

THE

VOICE

MAGAZINE

Volume 16 Issue 49
December 19, 2008

The Human Statues

Jubilation across the nation

Life in Bookmarks

A window on 2008

Winter Roads

Safe driving tips



Plus:

*The Interviewer, Music To Eat Lunch To,
From Where I Sit, and much more...*

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The Voice is published
every Friday in HTML
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To subscribe for weekly
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Special thanks to
Athabasca University's
The Insider for its
frequent contributions

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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.



Re: "I've Got the Budget Blues" by Greg Ryan, v16 i48 (2008-12-12)

When I read Greg Ryan's article, he might as well have been speaking directly to me, and my friends. I just wanted to say that I felt it not only was it extremely well-written, but it was done so in such a way it read like a friend talking to a friend. For those who are struggling to budget time and money it gives them an idea on how to get started and for those who are already doing so, it gives them hope that it can be continuously done.

Ultimately, it lets everyone out there know that they aren't alone, that others struggle to do the life-long balancing act and that others do actually understand.

Sincerely,

J. Burnett

ON THE HILL

Sandra Livingston



Making a List

Another year has come and gone and what a year it's been—especially in the halls of Parliament, with Canadians being served an unappealing brew of partisanship, broken promises and an early election, all topped with a self-serving dollop of prorogation.

When it comes to being rewarded for a job well done (in this case, putting the electorate ahead of political manoeuvring), they all deserve a lump of coal in their stockings.

So what wishes do we dare put on our Parliamentary Christmas list for the New Year? What hopes do we hold for our feckless leaders as they return, well paid and well rested, to the job on January 26?

For starters, we can hope that some industrious elves have taped a note to Stephen's locker while he's been away unwrapping his shiny new budget, something along the lines of "This is a *minority* government."

With luck, it will serve as a reminder that he hasn't been given the keys to the car; he's been handed a mandate to work with all the other MPs in the House, which means they all get to ride along beside him and occasionally offer suggestions ("No, no, you missed the turn. The directions said slight *left*.")

Another item on the list would be a fervent wish that Stephen has learned at least one lesson well: when you suddenly poke the opposition with a sharp, unanticipated funding stick, you might get bitten by a coalition, and that puts us all in a mess. Not that our political funding system shouldn't be open to review, but a little pre-emptive dialogue goes a long way (Stephen, please see the note on your locker, above).

We can also hope that the opposition leaders each get a wonderful sense of irony for Christmas, one they'll put to good use when they return to their seats in January. Because it really does beggar belief to hear them call Stephen Harper out for being power hungry, then watch the machinations begin as everyone rushes to leverage their own position. Maybe those same elves could slip a reminder under the doors of the opposition caucuses: it's not about striking deals that will set you up well for the next election, it's about spending serious time developing policies to help Canadians through these tough economic times.

And while we're at it (and still have some room on the list), let's hope that the Speaker of the House gets the one thing that *he's* been hoping for all year: order. To hear him calling for it, you'd think it had gone missing long ago—and you'd be right. The hollering, booing, interruptions, insults, and desk-thumping of the average Question Period make a pro-wrestling audience look positively urbane by comparison. And through it all, the Speaker looks wearily on and occasionally calls for the MPs' missing civility. It makes me want to go out and start pasting up signs in his neighbourhood, "Lost: Order in the House. Reward offered."

So, will we get a functioning federal Parliament for 2009? One with leaders who have the maturity to check their egos and squabbles at the door and find a way to work together for the benefit of the people who pay them? We'll find out in January when Parliament reconvenes. In the meantime, enjoy the festive season and may all your holiday wishes come true.

WINTER DRIVING

Diane Gadoua



Wintry weather brings a bounty of enjoyable things—fresh powder on ski hills, snuggling up with a warm drink—but it also brings black ice, whiteouts, and the one thing many commuters dread: winter driving.

If you live in a snowy climate, you've likely seen it all; the fender benders, the spinouts, and the cars overturned in the ditch.

But winter driving doesn't have to be that bad, and Mark Cox, Director of the Bridgestone Winter Driving School, offers some timely advice as you head out onto those snowy roads.

As Mark explains, the main hazard of winter driving is "limited traction or 'grip.'" On dry pavement a driver can use poor technique and get away with it because they are well under the grip limit. Low grip magnifies poor technique and makes every mistake more critical."

It may seem logical that simply slowing down would avoid the problem, but it's a little more complicated than that.

"In many instances," Mark says, "a driver who is going much slower than traffic is just as much a hazard as a driver going too fast. Speed differential is a very real problem in winter driving."

He explains that the techniques taught at the Bridgestone Winter Driving School "aren't winter specific, they apply to any low grip situation (wet pavement, gravel, dirt, mud, etc.) and even to dry pavement at higher speeds. Driving using proper technique is simply a safer way to travel regardless of the surface."

When it comes to proper driving technique, Mark notes that there are several common mistakes people make, especially in bad conditions: "Following too closely, overestimating the ability of all wheel drive, and not looking far enough ahead."

Along with learning (or taking a refresher on) proper driving skills, preparing your vehicle for wintry roads is vital. We asked Mark what drivers can do to get their vehicles ready to face the snow and ice.

"Make sure the battery, wipers and suspension are in like new operating condition. And be aware that a half worn snow tire has the performance of an all-season tire, a half worn all-season tire has the performance of a summer tire, and summer tires aren't ever appropriate in winter conditions."

"As temperatures drop in the fall," he explained, "so do tire pressures. For every 10 degrees F drop in temperature a tire loses one psi. If you last checked your tire pressure in September at 80 degrees and it's now 30 degrees out, your tires are five psi too low. This affects both performance and safety negatively."

A great place to find out more about prepping your vehicle is the Transport Canada [website](#). They offer a downloadable winter driving manual packed with practical advice, including a list of items to keep in your car.

To help fine tune your skills behind the wheel, the Bridgestone Winter Driving School [site](#) offers winter driving manuals and DVDs, and you can learn more about winter tire safety at [Be Tire Smart](#), a government of Canada resource.

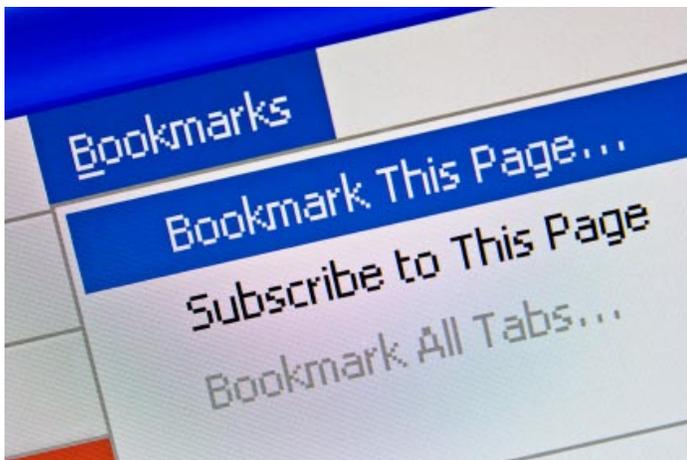
While there's a lot of good information available, we asked Mark what one piece of advice he thinks is the most important for people to remember.

"It takes from four to 10 times as long to stop on ice and snow. Drivers need to factor this in to the following distance and look far enough ahead to compensate for this distance," he says.

And the biggest misconception people have about winter driving? "That it is a scary, stressful thing to do. Winter driving using proper technique can actually be a fun experience."

