

THE VOICE MAGAZINE

Volume 18 Issue 26
July 2, 2010

So Long, Farewell

Ready to leap

Organized Chaos

Angels & Demons

Home Routes

Music on the way

Plus:

*From Where I Sit, Sister Aurora,
Click of the Wrist, and much more ...*



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The Voice is published
every Friday in HTML
and PDF format

To subscribe for weekly
email reminders as
each issue is posted,
see the 'subscribe' link
on *The Voice* front
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Special thanks to
Athabasca University's
The Insider for its
frequent contributions

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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

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



HELLO, GOODBYE

Tamra Ross



This week, AU is holding its first—and possibly only—summer recess. While the break is just one week long, it is something we are not used to: a tangible shift between school years that brings a sense of renewal as we look forward to the influx of fall students. (We'll overlook, for the moment, the financial pressures that have caused Alberta universities to initiate the staff furloughs this year.)

While AU is not on a semester system, we do notice a significant slowdown in student inquiries over the summer, and a surge of enrolments for the first of September start date.

The timing seems fitting, then, for an announcement of change here at *The Voice Magazine*, the only student-run publication for Athabasca University students.

With some sadness, I must announce that this will be the last issue edited by Sandra Livingston, who took on the Managing Editor role three years ago. I admit to only *some* sadness because as much as I will miss working with Sandra (as will many of our writers, who have spoken so highly of her), I am thrilled at the reason she is leaving: a burgeoning writing career that demands more time and focus. We should all be so fortunate to have the greatest demand on our time be something that we love and for which we have striven. Of course I also feel a certain level of pride, having selected Sandra for the job because I felt she had real talent as an editor and potential as an author. I'm also delighted any time that one of our staff or writers finds success in the writing field, as I believe that fostering student journalism and creative writing is a key goal of a student-funded publication.

The parting is less bitter, too, when we can be assured that there are capable hands ready to keep the momentum. And we do have momentum: *The Voice* is often praised for the quality and variety of its submissions and its unique, thoughtful approach to student publishing. Our new editor, AU alum Christina Frey, is as familiar with our publication as she is to our readers; she's published more than 80 articles in *The Voice* (many of which are profiles of our student readers). Christina knows our readers, and our university, and I look forward to working with her to continue to take *The Voice* in new directions. Her task will certainly be made easier by the dedicated and imaginative group of regular writers she will inherit, a group soon to be enriched by Ms. Livingston herself (she's not getting away that easily!).

Welcome, Christina, and farewell, Sandra.

I'll leave you now with a quote from my adored Kurt Vonnegut, because it so neatly sums up what I think any publication should strive for:

"New knowledge is the most valuable commodity on earth. The more truth we have to work with, the richer we become."

Kurt Vonnegut, *Breakfast of Champions*

SO LONG, FAREWELL

Sandra Livingston



I've never jumped off a cliff, but as I write this I'm pretty sure I know what that sensation would be like. The cautious approach to the edge, sizing up the situation. The prevarication involved in weighing the pros and cons (and deciding just how crazy one has to be to jump). Then the mix of excitement and self-doubt once the decision's been taken and there's no turning back.

The cliff I'm talking about is a metaphorical one, but it's no less daunting: this week's issue marks the end of my time as Managing Editor at *The Voice*, and the leap into a full-time writing career.

For all the thrilling possibilities that holds, the decision is bittersweet. During my three years as Managing Editor, I've learned so much more than I ever imagined about writing. It's a direct result of editing: learning to immediately recognize good writing, spotting clunky phrases a mile away, and honing the instinct to know *why* a piece of prose has that magical quality even though it breaks every rule in the book.

For a writer, spending serious time on the other side of the editing desk can offer insights worth their weight in gold, and I leave carrying a bag bursting with doubloons.

