

THE VOICE

MAGAZINE

Volume 15 Issue 12
April 6, 2007



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Expanding Your Horizons

Nature Notes

Plant Dispersal

The Good Life

On Success

Plus:
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Sun Signs
Lost & Found
Music to Eat Lunch To
Chronicles of Cruiscin Lan

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To AU Students

Microsoft Office 2007 will be officially released by Microsoft January 31, 2007, and has been available for download from Microsoft for a while.

While AU staff will eventually be using Office 2007, a full conversion to this software is several months away. An announcement will be posted when the conversion is complete. Until then, documents sent to AU staff should be saved as Office 2003 format. Save your documents as follows:

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AU Computing Services Helpdesk

THE VOICE MAGAZINE

1200, 10011 109th Street NW
Edmonton, AB T5J 3S8
800.788.9041 ext. 2905

Publisher AU Students' Union
Editor In Chief Tamra Ross
Managing Editor Sandra
Livingston

Regular Contributors:
Mandy Gardner, Katie Patrick,
Hazel Anaka, Bill Pollett,
Janice Behrens, Barbara Godin,
Wanda Waterman St. Louis,
John Buhler, Zil-E-Huma Lodhi

THE VOICE ONLINE:
www.voicemagazine.org

The Voice is published every
Friday in HTML and PDF
format

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Special thanks to Athabasca
University's *The Insider* for its
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NATURE NOTES:

By Zoe Dalton

from the backyard to the biosphere

From Point A to Point B: Plant Dispersal—the Hows and Whys

Dispersing from point A to point B, particularly when point A is hundreds of kilometres from point B, is probably not something one would normally consider plants to be capable of. Often when we think of mobility, we think in terms of the individual—the Canada goose migrating south, the white-tailed deer leaving a wooded area and entering an old field, the bull elephant traversing its great home range in search of a mate.

Granted, you'd be hard pressed to find an individual plant able to pick up its roots and head south for the winter. However, when we consider populations as the unit of interest, the mobility situation for plants is quite different. Plant populations actively leave certain areas and enter others. As environmental conditions change, a given area may no longer be amenable to the growth of certain species. Past climate change events (e.g., ice ages) are good examples of situations in which plants have migrated out of certain areas. Examining the historical pattern of plant distribution in the landscape provides interesting information about past climatic conditions in an area.

Most of us can, of course, grasp the idea of how a given plant species might leave an area: easy, it dies out. But how exactly is the *entre* performed? When an area that has been burned or logged begins to come back to life, where is this life coming from? Seeds are at the heart of the story. Every plant has some mechanism by which propagation occurs such that future generations are produced and the species is given the chance to live on. And many plants have specific mechanisms designed to allow for dispersal of their seeds to areas quite far from the parent plant. This helps to ensure genetic diversity, and provides the opportunity for seeds to arrive, by chance, in new areas that may be appropriate for colonization, thus expanding the range of the species.

Of course, rooted as they are, plants don't have the ability to move their seeds around the landscape on their own. They rely on other factors to do this for them: seed-dispersal factors may be biological or non-biological, or both. As we'll see, animals play a big part in seed dispersal, but so do more basic elements like wind, gravity, and water.

Plants that rely on animal-based dispersal mechanisms display one of two traits: they either offer something to the animal from a nutritional standpoint, or their seed-dispersal mechanisms have to be a little more underhanded, getting the animal to transport the precious parcels unawares.

Acorns fall into the former category. Oak trees produce a tasty and nutritious offering—the acorn—which seed predators like squirrels and blue jays simply can't resist. Luckily for the oak tree, these animals are long-term planners: they

collect and cache (by burying) a great number of acorns for later eating. Often burying the acorns in areas ideal for germination, these animals can forget up to half of the seeds they've stored away. Many of these buried acorns are deposited in locations at a good distance from the parent tree, thus aiding in a very real way in the movement of oak populations throughout the landscape.