SLICE OF LIFE

Christina M. Frey



Bookmarks: A Window on 2008

The holiday season brings out the nesting instinct in me. It's not so much the Martha-Stewart-homemade-cocoa-and-handcrafted-decorations nesting instinct, but is more along the lines of "Uh-oh, it's almost 2009 and look what a hopeless mess everything is!"

I look around at the boxes in the garage, the summer clothes still hanging in the closet and the piles of papers littering the office.

I try not to think about the forgotten, months-old cottage cheese lurking at the back of the fridge—the

one with the green film on top that it *didn't* have when it left the store.

Then, fortunately, I remember my web browser's "Bookmarks" tab, a disorganized mess of web links. Now *there's* a job I can tackle easily.

I brew a cup of non-homemade cocoa, and sit down to start organizing my life, one link at a time.

At first, it feels tedious. But then, as I start pulling up websites, sorting, and deleting, I begin realizing that my bookmarks list is more than a jumbled collection of links proving the extreme disorganization of the Internet users of the household. It is an outline of my life, interests, focuses from the entire year—an expression of who my family and I were, and who we gradually became, over the course of 12 months.

Dozens of bookmarked recipes—both sweet and savoury—designed to use up an abundance of rhubarb. Ahh, last summer, and the good friend back in Alaska whose garden overflowed with more rhubarb than her three kids could eat. She passed on to me more rhubarb than *my* family could eat, especially since the rhubarb-eating portion of my family was limited to me. I'll never forget the face my two-year-old, Kiersten, made when I tried to expand the rhubarb circle to include her.

The fondue recipes from our lovingly planned "we're back in Alaska" party—which never happened. We barely had time to arrive home from four months in Washington, D.C., pack up, and leave again for Louisiana. What a crazy five weeks those were.

The Cajun cooking recipes from the first few months in Louisiana, when I started to embrace everything southern: shrimp, chicken, sausage, and every other type of jambalaya imaginable, all with widely varying ingredients, but each insisting it was the proper, old-fashioned way to cook it. Crawfish étouffée, made successfully, and deliciously shudder-free as long as I didn't think too hard about what crawfish look like outside of the plastic package.

Hello Kitty videos on YouTube, originally bribes to get Kiersten to sit still while we brushed her teeth. I think she's forgotten about them (I hope!), but I don't dare remove them. Toddlers used to have security blankets; now, apparently, it's online videos. God help us if the Internet ever goes down.

Daily aurora borealis forecasts. It was always a source of disappointment that we only saw the northern lights a few times while living in Alaska; we were just a little too far south for that.

An article on how to use mind control on customer service. I tried the suggestions once and got nowhere. I called back with my traditional method (I like to describe it as "Dr. House" style; others might use a different term) and got 25 per cent off. Delete.

Links to garage sale websites. Who knew that having a yard sale could be so easy? And that people would actually buy all that stuff? We thought we were prepared, but, of course, found at least 10 things the following day that would have been great sellers too. I guess I'd better leave those sites on the list for next spring . . .

Different hairstyle pictures. Last summer, I went into the salon planning on big changes, but the stylist wouldn't do it. "I like your hair long," she said. I delete the links, and then I think that was a mistake. I'm due for another haircut, and this time I'll go in armed with photos and I won't take no for an answer. New year, new attitude, new hair. Oh, who am I kidding? I'll go in brazenly and come out with a meek trim, as always.

We're coming down to the end of the list. Tax questions, from every possible angle, to see if there was any way I could get out of paying income tax, or at least write off most of my self-employment expenses. (There wasn't, so I paid. But grudgingly.)

Ah, the last link. A hilariously awful game—in fact, it's from awfulgames.com—involving Tetris, sewers, and plumbing. No joke. I'm utterly humiliated to think I actually bookmarked it, but then, since no one else is awake, I guiltily play one round—under a fake name—and remember why it was so addicting. I delete it, although I'm desperately tempted to keep challenging the high scorer.

The "keepers" are sorted into folders, alphabetized, ready to be clicked again someday. My Bookmarks tab is clean, a fresh page on which new links of life can be written—or, as it were, clicked. I wonder what 2009 will bring.

My cocoa is nearly done; it's time to stop musing and move on to organize a closet or a few boxes. But first, I need to do just one thing: www.awfulgames.com . . .

My Bookmarks tab is clean, a fresh page on which new links of life can be written—or, as it were, clicked. I wonder what 2009 will bring.

IN CONVERSATION WITH . . .

Wanda Waterman St. Louis



Francesco Casetti

*Francesco Casetti is a renowned professor of cinematography and author of the recent *Eye of the Century: Film, Experience, Modernity* (see [Voice review here](#)).*

Mr. Casetti is chair of the Department of Media and Performing Arts at the Università Cattolica in Milan and was recently a Visiting Professor at Yale University. Recently, Mr. Casetti spoke with The Voice from Connecticut.

“The cinema is exactly this: an experience that vacillates between the possibility of an excitement beyond measure, and an adherence to measures that avoid all risk. It is the space between, in which the comings and goings serve to recover a balanced turmoil in order to arrive at what modern man needs: good emotion.”

Francesco Casetti, from *Eye of the Century*

What is “Good Emotion”?

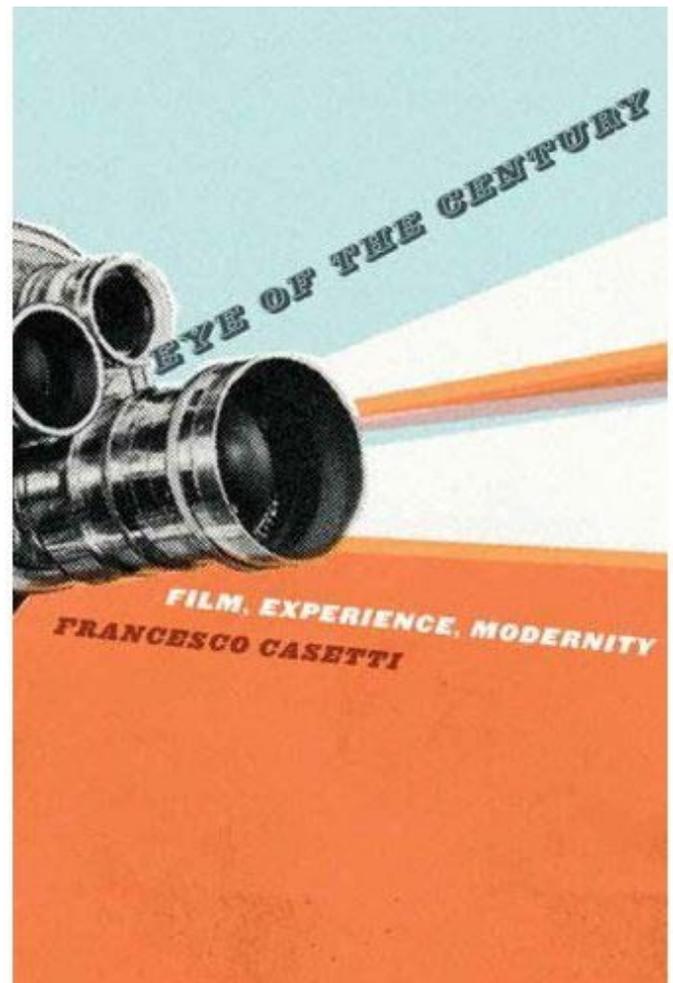
Good emotion is strong emotion that you can experience without feeling lost. Having been a staunch semiotician I can never stop learning from everyday life.

