

# THE VOICE

## MAGAZINE

Volume 15 Issue 16  
May 4, 2007



## **Critical Mass**

*New communications course has it covered*

## **Heating Things Up**

*Spring rituals to revel in*

## **Pace Yourself**

*What a difference a decade makes*

*Plus:*  
*From Where I Sit*  
*Chronicles of Cruiscin Lan*  
*A Musical Interlude*  
*AUSU This Month*

*and much more...*

Welcome To The Voice PDF  
*The Voice* interactive Table of Contents allows you to click a story title to jump to an article. Clicking the bottom-right corner of any page returns you here. Some ads and graphics are also links.



## features

EDITORIAL

Sandra Livingston



## articles

NATURE NOTES

Zoe Dalton

COURSE INTRODUCTION: CMNS 201

Katie Patrick



## columns

CHRONICLES OF CRUISCIN LAN

Wanda Waterman St. Louis

A MUSICAL INTERLUDE

Diane Gadoua

FROM WHERE I SIT

Hazel Anaka

AUSU THIS MONTH



## news and events

B.C. GOVERNMENT LOOKS TO ENTICE STUDENTS TO PUBLIC SERVICE L. Guille and N. Green

CLICK ON THIS

Lonita Fraser



## from the readers

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

CLASSIFIEDS



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

### *To AU Students*

The deadline to apply to graduate is May 12, 2007. The application to graduate can be found here

<http://www.athabascau.ca/registrar/forms/pdf/grad-application.pdf>

along with a lot of other helpful information about Convocation.

As well, the deadline to RSVP to Convocation invitations is May 18, 2007.

We hope to see everyone in Athabasca in June!

*Mel MacGregor  
Events Coordinator  
Office of Institutional Advancement  
Athabasca University*

## THE VOICE MAGAZINE

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

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**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

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## And They're Off

In our speed-obsessed society, there's no end of gadgets to help people hurry things up.

It started (in the memories of most garden variety *Homo sapiens sapiens*) with the vacuum cleaner, the dishwasher, and the electric can opener.

Inventors moved ahead at warp speed, and now we can send images of things that are going on halfway around the world in, quite literally, the blink of an eye. (For those using dial-up Internet, you may have to blink several times. Or go make a cup of tea.)

But 56k modems and jammed fax machines notwithstanding, humans are enchanted by the idea that we can make tools and gizmos that speed up our lives. We love them—can't get enough of them, in fact.

And now it appears that our handy little helpers have another bonus: the machines are speeding *us* up.

In 1994, Robert Levine of California State University studied how long it took unsuspecting pedestrians to walk 60 feet on flat, unobstructed pavement.

Richard Wiseman, a professor of psychology at the University of Hertfordshire, repeated the original study—and found that people all over the world are walking faster. On average, 10% faster.

The researchers discovered that the most dramatic acceleration is “in Asian ‘tiger’ countries such as China and Singapore,”<sup>1</sup> places that have seen especially significant economic and social change. There, people are hurrying along as much as 20 to 30% faster than they were about ten years ago. Of the 32 cities studied, the fastest walkers anywhere were found in Singapore.

In Britain, the quickest walkers were in London (they came in 12<sup>th</sup> overall), but they lagged behind their speedy neighbours in Dublin. The slowest pedestrians in the group were in the city of Blantyre, Malawi. They covered the distance in a positively sedate 31.60 seconds, compared to the mere 10.55 seconds it took in Singapore.

Time may be money, but there's a downside to all this rushing around. Robert Levine has also shown that the pace of life is linked to other signs of behaviour and to our health. People in fast-paced societies are “less likely to help others, and also tend to have higher rates of coronary heart disease.”<sup>1</sup>

So why the change of pace? According to psychologists, the immediate gratification provided by gadgets like the Internet and cell phones—push a button, hurry up, don't wait—has made us all more and more impatient. Without even realizing it, humans have adjusted their actions to fit the pace of machines.

It makes sense; when we're not used to waiting more than two or three seconds for what we want—whether it's a web page to load or an email to open—taking 30 seconds longer to get somewhere feels like an eternity in comparison.

Will being more aware of this role reversal slow people down? Make them stop, take a breath, and realize that machines are supposed to make life *less* stressful, not more? Of course not.

