

# THE VOICE

## MAGAZINE

Vol 18 Iss 41 2010-10-15

### Human Nature

Cracking the code

### Drop in the Bucket

Power of a million

### Canadian Poetry

In search of an identity

*Plus: From Where I Sit,  
Click of the Wrist, 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.



## IN REVIEW

Tamra Ross

Nature, Nurture, and Human Nature: Vincenzo Natali's *Splice*

Photo courtesy of eOne Films

As a horror fan, I've bemoaned the recent spate of huge-scope, quasi-horror flicks that focus too intently on action and external forces. For me, the demarcation line between horror and sci-fi is clear: horror is intimate, often uncomfortably so, while sci-fi is broad and sometimes aloof. Most of the great horror masterpieces (there are many, but anything by Hitchcock, Carpenter's *The Thing*, Clive Barker's films, *Jeepers Creepers*, Cronenberg and Romero's oeuvre, the first *Saw* film, and all but the Will Smith version of *The Last Man on Earth* novella come to mind) are emotional pressure cookers in which characters are tensely bundled in remote places or in literal or metaphorical cages. Monsters may abound—in Romero's work, zombies literally subsume the seething human mass, leaving few survivors—but it is the intimately, sometimes excruciatingly so, examined reactions of a small group of people that drive the story.

Today's horror too often includes car chases, wire fighting, earth-shattering disasters, and military intervention. The massive scope provides well-funded filmmakers with boundless opportunities to show off their effects' prowess, but the films remain wholly unsatisfying to the horror audience.

Canadian director Vincenzo Natali, however, is an old school horror director, even if his films aren't always categorized within the genre. It's in his approach; Natali seems to have learned from the best, and to have created a unique style that is both referential of the past masters and refreshingly unique.

I became a fan of the director with his first feature, *Cube*. The micro-budget surreal horror film was one of the most unique, startling, and stylish films of the late 90s. In *Cube*, a small group of strangers awakens in a nightmarish configuration with only one apparent purpose: to grotesquely kill everyone who tries to escape. How the group coalesces, fractures, grasps at, and rejects each other is the core of the story.

Natali's second release, *Nothing*, is considerably more surreal. The film is more black comedy than horror, but the isolation is more intense, with a focus on only two characters, who literally warp out of the known world to find that their home is the only place that exists. Again, characters startlingly awaken in a world removed from all human, social, and national contexts, where the only salvage is the moral and emotional (in)stability of their own minds.

This week, I had the opportunity to preview the DVD release of *Splice*, Natali's latest, and highest-budget, film. From the advertising, I was concerned it would be too similar to *Species*, a more conventional action-horror hybrid (pun intended) that worked, but which has already been imitated many times. *Splice*, however, is co-produced



Vincenzo Natali on the set of *Splice*.  
Photo courtesy of E1 Entertainment.



by Guillermo Del Toro, the Spanish director of some of the most brilliant, moving, and surreal horror films of the last 15 years. Fortunately, the input of these two individualistic directors overcame the pressures of the Hollywood machine, and produced a film that retains the intimacy and power of great horror, and, not incidentally, the best of independent Canadian filmmaking.

*Splice* has a slightly larger cast than *Cube* or *Nothing*, but all but the two main characters are peripheral. Isolated by a shared secret, Clive and Elsa—the rock stars of the genetic splicing biz—must come to terms with the responsibilities of having created a hybridized human on a scientific whim. Working outside of scientific ethics and the direction of their sponsors, the two have no moral resources to consult when they find they are unable to cope with the increasing demands of their growing experiment and the reality that what they have created is not quite, but almost, a human being.



*Adrien Brody & Sarah Polley as Clive & Elsa.  
Photo courtesy of E1 Entertainment.*

I say almost because Dren, their creation, is as endearingly human as she is naively animal and malignly alien. Her greatest handicap, however, is that she ages to adulthood in a matter of days, gaining what appears to be full adult intelligence, with very little experiential or emotional learning to help her contextualize her world or her role in relation to other intelligent beings. For Elsa and Clive, she is too human to be destroyed, and too monstrous to be released, so their dilemma is how to be humane while protecting humanity and their own very human choices.

You may view *Splice* as simply a retelling of the Frankenstein myth—which it is—but Natali's version goes deeper. Wisely, he's sheared his Dr. Frankenstein into a pair of creators; one of each gender, co-workers, lovers, and business partners, startlingly similar, but always complementing each other emotionally and acting alternately as yin and yang.

