

# THE VOICE

## MAGAZINE

Vol 18 Iss 35 2010-09-03

### **Musical Snowglobe**

One world voice

### **Artistic Silence**

A jazz singer speaks

### **Supply List**

It's in the bag

*Plus:*

*From Where I Sit, Sister Aurora,  
Write Stuff, and much more . . .*



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# LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

We love to hear from you! Send your questions and  
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indicate if we may publish your letter.



## EDITORIAL

Christina M. Frey



## Happy New Year

New backpacks. New outfits. New binders. Freshly sharpened pencils. It's back-to-school time, and a change is in the air.

Unlike the Victoria Day weekend, which ushers in a more relaxed season, Labour Day weekend is summer's last hurrah: the last big party before it's time to buckle down and get serious.

Yet although it heralds the social end of summer, the Labour Day weekend is more about beginnings than endings. Coinciding with the start of the school year in most places, it represents a new year, a new chance to start over, and most importantly, the opportunity to get on, and stay on, the path where we want to be.

All the stores and shopping malls promoting back-to-school sales got something right: September really is a new beginning. And whether you're four years old and on your way to Kindergarten or 17 and starting your senior year of high school, you feel it.

As adults, we're not immune from the feeling—whether we're students or not. It's amazing, isn't it, how a new pack of highlighters or pens can give us a new enthusiasm for our work. And there's nothing like a brand-new set of course materials to get us excited about learning again. But initial reactions aside, all the physical trappings of the back-to-school season will only get us so far.

How about adding a fresh outlook on life and a new, revised set of personal goals to our back-to-school supply lists?

Much is made of the January 1 tradition of making (and subsequently breaking) New Year's resolutions. But for many of us, coming off a post-Christmas high, it's usually an exercise in futility. Since the start of the calendar year comes in the middle of the traditional academic year, maybe it's time to move our good intentions to a different season.

Re-defining our goals periodically is the perfect way to ensure that we stay on target. And since it stands on the border between the relaxed pace of summer and the productivity of fall, September is the perfect time to evaluate where we're at. Whether we're hoping to attain educational, professional, or personal goals in the coming months, it's important to focus the renewed energy that comes with the new season.

While it's crucial to set broad goals, it's equally necessary—and perhaps more so—to choose smaller goals, too, the ones we can strive for day-by-day. Even minutiae (going to bed earlier or limiting Facebook, for example) will ultimately improve productivity, which will eventually bring our longer-term plans or dreams into closer range.

Defining our goals, and committing ourselves to what we need to do to attain them, will keep us focused as September moves into fall. Better still, as we bid farewell to summer 2010, we'll have a plan that we know we can follow, so that come summer 2011, we'll be where we hoped to be.



## IN CONVERSATION WITH . . .

Wanda Waterman St. Louis

## Patricia Talem

*Patricia Talem is a Brazilian jazz singer with a fluent, tender vocal style reminiscent of Astrud Gilberto. She recently released her self-titled debut album, a beautifully produced selection of songs by mostly Brazilian composers. She's now working on her second album. Recently, Patricia took the time to talk with Wanda Waterman St. Louis about repertoire, the importance of silence for creativity, and how it feels to sing.*

## Background

I was born into a family of engineers, but I was privileged to have the support of my family to study and practice music.

As a child, I would often sing in front of the mirror, dubbing children's songs.

At 14, I began formally studying music theory and singing, but the best school for me has been practice. I was very young when I began to sing in the pubs of São Paulo. I have also been influenced by the music of Rio de Janeiro and Minas Gerais [a Brazilian state], the land of Milton Nascimento.

I always heard good music at home. Early on, I learned to appreciate bossa nova, samba, and other Brazilian rhythms. And there is no way to talk about bossa nova without talking about jazz.

## Choosing the Songs

The choice of repertoire for this album was very slow and methodical. I found many beautiful, interesting songs, and I tried to choose those that somehow connected with my life. I believe that in principle this is the best way for me to interpret a song.

## The Players

I already knew the work of Marco da Costa, a major producer and Brazilian drummer. It was through him that I met Sandro Albert, and I was charmed by his compositions and way of working. Through this partnership with Sandro, I met Russell Ferrante and Jimmy Haslip of the Yellowjackets. For me it was a gift to work with such sensitive and brilliant musicians.

