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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

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



EDITORIAL

Sandra Livingston



Dishing Some Dirt

People's fears and insecurities are a goldmine for marketers. Not that this is news; even The Rolling Stones were lamenting the fact back in 1965, when that man on TV was telling Mick how white his shirts could be.

But while the '60s may have ushered in the Age of Aquarius, according to some psychologists what we're living in now is yet another Age of Anxiety.

Ours isn't fuelled by the Great War, or eloquently reflected in the words of Erich Maria Remarque. No, today's Age of Anxiety has more to do with terrorism, Orange Alerts, global warming, and a dying planet.

So how to feel like you're in control when the world is spinning out of it? Step right up, ladies and gentlemen, and take a peek behind the curtain, because the marketing gurus have just the elixir to allay your fears. When you can't control the big stuff, you can still feel a reassuring sense of order by controlling the small stuff. Actually, the very small stuff: germs.

That's right, we've got everything you need to sanitize, clean, disinfect, and take your environment to the next level of purification. We'll kill 99.9 per cent of germs, guaranteed. You can now find products to purify your bathroom, rule over the bacteria in your furniture, and even have a germ-free baby. And for those occasions when life forces you to handle objects that other people have touched, you can stock up on handy little bottles of sanitizer to purify your hands. (One website even offers advice on how to keep your cleaning sponges clean, reassuring readers that "there's no need to live in fear of a little cellulose square.")

Translating our bigger worries into a desire to control every last microbe is a marketer's dream; it plays into many people's very real anxieties while turning a hefty profit. But it also dangerously ignores the fact that bacteria are vital to good health.

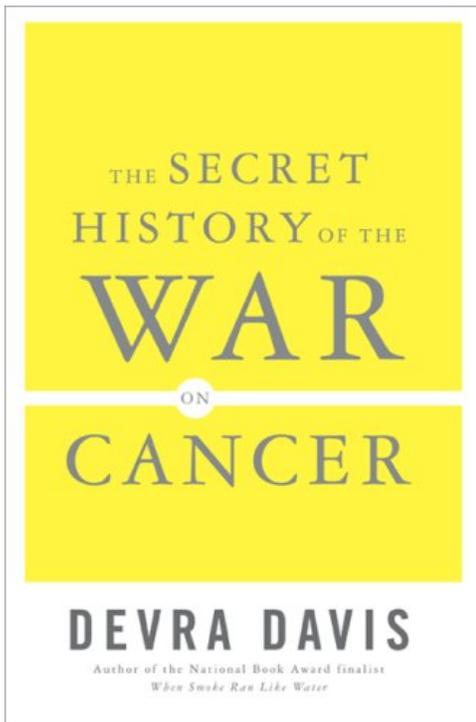
As this article from *The Ecologist Report* reminds us, "many of the germs inhabiting the body are closely related to known pathogens in the environment, and many trigger an immune response when they inadvertently move from one part of the body to another." As you reach for that bottle of sanitizing mouthwash, you might be interested to know that "*Streptococci* bacteria living in the mouth inhibit the growth of *Streptococcus pneumoniae*, which can cause pneumonia, and *Streptococcus pyogenes*, the instigator of 'strep throat'."

Besides the damage that uber-sanitizing and rampant antibiotic use can have on our health, marketers are also selling us a losing battle. As a recent *New York Times* article reveals, as many as six tribes of bacteria live on the skin in the crook of your elbow. Even after washing, "there are still one million bacteria in every square centimeter." Not even NASA can win at the germ-killing game: researchers have found surprising numbers of "hardy bacteria" in the space agency's supposedly sterile clean rooms.

So when the inevitable commercials appear offering products to sanitize the inner elbow (the newest battlefield in the war on germs), I think I'll take my chances—and keep my bacteria-laden money firmly in my pocket.

PAGES

John Buhler



Review: Devra Davis, *The Secret History of the War on Cancer*

About a year ago, I participated in a phone survey concerning Canadian health issues. One question asked me to determine which should be the greater priority for the federal government: preventing heart disease or treating cancer?

I asked the pollster why the *prevention* of cancer was not an option. “How do you prevent cancer?” she asked, through her laughter. Well, eliminating exposure to cigarette smoke, asbestos, benzene, pesticides, and herbicides were just a few examples that I immediately provided.

Clearly, however, the researcher—hired by no less than one of Canada’s most powerful political parties—had simply swallowed whole the false assumption that we are helpless to stop new cases of cancer from developing. More disturbing, though, is that one of our country’s major political players obviously gives little thought to the known carcinogens (to say nothing of the suspected

carcinogens) in our air, water, land, food, and workplaces.

How did it come to pass that our society simply accepts cancer as the inevitable cost for living longer than previous generations? How has industry (with government complicity) managed to obscure the cancer risks to which we are being exposed?

In *The Secret History of the War on Cancer*, epidemiologist Devra Davis shows us how industries that use and produce carcinogens have concealed risks, funded self-serving studies, influenced politicians, sat on the boards of anti-cancer agencies, and exploited any doubts about the carcinogenic potential of products and employees’ working conditions. She portrays the struggles of individuals who risked litigation, loss of research funding, and even career suicide to bring attention to this dismal situation.

