

# THE VOICE

## MAGAZINE

Vol 18 Iss 43 2010-10-29

### Tricks or treats?

Bringing back the magic

### Book Box

Libraries on the go

### Float and Fall

Meklit Hadero



*Plus: Voix du Maghreb, Cruiscin Lan,  
From Where I Sit, and much more . . .*

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# LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

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



## BAG OF TRICKS

Maxie van Roye



Evening falls. You're settling down to a quiet night in front of the fire, when a couple of masked thugs show up at your door. You open it, and they accost you with demands and threats: give us what we want, or you'll be sorry. Do you slam the door? Do you call the police? Are we talking about an Orwellian future?

No indeed; you dole out a handful of candy into a smiling pumpkin or orange-patterned sack. Then you send the trick-or-treaters on their merry way to take their threats to the house next door.

But wait a second. Isn't this Halloween we're talking about? Shouldn't this night be all about the scary and the surprising? The ghostly and ghastly? The unexpected? If so, why are we letting them off so easily?

Halloween has gotten soft in its old age. Everything's "scary fun" this and "spooky treats" that. It's all too cute, all too tame.

It's all too boring—frightfully so. This year, I want to bring the magic back. Why not make it a night everyone will remember . . . possibly in their nightmares?

Modern kids are too savvy to be taken in by the usual "spooky" décor—plastic, cauldron-stirring witches or cackling ghouls that grow in a box on department store shelves. It's time to bring some real thrills to the mix.

Let the kids ring the doorbell in vain. Then, when they turn away, disappointed, I'll jump out of the bushes with a ghostly yell, looking my werewolf best. I'll attempt to offer candy in the direction of the rapidly fleeing screams, but it might be a lost cause. Plus, who takes treats from a werewolf?

Or perhaps, I'll open the door with a sweet smile. But instead of little boxes of oversugared pellets, I'll use empty candy boxes for eerie notes advising the recipient, in spidery written-by-a-mummy script, that "We are watching you," or to "Take care—she will enter your bedroom at the midnight hour."

And to think the parents will blame the resulting sleeplessness on too much candy.

Maybe I'll offer the trick-or-treaters the treat basket—and let their candy-grabbing set off a motion-triggered toy spider. Or better yet, I'll slip a rubber cockroach into the treat bag. Of course, that might cause parental coronaries.

But hey, why not spread the Halloween spirit to the whole family?

Because scares are for adults, too. And what better way to ensure heart palpitations in the grown-up crowd than by dropping authentic-looking tax arrears notices in their mailboxes? Double points if one of my neighbours actually *is* in arrears.

Of course, the best tricks I'll reserve for the trick-or-teens who slouch up to the door. You know, the 15-year-olds who are far too cool to actually don a costume, but who are definitely not too cool to con the neighbours for free treats. I have a lovely collection of candy-wrapped toothbrushes waiting just for them.

I'm dreaming of a truly tricky Halloween . . .





## Entretien avec Jasser Haj Youssef, 2e partie

Violoniste virtuose, compositeur, professeur et chercheur, Jasser Haj Youssef est ce musicien tunisien qui, le premier, a introduit la viole d'amour (violon baroque muni de cordes sympathiques) dans la musique arabe. Résidant à présent en France, sa carrière lui a permis de partager la scène avec Cheikha Rimitti, Karim Ziad, Barbara Hendricks et bien d'autres musiciens remarquables. Ayant étudié au cours de ses études doctorales les similitudes entre les improvisations de la musique arabe et celles du jazz, il a également contribué de manière significative à la fusion du jazz et de la musique arabe. Dernièrement, Jasser a pris le temps de parler de sa formation et de ses influences musicales avec Wanda Waterman St. Louis (Lire la première partie de l'entretien).

