

THE VOICE

MAGAZINE

Vol 20 Iss 03 2012-01-20

Stand Together

Hurt & responsibility

Smooth Layout

The i-magazine

Access Denied

Why we all need Wikipedia



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

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***The Voice
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www.voicemagazine.org

1213, 10011 109th St. NW
Edmonton AB
T5J 3S8

800.788.9041 ext. 2905

Email

voice@voicemagazine.org

Publisher

AU Students' Union

Editor-In-Chief

Tamra Ross

Managing Editor

Christina M. Frey

Regular Contributors

Hazel Anaka
Katie D'Souza
S.D. Livingston
Wanda Waterman

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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

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



EDITORIAL

Christina M. Frey



Access Denied

The night before the blackout protests on Wikipedia, Reddit, and other information sharing sites, a friend of mine posted the following status: “Maybe the Mayans were just predicting the blackening of Wikipedia.”

Exaggeration? Maybe not. This columnist wasn’t so far from the truth when he joked that without the online information giants, we’d be under a “‘knowledge eclipse’— no one under the age of thirty [would] know how to confirm or disprove a statement of fact.”

The truth is that we rely heavily, almost exclusively, on online sources for verification and knowledge. Whether we’re researching a project or article, locating the best deals on tablets, or just finding out when *The*

Hunger Games hits theatres, we almost always turn to the web for information.

Good or bad? That’s up for debate. Librarians decry the lost art of researching the old-fashioned way, and there’s always the concern for accuracy that led many to resist web-based research for years. On the other hand, a savvy user can weed out most of the garbage. And there’s no denying that the pervasiveness of online culture has allowed the spread of information, ideas, and even revolutions. One only need look at 2011’s Arab Spring as an example of how much social change online interaction can initiate.

It’s often been said that knowledge is power. But in today’s connected world, it’s the ability to freely access that knowledge that’s truly empowering. While we still have libraries, microfilms, DVDs, and the like, the reality is this: the quickest and most effective way to spread and share knowledge is online, through social media.

Which all makes the fuss about the proposed US anti-piracy legislation (SOPA/PIPA) particularly relevant.

For a crash course in why the legislation’s problematic, the Electronic Frontier Foundation gives the rundown. Essentially, the bills would give far-reaching powers to shut down sites that could possibly be seen as stealing information.

The problem is that it’s not limited to websites profiting from, say, the illegal pirating of movies. It could be something as simple as a blog like The Oatmeal turning a press photo into a joke, or all of YouTube being shut down because some user uploaded a video of their kid singing a song—without paying the original artist royalties. Worst of all, there’d be little to no due process for site owners once a complaint was lodged.

The stifling of free speech is always a matter for concern. But cramping the very means of communication—the *primary* means of communication these days—is altogether frightening. And while

Go Google it: the modern reality is that the Internet has become the primary source of knowledge and communication. That’s why any restrictions on this source are everyone’s concern.

this legislation is being presented before US Congress and Senate, it's still relevant for Canadians. International sites can be targeted as well, and Canadian and US users share information frequently.

In fact, because of the interconnectedness of the web, what affects a user in one country will impact others networked across the globe.

Make your views known. Spread awareness. Even if the legislation fails, stay vigilant—there are many other nations who have introduced or are introducing laws that stifle online communication. We need to be aware of the plight of all, working toward freedom of access across the globe.

It's not just a web geek thing. It doesn't matter if you don't use Wikipedia or avoid Facebook. If the proposed SOPA/PIPA legislation and similar measures aren't stopped, we could be looking at the beginning of the end of modern communication as we know it.

Maybe the Mayans were onto something after all.

CLICK OF THE WRIST

The Scott Expedition

Earlier this week marked the centennial of British explorer Robert Scott's arrival at the South Pole. His team reached the landmark just days after it had been discovered and claimed by Norwegian rival Roald Amundsen. Worse, on the ill-fated return trip, inclement weather trapped the Scott expedition just 11 miles from their next camp, and the men slowly froze and starved to death.