When I live something intensely I’m on the edge; I’m at risk of losing myself. It’s like this when I fall in love—on the one hand I’m exalted, and on the other hand I feel lost. A good emotion is one you can live intensely while feeling safe.

Cinema has been exactly that. In front of you is an exciting, even dangerous life, but while watching it you feel safe.

In this sense the film theatre is a harbour in which to enjoy the turmoil and the storm around you. You are living the storm, but you are in the harbour. I touch on this in the book during my analysis of *King Kong*.

What is at stake in *Breakfast at Tiffany’s* is self-acceptance. It’s true, she’s phony, she’s impossible. It’s true that life is a riddle. But in the end the film says, *Be confident!* This is the great message of the film.



The twentieth century gave us almost impossible situations as a kind of challenge, situations in which we had to choose between things like freedom and duty. Film was the only art of the twentieth century that tried to find a compromise, a *good* compromise, between the two sides of the riddle. How do you compromise between being phony and being real? This is the challenge of modernity, if you think about it.

What is classical? That which is a model, and primordial, beautiful and ugly. There is a wonderful essay by Deluc called *Cinéma Populaire* in which he claims that the classical character of the western film is a sort of re-enactment of the old Greek tragedy. There's a wonderful passage in which he speaks about *Rio Jim*, calling him the Orestes of our time, looking for his Clytemnestra.

I think now more than in the past the barriers between the different arts are dissolving. When you go to the ballet you go to the ballet and when you go to the opera you go to the opera, but when you go to the movies it's a little more complicated.

What is the modern? It's no longer the primordial model; it's the clash and the coexistence of two different models at the same moment. The modern says, *I'm the master of my life*, but at the same time *I'm overwhelmed by the intensity of my life*.

In the modern world the subjective takes the place of God. Modernity is not a primordial model; it's two opposite sides struggling and putting me in an uncomfortable position as to what to choose. Film provides a wonderful answer: *choose both*.

The Double Pleasure of Analytical Film Viewing

Watching movies is a public pleasure, if you will. On the one hand you are enjoying the movie as such, opening your mind to

something. On the other hand you have the pleasure of taking the film apart and trying to understand what happens. In the same way you enjoy your own life; on the one hand you simply enjoy it and on the other hand you try to understand the meaning of what happens around you. What you have in films is this same double pleasure.

Film's Place Among the Arts Today

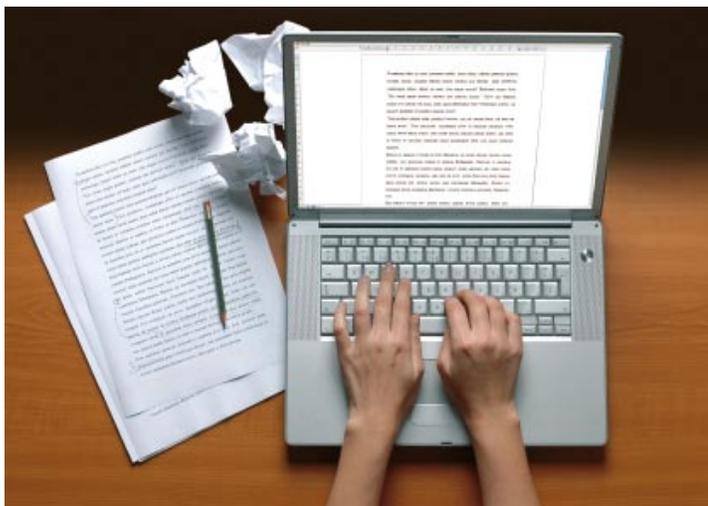
I think now more than in the past the barriers between the different arts are dissolving. When you go to the ballet you go to the ballet and when you go to the opera you go to the opera, but when you go to the movies it's a little more complicated. In this sense the position of film is quite strange because it's probably the first art to grasp different forms of expression and to put them together.

It's not the synthesis of the arts that's important but rather the dissolution of borders. In this sense I'm still a film scholar. But I'm not so sure what film is today. Take YouTube. In a certain sense it's still a kind of film theatre, but in another sense it's not.

Today when I go to a theatre to watch a film it's an incredible pleasure but a strange pleasure in a sense because I'm doing an archaic thing.

In the book I'm writing now one of my first questions is not "*What* is cinema now?" but "*Where* is cinema now?" The classical movies were able to inform, to give shape to our lives and to our desires—they provided a picture of life and desire. Now the inspiration for film is no longer human desire but the digital landscape.

THE 2008 VOICE MAGAZINE WRITING CONTEST!



Write for *The Voice* and win money for your education!

The Voice is launching its 2008 writing contest, with categories for both fiction and non-fiction.

We've got over \$1,000 in prizes to give away: one winner in each category will receive a scholarship of one Athabasca University undergraduate course.

Please read the contest rules and regulations and submission guidelines carefully to ensure you are not disqualified.

It's free to enter, but the length limits are firm and all entries that go beyond these limits will be disqualified. Good luck!

Categories

Non-Fiction:

In 1,500 words or less, write about any issue affecting freedom of speech. You may write about issues in the press, in politics, or on a personal scale. You may focus on current issues of free speech, or take a historical approach. Feel free to use research or statistics in your article (with proper citations), or write a creative opinion piece.

Fiction:

This category is open to your imagination! Write a 1,500 word or less fiction submission in any genre or format. Short stories, poetry, a scene from a play, even a comic. Be creative!

Rules and Regulations

- The *Voice* writing contest is open to anyone 16 years of age or older, with the following exceptions: AU, AUSU, and *Voice* staff and AUSU councillors are not eligible to enter the contest.
- Winning entries will be published in *The Voice*. *The Voice* reserves the right to print non-winning entries at a rate of remuneration in accordance with current *Voice* freelance submission rates. *The Voice* may use portions of non-winning non-fiction entries in a composite about perspectives on free speech. No remuneration will be provided for such use.
- All decisions regarding this contest and the selection of winners remain with the judging panel and are final.
- Entries will be judged by a panel to be selected by the *Voice* editors, and this panel may include: AU students, AU tutors, and/or AUSU councillors. The panel will include at least 3 members.
- *The Voice* editors will collect articles and oversee the judging, but will not be judges.

- Entries must be original works that have not been printed or published elsewhere (including online), and must not be course assignment papers or derivatives of.
- Entries must not contain any information that would make the identity of the author evident to judges. To ensure fairness, all entries will be forwarded to the judging panel with a reference number attached, but no personally identifying information. *The Voice* editors will keep the identity of the authors private until the contest closes. *The Voice* editors will keep a record of the authors of submissions, and will be the sole owner of this list.
- Entries will not be edited for grammar, spelling, or content, although *The Voice* editors may black out any personally identifying information contained within the submission. Otherwise, entries will be forwarded to the judging panel as is, with the exception that all entries will be converted to use the same file format, margins, font size, and font style to ensure that all entries are equally readable.
- The deadline for submissions in both categories will be December 31, 2008. The winners will be announced by February 28, 2009. *The Voice* reserves the right to extend either deadline if necessary.
- One grand prize winner will be selected in both the fiction and non-fiction categories. If no entries are received in one of the categories, the prize money will be returned to the *Voice* scholarship budget. Prizes will be awarded in the form of a certificate for one free Athabasca University undergraduate course. Prize certificates have no cash value.
- *The Voice* reserves the right to add additional, secondary prizes.
- *The Voice* is not responsible for lost emails. *The Voice* editors will confirm receipt of all entries by email. Please follow up if you do not receive a reply in two business days.
- All entrants agree to allow their name and city of residence to be printed, along with their submission, should it be selected as a winning entry. No further remuneration—beyond the contest prize—will be paid to the contest winner when their entry is printed.
- Winners will be asked to sign a standard Release and Indemnity form; each prize winner agrees to release the sponsor and its agents from any liability in connection with the prizes awarded in this contest.
- Any entrant found to be tampering with the contest results, or attempting to influence any of the judging members, or using any forums or other public communications media to advise others of which entry is theirs will be disqualified; or if *The Voice* editors determine, at their sole discretion, that any other form of tampering has been attempted, that entrant will be disqualified.
- No preference will be given to regular *Voice* writers. Entries will not identify the writer as a regular *Voice* contributor when sent to the judging panel.
- Where applicable, this contest is subject to all federal, provincial, and municipal laws. Contest void where prohibited.