I've also been fortunate enough to have an Editor-in-Chief who knows just how to strike a balance between structure and freedom. Tamra has an uncanny talent for calling up answers to arcane questions about copyright or Photoshop without blinking, and a store of editing knowledge that goes on for days. Yet there has always been the support and freedom to experiment, to suggest, and to make my own mistakes (yes, I still cringe at the thought of that horrid orange title graphic that seemed like such a good idea at the time.)

There have been unexpected delights as well. While I counted on developing a rapport with *Voice* writers, I didn't expect to forge friendships that feel as though they run much deeper than email should allow. I hope there are at least a couple of writers who are smiling as they read this, and who know that our friendship and mutual fascination with words doesn't end here.

There have also been writers who, although they submit only occasionally, are always so charming and professional that just seeing their name in the inbox never fails to bring a smile to my face. I'll miss them.

And what of the *Voice* readers, the ones we do it all for? They have been the invisible presence guiding each decision, big or small. Will they be inspired or angered by a certain article? Have we shown them both sides of an issue in an editorial? Have I done the best I can for them each week? I'll miss them, too—for their comments, their suggestions, and their loyal readership that makes the magazine possible.

Not that every moment has been fabulous, mind you. There have been memorable nights spent staring endlessly at the graphic library because the perfect cover image simply didn't exist. At least, not until I stumbled across it at two in the morning, bleary-eyed and muttering savagely about finding a nice, dull job tagging sharks off Australia.

Though there may have been a few uncertain moments along the way, one thing is for sure: *Voice* readers and writers are in very capable hands with Christina M. Frey, the new Managing Editor. I could try to describe her warmth, enthusiasm, and skill to you, but here's a better idea: search the *Voice* site and read some of her many articles and AU student profiles. With talent to spare, she's sure to take the magazine in exciting new directions!

So, back to the edge of that cliff. Will I plummet to the bottom? Or catch an updraft and soar? Only time will tell. But now I must bid you so long and farewell, because the time has come to leap.

CLICK OF THE WRIST – World Cup

Soccer, football, or any name you call it: World Cup mania is reaching all corners of the globe. With the quarter- and semi-finals beginning shortly, it's hard not to get caught up in the excitement. This week's links take us from the history of soccer to the present day, and give us a glimpse of the future of the game.

Name of the Game

Ever wondered why North Americans call it soccer, but most of the rest of the world refers to it as football? And where do American football (think Super Bowl) and rugby fit in? This article explains the origins of the names and games.

Offside

If the rules governing offside violations have you confused, the FIFA staff has created an interactive guide that fully explains how Offside Law 11 works. Using animation, it simplifies the controversial and complex rule. Now, you'll finally understand why that one player received an offence and the other did not!

All About Location

If you're more interested in cultural studies than in the mechanics of soccer, the BBC's interactive guide to the 2010 World Cup venues is sure to fascinate. Readers can learn the history behind the South African stadiums where their favourite teams have been playing this summer.

Super Ball

Whoever told you science and sports couldn't mix hadn't heard about Taiwan-based company Greendix's solar-powered "smart" soccer ball. The ball's solar panels power motion sensors and audio signal emitters. It's technologically mind-blowing, but the future possibilities are even better: the ball's audio features could open up the game to the visually impaired.



IN CONVERSATION WITH . . .

Wanda Waterman St. Louis



Home Routes, Part II

Home Routes is an exciting, new non-profit initiative creating music events that benefit musicians, consumers, communities, and the earth.

Recently, Home Routes volunteer coordinator Ali Hancharyk took the time to answer some questions from Wanda Waterman St. Louis.

The Musicians

The response from musicians has been tremendous. One of our most successful tours was with Valdy last season on our Manitoba Yellow Diamond Circuit. The audience response was a sold-out tour; calls flooded our office for the chance to nab a ticket, some even willing to travel to neighbouring communities just for the chance to see the acclaimed performer. Many artists have had so much fun, they've asked to do a Home Routes tour again.