The Norwegian Way

Why was Amundsen's expedition successful while Scott's was doomed? The answer lies in more than just luck, according to this *National Geographic* article. Read the difference between the two explorers' approaches and decide for yourself.

Picture It

In honour of the anniversary, take a look at these rare, recently released photos of Scott's expedition. They were taken by the expedition's photographer, Herbert Ponting. While Ponting never reached the Pole—he stayed behind at the camp awaiting the others' return—this action saved his life, as Scott and his team perished on the way back to the main camp.

Read All About It

To better understand Scott and the rigours of his expedition, go straight to the source. The British Library Online has made Scott's thrilling account available online.



IN CONVERSATION WITH . . .

Wanda Waterman



Above: Ashley Callingbull (actor). Photo by: Dean Buscher.

Blackstone, Part II

Ashley Callingbull: On Playing Sheila Delaronde

***Blackstone** is a Gemini award-winning Canadian television series based on a fictitious Canadian First Nations reserve. It airs on the Aboriginal People's Television Network (APTN) and features some of the best aboriginal actors in North America. The second season premiered last week.*

Blackstone is part of the recent trend to portray the realities of reserve life and the

heroic struggles of First Nations peoples to overcome personal demons and the after-effects of years of oppression. Cast member Ashley Callingbull is an international beauty pageant winner (including Miss Canada 2010), an actress, singer, children's advocate, motivational speaker, and the niece of the late famed Cree actor Gordon Tootoosis, with whom she had the opportunity to work in the first season of Blackstone. Recently Ashley took the time to answer some of Wanda Waterman's questions about her personal struggles, her healing process, and her Blackstone character Sheila Delaronde, a young woman caught in a Romeo-and-Juliet romance with a young man from a family on the outs with her own clan.

You'd think the life of a beauty queen/actress would be a lot cushier than that of Ashley Callingbull. A rigorous schedule of pageants, appearances, and academic work sometimes leaves little time for sleep, and on the set of *Blackstone* she's often required to put on a brave face and keep on going in spite things like—well, hornet stings:

"One time Justin and [I] were walking to the set," she recounts. "I was wearing sandals, and wardrobe had put me in high pink socks—which I guess is like a fashion mistake—but I kind of liked them, so I wanted to keep them. A hornet got attracted to my socks and got under my toe and stung me over and over again.

"I had to grab the hornet, and five seconds after that I felt the pain and couldn't walk because my foot was so big and swollen. Justin had to carry me back. They told me I couldn't drive because it was my right foot." She adds sheepishly, "But I had to drive anyway, and when I was driving I kind of hit the fence."

The first episode of *Blackstone's* Season 2 aired last Tuesday, so now viewers know that it was Andy Fraser, the chief, who shot the stripper. We also know that Andy was responsible for the contaminated water supply (by virtue of a decision he made when serving a term as chief years ago). He's trying to cover up both flubs; when it comes to the tainted water, he doesn't even stop short of trying to bully a doctor into silence.

Unfortunately, sagas of corrupt chiefs who gain office by promising special favours to certain band members are all too common on a minority of reserves. Such chiefs quickly gather around themselves the right symbiosis of dishonest or weak council members to enable them to get away with murder—literally, in Andy’s case—while lining their pockets and boosting their power base.

Director Ron E. Scott has made a point of including accountability among the themes of the show. While colonialism has devastated First Nations individuals, families, and communities, there is an increasing perception among First Nations peoples of the need to take responsibility and to acknowledge that at least a few of the ongoing problems are self-generated.

“A lot of that is not because of other people,” says Ashley. “It’s because we go down the wrong paths. We get lost in the bad things that we’re doing, and it just gets worse. There’s no positive support system and if that’s not there, then we’re just going to drag ourselves down.”

She counts a lack of clear guidance as the most significant void in her early years. For this reason, she devotes a large portion of her time to speaking to children.

“When I was a child, I didn’t have anyone that was a role model for me,” she says. “I didn’t have anyone to tell me everything was going to be okay and to push me in the right direction. I felt like I had to rely on myself. I think it’s really important to give back to the children because they’re going to be our future leaders, and if you make a difference with them now they’re going to have a great future.”

