

# **Locks and Keys**

**Banned Book Week** 

## **Beyond the Blue**

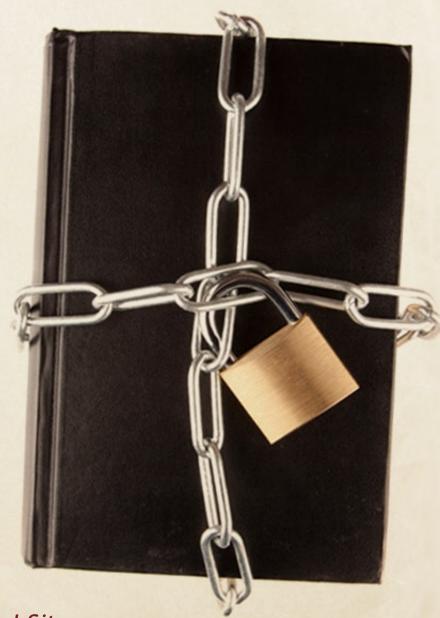
Life and responsibility

## **On Trend**

In the spotlight

Plus:

Voix du Maghreb, From Where I Sit, Chronicles of Cruiscin Lan, and much more . . .



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## The Voice Magazine

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## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

We love to hear from you! Send your questions and comments to <a href="mailto:voice@voicemagazine.org">voice@voicemagazine.org</a>, and please indicate if we may publish your letter.

Re: "Voix du Maghreb: Entretien avec Yasmina Khadra, 1re partie" by Wanda Waterman St. Louis, v18 i37 (2010-09-17)

Quel plaisir de lire un article écrit en français (Voix du Mahgreb: Entretien avec Yasmina Khadra)!

La qualité des articles de votre magazine est excellente. Bravo!

Audrey O'Brien

#### EDITORIAL Christina M. Frey



#### A Light in the Darkness

In this issue's "<u>Green Light</u>," I highlighted the debate over compact fluorescent bulbs ("CFLs") and their effect on electromagnetic fields. Although the information's been out there for some time, it only came to my attention this week.

I'm intrigued to learn about the "dirty electricity" phenomenon. I'm awed at how little we really do know about the universe. I'm interested in the possibilities of LED bulbs. Yet a part of me feels angry, disappointed, cheated.

Like millions of other homeowners, we jumped on the CFL bandwagon a few years back. We wanted to conserve energy and save money. We wanted to protect our family and our planet. And we didn't go into it blind; we did a little digging, all of which turned up only the highest praise for CFLs.

Yet somehow, we—and everyone else along for the ride—were duped. Or at least, the research seems to suggest it. Whether it was lack of information, insufficient studies, or just a case of playing with technology we really didn't understand, the CFL craze resulted in many people making choices they thought were for the best—only to find out they may have been wrong.

I shouldn't be surprised. How many other times has this happened? Good-bad-better and even good-bad-good and back to bad again are constantly occurring back-to-back at a dizzying speed. What about butter versus margarine? Or the question of fats, good, bad or otherwise? Carbs. Bottled water. Job applications. Studying. Vaccines. Even ideologies. Everything's up for change. The list goes on and on.

The scary thing is that we barely notice this happening. Without batting an eye, we move on to the next trend, the next option, the new solution. Why?

The easy answer would be that perhaps we feel that there's safety in community. But it may be deeper than that.

I like to think we all have a bit of the idealist in us. We want to do good for ourselves, our communities, and our planet. But let's face it: with the hustle and bustle of modern life, we find ourselves too busy, too tired, or too distracted to do something significant.

So we settle on small signs. Manageable things. Actions that don't require too much of a commitment, but allow us to give ourselves the proverbial pat on the back for a deed well done.

We want to protect our planet, so we buy the right kind of bulbs. It's a symbol that we're doing good. Never mind that we cheerfully waste energy in other manners, or drive our gas guzzler much more than we need. The environmentally-friendly bulbs are a tangible reflection of our involvement, of the "fact" that we're doing our part.

In fact, we prefer to exercise our ideology from a comfortable distance. And any easy route to such self-fulfillment is welcomed with open arms. Hence the bandwagon phenomenon, and the constant latching on to and letting go of trends in just about every area of our lives.

Is this a bad thing? Not entirely. If we act hypocritically, I think we do so unconsciously. We truly do believe that we're making choices that are for the best interests of ourselves, our families, and the world. And every little bit does make a difference.