The deadline for submissions in both categories will be December 31, 2008. The winners will be announced by February 28, 2009. The Voice reserves the right to extend either deadline if necessary.

Submission Guidelines

- Your submission must be an electronic file attached to an email and submitted to voice@ausu.org. Submissions sent as the body of an email will not be accepted. Contact voice@ausu.org if you require instructions on how to attach a file to an email.
- Submissions should be in Microsoft Word format [.doc or .docx], rich text format [.rtf] or plain text format [.txt].

- If you use footnotes or endnotes, type them in at the end of the document, rather than using the endnote feature of your word processor.
- If you use a word processor other than Word or work on a Mac computer, you can save a file in one of these alternate formats using the 'save as' function and selecting the desired format on the save menu. Contact *The Voice* editors if you require assistance in formatting your submission. Users of older Macs may have to send entries in HTML format.
- Each entrant may submit one entry in each of the two categories.
- All entries must be under 1,500 words due to judging time constraints. Length will be determined by the word count feature in Microsoft Word. Your references and citations section will not be included in the word count.
- References should be formatted consistently according to a standardized publishing style guide, such as the American Psychological Association (APA) or the MLA press style.
- Entries should not include unnecessary formatting such as drop caps, graphics (unless the graphic is integral to the work), or unusual fonts. Entries must be text; scans of handwritten or typed documents will not be accepted.
- The email should include the following information: Your full name, AU student ID number (if applicable), email address, telephone number, mailing address, the title of your entry, and whether you are submitting to the fiction or non-fiction category.
- Make sure non-fiction entries are based on the topic question detailed above. Fiction entries can be on any topic you like. Do not include your contact information within your article but be sure to include a title.

Entries will be judged on the following criteria:

- Non-Fiction entries will be judged on originality, creativity, accuracy, and how well your support your assertions with data or argument. You will also be judged on the presentation of your article, including professionalism, proper spelling, grammar and syntax, and readability. You may write in journalistic style or essay format.
- Fiction entries will be judged on creativity, entertainment value, and the originality of your writing style.
- Regardless of the genre you choose, you will be judged on the effectiveness of your piece and your technical writing skills.

Contact voice@ausu.org if you have any questions.

DID YOU KNOW?

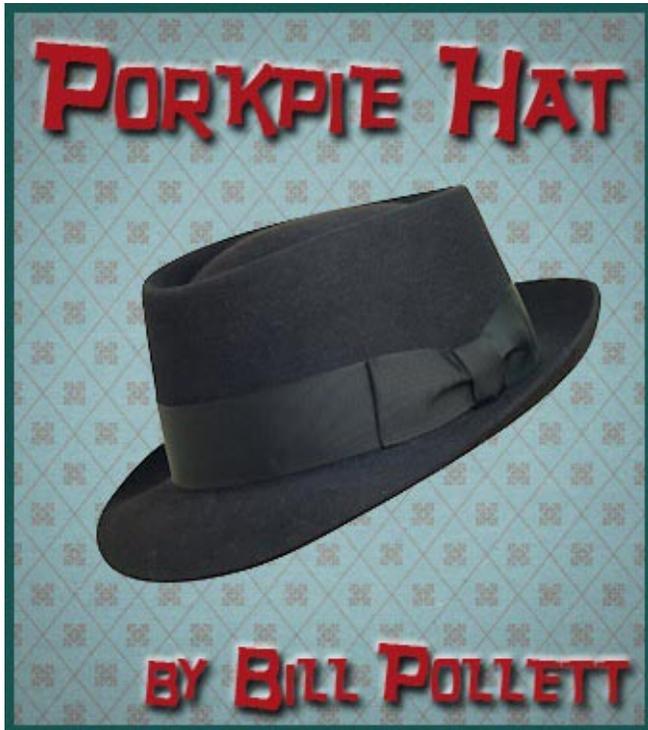


PLAR Program Highlighted in New Book

AU's Prior Learning Assessment and Recognition (PLAR) process has been highlighted in a new book titled *Prior Learning Portfolios: A Representative Collection*, making AU the only Canadian institution to be included.

The book, published by CAEL/Kendall Hunt Publishing, includes a CD-Rom with "copies of relevant models, processes, templates, and samples from each contributing university as well as historical material outlining the development of prior learning activities over the years," as the AU website explains.

If you want to learn more about how to use PLAR to gain credit for past academic and work experience, visit AU's Centre for Learning Accreditation [here](#).



Icebound – A Winter Tale

Because the couple had rented the house in mid-July, when the mosquitoes were clouding and clotting and droning like nature's own hurdy-gurdy in the summer air, they never gave a passing thought to the ancient furnace sitting silent and still in the basement, or the single-paned windows throughout.

By mid-December, the city was locked in ice. The hospital waiting rooms were filled with frostbite victims. City buses were often to be seen stranded, like crippled Russian submarines in a Moscow dry dock. Cars slid sideways down the hills. Lost and discarded items—single gloves, tinfoil wrappers, chocolate milk cartons, used condoms, ballpoint pens—were preserved on the sidewalk like fossils under layers of ice, layers of melt and freeze, melt and freeze.

The furnace in the couple's basement, black and infernal, appeared to be a relic of the early Industrial Revolution. When overtaxed, it would give forth

alarming death rattles, chokes, and sputters. Afraid it would ignite like a ball of magnesium, or else poison them in their sleep, the couple kept the heat turned down to a minimal 10 degrees Celsius.

They went to bed early every night bundled in long underwear, toques, wool sweaters, work socks, sometimes even gloves and scarves. They filled leaky hot water bottles. They rubbed each other's hands and feet. To help with the ruinously immense electric bills, they read books to each other by candlelight. They read *Moby Dick* and *Nostromo*, and drank mint tea made on a camp stove. To pass the long nights, they improvised extravagant erotic fantasies. They were the last survivors of a doomed Arctic expedition. They were medieval settlers of the Faeroe Islands, feasting on roasted puffin and the blubber of pilot whales, making love in the midday darkness, and listening apprehensively to the howling wind for the sound of approaching Viking oars.

Their old eiderdown comforter was streaked and spotted with candle wax. The inside of the bedroom windows were layered with baroque formations of frost and ice. The headlights of passing cars would illuminate miniature landscapes in the windowpanes—sculpted crystal vistas of mountain and bottomless frozen lake, winged creatures and Gothic towers—far more ethereal than the stained glass of any cathedral. Night after winter night the couple would fall asleep huddled together for warmth, each of them drifting into their vivid, isolated December dreams of white owls, black wolves, icebound sailing ships.

