

THE VOICE

MAGAZINE

Volume 15 Issue 23
June 22, 2007



Convocation 2007!

Continuing coverage of events, grad interviews, and more

Heart to Heart
The Impatient Romantic

Fair Play
Taking Aim at Student Loans



Plus:
From Where I Sit
Click On This
Lost & Found
Music To Eat Lunch To
and much more...

" . . . WE BECAME A
LEARNING COMMUNITY

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from the readers

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

I just finished reading the articles about the 2007 convocation. And I just wanted to say thanks for putting those in there. I really enjoyed reading about the events, and I loved the graduate interviews. It encouraged me to actually hear about people who have finished! As well as I now have a better idea of what to expect when I graduate in a few years.

Thanks,

Amy Sovereign

THE VOICE MAGAZINE

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Convocation 2007

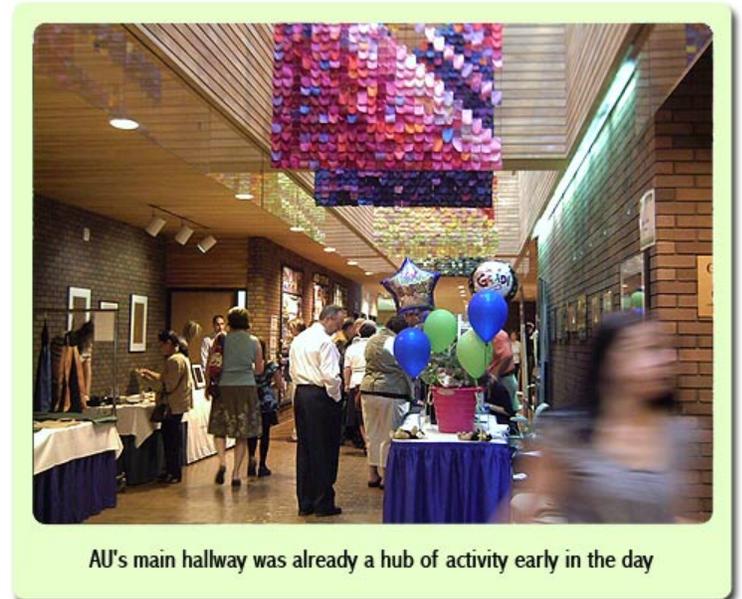
Sandra Livingston

This is the second of a special three-part Voice report on Athabasca University's 2007 Convocation, which took place June 7, 8, and 9. The Voice offers its warmest congratulations to all this year's graduates!

On Friday, June 8, sunny skies and warm weather once again smiled on the AU campus, and a slight breeze promised to keep everyone comfortable in the giant red-and-white striped tent. Although a sense of anticipation still filled the air, it was mixed with what can only be described as a slightly more relaxed feeling: the first day of ceremonies had gone wonderfully, and day two of Convocation 2007 was well underway.

Once again, the parking lots and campus grounds filled up early, and the tables in the main hallway were a going concern as everyone stopped to decide on their choice of commemorative frames and AU merchandise.

The day's group of graduates posed for photographs, explored the university grounds, and eventually made their way to the library, where they received their robes, along with numbered slips of paper that designated their place in the procession.



AU's main hallway was already a hub of activity early in the day



Registrar Jim D'Arcy with the AU mace

As the graduates made their final preparations, AU Registrar Jim D'Arcy was already standing by, and he caught everyone's eye as he held the ceremonial mace. Symbolic of the traditional talking stick used by many indigenous people, the mace is beautifully crafted out of natural elements that reflect the power of, and respect due, the natural world. The combination of moose horn, pine, fir, bear claws and teeth, eagle and raven feathers, and stone represent the balance and power of nature, while beads signify the human component and its more transient attachment to the physical world.

Soon, the practical details of receiving robes and sorting out lineups were complete. Everyone hurried into place, and the graduates were ready and in position under the long white awning, waiting for the signal to begin.

On Thursday, a South African singing group had conducted the graduates into the tent, and on Friday the accompaniment was no less impressive: graduates, academics, and special guests proceeded along the length of the red carpet and onto the stage to the sounds of the Northern Cree Singers. The faint scent of sweetgrass drifted through the tent's high dome as this



The graduates prepare to make their appearance . . .

aboriginal drum group (who also appeared at the 2007 Juno Awards) performed a powerful song, one that echoed the sense of pride and accomplishment in the ceremonies.

Everyone stood for the singing of O Canada, and Chair Joy Romero greeted guests and graduates with her opening remarks. On this day, she had the pleasure of introducing the Honorable Norman L. Kwong, Lieutenant Governor of Alberta.

He began his lively address by saying that, after observing the tradition of excellence of AU, he was going to go home, get on the Internet, and try taking a couple of courses—starting with public speaking. On a more serious note, he acknowledged the accomplishments of all the graduates and spoke of

the many exciting opportunities awaiting them.

Throughout his speech, a member of the Royal Canadian Mounted Police stood at his side, and cameras were flashing as audience members captured the striking image.

His greeting was followed by remarks from Mike Cardinal, MLA in the Athabasca-Redwater constituency, and Paula Evans, Councillor of the Town of Athabasca. Ms. Evans shared the town's pride in being home to Athabasca University, and invited visitors to enjoy the beautiful surroundings, including the boreal forest. She also noted that Athabasca is named for a Cree word, and means "meeting place in the reeds."

Dr. Frits Pannekoek completed the day's opening remarks with a reminder of just how unique AU's vision is, saying that the university is a place for ongoing, lifelong learning, and that student experiences are integrated into the real world. He also noted that 74% of AU graduates are the first in their families to earn a university degree.

