

THE VOICE

MAGAZINE

Volume 15 Issue 24
June 29, 2007



Convocation 2007!
Final coverage of this year's ceremony

Photo Feature
Treasures await beyond Paris

Brought To You By
New AU course goes "commercial"



Plus:
Sun Signs
Chronicles of Cruiscin Lan
AUSU This Month
Lost & Found
and much more...

"... OTHERS SHOULD LOOK AT
ATHABASCA TO SEE HOW IT IS DONE"

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

THE VOICE MAGAZINE

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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
frequent contributions

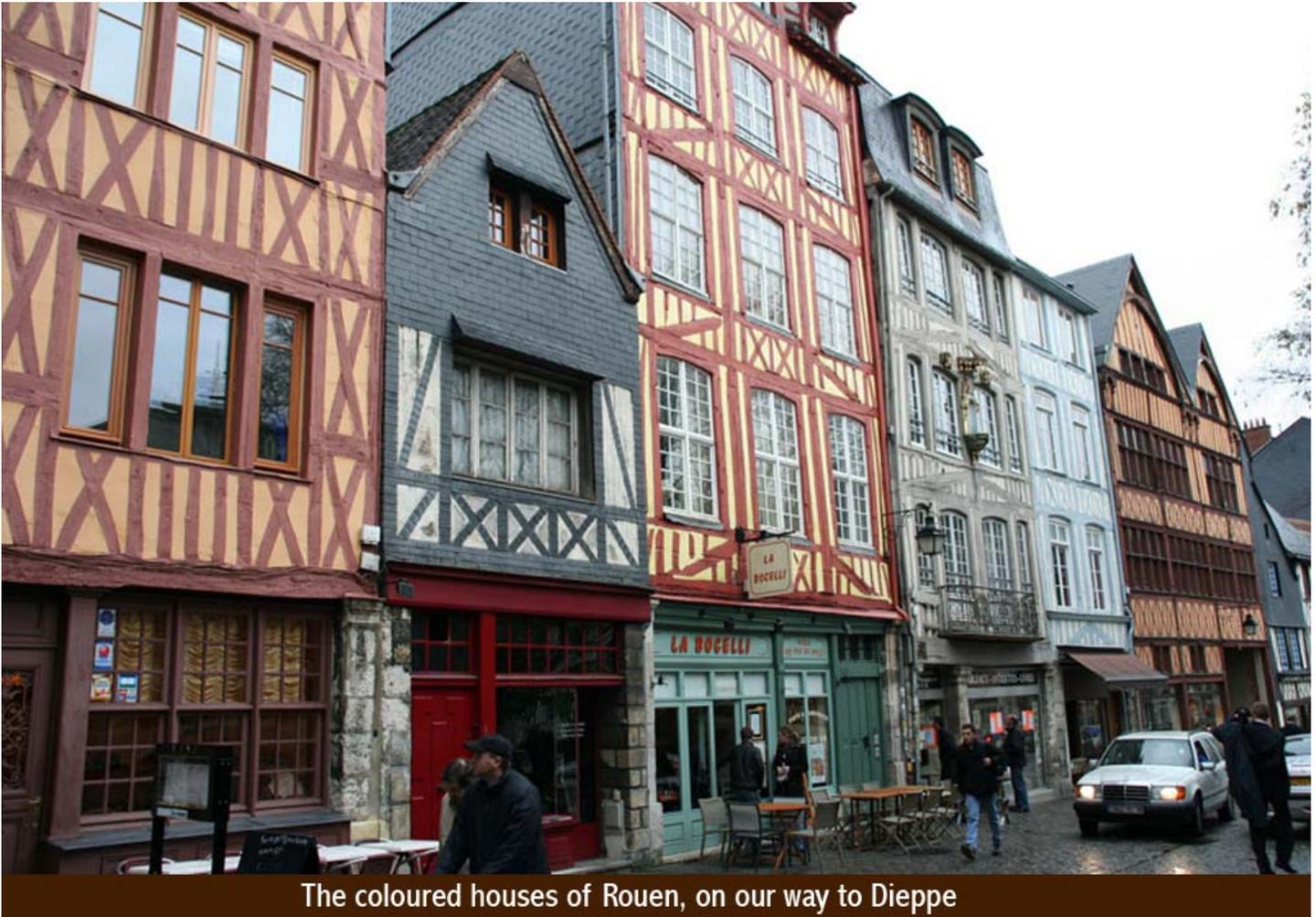
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Cliffs along the coast of Normandy

The rumour is true—after a couple of months living in France I can confirm with confidence that its capital is amazing. But now and then, somewhere between philosophy-inspired classes and smoke-filled cafes, the curiosity to see what lies beyond the city's three-ring highway rises in me. Then I just have to trick my boyfriend into another trip by quickly getting online and buying the next available train tickets to anywhere.

One of the first such weekend expeditions was to Normandy, the northwestern part of France. On a grey rainy day we reached Dieppe, almost the closest seaside town. With a sprinkle of imagination you could almost see England from its white, vast, sandy beach. This fishermen's town and its port, safely hidden from the rough winter sea, are guarded by a medieval castle. When I stood there, looking at the mysterious images the sea had painted in the sand, I felt as if I could change not only place, but time as well. As the sky cleared, we climbed the steep cliff at one end of the town to watch the scarlet sunset. I was fascinated by neat little villas that were overlooking the clustered town houses, the beach, and the infinite sea. I wished I could sit in my own room with such a view; I would surely never get bored of it in my entire lifetime.