And I'd take the time to explain it, but my cellphone's ringing and I've got to fly.

<sup>1</sup> *Times Online* (2007). “Modern life: it's one step at a time, only much quicker.” Retrieved May 2, 2007, from <http://www.timesonline.co.uk/tol/news/uk/science/article1733967.ece>



# NATURE NOTES:

By Zoe Dalton

from the backyard to the biosphere

## Planting and Paddling: When Winter Dreams Come to Life

I know I'm not the only one who practically salivates when this warm weather starts to roll around. It's finally time for those winter dreams to spring to life. Poring over seed catalogues, following the river's winding path on the topo map, researching the best time to strike out on that section of the trail not yet travelled—these are all such delicious ways to spend winter evenings. But nothing can compare to the knowledge that it's all about to be experienced in the flesh; no more paddling through the cerebrum, no more planting that imaginary garden, no more hiking through the intellect: it's all about to be carried out in the real world. The old brain can look forward to taking a break and letting the body and senses take over.

For me, the day my seed packages arrive in the mail is always a time of great excitement. This year, the wondrous moment came just a couple of days ago. I got back late from this year's first jaunt out of the city and was aching to just go to bed, deal with all my gear and remnant foodstuff tomorrow. But that big parcel sticking out of the mailbox could not be mistaken: it must be my seeds.

I couldn't (and so didn't) wait to rip open the envelope and pore over the details of each species: height, flower colour, wildlife species attracted by the plant, preferred growing conditions . . . technicalities that, to a non-plant person, would be exceedingly tedious always get my blood pumping a little faster, and kept me up that night refining in my mind the exact location of each planting. Aargh—the only problem is that it's still too early to plant many of the seeds outdoors, and I just don't have the space or light to “plant indoors for earlier blooms”; I have to wait just a little longer . . . but at least I know I'm getting close.

For me, a car-less city dweller, planning canoeing and hiking trips is a little more complex than prepping for my gardening adventures. Or should I say *carrying out* these trips is a little more complex. Planning is not a problem: topo maps, dull as they may seem to some, for me spell summer beauty, peace and the absolute leaving behind of city woes, and represent a great way to while away free hours during those pre-spring months. As far as actually heading out to those yearned-for locales, there is nothing like hitting the hiking trail, even if just for a day in a car borrowed from a family member, or splurging on a rental car (even if it means dealing with those not-so-pleasant rental folks), popping the canoe on top and seeing up close just what that guidebook author was trying to say.

The sweet smells of budding leaves and moist soil, the lovely cacophony of spring birdsongs, the sunlight filtering through the just-about-to-develop forest canopy: nothing compares to the first walks of the season. Nothing, that is, except for hearing that gentle dip, swoosh, dip, swoosh of the paddle, tucking in

tight to the little bay and watching the loons, inspecting the plants that miraculously survive on that rock island, and feeling the peace wash over me as the canoe bobs and sways in the water.

So I've got the earliest seeds out in the beds, the more delicate—but still tough-ish—ones in pots, ready to be brought inside at the slightest threat of frost. The mud on my shoes, something of a memento to be saved for at least a few days, is evidence of my first hike of the season. And I've got my first canoe trip ready to go in June, when things in the rest of my life slow down enough to allow for a real outing. It's all so close to being out of the brain, off the paper and into the world. Whatever thrills spring holds for you, I know you'll enjoy the fulfillment of those winter dreams and plans—have fun!

## Click On This - Bits 'n' Pieces

Lonita Fraser

The universe is a varied and wonderful place. It takes all kinds to build it and fill it. In honour of that, here are a few ways to build and fill your universe, and peeks into how others fill theirs.

**Gumwrapper Chain** - <http://www.gumwrapper.com/>

At 50,905 feet, it's the gum wrapper to beat!

**Avant Garde Project** - <http://www.avantgardeproject.org>

"The Avant Garde Project is a series of recordings of 20th-century classical-experimental-electroacoustic music digitized from LPs whose music has in most cases never been released on CD, and so is effectively inaccessible to the vast majority of music listeners today."

**Soda Pop Stop** - <http://www.sodapopstop.com/home.cfm>

A passion for pop, salivating for soda.