Following Dr. Pannekoek's greetings, a very special guest was inducted to the Order of Athabasca University: Lionel Cherniwchan. He has been involved with AU for a number of years, and along with acting as a public member of Governing Council from 2000 to 2006, he continues to work as an ambassador for the university and to promote it through a variety of activities.

He noted with obvious pride that only one university is accredited in both Canada and the United States—and that university is AU.

After the induction ceremony, it was time for the graduates to shine. Repeating the formal petition that was to take place on all three days of convocation, Dr. Margaret Haughey, the Vice-President Academic, asked



. . . followed by the academics

the candidates to rise then addressed the AU governing council. Chair Joy Romero declared the petition granted, and the graduates responded to Dr. Pannekoek by agreeing to honour the AU pledge.



The Northern Cree Singers pow-wow group

The first group of graduates took their place along the side of the stage, and one by one received their coloured hood and their diploma as their brief bios were read aloud.

The degree presentations for the day included:

Master of Health Studies

Master of Nursing

Master of Science - Information Systems

Bachelor of Nursing

Bachelor of Science

Bachelor of Science in Computing and Information Systems

As the graduates returned to their seats, the stage soon became a sea of colour, filled with the bright peach, blue, yellow, and teal hoods that designated each academic department.

The bios were lively, and served as a reminder that AU students have a university experience like no other. Some graduates wrote of having been involved with AU courses for the past 20 years, while others were proud to have earned their degrees in only 19 months. Some had completed their assignments by candlelight when the power went out, and one Master of Nursing grad had a baby just 6 weeks before writing a comprehensive exam.

These personal glimpses into the life of AU graduates also reaffirmed the fact that the university offers a truly lifelong educational experience: one graduate is expecting her first baby in July, while another is looking forward to becoming a grandmother this summer.

Along with the hard work that went into earning their degrees, AU's graduates have many other talents and accomplishments to be proud of. The day's group included a commercial pilot, an individual who recently completed the Boston Marathon, and another who plans to become a nurse practitioner with Doctors Without Borders.

Following the awarding of the degrees, three more special events were planned. The first was the presentation of the Governor General's Silver Medal to Maureen Burt, a Bachelor of Nursing graduate from Okotoks, Alberta.



The Honorable Norman L. Kwong, Lieutenant Governor of Alberta, accompanied by a Canadian icon--a red-coated Mountie



Joy Romero awards the Governor General's Silver Medal to Maureen Burt

Next, the day's graduate address was given by Janice Dalton. Janice had just received her Master of Health Studies, and she said that it was "unbelievable to think that while sitting in the comfort of my own home in a small rural community I could broaden my horizons and learn through interaction with a diverse group of health professionals worldwide."

She also praised the assistance of AU staff in her educational journey, and knows that their "positive influence" helped her to achieve her success in the program. (You can read the full text of Janice's speech at the end of this article.)

The final presentation of the day was the conferring of an Honorary Doctor of Laws, and the

recipient was Johnsen Sewepagaham. An ardent supporter of post-secondary learning, Mr. Sewepagaham's efforts helped to bring post-secondary education to his community. He has also served as Chief of the Little Red River Cree Nation in North West Alberta, and held that post for five consecutive four-year terms beginning in 1980.

Dr. Winona Wheeler, Associate Professor of Indigenous Studies, introduced Mr. Sewepagaham, and an elder offered a prayer for the occasion. Mr. Sewepagaham praised AU for its excellent methods of delivering education, and he accepted the Honorary Doctorate humbly and with honour. Following the presentation, the Northern Cree Singers performed an honour song.

As the last beat of the drums resounded through the tent, it was time for Joy Romero to close the ceremonies and begin the recession. Piper Kara Hryckowian again took her place at the front of the stage, and everyone rose to follow her as the platform party proudly made their way back along the length of the tent and out into the sunny afternoon.

The new alumni posed for photos with beaming family and friends by their sides, and as soon as pictures were taken the robes were returned and everyone headed for the lunch that awaited them in the food tent.

As people slowly began to wander back to the parking lot, degrees in hand, there was a sense that the day's ceremony marked not just a conclusion but also a beginning. Whether they were looking forward to the prospect of a new career or the adventure of more studies, this year's group of AU graduates were already busy making plans for what tomorrow—and the future—will hold.



Proud new alumni posed for photographs after the ceremony

Watch for the conclusion of Convocation 2007 coverage next week!

CONVOCATION 2007 - ADDRESS BY GRADUATE



During each of the three days of convocation, one graduate addressed their fellow students and convocation guests, sharing their thoughts about graduation and the journey that brought them there.

On Friday, June 8, the graduate address was given by Janice Dalton, of Harbour Main, Newfoundland and Labrador, who received her Master of Health Studies degree.

The Voice thanks Janice for sharing the text of her address, which is printed below.

Madam Chair, Your Honour Mr. President, Distinguished guests, Elders, Members of the platform party, Graduates, Ladies and gentlemen,

It is a sincere honour for me to speak before you today on behalf of this year's graduating class of 2007. Lifelong learning has often and fittingly been likened to a journey. At the beginning of our learning journey we had to first decide where our journey would take place. We chose Athabasca University. I am confident that each of you will agree with me when I say we could not have made a better choice. It has allowed us to master not only knowledge in our field of study, but also improved our media skills through its distance education delivery mode.

In my case, the online learning format allowed me to remain at home in Newfoundland with my husband and four children and to continue my career while pursuing my educational goal. It is unbelievable to think that while sitting in the comfort of my own home in a small rural community I could broaden my horizons and learn through interaction with a diverse group of health professionals worldwide.