The coloured houses of Rouen, on our way to Dieppe

As my boyfriend and I are both explorers by nature, we didn't stop where the path ended, at the cold fence on the edge of the cliff. We knew we could go farther. But what we found there immediately brought my daydreaming to its end, for at the tip of the street of those neat small villas there was a pillbox, a sad leftover from World War II. On the inside it was coloured by graffiti, as if that could make it any more welcoming. Turning back toward the beach, I realized it probably served its function very well from such an elevated position. In the next moment I again travelled back in time and I did not like what I saw before me.

On another walk later in the evening I noticed memorials, commemorating the unfortunate Dieppe Raid and the British and Canadian soldiers involved. This, therefore, was most certainly not a view I would like to have from my living room, I decided.

Our next quest was even further to the south. We got a great train-and-hotel weekend package in Bordeaux. I'm sure this name rings a bell—you have probably heard about, or even better tasted wine from, the vineyards of this French region. Although the wine tasting was indeed tasty and the macarons even more so (not spaghetti, but special cookies we happily chewed during our visit to the nearby village of Saint Emilion, known also for the biggest underground monolithic church in Europe), I was most amazed at the local feast of Arcachon. When we first walked through this seaside town, we quickly dismissed it as a huge summer station, with nothing more to offer than some pretty nice residences and another sandy beach. But just as we were about to return to the "real city," we heard some music from a park overlooking the town. Intrigued, we climbed the stairs and when we reached their top, a fairy tale opened up before us.

The whole park was scattered with children's games that adults were also more than happy to try their hand at. But what games they were! Until seeing this with my own eyes, I was convinced that nowhere in the world did people throw horseshoes around a stick anymore. Or huge fir cones into wooden frames. Or use a heavy stick to get an empty bottle around obstacles from one side of a board to another without it falling.

There were even groups competing at every game and you could see who belonged to which group by the colour of the ribbon around their hats. My enthusiasm for this creative feast became even greater when, on our return to Bordeaux, the first thing we saw were the flashing neon lights of a fun fair. Without much hesitation I knew which fair I would prefer to take my children to if I had some.

Moving up on the map again, toward northwest France, we discovered Reims. The city is famous for its magnificent cathedral and sparkling champagne, but it would not mean much to me if I hadn't known a family living there which soon became like our very own. Our friend Mathea took us to several evenings of poetry and wine, something that is non-existent in the French capital but is known to occur in my country, Slovenia. (There, though, wine usually wins over poetry.)



Testing strength in Arcachon



The oldest Pommery champagne bottle

In Reims, however, the two are not in competition, but intertwine like a vine and a vine prop. During the readings by the authors we usually tasted three different wines and learned about their history and characteristics. Yves, Mathea's husband, also took us to a wine fair in the nearby town of Epernay. I won't deny it, some of its visitors did get drunk—the tasting was free and you could even take your glass home. But for me it was a great occasion to acquire at least a bit of that tacit feeling that helps you distinguish some more varieties of wine than simply red and white.

In the same region there is also Charleville-Mézières, the home town of the poet Rimbaud. It is also the town of the world puppet festival Mathea came to see from Slovenia some 15 years ago. She didn't know then that she would marry the boy she had met on the train that took her there. On the Sunday of our visit the town was empty, the marionette school closed, and only a huge puppet came out of a wall at every full hour to tell a part of Charleville-Mézières's history.

But the red-bricked buildings got a whole other meaning when Mathea said, "This is where the workshops took place." An empty restaurant was suddenly enlivened by her voice—"This is where we first ate pizza together"—and the nearby dark woods seemed to be closing in upon us—"This is where we had our first fight." And in a blink of an eye, their daughter is turning six.

Indeed, you never quite know for sure where the train you are stepping on is going to take you, but it took me all around France and I appreciated every stop along the way.



History-teller of Charleville-Mezieres

Convocation 2007

Sandra Livingston

This is the conclusion 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!

As hard as it was to believe, the final day of convocation 2007 had arrived, and it was time to award the final degrees to this year's graduating class.

There was a different sense of excitement in the air for the final day of ceremonies: not just the anticipation of the day's graduates, but also the sense of looking forward; of marking the final moments of one phase and the beginning moments of another.

The ceremonies began with the sound of bagpipes as piper Kara Hryckowian led the procession into the tent. The program was shorter for the final day of ceremonies, but there were still some very memorable events scheduled.



Today, as on the previous days, Joy Romero welcomed the graduates, academics, and guests. But she not only addressed them in her capacity as Chair of AU's Governing Council: she also addressed them as a fellow graduate, because she too would be receiving her Master of Business Administration degree a little later in the ceremonies. Exchanging a proud smile with the other grads, she concluded her remarks by congratulating the class of 2007, and saying "Here's to us!"