One night, a terrible wind swept down from the north. The fragile, brittle bedroom windows cracked, then shattered. Gusts of snow swept across the room. The dreaming lovers slept on.

In the morning, when she woke, the woman found that her partner had frozen solid in the night. His features were caked with frost. The hair that fell down below his toque was bright as tinsel. He was stiff as a board. Not knowing what else to do, she sat above him and cried scalding hot tears in the hopes they would thaw and revive him. They merely ran in tiny rivulets, and froze.

Remembering old fairy tales, she put her lips to his for an enchanted kiss. They froze there, like a tongue to a Winnipeg February lamppost. With one hand, she reached for the phone, and dialled 9-1-1. When the fire department arrived and freed her, they covered the man with thermal blankets, and left to attend other disasters. Alone with him again, she waited day and night for the thawing to begin. If anything, he became progressively more solid.

One morning, wanting to make the best of the situation, she levered and manoeuvred the iceman, as she had come to think of him, from the bed. She dragged him down the stairs, and propped him up beside the kitchen table. She chatted to him about her plans for the day as she cooked and ate her fried potatoes and eggs. Struck with inspiration, she carefully placed him on a long black plastic sled, and took him with her while she went Christmas shopping in the village. She bought him long underwear, and books of inspirational poetry, so she could read to him and keep his spirits up in case this condition should last throughout the bleak winter.



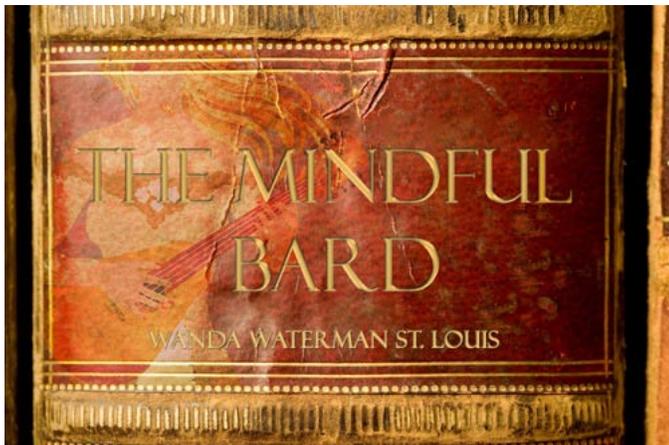
One night, overcome with a decorating mood, she propped him in the living room window, and wrapped him all around with strings of multicoloured Christmas lights. Passing families gathered outside to stare in wonder at the beautiful frozen man. They smiled and waved. They sang ancient yuletide carols. All night long, the man blinked gaily on and off, lightening the darkness.

That very night, in her dreams, an angel came to visit her, and told her what she should do. While the city still slept, she drove to her father's house. From his garage, she borrowed the ice auger he used on his winter fishing trips, and heaved it into the trunk of the car. Stopping by her house, she put her man once more on the sled. Using her best knots, she tied the sled to the bumper of the car, and drove with commendable care to the river's edge. Getting to work with the auger, she carved a man-sized hole in the thick ice. She pulled the sled to the edge of the hole, and deftly manoeuvred her partner into position. With one final push, she watched him slide into the water, then sat back and waited.

As the long minutes crept by, she began to worry that the angel had lied, or that she had put too much faith in her dreams. Her hands were becoming numb, even through her gloves, so she gathered pine cones and twigs from the river's edge, and made a small bonfire beside the hole. She grew more and more anxious, then frightened. Her tears fell into the gray, early morning water.

Then, at the precise moment she was about to give up all hope, she saw a faint flicker of movement beneath the ice. Peering down, she could see her lover, his face and hands held to the ice as though they were pressed against a window. He waved slowly, and gave what she thought (it was difficult to tell, precisely) was a rueful sort of smile. She gave a cheerful grin and wave in return. She placed her lips to match his, and they shared an ice age kiss—no less warm for inconvenient distance separating them. Following her direction, he swam to the hole in the ice, but refused to get out. Strangely, she seemed to understand. In compromise, he reached an arm out of the water. For hours, until she could no longer delay getting on with her day, they held hands.

Every night that winter, she came to the frozen river to visit her iceman, her beautiful pale green merman. If he wasn't there, waiting for her in the usual spot, she would summon him by shining a powerful flashlight on the ice. Every night he would rise to the light, naked and seemingly at peace, and they would share their gestured greetings, both of them wondering what new changes, if any, the spring might bring.



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

CD: The Human Statues, *The Human Statues*

Release date: 2008

Label: Independent

The Manic-Depressive Fraternal Love-Twins of a Campfire Songster and a Motown Diva

If you follow this column you'll have noticed my weakness for *any* music that sounds *anything* like my

parents' record collection from the late '50s, early '60s, a trove that included a lot of pre-Beatles folk music.

Funny thing, but the groups today that sound to me like the Kingston Trio or Harry Belafonte or The New Christy Minstrels or Nina and Frederick never cite these as influences. They do cite people who were influenced by performers who were influenced by these performers, but that's not the same thing.

Whether or not such comparisons are accurate, I feel an irrational dread when I hear new acts being compared to old acts.

Is it not possible to appreciate new music without seeing it as a bricolage of other acts? Is the music industry just like the movie industry, which demands that producers pitch new films as a combination of this and that *other* successful film (e.g., "It's like a cross between *Shrek* and *Silence of the Lambs*")?

I'm going to carry out an existential experiment; I'm going to forget about the long list of musical influences The Human Statues has posted on their MySpace page and try to come up with comparisons having nothing to do with commercially successful artists. Here goes.

Yes, this music is something new, but it does take you back.

Back to summer camp where the male counsellors all have short hair, horn-rimmed glasses, and plaid shirts and artfully strum their guitars while crooning "Where Have All the Flowers Gone" to some female counsellor you wish was you, some 19-year-old girl with her wide arse stuffed into tight pedal-pushers, her long tresses tamed by a wide elastic band.



It takes you back to that twilight time when the dark night of the '50s soul was breaking out into the Age of Aquarius, an era that seemed so threatening at the time but which in retrospect seems so innocent and wholesome, a time of girl groups, hootenannies, *Sterile Cuckoo*, beatnik poetry, portable record players, *Georgie Girl*, and rec rooms.

The harmonies are glee-club tight and the accompaniment is both fitting and adventurous, evoking too many decades to count on the fingers of one hand.

***“When you share love with anyone
One day it’s gonna make you cry,
Wanna die.***

***There’s no use wondering why—
It’s out of our hands.”***

**from “Out of Our Hands,”
by Zachary Stevenson,
*The Human Statues***

Another thing I like about The Human Statues is that in spite of their well-scrubbed personae and rollicking songs they really do address the pain of living and provide, if not an antidote, a word of comfort, which in some circumstances is all we can hope for.

The core from which these lyrics emerge is clearly a broken heart grasping for meaning after the gut-punch delivered by the self-destruct intrinsic to love relationships. Yet the band states that it’s their quest to “spread jubilation across the nation,” and this they accomplish by means of exuberant public performances of bouncy odes to failed or unrequited love.

Just as economic, political, and environmental gloom loom on our horizon The Human Statues provide an earnestly droll vision of the world to keep it all from getting too heavy.

The Human Statues manifests three of *The Mindful Bard’s* criteria for music well worth a listen: 1) it is authentic, original, and delightful; 2) it displays an engagement with and compassionate response to suffering; and 3) it provides respite from a sick and cruel world, a respite enabling me to renew myself for a return to mindful artistic 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.