But when we make these decisions to improve our health or reduce pollution, for example, we need to take one more step. We need to ask ourselves just why we're doing what we're doing. How serious are we about, say, conserving energy? Serious enough to make, and continue making, lifestyle changes? Or just interested enough to slap a Band-Aid on the problem and hope it goes away?

So after I finish researching CFL bulbs, I'll have some decisions to make. I want to do the right thing, and if switching to LEDs is necessary, it's an easy solution. But hopefully, when I take down my CFLs and reach for the new package of LEDs, I'll give a little more consideration to the deeper meaning of my actions—and take that with me as I live out my life under the glow of my new light bulbs.

#### **Green Light**

#### News, Tips, and Tricks for a Healthy Planet



Does your house have "green lighting"? If so, chances are good that you've purchased compact fluorescent bulbs ("CFLs"), those oddly-shaped spirals that seem synonymous with environmentally aware living. But although they're more energy-efficient than incandescent bulbs, they may be contributing to another form of air pollution.

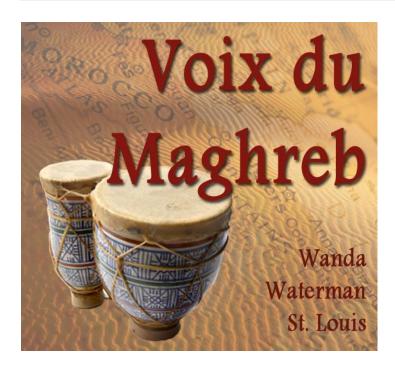
According to some scientists, CFLs create a phenomenon called "dirty electricity," in which the normally smooth electrical flow is disrupted. The surrounding EMF field is changed, causing a form of electrical pollution. Neither incandescent nor LED bulbs have the same effect on the EMF field.

Health Canada <u>insists</u> that CFLs are not inherently unsafe (although disposing of broken CFLs can be tricky, since they contain mercury; <u>here</u> is a description of how to do so properly).

And it's true that the long-term effects of dirty electricity are unknown. However, studies have shown that diabetics exposed to dirty electricity experienced a rise in blood sugar levels (which dropped when they were moved to a cleaner environment). And asthmatic students whose school cleaned the electrical pollution in the air discovered that they no longer needed to take their inhalers as frequently in the classroom environment.

Dr. Magda Havas, a professor at the University of Trent and a specialist on the biological effects of EMF radiation, warned against the use of CFLs in a "Be Green" segment of CBC Montreal's evening news. The news segment, which is available <a href="here">here</a>, suggests using LED bulbs as an alternative. They don't emit dirty electricity, and bonus: they're more energy-efficient than CFLs.

For more information on Dr. Havas's work on dirty electricity, please visit her <u>website</u>.



#### Entretien avec Yasmina Khadra, 2<sup>e</sup> partie

« <u>Yasmina Khadra</u> » est le pseudonyme de Mohamed Moulessehoul, un écrivain algérien qui a servi dans l'armée de son pays, utilisant ce pseudonyme pour protéger son travail des censeurs durant la guerre civile. Il a quitté l'armée en 2000, parvenu au grade de commandant, afin de consacrer son temps à l'écriture. Il vit à présent à Aix-en-Provence, en France.

Son roman L'Attentat a remporté le Prix des libraires en 2006; la même année, Les hirondelles de Kaboul a été finaliste du prix littéraire international IMPAC de Dublin. Les romans de Yasmina Khadra, traduits à présent en 33 langues, sont connus pour la vivacité de

leurs images, la simplicité et l'élégance de leur prose, ainsi que le courage avec lequel cet auteur décrit les effets de l'extrémisme religieux.

Dernièrement, Yasmina Khadra a pris le temps de répondre aux questions de Wanda Waterman St. Louis à propos de l'idéologie, de la liberté religieuse et des origines de l'extrémisme.

#### Comment avez-vous trouvé votre nom de plume?

Il s'agit des prénoms de mon épouse. Et elle me les a confiés. À moi d'en être digne.

#### Que faites-vous pour vous ressourcer après le travail?

Rien de spécial. Quand je termine un livre, je retourne à mes occupations. Je n'aime pas trop prolonger une inspiration. La réalité de tous les jours me rappelle à l'ordre, et je réintègre le chahut du monde et ses dérives.

#### Pouvez-vous décrire votre processus d'écriture?

Je ne travaille pas à partir de plans. Je commence d'abord par construire mon histoire dans ma tête, je la laisse mijoter pendant des mois ou des années, puis je me mets à l'écriture.