She then introduced Dave Chatters, retired MP Westlock - St. Paul constituency. He offered well wishes to the graduates from the Canadian government, and noted that it was a special pleasure for him to be present to see long-time friend Della McLean inducted to the Order of Athabasca University. She sat as a public member of the Governing Council from 1997 to 2000, and continues to support AU through contributions of art and culture.



Following the induction ceremony, it was time to begin the awarding of the degrees:

Master of Business Administration

Bachelor of Administration

Bachelor of Commerce

Bachelor of Management

Bachelor of Health Administration

Bachelor of Human Resources and Labour Relations

Once again, the diversity that AU's distance education provides was clear. The graduates listed their homes in places that spanned the globe: Nairobi, Kenya; New York, USA; Heidelberg, Germany; and Hamilton, Bermuda, just to name a few.

They also hailed from places all across Canada, from Campbell River, B.C., to Iqaluit, Nunavut, to Richibucto Road, New Brunswick.

The bios that were read also revealed the opportunities that are open to students while they study at AU. One student studied while spending time in Bosnia, and with NATO in Kabul, Afghanistan. Another graduate was lucky enough to have completed his final exams in Milan during fashion week—definitely not something he'd be able to do at a traditional bricks-and-mortar university!

When the final degree had been awarded, Philip Ferguson, a graduate in the MBA program, took the podium to deliver the third (and final) grad address. He noted that although learning via distance could be challenging because of the many time zones involved, it was also a reflection of the "ever-increasing globalization of business," and the need, in today's international commercial environment, to be able to "effectively communicate electronically on a global front." (You can read the full text of Philip's address following this article.)



Friends and relatives watch the degree ceremony

The final presentation of the day was given by Albert Karvonen, an Alberta filmmaker whose films have brought the wonder—and value—of Canada's wildlife to audiences around the world. He spoke with obvious enthusiasm about the importance of preserving our natural environment, and remarked with a smile that the AU graduates would make excellent wildlife photographers because of their ability to sit still on stage for such a long time.



The new alumni slowly begin making their way home

On this upbeat note, it was time for the 2007 graduation ceremonies to come to an end. Joy Romero congratulated all of this year's graduates in her closing remarks, and the stage emptied for the last time as family and friends clapped and cheered the new alumni.

Whether new careers, travel, or more studies await them, it's clear that the 2007 graduates—like their fellow alumni before them—have the commitment and dedication to see any challenge through. And that's the best kind of inspiration for AU graduates still to come. See you in 2008!

CONVOCATION 2007 - ADDRESS BY GRADUATE

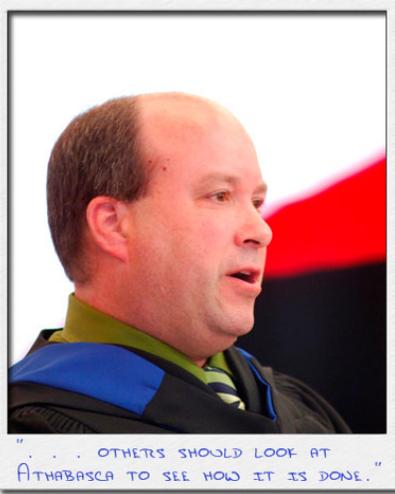


Photo courtesy Blaise MacMullin

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 Saturday, June 9, the graduate address was given by Philip Ferguson, of Waterdown, Ontario, who received his Master of Business Administration degree.

The Voice thanks Philip for sharing the text of his address, which is printed below.

Madam Chair, Mr. President, Distinguished Guests, Members of the Platform Party, Fellow Graduates, Ladies and Gentlemen,

I would first like to thank Mr. D'Arcy for asking me to deliver the graduating address here today. I was both surprised and honoured and quickly accepted. Soon after, the reality of the situation kicked in and I realized that I would be speaking in front of a large number of highly educated graduates and their proud families and friends. I must say, the thought of changing my mind did enter into the realm of possibility, albeit for a brief moment.

Once I realized that the possibility of retreating from my decision was not an option, I began to ponder what I would say here today. What first came to mind was the global reach of Athabasca's MBA program. It is interesting to note the geographical statistics of the graduating class of 2007. In Canada, eight provinces and all three territories are represented. Internationally, we have graduates from six of the U.S. states and graduates from another eight countries around the world. It is this international perspective from which all students are able to take advantage, through the various Athabasca MBA programs and, specifically, Athabasca's unique way of delivering their programs. The courses involve a high level of teamwork, which is sometimes challenging given the differing time zones.

Although challenging, it is reflective of the ever-increasing globalization of business where you need to be able to effectively communicate electronically on a global front. The courses enhanced that aspect of communication while the international diversity of fellow students injected a flavour into the courses that would likely not be present in a traditional MBA program. The world's barriers to trade and commerce continue to be less apparent and it is likely that this trend will continue. It is likely that online MBA programs will grow in popularity, and others should look at Athabasca to see how it is done. Athabasca should be proud of all its staff and consider itself as the benchmark (or the Wayne Gretzky) of online MBA programs on which others should be judged.

