

THE VOICE MAGAZINE

Volume 18 Issue 27
July 9, 2010

It's the Climb

The journey continues

Power of Suggestion

Musical conversation

Inside Job

Probiotics

Plus:

*From Where I Sit, The Mindful Bard,
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, and please
indicate if we may publish your letter.



CLIMB EV'RY MOUNTAIN

Christina M. Frey



On family vacations, I'd always far preferred the beach to the mountains. However, time chips away at even one's most deeply-held prejudices. My years in Alaska began quietly entrenching in the corner of my mind the utter beauty of the rugged terrain.

It wasn't merely the stunning vistas that changed me, although they did their part. It was what those mountain ranges, stretching far off into the horizon, represented: the unknown, the untouched, the uninhabited, the waiting to be explored.

My husband and I are more city types, yet during those few years, hiking in the mountains was one of our favourite leisure activities. It wasn't all about reaching the top, either. In fact, we found it impossible to forge ahead without constantly turning to admire the changing scenery. The gradual shrinking of our town as we climbed

higher, the tiny flowers under our feet, and the patch of snow still left unmelted in August all contributed to the charm of the hike.

At the top, we'd pause, admiring how far we'd come. And that's where the fun began.

The hardest part of mountain hiking was never the climbing (although my husband, carrying our daughter, might disagree); it was the stopping. The going back. The turning around and never knowing what lay ahead.

It's true. When we reached the summit, after looking down, we looked out at the long ridges of snow-capped mountain ranges. We couldn't leave without investigating that funny-shaped crest, that hill over there. We needed to see just what lay beyond that valley; it wasn't too far, just another half-hour hike. Once we'd reached that elusive point, though, we saw still more mountains, still more alluring peaks beckoning enticingly to our adventurous side. There was always something more to see.

This week, although far from the Alaskan mountains, I'm setting out on a similar expedition. As the new Managing Editor at *The Voice Magazine*, I'm looking both back and ahead with enthusiasm and trepidation.

Former editor Sandra Livingston—who's off on a new adventure of her own—took *The Voice* to new heights. Looking back over the magazine's history, it's easy to be awestruck at how far it's come over the years. I feel fortunate to have been a part of *The Voice's* writing team for several years; becoming more directly involved in the future and direction of *The Voice Magazine* is equally exciting. Yet no matter how high a summit I've scaled, there's always another snow-capped peak on the horizon, just begging to be explored. And that's how I feel about *The Voice*.

I'm looking forward to clambering the hills and valleys of *Voice* editorship. Working closely with its incredible group of writers, whose dedication and talent have helped make the magazine what it is, will be both enlightening and rewarding. I'm also excited at the possibility of discovering new talent hidden among *Voice* readers. But most of all, I can't wait to see what lies ahead on those snow-capped peaks stretching far into the distance.

It's a climbing expedition that I'm eager to tackle.

Who's with me?

CLICK OF THE WRIST – Total Eclipse

With all of the publicity surrounding the release of *Eclipse*, the third film in the popular *Twilight* series, it's easy to overlook the real solar eclipse occurring on July 11, 2010, in the South Pacific. Although it's not visible from most of the inhabited parts of the Earth, this total solar eclipse is still noteworthy: the planet won't see another one until November 2012.

Totally Lost

If you're confused by umbras and penumbras, this beginner's guide, written by astrophysicist and NASA eclipse expert Fred Espenak, is an easy read.

Room with a View

Even if you don't live in the few locations from which the eclipse will be visible, it's still possible to watch totality online. A team of Japanese eclipse hunters is traveling to the area and plans to stream video of the solar event. See this translated page for information on where and how to view it.

DIY

Not content to view the eclipse from afar? San Francisco's Exploratorium has simple instructions for creating your own total solar eclipse from the comfort of your backyard. Wait for a sunny day, and try it out!