Adrien Brody and Sarah Polley have great chemistry in this film, and are convincing as the talented but sheltered team of self-professed science nerds who hide deep insecurities behind a facade of pop culture iconicity (as the film opens, we learn that the pair is featured on the cover of *Wired* magazine). They are each other's only moral compass, yet too similar and confused to be of much assistance when Dren becomes sometimes impossible to classify. Their inner turmoil is influenced as much by each other as by the culminating pressures of the outside world and the rapidly growing creature (child) in their lab.

*Splice* is intriguing because there is no black and white. None of the characters are particularly evil or single-purposed, but all have moments of both humanity and scientific or business-like detachment. I liked that these are characters whose motivations I can understand and that the audience is left to judge right and wrong.

*Splice is intriguing  
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and white . . . the  
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right and wrong.*

An interesting undercurrent in *Splice* is the legacy of child abuse, revealed through Elsa's vacillation between tender nurturing and crushing, cold-hearted control of her progeny. The nature vs. nurture question follows: is Dren increasingly difficult to control because it is her nature, or is she reacting to the chaos emanating from her panicked, damaged parents?

What is most intriguing for me is that this is one of the few films that questions our illogical fondness for splicing our own genetic material. Collectively, we idealize the act of creating new humans, even if the world has plenty and there are many genetically unrelated children in need of homes. It's something I've often considered and discussed with friends, but *Natali* takes the concept further by completely confounding the "natural" human procreative process with the scientific one.

The discussion would not be complete, however, without giving due to the film's jaw-dropping effects. But these effects are not obvious mind-blowers that take you out of the story and leave you agape. *Splice* uses technology in a very different way; its effects are so seamless, realistic, and judiciously used that it's easy to believe that its improbable creature exists.

I found *Splice* to be a highly enjoyable film that left me thinking. For fans of Natali, it is a great extension of his work, incorporating a higher budget and spectacular effects without losing the human element for which he is known. I call *Splice* a horror film because of the boundaries that it crosses and the wrenching decisions that the scientists must make concerning their creation (albeit, in the end, a decision is made for them). That said, relative to most modern horror, it's light on the violence and blood and suitable for most mature audiences. Be warned, though: *Splice* does ask you to confront some deep-seated feelings about procreation, children, abortion, and how to determine when something has a right to be called alive, or human.

No, it is not always an easy film to watch. Too often you aren't sure what you feel, or should feel, and there is no tidy resolution. But it is a film to ponder, discuss, argue over, and watch again.

## GREEN LIGHT

Christina M. Frey

### A Million Chances: A New Online Model



Ever felt as though the weight of the world rested on your shoulders?

It happens oftener than we'd like. The closed-in world created in part by our obsession with online media frequently makes us feel as though we're operating in a vacuum. One area in which this is particularly discouraging is the environmental movement.

It's easy to respond with our best ostrich imitation. Results are impossible for us to detect, so we don't have that reinforcement of success—or of improvement—to keep us going. And then we fall off the wagon, only to climb back on and off again as we become alternately inspired and discouraged.

But that would be a mistake. Sure, recycling that lone Coke can probably won't, on its own, make a huge difference to the planet and to our human condition. But what would happen if a million people got together for the good, making small lifestyle changes in the hopes of making a collective difference?

That's the philosophy behind the innovative [One Million Acts of Green](#), a worldwide phenomenon celebrating its second anniversary this month.

One Million Acts of Green (OMAOG) is essentially an online global gathering space for those interested in making a difference to the environment. Users can create a profile, and then pledge to complete (or actually complete) small actions or lifestyle changes that can have a collective impact on the planet's health. Acts can be as simple as using a power bar or only running the dishwasher when it's full, or as complex as installing solar panels—and everything in between.

When you complete an act, your score goes up. But better yet, so does the collective score: users can see how many acts have been completed, how much carbon dioxide emissions have been saved, and what the equivalence is in terms of large-scale environmental action.

For example, at the time of writing, nearly 4 million “green” acts had been done worldwide. And almost 440 million kg of greenhouse gases had been saved—the equivalent, according to the site, of “taking 93,182 cars off the road for an entire year” or “planting 439,820 trees.”



The power of unity is stunning, isn't it?

If you find it difficult to self-motivate, OMAOG offers the opportunity to join or start a group. And if competition is your thing, there's also a place where you can challenge other individuals or other groups. It's co-operative competition at its best.

One of the things that excites me the most about OMAOG, though, is the possibilities that this model presents. The program brings together some of the best elements of social media and avoids some of its worst pitfalls. But most importantly, it facilitates outward action—an application of principles to real life.