On any journey the assistance and guidance provided by others is paramount in reaching the destiny. The staff and faculty at Athabasca have guided and eased my journey in many ways. Professional and support staff were always available and more than willing to assist with technical difficulties, and to answer simple questions such as what form to complete or where to find that needed journal article. Their responses were always professional and friendly. There was never a feeling of being a bother.

The contribution the faculty has made to my journey cannot be overstated. In my opinion, having studied at a number of academic institutions, the faculty at Athabasca University is outstanding. I am convinced that without their positive influence I would not be standing here today. Their leadership in education demonstrates their commitment to academic excellence. They are experts in the field of distance, online education and continually strive to support learning through innovation. At Athabasca University, the course material is not simply posted online; there is emphasis on creating an inviting and effective learning environment. Engaging in the learning process via the Internet can sometimes be isolating; however, this was not my experience. The faculty provided unprecedented opportunities to engage students in the learning process and create a feeling of community.

This brings us to another key factor in successfully completing our journey: our cyber peers. It is rare that we travel alone on a journey. On our journey we travelled with others working toward the same learning

goals. As well as goals, we shared challenges. Through faculty leadership, class interaction, and shared work tasks we became a learning community. As part of the learning community we experienced trust and belonging. If one person struggled with a concept we all struggled with the concept until the learning was conquered; we became masters of not only our own destiny but felt a sense of responsibility to support our cyber peers in the mastering of their destiny. It was through this connectedness we learned and grew.

And of course I would be remiss if I did not acknowledge our family and friends who unconditionally supported us through this journey. For each of us they may be called by a different name; mother, father, husband, wife, child, best friend, or co-worker to name a few. However, whatever their title they are each special. They experienced the ups and downs of our emotional roller coaster as we struggled to complete an assignment or celebrate a positive evaluation. In the case of my husband, who does not work in a health-related field, he would sit, listen, and nod his head as I discussed my latest course topic. At the end of the conversation I had gained a better understanding of my subject matter. However, I am sure that he was no more enthused about the topic at hand. The important thing was he listened. Unfortunately he could not be here with me today to celebrate; in some ways he has earned the diploma as much as I have. Therefore, with him in my mind and on behalf of the graduating class, I would like to acknowledge and thank family and friends for just being there.

Today we have arrived at the end of the journey we started a number of years ago. The completion of our programs has required planning, perseverance, hard work, dedication, balance, and support. However, in my opinion, it has been well worth it. I am confident that as each of you sit here with pride in your accomplishment you also feel your learning has been worth the investment. However, now that we have arrived at this destination, it is time to start the next journey, using the new knowledge, skills, and attitudes we have acquired. As we wake up to a fresh new tomorrow and we prepare to embark on our next challenge I leave you with this thought from famous American poet Ralph Waldo Emerson: Do not follow where the path may lead. Go, instead, where there is no path and leave a trail.

Congratulations and enjoy your celebration.

CONVOCATION 2007 - GRADUATE INTERVIEWS



This is the second of a three-part Voice series featuring interviews with some of AU's 2007 graduates.

For many graduates, convocation weekend was the first time they had seen the beautiful grounds and buildings of the AU campus, and they attended the ceremonies from places near and far, including Calgary, Alberta, and El Paso, Texas.

The Voice would like to offer its sincere congratulations to all of this year's graduates, and knows that their accomplishments will encourage all those students who are still completing their studies at AU.

Darlene Peacock

Master of Health Studies

Darlene is pictured here with her granddaughter Mercades.

Darlene completed her Master of Health Studies over six years, and it was her perseverance that led to her success in the program.

She drew on that experience to offer encouragement to students who are still in the program, and her words of advice are to "stay with it, persevere, and don't give up."

She travelled from Enoch Cree Nation near Edmonton to attend the graduation ceremony, and *The Voice* caught up to her and her granddaughter Mercades as they were enjoying the beautiful Athabasca campus and preparing for convocation to begin.

Darlene plans to continue on her current career path as a program liaison officer with Health Canada, and will put her degree to good use in that role.

Congratulations, Darlene!



William DeGagne

Master of Business Administration in Project Management

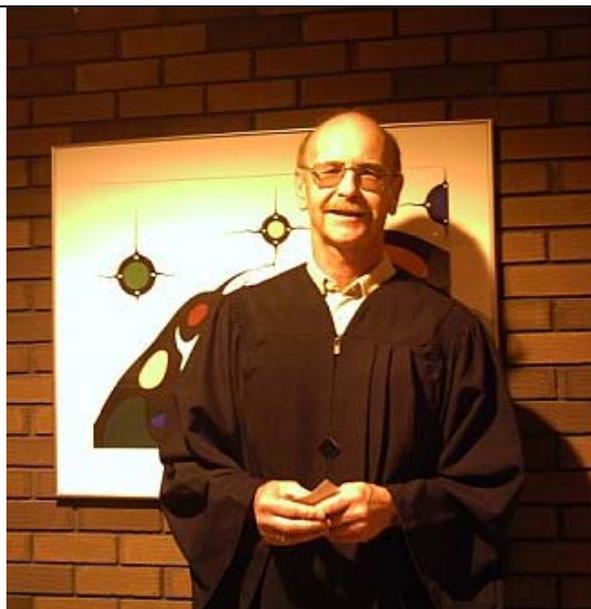
William began his studies in the Master of Business Administration's Project Management stream in 2004 and completed the program in 2007, just over two and a half years.

He travelled from Winnipeg with his partner and mother to attend convocation and, as he donned his robe and waited for the graduate line-up to form, expressed surprise that the big day had arrived so quickly.