Mysterious Island

Totality of this month's eclipse can be viewed from the remote and mysterious Easter Island. Twelve years ago, a team of researchers, archaeologists, and filmmakers traveled to Easter Island to try to understand the nearly nine hundred giant stone sculptures—called *moai*—that dot the face of this tiny island. PBS's fascinating documentary of the expedition isn't available online, but its interactive online guide is a good substitute. Interested armchair explorers will want to check out the photographs, 360-degree panoramas, videos, information, and travel blog.



HEALTH MATTERS

Katie D'Souza



Probiotics: Our Friends on the Inside, Part I

Move over, *E.coli*, *listeria*, and *salmonella*. We're talking friendly bacteria here. Specifically, we're talking about those good, or probiotic, bacteria that reside in the human digestive and vaginal tracts.

What are these micro-organisms? The word *probiotic* means "for life"; in other words, they are important for human life and health. And in the light of the positive scientific research pouring in, you'd have to concur that these bacteria were suitably named.

What, when, and where?

For centuries, we've known that milk transformed into yogurt or other substances (like kefir) through lactic acid fermentation. But it wasn't until the 20th century that the exact reason for this became known: probiotic bacteria were responsible. Metchnikoff, the Russian scientist behind this discovery, determined that the probiotic bacteria involved in the milk-to-yogurt transformation actually "seeded" the intestines with beneficial bacteria. This seeding, he said, caused the positive health effects resulting from consumption of fermented milk products.

He wasn't too far from the truth.

The deep, dark secret

In the average person's digestive system, there are approximately five hundred different types, or species, of micro-organisms that colonize there. (Nice thought.) As you'd expect, some of these micro-organisms, like probiotics, are peaceful; others, like *Candida* (yeast), are not. For intestinal health, you need to have a higher percentage of the good probiotic bacteria than yeast, fungi, or other unpleasant micro-organisms. Why? Because having an overabundance of good bacteria means that the good squeeze out the bad. It's like musical chairs: if the probiotics have most of the seats, the harmful organisms have nowhere to live.

In addition, an abundance of probiotic bacteria in the intestines has many scientifically validated advantages. For example, it helps those with irritable bowel syndrome; prevents ulcers; reduces allergies; prevents traveller's diarrhea and chronic diarrhea; improves immunity; and promotes superior absorption of trace minerals, including co-production of vitamin K (a vitamin necessary for blood clotting).

But for many of us, if the good bacteria aren't outnumbering the bad, we suffer from some (or all) of the following symptoms: gas, bloating, headaches, poor bowel function (including irritable bowel syndrome), fatigue, yeast infections, skin disorders, and allergies, to name a few.

What are their names?

The word *probiotic* is a general term, similar to how we describe ourselves as human beings. But there are many types, which live in different areas of our bodies and perform different functions. Probably the best

known, and best studied, probiotic is *Lactobacillus acidophilus*, often nicknamed “acidophilus”. *L. acidophilus* is a primary resident in the small intestine (the first part of your intestine; it attaches to your stomach).

Also common are the *Bifidobacteria*, which love the climate of the large intestine. They are also one of the main probiotics that pass through human breast milk to a nursing baby, conferring probiotic protection on the baby. Other probiotics include *Lactobacillus rhamnosus* (often found in the vaginal tract, helping to prevent vaginal infections), *Lactobacillus reuteri* (ulcers, beware), and *Saccharomyces boulardii* (protects against traveller's diarrhea).

Just eating yogurt (even the so-called probiotic yogurt) won't ... give your body enough fuel to drive the good bacteria into action ...

So what do I ...

The good news is that if you do lack enough probiotic bacteria, they are easy to incorporate into your diet. Grandma always said that yogurt was good for you, and she really was right. Other fermented foods, like kefir, fresh sauerkraut (not in the cans or jars, since these have been heat-treated), miso, and tempeh, also often carry certain probiotic strains from the fermentation process. The goal is one to two servings a day of a fermented food to help maintain a healthy digestive system.

However, there's a catch. Yogurt and fermented foods may do the trick for you and help you maintain your health, but if you already have a digestive disorder, the good bacteria strength in fermented foods just isn't enough. You've got to flood the good bacteria back into you in order to change things around.