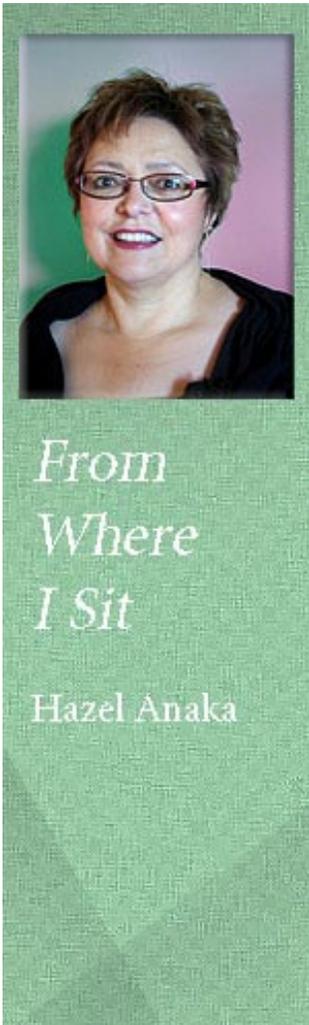
THE VOICE HOLIDAY SCHEDULE

The holiday season is fast approaching, and our last regular issue for 2008 will be on Friday, December 19 (we won’t publish December 26).

We’ll be enjoying lots of eggnog and good cheer from December 22 through January 2, and will be back at work on January 5.

On January 9, watch for our Best of 2008 issue, with our editors’ picks of the best news and views from the past year. Our first regular issue for 2009 will be published January 16.

We wish our readers all the best for the holiday season, and we’re looking forward to another great year of keeping you informed and entertained!



Merry, Merry Christmas

In less than 10 days many of us will gather in living rooms or basements all across the country to celebrate Christmas. The gathering may be Norman Rockwell-ian in its old-fashioned wholesome sensitivity. Or more likely it will be a collection of souls connected by DNA strands and years of shared (if sometimes disputed) memories. And while each of us may vow to be on our best behaviour, the sad truth is we'll all be there with human foibles and failings intact.

Surely there will be spirited debates about the near-miss with the federal coalition. Some will talk about the dwindling investment balances and disappearing nest eggs. Others will whisper a prayer hoping that the alcoholics in the family won't overdo it this year and create some ugly scene.

The youngest in the crowd will get the most attention and best loot. The tweens will wonder when they will finally graduate from the little kids' table and move on up to the adult group. Grandmothers everywhere will preside over the kitchen and the feast, cooking enough for an army and urging yet another helping.

Games may be played if enough coaxing is done. As always, some will choose to "sit out" as voyeurs and critics rather than playing charades or favourite board games. The actual gift opening will be done in smaller nuclear family groups.

Our family stopped "picking names" years ago. More recently, our extended family even had to dispense with the Grinch gift exchange when battle lines were drawn around the "it" gift of the season.

What should have been a fun exercise in strategically getting the coveted gift after the agreed upon number of "steals" in fact turned nasty. Not our proudest collective moment. It seems wiser to seek peace than try to force tradition or a minority opinion on the larger group.

For better or worse these people are our tribe. Our customs, characters, and craziness are our own. We can't be anything more (or less) than we are. We're not like movie families or even neighbour families. That reality has been harder for some of us to accept than others.

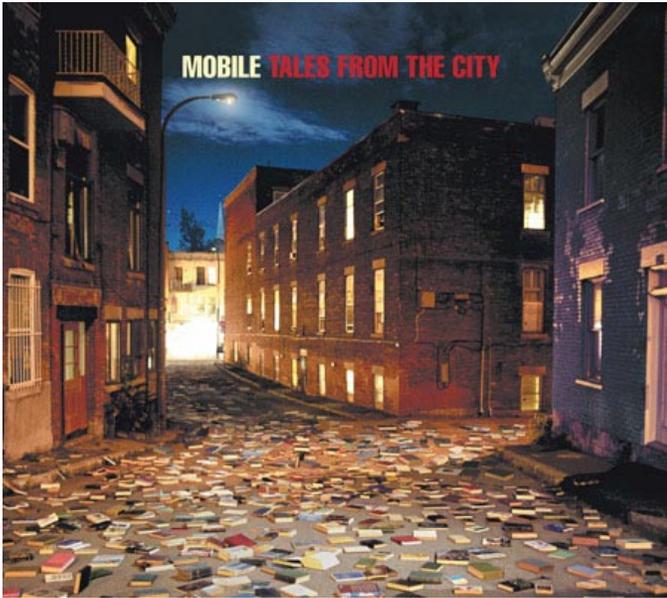
It's easy to look outside and think, *Why can't our family be like that?* Why can't we do fancy holiday travel? Why don't we serve turkey dinner to the homeless? Why don't we sing carols or skate on an outdoor rink? Why aren't we creating new traditions for our own little immediate family? Why aren't we trying to recapture or reinvent some of the best memories from our own childhood Christmases?

For me it's been an exercise in acceptance, live and let live, understanding that my way isn't the best (or only) way to do anything. Maybe one of the blessings of the realignment of the economic world will be a rethinking of priorities and values and a step back toward simplicity. That could mean a merry, merry Christmas, from where I sit.

MUSIC TO EAT LUNCH TO

Mandy Gardner

Mobile – *Tales from the City*



Release date: October 7, 2008

Label: Universal Music Group Canada

Tracks: 10

Rating: 9

Tales from the City is a full-length album from Canadian group Mobile, a band that has put some stronger emotions into this record than their previous release. Having a family member deal with breast cancer brought out a few new musical innovations from not only guitarist Christian Brais but from all the other band members as well.

Established fans are impressed with this new release in comparison with past recordings, but that doesn't

change the fact that *Tales from the City* deserves recognition as one of the greatest progressive new wave records ever produced.

Since Mobile's evolution caps off a mere two-record discography, it is fair to say that only good can come of the fuller, stronger hold on melody that has been produced this time around. In this 10-track second release, Mobile has encapsulated an entire length of musical composition that matches perfectly with the CD's cover art.

Tales from the City features a dark city street that appears not only empty or abandoned but also gives the distinct impression of containing a million different stories of human life through the clear metaphor of a scattering of books. Dovetailing with this initial image and title, the 10 tracks on this record truly seem to precisely tell those stories suggested on the album cover.

The musicians have mastered their progressive genre with a few melodies that could pass for pieces of a Strokes or Killers song, but there is no mistaking the differences in this wholly uninterrupted album of dreamlike, pensive, and ever-so-mildly tensed music.

Don't let the term "new wave" confuse you, however. Although Mobile's recordings can easily be traced back to a parental '80s new wave training, the band has done a splendid job of turning that "progressive" corner and producing something that sounds entirely new but not uncomfortable to the musical palate.

I highly recommend this band to music appreciators of all genres because of its thought-provoking and emotive qualities. If you would like to hear a few samples from *Tales from the City* the band would probably like nothing better than to share their songs with you [online](#)—check out four tracks including the excellent first single, "Killer."

Although Mobile may initially sound like the kind of neutral background music that could be played at a social gathering or the beginning of a party, the truth is that these guys pack an awfully big punch into each little note played. I thoroughly enjoyed the record.