## How Singing Feels

When I sing, I feel like the world stopped. Everything else becomes unimportant and the music is absolutely queen.

It is very pleasant to be connected to the musicians and the meaning of that song for several minutes, and to make this performance the most important and precious.



## What You Need

I think the world today is too fast. This is very good in some respects. Communication is more effective; if not for the internet, for example, I couldn't give this interview. Also, speed makes our music heard around the world. But an artist needs to calm down, to take a moment of pure leisure, to meditate on the song, the power. For me, silence must precede creativity, always.

## Changed

Art has the power to transform a human being, and it's the best therapy there is. I learn a lot about life from songs, music, poetry, and art in general. Art is also a great way to meet myself. When I hear my old recordings, for example, I perceive intentions, moments that show me who Patricia was at that time.

## Inspiring Work

I've been greatly influenced by João Gilberto, Tom Jobim, Milton Nascimento, Flávio Venturini, Sandro Albert, Chet Baker, and Paco de Lucia. I have also been influenced by dance. I practiced flamenco for many years as well, and this ended up influencing my music.

This week, I've been listening to *Atlantis* by Wayne Shorter, *Nearness of You* by Michael Brecker, and *Efêmera* by Tulipa Ruiz.

## Social Conscience

What often happens in Brazil is that some people see jazz as being only for a musical elite, which is not true, and moreover, is completely contradictory to jazz's roots. For this reason, I try to bring music to people with less culture and less privileged conditions, whenever possible. I think music is a complete form of education.

I also believe very much in music as a way to create a better future for children, particularly in regions where child labour is common.

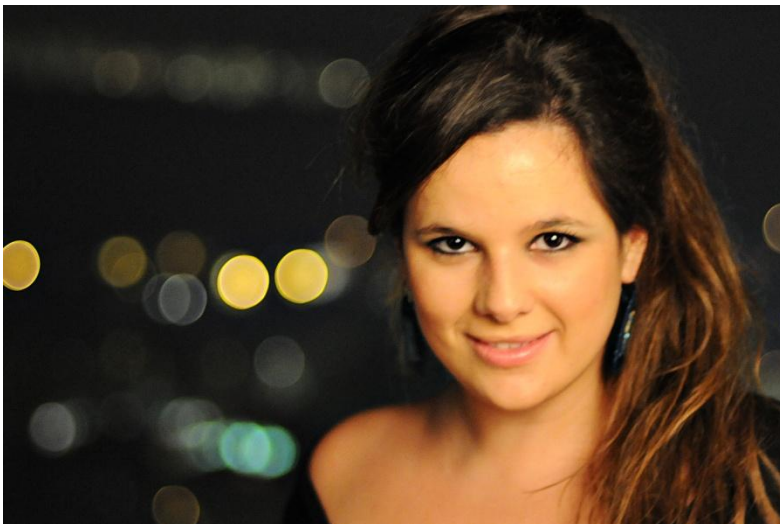
*[A]n artist needs to . . .  
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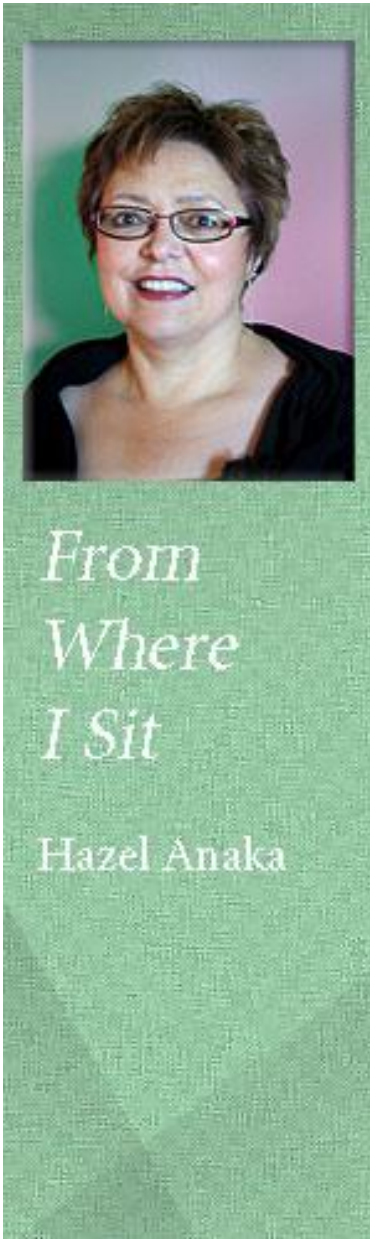
## Preparing a Song