Artists' submissions are juried; we ask that they submit an acoustic recording of what they would sound like in a house concert setting, as well as a one-sheet biography. Submissions are juried every few months with no hard deadlines. The lineup for next season will be ready late June.

The artists we work with are wide-ranging in genre: you could be hosting a seasoned bluesman one month and an authentic Celtic musician the next. The only thing that stays the same is the quality of the performances; these are acclaimed musicians that make a living through their art practice, sharing their stories across the country.

The Hosts

The biggest benefit of being a volunteer host is that you can meet new people, make friends in your community, and have the opportunity to experience quality acoustic music. You get to hang out with artists, perhaps even get serenaded at breakfast time, and introduce new music to your community. This is especially valuable in places that do not get the chance to go to many concerts because of their remote locations. Hosts give communities this accessibility to artists, and are happy to be the cultural leaders of their city or town.

The Ideal Home Routes Venue

The ideal host would be one that loves folk music, who loves to entertain for friends and family, and who owns a home (or other non-traditional space) that can hold around 25 people or more. Volunteer hosts, or "presenters," hold intimate acoustic concerts in the comfort of their own living rooms. Home Routes books the acts, and presenters promote the show to friends, family, and community members. This is the chance to be a cultural impresario in your living room!

Calendar

Each season features six shows: three in the fall and three in the winter and spring. The season can be taken on fully by one host or split between friends who'll support each other's concerts during the year.

Home Routes will make sure each host receives CDs from each artist and a performer program book complete with bios and pictures at least six weeks before the first show. Home Routes will also provide a "How-to" guide for presenting house concerts. Home Routes is committed to providing support to the hosts and musicians throughout the season, 24/7, while shows are on!

Getting the Word Out

The thing that differentiates a house concert from a larger scale concert is that they're publicized by word of mouth. Presenters invite their family and friends into their homes; as such, these concerts are not open to the public. The word of mouth is the most effective form of promotion and is essential to help create private listening room performances. One is more apt to attend a concert once they've received a personal invite to someone's home, rather than just seeing a poster on a lamppost!



ATHABASCA UNIVERSITY CLOSED JUNE 28 - JULY 4



AU has announced that the university will be closed during the week of June 28, although some key services will be available. According to the AU website, the closure is necessary to help balance the budget and is scheduled "during a reduced period of activity," which should allow for the least impact on students.

The Information Centre will operate on reduced staffing levels during the closure. If you have an urgent inquiry, you can leave a voicemail at 1.800.788.9041 (Canada and the US) or 780.675.6100 (Alberta).

If you've got an exam scheduled, don't worry. AU's announcement notes that "all scheduled examinations will be conducted during the closure."

For more info, visit the [Exam section](#) of the online calendar.

The Faculty of Business Student Support centre will be operating as usual and can be reached toll-free at 1.800.469.6531 (Canada/US), 780.675.6338, or by emailing business-support@athabascau.ca. Tutor services aren't affected by the closure and you should be able to reach your tutor during regular hours.

AU will resume normal operations on Monday, July 5 at 8:30 a.m. (MDT).



Intriguing New Developments in Alternative Music

Cybiont, *Angels & Demons*

2010

Musical *Bricolage* as Metaphor

"You see things; and you say, 'Why?' But I dream things that never were; and I say, 'Why not?'"

George Bernard Shaw

"Don't ask what the world needs. Ask what makes you come alive, and go do it. Because what the world needs is people who have come alive."