Of course, not all plants that rely on animal dispersal offer their helpers such sweet rewards; in fact, some plants' animal-dispersal mechanisms can be a downright drag for the furred or feathered individual involved. As many of us have likely experienced, burrs have a way of grabbing on, and holding on. What is it about burrs that gives them such sticking power? A seed's morphological characteristics (a.k.a its physical traits) often give quite a bit of information about how it might travel from point A to point B. This is certainly the case with burrs, in which those all-too-familiar little ball-shaped seed cases are covered in visible hooked spines—just perfect for adhering to fur, clothing, hair (!), or anything a hook can grab on to. And, given the ability of a burr to become impossibly entangled in fur, feather, or hair, an animal may carry the plant's seeds quite a distance, aiding significantly in this nuisance plant's distribution.

Relying on wind dispersal may not seem to necessitate the same level of sophistication as animal-based dispersal requires; but plants have developed very intricate mechanisms for making the most of this dispersal factor nonetheless. Take the common milkweed: once mature, its pods burst open and release hundreds of small, lightweight seeds, each one attached to a number of long, silky hair-like plumes. Even slight breezes are able to set the light, plumed seed in motion; and once it's on the go, the seed's plumes act as a parachute, billowing out and allowing the seed to stay windborne for surprisingly long periods of time—and thus surprisingly long distances.

And where would the world be without water? Well, without coconuts, for one. With their hard, protective shell and hollow interior, these tasty treats are able—once they've matured and fallen from the tree with a little help from gravity—to float in whatever body of water they may have been lucky enough to land in, and disperse to distant lands by way of ocean or river currents.

The diversity and adaptability of living things never ceases to amaze. Seeds, with their remarkable ways and means of moving throughout the landscape, provide just one more reason to keep on marvelling at the natural world.

CLICK ON THIS: Futurific

Lonita Fraser

Origami Fortune Teller - http://www.tappi.org/paperu/art_class/fortuneTeller.htm

This isn't what we called them when I was a child, but I do remember making them. I wonder if children still make things like this.

Online Magic Eight Ball - <http://www.osric.com/8ball/>

As convenient as this may be, and as humorous, I still miss doing this the old-fashioned way.

I-Ching Online - <http://flytrapinteractive.com/%7Ecomplimentary/iching/>

No yarrow sticks or coins to toss, but still an I-Ching reading.

Zentences - <http://phenomenon.org/intense/zentences/flash4.html>

Perhaps not relating what the future holds, but still, the randomness might betoken some words of wisdom.

Moodstats - <http://www.moodstats.com>

Track your moods and generate charts and statistics from the data you enter, with this handy little application.



As a student at Mount Royal College completing the last year of my Psychology degree at Athabasca University, I recently attended an AU workshop called “Career as a Process and Not an Event.” Organized by Anita Spence, our Academic Advisor, and facilitated by Shannon Yates, a tutor in AU’s Centre for Psychology, this workshop left me feeling inspired and positive.

One of the things we learned was to look at the future differently and to approach certain questions in a different manner. The question shouldn’t be “What can I do with a BA in . . . ?”, but “What questions would I like my education to answer?” Jobs are created to solve problems. Keeping this in mind opens up your options and doesn’t limit you to one or two career choices. We need to be flexible and understand that there is not one perfect job for us, but many jobs.

When answering the second question, we have to look at ourselves not only from an education point of view but also to look at our own personal skills, our values, beliefs, interests, and background and see how that

whole package can suit a specific career choice.

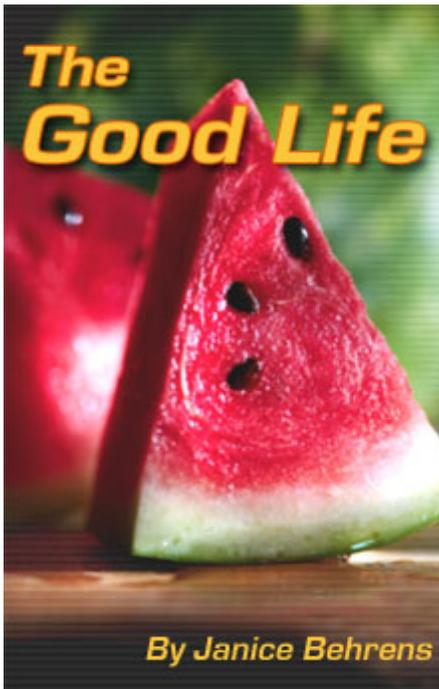
Life is all about making decisions and when an opportunity comes up, perhaps in a career choice, how do we deal with that? Five skills that I found very beneficial to recognizing, creating, and using “chance opportunities” (according to our facilitator) were:

