to some extent seen as complicit.

This global '60s brings out some remarkable phenomena. Awakening to new ways of thinking about justice and activism, or simply thinking about these things for the first time, was neither restricted to the West nor was it necessarily inspired by the struggles and enlightenments of Western youth.

The global stage hosted a set of developments, many of which can be grouped under anti-colonial liberation struggles or movements of transnational, non-proletarian self-determination. These often included or were part of movements to halt environmental destruction or to create social justice for marginalized groups. The historical trajectories demanded changes in the way those involved thought about their place in a world that dictated a tiered (first, second, third world) paradigm based on how "developed" a nation was perceived to be by industrialized military states.

After reviews of a series of books about the '60s in America, *New World Coming* is a humbling read; the cultural revolution in the United States pales by comparison with simultaneous world events and ideological shifts.

This book is based on a series of lectures given at an international conference at Queen's University in 2007. The conference had the same name, and its purpose was to shift the focus away from the major—and very centralized—events that have almost exclusively dominated '60s studies from the beginning.

One consensus is clearly that the cultural and historical crescendo and decrescendo of the '60s (which, let's be clear, can't be limited to the events of one decade) was a dramatic transition period, but the question being debated is often this: *What were the '60s a transition from, and to what did they transition?*

This book represents a major leap forward and is an indispensable foundation for a social activist's education. Extremely useful to mindful bards and culture makers is the section "Cultural Citizenship," a series of essays on the relationship between art and social activism, showing many examples of mutually inspiring and highly constructive symbioses of creativity and social action.

*New World Coming* manifests six of The Mindful Bard's criteria for books well worth reading: 1) it confronts existing injustices; 2) it renews my enthusiasm for positive social action; 3) it gives me tools enabling me to respond with compassion and efficacy to the suffering around me; 4) it displays an engagement with and compassionate response to suffering; 5) it stimulates my mind; 6) it poses and admirably responds to questions which have a direct bearing on my view of existence.

*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.*







## I Wish

December is traditionally a time for making wishes. So even though I haven't believed in Santa for a few years now I'm going out on a limb here and sharing my hopes with you. If there is any justice in this world some wish-granting entity will hear my plea. Read on to see if you share my desires . . .

I wish Tiger Woods would have manned up about what really happened when he smashed his dream machine into a tree and spared the world (me) the ensuing days (and days) of speculation, gossip, flights of fancy, accusations, innuendo, and the dire predictions about his "soiled" reputation that resulted.

I wish Rider Nation, the 2009 Grey Cup underdogs, would have won the damn thing, even though I don't understand (or care to understand) football. I care so little I can't be bothered researching the watermelon hat thing, but they are our neighbours so condolences or whatever you say when a "nation's" dreams are crushed.

I wish the Tareq and Michael Salahi "news" would drop off the radar. Sure, check the reason for the security breach but please, oh please don't let this go on as long as balloon boy's family farce. Or are they simply this week's faux celebrities? Glad to hear there were no takers, so far, for an exclusive interview for megabucks. Even Larry King backed away from this. Seems they have now received an invitation—to testify. The media circus continues.

I wish the guys who conceived those ignorant cat food commercials with Hubert and others would turn in their PR firm ID and find real work. The taco one with the dog licking his privates seems to have disappeared so maybe there's hope. Give me the two A&W guys any day. They've got it right.

I wish that if Edmonton wins the bid for the 2017 World's Fair we won't have to endure eight years of bitching and moaning by naysayers and small thinkers who can't see beyond potholes and LRT expansion. It's time Edmonton played in the big leagues and adopted a more cosmopolitan attitude and belief system. Build it and they will come. And remember and spend and return and talk about it. There is no shortage of critics who will count the cost in dollars and loss of focus on "real issues;" just don't count me among them. And yes, my tax dollars are at stake here too.

I wish Michael Ignatieff would take "a long walk in the snow" like Trudeau did in 1984 before concluding it was time to leave politics. I would miss Ignatieff's flip-flops, missteps, reversals, and arrogant face beneath the trademark bushy eyebrows, though they've seemed tamed and less wild in recent photos.

That, dear friends, is my current wish list. It includes self-important ridiculous people caught up in their own celebrity; small teams and towns vying for what the big boys have; tasteless advertising; and a miscast politician. We need a miracle, from where I sit.



## AUSU UPDATE



### New 2010 AUSU Handbook/Planners

The new AUSU Handbook/Planners are in the final stages of creation, and should be available within the next couple of months. We had great response on it being full colour, so we'll be doing that once more. Also, numerous suggestions for improvements have been heard and we're fitting in what we can while still keeping the book at a convenient, compact size.

Watch the AUSU front page for the pre-order form, which should be up in early December!

### SmartDraw Program Renewal

Some of you who took advantage of our program to provide SmartDraw software to members have been getting notifications that your software license will soon be expiring. Fortunately, AUSU will be continuing this program, so if you haven't already, go to the AUSU home page to download the newest version.

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.

### Think AUSU for Christmas

If you haven't already, take a look at our [merchandise catalogue](#) on the front page. Show your AUSU colors on your tree with one of our glass ornaments, and the hoodies and baby jumpers are great gifts for those important people who are supporting your pursuit of your degree.

We also have a selection of other items, such as *Voice* mugs and USB hubs, when you want to show where you get your student-focused news from.

### Lock Loan Program Cancellation

Not everything is good news. And unfortunately, due to continued loss of loaner locks that was well beyond our expectations, AUSU has determined that it simply cannot continue to loan locks out to students at the Edmonton and Calgary Exam Centres. However, the locks are still available for purchase, and their popularity attests to their use and convenience. Used locks are being sold for \$2, new ones for \$4. Contact [ausu@ausu.org](mailto:ausu@ausu.org) for details.