I remember the first course in the MBA program—Strategic Management. When the course began you knew that the other students were in the same boat and unsure what the journey would bring. After I downloaded the course material I quickly went to the section that included the mark breakdown. For all the guests out there, generally the courses had a case that was due in or around the fourth week and a final one due at the end. I recall looking at the first case and its requirements. I hope I am not alone here, but when I looked at

the word limit on the case I almost fell over—thoughts of “How many words?” and “There must be a typo here,” would bounce around in my head. The fact that you could go over in word count by 5% was something that was not a concern at that time. This internal thought process tended to replicate with each course (sorry, bad pun). Mind you, in the end, it was surprising how handy and useful those extra words would be.

Being from the Greater Toronto Area, I would often be on the computer every evening. There were personal sacrifices that had to be made. In the winter months, I would need to decide whether I would watch a Toronto Maple Leaf hockey game or get onto Lotus Notes and work on group cases or the readings for the week. On the bright side, the Leafs were generally quite accommodating once the regular season was over. Note to self—send thank you letter to Mats Sundin.

As touched upon previously, we have quite a diverse graduating class again this year. They come from various areas including companies from the profit and not-for-profit sectors, government, healthcare, and defence, to name a few. Each has had to make personal sacrifices while families and friends had to make certain sacrifices of their own. My teenage daughter had to relinquish the seat in front of the computer nightly—that often didn't go over too well but there was an understanding of the importance and desire to complete the MBA program. I am certain that we all have stories of family sacrifices in order that our educational goals could be met. On behalf of the graduates here today, I would like to thank family and friends for being supportive and understanding. Sometimes the road was a little on the bumpy side but, in the end, we all know that we couldn't have done it without you . . . a heartfelt “thank you” is definitely in order.

The faculty and staff at Athabasca also need to be congratulated on being able to deliver both high-quality graduate and undergraduate programs. Being distance education, there was an original concern that there would be obstacles inherent to such a program, whether it be administrative or in the delivering of the education itself. This concern was quickly erased as courses were well structured and executed smoothly, largely through course planning but also through the high calibre of the coaching staff. Athabasca has been able to effectively eliminate “distance” and replace it with “high quality and calibre.”

To my fellow graduates, congratulations . . . we did it! More importantly, we did it with the help and understanding of family who sit across from you today. For those families that could not be here for the celebration, I am sure that they are also just as proud of our accomplishments from afar. Graduates unable to join us today deserve special attention as they likely reside in far-off places and had more of a challenge juggling what I call the “time zone differential.” In either case, we all appreciate your support and are happy that you were able to join us today.

Now please join me in congratulating the graduating class of 2007!

CONVOCATION 2007 - GRADUATE INTERVIEWS



This is the conclusion 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 Surrey, British Columbia, and Nairobi, Kenya.

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.

Andrea Schlender

Bachelor of Nursing

Andrea (left) earned her Bachelor of Nursing degree with distinction, and she attended convocation with her friend Dana Heerschop (right), another Nursing graduate.

Andrea travelled to Athabasca from Edson, Alberta, and her advice to current students is to "study hard and enjoy your time."

Andrea has already put her Nursing degree to work in the field. She's a nurse at the Foothills Hospital in Calgary, and her main focus after graduation is simply working hard and enjoying her career.

Congratulations, Andrea!



Dana Heerschop

Bachelor of Nursing

Dana (right) completed her Bachelor of Nursing with distinction in three and a half years, and she too has already put her skills to work as a nurse at Calgary's Foothills Hospital.

She believes that the time and dedication involved in earning a degree is well worth it, and she encourages current students to "stick with it."

After graduation, her plans are to relax and enjoy her job. As she told *The Voice* before hurrying to join the graduate line-up, "I'm just into this new career and loving it."

Congratulations, Dana!

Nancy Burt

Master of Arts, Integrated Studies

One of the things that Nancy (left) is most proud of in earning her Master of Arts degree was her ability to work “at a very, very full-time job—I work in the administration at Humber College in Toronto—and getting an advanced degree at the same time.” She believes that AU’s distance education format played a key role in her success, “because you don’t have to go out to a class a couple of times a week. Once you’re on a computer you can do it.”

Nancy doesn’t have any immediate plans to continue her studies, but it’s always a possibility. “I’ll never say no,” she smiled, but added that, for the moment, she’s “just going to enjoy work.”

Congratulations, Nancy!



Susan Magill

Bachelor of Professional Arts, Communications

For Susan (at centre), receiving her Communications BPA with distinction was reason enough to enjoy the day. But another pleasant surprise awaited her at convocation: she met up with her former college professor Nancy Burt, who was graduating with her MAIS on the same day.

Susan travelled from Petawawa, Ontario, to attend the ceremony, and she says the process of earning her degree was “tough, but it’s so worth it”—she has recently been hired as a public affairs officer for the Canadian Air Force, and is looking forward to her new career.

Congratulations, Susan!

Judy Charles

Master of Arts, Integrated Studies

Judy (right) travelled from Toronto to receive her Master of Arts degree, and was enjoying the day with her friend Nancy Burt. Reflecting on all the hard work and perseverance involved in earning an advanced degree, Judy says she is most proud of the fact that “we did it. And we worked really hard, and learned so much, and . . . it’s just fabulous.”

She doesn’t have any specific plans for right after graduation, and as she relaxed and celebrated with her friends, said that her biggest plan at the moment had simply been the trip from Toronto to attend the convocation ceremony.