A central theme of Davis’s book is the potent strategy of creating doubt, first developed by the tobacco industry and taken up later by the chemical industry, to dismiss concerns about the health effects of their products. (The “doubt” about the potential of chemicals to cause harm makes it acceptable to expose our children to cancer risks, even by people who are considered to be educators: my local school board has no problem using potential carcinogens around its playgrounds, because these chemicals have not yet been “proven” to cause cancer). The tactic of creating doubt is now even used to discredit the accumulated evidence for evolutionary theory and the threat of global warming.

Davis draws upon industry records, epidemiological research, and her considerable professional experience. Not only does she delve into controversies about cancer statistics, research, detection, and prevention, she provides her own personal experiences of losing friends and family members to cancer.

The book also includes a fascinating history of medicine’s knowledge of carcinogens. By 1700, Bernardino Ramazzini, an Italian physician, had already discovered that cancer was an occupational risk in several professions.

Certainly by the 1930s, as Davis reports, many causes of cancer were well known. German researchers had even demonstrated the cancerous effects of tobacco, benzene, and asbestos.

Later that century, Percival Pott, an English surgeon, determined that scrotal cancer was an occupational hazard among chimney sweeps. Certainly by the 1930s, as Davis reports, many causes of cancer were well known. German researchers had even demonstrated the cancerous effects of tobacco, benzene, and asbestos. (Later, after Germany's defeat in the Second World War, governments and industry snapped up Nazi scientists, pilfered their research, but concealed or discredited the Nazi research on carcinogens).

Davis quickly dispels the myth that increases in the rate of cancer can simply be explained as the cost of living longer. Why, for example, is brain cancer five times more prevalent in the U.S. as compared to Japan? Why, in a single decade, has testicular cancer increased by 50 per cent in men less than 40 years of age? Why are younger women

experiencing twice the rate of breast cancer seen in women of the same age a couple of generations ago? Why are black women more likely than white women to become victims of breast cancer? And an aging population definitely has nothing to do with the rise in leukemia and other cancers among children.

Financial concerns are of course the principal motive for hiding or minimizing the causes of cancer, and for failing to clean up toxic land. Racism has also been a factor, and in the U.S., higher rates of cancer among blacks were often blamed upon genetic differences rather than the dirty and dangerous occupations in which they have worked.

North American society is awash in known and potential carcinogens (including the hormone disruptors that many people inadvertently ingest or apply to their bodies on a daily basis) but industry has been allowed to create this situation because governments in the U.S. and Canada have failed to enact and enforce laws that ensure workplace safety and limit consumers' exposure to carcinogens.

The Reagan era in the U.S. was particularly regressive, as it pursued a program of less government control, and therefore had little interest in monitoring carcinogenic substances. The legacy of this free-for-all mentality continues to this day, and Canada's situation is not very different: while the European Union has banned many potentially harmful substances from personal care items, for example, these same chemicals can be found in North American products, including bubble baths and shampoos for babies.

(Davis's book was published before baby bottles containing BPA were removed from store shelves in Canada, but the BPA issue illustrates the government's failure to seriously limit the public's exposure to potential carcinogens. Ostensibly protecting cuddly babies from carcinogens makes for good public relations, but BPA is still being used in reusable water bottles and by the food industry to line tin cans.)

In terms of Canadian relevance, Sarnia, Ontario, earns special mention. Davis portrays it—owing to the effects of the asbestos industry—as a cancer hotspot. Though asbestos is banned in many countries, Canada continues to mine and produce the carcinogen.

Individuals victimized by cancer may also find themselves victimized by the legal system. Legal manoeuvring makes it almost impossible to sue corporations that use and produce carcinogens. According to Davis, "before you can collect damages, you must . . . show that someone already got [cancer] from the same things you did, prove that you had specific exposures to a particular agent, find the firm that caused your harm . . . and prove that they knew the exposure was harmful" (42-3).

In effect, the legal standard for proof of harm is impossibly high. According to Davis, even though, as mentioned above, it was known in the 1700s that chimney sweeps were subject to scrotal cancer, a modern-day chimney sweep who develops this disease would be unable to sue an employer, as it would be impossible to determine which *single* carcinogen, among the hundred or so carcinogens found in soot, actually caused his particular cancer.

Davis uses epidemiological and animal research in helping to determine which substances are likely to produce cancer in humans. She also highlights a legal double standard in the application of animal studies: they are acceptable for testing the safety of pharmaceuticals that are later used on humans, but are not accepted as proof of harm in the case of carcinogens. Even though substances may cause cancers in rats, for example, governments, industry, and the courts do not consider it to be proof that humans may be at risk.

This reviewer, however, sees Davis's reliance on animal research as problematic. Apart from ethical concerns (animals are supposedly different enough from us that we can subject them to whatever tests we wish, but similar enough to us that animal research findings are applicable to humans) such tests may simply fail to indicate that a substance is harmful to humans.