His advice to current students is to enjoy their studies and their time at AU, because "it goes by so fast. It's a wonderful journey and it's a lot of fun, and it's hard to believe it's over."

William currently works as a project manager in the consulting industry in Winnipeg, and knows that his degree will open up many more possibilities to him in the field.

Congratulations, William!



Elaine Clark

Master of Nursing

For her graduation from the Master of Nursing, Nurse Practitioner stream, Elaine enjoyed a family reunion along with the convocation ceremony: she was accompanied by her husband and son, her mother, and her brother and his family.

She travelled from beautiful Gabriola Island, B.C., and says of her AU experience that she "really, really loved the fact that I could do my Masters online from a little island, and not have to travel or commute anywhere to do it. Otherwise I would have had to uproot my whole family. So my family got to stay on Gabriola Island and work and live, and I got to do what I wanted to do. It was the best of both worlds."

Elaine completed her program in three and a half years on a part-time basis, and advises current students to "buy a good computer. A good computer and a good printer."

After convocation, she is looking forward to putting her degree to good use in the field as a nurse practitioner soon.

Congratulations, Elaine!



Karin Kratz

Bachelor of Administration

Karin lives in Comox, Vancouver Island, and had some inspiring words of advice for current AU students: "If you believe you can do it, you can."

She stressed the importance of enjoying the learning process itself and not worrying about the time it requires.

Karin originally started taking courses through AU in 1979. She took a 20-year hiatus and then returned to her studies, and as she said, "here I am. So it can be done."

An employee with the Department of National Defence, Karin doesn't have specific plans for immediately after convocation, but believes that "being able to complete the course in itself is monumental. The building of self-esteem that comes from being able to do it is important."

She believes that "the degrees themselves are of course helpful later on in life . . . but they are secondary" to the actual insight and knowledge gained.

Congratulations, Karin!



Samantha Fuhr

Bachelor of Professional Arts, Criminal Justice with great distinction

Samantha is pictured here with Ahmed Taha.

Samantha travelled from Edmonton to receive her Bachelor of Professional Arts in Criminal Justice.

For Samantha, one of the best things about completing her degree at Athabasca was having a convenient schedule.

She enjoyed being able to work at her own pace, and when asked what words of advice she has for current AU students she noted that she tends to procrastinate, and that she had to learn to overcome that in order to succeed in her distance studies.

Currently, she is employed with the City of Edmonton, but has plans to continue her education. She has recently been accepted to a university in Spokane, Washington, for a Master of Arts program.

Congratulations, Samantha!



Watch for more graduate interviews next week!

CONVOCATION 2007 - PHOTO ALBUM

On June 7, 8, and 9, the Athabasca University campus was filled with the sights and sounds of Convocation 2007, and these photos offer a glimpse into this year's celebrations



Watch for more convocation photos next week!



Community-Based Management Versus Backroom Deals

This is the conclusion of a two-part series on the growing privatization of the clam industry in southwest Nova Scotia.

The federal government has long been in the habit of quickly sliding smelly deals under Maritimers' noses in the hopes that they won't catch a whiff until it's too late to send the deal back. A recent instance was the Digby wharf fiasco, in which locals were not told money was available to their community for wharf repairs until after a private company had squandered a generous chunk of the taxpayers' money and then left the wharf to rot.

Peter Stoffer, federal NDP fisheries critic, gives voice to the grounds for a growing frustration among Maritime fisher peoples: "You Maritimers witnessed the largest collapse of a public natural resource in the history of the world in the northern cod. Four billion dollars of your money went to adjust that industry. The corporate people didn't pay it, *you* paid it. And not one DFO [Department of Fisheries and Oceans] official was ever held accountable for that. What they're now allowing is for the company to have unfettered access for ten years with no other entrance into that fishery."

Stoffer expounds on what is wrong with the privatization process: "The fish do not belong to the company; they belong to the people of Canada, and the Supreme Court said that in 1997 in the case of Comeau Seafoods versus DFO: 'There is a public right to fish and it's a common property resource and not to be privatized.' Nothing's stopping Innovative Fishery Products, the Daley brothers, or Clearwater being sold to outside interests like Americans or Icelanders or whatever, and then you have foreigners controlling a public resource—the fish—just like what's happening in our forestry industry."

The existing network of government rules, regulations, and practices has indeed proven fortuitous for IFP. The more beach closures the merrier for a company that stands to increase profits and widen its monopoly every time contaminants are detected in the tidal waters of a clam flat. And thanks to the long series of bureaucratic hoops that have to be jumped through in order to have a closed beach reopened, an indefinite period of time will pass before the company loses access to those beaches.

This scenario might not look quite so bleak if the company had a history of responsible ecological practice. But by its own report, IFP is doing nothing to increase clam stocks. The DFO and the Nova Scotia Department of Fisheries and Aquaculture (NSDFA) claim increased yields in recent years yet provide no evidence of any increase in biomass. In fact, one has only to go to the [DFO website](#) to see evidence of declining clam stocks and the suggestion that this may be due to the concentration of clam harvesters on open beaches as a result of increasing beach closures.

Sherry Pictou, of the Bear River First Nation, approaches the mic to point out that aboriginal treaty rights call for consultation with First Nations peoples before publicly owned natural resources can be leased to private businesses, and that no such consultation was initiated by government.

"Why should we agree to this process?" Sherry asks. "This is a violation of the human right to survival. Show me where this is good."

A clammer calls out, "Give that woman a medal!"

Ian Marshall, area director for DFO for South West Nova Scotia, points out that it is easier to hold one leaseholding company responsible to supply uncontaminated product than to monitor the product supplied by several hundred independent clam diggers.