For instance, if you have dysbiosis (gas and bloating following meals), the bad bacteria outcompete the good probiotics. Just eating yogurt (including the so-called probiotic yogurt) won't give you the chance to overcome this. Could you expect your car to drive halfway across Canada without sufficient gas? In the same way, a couple servings of yogurt won't give your body enough fuel to drive the good bacteria into action to overtake the bad.

In the next instalment of “Health Matters,” we'll explore how many probiotics to take to counteract digestive disorders. We'll also investigate some funny quirks of these bacteria, and discuss cautions, including whether they should be used while taking antibiotics.



Katie D'Souza is an AU graduate and a licensed naturopathic doctor. She currently lives in Ontario.

The information contained in this article is for personal interest only; it is not intended for diagnosis or treatment of any condition. Readers are always encouraged to seek the professional advice of a licensed physician or qualified health care practitioner for personal health or medical conditions.

IN CONVERSATION WITH . . .

Wanda Waterman St. Louis

Jeff Reilly, Part I

Jeff Reilly is a CBC producer, composer, and virtuoso bass clarinetist. A strong and influential voice in contemporary music, Reilly has performed with many notables, including the Elmer Iseler singers.

Wanda Waterman St. Louis spoke to him at this year's season finale of the Nova Scotia Youth Orchestra ("NSYO"), an event at which Reilly's composition *Internal Combustion* was performed with guest percussionist Mark Duggan.



"Music, in performance, is a type of sculpture. The air in the performance is sculpted into something."

Frank Zappa

On Combining Composition with Improvisation

When you're improvising, you're all improvising the same ideas. It's like having a conversation. Right now we're not talking about building a house, are we? We're talking about this piece. So from a musical point of view, this is what we're going to talk about. We can talk about it freely, but we have to talk about this subject matter.

The improvisation has to fit into this structure. So the idea is that you set the structure, set the written material, set the context for improvisation, have a sense of how long each section lasts, give out some free ideas—not too many—and hope that the thing has integrity.

To prepare for this performance, I led a workshop where I got the orchestra aware of these ideas, and then Dinuk [Wijeratne, the NSYO conductor] rehearsed them, extremely well, I might add, over a three-week period. Then Mark had a rehearsal with them without me there (sometimes it's better if I'm not there). And then they had a two-hour rehearsal today with me. That was the first time I'd heard the whole thing together.

On *Internal Combustion*

[In this piece, a series of hand gestures is used to draw specific sounds from the orchestra.]

The idea of having ten cues is related to the fact that you've got ten fingers. If you want to give the orchestra an indication of which cue you want, you can use any number of fingers. On one hand it's hard to do, so there are ten cues, and then there are these hand gestures.

Each one of those ideas is the same sort of idea formation that you use when you write any piece, except that I kept them in their raw form for the orchestra to improvise on. If you listened to what Mark did, you heard that everything that the orchestra did was very similar to what the written stuff said. In some cases you might not know if the music being played was written or improvised.