Ashley knows first-hand the effect of social systems that fail to ensure the safety and well-being of children. A survivor of childhood sexual and physical abuse, she, together with her family, tried to bring the perpetrator to justice in spite of terrible opposition from the community in which they were living.

“When it happened to me it wasn’t even in my own community. This man had done the same thing to others, but they were living in fear and not saying anything. We had that whole community treating us badly because we weren’t from there, and we were being rude and mean, apparently, by going to court and trying to settle this.”

“Those were probably the worst years of my life,” Ashley says of both the abuse and the secondary trauma that came in its wake. “That’s something you don’t let go of, because you’re so young. You don’t know what’s wrong and what’s right.”

She entered counselling but gained little from it. “Therapy doesn’t help,” she says, “because they’re getting paid to listen to you, not to help you get better.”



**L-R: Ashley Callingbull (actor), Justin Rain (actor).
Photo by: Dean Buscher.**

Ashley discovered in dramatic play the healing direction she needed. “I find acting is a therapy for me. It’s definitely a different way of expressing myself and releasing all these emotions into a character. I found my true passion; I never feel more like myself than when I’m doing what I love. It’s a way of releasing the bad and letting in the good. I’m not hiding anymore.”

Another healing element was native spirituality. “My grandparents are very spiritual,” she says. “We lived a very traditional life and I think relying on my spiritual beliefs and going to sweat really helped me, because that’s who I am.”

(To be continued.)

Wanda also penned the poems for the artist book They Tell My Tale to Children Now to Help Them to be Good, a collection of meditations on fairy tales, illustrated by artist Susan Malmstrom.

DID YOU KNOW?

Ethical Expeditions Field School



Interested in ethno-cultural studies or biodiversity? Appreciate humanitarian efforts? Enjoy travelling? How about experiencing all three—and earning university credit?

The Ethical Expeditions Borneo Field School is a travel-study program “designed for undergraduate students to gain practical research experience in Ecology and Conservation in one of the world's environmental hotspots.”

The month-long 2012 program will travel to a remote community in the Wehea Forest in Indonesian Borneo. Students will have the unique opportunity to do hands-on research, learning “directly from scientists, local leaders, rangers and NGO’s who are working to solve the complex challenge of protecting the remaining biological and cultural diversity on our planet.”

Previous participants have found Ethical Expeditions to be the experience of a lifetime. Program alumni have even gone on to “[pursue] careers in the conservation and development field.”

The 2012 Field School will run from approximately June 10, 2012 to July 14, 2012. The cost of the program is \$4950 USD (including university credit, educational materials, meals, and accommodations). Airfare to Balikpapan, Indonesian Borneo, is the student’s responsibility, as are other travel-related expenses. Participants can earn four university credits. The program can also be pursued as a non-credit option, if desired (at a reduced fee).

The program is limited to six students, so apply today. For further information, visit the Ethical Expeditions [website](#) or contact Sheryl Gruber at ethicalexpeditions@gmail.com.



From Where I Sit

Hazel Anaka

What's in Your Wallet?

What's in your wallet right now? If you're like me, you've got a wad of gift cards that you received for Christmas—or from when you returned hideous, inappropriate, so-not-for-me gifts to the store.

Those expensive rectangles of plastic are making the change compartment of my wallet bulge; I'm a frugal gal who needs a visual reminder to use 'em or lose 'em. I kick myself when I forget one during a purchase. And don't get me started on the coupons that have quietly expired in my purse!

I once bought a movie package deal that included admission and snacks, just because it had a good expiry date. Then, nearly 18 months later and just days before expiry, I made plans to use it. The movie *Young Adult* was okay, but the drinks were 64 ounces of sugary death-in-a-cup. But that's another column. At least it didn't expire.

Back to the gift cards. Apparently not everyone is as vigilant as me in making sure they use the cards. According to an article in the January 12 issue of the *Edmonton Journal*, about \$1 billion worth of the \$6 billion spent on gift cards is never redeemed.