**Quels sont les différents genres musicaux qui ont influencé votre style ?**

Mon jeu est le résultat d'un métissage de plusieurs cultures musicales : il y a la culture arabe due à mes origines tunisiennes, il y a les cultures orientales (turque et indienne) venues suite à mes recherches modales et rythmiques. Dans mon jeu, il y a aussi des influences de la musique classique (Bach, Mozart, Debussy) et des influences afro-américaines grâce aux nombreuses rencontres avec des jazzmen. Il y a aussi des emprunts à la musique irlandaise, africaine et latine, par amour pour ces grandes cultures.

Toutes ces influences font que j'ai un son proche de la voix humaine et un jeu proche de plusieurs cultures à la fois.

**En quoi vous sentez-vous le mélange de différents genres musicaux ?**

Le métissage fait partie de mon identité. J'aime la rencontre des musiques lorsqu'elle est bien étudiée et loin des buts commerciaux.

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

J'aime bien marcher au bord de la mer. Ça libère mes idées et sentiments. J'adore aussi le café et le chocolat. Ça donne de l'énergie !



*Above: Jasser Haj Youssef.  
Photo: Fabien Lemaire.*

**Quelles pensées et quels sentiments le nom « Tunisie » évoque-t-il pour vous ?**

La Tunisie évoque pour moi l'amour, la nostalgie et l'inquiétude.

**Votre conscience sociale a-t-elle une influence quelconque sur votre travail ?**

Évidemment ! Ce qui se passe dans la société m'inspire beaucoup et oriente mon travail vers des directions artistiques que j'assume de plus en plus. La présence de la musique africaine, par exemple, dans ma musique est probablement due à ma sensibilité à cette culture et à l'histoire de son peuple qui attend toujours une reconnaissance.



**La vie de musicien a-t-elle eu une incidence sur votre conscience sociale ? Vous a-t-elle ouvert les yeux sur des choses que vous ne remarquiez pas avant ?**

Être artiste développe en nous une responsabilité et un engagement envers la société. Cela nous pousse à bien réfléchir à ce qui se passe dans notre vie, pour participer activement à la construction de notre société.

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

La paix, la tolérance et le respect de l'autre sont mes seules croyances politiques et religieuses. Cela s'entend dans ma musique qui rassemble des artistes d'origines, de religions et de croyances différentes.

**Quelle musique avez-vous écoutée cette semaine, en dehors de la vôtre ?**

Des chansons turques de Bülent Ersoy, des pièces pour viole de gambe (Marin Marais et Diego Ortiz), des chants sacrés de Bruckner et j'ai assisté à un concert de jazz afro-cubain de Chucho Valdés et Arshie Shepp.

## Green Light

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



### Greenwashing

Green is the new, well, everything, and nowhere is this more obvious than in the plethora of “earth-friendly” products now available. But isn't this a good development, giving us the opportunity to make a difference in our everyday lives?

As the [CBC reports](#), maybe not. A recent study of Canadian and American products suggests that 95 per cent of those earth-loving labels may actually be misleading.

It's a phenomenon called “greenwashing.” Manufacturers who claim their products are green are failing to give the whole picture. Instead, they claim earth-friendliness because of one attempt at sustainability, while ignoring the other pollution they create. Or, they make “vague, irrelevant or unproven claims.”

Anyone can say their product is green, but not all have the facts to back it up. *Caveat emptor.*



## From Where I Sit

Hazel Anaka

### Survival Kit

The village I live near has a population of less than 500. The school, which houses kindergarten to grade 12, has a combined population of around 200. In that context, it shouldn't surprise anyone that the high school graduation class numbers anywhere from 12 to 15 kids.

Yet it's a big deal. The local weekly newspaper will provide multi-page coverage of the graduation exercises. There will be a cover story, centrefold pages with each graduate's formal gown photo, congratulatory ads from everyone from the provincial premier (who also happens to be our MLA) to local businesses, and a recap of the speeches. The graduation exercises have *always* been held in September because by then all the provincial grades are in, the marks are tallied, and there is no doubt that each student on the stage has earned the required number of credits to graduate. Yes, it can be a drag for proud parents and others to stop harvest efforts to celebrate this milestone. Yes, the grad parties around here are over-the-top in terms of size, expense, and gifts received. Today's grads receive gifts that used to be given at weddings. But I digress.