The Canadian Coalition for Health and the Environment, for example, questions the value of animal tests that study exposures to single chemicals in isolation, under completely artificial conditions. In an open letter regarding the testing of herbicides, they cite findings suggesting that rats, the favoured species for laboratory tests, actually have an innate protection from some substances that are harmful to humans: "extrapolation from studies in rats may be inappropriate, because rats have genes that do not exist in people, for detoxification of chemicals."

Davis herself makes reference to erroneous tobacco research on rats that failed to produce cancer in the animals (and was thus cited by the tobacco industry as proof of its product's safety) simply because the physiology of the rat respiratory system was not taken into account. Are we, perhaps, allowing ourselves to be exposed to substances that produce cancers in humans because they failed to do so in animals? This points to the need for a much more sensitive measure of safety; cell cultures, perhaps?

Nevertheless, Davis presents us with issues that should be a call to action. In preventing cancers, we need to demand more accountability and openness from industry, better regulation and enforcement by government, and willingness by both entities to clean up toxic waste sites.

In addition, she underlines the need for an independent and objective body to research cancer risks (though, I must add, one which does not rely upon inappropriate and outdated animal studies).

Well written, engaging, and drawing upon a vast amount of personal and professional knowledge, *The Secret History of the War on Cancer* is a must-read for anyone concerned about human health and the health of the planet.

The *Secret History of the War on Cancer* is published by Basic Books. ISBN-13: 978-0-465-01566-5. ISBN-10: 0-465-01566-2.

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CAREERS

Behdin Nowrouzi



Consider a Career as a Speech-Language Pathologist

What is Speech-Language Pathology?

Speech-language pathologists (S-LPs) are health care professionals involved with the assessment and treatment of disorders related to language, speech, and hearing. Moreover, they have a pivotal and active role in cognitive communication, voice, swallowing, and fluency. They may also be referred to as speech therapists.

Education and training

S-LPs are university-trained, regulated health professionals who may be required to register with a provincial college in order to practice. The National Occupational Classification resource states that registration with a regulatory body is required for speech-language pathologists in Saskatchewan, Manitoba, Ontario, Québec, and New Brunswick (links to Canadian licensing bodies and current regulations can be found [here](#)).

According to the Canadian Association of Speech-Language Pathologists and Audiologists (CASLPA), the following universities offer graduate programs in speech-language pathology: University of British Columbia, University of Alberta, University of Western Ontario, University of Toronto, University of Ottawa, Université de Montréal, Université Laval, McGill University, and Dalhousie University. Three of these programs are delivered in French.

S-LP students' course load requirements include graduate level courses in anatomy, hearing disorders, hearing aids, language development, neurology, phonetics, speech disorders, research methods, and voice disorders.

Furthermore, they must complete clinical rotations in order to meet the provincial and CASLPA certification requirements. All Canadian university programs meet these requirements. Those students who receive their training internationally must ensure that they meet these requirements if they plan to practice in Canada.

Admission information and requirements

Students are required to have completed an undergraduate degree prior to entry into a graduate program in S-LP. Prerequisite courses in psychology, linguistics, biology, health sciences, and social sciences are required. Applicants are advised to contact their school of choice directly.

The University of Alberta offers a Master of Science degree in speech-language pathology with two options: a thesis or course-based stream.

Where speech-language pathologists work

An S-LP may work as part of a multidisciplinary team or in private practice. Therapists work with a variety of health problems and diagnoses, such as hearing loss, multiple sclerosis, amyotrophic lateral sclerosis, Parkinson's disease, genetic disorders, and learning disabilities.

With additional training and education, an S-LP can specialize and work with people that suffer from a particular disorder (i.e., preschool children with learning issues).

S-LPs are also active and frequent contributors to different areas of rehabilitation research. In universities and research facilities, they conduct research on speech and other communication disorders and on the implementation, design, and use of communication devices.

In hospital and rehabilitation settings, S-LPs work within an interdisciplinary team that includes physicians, nurses, occupational and physical therapists, dieticians, clinical psychologists, and social workers. In schools, they collaborate with teachers and other education staff members.

Salaries

According to CASLPA, an S-LP's yearly salary is just over \$59,000. Below is a breakdown of yearly salaries across the country (Table 1).

Table 1. Mean yearly salary of Speech-Language Pathologists across Canada (2005).

Region	Yearly Salary
BC and Territories	\$64,185.41
Ontario	\$62,352.18
MB/SK/AB	\$59,519.62
Quebec	\$58,021.52
Atlantic	\$57,983.15

Source: Adapted from CASLPA, 2005.

In Alberta, S-LPs working part-time or full-time earned from \$57,300 to \$90,900 a year in 2007. The mean salary was \$74,700 per year. It is predicted that job growth remains strong across Canada for speech-language pathologists.

For more information regarding a career in speech-language pathology, please visit the Canadian Association of Speech-Language Pathologists and Audiologists' [website](#).