I always, always put myself in the place of the main character of a song. I imagine details, colors, gestures, and expressions, and I create a movie from that song. Often, in public, I identify with someone in the audience, and immediately place this person as a character in this movie too.

## Belief

My biggest belief is to not do to others what I do not want them to do to me. This applies to politics, religion, relationships and family.





## What a Story!

Allow me to retell a story told to us this afternoon by a salesman named Allan.

A quick and dirty analysis reveals a story arc, tension, interesting characters, humour, climax, and resolution. But how much of a story's appeal comes from the teller and the telling?

Impending death was the catalyst for the remembering and the retelling. Does some emotional thing kick in and take us back to the days of oral tradition, where stories were shared across a fire instead of through cyberspace? A time when people had more than 140 characters or emoticons to convey a message. When you sat across from someone and made eye contact. When the storyteller could see your eyes widen or your grin broaden.

Allan told us about his dying cousin. Family and friends are working frantically to finish the bodywork on a Chevy Nova for a final, no-holds-barred, winner-takes-all race to decide once and for all who's got the hotter muscle car—Allan or his cousin. As heartwarming as that is though, it wasn't the main story.

That began something like this.

On a dark February night, when Allan should be walking the dog, he puts him in the car instead and begins cruising down back alleys in the seedier part of town, searching for a car to buy. In the dark, he catches a glimpse of a beat-up, dirty, snow-covered car that might be the coveted 1970 Chevelle SS he desires. He circles the block for another look. He does this two or three more times. He goes home, but can't get the car out of his mind.

After his wife falls asleep, he heads out to look again, this time with a flashlight. He borrows a pen from the 7-11 to write down the VIN number. He leaves his card in the guy's mailbox. *Where did you go last night?* the wife asks. *Oh, no, you don't, you're not buying that car.*

But he can't get the car out of his mind. *Don't even think of coming here without \$8,000 in your hand*, he's told. He manages to lay his hands on \$6,000. A buddy runs a background check on the machine, and it is everything the seller professed it to be.

Allan knows he won't leave without the car.

He tries to play it cool, not let on how badly he wants it. The seller looks like Jesus, but with attitude. The house is cold and poorly lit, the fridge empty. Allan holds out a wad containing \$5,000 in 20s. The seller swears, but takes the money and says he will buy some pot and his favourite hooker. Oh, and maybe get

caught up on the mortgage. He then starts dragging stuff up from the basement—a set of tires and wheels (worth about \$2,000), genuine GM parts, accessories, and more that he threw into the deal.

“But what did the wife do?” I asked.

“Oh, we were already having trouble. The divorce cost me about thirty grand. But that’s not all,” Allan said.

After he got the car completely redone, Allan wanted to go back and show the owner. He headed back to the neighbourhood, but nothing looked right. He wasn’t even sure he had the right street anymore. But a neighbour came out. *Can I help you?* he said. *Yeah, I bought this car, fixed it up, wanted to show the previous owner.*

But no luck. It seems that with all the new-found space in the basement and ‘seed money,’ the seller had turned entrepreneurial, started a grow-op, and gotten busted, and was in jail.

You can’t make a story like this up, from where I sit.