In Alberta there is a law that says store gift cards can't expire. That doesn't help those lost or forgotten, though. Some malls issue gift cards for use in any of their stores, but the catch is an administrative fee that eats into the value of the card after some time has elapsed.

Card swapping sites like cardswap.ca are doing brisk business and offer up to 92 per cent of the face value of the card. It is also possible to donate your cards to a registered charity and receive an income tax receipt if the value of the card is clear.

Inventory time: right now I have a \$50 card for Boston Pizza, received from someone I do contract work for; a \$50 card for Sobey's as a thank-you from a board I sit on; a \$200 card from the Mayfield Hotel and Dinner Theatre from Hilary; a \$25 card from Rona (won by Roy in a door prize draw at his Christmas party); and a Timmie's card of indeterminate age and value. Rounding out the selection is an ancient card from an aesthetics school I used to go to for pedicures, a card for Hole's Greenhouses won in a dream home lottery, and a gift certificate for the pedicure I'll get before our trip to Palm Springs.

Already used this month are the cards from Sears and Indigo. I love getting and giving gift cards because they offer options. It's like a shopping spree paid for by someone else. What could be more fun? If you maximize the purchase with clearance sales or discount coupons, the savings really add up. I scored a black wool Nygård blazer (regular price \$129) for \$45.27 after coupons, sales, and gift cards were subtracted. Gotta love it, from where I sit.

Hazel Anaka's first novel is *Lucky Dog*. Visit her [website](#) for more information or follow her on Twitter @anakawrites.

CHRONICLES OF CRUISCIN LAN

Wanda Waterman



20 YEARS OF NEWS AND VIEWS

We're continuing our celebration of two decades of *Voice* history with an in-depth look at our very first issue. Called *The Paper*, it was published in the spring of 1993. Last week we learned some general [trivia](#) about the premiere issue. Now we'll dip into the pages to see what news and views were important to *Voice* readers and writers 20 years ago:

- **Council news:** Early in its history, *The Voice* was produced by an editorial committee of AUSA/AUSU councillors, so it had a strong focus on the doings of Council. The first issue updated constituents on the recent election of a new executive board.
- **Around AU:** Student issues remained another staple. For example, an interview with an AU Library librarian discussed new developments at the Library. [Check it out](#)—and compare it with today's [Library services](#) to see how much has changed!
- **Further afield:** Twenty years ago, AU students were just as interested in world issues as they are today. Read *The Paper's* article, written by an AU tutor, on gender discrimination and the law. Do you think things have changed in the past few decades? [Let us know!](#)



The Long Tail

We're still a long way from spring cleaning, but it's not too early to start thinking about those stacks of magazines in your basement. You know the ones—those craft magazines you're saving because there's a pattern you want in one of them (if only you could remember which one). Or that collection of *Road & Track* you've been meaning to reread. But what if digital back copies could banish that clutter forever?

When it comes to magazine subscriptions, hanging onto old print copies used to make sense, especially for publications that focus on evergreen content. That's content such as recipes or woodworking projects; the type of thing that has a much longer shelf life than news stories. Finding old print copies has often been a hit-and-miss venture, with no guarantee that you'll discover what you're looking for at used book shops or flea markets.

But with the tablet and e-reader markets booming, magazine publishers are jumping on the long tail—and finding surprising success. The long tail is a business strategy that can apply to virtually any market, but in publishing it's often come to refer to backlists (this [blog post](#) from The Book Designer explains it well). In the case of magazine publishers, that can amount to decades' worth of back copies.

Still, it simply isn't practical to print one or two copies of an old issue every time a customer wants one. Enter the tablet, and the possibility of ditching your dusty stacks of *Better Homes and Gardens* once and for all.

As *Adweek* [reported](#) recently, one of the first tablets to offer digital subscriptions was the iPad. The only trouble was, "single copies were the only way most magazines were available," and those often cost as much as a full year's print subscription. Publishers responded well to consumers' angry feedback, and along with other new subscription options came the ability to order single back issues.