#### Restez-vous attaché à une idéologie politique ou une croyance religieuse?

J'ai horreur des idéologies. Je suis musulman. Cependant, je reste convaincu que la religion doit se limiter à un choix personnel et libre, que ce choix ne doit pas s'imposer aux autres, car la liberté est essentielle dans l'exercice de la foi. Dès que la religion bascule dans l'engagement politique, elle se substitue à l'idéologie.

#### Selon vous, quelles sont les origines de l'extrémisme religieux ou les conditions préalables à sa montée?

D'abord l'injustice sociale. Ensuite, les amalgames politico-médiatiques - des amalgames volontaires, lorsqu'il s'agit de manipulation, de stigmatisation et de diabolisation; des amalgames outranciers, lorsqu'il s'agit d'ignorance et de racisme ordinaire.

## Qu'est-ce qui peut prévenir l'extrémisme dans une famille, une communauté ou une société? Quel est l'antidote?

Le discernement! C'est l'unique antidote. Le DISCERNEMENT. Et pour qu'il y ait discernement, il faudrait une vigilance intellectuelle, une ouverture sur la culture de l'autre, une transcendance saine et persévérante. Or, les raccourcis et le recours systématique aux stéréotypes trahissent une effroyable paresse intellectuelle qui privilégie le rejet expéditif au détriment de la curiosité et de la réflexion. Ce qui se passe dans le monde, toutes ces réactions malheureuses, faites de peur et de méfiance, relèvent de l'instinct grégaire, preuve que l'humanité est loin d'accéder à la maturité.

#### **CLICK OF THE WRIST: Falling Leaves**

This past week brought us the first day of autumn, and the coming weeks will usher in a season of crisp days, chilly nights, warm colours, and good memories. For many, fall is the favourite season, and they're not alone. Throughout the ages, autumn has intrigued and inspired scientists, artists, poets, musicians, and more to bring forth their own seasonal interpretations. Here are a few to enjoy.

#### **Scientific Theory**

Why do some leaves turn yellow and orange in the fall, while others become imbued with deep purples and reds? This science blog, now a part of *Discover* magazine's website, explains some of the competing theories.

#### **Artistic Touch**

Think leaf art pictures are for kids? Think again. Award-winning Japanese artist Kazuo Akasaki has created beautiful, one-of-a-kind pictures using only fallen leaves. You can check out some of the amazing results at Japan Probe.

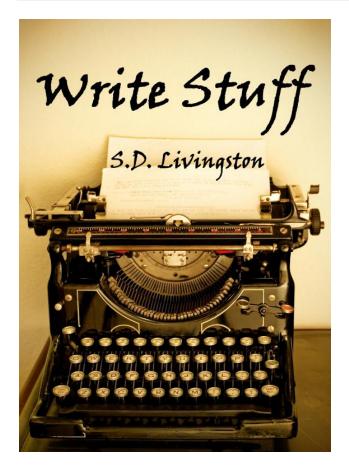
#### **Poetic Vision**

John Keats's classic ode to the season, "To Autumn," is one of the most famous poems in the English-speaking world. The Academy of American Poets gives the full text and offers an audio reading of the poem.

#### **Musical Interpretation**

Part of Antonio Vivaldi's *Four Seasons* violin concertos, "L'autunno," or "Autumn" (also known as Concerto No. 3 in F major, Op. 8, RV 293), is as fresh and moving today as it was nearly 300 years ago. This video shows one passionate performance.





#### **Do Not Presume**

Perhaps, as Banned Books Week gets underway, you are one of the many people around the world who believe it is dangerous to let writers publish ideas that conflict with yours. Maybe you're a parent who's signed a petition to have a book removed from the school curriculum. Or a citizen who's lobbied to keep a novel out of your public library.

I support your right to read what you choose. In return, I ask only this: do not presume to speak for me.

Perhaps I am a teenager growing up in a house filled with prejudice and intolerance. I may be blind to wider possibilities, to the acceptance of others (perhaps even of you), and may be ready to carry those views with me into the world as an adult. Maybe, just maybe, as our class studies Harper Lee's classic *To Kill a Mockingbird* (one of the most challenged novels ever), I may come to see that other possibilities exist. That I do not need to perpetuate the bigotry of my surroundings. Do not presume to speak for me.

Perhaps I am a parent whose child is struggling at school. He reads a couple of grade levels behind his classmates and is becoming frustrated and apathetic, convinced that school is a waste of time. Maybe, just maybe, he's discovered a copy of *Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows* on the library shelves and, for the first time ever, is enthused about the delights to be found in a book. His reading skills (and confidence) are improving. Do not presume to speak for me.