The Interviewer

It is the ninth decade of the twentieth century...
written and illustrated by Wanda Waterman St. Louis

Rockhead #5: Group Home

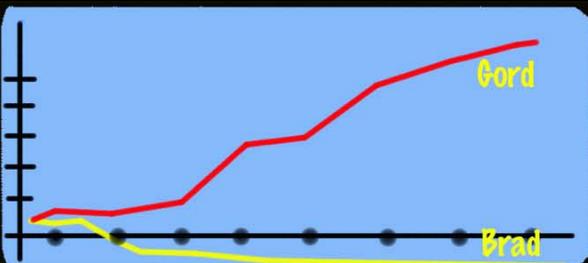


Reuben ends up walking to Gord's group home for a visit.



Sure enough, an uncle has left this dude EVERY Blind Boys record ever made.

Gord rises considerably in Reuben's estimation and it no longer matters that he's the brother of a putz.



When Gord comes to work at the station, Rob, one of the workers at Gord's group home, comes along to try to help Gord learn his job.



Don't you think her arms are fatter than mine?



This doesn't surprise Reuben because from what he's seen Brad likes whatever the record corporations tell him to like.

Rob has introduced Gord to the Ramones.

Twenty-twenty-twenty four
 I want to go
 I was sedated
 Nothing to nowhere to go
 I wanna see
 Just put me in a wheelchair
 and put me in
 Hurry hurry hurry
 before I go insane
 I can't control my fingers
 I can't control m

Gord actually GETS the Ramones.

next: Ramones

AUSU This Month



2009 AUSU Handbook/Planners

The 2009 AUSU planner pre-order form is up! You'll find the order form on the AUSU [home page](#), but please note, the planner will only be sent out when it arrives in our office in December.

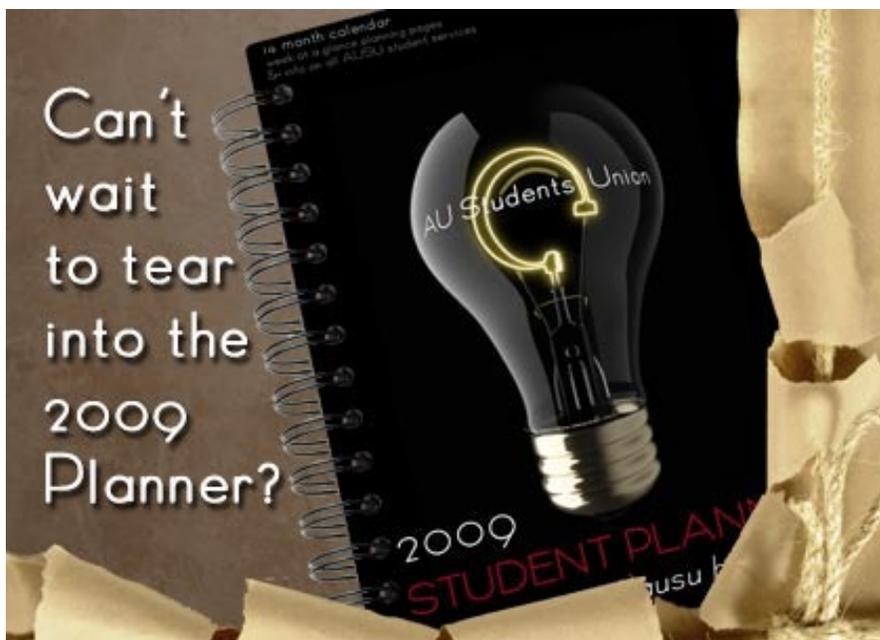
Anyone who pre-orders will be in the first batch of planners mailed out. If you order early, you should have your new planner by the time the January pages run out in the old one—and hopefully well before that!

As always, we'll be excited to know what you think of the planner, and especially want to hear of any improvements you think could be made.

Merchandise Still for Sale

We still have some locks and memory keys available for sale. Both of these were designed with ease of mailing in mind, which means they're small enough to be easily stored pretty much anywhere.

The wristband USB key is a unique way to carry around your assignments, online materials, and even emails while you're on the go. With a 1 gigabyte capacity, it can even handle a good chunk of your music collection, and the design means you no longer have to worry about losing it. *The Voice* memory key has less capacity (512 MB) but the dark, flip-top design is classy enough to accompany you anywhere.



AUSU Lock Loan Program

Still running, and still popular, the lock loan program can allow you to rest easy knowing your valuables are safe if you're taking an exam at the Calgary or Edmonton campus. The locks can be set to any combination, and are loaned to people without any deposit, but we ask that you please remember to reset them to 0-0-0 before returning them so that we can continue this program.

SmartDraw Program Continues

If you haven't yet, you might want to download a copy of SmartDraw. 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.

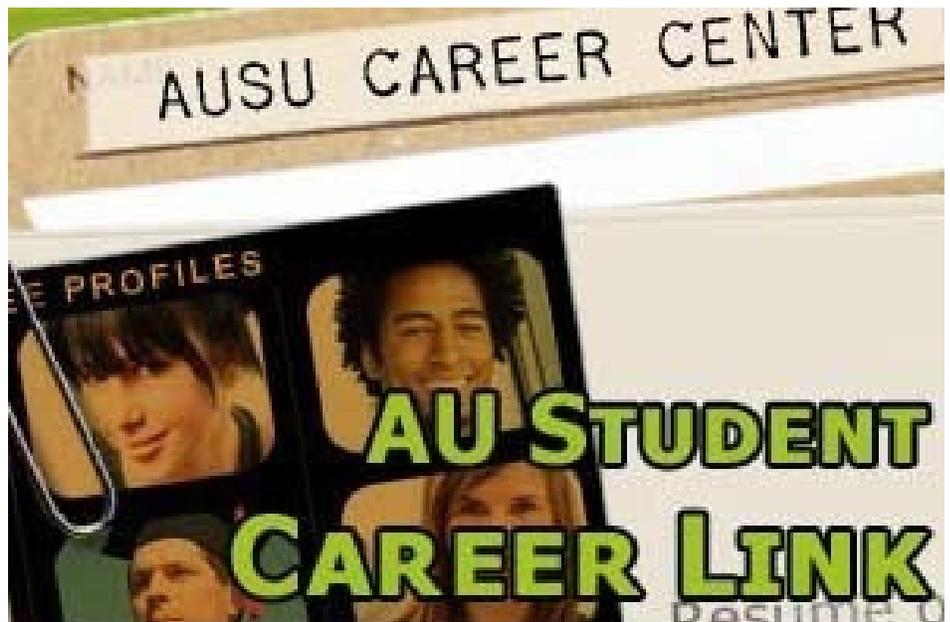
SmartDraw allows you to create a wide range of graphics for your assignments and submit them electronically in a Word file. You can also place your graphics in Excel or PowerPoint files, or export them as TIF, GIF, or JPEG files to make a web graphic or even a logo. Just a few of the graphics you can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

Employment Site is here!

Many of you will already have seen the link to our new employment site on the front page, and while there are not a lot of employers in evidence yet, it's a great opportunity to get your resume, skills, and talents in there.

The Personnel Department is busily working on finding employers who could use your unique abilities as a distance education student. Be sure yours are available to get the early opportunities!



Appointments

AUSU VP External, Barb Rielly, has stepped down from her position as chair of the AUSU Awards Committee, and new Councillor Bethany Porter has taken on the role. Council wishes Bethany good luck in this position, which can involve making some hard decisions.

Increasing AUSU's representation within AU, VP Finance and Administration, Sarah Kertcher, has been appointed to AU's integrated learning centre steering committee. This committee will examine the possibility of integrating all AU sites in the Edmonton Area into one building. Sarah will ensure that the committee keeps concerns of our members with respect to ease of access and exam conditions as well as AUSU's own special needs for storage and physical office space well in mind.