It came as no small surprise when subscribers started choosing back issues nearly as often as new content. At Hearst Magazines, which publishes such titles as *Esquire*, *Cosmopolitan*, and *Popular Mechanics*, as much as "30 percent of its single copies sold on tablets are back issues." *Adweek* notes that the story's the same over at *Martha Stewart Living* and *Everyday Food*, with as much as 25 per cent of "digital single copies sold on the iPad" being back issues.

Before you ditch your old magazines, though, be warned that the iPad is (so far) the only device that offers multiple back issues. Other devices, such as the Nook and Kindle Fire, only allow consumers to purchase a single back issue of a particular title.

In the next few years, the only sounds of spring cleaning might just be the sound of your finger swiping a tablet.

*S.D. Livingston is the author of several books, including the new suspense novel *Kings of Providence*. Visit her [website](#) for information on her writing (and for more musings on the literary world!).*



Groupe Tadalat, 1re Partie

« Héritiers de la 'révolution des guitares' initiée par Tinariwen au début des années 80, les musiciens de Tadalat côtoient au quotidien ceux de Terakaft, Tamikrest ou encore Amanar, tous issus de la florissante pépinière de l'Adrar des Ifoghas. Toutefois, ils se démarquent de leurs grands frères et amis par des arrangements, des rythmes et des styles qui leurs sont propres. La musique de Tadalat s'inscrit dans la mouvance actuelle du métissage et s'enrichit ouvertement d'influences occidentales. »

Groupe Tadalat

Membres: Oumar Badi (Guitare, solo et voix), Aboubacre Ag Mohamed (guitare accompagnement et voix), Zeidi Ag Baba (basse et voix), Mohamed Ag Ibrahim (djembe), Fatimata Walet Hadé (choeurs), Abdallah Ag Amano (ingénieur son et manager)

Ce qui suit est une interview avec Abdallah Agamo.

Antécédents Musicaux

Nous avons tous l'amour de la musique depuis notre enfance. En grandissant, il y avait ce groupe emblématique de la musique contemporaine touarègue (Tinariwen) qui était très écouté et qui est devenu une source d'inspiration pour nous.

En dehors de ce fait, nous avons aussi été influencés par nos proches parents, que nous avons vus jouer quand nous étions petits. Nous avons ainsi commencé à jouer sur des guitares fabriquées avec des bidons; petit à petit, nous avons appris et avons commencé à jouer avant d'avoir une vraie guitare.

Pour la plupart d'entre nous, nous avons appris à jouer sans aucune indication ni leçon; mais, plus tard, nous nous sommes rapprochés des gens que nous voyions jouer pour leur demander conseil.

Tous les membres du groupe ont grandi pratiquement ensemble dans le même village, « AGUEL'HOC », dans la région de Kidal; et, depuis leur enfance, ils étaient très liés : ils jouaient, partaient à l'école ensemble.

Instruments de Musique

Les membres de Tadalat jouent de plusieurs instruments comme la guitare électrique, la basse, le djembé (tambour) et la batterie, qui est un nouvel instrument dans notre musique.

Pour être Créatif

Nous nous inspirons de nos sociétés et, pour cela, la meilleure condition pour être créatif est tout simplement d'être entre nous et de partager nos réalités pour les exprimer au monde entier.

En plus nous citerons entre autres: Le film sur l'histoire de Tinariwen (TASHUMARA), les Rockers Oubliés du Désert, Desperado. Nous écoutons beaucoup de musiciens comme Carlos Santana, Jimi Hendrix, etc.

Quand on compose une chanson, c'est souvent à travers un fait et de là vient une idée qu'il faut développer et travailler. Ou, tout simplement, sans faire attention une idée peut venir; il faut donc la chanter.

Conscience Sociale

Nos peuples sont en retard; on n'a plus le temps, le monde va vite. Il faut trouver, la main dans la main, des solutions pour le développement de notre pays. Notre mission est de dire cela, non seulement à nos peuples mais aussi au monde extérieur.

Quand on est artiste c'est pour accomplir une mission : celle d'exprimer la parole du peuple. Nous sommes donc sur cette voie et transmettons les messages de paix, d'union et d'échange au monde entier. Pour cela nous avons souvent besoin de nous isoler pour travailler.