**Build a Tiki Bar** - <http://blog.humuhumu.com/2006/09/05/how-to-build-a-tiki-bar>

There's more to life than Margaritaville, mateys. Celebrate the tiki in you.

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

Random wisdom, or wisdom out of the random?



## CMNS 201 - Introduction to Mass Media

Are you interested in Communication Studies and Mass Media? Athabasca University's Communications Studies program has expanded to include a new communications course, Introduction to Mass Media (CMNS 201), to its list of ever-growing course offerings. According to course professor Dr. Evelyn Ellerman, CMNS 201 is the "first of two introductory courses for our proposed Bachelor of Arts (Communication Studies)," and offers students an excellent learning experience through varied topics and an exciting online component.

CMNS 201 highlights the "important relations between technology and society and between the mass media and society." Over nine units, students focus on various key topics in the media. Students are also trained to focus on "questions raised by the relations between these media and the field of public relations; by the globalization of information; and by the blanketing effects of media on society."

Unit 1 acts as an introduction to mass media and communication, ensuring that students have the "framework" upon which to build their knowledge of further material discussed in the course.

In unit 2, students discuss public relations, seeing how the field "balances the ethical standards that support the practice of public relations against the ways in which they can be perverted by public and private interests."

Units 3 and 4 discuss advertising and newspapers/magazines, respectively. The topic of unit 5, sound recordings, "pays particular attention to ownership and control in the music industry." Students also delve into the cultural effects of music, and the "role of music in society."

Units 6 and 7 familiarize students with radio and television media; in unit 8, students look at the widespread use of the Internet, with special focus on the "social, legal, and ethical problems that this medium poses to society."

CMNS 201 also has a new online textbook component. Students receive a "print copy of the text, *The Media of Mass Communication* by Vivian and Maurin, along with its URL." This URL enables students to access additional sections that have been added to the text to enrich the students' learning experience. For instance, students can access additional topics such as "Media People," "Media Issues," and "Media Abroad" to "broaden understanding and appreciation of the history of mass media and the thoughts of some of its key players," says Dr. Ellerman.

Additionally, CMNS 201 also has audio and video components. Dr. Ellerman indicated that Dr. Aaron Bor has a "wonderful ability to reach the first year student in a way that is accessible and interesting. It is appropriate that the course moves back and forth between the print and online formats, because that is what contemporary media ask us to do."

Course authors Dr. Bor and Dr. Ellerman are both part of AU's Communications Studies faculty.

Dr. Bor, previously professor of Communication Design at the California State University, Chico, is currently an Adjunct Professor at AU. Dr. Bor has worked extensively with video arts and multimedia workshops at the

University of California at Santa Cruz. His awards for this work include those from the Santa Cruz Video Festival, California Intercollegiate Press Association, and the Broadcast Education Association. His previous clients include the Public Broadcasting Service, Canadian Broadcasting Corporation, National Park Service, as well as the State of California, and many more.

Dr. Ellerman is one of the pioneers of AU's Communication Studies program, and was a driving force behind its conception in 1999. She has co-authored several AU Communications courses, including CNMS 301 (Communication Theory and Analysis) and CMNS 302 (Communication in History).

CMNS 201 has several assignments, as well as a final exam, the latter of which is worth 40%. According to Dr. Ellerman, the assignments are "designed to give students a great deal of feedback throughout the course." She explained that the AU faculty has found, over the years, that students "prefer more frequent feedback and course assignments that are divided into smaller chunks," a preference that is especially pronounced in 200-level courses like CMNS 201.

As a result, CMNS 201 has three essay assignments (750 words each), each of which is worth 8%. The essay topics are suggested in the assignment manual, and are many and varied. All topics focus not on the reading of the course material, but on the student's ability to apply their readings to "everyday life" situations. Essay topics include media debate issues, analysis of the "construction and effectiveness of advertisements," as well as "assessment of the effectiveness of certain media in [the student's] community."

The remaining 18% of CMNS 201's marking scheme consists of their choice of two unit study questions which focus on the unit's material. If students prefer, another option for these small assignments is a short discussion on the relevancy of the mass media theories discussed in the unit to "the contemporary environment." The unit study questions help facilitate quality student-tutor interactions, providing students with an excellent learning experience.