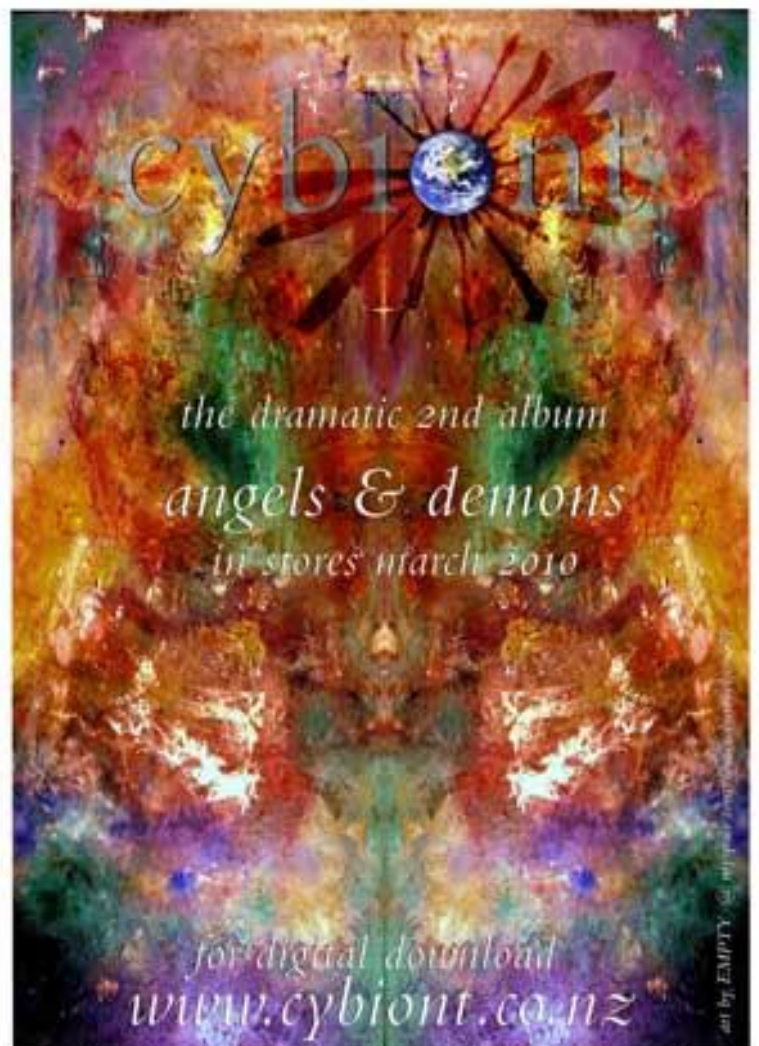
Howard Thurman

After several wasted hours, I realized that the movie I had chosen to recommend this week, a movie that had shown so much promise in its first hour, was turning out to be such a putrid gym bag that I couldn't possibly recommend it to my readers. And I had nothing else on my desk. And the deadline loomed.

Today, what should arrive in the mail but one of the most significant albums I've heard this year. Yes, God takes care of fools and children!

Cybiont is this guy in New Zealand who does some pretty engaging stuff with music. In the noble tradition of Devo, he has based his oeuvres on an evolution-related theory, and in his case the theory is not quite as cockamamie as that on which Devo was founded. *Angels & Demons* is his second album.

At first listen, the musical nods and allusions seem like a pile of musical rubble left over from the condemned edifices of Tom Waits, David Pritchard, Steve Reich, Kurt Weill, The Velvet Underground, and Kraftwerk, among others. Call it post-dance-ambient-industrial-electronic-experimental-rock-noir if you will, it's simply a *really* good listening experience, full of substance and originality.



As T. S. Eliot proved, a *bricolage* is not always an assortment of borrowed elements haphazardly piled on top of each other, but can be a means of making sense of chaos, of drawing chaos into the realm of the imagination in order to plumb its meaning. Collecting aesthetic tidbits from multiple sources, a kind of cultural pack-ratting, can, in the right hands, become something as fascinating and enriching as *Angels & Demons*.

Cybiont sings in a deeply expressive and resonant voice, and his accent (the question of whether or not this is an artistic flaw just adds to the fun) gives it that surreal Weimar touch.

The name “Cybiont” emerged from the teachings of French thinker Joël de Rosnay, who hypothesized that the next (or imminent) step in evolution is the formation of a massive brain in which humans function as neurons and in which, to paraphrase, technology and nature serve as glial cells. And yes, trying to get your head around this can aid your appreciation of many of the lyrics here.