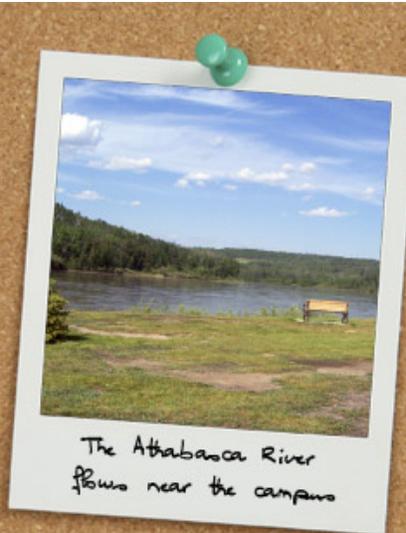
Congratulations, Judy!

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



Flowers bloom onstage



The Athabasca River flows near the campus



Congratulations, graduates of 2007.



Piper Kara Hryckowian waits to give the signal



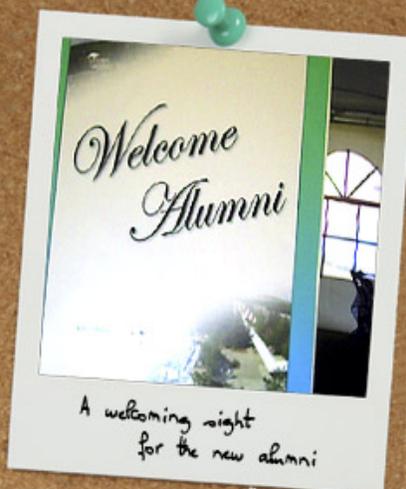
The singing of "O Canada"



Enjoying the day



Even the kids were kept busy



A welcoming sight for the new alumni



A Packard House



MKTG 420 - Advertising and Promotion

Recently opened in May, Advertising and Promotion (MKTG 420) “emphasizes integrated marketing communication,” said course professor Chris Thorne, adding that the course focuses on the communication type “seen in direct marketing, promotions, and advertising.”

For instance, Thorne explained, a product for sale at the store is a result of integrated marketing. For this product to be there, an extensive amount of public relations, sales, and promotions had to take place. This integrated marketing model, Thorne further explained, is a “key pillar to the concept of marketing,” and fuelled the decision at AU’s School of Business to create MKTG 420.

“Without such a course,” he commented, “an important part of the discipline of marketing was missing from the [AU] curriculum.”

MKTG 420 consists of six main units, with a total of 15 lessons. Each of the units, Thorne explained, covers each piece of advertising and promotion “in sequence, and then covers it as a whole as well.” This provides students with the “big picture,” as well as real-life illustrations.

The first two units introduce students to the basics of the concept of integrated marketing communications and its importance in the world of marketing. These units also focus on how consumers “connect to integrated marketing,” and the models and strategies currently employed in the marketing field to maximize consumer interest.

The next four units in MKTG 420 follow a “standard approach to marketing,” commented Chris Thorne. In Unit 3, students explore the decision-making stage associated with marketing, and delve into marketing strategies commonly used to promote products and services. Unit 4 focuses on how to “deliver the message,” or, in other words, how to attract consumer attention. Students explore the pros and cons of television and media advertising, as well as the effectiveness of print, Internet, and other advertising tactics.

Through Unit 5, students learn about how, once products or services are advertised to the public, the integrated marketing model continues. Sales promotions are discussed, as well as further marketing and awareness strategies including public relations and media.

Unit 6, the last unit in MKTG 420, shows students the final “control and monitor” step used in integrated marketing. Students learn how to determine the effectiveness of a marketing model, complete with evaluation skills. Implications of decisions, from both ethical and economic views, are discussed.

MKTG 420 resources include an online component, as well as a CD-ROM and text that Thorne feels is an excellent resource for students not only during the course, but also as a handy reference in future marketing work.

The assignments in MKTG 420, indicated Thorne, are designed to give students “real-life” experience with the world of marketing, complete with integration. Students will have the opportunity to look at existing companies and their associated marketing programs, evaluate these, and suggest improvements using the

standard business approach. Chris Thorne indicated that this will be achieved through case-study work, individual research, and/or “living lab” experience, in which students actively look at “real” companies’ use of advertising and promotion to further their businesses. MKTG 420 assignments are approximately seven to ten pages long each.

Course professor Chris Thorne has been teaching university-based marketing courses for the past ten years. Starting in 1998, he taught strategic marketing at York University in Toronto for six years. After this, he joined the faculty at the University of Bahrain in the Middle East and focused on teaching a wide variety of marketing aspects, including sales and promotion, for two-and-a-half years. He has also taught marketing research and communications courses at Conestoga College and Wilfred Laurier University. Currently, Chris is the vice-president of Maritz Canada’s technological telecom research group, and is also a course professor at Athabasca University and York University.

For more information, visit the course syllabus at:

<http://www.athabascau.ca/html/syllabi/mktg/mktg420.htm>

CLICK ON THIS - How To Do

Lonita Fraser

In a big, wide world such as we've got for ourselves, you'd think we would never run out of things to do. Yet, sometimes, we are still bitten by the boredom bug, and need to find some way to fill our time.