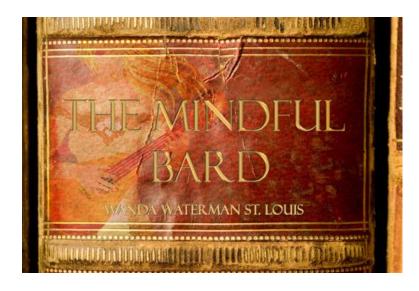
Perhaps I am someone who needs help explaining to my child that families come in many shapes and sizes. Maybe, just maybe, she is confused that her friend has two dads. Or that her own family has two mothers.

Instead of avoiding the reality she encounters every day (a reality that will not disappear even if no authors write about it), maybe it will ease her mind if we sit down together with a copy of *And Tango Makes Three*. Do not presume to speak for me.

I understand we may have different tastes, different views of history, and a different tolerance for strong language. Perhaps even different beliefs on politics or religion. I accept those differences and support your right to voice them. But when it comes to deciding what I should or should not read, do not dare presume to speak for me.

In the United States, September 25 to October 2 marks <u>Banned Books Week</u>. In Canada, <u>Freedom to Read Week</u> takes place February 20 through 26, 2011. If your own freedom to choose is important to you, think about clicking some links and finding out about the many events taking place, both online and in your area.





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

DVD: Avatar

Theatrical Release: December 2009

**DVD Release:** April 2010

**Starring:** Sam Worthington, Zoë Saldana, Sigourney Weaver, Stephen Lang, Michelle Rodriguez, Giovanni Ribisi, Joel David Moore

**Director/Screenwriter:** James Cameron

#### Twentieth Century Fox

After I Lost the Use of My Legs They Grafted My Soul Onto the Body of This Big Blue Masai Warrior and Dumped Me on Another Planet Where Everything Went to Hell Until the Marines Got Booted Off

The word "avatar" is one of some significance in the digital age, which is one reason why it begs examination. When one's soul, one's consciousness, one's *reason* inhabits a new body, a new life is created: a second chance, perhaps, at becoming what you were meant to be. On the other hand, your soul is still essentially vulnerable and alone, desperately in need of union with something grander—and kinder—than merely yourself.

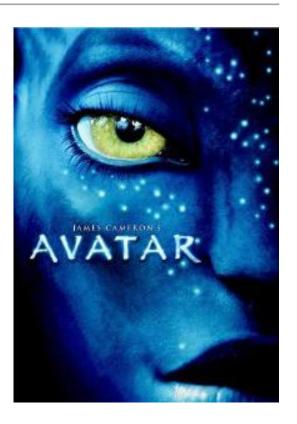
The enemy, for one thing, is brutal and remorseless. The Marines degrade the gigantic, agile, and lovely Na'vi by calling them "blue monkeys," "aboriginal horde," and "fly-bitten savages," spiritually shrinking these magnificent creatures by means of racist-type epithets in order to justify snuffing them out. After all, genocide must be scientifically executed: demean, demoralize, infiltrate, sabotage, and destroy what a group holds sacred and you've knocked them out for a round. If they stand up too fast, lay 'em low with an overhand right.

Contrast this with the simple poetry of conscious, compassionate interaction with the living beings around you. The Na'vi greeting, "I see you," not shared between the lovers until the end of the film, is explained by one earthling thus: "...it's not just, 'I'm seeing you in front of me,' it's, 'I see into you. I see you—I'm accepting you. I understand you ...'"

It's fun to speculate on the sources of the complex of ideas in this film. Avatar loses points for pompous New Age posing, but regains them with respectful nods to Native American mysticism. Some of the dialogue is a bit preachy, but at other times it rings with the depth of Rachel Carson and the newness of Joel de Rosnay's "symbiotic man." There is also the mythological component: the Tree of Souls is an enchanting manifestation of the archetypal Tree of Life, similar to Yggdrasil in Norse mythology, a network of links between the spiritual and the material worlds and thus a locus of life and healing and a link between past and future. And the paramour Neytiri is a clearly phallic female, the ideal partner for a man just emerging from a sense of powerlessness.