In an earlier conversation, Ken Weir showed some sympathy for the DFO's quandary, but does not see a monopoly as the only feasible solution to government understaffing. "There are too many diggers everywhere," he admits. "But there are only five plants that buy clams in this area. Just go to the plant. If the clams are small, burn [penalize] the plant, and burn the guy that dug the clams and that would eliminate the problem. But I tell that to DFO and it's like I got three heads on me or something."

The DFO insists that the availability of ten-year leases to IFP is necessary to protect the business's investment in the industry. They also claim that ten-year leases can provide IFP, the one leaseholding company eligible for a ten-year lease, the opportunity to invest in stock enhancement, yet have not demanded that the company engage in stock enhancement or even good environmental stewardship. Tom Vitiello, Annapolis Royal municipal councillor, expresses amazement that ten-year leases will be granted in the absence of an independent study of the company's environmental practices.

"I am disappointed," Vitiello shakes his head. "In fact I am astounded!"

Also astounded is Arthur Bull of the Bay of Fundy Marine Resource Centre, who asks that any decisions the government makes be evidence based. Bull asks Marshall Giles of the NSDFA if the lack of information on company stock enhancement could be made a matter of public record. Giles says no, because the privacy act protects the interests of the company. The room rumbles and groans.

Bull points out that the key point is not the productivity of the company but rather stock assessment, and asks for evidence that the stock has increased. Again his request is refused, but he is told that his questions will be taken back to the office.

Plaid-shirted Mary McWhinney approaches the mic. "First of all," she announces in a powerhouse voice, "I wanna say somethin' to that fuller sittin' over there." She points to Ian Marshall of the DFO. "The whole time he was talkin'," she says, pointing back to Vitiello, "you was sittin' there with a big smirk on your face. Now you owe him an apology!"

Marshall sheepishly asserts that he meant no harm, that he was not laughing at the councillor, but apologizes anyway. Mary turns back to Vitiello.

"Are you satisfied?" she asks.

"Uh, yes!" he blurts out in amazement. "I wasn't aware that he was laughing, so no harm done."

Mary goes on to ask the officials, "You said you was here to listen. Has a decision been made yet about these leases? And can anything we say change your mind?"

"No one has made an application for these leases yet," says Marshall Giles.

This keeps getting repeated, not only as if it makes a difference, but also as if it were true. The fact is that IFP has already been granted a ten-year lease on a prime stretch of closed clam beach at the head of St. Mary's Bay. The company is now poised to submit applications for 14 more closed beaches in the area.

A clammer must harvest at least a ton-and-a-half of clams from open areas before he or she will be hired to dig clams for IFP. This means the open beaches are heavily harvested.

"I've never seen the evidence one way or the other but what the clam diggers say is that that could wipe us out," says Arthur Bull.

Ken Weir claims that many flats are now stripped of clams. The diggers now have to drive up to 30 miles to dig, in a region where once you could walk to a bountiful flat from your own back yard.

Environment Canada undertakes painstaking testing procedures to ensure that clams found beneath contaminated tidal waters do not reach the marketplace without first having been cleansed of impurities. But funds are low and staff are few and so more time than necessary may elapse before a previously closed beach can be reclassified as safe for clam harvesting by anyone but diggers for IFP.

When asked for long-term solutions, Denise Sullivan of the Annapolis Watershed Resource Committee states, "We're looking at the way things are done in coastal Maine. Their model is very different from ours in terms of who has legislative authority over the resource, and all of their management is done on a much more local scale."

Ken Weir and fellow clam harvesters agree, and have been working with the watershed committee to implement the early stages of community-based management in the area: "DFO aren't there to help us—they're out there to help the company. We want community-based management. We want to set limits to conserve our industry."

From a couple of angles the future looks hopeful. Beaches reseeded by volunteers are now peppered with clams from low- to high-water marks; in two years these clams will reach maturity and be ready for market.

"The Annapolis Watershed Resource Committee are actually looking quite strong," says Arthur Bull. "Clamming, unlike codfish, can be brought back a hundred percent. You can actually clean up the beach and clams will grow back, but you have to actually clean it up. You have to manage it. You can't just leave it."

Ken Weir reports that the DFO has recently agreed to aggressively enforce size limits, which is one means of increasing clam stocks. In the past, IFP was reputed to be lax in weeding out smaller clams; the marketplace, especially restaurants, relished the smaller clams and so there was little penalty for illegally marketing them. Enforcing size limits is one effective means of protecting the resource.

Things could be rosier. With greater government compliance toward (or less interference in) community-based management, *all* southwest Nova Scotia clam beaches might indefinitely continue to enrich both the local economy and the international diet. But for now the reseeded is done on the clambers' own time. The clam diggers' associations have submitted a proposal to the DFO requesting that clambers' employment benefits be extended through the summer months to enable the diggers to reseed depleted beaches. Such an arrangement would bring larger numbers of clambers to this endeavour for longer hours, practically guaranteeing its success. So far the proposal has not been rejected but the clambers have been informed that there is no money available for that sort of thing.