Turn An Etch-A-Sketch Into A Picture Frame - <http://photojojo.com/content/diy/etch-a-sketch-picture-frame/>

Not only that, but they'll also help you turn your photographs into etch-a-sketchy masterpieces that look like you spent hours fiddling with the knobs. Some of these instructions might be a bit complex for the average soul, but anyone with a graphics program should be able to find a way to do this.

Cardboard Castle - <http://www.mrmcgroovys.com/castle.htm>

Tired of your current digs? Why not try out a do-it-yourself dream home like this? I don't know where I'm going to get eight refrigerator boxes, though . . .

Crystal Gardens - http://www.chemistry.co.nz/growing_crystal_gardens.htm

You don't need a chemistry kit to make your own crystals, but you will need to be careful with some of the ingredients. I remember growing crystals in the fridge in a jar filled with dye-tinted sugar water.

Camera Toss: How To - <http://cameratoss.blogspot.com/2005/10/camera-toss-mini-howto.html>

Looking for something new, and a little different, to augment your shutterbugness? Why not consider camera tossing? This site will show you how.

Efficient Google Searches - <http://www.dumblittleman.com/2007/06/20-tips-for-more-efficient-google.html>

A little mundane after the previous links, perhaps, but absolutely useful for the web searcher in you.



Cancer

June 22 - July 23

Cancer, the crab, is the fourth sign of the zodiac. Its element is water and it is a cardinal sign, which means it is a leader along with Aries, Libra, and Capricorn.



Cancer is the sign of fertility. Cancerians have a need to nurture; it is part of who they are. They want to care for others. When visiting the home of a Cancerian you will be sure to be well fed. They may or may not have cooked the meal, as some are excellent cooks. Another aspect of Cancer's need to nurture is to make sure that their family and friends are emotionally content. They will do whatever they feel is necessary to help others achieve this balance.

Cancer's ruling planet is the moon. Like the phases of the moon, Cancerians experience many changeable moods. You may first encounter Cancer in a jolly mood laughing their contagious belly laugh, or you may find them in a somewhat gloomy, melancholy mood. Or you may have the unfortunate luck to encounter them on a crabby day and they may bite your head off for something you perceive as minor.

Cancerians are extremely sensitive. When you witness a Cancerian's tears, you will have no doubt that their pain is genuine and from deep within. They don't cry for effect, they cry because their essence has been injured. Sometimes a look or harsh word from a loved one or friend can cause Cancers to retreat into their protective shell. They will stay safely hidden until they have nurtured themselves back to emotional equilibrium.

Cancer men make wonderful fathers and Cancer women devote their lives to their children. They love their home and it is usually filled with family photos and mementos. Their home may be cluttered, but it will always be warm and cozy. Cancers tend to be tight with their money. Even as children they find it difficult to part with their pennies.

Cancers love animals, flowers, working in their garden, and doing anything to make their surroundings more appealing. They make excellent employees and are frequently the last ones to leave the office.

Physically, Cancers often have round faces, with soft clear skin, resembling the man in the moon. However, you may also find some Cancerians whose brows are knit together, giving them the perpetual frown of the crab. Cancerians often struggle with their weight as they enjoy food and often use food to fill an emotional void in their life. Cancers have difficulty speaking in front of groups because they are painfully shy and secretive. However, they are often excellent writers and able to express with their pen what they can't verbalize. The Cancerian's life journey should be to lead in a sensitive, thoughtful, and deliberate manner.

Positive qualities: tenderness, sensitivity, tenacity, imagination, caring

Negative qualities: stinginess, irritability, melancholy, possessiveness, moodiness

Famous Cancerians: Dan Aykroyd, Tom Hanks, Anjelica Huston, Camilla Parker Bowles, Pamela Anderson, Courtney Love, Harrison Ford

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Are We Alone?

From a base in the desert, glowing with industrial light, scientists shoot a probe into outer space with tokens of greeting from the human race. There are pages of sheet music, some recordings of Mozart and Louis Armstrong, some classic black-and-white films. There are photographs of the Taj Mahal and ancient pagan stones on a hillside, a child's drawing of a cat, a diagrammatic fragment of the human genome.

A thousand miles away, unable to sleep, an old man sifts through a shoebox of photographs. He picks up and discards faded colour photographs of hot dogs being eaten in front of roller coasters, picnics in national parks. There is a picture of a two-month-old baby—now a tax lawyer living on the other side of the continent, with a closet full of power ties and a personal trainer, and no time for long distance 3 a.m. phone calls—holding up a magic lantern night light. A woman in her thirties with blond hair, and a radiant smile, and no sign of cancer at the time the picture was taken, is wearing a Montreal Expos baseball cap turned backwards.

At the base in the desert, satellite dishes move their immense heads back and forth like spectators at an apocalyptic tennis match. They scan the random universe for patterns, for signs, for possibilities of contact. On a nearby hillside, a group of true believers gather with battery-operated lanterns and huddle beneath blankets and sing folk songs, and wait for contact.

With hours still to wait before dawn light breaks, and nothing but weird and evil television shows to drive away the shadows, the old man puts a jacket on over the top of his pyjamas and pulls his car out of the driveway. He drives along the coast road, smoking on the grass and watching the luminous blond preschool boy on the swing set, cutting great arcs through the air, pretending to be an astronaut launched into space.