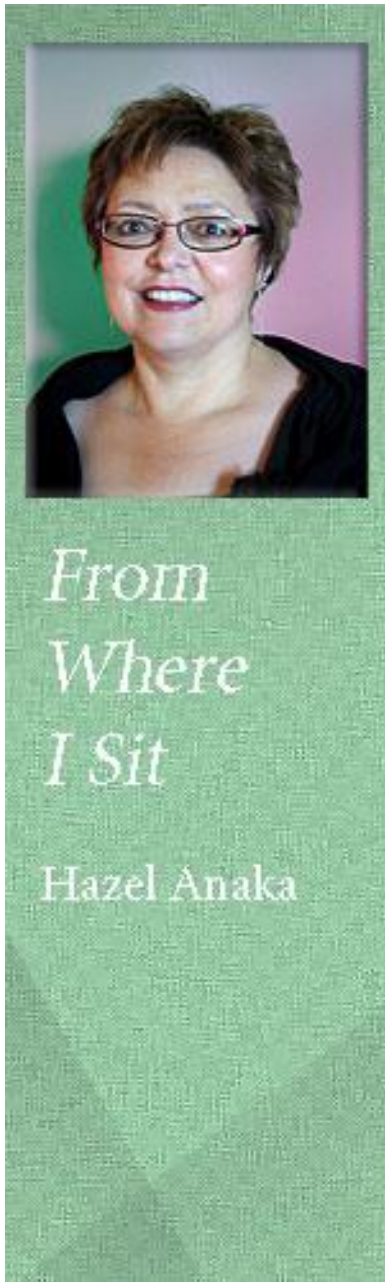


Dinuk Wijeratne, Jeff Reilly, and the author. Photo: Susan Malmström.

A Game Plan

People often forget that music is actually like a sophisticated game plan. There are no winners or losers, but you're really playing a game; and the better you play the game, the more fun you have, the kind of fun that provides a deep, heartfelt, complex human satisfaction.

So the rules of this game are a little more transparent. There are all kinds of notes you have to follow and you don't know what the composer's overall idea was. You're told, *Here's the bare bones of it: here you go, you do some of the work too.* And we'll have a really good time doing it. That doesn't mean it can't be intense; after all, we're playing with the stuff of the universe.



A Week in the Life

I'm not sure if it is a widespread affliction affecting females everywhere, or a Hazel-specific condition. It seems harmless at onset, and small, short bouts are easily handled by healthy individuals. It isn't marked by high fever, vomiting, or diarrhea. There's no sign of blood or discharge of any kind, unless, of course, you count the loss of resolve.

Transmission is most often among immediate and extended family members or friends. It seems to spread through the telephone. Recently, I was infected by a call from my aunt. She was desperately coercing—er, recruiting—volunteers to man the admission gates at a three-day festival in a neighbouring town. A six-hour shift on Friday? Well, okay, if you're really stuck. I came home mentally exhausted and had to take to my bed to watch Charlize Theron in *North Country*.

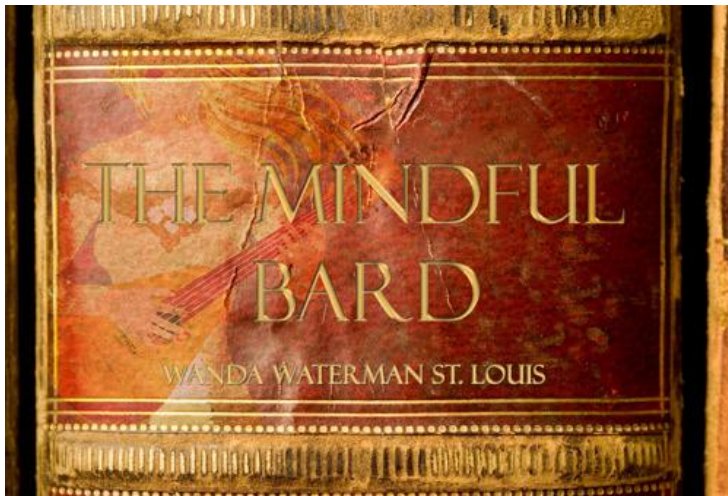
I spent Saturday helping Hilary sand and strip a nine-drawer dresser, and we're not done yet. In this case, the imposition on my time was self-inflicted. I had known she had wanted a vintage piece of furniture for her living room. When I spotted it in a secondhand store in Red Deer, and Roy picked it up and brought it home, I knew I'd be pressed into service during the restoration. Why, oh why, can't I just look the other way? Evidently, it's not in this mother's makeup.

With husbands, the call comes not by telephone, but over breakfast. Can you give me a hand with the eavestroughs? They must be plugged. So while he's on the ladder, I'm the one dragging a hundred feet of garden hose; bringing a trowel, pail and loppers; scooping up the slimy debris from the end of the downspout; and doing general cleanup. Two hours of routine household maintenance means two hours not spent on my stuff. Apparently, my stuff can wait. If I don't write today, there's always tomorrow, isn't there?