A stunning example is the song “Pig,” a grinding blues anthem suggesting the place of the individual in the universe: “*I am a pig, singing to the moon (4x) / Are you a pig, singing to the moon?*” There is rhythmic panting in this song that will (sorry) totally blow you away.

And that’s just the beginning.

DID YOU KNOW?



Changes to myAU Student Portal Login

If you’re an AU student who regularly uses the myAU portal, you’ll notice a small change to the login page soon.

AU has announced that, beginning July 7, “the existing top field entitled ‘User ID:’ will now be changed to ‘AU Student / User ID:’”

The updated wording is meant to improve usability and will not change the field’s function. As well, the adjacent password field remains unchanged. You can keep using your AU Student ID number in the renamed field as usual to access the myAU student portal.

If you’ve got any questions about the change, contact Mark Dunsire by email at markd@athabascau.ca or by phone at 780.675.6303.

Sister Aurora

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

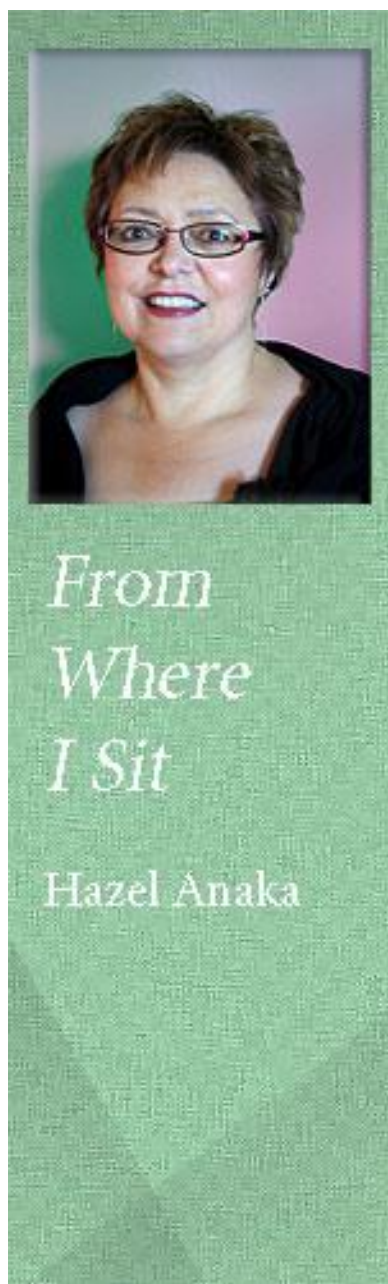
#47 Lynn, we **HAVE** to burn our shoes.

The cops might take our footprints and trace them back to us.

By the way, Bert, they're going to subpoena the phone records. They'll know that you and Shane called each other tonight.

That doesn't matter because they won't know what you said.

When they ask, be sure to be accurate about the times of the phone calls, 'cause that makes you look honest.



Best-Laid Plans

A few days ago, I returned from a week-long getaway at Canmore, Alberta's Falcon Crest. The plans had been made 10 months ago. It was to have been after seeding of the crops was complete so Roy could attend, too. What we didn't factor in was the spraying. With crops (and weeds!) growing like crazy this year, the little buggers had to be zapped at exactly the right moment. All of which meant Roy would join me later.

I made a quick stop in Red Deer for a stretch. When I finally arrived, it was pouring rain; I was grateful for the underground parking as I began the job of unloading the car. Because this was a studio unit, I had a kitchen and intended to do my own cooking with the dry goods and perishables I'd packed. Add to that a biggish suitcase with clothes and toiletries and a smallish one with books, movies, and writing projects, and I had a lot of stuff to move in and unpack.

The rain continued for the next two days. The balcony allowed me to enjoy the cool mountain air, and the gas fireplace made things toasty when I felt chilled.