Too often, social media and other online communication spaces become outlets of shameless self-promotion or narcissistic navel-gazing. Even at their best, they reinforce the insular loneliness of online society; users are certainly communicating, debating, and soapbox posturing, but it's all in the machine.

Here, the difference is striking. While there's certainly room for vanity, or online escapism, “playing the game” involves something outside ourselves and the smallness of the online world. And even when an individual gets involved for selfish reasons—say, for example, to show family, friends, or strangers that he's “greener” than they are—the world still gains.

OMAOG is helping the future of humanity in a sphere beyond the influence of greenhouse gases: it promotes a realistic way to make a change. It shows that different nations, creeds, and personalities can indeed join



in an effort to improve each person's local community and by extension, the whole world. And yet it seamlessly integrates our desire for online interaction and fulfillment with our ingrained need to make a difference.

I hope that the initiative will inspire the creation of more outside-focused media. As a wise wizard once said, “The smallest person can change the course of history.” By participating in A Million Acts of Green or similar initiatives, we're changing the course of the future—one act at a time.





Album: Binobin, Mektoub

November 2010

**Musicians:** Adlane DeFouad, Badr DeFouad, Val Valentine, Adam Borek, Yves Teslar, Didier Marty, Christophe Dutray, Gilles Pausanias, JP Melindji.

**Guest musicians:** Manu Dibango, Thierry “Titi” Robin.

**Where Middle East Meets West and Dances to the Tune of Many Different Drums**

*“ . . . Binobin . . . have at last found a musical elsewhere where they don’t have to choose between their multiple cultures. Where bendirs and karkabous have no need for visas to jam with guitars and saxophones.”*

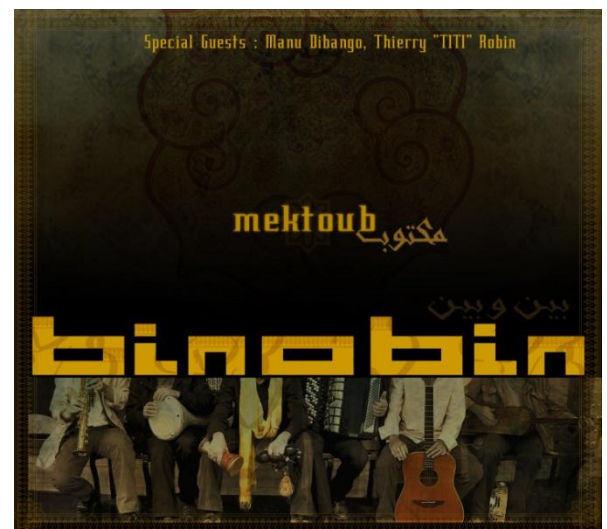
Binobin’s website

The statement above is a declaration of creative victory, the kind of triumph experienced by artists who have accepted their own ethnic identities in spite of a world that may not be able to make sense of those identities just yet.

For artists who have had any amount of vocational success, there is often a leap to be made between the stream in which they were spawned and the more oceanic arts world. Exiles are keenly aware of this, but so are those who must move back and forth between the two worlds. Robert Burns was perpetually torn between the rugged Scottish countryside and the salons of London, never feeling one hundred per cent content in either.

This sense of not quite *fitting* in either of two worlds is summed up by the name of “Binobin,” a France-based Moroccan group whose Arabic name means “the space in between” (or alternatively, “not quite complete”). It’s a metaphor which sparks allusions to the experiences of not only artists, but also of outsiders of every variety.

The group’s Moroccan roots show in the Gnawa rhythms as well as in the instrumentation—the 10 band members play taarija, darbouka, bendir, karkabous, and tbilat, and do rhythmic hand-clapping (which in Morocco has musical instrument status in itself) in addition to accordion, guitar, and tenor sax. But the group also pays loving tribute to musical genres and categories the whole world has welcomed, including reggae, Latin, klezmer, gypsy jazz, sub-Saharan African, and West Indian music.





Binobin has had a tremendous amount of experience playing live, and every track is an engaging party tune. A first listen to almost any track on this album will crack you up—the Zappaesque hoots, shouts, crazy beats, and other anomalous noises make you feel like you’re in a busy market in Marrakesh or listening to a rhythm band for hyperactive children.

But the song lyrics cast a longing eye back to simple, peaceful village life and suggest the anxieties and humiliations that await the immigrant. The title track, “Mektoub” (meaning “destiny” in Arabic), announces a purely fatalistic view of life.