The old man sits in his car, and listens to the creaking of rusting chains as phantom children swing back and forth, brought to life by the early morning wind. Looking up, he sees the desert-launched probe slide across the sky like a raindrop across a windshield. He briefly wonders whether it might have been a UFO or a shooting star. Too old to make a wish, he simply pushes in the cigarette lighter and heads back to his unlit home.

MUSIC TO EAT LUNCH TO Summer Concert Lineup

Mandy Gardner



It's that time of the year when most of us look forward to getting outside, browning our pale winter skin, and seeing some shows—and I for one am very happy to be back in Alberta for this special season after years of absence!

There are some great concerts coming up in our region in the next two months, so if you haven't hooked yourself up with tickets yet, you're going to want to get in line before it's too late. If you're not sure which concerts to throw your pennies at, here is a little compilation of the dates I think you should be seriously considering:

June 29 - The White Stripes

Undoubtedly this will be impossible to grab tickets for unless you plan a *Detroit Rock City*-esque attack on Calgary on the night of the concert, but for those of you who are really into this band, you went and bought tickets the second you heard about the tour. Jack and Meg White are back after announcing an indeterminate hiatus while Jack recorded with the Raconteurs; after the release of *Icky Thump* with the White Stripes this February, however, this is gonna be a show not to be missed. Apparently the anniversary show in Glace Bay, Nova Scotia, sold out in a mere 12 minutes.

July 5 - Vans Warped Tour

After some initial confusion about the Alberta location for Warped, it looks like we're doing it up in Calgary after all (probably because everyone, including myself, whined to no end that we'd have to drive to Edmonton and break years of tradition). Who's on stage this year? While I've already revealed the heartbreaking news that Anti-Flag and NOFX are not on the bill, we do have Bad Religion and Pennywise as our headliners and a few decent subliners to add into the mix, like Red Jumpsuit Apparatus, Killswitch Engage, and New Found Glory.

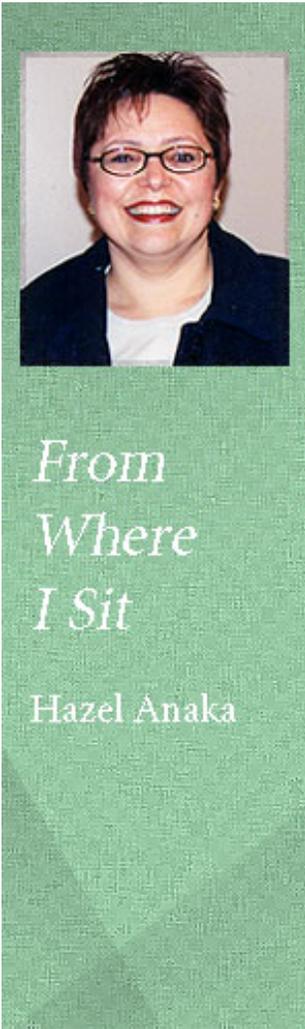
July 18 and 19 - Rise Against

Now here's what I'm really looking forward to, and if you want to see them live you better have your tickets already! Ticketmaster has sold out for both the Calgary dates and the Edmonton show, so while you might be able to grab some seriously expensive tickets from an online scalper, chances are you just aren't going. The boys are back in Canada for a few dates after only recently finishing up their nationwide tour with Anti-Flag and Moneen, so we're incredibly lucky to have them back so soon.

July 26 - Nickelback

For all you fiercely proud Albertan rockers, Nickelback is home and playing in Calgary with Puddle of Mudd, State of Shock, and Daughtry. They aren't really for me but I know so many of you wouldn't miss it for anything. For that old-school rock vibe that's inescapable in every car or pickup throughout the province, this is one of those homegrown events you really ought not to miss.

Get onto Ticketmaster, hound those scalpers, do what you've gotta do, but don't waste the summer! I'll be chiming in with my thoughts and hopefully some non-blurry pics of the Warped Tour and Rise Against so maybe I'll see some of you there. Have a blast!



Sticks and Stones

A recent *Edmonton Journal* Sunday Telescope featured a compilation of insults spotted on the Internet and submitted by a reader. According to the intro, “a carefully crafted, clever insult is becoming a forgotten art.” When I think about the not-so-recent public peeing match between Rosie O’Donnell and Donald Trump I’d have to say I agree.

She said: “Left the first wife, had an affair, left the second wife, had an affair, had kids both times. But he’s the moral compass for 20-year-olds in America. Donald, sit and spin, my friend.”

He said: “Rosie’s a loser. A real loser. I look forward to taking lots of money from my nice, fat little Rosie.”

She called him “a snake oil salesman.” He said she’s “a woman out of control.”

Contrast that with this exchange between Winston Churchill and George Bernard Shaw.

Shaw: “I enclose two tickets to the first night of my new play. Bring a friend . . . if you have one.”

Churchill responded: “Cannot possibly attend first night; will attend second, if there is one.”

In another example of a famous exchange, we see William Faulkner and Ernest Hemingway trading barbs. “He has never been known to use a word that might send a reader to the dictionary,” claimed Faulkner of Hemingway.