I intended to find the right balance of working and kicking back. I got off to a great start with the working part, and was thrilled that I could get onto the hotel's wireless. I was creating documents, working on a business plan, just chugging along. Reading or watching a movie was the reward for my diligence. It irked me that I couldn't sleep in past seven each morning, but hey, it was what it was. I had high hopes for what I could accomplish on what was turning out to be a mostly solo retreat.

My first experience with Vietnamese food (loved it!), hours spent in a book store, and a stop in a rock and gem shop in Banff were fun diversions. But I really planned to use the distance and focus to get some nagging projects completed.

It was not to be. On day two or three, my laptop was hit by a virus. First, I was confused, then suspicious, then angry, then worried. Confused, because I had up-to-date virus protection and didn't take unnecessary risks. Suspicious, because the wording of the dire warnings seemed a bit off and they kept diverting me to a website that could solve all my problems for only sixty bucks. Angry, because criminals were intent on hurting people and separating me from my money. Worried, because I hoped there was no lasting damage to my computer and its contents. I tried to remember when I'd last backed up my system. I had to acknowledge that everything I do, for fun or profit, is tied to that small, rectangular box of technology.

Because I wanted to have the repairs done closer to home, my well-laid plans were now scuttled as I faced life without email, internet, or Word. It seemed there was a divine plan at work, and I came to accept the not-so-subtle message. Eighty bucks later, I'm back in business. Plans, it seems, are subject to change from where I sit.

AUSU UPDATE



Convocation 2010

AUSU wishes to congratulate this year's graduates, whether attending Convocation in person or by distance. We wish you the best of luck in your future pursuits. You are an inspiration to all AU students!

AUSU Executive Election

AUSU has recently held its internal election for the Executive. We wish to congratulate Barbara Rielly (President), Bethany Tynes (Vice President External and Student Affairs) and Sarah Kertcher (Vice President Finance and Administration) on their election and thank those that ran for their willingness to serve.

Internal elections are being held to determine committee membership and we expect that all will be in place shortly. Our new Council is taking its bearings and has already begun to set the direction for this term.

Student Issues

AUSU recently completed a compilation of reported student issues covering a two year period; all issues were recorded in such a way as to ensure that student information remains protected and private. This effort confirmed what we long suspected; that tutor problems were the single biggest issue faced by our students (56 of 120 complaints).

Outdated course materials and errors in texts continue to be reported as well as were exam issues, slowness of the transfer process, and the scantiness of information in School of Business FAQs. Over that two year period there was a decrease in the number of complaints about student financing, exam request problems, difficulty registering in more than six courses, and materials shortages for courses. Kudos to AU for improving in those areas. Now if we could only get the Tutors' Union to the table . . .

New 2010 AUSU Handbook/Planners – Arrived!

Finally! People have already started receiving the new planners in the mail, and we're currently shipping them out as fast as the orders come in. Full of useful information about AUSU, writing styles, course grading, great finds online for your studies that you may not have known about, as well as having places to write down your phone numbers, keep track of your assignments, and, oh yeah, a year's worth of calendar to plan out your schedule too. We'll give one free to each AUSU member just for the asking.

Remember, though, we only print a limited number of these each year, so when they're gone, they're gone.

Let 'em Know who Represents for You!

AUSU logo mugs, hoodies, USB keys, and much more are all available for sale from our office. Also, used locks can be purchased at half price! Check out our merchandise catalog on our front page. You should

check out our hoodies in particular—made in Canada and 100% bamboo, we're offering them for just barely over our cost, and they're both durable and comfortable.