The lyrics on *Mektoub* convey the sense of loss of identity that comes from feeling stuck between two worlds and not really a part of either one, stretched between home and adventure, between the regional and the international, between the community and the solitary life of the artist who is very aware of his or her integral uniqueness.

*Mektoub* is Binobin’s sophomore album.

*This review would not have been complete without the help of Taha Rhili of Redeyef, Tunisia.*



### DID YOU KNOW? iTunes U

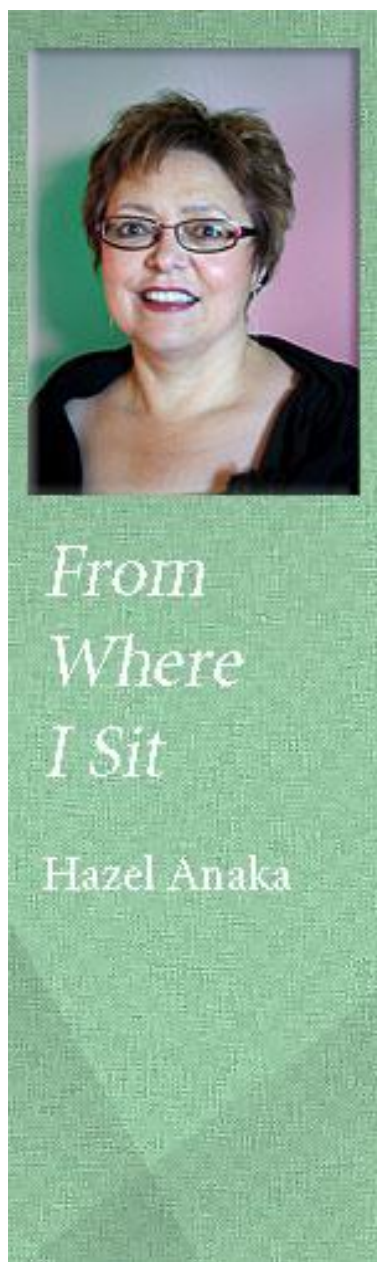
Think iTunes is just a music store? Think again. The online content giant now also offers [iTunes U](#), a fantastic resource that contains a wealth of free learning materials.

Over 300 universities, including big-name schools like Oxford, Cambridge, and Yale, have created publicly accessible course materials in a wide variety of media. Video lectures, audiobooks, films, slideshows, and even video tours are among the multimedia available. And topics range from

creating business plans to programming iPhone apps to investigating the ancient world to learning a new language—and much more.

It goes beyond the classroom, too: there are museums, libraries, and a host of art, music, and programming to explore. Under the “Beyond U” tab, users “can access a wealth of content from distinguished entities such as MoMA, the New York Public Library, Public Radio International, and PBS stations.”

The iTunes software can be downloaded for free onto your computer. Alternatively, you can integrate iTunes U with your iPod or smart phone, making learning on the go easier than ever.



## Radio Days and Nights

For the past several days and until the rain stopped our harvest efforts, I was operating our John Deere 7720 combine. It is hydrostatic, which allows me to control my forward and backward movement without having to step on a clutch pedal and change gears. This is a blessing when operating the machine for 10 or 11 hours straight. It also means it's the best combine of the three that we own.

What's even more desirable about my combine is the fact the radio works. In the other combines, static is the most likely result when you turn on the radio. And as maddening as that was, in past years I just accepted the fact. Without the distraction of the radio, after a few hours I would enter that sweet meditative state where creative thoughts bubble to the surface of one's consciousness. In fact, I carried a tiny notebook and pen to capture those brilliant ideas. The fact that I never went back to the notebook to use those ideas seemed immaterial. It was the act that mattered, not the result.

I should confess that I'm a fair weather radio listener, more likely to tune in when winning a trip to Mexico is at stake. Otherwise, I can go for months without bothering. I especially hate the on-location broadcasts from car dealerships and hot tub places. I turn to *Canada AM* for my morning news. I usually drive in silence to tap into quiet thinking time.