Canada's *Oceans Act* endorses the involvement of local communities in the management of coastal aquatic resources. But according to a recent paper by Melanie G. Wiber, of the University of New Brunswick's Anthropology Department, and Arthur Bull, ". . .the law has more often been deployed in ways that facilitated blocking participatory governance of resource management. Unless and until the political will exists to shift the real barriers to participatory governance, significant changes to governance structures will not emerge."¹

On the afternoon of May 25, 2007, I received this email from Arthur Bull:

Hi Folks,

I am writing to tell you that I got a call from Greg Roach at Nova Scotia Fisheries and Aquaculture this afternoon, and he told me that the Minister signed the leases [the leases allowing IFC sole harvesting rights for the 14 closed clam beaches mentioned earlier]. He said that there were some changes as a result of our interventions: 1). the areas could be opened if they were tested as clean, 2). the Annapolis River lease is only for five years, 3). the Minister can force the company to cooperate with conservation work, and 4). there will be public access for non clam harvesting use. I do not think any of these makes any difference to the essential privatization of this resource in this place. I think it will take some time to grasp the implications of this . . .

Since receiving Arthur's email, I came across this quote from the poet Percy Bysshe Shelley, which may apply to this situation: "Power, like a desolating pestilence, pollutes whatever it touches . . ."

Arthur's message is followed swiftly by this from Sherry Pictou, who has just heard the devastating news:

My heart is overflowing with Grandma Sarah,
Teaching us to dig clams.
As she wrapped our harvest in foil
And cooked it over heated coals beneath the sand
I knew this was for me,
And for my lifetime . . .
And those lifetimes
Before and after me,
Where shell heaps
Bare the answers to existence
In both life and death.
The clam, the beautiful clam,
Hidden within its intergenerational
Purple blue shell,
The food of life,
Ancient food for future generations . . .
Oh my brother,
So contented as you walk slowly
The back road, your bucket full of clams,
Your clam hack,
So serene and quiet,
This walk of ancient paths,
You, carrying so quietly
The ancestral knowledge;

The rest of us
Are too absorbed
In the fast pace of tomorrow
To learn, or feel,
With our hearts, today.
I see you there
With your shucking knife,
For a second
Trying to teach me,
As your ancient laughter,
Of fathers and grandfathers
Before you,
Rings loud to this day
In my heart of all hearts
As I struggle to learn
This art now floating along
Bay shores and inlets,
And continue to do so
Today . . .

If you would like to help, please share the following concerns with Loyola Hearn, Minister of Fisheries and Oceans:

- that the government actively support community-based management of fisheries in Nova Scotia;
- that as the government works toward forming any decisions which could affect coastal resources in Nova Scotia it will implement a transparent and public process allowing for full disclosure of all data upon which the federal and provincial governments' decision is based; and
- that a forum for all affected stakeholders will play a significant role in any decision reached.

Email min@dfo-mpo.gc.ca (please include your postal and email address), or write to:

The Honourable Loyola Hearn, Minister of Fisheries and Oceans
Department of Fisheries & Oceans
200 Kent Street
15th Floor
Ottawa, ON K1A 0E6

¹ Wiber, M. G. and Bull, A., 2006. "Re-scaling governance for better resource management?" Prepared for the Law and Governance Conference, Max Planck Institute for Social Anthropology.

Hunter Valentine - *The Impatient Romantic*

Release date: April 10, 2007

Label: True North Records

Tracks: 11

Rating: 5

This all-female three-piece band is a Canadian group based in Ontario who formed in 2004 and have been enjoying a local fan base. *The Impatient Romantic* is the band's first full-length album, and it follows a self-titled four-track record that did a lot to bring in the local audiences and a few ranging farther across Canada.

The band describes itself as a musical Jimmy Dean; someone who you either love or hate, but can't hate because "he is just himself and he never promised you anything."¹ Such is the band, and I must say such is the album. I wouldn't say I enjoyed the record; however, there are elements of it that I admire and can't disregard.

Although the vocalizations almost set my teeth grating on each other at the outset, they weren't as unbearable as I thought they might be throughout the record. That said, they aren't pleasant. The songs are very much in tune with the album title, looking into jaded little love stories with a bitter eye and an ambition to go out, have sex freely, and not feel (the goal according to the lyrics!). These 11 tracks give the impression of being well thought out; they just don't speak to me on any level and I have no desire to ever hear them again.

What is unusual about the record is that it really doesn't come off sounding typically Canadian like so many other indie and alternative artists do. This might easily be an international band with a few features on the *Friends* soundtrack as far as I'm concerned; despite Canadian references like "Van-City," it's more a feminist record than a Canadian one. Not that there is anything wrong with that. In fact, it's nice to know our countryfolk can handle something more than a solemn and gritty pledge to the home nation and all its quirks.

If anything, that's what I most appreciated about Hunter Valentine on this album: the ability to present the world with something wholly Canadian without needing to actually point that fact out. In terms of the music itself, however, I've heard better indie, better alternative, and better all-girl bands. Not only is this band not for me, but I'd wager it's not for many of you either. At least they've got their Ontario fans!

¹ Hunter Valentine website. "Bio." Retrieved June 19, 2007, from <http://www.huntervalentine.com/bio.html>

Living on the Wild Side



*From
Where
I Sit*

Hazel Anaka

You don't have to frequent Edmonton's Whyte Avenue or Calgary's Red Mile to live the wild life. In fact, you don't even have to live in a big city. You can live on my farm one short hour northeast of Edmonton.

I'm not sure what exactly is going on but my encounters with wildlife seem to be increasing both in species and frequency. Just now, as I moved through my office in search of something, my peripheral vision caught sight of movement outside. A double-take confirmed my eyes weren't tricking me. Marching up the sidewalk to the house, bold as can be in broad daylight, was a skunk. A skunk. From the relative safety of a half-opened screen door I yelled at it. Luckily for our pregnant farm cat and me it turned and hurried away—scentlessly—to hide under the Buick and then scurry between the garage and our storage container, off to the outer reaches of the yard I guess. We try not to be careless with dry cat food because we know it can attract pests like magpies and skunks, so what gives?