AU Profiles:

AU Profiles: Carmen Boudreau-Kiviaho

Christina M. Frey



Athabasca students are scattered all over the world! Canadian-born Carmen Boudreau-Kiviaho, a Master of Arts—Integrated Studies (MAIS) student at AU, has lived in Finland for nearly the past 10 years. She explains why she chose to relocate to Finland, and how the MAIS, particularly in Canadian Studies, will give her an edge in the Finnish job market. She also tells why distance education is worth the extra effort.

Carmen fell in love with Finland during a post-graduation trip she took to celebrate finishing her second bachelor's degree. "I thought I deserved a fun vacation after being in school for six years!" she says.

After spending a few months traveling and visiting friends and family, she decided to make the country her home. "I really like it here, I feel like I really fit in," she says. Now she has even more ties to the country: she married a Finn in 2006, and their daughter, Olivia, was born last year.

Carmen lives in Espoo (pronounced "Es-poh"), a city of 230,000 sitting adjacent to Helsinki. "It is very international and is growing a lot," she says. For example, Espoo is "home to cellphone company Nokia," she adds. She likens the landscape to northern Ontario—in other words, rugged but beautiful.

Although she finds the weather comparable to Ontario's, Carmen notes that the Baltic Sea has a moderating influence on the winters. This means a lot of rain along the coast in the winter, and far less snow than one might expect.

"Last winter we managed to ski in Espoo four times . . . that's it!" she says. In addition to skiing (weather permitting), Carmen enjoys hiking in a nearby national park. She's also taken the opportunity to travel to other Nordic countries—including Denmark, Norway, and Sweden—as well as some further trips. "We did the Trans-Siberian railway from Beijing to Helsinki," Carmen says. "What a fantastic trip!"

Carmen began looking into further education after deciding that she wanted something more exciting in the job arena. "I am 35 and . . . am a technical writer at a computer software company," Carmen says. "It's not something I want to do for the rest of my life." Because she felt that having a master's degree would make her "more employable" in Finland, she began investigating programs.

Local schools were inaccessible. Although Finland is slowly changing, advanced degrees there are usually viewed as a continuation of prior degrees. This was a problem for Carmen, whose interests lay outside her previous bachelor's degrees in outdoor recreation/tourism and physical education.

"I would be forced to continue along the stream I started studying in . . . there is not a lot of room to move," she says. "With the MAIS program, I can expand my academic background." With a MAIS under her belt, she adds, "I have more of a chance of doing a Ph.D. in Finland."

Carmen, who started the program in January 2007, hopes to major in Global Change and Canadian Studies—the latter being "a program still under development," she says.

"Finland and Canada have lots of ties, but they're not highlighted or worked on diligently," Carmen points out. She feels there could be a lot more networking among those who work with Canadians. "I think [Canadian Studies] would make me a real minority in Finland, and maybe even more employable," she says.

Global Change, which she feels is a "timely subject area," focuses on more than environmental changes, although those are examined. For example, Carmen says, "One course in the MAIS program deals with the dominance of English as a world language."

Carmen enjoys studying by distance, and she's a veteran of similar programs. While in Finland, she'd completed two certificate programs from Canadian institutions. "I've done it before, so I know I have the motivation to do it," she says.

Carmen's challenge this time around is having a small child to care for—but she's found a way to make it work. Her daughter, now 15 months old, was only 2 months when Carmen started her first course. "It was a challenge last year," she admits. However, it's a little easier now: "[she's] pretty regular and routine as far as . . . sleep goes," Carmen says. "I manage to squeeze in a lot of reading when she's sleeping."

Despite the challenges of studying via distance, Carmen feels it's an "investment" and well worth the difficulties. "It can be a lonely existence, but stick with it," she says. "Look at distance learning as an experience you wouldn't get in a classroom," she adds. "You might learn something about yourself along the way."

DID YOU KNOW?

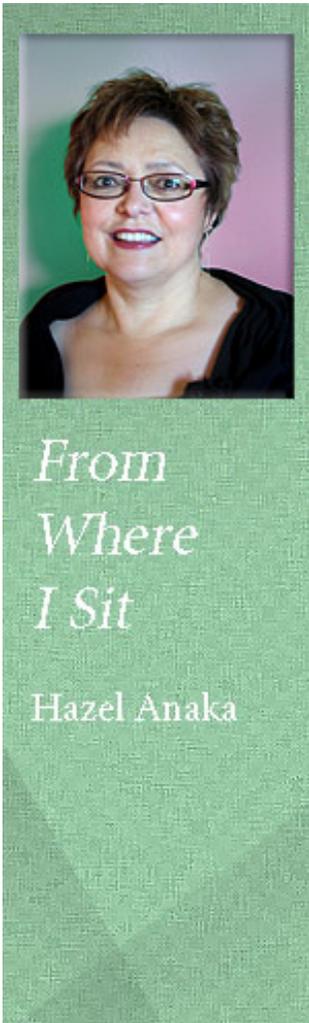


Program Plans

Are you getting close to completing your degree and want to make sure you've covered all the requirements? Thinking of switching majors but not sure which courses will carry over? Or a new AU student trying to decide which program to enrol in?