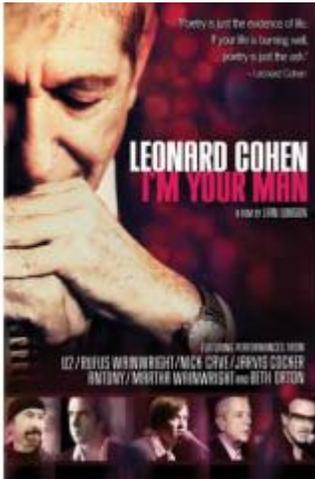
*For more information, visit the course syllabus at: [www.athabascau.ca/html/syllabi/cmns/cmns201.htm](http://www.athabascau.ca/html/syllabi/cmns/cmns201.htm)*

# The Chronicles of Cruiscin Lan

by  
Wanda  
Waterman  
St. Louis



*Mandy Gardner, the Voice's melodious music reviewer, is away this week. She'll have more great reviews for you soon, so in the meantime relax and enjoy this short musical interlude.*



## Leonard Cohen - *I'm Your Man*

Release Date: November 2006

Label: Lions Gate

Running Time: 103 minutes

Rating: 8

Strictly speaking, this film featuring interviews with Leonard Cohen isn't a music CD. But along with a series of conversations with Canada's Tower of Song himself, this DVD is filled with enough of Cohen's songs to satisfy even the most ardent fan.

The first thing we should probably get straight is that, before watching *I'm Your Man*, I was the last person that Leonard Cohen could count among his admirers. As un-Canadian as this may sound, I just couldn't get past that somehow pretentious, too-self-aware exterior to actually listen to the words. All that changed, though, when I heard those rich, sometimes heart-wrenching lyrics performed by the talented musicians on this DVD.

Not only did I discover the jewels that Cohen creates out of words, I also stumbled upon some incredible performers that I might not otherwise have heard of.

The one that stands out the most is a singer named Antony Hegarty, of the band Antony and the Johnsons. His performance of Cohen's "If It Be Your Will" is nothing short of ethereal. Although there are those who may not enjoy his almost reluctant stage presence or his unique voice, his treatment of the song comes across as incredibly personal, as though we have gotten a glimpse of some old, deep pain when we weren't supposed to be watching.

Another standout is Rufus Wainwright. Some may consider his style over the top—way, way over—but his take on "Everybody Knows" is pure campy fun, and I'm amazed with each subsequent viewing at his remarkable vocal control. Later, he slows things down for a beautiful rendition of "Hallelujah," and his version of "Chelsea Hotel" is stirring.

On the down side, the opening performance by Nick Cave almost made me turn the DVD off. I'm sure he has his fans, but I still can't figure out what his hackneyed, posturing performances are doing on this otherwise great film. His handling of the title track "I'm Your Man" seemed almost like a parody of a bad '70s lounge singer, and the intentionally staggered phrasing of "Suzanne" (with Perla Batalla and Julie Christensen) made me long for Leonard to take the microphone instead.

There are far too many performances to list here, but Beth Orton's handling of "Sisters of Mercy" and Teddy Thompson's "Tonight Will Be Fine" are two more wonderful moments.

By the end of the film, when Leonard himself joins Bono to sing "Tower of Song," I was actually won over enough to listen to that famous voice all the way through the number.

Would I buy a copy of a Leonard Cohen CD that features only him singing? No, but *I'm Your Man* has certainly won a convert to the beauty of his writing—and a new fan of several other wonderful artists.



From  
Where  
I Sit  
Hazel Anaka

## More Than One Secret

Unless you've been living under a rock or have just awakened from a coma, it's a safe bet you've heard about *The Secret*. Or read the bestseller. Or watched the DVD. Or all of the above.

Having some of the contributors on the Oprah show to plug the book ensured its bestselling future. Critics have pointed out that the secret is no secret at all, just a repackaging, regurgitation, and rebranding of an old truth. In other words, a brilliant marketing coup.

After many chapters in the book and many vignettes on the DVD we are eventually told that the secret is in fact the law of attraction.