This winter we found moose droppings 25 feet from the house. We know the moose criss-cross our farm, but in our backyard? Please. Deer in groups as large as eight or nine meander through the yard morning, noon, and night. They're cute and seem so benign until they start eating my flowers or the hay bales across the road. Usually, tapping on the window is enough to scare the daylight out of them. Sometimes we try to capture them on film.

I encountered a fox at the edge of the patio one day and again near a flower bed one evening months later. I know we have coyotes nearby because of the evening serenade. When we had cattle and young calves, the coyotes patrolled the perimeter of the corrals looking for the chance to snatch a weak or sick newborn. Several years ago our little house dog Buddy was mauled by a coyote. Thankfully

he survived with the care of a vet.

We have all manner of birds in our yard, some more desirable than others. We could do without the swallows, magpies, and woodpeckers. The hummingbirds, chickadees, finches, and redpolls are welcome to visit our feeders, trees, and lives.

My worst experience had to be the day a porcupine pushed past a flowerpot at the back door to get into the house and scared the crap out of me. I shrieked and shrieked until somehow it got back outside without leaving a single quill in my legs or falling down the stairs. I still cringe when I think how much worse it could've been.

I don't know if it's because we don't have a big farm dog or if there's not much human activity outside when Roy's away, but I'm not that impressed with some of our four-legged visitors. Mind you, I guess they're preferable to some of the two-legged variety, from where I sit.

The Chronicles of Cruiscin Lan

by
Wanda
Waterman
St. Louis





Almost Weightless

On grad night we were third-rate earthbound astronauts. We were driving our rusted-out rockets, navigating beneath icy galaxies. In our protective suits of Buzzcocks T-shirts, naiveté, and vague aspirations, we free-floated around the light of campfires on secret party beaches. Beyond the top of the dunes, on the edge of our mental horizons, a future of shopping malls and product placements and terrorist alerts flickered with a faint radioactive glow.

This one girl, Mandy, was drinking lemon gin straight from the bottle. She had a necklace of cowrie shells and dirty-blond hair and a bright red scar across her face from when her dad hit her with a table lamp at the beginning of the school year. We walked off a good distance from the others, and she told me things she had never told anyone else, and I promised to keep them in a safe place for her. I don't remember what we talked about. Let us say we talked about French-Canadian meat pies and where to buy the best pot and pen-and-ink drawings and her crippled cat

and the mushroom cloud we both saw in a documentary in Social Studies when we had sat side-by-side in ancient wooden desks, scared shitless for the fate of the world. We passed a bottle back and forth between us. We made love in zero gravity. We were, for a time, almost weightless.

Two weeks before Christmas, I cheated on her with someone whose name escapes me. The last time I saw Mandy, she drove up to my door on a John Deere snowmobile. She had a toque on her head, and she was dressed in a parka with a fur-lined hood, impossibly bulky like a cold war fallout suit. She stopped about 20 feet from where I was digging through my pockets looking for my car keys. She took off one glove and gave me a one-fingered salute, then gunned the machine off across a wide-open field.

She was beautiful that night when we had gathered around the fire prying open oysters and searching for pearls, the girl with the cowrie-shell necklace. We were all beautiful. In firelight, with the flaring embers falling down around our shoulders, burning tiny holes in our clothes, we listened to Elvis Costello and *London Calling*. We were horny and idealistic and ignorant and filled with a wonder that we would never again be able to recapture. We had only the vaguest notions of betrayal and absolute zero. We imagined that this moment, these hours, were the beginning of some bright new alien thing, instead of just a bright place on the edge of an immensity of frozen darkness.

AUSU THIS MONTH



Coalition for Student Loan Fairness

AUSU is currently investigating the Coalition for Student Loan Fairness (CSLF) to determine if participation with this group would be advantageous to our members. The group, a grassroots movement of student loan borrowers from across Canada, supports fairness in the loans repayment process.

The CSLF notes that Canadian students are charged a rate of 2.5 to 4.5% above prime for loan repayment, resulting in interest charges that can amount to as much as 33% of the loan principal over the lifetime of the loan. Borrowers who utilize interest relief during low-income periods may pay considerably more. Given that student loans are offered as a public service and incentive to learning, the high profitability of these loans is of concern to AUSU.

CSLF also notes that students over the age of 30 are not included in government surveys of student loan experiences. This is of particular concern to AUSU as the majority of our membership is 30 years of age or older and we know from our experiences with our members that the current loans program does not adequately serve these members, nor does it serve members who wish to work to support themselves while studying part-time.

CSLF also asks that the government provide an Ombuds office to handle student loan complaints—a change that would help address many of the problems we hear about regarding lost forms, incorrect instructions, and confusing requirements. Additionally, CSLF supports providing for consolidation of multiple student loans into a single loan with a single payment, a change that many students have asked for.

Members are encouraged to check out the CSLF website at <http://www.studentloanfairness.ca/index.php>

AUSU Frappr—Show Us Where You Are

On June 20 AUSU launched a Frappr member map on the front page of AUSU.org. Just three days later, nearly 140 members have added their dot to our map, and a "picture" of the dispersion of our website visitors is taking shape. We're thrilled to see so many of you leaving your little mark on our site, and we love all the great pictures and shoutouts people have uploaded. Members who have left anonymous pins are encouraged to add their name (or alias, if you are shy) so we know you are all different people! If you haven't added your mark, drop by www.ausu.org—and don't forget to read the posting information if you are new to Frappr.



At Home: Recent survey claims Canadian cities are among the cheapest to live in

The Mercer Human Resource Consulting agency has compiled its annual cost of living survey; a list of the most expensive cities in which to live. The survey took 143 countries into consideration and used various daily costs and transactions to calculate which were the most expensive and which were the most affordable.