## DID YOU KNOW?



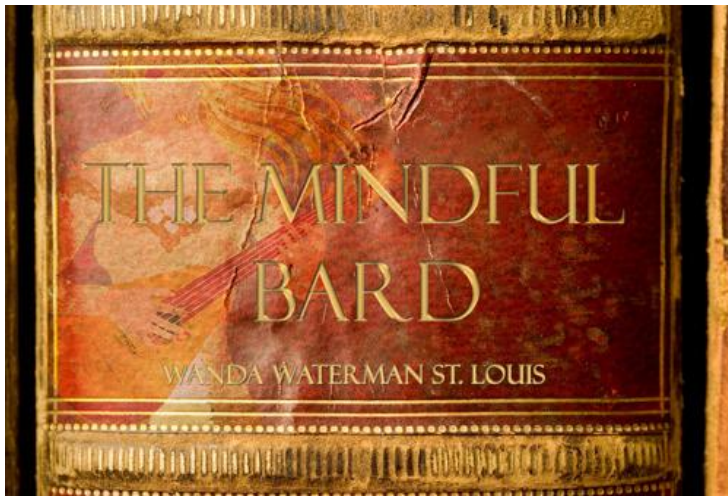
### Student ID Cards

Choosing to learn by distance doesn’t mean you have to give up the opportunity to get student discounts at the movies, the bookstore, or the train station. According to the [Student Calendar](#), every “active Athabasca University student” is eligible to request a photo student identification card.

To apply, you need to mail or fax the appropriate [form](#) and have your photo taken at the Registrar’s Office or at the Edmonton or Calgary Learning Centre. But if distance or schedule makes this impossible, there are two other options. You can scan and email a passport-sized photo along with a scanned image of the front of your driver’s license (provided that the license includes your date of birth and current address). Alternatively, you can have a passport-sized photo signed by a guarantor. Further instructions can be found [here](#).

Have a student ID card that’s out of date? Don’t throw it away, as students are only eligible for one card. To keep the card current from year to year, active students may “request a date sticker from the Office of the Registrar, AU Edmonton, or AU Calgary.”





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

### Blancheneige Bazaar Orchestra

**Albums:** Blancheneige (debut album, 2005), Royale Aero d'Inde (2008).

**Musicians:** Bernard Benony, Pierre Cassat, Karim Humbert, Guy Khalepski, Ophir Levy, Nicolas Portnoï

### **Snow White and the Five Multi-ethnic Musical Giants**

*“To become truly immortal, a work of art must escape all human limits: logic and common sense will only interfere. But once these barriers are broken, it will enter the realms of childhood visions and dreams.”*

Giorgio de Chirico

It's always thrilling to see disparate musical patches sewn together so well that the seams hardly show, and with Blancheneige, the patches couldn't be more disparate—nor the seams less visible.

Blancheneige has been active for a few years in Europe, where the band has developed a small but rapturous cult following, well-deserved because it's hard to say how they could possibly get any better. Aside from the artfully conceived eclecticism, there is a hypnotic rhythm in every track, coupled with an urgency and drive that makes your heart race.

It's funny how musicians can draw together elements that, politically at least, seem hopelessly divided. Elements of classical raga, reggae, raï, Gnawa, Sufi, klezmer, avant-garde, aleatoric music, Gregorian chant, Hawaiian guitar, Arabic music, sub-Saharan African drums, surfer guitar, and even classic jazz, free jazz, and bebop, make these two albums endlessly repeatable, eminently danceable, and testaments to the beauty of integration.

The haunted wailing of the ghetto denizen, the hymn of the mystic, the whirling dance of the dervish, the skulking vigilance of the partisan, the call to prayer, the rock anthem of a decadent youth, all are given voice by a handful of superlative musicians who seem to turn every genre into gold.

Both albums are swimming in complex but memorable tunes, vibrantly expressive improvisations, arrangements as tight as jigsaw puzzles, and odd little flourishes that emerge when you least suspect them: a ringing cell phone, the loud “Hyah!” of a cattle rustler, a child's music box, the rhythmic clanking of a chain gang, and—well, if you listen hard I'm sure you'll find even more nuggets than I did.



With a disarming bravado, Blancheneige makes ironic, poetic, pathos-free musical comments on the human dilemma.

The music of the Blancheneige Bazaar Orchestra manifests six of the Mindful Bard's criteria for music well worth hearing: 1) it stimulates my mind; 2) it harmoniously unites art with social action, saving me from both seclusion in an ivory tower and slavery to someone else's political agenda; 3) it provides respite from a sick and cruel world, a respite enabling me to renew myself for a return to mindful artistic endeavour; 4) it gives me tools that help me be a better artist; 5) it is authentic, original, and delightful; and 6) it makes me appreciate that life is a complex and rare phenomenon, making living a unique opportunity.