- 1) Curiosity—exploring new learning
- 2) Persistence—exerting effort despite setbacks
- 3) Flexibility—changing attitudes and circumstances
- 4) Optimism—believing anything is possible
- 5) Risk-taking—taking action in the face of uncertainty

A great exercise that we did at the workshop was this: in a group of people, each person took a turn and spoke about an experience. While the person was speaking, other group members wrote down qualities about that person, such as “patient” or “spiritual.” After the person finished speaking about his or her experience, members in the group read out the qualities or characteristics they felt or thought this person had.

I recommend this exercise; it can help the speaker to see themselves in a different light or to reassure themselves about certain qualities they possess and what they are good at. An understanding of these personal qualities can help a person decide what kind of career path they would like to pursue. After listening to what my group members had to say, I realized even more which kind of career path I should take.

I’m glad I attended this workshop, and recommend it for future or present students. It’s always better to approach a question from a positive point of view and to avoid limiting yourself in career options—or in anything, really. This workshop was very personal for me and helped me see who I really am. By first understanding who you are, and then combining that knowledge with your education, the variety of possibilities in a career is endless.



Success Requires Being Well-Rounded

Since it is almost NHL playoff time, I thought I would start this week's column off with a hockey analogy. Anyone who has ever played hockey, or any other team sport for that matter, is well aware that being successful as a group requires a balance of individual strengths and a commitment to the success of the whole team. What this means is that each member of the team must do what he or she does best, must take the opportunity to shine in the ways that are unique to him or her. To continue with the hockey metaphor, this means that the players with the defensive roles must be steady and reliable, the goalie must be cool under pressure, the playmakers must be creative and far-seeing, and the goal scorers must be ready to capitalize on opportunities. Indeed, to make it very far into the post-season, your team must have a diversity of skills brought to the ice by its players.

This is only half of the equation, however. Any successful team also requires each of its members to see above and beyond their own skills. Everyone involved must be willing and able to take on roles that he or she may not be absolutely comfortable with. Scorers, for instance,

must be willing to block a shot when it is needed, and defenders must be ready to drive to the net when the opportunity arises.

Although we can see that this well-roundedness is an essential aspect of successful team play, we often don't think of the ways that this analogy might apply to us as individuals. From a fairly early age, most of us learn that there are certain things that we tend to pick up easily, and there are other things that we tend to struggle with. For me, sports and math were areas that I received early praise in, and from then on I became increasingly confident in them. Other areas, such as language and fine arts, gave me a lot more trouble.

Some of this, I know, is a result of my individual personality. The truth is, I always have been, and always will be, better at shooting a free throw than painting a cubist picture. However, I strongly believe that some of the differences in my abilities and comfort levels are related to the perceptions of myself and others. Over the years I have found, for instance, that writing and fine arts such as photography are a great source of pleasure for me. Will I be writing the Great Canadian Novel or attending opening night at my one-woman art gallery show in the near future? I would say probably not. But the fact remains that these pursuits are a vital part of what makes me a whole and well-rounded person.

To go back to the hockey analogy, for me to be successful—to lead a fulfilled, rich life—I need to continually make a commitment to developing the full range of my abilities. I need to move beyond my personal comfort zone, to take chances and develop skills I may not even suspect I have. If we are each able to do that, who knows what kinds of successes await us?



From
Where
I Sit

Hazel Anaka

Society's Shell Game

The Edmonton Police Service is used to criticism. Scandal after scandal, internal inquiry after internal inquiry, chief after chief, the criticism continues. It is no simple matter, this business of modern day policing. A sampling of letters to the editor, man in the street interviews, and venting submissions reveals almost as many takes on this issue as there are people offering opinions.

In my own experience as a Fee Justice of the Peace in rural Alberta since 1978, I've seen a host of RCMP officers come and go through this small detachment. Rural policing has its own distinct challenges: isolation and lack of timely backup, lack of specialization, huge geographic areas to cover, unreasonable on-call demands, and lack of anonymity in the community (when are you truly off-duty?). In addition are those aspects of the job common to police officers everywhere: too much paperwork, disappointment with judicial decisions, community criticism and lack of understanding, appreciation and support for the difficulty of the job. Without exception I believe each of them was doing their job to the best of their ability with the right motivation and the right intentions. Of course I gravitated to some more than others, liked some more than others, and respected some more than others.