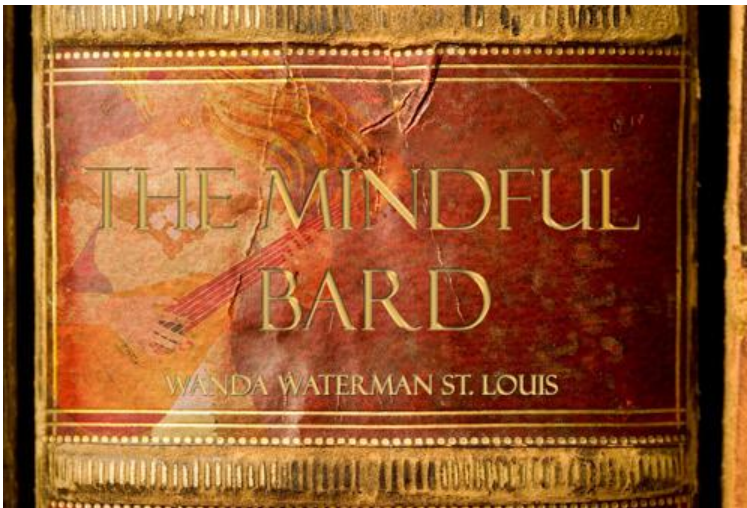
So I was surprised to discover how much I enjoyed those days and nights of CBC Radio. It is commercial-free; thanks, I guess, to all those "government handouts" that drive most Canadians crazy. CBC bashing has traditionally been a national pastime.

Prior to this, I was neither friend nor foe of the national corporation. I'm not sure how I've changed, but I was impressed. In an era of 30-second sound bites and superficial tickling of deep issues by most news outlets, CBC Radio can spend a full hour of airtime on a single topic. Those topics are nowhere

near "front of mind" for other news agencies, media, or probably most Canadians, but they're worthy of exploration nonetheless.

Here's some of what I heard above the din of my John Deere. I learned that the thawing of the permafrost is exposing the remains of thousands of woolly mammoths in Russia and Canada. The hope is that the 12-foot tusks retrieved from each animal will replace the trafficking of elephant ivory. I heard about parasitic worms that invade snails. About kinky fruit bat sex. About how migratory birds and bats have smaller brains than their counterparts who don't travel huge distances. I heard comedians debate the merits of Scrabble versus Monopoly, the concept of lowering the drinking age, and the merits of mustachioed men.

I was captivated as brain scientist Jill Bolte Taylor relived the story of her catastrophic stroke at age 37. Her book, *My Stroke of Insight*, is now on my Christmas wish list. Thank you, CBC, for tackling the significant, the offbeat, the quirky. It's great radio, from where I sit.



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

### On Canadian Poetry, Part II

It's no secret that Canada has not quite come into its own regarding the creation of a body of literature to rival that of older nations. (I am excluding Leonard Cohen from this equation because he achieved fame more as a singer-songwriter than as a poet per se, and is one of those rare poets whose poems can easily make the transition from page to stage.) Northrop Frye, who has so much to add to this debate,

suggested that Canadian poets retained a "garrison mentality" that somehow limited the scope of their art.

But let's not be too hard on ourselves. Remember, we are a young country, 143 years at last count, and our population is only about a tenth that of the United States (which makes our number of music and show business personalities per capita seem pretty phenomenal). And although many Canadian poets do not seem inclined to break new ground, our culture does not demand startling innovations from us. Compared to the United States, we are a culture of moderation and forethought, not brainstorming or zealotry.

This in itself does not doom us, culturally. But we need to stop seeing our literature as either a set of ethnic solitudes or an elitist, exclusionary hierarchy; we need to recognize literature as a network of consciousnesses that are all, in their way, significant to the culture at large. If we could do this, we might not be so tempted to silence the rabble and laud the conqueror. We might even end up with a national aesthetic whose vibrant flux and flow would enrich the world for generations.

But there's more to it than just a nurturing of the urge to create poems. As you may have guessed, the aesthetic of the Mindful Bard includes a degree of social concern. It advocates responding with compassion to the suffering in the world, but not dissipating one's energies in thoughtless activism. The Bard also believes in incorporating social concern into one's art insofar as this does not diminish the integrity of the art as such.

Many with taste will beg to differ with the Mindful Bard picks for the 10 most significant Canadian poets. But remember that these are the personal tastes of a former English major who skipped classes to hang out at the campus radio station, and hardly an educated survey of Canadian poetry. See it as one more example of bad taste bullying pedantry.

Two of these are singer-songwriters, and one of them simply wrote doggerel. T.S. Elliot be damned; poetry should not be difficult. Neither should it be easy. Poetry is one place where "shoulds" really don't belong.

These poets were chosen because they helped shape the northern cultural consciousness, their verse having resonated so often for so many regarding what it is like in this particular time and space. I know there must be other poets in the country's history who would



be Bard picks, but it's up to you, gentle reader, to inform me of their names.