It was through newspaper coverage of this year's graduation ceremony that I stumbled on the notion of a survival kit. The valedictorian had stolen the idea from her dance teacher, who had no doubt stolen it from someone else. Well, dear reader, the larceny continues . . . with my own twist on things.

Every survival kit should include these eight items:

- A picture of The Duck (my hometown, Andrew, is home to a statue of the world's largest mallard): this item is a reminder of our roots. No matter how big or small, how metropolitan or backwoods, our home community shapes us and leaves its mark. Cherish that.

- A postage stamp: to be used to recapture the lost art of letter writing.

Write to thank someone who has helped or inspired you.

- A packet of sugar: a reminder to look for the sweet in ourselves and others, and to look for the blessing, the gift, the silver lining—because it always exists.
- An eraser: through our mistakes comes the biggest learning. An eraser gives us permission to fearlessly “go for it,” because there are always do-overs.
- A pencil. Or pen or crayon or brush or keyboard to identify and record our blessings.
- A Band-Aid: to be used to heal hurts, and as a metaphor for self-care.



- A rubber band: a reminder to be flexible to prevent breakage of one's spirit, and to be resilient when things knock us flat and we need to start again.
- A toothpick: to be used to pinpoint the finest qualities in ourselves and others, but not to peck ourselves or others to death with criticism.

Snippets of wisdom are everywhere, from bumper stickers to emails to sacred texts. Our challenge individually and collectively is to consider the merits of re-examining old beliefs and adopting new ones that might serve us better. Sometimes we just need to be reminded, from I sit.

## CLICK OF THE WRIST: Candyland

One of the scariest aspects of Halloween—at least for parents and dentists—is the amount of candy that's consumed around October 31. But how do those little brightly-coloured gems make it from liquid mixture to trick-or-treat baskets? This week's links shed light behind the scenes of a few of the season's favourite treats.

### Candy Corn

The little orange, yellow, and white candies are one of the most popular fall treats, with over 20 million pounds sold this time of year. The Food Network has the story on how they're made—and what gives them their signature fluffy taste.

### Chocolate World

From bean to bar, it's a long process—but that doesn't stop chocolate from being one of the preferred snacks at Halloween (and any other time of the year). This series of short videos from The Hershey Company describes the cycle.

### Chew On This

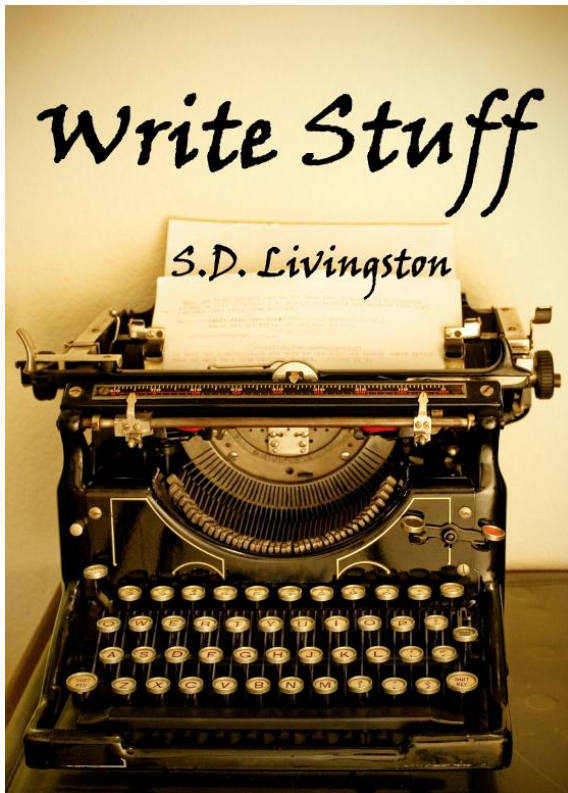
Bubble gum—particularly the old-fashioned, twist-wrapped type we see crop up at Halloween—follows a complicated manufacturing process similar to that of many modern candies. But what about its signature colour, bubble gum pink? *How It's Made*, from the Discovery Channel, has the lowdown.