It's a little bit like the military. I wouldn't want my husband or children to be serving in Afghanistan but I'm forever grateful that some men and women choose to—for my sake, for all of us. That same sense of gratitude extends to police officers, fire fighters, paramedics—heroes all.

Yes, there are probably members who shouldn't don the uniform because they bring discredit to the profession. There's a specific Edmonton Police Service member whose name keeps resurfacing in negative stories. Bad apple? Surely that

doesn't negate the good work of thousands.

The most recent criticism of the Service stems from the alleged dumping in north Edmonton of a vanload of intoxicated aboriginals. Is it standard practice? Was it justified? Was it the most expeditious way of dealing with a chronic, no-win problem? Are the police a handy whipping boy for growing frustration with our society? Do the critics have the facts or is it a case of attack first, ask later? Are we expecting miracles from an agency that's underfunded, understaffed, and overtaxed? Are the homeless, the disadvantaged, the marginalized the subject of a shell game, being shuffled from agency to agency, shelter to shelter, cell to cell, temporarily out-of-sight, out-of-mind? Is Edmonton unique in these challenges?

Apparently not. A February 10 story in the *Los Angeles Times* covered the issue of a hospital in that city "dumping homeless patients" (1). Can you imagine a society where a hospital van would dump a paraplegic man on skid row "who wore a soiled hospital gown and had a broken colostomy bag" (1)? This is not a tragic isolated incident. More than a dozen hospitals and outside police agencies have been accused of dumping patients and criminals in the downtown area.

I don't have the answers but I do know attacking the police, themselves a victim in society's shell game, is counterproductive. The answer is bigger than them, from where I sit.

(1) Los Angeles Times (2007). "Hospital's account of 'dumping' case disputed." Retrieved April 4, 2007, from <http://www.latimes.com/news/local/la-me-dumping10feb10,0,7983871.story?coll=la-home-headlines>

The Chronicles of Cruiscin Lan

by
Wanda
Waterman
St. Louis





Some Things I Owned

One good thing I owned one time was this bone-handled penknife. It had a picture of a Mountie and a bright silver blade. With that blade, I could slice through sour green apples when I was trespassing in Rowbottham's orchard, sitting way up high in a tree. With that blade I could remove splinters from the bottom of Teresa Connolly's beautifully curved feet after she walked like a beautiful high-wire artiste along the rafters of her mother's potato barn. With that blade, I could pry fossils from rocks. I could cut the cry of an owl from the night sky and put it in my shirt pocket. I could slice open the bellies of passing cumulus clouds and feel the fresh silver rain pour down the back of my shirt.

Another good thing I owned was this red and black plaid shirt. I wore it planting trees in the Kootenays one summer. I tore it falling off a dirt bike when I was doing something stupid. Years later, I put it 'round the shoulders of the most beautiful woman I ever met after we went swimming in Lake Erie on a cold day, when the wind threatened to freeze our blood,

and the sparks from the campfire swirled like angry fireflies through our hair.

Something good I wish I still had was that notebook that fell overboard in my backpack from the canoe in that lake in Wisconsin. I filled that notebook up with poems about pomegranates and fire-eaters and palaces and golden-haired sirens and red motorcycles. I filled it up with drawings of strangers' faces, and pressed wildflowers between its pages. When the pages started to fall out, and it was too full of flowers, I held it together with hemp rope and an elastic band. I reached down into the water of that Wisconsin lake to try and reach that backpack, but it just slipped through my fingers, disappearing like a bright green jellyfish into the darkness below.

Here are some things I never really wanted, but just sort of wound up with: a cell phone that rings when I least expect it; a car that never seems to take me anywhere exciting; a Visa card for buying things I don't really need and making reservations for places I don't really want to go; a laptop computer that doesn't know how to write poems about palaces or motorcycles.

CLICK ON THIS: Wearability

Lonita Fraser

Odd Watches - <http://www.wristwatchreview.com/2006/09/28/odd-watches-of-the-world/>
Why tell time with an everyday watch when you could have one of these curious little numbers?