I'm normally not much of a visual spectacle buff, but the vicarious thrill of watching these glorious creatures swoop through the floating mountains and tropical wonderlands is positively regenerative. And you can feel every ounce of the delicious freedom experienced by Jake when, having gone to sleep a paraplegic, he wakes up a magnificent blue specimen of a sentient being. Like the best of fantasy film, art, and literature, *Avatar* bears just enough resemblance to reality to effectively open our eyes to the wonder—and the phenomenal responsibility—of life in the real world.

Avatar manifests five of The Mindful Bard's <u>criteria</u> for films well worth seeing: 1) it provides respite from a sick and cruel world, a respite enabling me to renew myself for a return to mindful artistic endeavour; 2) it is about attainment of the true self; 3) it inspires an awareness of the sanctity of creation; 4) it displays an engagement with and compassionate response to suffering; 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.





#### **DID YOU KNOW?** The Literature Network

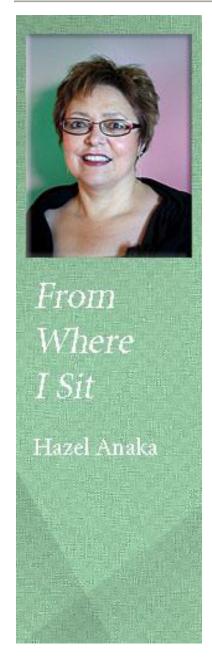
Looking for the text of an elusive Edna St. Vincent Millay poem? Can't quite recall the source of that Shakespearean quote?

Consider visiting <u>The Literature Network</u>, an online "tool for reading, searching, and discussing works of classic literature." With close to 3,000 full-length books and nearly 4,000 shorter works (including poetry and short stories), it's a fantastic resource for both students and lovers of the written word.

In addition to reading the classics online, visitors can use the site's search feature to locate a particular word or phrase in an author's works.

And there's more: besides searchable access to the full texts of classics from Plato's *The Republic* to Beatrix Potter's *The Tale of Peter Rabbit*, The Literature Network includes author bios, literature forums, and a database of quotations.

Although The Literature Network is free to use, users can also choose to subscribe to the site for an ad-free browsing experience.



#### **Seventy-Six Years Later**

There are many other things I could have done today. Let me count the ways. I could have vacuumed and halted the rampant reproduction of dust bunnies. I might have researched a creative way to cook the six pounds of lean ground beef in the fridge.

Or maybe I should have begun yanking out the flowers that got zapped with two nights of minus-six temperatures. Those babies are done.

I could have spent the day in my studio. Eight years ago, I painted a two-by-six-foot canvas as part of Greg and Carrie's wedding present. My talents and tastes have since evolved and I intend to repaint it. So far, all I've done is take it off their wall and re-gesso it.

Or I could have gathered up supplies for a prototype for the one hundred table centrepieces and huge floor decorations I'm making for a large corporate Christmas party that Hilary's company is hired to decorate.

Cracking open Jonathan Franzen's *Freedom* was another possibility. But for that, I'm practicing delayed gratification by waiting until after harvest, when I hope to be ensconced in a hotel suite for a few days.

As if life isn't hairy enough around here, Roy decided to run in this fall's municipal election. It's the same position I held 15 years ago, so I know whereof I speak. I could have tweaked the voter list I created for him or planned the menu for the election night (victory?) party, but I didn't.

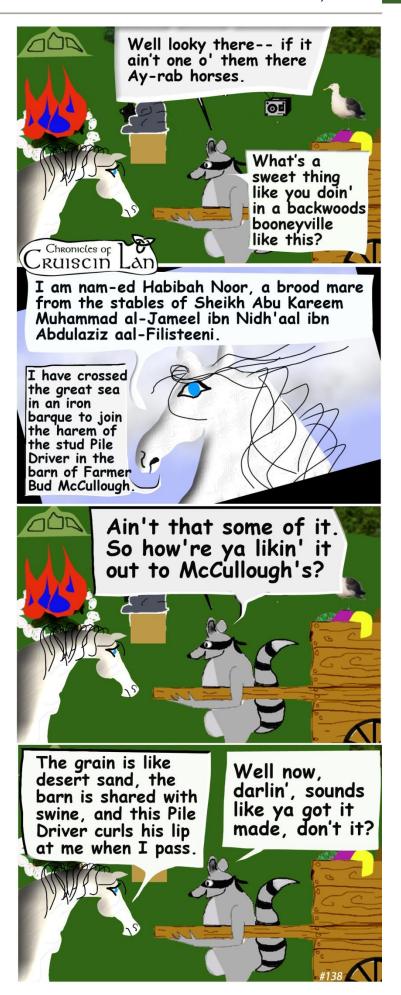
Instead, I spent way too long on the Internet googling some old mining company shares that my mom gave to me several years ago after my dad's death. Ten shares issued November 26, 1934, for North West Minerals Ltd. The receipt for \$2.50 (completed in pencil) and accompanying letters speak to a time long ago when a Robert Muir put a piece of paper in a typewriter