Hemingway responded with, “Poor Faulkner. Does he really think big emotions come from big words?”

There was one that brought a smirk to my face because I can see myself thinking it but not being clever (or ballsy) enough to say it: Groucho Marx saying “I’ve had a perfectly wonderful evening. But this wasn’t it.” I wish I knew the context for Marx’s remark.

I also loved the wit of Mark Twain—“I didn’t attend the funeral, but I sent a nice letter saying I approved of it”—though I could never imagine actually feeling that way about anyone. Well, maybe bin Laden.

Remember when our parents said “If you can’t say anything nice, don’t say anything at all”? That was likely some feeble attempt to stem sibling name calling. But it’s also one tongue-biting, ulcer-inducing life lesson. Insulting anyone in whatever way at whatever time in history really shouldn’t be admirable. But I do love the power of words—well-chosen, succinct, double entendres, clever, clarifying. So much better to search for just the right words rather than settle for the default “f#\$k” for every occasion. So much better to attack the actions, not the person. So much more civilized to ridicule pomposity.

There’s nothing worse than having a battle of wits with an unarmed man. For an exchange to be truly remarkable the parties need to be intellectual equals with a playful, competitive streak and a genuine lack of malice. Anything less is just laziness. Anything more is bordering on hateful.

Have a safe outlet for expressing rage that doesn’t hurt anyone, including yourself. Try some witty insults if you dare. Admire the clever comeback. With the right attitude it’s all good, from where I sit.

The Chronicles of Cruiscin Lan

by
Wanda
Waterman
St. Louis



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: Vancouver makes a commitment to cutting greenhouse gas emissions

First British Columbia and now the city of Vancouver have decided to take the lead on curbing greenhouse gas emissions since Kyoto resolutions have failed to take place throughout Canada.

The aim is for the city to reduce carbon emissions by 80% by 2050 (33% by 2020), according to CBC News.¹ Vancouver's Mayor Sam Sullivan, a member of the Non-Partisan Association, has announced his intentions to restrain carbon emissions with the EcoDensity plan.

Sullivan and local city councillors have agreed that the best way to curb emissions is not by reorganizing existing industries but by closely monitoring new industry initiatives and ensuring that these are built from the ground up with environmentally friendly policies in place.

The mayor's website quotes him as saying that "by fighting urban sprawl, Vancouver's EcoDensity plan will reduce greenhouse gas emissions and improve our quality of life."

Sullivan and his staff hope that by changing the focus of development from the current effects on environment to a healthy future outlook on urban existence, developers will be able to bring new and ecologically viable plans into the city. Vancouver has maintained a strong stance on its environmental and economic policies over the years, notably aside from a recent decision allowing Wal-Mart to establish itself within the city.

Sullivan expects that since Kyoto has been all but ignored by nations across the world, whether they have signed on or not, it is up to the cities of those countries to implement change. Through EcoDensity, Vancouver plans to establish itself as a strong unit economically and environmentally so that its citizens might appreciate the diversity of nature around them.

¹ CBC News, 2007. "Vancouver sets green targets." Retrieved June 28, 2007, from <http://www.cbc.ca/canada/british-columbia/story/2007/06/27/bc-vancouver-green.html>

In Foreign News: More UN peacekeepers are coming from China than ever before

The blue-helmeted peacekeepers we know from news footage and movies like *Hotel Rwanda* are a diverse crowd, and most of us are very aware that many Canadian forces are trained within the United Nations peacekeeping unit and deployed all over the world. Despite this proud claim, however, it is countries like India, Uruguay, and Bangladesh that are actually contributing the most police, military observers, and troops to UN causes and expeditions.

In comparison, the contributions of highly developed nations seem entirely symbolic: Canada sent 131 troops, observers, and police this May while Pakistan sent 10,619. In May of 2006, Canada supplied 127 personnel while Bangladesh gave 10,288.

China has also had a lower standing in these statistics, relying on government funding to round out its contributions to the UN. However, in recent years there has been a boost in the number of personnel coming out of that country. China sent 1,060 people off for UN missions in January of 2006, and a year later the number had jumped to 1,861.¹ According to the *Christian Science Monitor*, the reason for this is an increased sense of social responsibility on the part of the Chinese people and government toward the African continent.

In the last seven years, China has cancelled a momentous amount of debt on behalf of African countries as well as boosting its development aid and promising further increases in coming years.

Ethiopian businessman Amari Kifle has said that the difference between Western (usually American) aid and Chinese aid is significant: "We are tired of the condescending American style. True, the American government and American companies have done and do a lot here, but I always feel like they think they are doing us a favor . . . telling us how to do things and punishing us when we do it our own way. These Chinese are different. They are about the bottom line and allow us to sort out our side of the business as we see fit."²

¹ United Nations Peacekeeping. "Monthly Summary of Contributors of Military and Civilian Police Personnel." Retrieved June 28, 2007, from <http://www.un.org/Depts/dpko/dpko/contributors/>

² *Christian Science Monitor*; 2007. "China takes up civic work in Africa." Retrieved June 27, 2007, from <http://www.csmonitor.com/2007/0627/p01s05-woaf.html?page=2>

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Publisher Athabasca University Students' Union

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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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