Croyance

Nous sommes musulmans, l'islam est une religion de paix, de partage et d'acceptation de l'autre. La meilleure politique pour nous est celle qui développera nos pays; celle qui permettra à nos jeunes frères d'aller à l'école, à avoir suffisamment d'eau, à avoir des routes entre nos villes et nos pays; celle qui créera des emplois pour les personnes au chômage et enfin celle qui permettra des échanges entre nos peuples et ceux d'ailleurs.

Écoutée Cette Semaine

Dire Straits, Bob Marley, Tinariwen, Tamikrest, Tartit, Carlos Santana, Salif Keita, Ali Farka Touré, BadCo . . .

Projets Pour la Prochaine Année

Nous travaillons à la promotion de notre premier album dédié à notre village «AGUEL'HOC», qui sortira en janvier 2012, en France, chez Reaktion: www.tamasheq.net et www.myspace.com/groupepetadalat.



(La suite, la semaine prochaine!)

AUSU JOB POSTING

Chief Returning Officer

The Athabasca University Students' Union (AUSU) represents AU undergraduates and their interests. The Union strives for a fair and accessible election process for members of the Students' Council. To this end, AUSU is seeking a student to fulfill the role of Chief Returning Officer (CRO) for the 2012 AUSU General Elections.



Position Duties and Responsibilities

The CRO's responsibilities, as outlined in AUSU policy, include arranging to receive, collect, and maintain ballots in a secure location, confirming the official vote count, notifying candidates of the results, and conducting the appeal process as required.

The CRO reports to the Executive Director of AUSU and AUSU Students' Council.

Selection Criteria

Applicants must:

- be bondable
- have strong organizational and logistical abilities
- be able to analyze and apply policy to ensure a fair election process
- be proficient with email, attaching documents, and using spreadsheets in Microsoft Excel
- be able to check email once per day and reply to several emails per day throughout the election period
- not run for a position on Council in this election

Remuneration

\$500 stipend at the close of the election and all appeal periods in March 2012.

Application Deadline

January 23, 2012

Apply by email, with resume and cover letter as attachments in Word or PDF format, to ausu@ausu.org.

INTERNATIONAL NEWS DESK



At Home: Waste Not

Frequently, cash-strapped towns will offer space for landfills, holding onto other communities' trash in the hopes of staying afloat. A new, unique government proposition has failing towns jumping to take part—but not everyone's sure it's a wise move.

As *The Globe and Mail* [reports](#), at least nine towns in Saskatchewan and Ontario are bidding for a chance to become "the final resting spot for Canada's nuclear garbage."

The federal government is seeking a location to permanently store its nuclear waste. While many environmentalists are concerned with the long-term effects of "burying an eternity of nuclear waste," the communities trying for the dubious honour "say they'd be crazy not to ponder the nuclear option."

These communities are home to shrinking labour forces and many are close to "bottoming out," one community leader told reporters. Leaders, who say the "risks involved are outweighed by potential benefits," see the economic boost from the multi-billion-dollar program as the community's only salvation.

The selection process has nine steps and "could take years." A similar selection process was completed in Sweden in 2010.

Around the World: Birds are Prey

Sharks: they roam the high seas in search of prey, whether water-dwelling sea creatures or airborne marine birds. How, then, did the remains of land-dwelling songbirds end up inside a tiger shark?

As *National Geographic's* Daily News site [reports](#), research suggests that light from offshore oil rigs is disturbing the flight patterns of land birds, "making them crash into the rigs or fall into the water from exhaustion." The avian victims include woodpeckers, tanagers, and meadowlarks.

The study took place over two years, and the statistics are worrisome: "[more] birds are killed each year by colliding with rigs than were killed by the 2010 Gulf oil spill."

And the unnatural state could disturb the ecosystem still further. Researchers suspect that sharks may be becoming conditioned to deliberately seek out prey in areas where the rigs shed their light. In fact, American Bird Conservancy representative Christine Sheppard told reporters that "the sharks may actually be learning there are places where there are birds available to them."