A couple of decades ago success guru Brian Tracy defined it: "You are a living magnet; you invariably attract into your life the people, situations and circumstances that are in harmony with your dominant thoughts."<sup>1</sup> He also explained that the law of attraction springs from the law of cause and effect, "the granddaddy law, the 'Iron Law' of Western thought."<sup>1</sup>

The law of attraction has also been called the Law of Sowing and Reaping, the Law of Action and Reaction, the Law of Compensation, and the Socratic Law.

This law is just one of 151 laws revealed in a tape program called *The Universal Laws of Success and Achievement*. Tracy didn't invent this stuff. He just pulled together and sorted the laws into 12 different categories: success, achievement, happiness, love and relationships, economics, negotiating, money, wealth creation, selling, business, luck, and self-fulfillment.

Anyone who has ever read a self-help book or heard a personal coach speak or spent one minute trying to become a self-actualized human being knows that none of this is new. Oh sure, every so often people find a new spin or a new way to explain things, but essentially a truth is a truth is a truth. Most mortals need to be reminded, reinvigorated, re-engaged. Bestsellers and media hype bring the message to new audiences and remind those of us who've heard it before.

Don't get me wrong, I'm no genius. It's just that I've invested in myself by buying books, tapes, and seminars. Without exception all the experts suggest turning your car into a university on wheels. Drop a tape into the player and soak up all that good, empowering, soul-renewing info. And it beats road rage by a country mile. In our multi-tasking world it makes sense. It's especially effective for auditory learners. When my kids were still at home I nearly drove them crazy by playing Jim Rohn tapes whenever they were captive in my vehicle for longer trips. At the time they felt they'd be permanently scarred by the experience. I wonder what they'd say now.

The bottom line is this: we are surrounded by riches of books, tapes, DVDs, world-class speakers, research, and history. We can reach for classics written before many of us were even born because a truth is a truth is a truth. We can use today's technology to help integrate the messages into our lives. We can invest in ourselves and actually use the materials. After all, there's more than one secret, from where I sit.

<sup>1</sup> Leadershipnow, excerpted from Brian Tracy. *The 100 Absolutely Unbreakable Laws of Business Success*. Retrieved May 2, 2007, from <http://www.leadershipnow.com/leadershop/5107-4excerpt.html>

## AUSU THIS MONTH



### Changes to Council Executive The AUSU "cabinet" does the shuffle

AUSU councillors are elected for two-year terms and, traditionally, the three executives also serve for two years. In early 2005, however, council began to discuss the possibility of holding a mid-term executive election for the following reasons:

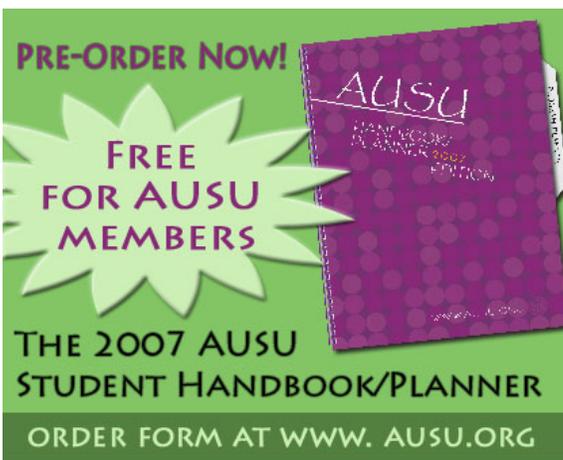
- Executive positions are very demanding and require a large time commitment for a modest wage. All AU committees and executives work daytime hours, as do AUSU staff, therefore most meetings AUSU executives must attend regularly are also scheduled during the day. While executives can make their own hours to some

extent, the frequent daytime commitments preclude AUSU executives from holding full-time jobs outside of AUSU. They may also find it difficult to maintain a full course load (many universities permit student council executives to hold full-time student status while taking only one course while they serve, but AU has no such provision). A mid-term election provides tired executives an opportunity to step down after a year without prejudice or a sense of ending their commitment early.

- Some councillors may not run for executive positions when they first get on council because they are inexperienced and do not feel ready to effectively serve in this capacity. For this reason, seasoned councillors usually are elected to executive positions. By midway through the two-year term, newer councillors may reconsider. This also allows councillors who may have been added to council through a by-election to have an opportunity to run.
- After a year, councillors will also have a better idea of who will serve best in each of the executive positions and may want an opportunity to cast a new vote.