### Sugar Coma

We're frequently told that candy's no good for us since it's nothing but sugar. Surprisingly, though, using only sugar won't give the taste and texture to which we've become accustomed in mass-produced sweets. The Exploratorium explains the chemistry behind candy production.







## Libraries and Lunches

At first glance, the headline in *The Wall Street Journal* is a little alarming: “New Library Technologies Dispense With Librarians.” Your immediate reaction might be to envision a future in which the community library will disappear, and reading will be reduced to the lonely glow of a million e-readers, an experience barren of human interaction.

In fact, the *WSJ* article is about an interesting new service called Library Express. A service that, for all its good points, will never replace the real thing.

Make no mistake, Library Express is a very cool idea. It’s essentially a vending machine for library books. Some locations let you pre-order online and pick up your book or DVD from a lockbox a few days later. Others are more like traditional vending machines, where you choose from items on display behind glass, then swipe your card and out pops your borrowed copy of something by, say, Bill Bryson or Emma Donoghue.

There’s plenty to like about this system. For starters, some libraries have turned to it when local budget cuts have forced them to reduce their hours. Busy commuters can also support the public library system even if work schedules or transit routes don’t permit. And if you’re a kid whose parents can’t (or won’t) take you to the library, a book kiosk nearby can sustain a love of reading.

For those who are worried that a service like Library Express signals the demise of public libraries, I have one word for you: automat. Back in the early 1900s, the automat was the wave of the future. Instead of going to a restaurant, diners would choose a meal from a wall of glass-fronted cubicles, insert their money, and enjoy fresh food (in the early days, machines were filled from a kitchen on site).

The automat has evolved into the modern vending machine (although the “fresh” aspect doesn’t play such a large part anymore), and it’s just as popular as ever. The one thing it hasn’t done, though, is replace restaurants. Or fast-food joints, or jobs for chefs and wait staff.

The mistake in thinking (or even suggesting) that automated book machines will replace librarians is in assuming they perform the same role. They don’t. Libraries, and librarians, offer much richer value than simply dispensing books. The Toronto Public Library is a good example. Services vary by location, but branches offer everything from appearances by popular authors to computer training to special tours for ESL groups. Your preschooler can make friends at a reading program, while older kids can enjoy everything from puppet shows to Halloween events.



Librarians themselves offer a wealth of knowledge that a book kiosk can't even begin to compete with. As professionals who must earn a diploma or degree in Library Technology and/or Information Management, librarians can find that obscure title you're hunting for, offer advice, encourage reluctant readers, and answer the thousand-and-one questions patrons might have. And that's barely scratching the surface.

It's easy to see library vending services as a threat to the living, breathing spaces of our public libraries. In reality, it's just the opposite. Not only do book kiosks add to the abundant options for readers, they also promote the library "brand." If you enjoy the books and DVDs in a machine, you'll be more likely to see what other services the library has on offer.