You can check out the requirements for all AU programs with the online [Program Plans](#). Each plan is a handy checklist of core courses, electives, course levels (e.g., junior or senior), and examples to help plan your degree, certificate, or diploma. There are also Practice Program Plans, templates available in Word format that you can download and fill in. Depending on your initial enrolment date, program requirements may vary, and plans are available for the past 10 years.

If you need help selecting courses it's always best to speak with an AU advisor, but the online program plans are a great place to start!



Any Trick Will Do

I'm not sure where you're reading this. If you're in north-central Alberta it's been a long, painful climb to spring-like conditions.

It's hard to believe my May Day tree will actually bloom in May, given that it doesn't even have leaves at this writing. We had a surprise snow dump of about 10 inches a few weeks ago. The cool spring winds blow and blow. The thermometer resists the upward climb we so badly want.

It's hard to get into the yardwork/gardening mindset when the furnace keeps starting and the clouds hover day after day.

The viral head/throat thing I've been fighting for over two weeks hasn't improved my energy level. The not-so-stellar condition of the flowerbeds makes the job more daunting. I didn't get around to the recommended cleaning of all the beds last fall. The grass, trees, shrubs, and perennials all seem so reluctant this year. Do they know something I don't? I can only imagine how greenhouse and nursery operators must feel with a spring like this.

I spent part of Mother's Day cleaning out the garden shed. Hilary was out and we offered her the bottle depot money if she sorted the empties. That cleanup led to a purging of old plastic flower pots and a reorganization of the garden tools. Unlike Martha, I didn't clean, sharpen, and oil all the cutting surfaces on the hoes, spades, and pruners. So I guess I'll be blundering through another year without the proper prep.

The generous gift card I received from Greg and Carrie for a Sherwood Park greenhouse means I've got some shopping to do. Frankly, the sheer act of meandering through a large garden centre, reading tags, talking to sales reps, delighting in the sights and scents, may just be what the doctor ordered to get me going this year.

The sky has darkened and the rain has just started coming in sheets. More important than the lawn and flowerbeds is the late, cold start to spring seeding. How can wheat or canola germinate if the ground is cold, cold, cold? The growing season is only so long and plants need time to surface, grow, and mature before the killing frost in September. Wouldn't it suck if now, when commodity prices have finally risen, the crop fails because of adverse weather conditions?

So how do I snap myself out of this funk? I might try the tough-love, if-you-don't-do-it-no-one-else-will approach. I might remember what happens when weeds get a stronghold on a plot. I might force myself to don the necessary headgear and layers to work in the cool temperatures.

Then again, I could visit the garden centres for an infusion of hope, inspiration, and renewal. I could read some gardening books, watch some landscape TV. I could dig out the fountain, birdbath, and patio pots in storage. I could plan an outdoor party. I've done that in the past: sent out invitations and then worried about making the scene company-worthy. This year, any trick will suffice, from where I sit.

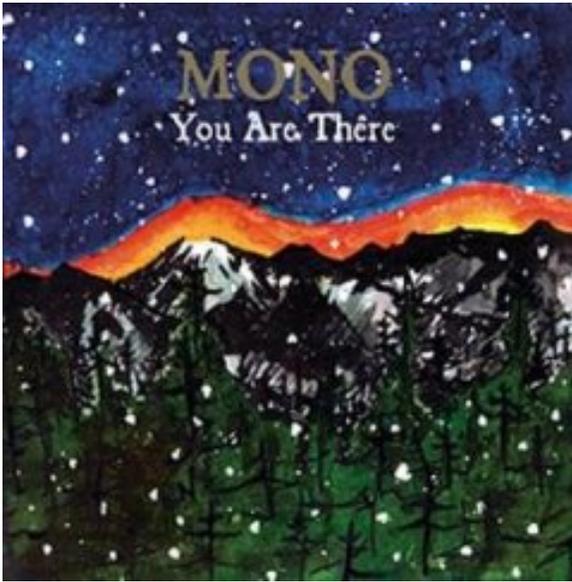
The Chronicles of Cruiscin Lan

by
Wanda
Waterman
St. Louis



MILK-CRATE BANDIT

Erik Ditz



My Trip to Japan

Japan is one of those places where anything goes, like public parks inside skyscrapers, used-underwear vending machines, second careers for failed North American bands, and ganguro troupes haunting the streets.

The unabashed open-mindedness of the music scene in Japan breeds jealousy in the minds of small-town dwellers and city folk alike on this side of the ocean, and once there it becomes evident why: the apparently undiscerning ears of the Japanese are actually so finely tuned that the entire country literally cannot help being cool.

I feel it necessary to dispel the rumours I've heard since my return from this magical land of billions of Arthur

Fonzarellis: I'm not in the army, I haven't turned to Scientology, and I didn't start listening to country music. I was just in Japan, desperately sucking the cool from the air like the last crumbs of sugar from a bygone Pixy Stix.

This bizarre coolsmosis left me listening to so much music that I went out and bought the newest generation iPod, the model that inserts directly into your brain and never turns off, making it pretty difficult to form cohesive thoughts, let alone write entire sentences at a time.