and wrote things like "We beg to acknowledge with thanks receipt of your....." or "Official receipt is herewith enclosed...." or "We wish to thank you for the favour of this business once again, and shall have you kept posted on the progress of the Company's affairs. Very truly yours." Phone numbers on the letterhead are five digits long, not ten. Both the spelling of dad's surname and the name of the hamlet he grew up near have changed in subsequent years.

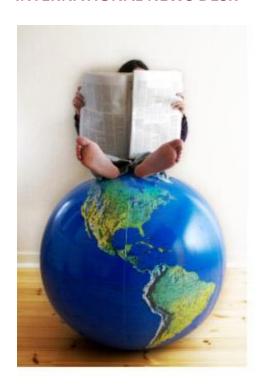
Because I goofed off this afternoon, I now know that scripophily is the hobby of collecting old share certificates and is big business. Is this share certificate worth the paper it's written on? Am I once and for all finally rich? I couldn't find any free answer to those questions, so I'm sending off \$40 to a place in Virginia to research it for me. I expect the only value is the historic value of the papers. So far, my dad and I are into this for \$42.50 and 76 years. What's another few weeks to wait for the report, from where I sit.

# The Chronicles of Cruiscin Lan

Wanda Waterman St. Louis



#### INTERNATIONAL NEWS DESK



#### At Home: Bilingual

Want a raise? Consider learning a second language; a recent study from the University of Guelph found that bilingual Canadians do better on the salary scale than those who speak only English or only French.

As *The Globe and Mail* reports, a second language means a higher income, and "you don't necessarily have to use a second language on the job to reap the financial rewards."

Researchers discovered that bilingual men living in areas of Canada other than Quebec make on average 3.8 per cent more than those who only speak one language; women who speak both French and English do even better, earning 6.6 per cent more than unilingual women. The figures are slightly higher for residents of Quebec.

But although working a bilingual job can mean a further salary increase in Quebec, for the rest of Canada, "it makes no significant difference." Regardless of whether French is actually used in the

workplace, the salary still remains higher for those who speak it than for those fluent in English only.

Why? According to Dr. Christofides, who co-authored the study, knowledge of a second language is often seen as indicative of certain positive personality traits. As he told reporters, employers "would see a [bilingual] person who is 'able' or 'sensitive' or 'has good social skills'."

#### **Around the World: Adapting Seeds**

It's no surprise that farmers need to be protected from weather extremes. After all, droughts, hurricanes, and other severe weather wreak havoc on crops—and by extension, affect both world economy and global poverty. The solution, however, may be found close to the source: the seeds.

As *The Washington Post* reports, scientists are discovering that ancient strains of wheat and corn are more adaptable to extreme temperatures and weather phenomena. Research near Mexico City has revealed that "ancient wheat varieties have particular drought- and heat-resistant traits, including longer roots that suck up water and a capacity to store more nutrients in their stalks."

The International Maize and Wheat Improvement Center in El Batan, Mexico, plans to use the strains to help develop varieties of wheat that will be more adaptable to future droughts or temperature increases. It maintains a seed bank to store possibilities.

It's not a foolproof solution. Farmers are cautioned that even the hardiest varieties "will fail unless [they] adopt methods of conserving water and recovering depleted soil."

However, the outlook is good. As the seed bank's Thomas Payne told reporters, "Many of these land races have been around for tens of thousands, if not millions, of years and have lived through wide variations in the climate."

#### **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.

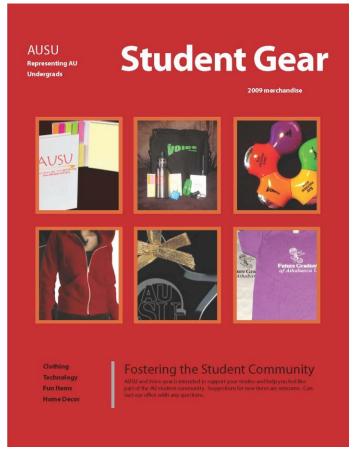
#### **SmartDraw Program Renewal**

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.



## **CLASSIFIEDS**

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### THE VOICE

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