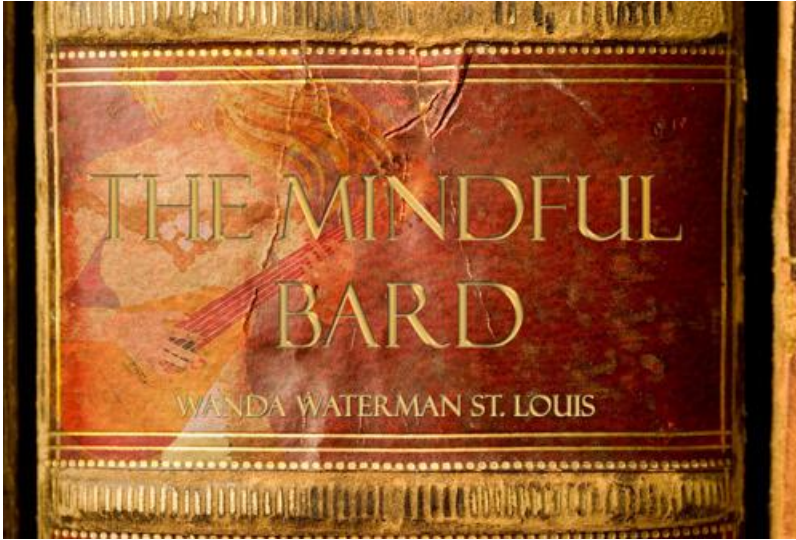
Tomorrow, I'll wander down to my local branch and return a book. While I'm at it, the librarian will probably suggest a couple of interesting titles I hadn't thought of. She might even give me a heads-up about a reading tour. At the very least, she'll spend a minute chatting, asking about my day while she scans my new titles. Show me a book-vending machine that can do that, and you may just get my attention.

## CHRONICLES OF CRUISCIN LAN

Wanda Waterman St. Louis







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

Meklit Hadero, *On a Day Like This ...*

Porto Franco Records 2010

### The Songstress With a Roadmap to the Poetic Landscape

As you may have noticed, the Bard avoids building up featured artists with comparisons to similar artists, partly because the entertainment world really milks this tactic

dry, scarcely daring to describe any new work without suggesting that it's nothing more than the sum of borrowed parts. The Bard also shuns comparisons out of respect for the distinctiveness of each performer.

But Meklit Hadero really does bear comparing to Joni Mitchell in her tender, subtle, sensitive portrayal of the vicissitudes of romantic love and other inner states. Like Joni, she's also musically innovative and embraces jazz as a medium that naturally enhances her personal style of expression.

One salient difference between Hadero and Mitchell is that Hadero's lyrical meditations dwell more on the sweet moments, the colours and scents and sounds of things, those sensory inputs that illuminate the inner cathedrals we build to house our pain and elation.

This music has the kind of jazz feel that makes you feel closely connected to 50s jazz, the beat poets, the civil rights movement, and 60s singer-songwriters. Hadero's mix of styles is a killing combination that seems at the same time artistically pure, a sign that she has remained solidly true to her own vision.

One of the few songs not written or co-written by Hadero is "Feeling Good," a song written by Newley and Bricusse and popularized by Michael Bublé. From Hadero's lips, it carries a meaning that is profound and mysterious—part lament, part anthem—and shows up her skill as a stylist. It is so hard to do this kind of thing well, but Hadero makes it all sound effortless.

The first track, "Walk Up" (the track which spawned the album's title) was actually inspired by James Turrell's installation, *Three Gems*—a "skyspace" permitting an LED-enhanced view of changes in the sky's appearance—at the de Young Museum in San Francisco: "walk up/walk up straight through the roof/straight through the hole in the ceiling/take your place in the sky . . . and you suddenly think of the kings/and the poets in the past/and how they must have felt just like this . . ."

*"the wrinkles when you smile*

*are like rings upon a tree*

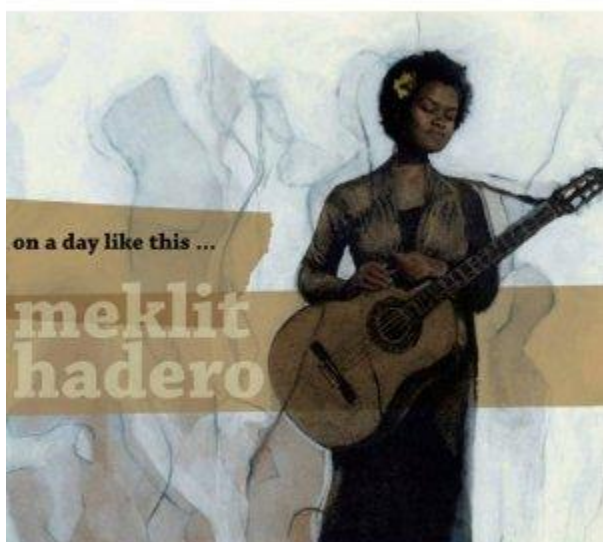
*you remind me of plane rides  
baby*

*of take-offs and landings*

*and watching the earth from  
the sky"*

Meklit Hadero, "Float and Fall"





This really is a very comforting, uplifting album in addition to being, from an artistic perspective, a perfectly precious little musical package.