AUSU UPDATE: JANUARY 2012**Bethany Tynes, President****Happy Holidays from AUSU!**

As the holiday season draws to a close, we hope you've had a chance to rest and relax with those who are important to you—and maybe even squeeze in a little bit of homework time!

Election Timelines Finalized

As we move into the new year, Council is also very pleased to announce that our 2012 election timelines have been finalized! We'll be hiring a Chief Returning Officer (CRO) in January, and on February 6, a Call for Nominations will be released, giving you all the information you'll need to run for AUSU Council, 2012-2014. Nominations will remain open until February 20, and campaigning will occur between Feb. 21 and March 2. All current students

will be able to vote online March 3-6. Joining AUSU Council is a great way to serve your fellow students, as well as gain valuable leadership experience, so I encourage you to consider running in our upcoming elections. If you don't have time to commit to being on Council yourself, though, you can at least get involved by reading about the candidates and casting an educated ballot.

Awards Policy Changes and Updates

Council has recently reviewed and revised many of our standing policies, and some exciting changes have taken place, particularly in our policy on Scholarships, Awards, and Bursaries. While previously, many of our awards were offered twice yearly, in November and May, we're now going to be offering our awards more often—some will still be offered year-round, while the remainder will be available on a quarterly basis. We hope that this will make sure that more students are eligible, and don't miss out on awards just because of the way their course start and end dates line up with our awards dates. And we've also increased the number of some awards given, as well! You can find all the details on our [website](#).

AGM Dates Coming Soon

Each year, AUSU ensures that an independent third-party auditor is hired to check over the organization's financial records and governance. The auditor's findings are then compiled and submitted to the members—you, our AU undergraduate students—at an annual general meeting. This meeting takes place by teleconference, so you can participate from almost anywhere, and is open to all current members. Members of the AUSU Executive will present updates on the year in review, in addition to the financial

documents. There will also be motions to update a few outdated bylaw and policy points. A date for this year's AGM has not yet been finalized, as we await the final documents from our auditors, but as soon as a date is set, an agenda will be drawn up and posted on our website. Keep your eyes open! We'd love to have you join us!

Have you heard . . .

. . . that our brand new 2012 Student Handbook/Planners are now mailing!? Yes, that's right—they're hot off the press! Some of the information in these little books is priceless when it comes to helping AU students navigate the university and our services—but they're free for you, just for being an AUSU member! We even mail them right to your door. All you have to do is ask!

. . . there's a new AUSU website on the way? We want our site to provide dynamic content and updates so that it's a place that you, as an AU student, WANT to visit regularly! If you have suggestions on content you'd like to see on our website, please get in touch with us to share your ideas.

. . . that AU is currently re-examining their course materials model? Currently, the cost of all undergraduate courses includes access to the necessary textbooks, and these are usually mailed directly to your door. This is convenient for many students, but many others have asked for the opportunity to look for bargains elsewhere, or to buy and sell used textbooks. What about you? How do you feel about the course materials system at AU? AU is asking students for their opinion! Email us your thoughts on student textbooks and learning resources, and we'll make sure that they're voiced in the appropriate committee!

. . . about our SmartDraw program? After much discussion, we've decided that this is a valuable service to students, so we've renewed our licenses for 2012! SmartDraw is a software package that allows students to create high-quality charts and graphics, and to insert these into a file type of their choice. Get your copy today, and let us know what you think.

Get in touch with us

Have comments or questions about AUSU or anything in this column? Feel free to get in touch with AUSU President Bethany at president@ausu.org. You can also email our office at ausu@ausu.org or call 1.800.788.9041 ext. 3413. We'd love to hear from you!

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THE VOICE

1213, 10011 109th St. NW, Edmonton, AB T5J 3S8 - Ph: 800.788.9041 ext. 2905 - Fax: 780.497.7003 attn: Voice Editor

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Editor-In-Chief Tamra Ross
Managing Editor Christina M. Frey

Regular Columnists Hazel Anaka, Katie D'Souza, S.D. Livingston, Wanda Waterman

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