Since any minute now I'm very likely to start screaming Three Six Mafia songs until somebody locks me away, let's make the best of it and take a look at some of the great bands marching forward into the future of music in the brainpods of the hub of radical and the home of awesome: Japan.

Boris - *Smile*

Boris has the ability to create music that, at first impression, seems to define uninteresting unoriginality in a fell swoop, but which is actually so layered, diverse, and complex that anyone inclined to label it anything less than sheer genius probably doesn't have ears at all.

The newest album, *Smile*, bursts at the seams with sentimental pop, drony grunge, and face-kicking rock 'n' roll meshed together with both brilliant interludes and shockingly abrupt stops and starts. This is music for musicians.

Job For A Cowboy - *Doom*

Pure effin' evil. Think Cephalic Carnage getting into a bar fight with The Locust and Burnt By The Sun.

Mono - *You Are There*

Mono's simple approach to amplifier worship makes itself evident in the first few seconds of this album, and only builds as the tracks wax endlessly on in a fury of ebbing and flowing feedback loops, glorious and

interlocking orchestral arrangements, and piercing piano pieces. If bands like Mogwai and Thee Silver Mt. Zion are ambient, then this is just plain comatose.

Battles - *Mirrored*

Mirrored is an epic triumph from the Don Caballero offshoot Battles that rounds up all of their previous work into a living portfolio of genre-blurring, feet-moving, technically astounding grooves.

Caribou and Euphone wish they could be this awesome. Every song on this album could easily fit into any background, playlist, radio station, or record collection without skipping a beat, and it's that incredible malleability of sound that makes this group such a success.

Disfear - *Live the Storm*

Disfear is one of the few bands in this world that can actually still be called punk rock. Not many groups can get away with the fast and simple style of angry, hungover skateboarders without seeming either painfully juvenile, phony, or both, but these guys just plain rip it up and then light it on fire.

Everyone on Epitaph and Fat Wreck needs to hear this album and bring some tissues with them, because it won't be long before they realize that they've wasted their lives.

Why? - *Alopecia*

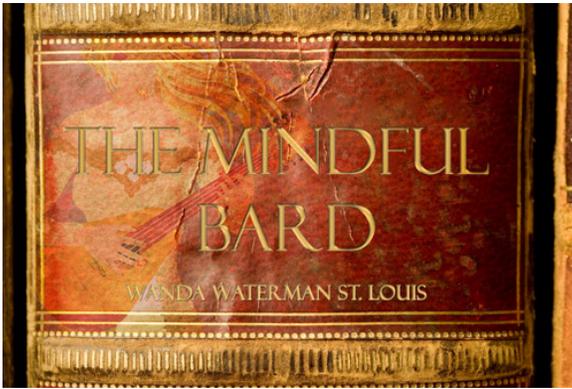
Though the frustrating, nasal voice and unlikely samples and time changes can be a bit difficult to adjust to at first, the unabridged talent and originality of Why? is ineffable and worth adapting for.

Touchingly humble and realist lyrics ("My copper crown's gone green, poor me . . ."; "Are you what church folk mean by 'the good news' . . . or are you giving me a dirty look in the rearview, clicking the button on your UHaul pen?"; and "Today after lunch, I got sick and blew chunks all over my new shoes, in the lot behind Whole Foods—this is a new kind of blues") line up succinctly with simple piano runs and funky tambourine beats and even the occasional, well-placed na-na-na-na to make for a dazzling, if strange, record you'll find yourself listening holes into.

Cursed - *III: Architects of Troubled Sleep*

Cursed has a history of deftly blending hardcore and metal in such a way that you can never know what's going to happen next. Their first two albums, aptly titled *One* and *Two*, helped set them apart from other hard bands by being just a little too heavy or fast or long where it didn't fit, and this album proudly carries on that tradition, shredding the preconceptions of metal like so many blasting riffs. Killer.

***"Are you what church folk mean by 'the good news' . . . or are you giving me a dirty look in the rearview, clicking the button on your UHaul pen?"
From Alopecia, by Why?***



Books, Music, and Film to Wake Up Your Muse and Help You Change the World

CD: Steppin' In It, *Simple Tunes for Troubled Times*

Release date: 2008

Label: Fox on a Hill

All right, Steamboat Queen,

Sing me a simple tune for these troubled times.

Hold tight, Steamboat Queen.

You must have been something in your prime.

from "The Steamboat Queen," Steppin' In It, *Simple Tunes for Troubled Times*

On several occasions during my early childhood my parents took me to visit the home of friends who owned a player piano. The adults would dissolve in laughter as I walked around and around the piano looking for the player who was ripping out that glorious honky-tonk tune.

Memories like this are part of what keeps me relatively stable in the wake of these "troubled times." Childhood memories and ancestral voices not only root us in the past, they also show us where we are and where we're headed.

I didn't want to hear this when I was 16, but a sense of the past does grant us wisdom and strength. The voices of *them what's gone before* are a source of enlightenment and solace, as exemplified by these timely songs that draw exuberantly on Texas swing, Dixieland, blues, gospel, Cajun, country rock, as well as North American folk history.