## CLICK OF THE WRIST – The Organizer

Early September means back to school for both kids and adults alike. But regardless of your student status, it's also the ideal time to finally get organized enough so that you can stop merely catching up on life and instead start forging ahead on your dreams. This week's links offer some tips on organizing various aspects of your life.

### Your Desk

You know the feeling: despite your best organizational efforts, your desk is a disaster area. But according to this professional organizer and life coach, the problem may be in your approach. She suggests that there are two types of paper accumulators—and shows how people can organize successfully by working with their inclinations.

### Your Academics

For distance students, new courses require an additional level of organization. These tips, from Yavapai College in Arizona, offer a plan both for students entering the world of online education and for long-time distance learning veterans.

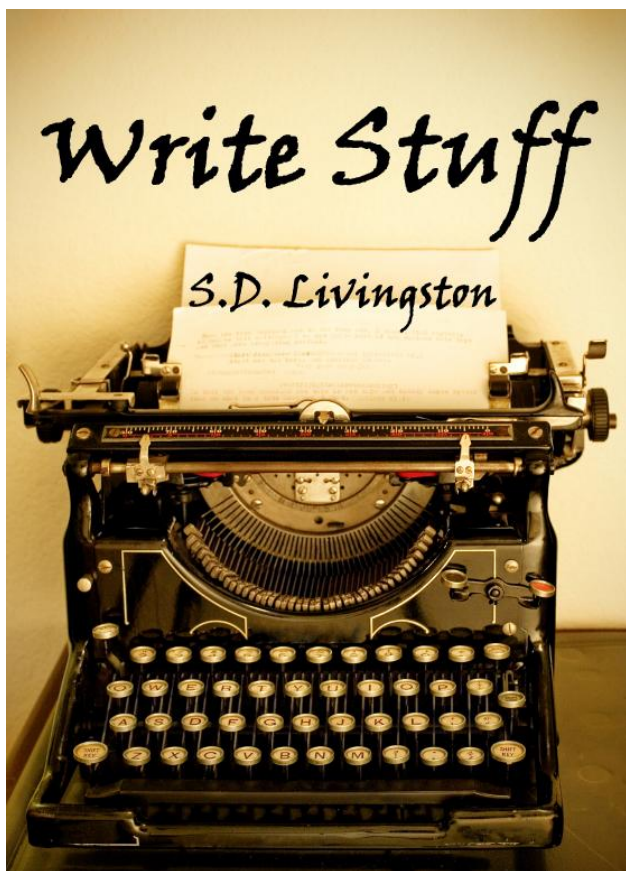
### Your Computer

Your computer's files may be compactly packed into a little black (or white or grey) box, but if what's stored inside is a disorganized mess, you'll still waste time sorting through the junk to find what you want. To get it all sorted out, consider listening to this University of Wisconsin webinar, entitled "How To Organize Your Digital Self" (available as an audio file).

### Your Life

Whether you're ready for a wholesale life makeover—or just hope to organize and simplify your life a little—you'll find plenty of food for thought in this Zen Habits blog post.





## Talking Trash

Beach read. Trashy novel. Call it what you will, genre fiction has always been considered second-rate next to its literary cousins. But if the value of a story lies in its ability to touch people, to help them make sense of their world, should style really trump substance?

At extreme ends of the spectrum, literary fiction and genre fiction seem to be staring in opposite directions. With literary fiction, it's all about looking inward. Characters tend to think rather than do, and navel-gazing is *de rigueur*. (Indeed, literary fiction has plenty of strict genre rules of its own, but that's a topic for another day.) With genre fiction, the focus is outward, on the action. We don't necessarily need James Bond to indulge in a long, philosophical analysis of why he's going to chase the bad guy. It's enough that he does—with an abundance of style and cool gadgets, of course.

Plenty of books fall somewhere in the middle of those extremes, but for the most part, literary fiction gets the nod as the good stuff—the stories with a *purpose* and,

therefore, a greater artistic value. But what, exactly, is that purpose? To make readers think about big questions, like social justice or the futility of war? There's no reason plot-driven books can't do the same, and many of them do it remarkably well.