Police Hat Collection - <http://people.zeelandnet.nl/tberry/>
I'm fairly fond of those little two-tone banded bowlers female officers in the U.K. wear. I'll be happy to take one off your hands if you've one about anyplace . . . no? Oh well.

Shoe Museum - <http://www.virtualshoemuseum.com/vsm/index.php>
Is that footwear, or sado-masochistic torture wear?

Ruler Bracelets and More - <http://www.individualicons.com/index.html>
Putting the fun in functional, this jewellery reflects our hardware favourites.

Medieval Clothing - <http://www.virtue.to/articles/>
Instructions and articles for costumers or the curious.



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Aries

March 21 - April 20

The origin of the glyph for Aries is unknown. The symbol, two half moons joined by a straight line, is representative of the upward and outward flow of energy as in the fountain of life. Some see it as a sprouting seed reaching toward the sky. As well, it could be viewed as the eyebrows and nose of the Ram, the astrological symbol for Aries.



Aries is the first sign of the zodiac. The Ram is a masculine fire sign ruled by the planet Mars, the god of war. Aries is symbolic of new beginnings as the world awakens in the spring. The doers of the zodiac, Rams are courageous, brave, energetic, excitable, and optimistic. They are constantly moving forward. The Ram craves excitement; they want to live life to the fullest. Arians are young at heart and they carry this well into their senior years. The Ram is confident and not afraid to take risks. Their adventurous spirit leads them into uncharted waters. The most endearing trait of Rams is their ability to laugh at themselves. Very few signs are able to do this with the openness of an Aries.

Aries are charming and irresistible to the opposite sex. Frequently the initiators in relationships, Arians are passionate and adventurous partners. They need and desire affection more than the other 11 signs. Rams are generous to a fault with both their time and money. They are ever ready to offer a partner their advice, even before they are asked. On the other hand, don't try to tell an Aries what to do; they will ultimately do things their way. Arians make loyal companions and will defend family and friends in spite of evidence to the contrary.

Aries rules the area of the head and face. They tend to walk with their heads slightly forward. The Ram is prone to headaches, eye strain, and injuries to the head. Dental caries may be an ongoing issue for the Arian. The Ram has an abundance of energy and stamina. Arians may have problems with their feet and suffer from corns and callouses. Busy Rams need to eat a balanced diet to maintain their energetic lifestyle.

As mentioned above Arians do not like to take orders, therefore they are uncomfortable in subordinate positions. They often work on their own or are the boss. Their competitive nature prevents them from accepting defeat easily. They search out challenges. When their job becomes boring they quickly move on. Aries are well-suited to many professions, such as writer, firefighter, dentist, surgeon, and, of course, entrepreneur.

Positive Qualities: energetic, courageous, self-confident, positive, spontaneous, independent, honest.

Negative Qualities: impatient, impulsive, self-centered, quick-tempered, bossy.

Lucky Day: Tuesday

Birthstone: Diamond

Most compatible marriage sign: Gemini, Libra.

Famous Arians: Colin Powell, Maya Angelou, Alec Baldwin, Russell Crowe, Celine Dion, Hugh Hefner, Elton John, Sarah Jessica Parker, Diana Ross, Rosie O'Donnell, Leeza Gibbons.

MUSIC TO EAT LUNCH TO Machine Head - The Blackening

Mandy Gardner



Release Date: March 2007

Label: Roadrunner

Tracks: 8

Rating: 7

Machine Head formed in 1992 and since the release of their very first album the band has faced harsh censorship and criticism of videos and lyrical content that just won't stop reflecting current events: the single "Davidian" was pulled from MTV after complaints of its description of the Waco, Texas disaster; in 2001 "Crashing Around You" was pulled because it bore too striking a resemblance to the World Trade Center attacks. What's a band to do when its songs are just too real for large audiences? After album sales fell consistently, Machine Head saw its guitarist Ahrue

Luster leave; Luster was replaced by Phil Demmel who would soon leave for other commitments as well. For a year, the remnants of the band stayed virtually silent and spent their time writing songs for the next album. When Demmel decided to rejoin in 2003, Machine Head was back on track to release *Through the Ashes of Empires* and now *The Blackening*.