*On a Day Like This ...* manifests six of The Mindful Bard's criteria for music well worth a listen: 1) it is authentic, original, and delightful; 2) it makes me want to be a better artist; 3) it displays an engagement with and compassionate response to suffering; 4) it inspires an awareness of the sanctity of creation; 5) it is about attainment of the true self; and 6) it provides respite from a sick and cruel world, a respite enabling me to renew myself for a return to mindful artistic endeavour.



### DID YOU KNOW? Write Site

As the semester progresses, assignments and essays start piling up. And although many find their coursework stimulating and rewarding, it's frequently the writing process that's the biggest challenge. But there's hope: if academic writing is your Achilles heel—or even if you just want some clarification on when to use a semicolon—consider visiting Athabasca University's Write Site, a fantastic resource offering a wide variety of writing aids.

The online resource, intended both for struggling students and for those who want a refresher, was created to “develop independent writers . . . and . . . encourage and support good student writing across the University.”

Resources range from a grammar handbook to guides on the essay writing process and the art of critical thinking and writing. There are also quizzes and drills for further practice.

In addition, Write Site offers personal assistance through its writing coach program. Students can submit a coursework assignment, and a writing coach will provide them with feedback on grammar, mechanics, organization, style, and research and critical thinking skills. Coaches will not edit assignments or comment on their content, however. Further guidelines for the Writing Coach Dropbox can be found here.



## INTERNATIONAL NEWS DESK



### At Home: Showered with Inspiration

Are you a daydreamer? Do you think up your best ideas while taking a shower or going for a run? You're not crazy—and you're not alone.

As *The Globe and Mail* [reports](#), certain settings are more conducive to creativity and invention—and it's not necessarily a quiet office with all the modern technological paraphernalia. According to scientists, activities that don't require much "concentration on any aspect of the task at hand" lend themselves easily to inspiration.

It's a function of our constantly-active brains. Scientists are now realizing that "the brain is a pro-active system that is continually at work helping us solve problems and prepare for future demands."

In other words, when we're proudly multi-tasking, our brains are so busy planning its next several moves that there's little room for the associative thought that's led to inventions and creative genius throughout history.

To encourage this type of spontaneous thought, it's recommended that we add in "a slight distraction," like music, or work to "improve . . . mood" in order to keep our focus broad and connected.

### Around the World: Group Smarts

What's smarter than a group of geniuses gathered together to solve a problem? It's not a trick question, but the answer's still a surprise.

As the *National Geographic* Daily News [reports](#), a new study suggests that the total smartness of a problem-solving group isn't the sum of its parts. In fact, that group of individual geniuses might not work as effectively as a group that "contains people who are more 'socially sensitive'" and "better able to discern emotions from people's faces."

Also higher in so-called collective intelligence: those groups where "more people . . . took turns speaking."

It's interesting research in these globalized times. As study leader, Carnegie Mellon University professor Anita Williams Woolley told reporters, "As our world becomes flatter and more interconnected, it's not as important to consider what an individual can do by themselves but what they can do collectively."

The results of the study have widespread application: from business think tanks to military strategy sessions, the possibilities are endless. It could even "help people succeed in group therapy."

But perhaps this shouldn't come as a surprise. In the natural world, animals that work together can accomplish more than those that operate solo. For example, Woolley told reporters, "ants are simple creatures but collectively can accomplish things that are amazing."

Proof that working together really expands and extends normal human limitations.

## 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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