Let's not forget the hours spent on Sunday pushing the '37 Olds out of the garage and getting it running for a prospective buyer. It seemed the perfect chance to also do some cleaning and organizing in hoarder's heaven. "If you don't tackle this," I said, "it will become my problem if you drop dead. Do you really want to do that to me?" So, grudgingly, he tackled a tiny section—with me at his beck and call.

Then there were the twelve hours on Canada Day spent weeding, spreading gravel mulch, and positioning the large landscape boulders we hauled home from nearby fields. My body still aches from the grunt work. My forearms are too tired to type. It hurts to hold my head up. Brutal, brutal work.

Analyzed individually, each of these projects or favours was important, as were the impromptu invitations to attend two wiener roasts and my cooking for company who dropped by. But the net result is that my stuff went undone. That's just sick, from where I sit.



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

Book: Paulo Coelho, *The Winner Stands Alone*

Publisher: Harper Collins, 2009 (Trans.)

A Brittle Compassion, a Tender Brutality

"It's something I learned in my youth, when I was fighting in an unjust war for an ideal I didn't believe in."

Paulo Coelho, *The Winner Stands Alone*

Ewa attracts driven men. It's hard to pinpoint why she attracts them, but it may have something to do with the purity of her ideals. Gifted, ambitious men attach themselves to her unreservedly in spite of the fact that she has little respect for wealth or ambition. They are willing to make any sacrifice for her except the one sacrifice she most desires: that they abandon their wealth and ambition. Her first and now estranged husband Igor is willing to "destroy whole worlds" for her.

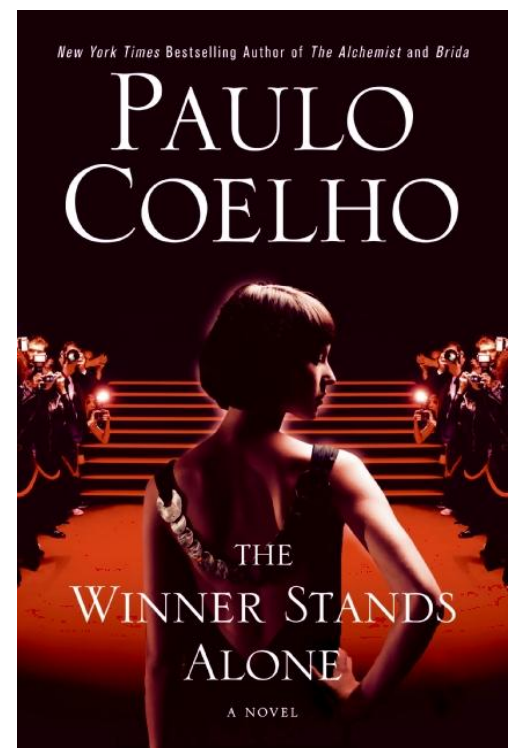
This story carefully examines the common value system of the rich and powerful. It even draws the reader to the edge of sympathy (but no further), showing up the callousness with which certain big players manipulate world events to their own advantage and to the detriment of the powerless.

It's a wonder that a writer of Coelho's calibre has become so widely read and translated. He's a master of the fluent dance between the writer's intellect and the need to create an authentic semblance of reality, between ideas and art. His prose exhibits great warmth, but at the same time a knuckle-whitening determination to face down the horrors of life.

In the relationship between Igor and Ewa, there is an intimacy between good intentions and the willingness to destroy, between the bleeding heart and calculated cruelty, between love and the banality of evil.

There is a strong distinction to be drawn between exclusive romantic love and Love Itself, which are essentially opposites. Love Itself can't by its nature be exclusive, and romantic love by its nature can't be general, except insofar as the romantic relationship acts as a kind of launching pad for love of a broader scope.

In their deep love for each other, Ewa and Igor share the strong convictions of their generation: a longing for world peace and contempt for all who waste their lives in superficial and selfish pursuits. But Igor's desire to guard his love for Ewa at all costs is part of a tangle of sentiments that includes, unfortunately, the psychological repercussions of having served in the Soviet war in Afghanistan.