One good example is a writer who's now considered a literary bastion: Charles Dickens. If you want action, he's your man. Not that David Copperfield ever got quite as physical as, say, Jason Bourne. But Dickens' characters fought, schemed, stole, and even murdered. There's no shortage of straight-on plot or buffoonery in his books either, and his characters are often caricatures of the broadest kind. In fact, no less a figure than Oscar Wilde “sharply criticized Dickens' sentimental lapses.”

And Dickens isn't the only one whose literary greatness was once considered little better than pop fiction. Back in 1896, Grant Allen slammed Henry Fielding's writing as “boisterously vulgar and human,” saying it lacked “inner meaning.” Today, Fielding's *Tom Jones* is a classic (and was even released as part of the Oxford University Press's Oxford World's Classics collection).

Modern genre writers face much the same battle. You can bet that mass-market authors like John Grisham and Danielle Steel aren't going to be shortlisted for the Pulitzer. Yet clearly their stories—and the stories of similar authors—resonate with people. As this [Forbes list](#) reveals, the top-earning authors in the world (for the 12 months ending June 1, 2010) fall firmly in the category of popular fiction. Without exception, they write in one of these genres: thriller, horror, romance, suspense, fantasy, or mystery.

There's much to be said for crafting an eloquent turn of phrase or exploring a character's deepest motives. But sometimes in the end it really does come down to the story, the core truth that makes us laugh or cry or think, no matter how simply it may be told. And there's nothing second-rate about that.



# Sister Aurora

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

#56

Yes, you have been reborn. As Sister Aurora. Can I call you "Rory"?

Nope.

How about "Aura"?

Yeah. "Aura"'s fine. But I'd prefer "Aurora".

I'm scared, girls.

Me too.



## INTERNATIONAL NEWS DESK



### At Home: Wine and Dine

If steak's on the menu for your next fine dining experience, chances are you'll choose to accompany it with a glass of red wine. A British Columbia cattle rancher has taken that concept one step further: if beef pairs naturally with wine, why not start the pairing while the beef's still growing?

As the CBC reports, the wine-fed beef has been hitting local restaurants for several months. And chefs "say it makes the beef taste unique."

Janice Ravndahl, the Okanagan region cattle rancher who's pioneering the innovative idea, supplements her livestock's diet with red wine for 60 days. It's a time frame that the farm has determined strikes a balance between cost-effectiveness and a tasty cut of meat.

A tipsy herd of cows? Not quite; according to Cornell University animal sciences professor emeritus Peter Van Soest, a cow wouldn't have difficulty processing the wine due to its large size. As he told reporters, "A litre in that size animal is not very much." Other experts in cattle nutrition concur that that feeding cows the wine won't harm the animals.

In fact, the results are beneficial—both to cattle and consumer. The wine "appears to make the steers more docile, which enhances the texture of the meat." As Ravndahl told reporters, "Cattle that are relaxed taste better," adding, "You don't want tense beef."

### Around the World: Social Media Resumé

We've all heard the stories about employees losing their jobs, or potential employees being passed over for a lucrative position, due to an unfortunate post or photo on Facebook. Yet the solution isn't to cancel your account—particularly if you're in the market for a new job.

As *The New York Times* reports, the modern "job-search process has undergone a revolution since the advent of Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn and other social networking sites." In fact, social media presence may even be necessary to job-hunting success.

According to Nancy Halverson, senior vice president for learning and talent development at MRINetwork, a recruiting firm, maintaining social networking profiles isn't just helpful when searching for employment—it's essential. As she told reporters, "Recruiters don't even know how to find you if you don't have a presence online."

It's still important that would-be employees learn to walk the fine line between "learning to promote themselves [and] coming off as self-involved." And they'll have to ensure that they keep their online reputation spotless, as even small slips could cost them a future job.

Nonetheless, the hassle is worth it. As Halverson told reporters, "It's nonnegotiable — you have to have a profile on a social networking site."

## 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.



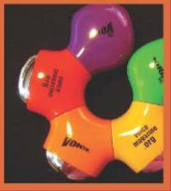
For any course that requires charts that cannot be easily created in Word or Excel, this should be a real time saver and make it easier to submit all portions of an assignment by email.




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.

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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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