A mid-term election was necessary during the 2004/06 council term due to the resignation of two of the three executives. This term, councillors developed a new executive election policy to allow for the option of a mid-term election each term. In mid-March, council decided to hold a mid-term election for this year.

Lonita Fraser, VP External for AUSU for the last two years, decided not to run at this time due to a high course load, and she has moved to a regular councillor without portfolio position.



New councillor Huma Lodhi, who has been with council for one year, chose to run for VP Finance, due to her experience on the AUSU Finance Committee over the last year.

VP Finance for the past three years, Karl Low, chose to run for the vacant VP External position.

Lisa Priebe, President for the last two years, opted to run again for her position.

The three candidates were acclaimed to their positions at a special meeting of council held on April 16, 2007. As both outgoing executives are still with council and available to assist their successors, the changeover is expected to be very smooth.

## B.C. Government Looks To Entice Students To Public Service

### Loan forgiveness, fellowships available to B.C. Public Service employees

By Lee Guille and Nigel Green

*Nexus* (Camosun College)

VICTORIA (CUP) -- The B.C. government has pledged to set aside \$1.75 million annually to encourage skilled youth to consider careers in the public service.

By 2015, more than 45 per cent of the current managing staff and 35 per cent of employees will be eligible to retire from the B.C. Public Service. The Pacific Leadership Program is working to stimulate student interest in public service on four fronts -- student loan forgiveness, paid education opportunities, scholarships, and graduate student fellowships.

"What the government is doing is investing in the public service by supporting education and growth of talented and dedicated staff," said Anne McKinnon, public affairs director for the B.C. Public Service Agency. "It sharpens the B.C. government's competitive edge to recruit and retain high-calibre employees in a marketplace that has increasing labour shortages."

The Pacific Leadership Program will be marketing the public service as an innovative and dynamic career choice.

"As B.C.'s largest employer, we face the same recruitment and retention challenges as the private sector," McKinnon said.

Entering into a career in the public service under the program's loan forgiveness program will reduce outstanding student loan debt by one-third a year.

"It's one element of a comprehensive transformation package that makes the public service an even better place to build a career," McKinnon said.

The Canadian Federation of Students, a national student lobby group, has been critical of the program, as it only applies to employees of the B.C. Public Service, and not all students.

"The premier's student loan forgiveness program for government employees overlooks many B.C. students' desperation," said Shamus Reid, B.C. national executive representative of the CFS in a statement. "It should be a starting point for a broader grants or loan remission program to assist all students in need."

B.C. post-secondary students have student loan debt averaging \$27,000 on graduation, and pay an average of \$4,960 in tuition fees.

The province has also set aside 60 scholarships of up to \$2,500 for students who have parents in the public service. These scholarships are available only to full-time students under 25 in a bachelor's degree program, or trade, technical or vocational training. Current employees of the provincial government are eligible for subsidized education.

There are also graduate student fellowships available. Each year, 20 graduate students conducting research related to government priorities will be awarded \$20,000 toward their studies.

The CFS has also been critical of the scholarship and fellowship program.

"The B.C. government is acting in a limited way, as an employer, while avoiding its greater responsibility to the province's economic future and the next generation," Scott Payne, B.C. chairperson of the CFS, said in a release.

The program is being implemented over the next year. More information can be found at [www.pacificleaders.gov.bc.ca](http://www.pacificleaders.gov.bc.ca).

# classifieds

Classifieds are free for AU students! Contact [voice@ausu.org](mailto:voice@ausu.org) for more information.

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## Research Subjects Wanted - Distance and Open Education Effects on Accessibility for First Generation Learners

Participants must be:

- first generation post-secondary distance education students or alumni
- fluent in English
- at least 18 years old

Respondents who complete our survey will be entered to win \$150. To participate or for information, email [survey@leximortis.com](mailto:survey@leximortis.com). Study performed and funded by AU students L. Priebe, MA; T. Ross; and K. Low.

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**Female Teacup Yorkie Terrier** Available to Pets Lover. For More Information, Get Back to me Via Email Or Phone Number: [Katie\\_webster002@yahoo.com](mailto:Katie_webster002@yahoo.com) or (231) 533 9523

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## THE VOICE

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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

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