While this is undoubtedly a metal band and a metal album, Machine Head haven't stayed trapped in their genre when it comes to exploring new sounds or synthesizers. The guitar harmonies stand out as exceptional, particularly on the opening track, and they've brought in a few well-timed sound effects that tend to calm the music down a bit from the usual hard-rock pounding and give your brain something extra to interpret. Imagine something a little bit like Madina Lake with more of a heavy metal sound, and that's what Machine Head is delivering with *The Blackening*.

I'm by no means a pure-hearted metal lover (I think we've established this in recent weeks), and when I listen to a record like this I'm always very happy to hear a few new elements that aren't part of the mainstream genre. I want to hear some fantastic lyrics, a new vocal method (think Slipknot's "Wait and Bleed"), well-written guitar riffs—*something* that sets each track and subsequently the whole album on a different angle to everything else it has been thoughtlessly categorized with in the HMW racks. Machine Head has come through for me with its moments of AFI-like listlessness amid music otherwise dense with the signature high-pitched guitar and ceaseless drumming of heavy metal. The songs come off just a bit lighter and more digestible this way, leaving something even a hard-core metal hater can deal with for at least a few songs.

Now don't get me wrong—I'm not of the opinion that an ability to cross genres is important. I think a band should do what they do with skill and diligence, and that's just what Machine Head has done here. With any luck, they'll even get to keep their video releases on air without getting caught in yet another controversial crossfire.

INTERNATIONAL NEWS DESK*What's new here and around the world*

Mandy Gardner

**Alberta Makes a Move Toward Wind Energy**

Mandy Gardner

Alberta doesn't come to mind when Canadians think of Green-leaning provinces. In fact, it's more likely to be the butt of environmental jokes than to be held up as a shining example to the rest of the country. But while we might be far behind the Maritimes when it comes to Green energy and dedication to recycling, even big bad Alberta has started a wind-energy initiative this past March to evaluate the future use of wind energy in place of a percentage of fossil fuels. A joint project of the Canadian Wind Energy Association (CanWEA) and the Alberta Electric System Operator (AESO), this wind forecasting study is hoped to provide the information needed for expansion into wind farming throughout Alberta in the near future.

Environmental activists province-wide have got to be happy that at last their province is moving in the right direction (or might I say if not happy, then relieved), although Dale

McMaster, the Chief Executive Officer of AESO, pointed out that "Alberta is the first Canadian province to investigate sophisticated wind forecasting methods . . . one of the tools that will help manage increased amounts of wind power in Alberta" (1).

The year-long tests are meant to help researchers understand the actual amounts of wind power that might be generated in the future, and what kinds of revenue might be expected by producers who will have to start incorporating alternative energy solutions into their current supply lists. It is assumed that following the completion of the study Alberta energy users will be able to source some of their power from wind farms, largely offsetting the carbon emissions from current coal-burning facilities.

Stay tuned for project results next March. We'll have to wait and see exactly how this information is going to be applied province-wide in terms of cutting carbon emissions and non-sustainable energy use, but once finished it's hoped the post-Klein Alberta government will see fit to implement a new Green system without delay.

(1) Canadian Wind Energy Association. "AESO/CanWEA forecasting study key to adding more wind power in Alberta" (2007). Retrieved April 4, 2007, from http://www.canwea.ca/news_releases.cfm?ID=43

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1200, 10011 109th Street NW, Edmonton, AB T5J 3E4 -- Ph: 800.788.9041 ext. 2905 - Fax: 780.497.7003 attn: Voice Editor

Publisher Athabasca University Students' Union

Editor In Chief Tamra Ross

Managing Editor Sandra Livingston

Regular Columnists: Janice Behrens, Wanda Waterman St. Louis,
Katie Patrick, Hazel Anaka, Bill Pollett, Barbara Godin, John Buhler

Contributors to listings columns: Zil-E-Huma Lodhi, Lonita Fraser

THE VOICE ONLINE: WWW.VOICEMAGAZINE.ORG

The Voice is published every Friday in html and pdf format

Contact *The Voice* at: VOICE@AUSU.ORG

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Special thanks to Athabasca University's *The Insider* for its contributions

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