While Moscow has topped the list for the second year, London moved up into second place, and Seoul dropped down into third position, Canadian cities have remained quite low and in fact have dropped their positions to assume a place lower down the list than in previous years.

Mercer says that the research is conducted by “professional researchers in each city”¹ and that the report is meant to record the living situations of expatriates living internationally. The stores selected for the cost analysis are done so because they will stock goods and provide services

that are of “an international quality.”¹

Essentially, this information is meant for international businesses that have sent employees out of their home country to deal with foreign customers, shipment handling, or other administration and sales. Knowledge of the relative cost of living as compared to the home city can help businesses to ensure their expat employees are receiving enough money to equal their circumstances back home.

According to the Mercer data, Ottawa is the cheapest Canadian city to live in, as it ranks down at 109; Calgary took 92nd place and Vancouver took 89th ranking.² In comparison with the rest of the world, ours is definitely one of the cheaper countries to reside in despite the common perception that with housing prices it is becoming difficult to actually establish any Canadian city as a home. While the Canadian dollar is holding strong against the U.S. dollar, it is paling in comparison to the strengthening Euro, and because of European and international inflation our cities simply remain some of the cheapest in which to live.

This is what I’ve been trying to tell everyone since I got back from Britain!

¹ Mercer Human Resource Consulting. “Cost-of-Living Report.” Retrieved June 20, 2007, from <http://www.mercerhr.com/summary.jhtml;jsessionid=IAT1YCAJK51KCCTGOUFCHPQKMZ0QUJLW?idContent=1096705>

² CTV News, 2007. “Canadian cities cheap in cost-of-living survey.” Retrieved June 20, 2007, from http://www.ctv.ca/servlet/ArticleNews/story/CTVNews/20070618/cost_cities_070618/20070618?hub=TopStories

In Foreign News: Such a thing as climate change refugees?

According to Reuters's AlertNet website, the number of refugees flooding into first-world countries is going to increase as a direct result of the threat of global warming and related environmental disasters. The article cites Michele Klein Solomon from the International Organisation of Migration as saying: "All around the world, predictable patterns are going to result in very long-term and very immediate changes in the ability of people to earn their livelihoods."¹

It seems, therefore, that the threat of global warming has not only become steep in terms of the environment, but is now a pressing issue to human rights activists who want to ensure that third-world citizens will have the means to support themselves and protect themselves in the changing weather that is purportedly coming our way.

The crisis set forth by Reuters is that the environmental degradation posed by pollution and resultant global warming will make basic living even more difficult for those people living in a fragile ecosystem with no solid societal infrastructure to keep them secure. The suggestion is that the issues of desertification, deforestation, rising water levels, and salination of existing freshwater resources will pose a major threat to people who do not have the technology or basic funding to deal with such changes in the ecosystem or environment.

A UN Wire link to the Reuters story says that experts' claims concerning the movement of refugees fleeing uninhabitable regions have been greatly diverse and that the most extreme number has been near one billion in expected climactic refugees. Certainly there can be little doubt as to whether climate change would, and may yet, escalate refugee numbers; however, the orthodox definition of "refugee" tends to focus on political constraints and the threat to human life drawn from government or rebel bodies.

Although much debate exists on the topic of global warming, maybe it is easier to agree that pollution is causing other issues that might be a real threat to undeveloped regions of the world. It would be a tragedy if, like the UN Wire suggests, "climate change refugees may find welcome lacking."²

¹ Reuters AlertNet, 2007. "Global warming to multiply world's refugee burden." Retrieved June 20, 2007, from <http://www.alertnet.org/thenews/newsdesk/L15265051.htm>

² UN Wire, 2007. "Climate change refugees may find welcome lacking." Retrieved June 20, 2007, from <http://www.smartbrief.com/alchemy/servlet/encodeServlet?issueid=2E86F1C9-0278-4DC5-8945-889B8CC683FF&lmid=sample#9B70B116-5DB9-4E5D-83B5-0541B768805D>

One of the things that sets mankind apart as a species is the manner in which we communicate. We have a rather unique language, and sometimes the things we do with it are equally unique.

Oxypedia - http://www.oxypedia.com/index.php?title=Welcome_to_Oxypedia

While we can be such original creatures, there is also the fact that sometimes we aren't; sometimes we say things that are just a bit askew. A site dedicated to the oxymoron in all its glory.

Newcastle English - <http://www.une.edu.au/langnet/definitions/geordie.html>

Newcastle, a city in England very close to the Scottish border, is not only far out in distance, but also far out in its language. The people from Newcastle have an accent that might be all but unintelligible to the untrained ear, but it's not just the way they speak; it's also what they say, as these dictionaries will attest.

BRICKtionary - <http://www.reasonablyclever.com/bricktionary/index.htm>

It is not by word alone that man defines his concepts and actions. This gentleman, for example, defines terms using—you guessed it—LEGO.

Word Navigator - <http://wordnavigator.com/>

Trying to solve a word puzzle? Perplexed by that little *mot* that's on the tip of your tongue that you just can't quite bite off? Then this site is for you. You can use wildcards to stand in place of words and letters in order to find words you only know a part of; use question marks to find words that might be spelled only slightly differently than how you know them; and so much more. There is also a link to a Crossword Solver, if that's more your game.

Common Errors in English - <http://www.wsu.edu/%7Ebrians/errors/errors.html>

And finally, something very useful. This site lists, explains, and instructs on how not to fall into common traps in English grammar and spelling. Even if you think you know it all, look again. This site is an absolute must.

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