The list: Émile Nelligan, Robert Service, Leonard Cohen, Marie-Claire Blais, Rita Joe, Joni Mitchell, Mark Strand, Michael Ondaatje, George Elliott Clarke, and John Wall Barger.

Now read them, and figure out why they are on this list.

*(This article was inspired by a question from Hasmik Khechikyan of Armenia.)*

## CLICK OF THE WRIST: Switched At Birth

As Halloween approaches, theatres fill with horror films and sinister events transpire on TV series. Currently appearing on a popular hit show is an instance of babies switched at birth, a creepy plot device that's popped up in literature, television, and film for many years. But although it's uncommon in the real world, it has happened—and the discovery, and resulting emotional trauma, create a chill worthy of any spooky film.

### Should Be A Movie

The tragic saga of Rebecca Chittum and Callie Conley is reality, but it sounds like the stuff of movies and literature. Shortly after Rebecca's young parents were killed in a car accident, the family discovered that the three-year-old was not a biological grandchild. Ten years of heart-wrenching family and courtroom drama later, the girls were largely remaining with the families that had originally raised them.

### The Florida Case

The sad story of Kimberly Mays and Arlena Twigg was later made into a TV movie, but the facts speak volumes on their own. The two baby girls were switched due to a hospital error, but there was an additional catch: Arlena had died during an operation when she was 10 years old (during which time the Twiggs found out that she was not biologically theirs). The courts became increasingly involved when a then teenaged Kimberly sued to remove her biological parents from her life. *The New York Times* has the story.

### Mama Knows

One of the creepier switched-at-birth tales involves a mother who knew about the switch—and watched her biological daughter grow up in the same small town as the child she raised as her own. Yet she didn't tell anyone of the mix-up for over 40 years. This hour-long radio broadcast, courtesy of Chicago Public Radio's show "This American Life," brings multiple perspectives to the strange story.

### After Many Years

The ending doesn't always have to be unhappy. This *Good Morning America* story introduces two women who were switched at birth but who didn't discover the mistake until they were 56 years old. It wasn't easy at first, but now they're trying to put the past behind them. In fact, they're working at joining their families together in an attempt to put nature and nurture into harmony again.





## INTERNATIONAL NEWS DESK



### At Home: Online Vigilantism

Store owners who are victims of theft often turn to technology to prevent further crimes, but surveillance videos can only take them so far. The videos allow viewers to watch crimes unfold, but although suspects can be seen and described, positive identification is a little more difficult.

For a Summerside, P.E.I., jeweller, the solution was simple: get better technology. As the CBC [reports](#), Philip Sullivan had “been robbed before” with “nothing . . . recovered,” so when a \$3,000 gold chain was stolen from his store, he decided to take his problems online.

The shop owner posted the four-minute surveillance video, with “supertitles describing the robbery,” on YouTube in September. He also “posted pictures of three people in the video” on Facebook, and sent the photos to the local BIA and chamber of commerce.

Apparently, it worked; this week, the police arrested a 21-year-old man for the necklace’s theft.

Years ago, “Wanted” notices were posted in public places; now, public has taken on a whole new meaning. Call it signs of the times.

### Around the World: Good Gossip

Your mother told you not to gossip, but it turns out that she may have been . . . wrong? Or perhaps, more accurately, she was only half-right.

As *The New York Times* [reports](#), a recent study shows that gossip can not only be harmless, it can actually benefit the gossiper’s personal and emotional well-being. However, certain types of gossip have a negative effect—and not just on the person being talked about.

The study, partly authored by a social psychologist, found that those who spoke about others but had “something nice to say” had a rise in positive emotions and self-esteem. The gossipers also experienced a lowering of negative emotions. The increase and decrease were minor, but noticeable.

However, the findings also demonstrate that negative gossiping has the opposite effect on the person who’s doing the criticizing, and the results are significant enough to give weight to the claim. For those spreading mean gossip, positive emotions decreased by 16 per cent and negative emotions increased by a whopping 34 per cent.

As Judith Martin (a.k.a. Miss Manners) told reporters, “We’re all gossipers . . . we bond that way . . . but [those] who spread malicious gossip are despicable.” It seems like the negative gossipers have already figured that out.

## 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.



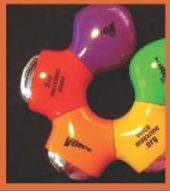



For any course that requires charts that cannot be easily created in Word or Excel, this should be a real time saver and make it easier to submit all portions of an assignment by email.

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.

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Undergrads

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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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## THE VOICE

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