The locks themselves are small and allow you to set your own three-digit combination, good not only for lockers at exam centres but also for the gym or anywhere that lets you use your own lock to guard your stuff.

## AUSU Council Down to Eight

AUSU will be starting the New Year with only eight council members. Heather Fraser was removed from Council as a result of repeated absence from Council meetings. It is always a hard decision for Council when we have to remove someone the members have elected, but without full participation it gets more difficult for Council to move forward. Council does hope, however, that this gives her more time for her many other endeavours, and wishes her the best.

## Election Policy Changes

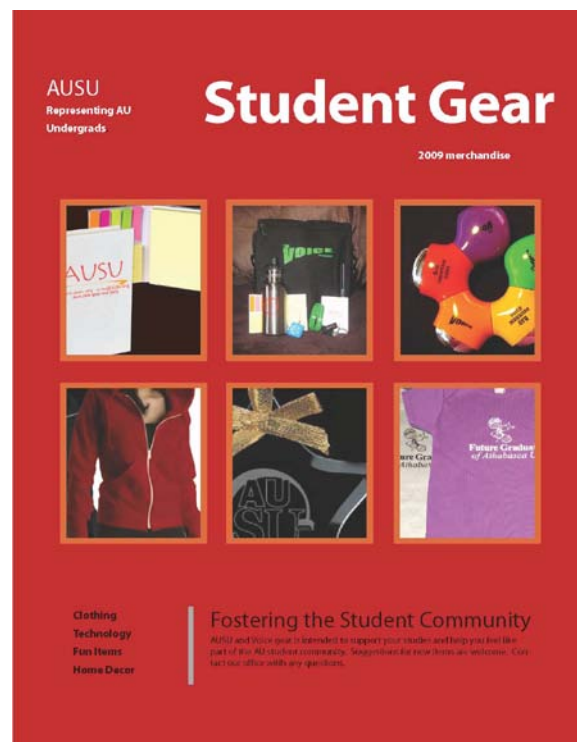
AUSU has made some adjustments to the timeline of the elections. Last year we had a number of complaints that the election period was just too long. People lost interest between when it started and when the voting period rolled around. The new policy shortens the timelines for nomination and campaigning considerably, although we have left intact the four-day voting period to be sure that all members have an opportunity to make their voices heard. Full details on the changes will be released on the AUSU website shortly, and Council has set the date of this upcoming election to March 7, 2010. Voting will be until March 11, 2010, with more details as to how you can participate to be available shortly on the AUSU website.

## AUSU Scheduling Meeting with Tutors' Union

By far the most common complaint we hear from members is that some tutors take far too long to respond and that there is too little communication between certain tutors and students. With more studies emerging that show the likelihood of students completing a distance-based course can be directly related to the amount of contact they have with their instructor, AUSU views these complaints as particularly grievous. To attempt to address this, AUSU is seeking a meeting with the tutors' union to try to discuss some ways that the Students' Union and Tutors' Union can work together to ensure that both tutors and students get the support they need to make sure students get the contact they need to get them through their courses.

## AUSU Thanks Minister Horner—With Odd Results

AUSU took the opportunity earlier last month to write a letter to Alberta Advanced Education Minister Doug Horner to thank him for holding firm to the regulated limits on undergraduate tuition, even though the government is under increasing budgetary pressure. Unfortunately, shortly after the letter was sent, Minister Horner announced that they were considering changing the regulation to allow significant increases to tuition beyond the regulated amounts.



## INTERNATIONAL NEWS DESK



### At Home: Taxes may put the brakes on Dutch bikes at Olympics

The Dutch government hopes to promote a healthier lifestyle by bringing hundreds of bikes to the 2010 Winter Olympic Games. But high import taxes might just derail the plan, as the [CBC](#) reports.

Amsterdam, the Dutch capital, is “widely recognized as the most bicycle-friendly city in the world,” a lifestyle that contributes to healthier citizens, a cleaner environment, and fewer “traffic and sustainability issues.”

During the 2010 Winter Olympics, the Dutch government plans to make some 450 bikes available at Holland Heineken House, the Dutch hospitality centre at the Olympics. Athletes’ families and the public could use the bikes to travel to the nearby speed-skating oval, and staff could use them to cycle between work and hotels.

The bikes would be put to good use after the Olympics as well, when they would be donated to a local charity.

But high Canadian import duties could put the brakes on the goodwill gesture. Dutch officials have “balked” at the high fees, and have been told that the only way to avoid the cost is to send the bikes back to the Netherlands after the Olympics. Both sides are continuing talks on the issue.

It’s expected that Dutch fans numbering in the tens of thousands could travel to the Games to support their star long-track speed skaters.

### In Foreign News: Harvard Law School tuition program suspended

Three years at a top US law school can cost students over \$120,000 and leave them with a six-figure debt at graduation. So it’s no wonder that a program offering third-year Harvard Law students free tuition was popular, with nearly twice as many applicants as expected. As the [New York Times](#) reports, that popularity is part of the reason the program had to be cancelled.

The program, announced less than two years ago, waived tuition for “third-year students who pledge to spend five years working for nonprofit organizations or for the government.” A Harvard Law School spokesperson explained to reporters that it was one way of encouraging students “to explore public interest careers.”

Yet with the recession driving Harvard’s endowment down 27 per cent between 2008 and 2009, even the prestigious university was forced to cut costs. At the same time, the recession made the tuition program even more popular. Before the program began, only about “10 percent of Harvard’s 550 annual law graduates went into nonprofit or government work.” With some 55 students expected to sign up, costs were estimated at \$3 million per year.

However, the first enrolment numbers reached 73, and “when it came time to sign up last year, 110 first-year students said they were interested.”

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

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