And if you have new little ones in your family, or know somebody who does, check out our baby onesies. Made by American Apparel, these onesies are high quality and let folks know your kids are growing up to great things as a "Future Graduate of Athabasca U"

AUSU Scheduling Meeting with Tutors' Union – Not really an Update

Some things resist change. We're still waiting for a response from the Tutor's Union as to when we might be able to meet with them to discuss ways that AUSU and the Tutor's Union can work together to ensure that students are getting the contact they need. Unfortunately, they haven't yet replied, so we're stepping up our campaign to get in touch with them. If you want to help, the next time you're talking to your tutor, ask them if they know when the Tutor's Union will meet with AUSU so that the groups can work together on common issues.

Our statistics we've been collecting from the forums and your calls show that issues with tutors - specifically the amount of time taken for marking assignments and exams are your number one concern. Help us help you.

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.



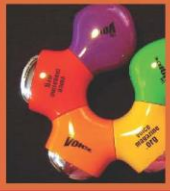



For any course that requires charts that cannot be easily created in Word or Excel, this should be a real time saver and make it easier to submit all portions of an assignment by email.

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.

AUSU
Representing AU
Undergrads

Student Gear

2009 merchandise

Clothing
Technology
Fun Items
Home Decor

Fostering the Student Community

AUSU and Voice gear is intended to support your studies and help you feel like part of the AU student community. Suggestions for new items are welcome. Contact our office with any questions.

INTERNATIONAL NEWS DESK



At Home: Shoplifters get hit in the wallet

When shoplifters steal goods, they might get away scot-free but somebody always pays. Now, some retailers are putting the high cost of shoplifting right back where it belongs: on the thieves.

As the [CBC](#) reports, one young shoplifter recently found out the hard way that stores are passing those costs along. Eleni Prontzos, 17, was nabbed for “stealing \$20 worth of makeup from PriceSmart Foods in Vancouver.”

Although the store did not call police, they did get the teen’s name and contact info. As Prontzos told reporters, staff told her “We’re just going to get your information and you can go.” What she didn’t know is that PriceSmart, part of the Overwaitea food chain, wasn’t about to let her off the hook too easily. A few weeks later, Overwaitea sent her parents a letter demanding to be compensated for the “investigative expenses” they’d incurred to handle the incident.

Overwaitea wants \$300 to settle the bill and has informed the family that, besides the option of recouping the costs in small claims court, the company could still pursue criminal charges in the matter. The teen’s father, Peter Prontzos, refuses to pay, calling the store’s actions a “moneymaking operation” and telling *CBC’s Marketplace* that the demand for compensation is “terrorizing parents.”

Overwaitea isn’t the only company trying to recover some of the millions lost to shoplifting each year. *Marketplace* has discovered that Shoppers Drug Mart, Loblaws, the Bay, and Zellers are among the stores taking a similar approach. For her part, Eleni Prontzos told reporters she’s learned her lesson. Unfortunately, when it comes to the costs of shoplifting, it’s honest consumers who end up paying the price.

In Foreign News: Today’s college students get failing grade in empathy

Every generation tends to moan about the falling standards of society’s youth, but a new study shows that, when it comes to treating people with empathy, today’s college students really do get a failing grade. As *The New York Times* reports, Sara Konrath, a researcher at the University of Michigan, “found that college students today are 40 percent less empathetic than those of 30 years ago,” with the greatest fall in numbers coming mainly after the year 2000.

The findings are based on a major new study, and were reported in May at a meeting of the Association for Psychological Science in Boston. Empathy can be a difficult trait for researchers to define, and Dr. Konrath “measured four aspects of ‘interpersonal sensitivity,’” including sympathy and the ability of subjects to imagine themselves in someone else’s shoes.

In other studies, Americans report sensing an overall decline in “other people’s kindness and helpfulness,” and reports from 20 years ago also documented the “increasing narcissism” of college students. For those who aren’t worried about how polite their fellow students may be, the implications run deeper than that: low empathy is linked to violence, sexual offences, and other antisocial behaviour.

CLASSIFIEDS

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

THE VOICE

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www.voicemagazine.org

The Voice is published every Friday in html and pdf format

Contact *The Voice* at voice@voicemagazine.org

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