A taste of wealth and power changes the outer dimensions of Igor's personal morality, or rather opens a chink in his psyche to let the demons out. Even in the face of the monstrous spectre of his own soul reflected in his actions, Igor believes inexorably in his own goodness; this belief is an essential element in his sickness, in the sickness of his generation.

There are cryptic references to mystical realms, realms that, far from being the exclusive domain of the intellectual, are seen as essential to the human soul. For example, there is one moving tale of a kind seagull who takes a mouse for a flight in its beak, giving the mouse a longing for a reality which in his current form he may never repeat.

The Winner Stands Alone manifests 10 of The Mindful Bard's criteria for books well worth reading: 1) it is authentic, original, and delightful; 2) it confronts existing injustices; 3) it makes me want to be a better artist; 4) it gives me tools to aid my art; 5) it displays an engagement with and compassionate response to suffering; 6) it inspires an awareness of the sanctity of creation; 7) it is about attainment of the true self; 8) it provides respite from a sick and cruel world, a respite enabling me to renew myself for a return to mindful artistic endeavours; 9) it stimulates my mind; and 10) it poses and admirably responds to questions which have a direct bearing on my view of existence.

Paul Coelho was recommended to The Mindful Bard by Ines Ben Aissa of Tunisia.

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.

Athabasca University

myAU

User ID:

Password:

Login

- ▶ Reset your password
- ▶ Help for students
- ▶ Contact us

Sister Aurora

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

#48

But those
detectives can
catch anyone.
All they need
is one
little clue.

If they catch us Bert can
use the battered wife
defense.

My mother will jump
at the chance to
defend her just to use
it in court.

We all heard him threaten to
kill her, right? It's simple.
According to the law she can
get off if he attacks her.

If she fears
for her life.

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: Underwater astronauts

Typically, the word *astronaut* conjures up the image of a cosmic setting: stars, planets, or, at the very least, a white spacesuit. Submarines and underwater exploration are the last things that come to mind, yet recently, that has been the reality for several astronauts, including Canadian Chris Hadfield.

As the [CBC](#) reports, for the past two weeks, astronauts and scientists have been working side-by-side in British Columbia's Pavilion Lake, near Lillooet. Instead of spacecraft, astronauts "have been flying tiny, one-person submarines among unusual rock formations called microbialites deep beneath the surface."

The teams have been carefully manoeuvring the underwater craft to collect samples and data from the lake's rare microbialite formations and transmitting them back to researchers. These skills will transfer easily to "deeper space exploration," where astronauts may encounter similarly "unique geological samples," Hadfield told reporters.

For the astronauts, the chance to investigate these particular formations is especially meaningful: researchers believe that the study of microbialites may give clues to the existence of life in other parts of the universe.

Although astronauts typically train in similar conditions, the exercises at Pavilion Lake are particularly satisfying because these missions have relevant results. As Hadfield told reporters, they add "a whole layer of realism to the simulation."

In Foreign News: Home comes the bride

For many couples, being married at home provides a level of intimacy that simply isn't available at traditional wedding venues like halls and country clubs. Yet for those whose homes aren't suitable for a wedding or reception, there's still a way to capture that personal touch.

As [The Telegraph](#) reports, some couples are choosing to hold their weddings and receptions at the homes of wedding hosts, families who rent out their homes and gardens to the happy pair. It's a win-win: for hosting homeowners, "Weddings can bring in sparkle as well as an income."

It's a lower-key way to bring in a little extra cash, but wedding hosting is not all about the money. Belinda Cooper, who rents her 17th-century manor to a small number of couples each year, told reporters that a wedding at her home "is a lovely thing to see because everyone is so happy."

Wedding hosts need to ensure that they're properly licensed and in "compliance with fire and insurance regulations." But after that, it's up to the hosting couple as to how to best bring that personal touch. For David and Judith Adams, who hosted several weddings a year in their four hundred-year-old vicarage, it was all about the small details. As David told reporters, "We use all the herbs and veg from our kitchen garden," adding that even simple dishes were given a homey "taste of The Old Vicarage."

CLASSIFIEDS

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

THE VOICE

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