The MyAU steering committee sees two new AUSU representatives, President Karl Low, and VP External Barb Rielly, joining to provide their input on how MyAU could be better structured to meet your needs. If there's something that's been bugging you about the MyAU system, now is a great time to call or email our office and let them know. We'll be sure to bring your concerns forward.

INTERNATIONAL NEWS DESK



At Home: Long-distance cards may ring up extra charges

'Tis the season to call friends and family who live far away, but Canada's Competition Bureau is warning people to read the fine print on those long-distance calling cards.

Many of them deliver what they promise—an inexpensive, convenient way to call long distance—but a [CBC](#) inquiry found that others hide steep rates behind deceptive advertising.

During the past few years, the Competition Bureau has fielded over 500 complaints about prepaid long-distance cards, but consumers may find they're left with little recourse when it comes to disreputable card providers.

One example is Newton Kimball, a salesman in Burnaby, B.C. After purchasing a long-distance card that "promised 200 long-distance talking minutes for \$10," Kimball tried using it to call family in Iran. He quickly discovered that his \$10 had bought him a mere 32 minutes of overseas phone time. When he called the provider to complain, he was told to read the fine print on the card, which

explained that rates "were subject to change without notice."

Other practices that consumers may find lurking in the details are hidden charges, cards with per-second charges, and "even some with published rates that have already expired." Sometimes, those misleading methods catch up with card providers: in 2004, Goldline was fined \$750,000 by the Competition Bureau for deceptive advertising.

The best bet, though, is for consumers to look beyond the attention-grabbing numbers on the front of the card and read the fine print, or buy small-denomination cards first to see if the company lives up to its claims.

In Foreign News: Australia replacing registered nurses to cut costs

In a bid to cut health care costs, New South Wales' (NSW) State Government will be replacing registered nurses with "less-qualified nurses and unqualified assistants," according to the [Sydney Morning Herald](#). The plan is in response to orders that hospital managers must save \$32 million within four years by reducing nursing staff in "small and rural hospitals." University-trained registered nurses will be replaced by trainee and enrolled nurses.

The plan contradicts the findings of a recent study commissioned by NSW Health, which showed that "increasing the proportion of less-qualified staff in hospitals caused a range of preventable complications and deaths." Data in the three-year study were gathered from 27 NSW hospitals, and revealed that higher levels of registered nurses resulted in lower rates of complications such as pneumonia, bed sores, and intestinal bleeding.

Jillian Skinner, the Opposition health spokeswoman, expressed concern that the changes would put lives at risk.

EDUCATION NEWS

Xandi Capistrano



Of poppies and coffee mugs: sociology prof ponders national identity

ANTIGONISH (CUP) - It might be safe to say that most people would not be finding national identity stirred in with their early morning large double-double; however, Patricia Cormack, a sociology professor at St. Francis Xavier University, is otherwise inclined.

In her article "'True Stories' of Canada: Tim Hortons and the Branding of National Identity," recently published in *Cultural Sociology*, she outlines the curious shift of Tim Hortons as an icon of Canadian culture to one of a Canadian institution and its role in the formation of national identity.

Sitting in the Tim Hortons by St. Martha's Hospital in Antigonish, N.S., preparing for one of her classes near Remembrance Day in 2004, Cormack took notice of the 25-cent poppy coin that was being officially distributed by the

Canadian coffee chain.

Later that same year, Tim Hortons celebrated its 40th anniversary, releasing a limited-edition commemorative mug, which was marketed as a meaningful gift that could be given to family and friends for Christmas.

Although none of this may strike someone as odd, these events got Cormack thinking. The authorization of Tim Hortons as an exclusive distributor of the Remembrance Day 25-cent coin was legitimized because "the franchise is a distinctive Canadian enterprise."

The strategy behind the marketing of the 40th anniversary mug as a thank-you gift for the long withstanding "friendship" between Tim Hortons and Canadians was again a legitimizing statement of the company's "own confidence as an integral part of Canadian ritual and memory."

What is it about Tim Hortons that allows us to believe that it is the institutional embodiment of national identity?

"An institution is bigger [than cultural icon]—it's a place you go to, to think about who you are and how you behave," she said.

"It comes out of the question of how Canadians find identity. Heritage Minutes, the CBC—those are official ways of doing Canada. [Those state institutions] think it's good for you. But sometimes you get sick of being told what's good for you. Tim Hortons allows us to produce identity in a commercial space. It feels more organic because you don't have the state hanging over you," said Cormack.

"Think about the coin. The state mints the coin, and they go to Tim Hortons to distribute it. You go from the state mint to the commercial coffee chain—they feel comfortable going that route and it changes the meaning of the coin in a certain way. They recognize the power of Tim Hortons."

With Canada being a nation founded by immigrants, the concept of Canadian culture is one of contention. Overriding the politics of institutionalized multiculturalism are the familiar themes of ruggedness and honesty, which according to Cormack, have been consciously capitalized on by the Tim Hortons franchise.

Tim Hortons “appeals to a version of Canada we like”—a Canada that is characterized by its ease and calmness, which allows our own personalities to creep into our notions of identity.

This publication of Cormack’s work has garnered media attention from across the country. “It’s the only thing I’ve ever written that’s had any attention at all,” she said, laughing. “I was quite surprised.”

With this unexpected interest in her work, Cormack, as a restless sociologist, had to figure out why they were coming to her. “The media loves to talk about Tim Hortons and Canada. It’s a topic that’s wildly popular—people like Canadian identity and Tim Hortons.”

Cormack’s future endeavours include more research on Canadian identity: “Right now, I’m trying to think about the idea of Canadian identity and culture, and how it’s administered by the state. How do cultural policies re-inscribe our desire of the state?”

CLICK OF THE WRIST - Eat, Drink, and Be Merry

This week, it’s all about the food. Christmas, Hanukkah, Kwanzaa, Shabe Yalda, Saturnalia—no matter which occasion you celebrate, there’s nothing quite like special foods to add to the good cheer. You won’t find anything quirky here; just links to some old favourites—and maybe some new ones!

Traditional Christmas Food

If you’ve invited your friends (or the in-laws) over for a homemade Christmas feast but have no idea where to start, this BBC site has you covered. You’ll find everything from tips on choosing a bird to edible gifts to canapés—and then some.

Non-Traditional Holiday Fare

Here are some recipes straight from the newly released cookbooks of four Canadian authors. I’m not sure about the stewed octopus, but bring on the chocolate bourbon pecan pie!

Top 8 Hanukkah Dishes

These traditional Hanukkah dishes will probably be familiar to many, but if you’ve never tasted plum-spiced beef brisket or warm, fluffy challah bread, you’re in for a treat.

Kwanzaa

With a name that means “first fruits of the harvest,” Kwanzaa is sure to tempt your palate. This site has main dishes, snacks, centrepieces, and you can also find directions on how to make a Kwanzaa family history book. Salmon croquettes, anyone?

Shabe Yalda

This ancient tradition is celebrated in Iran with a night-long feast in which the host shares food with family and friends. Originally, offerings were limited to fruit and vegetables in season, but recipes now include such delicacies as yogurt-and-eggplant dip and grilled fish with Seville oranges. (Just be sure to scroll to the bottom of the home page to find the link to these and lots more.)

CLASSIFIEDS

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

THE VOICE

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Publisher Athabasca University Students' Union
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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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