"Charles Hatfield's Blues" channels the Kansas-born pseudo-scientist on whom the movie *The Rainmaker* was based, and who, in the early part of the 20th century, had a secret formula for making rain. His services were much in demand, with mixed results—some sensational, some not.

"The Ghost of Richard Manuel" is a loving tribute to the Canadian musical wizard who, in 1986, after a long and distinguished career with The Band, hung himself in his hotel room.

Why write about these people? I can't say, but I do know that tales of doomed heroes seem so much closer to reality as most of us know it, and that they are often more entertaining and enlightening than the more highly publicized conquests and vanquishings.



“The Break of Day” and “Mr. President” keep up a time-honoured tradition of speaking out against inequality, that ugly underbelly of capitalism, in a country where free enterprise is a god many dare not foil.

None of this would be worth the plastic it was burned on if it weren’t so dang much fun. Just try listening to “The Romp” without dancing. Or at least hopping a knee or two.

Simple Tunes for Troubled Times lives up to five of The Mindful Bard’s criteria for albums well worth hearing: 1) it is authentic, original, and delightful; 2) it confronts existing injustices; 3) it makes me want to be a better artist; 4) it displays an engagement with and compassionate response to suffering; and 5) it provides respite from a sick and cruel world, a respite enabling me to renew myself for a return to mindful endeavour.

The Bard could use some help scouting out new material. If you discover any books, compact disks, or movies which came out in the last twelve months and which you think fit the Bard’s criteria, please drop a line to bard@voicemagazine.org. For a list of criteria, go [here](#). If I agree with your recommendation, I’ll thank you online.

AROUND AU



New AU Research Centre Website

The new AU Research Centre [website](#) is up and running, and it’s the place to go for all the news about AU’s “scholarly, research and creative activities.”

As the site explains, AU’s 2006-2011 Strategic University Plan (SUP) “commits Athabasca University to building new capacity as a research institution, and provides a framework for the development of a viable and purposeful research agenda.”

The new site reflects AU’s research objectives, including the support of provincial research goals; expanding new research and scholarship projects and fostering existing research; participating in federal government initiatives; and reflecting the priorities of national research councils.

Students interested in the Graduate Student Research Fund (GSRF) can find out about application guidelines and deadlines, and the section on Research Ethics offers in-depth information on AU’s research policies, as well as links to the university’s Research Ethics Board.

Other sections include info on Externally Funded Research, Internally Funded Research, and AU’s Arts and Science Research Talk series. There’s a lot to explore, so be sure to check out this great new resource!

AUSU This Month



Meet Your New Council

The AUSU Council and staff have added and updated their bio pages. If you're curious about who these nine people are, you can go to our [council page](#) to find out more, or meet our Councillors in the AUSU chat room at the times announced on the front page of the AUSU website.

Also, on May 26, at 6:00 p.m. MST, the new AUSU Council will be having their first council meeting open to public attendance. See the people you elected in action. Contact ausu@ausu.org or phone 1-800-788-9041, ext 3413 for details on how you can attend.

New Addition to Council Family

The VP Finance and Administration, Sarah Kertcher, was not able to participate in the most recent AUSU executive meeting, but her absence was understandable. The night before, Sarah had a baby boy by the name of Nathan Ross Kertcher. Nathan came into this world at 7 lbs. and 13 oz. AUSU sends its congratulations out to Nathan and his parents, and looks forward to the day when he's an Active Member.



AUSU Merchandise for Sale

Due to a high demand for AUSU merchandise, and delays in setting up our online store, we have put together a quick catalogue with a few items we have in stock now.

You can download the catalogue in PDF from the link on our home page, or go to <http://www.ausu.org/services/store.php> to see the catalogue online. Shipping costs will be calculated per order and we'll let you know by phone or email.

We are only accepting credit card orders at this time, unless you are able to visit our Edmonton office. We are in the process of selecting more product of good quality and use for our members, and some of these should start to be available soon. Suggestions as to other products are welcome.

AUSU Lock Loan Program

If you take exams at the Calgary or Edmonton campus, you can participate in our Lock Loan Program. Under this program, you can borrow a lock to secure your stuff while you take your exam, then return it at no cost and with no deposit. If you're not in Calgary or Edmonton, or would like to purchase a lock to keep, we are keeping the price close to our cost in the spirit of this program. However, to do this means we rely on you to return the borrowed locks, and to make sure the combination is reset to 0-0-0 when you do.

Employment Site Nearly Ready

Big news! AUSU has nearly completed the final testing of the new employment site developed in coordination with the Personnel Department. This site will be available to all of our members and their family or friends, and will help them to find employers looking for their skills.



Create professional-looking flowcharts, timelines, graphs, and more, in minutes, all by yourself. Then go spend some quality time with your family.

Free for AUSU members. Visit www.ausu.org



SmartDraw

Smart Draw – Benefit for AUSU members

AUSU has purchased a licence agreement to supply the award-winning SmartDraw software to all AUSU members (current undergraduate students). To access this deal and find out more, visit the front page of our website.

SmartDraw allows you to create a wide range of graphics for your assignments and submit them electronically in a Word file. You can also place your graphics in Excel or PowerPoint files, or export them as TIF, GIF, or JPEG files to make a web graphic or even a logo. Just a few of the graphics you can make include Venn diagrams, genetics charts, graphs, organizational and flow charts, and Gantt charts.

For any course that requires charts that cannot be easily created in Word or Excel, this should be a real time saver and make it easier to submit all portions of an assignment by email. Remember, though, that you should always check with your tutor to find out if there is a specific format he or she prefers. Your tutor does not have to have SmartDraw to view these graphics, however.

Installations under this program are good for one year. The package includes both the Standard and Health Care editions of SmartDraw.

AUSU Handbook/Planner 2008 in stock!

The 2008 AUSU planner is still in stock. We've added a few enhancements this year, including cheat sheets for common citation styles, a clip-in page-marker ruler, and a funky fridge magnet to remind you to get your weekly dose of *The Voice*.

As always, we're excited to know what you think of the planner.

It's Here! (really!)

Click to order your 2008 Handbook/Planner
Free for all AUSU members

INTERNATIONAL NEWS DESK



At Home: *Canadian Geographic* prints environment issue on wheat paper

In a first for a North American magazine, *Canadian Geographic's* annual environment issue has been printed on paper made from wheat.

The special issue has been printed using wheat straw—the part of wheat that's left after the grain harvest.

As the [CBC](#) reports, *Canadian Geographic* says the addition of “agricultural waste to pulp from trees could offer farmers a new source of revenue and cut the demand for pulp from the continent's boreal forests.”

For the past four years, *Canadian Geographic* has been working on the wheat-paper project with a Canadian environmental group, Markets Initiative; the magazine's printer, Dollco Printing; and the Alberta Research Council.

The magazine's editor-in-chief, Rick Boychuk, told the CBC that “We are all quite elated. This has galvanized the whole company. People are thrilled to be at the forefront of an initiative of this nature.”

While the goal may be to save forests, and presumably make the magazine more eco-friendly, a downside to the special paper is that the wheat-straw pulp used to make it was shipped from China.

To avoid the energy use required by shipping, some involved in the project hope to convince the North American pulp and paper industry that “magazine-grade paper can be made here from agricultural waste produced by Canadian farmers.”

It's estimated that Canadian farmers produce an estimated 21 million tonnes of wheat straw annually, a resource that could be turned into eight million tonnes of pulp and as many as 20 million magazines.

In Foreign News: South Africa deploys troops to halt attacks on foreigners

On May 11, the first of a wave of deadly attacks began on foreigners in South Africa, and the country has sent troops into the streets to try and stem the continued violence. The attacks have forced thousands to flee and resulted in 42 deaths so far.

The attacks, which began in the township of Alexandra, north of Johannesburg, have spread to the city centre and beyond. Durban has been the site of recent violence, and reports of attacks have come in from North-West province as well as Mpumalanga province in the north-east.

The violence is aimed at immigrants in South Africa, and it's believed the attacks are fuelled by growing resentment that skilled foreigners are taking jobs while local residents face poverty and an unemployment rate of 30 per cent.

As many as 15,000 people have sought shelter in churches, community halls, and police stations, but many more have chosen to leave.

It's estimated that there are three million Zimbabwean immigrants in South Africa, many of whom are fleeing violence at home. But with armed mobs of as many as 200 roaming the streets and attacking foreigners, people continue to scramble for a spot on the special buses ferrying passengers out of the country.

Some sources, however, say that political groups have orchestrated the attacks, and have been supplying weapons to hostels in the various townships. Manala Manzini, director general of South Africa's National Intelligence Agency, told reporters that "the attacks were unleashed by movements that supported the apartheid government."

This view is supported by South Africa's minister of intelligence, Ronnie Kasrils, who has stated that there are a variety of factions who may be organizing the violence, each with their own political aims in mind.

As the [BBC](#) reports, the deployment of South African troops to aid police marks the first time the military has been called in to restore order since the 1994 end of apartheid.

CLICK ON THIS – Number Crunch

Lonita Fraser

I'll admit it, I'm a big sucker for numeric and math geekery. It's not just for science nerds, y'see. There's fun to it. Trust me on this.

[Mental Math Tricks](#)

You never know when multiplication tricks could come in handy.

[Number Gossip](#)

Everything you wanted to know about a number, but were afraid to ask. Ooher.

[MathWorld](#)

The world's most extensive maths resource—and they aren't kidding.

[Dr. Sarah's Futurama Math](#)

All those math jokes out of six years of grad school. See? Higher education can lead to a lucrative career in comedy!

[Metamath Music Page](#)

Now why should mathematical proofs exist only on the page in dry one-dimensional fashion? Add a little pizzazz with sound!

CLASSIFIEDS

Classifieds are free for AU students! Contact voice@ausu.org for more information.

THE VOICE

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