

THE

VOICE

MAGAZINE

Volume 17 Issue 02

January 16, 2009

Talk About Canada!

Are you ready for
the challenge?

Poetry

Visions for the future

Acadian Song

Jeanne (Doucet) Currie



Plus:

Porkpie Hat, The Interviewer,

Music to Eat Lunch To, and much more...

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WELCOME TO THE VOICE PDF

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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

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



ON THE HILL

Sandra Livingston



A Bigger Shovel

One of the biggest factors underlying the global financial mess was easy credit. For years, banks and brokers made staggering profits by coming up with new ways to get people into mortgages—even people who would never be able to afford the spiralling interest rates on those sub-prime loans.

Even with the depths of the financial meltdown yet to be seen, credit card companies are still pushing easy credit, offering low introductory rates that jump drastically after a month or two.

Consumers by the millions have been all too eager to sign on, and even when they weren't, some banks and brokers used fraudulent practices to keep hauling in the dough.

In general, we've enjoyed a giddy run of buy-now-pay-later—and if Ottawa isn't careful, the potential \$40-billion dollar stimulus package will end up digging us even deeper into that hole.

On January 27, Finance Minister Jim Flaherty will table the government's budget, and the prevailing mood of Canadians can be summed up in one word: spend. In the US as well, president-elect Barack Obama is talking about staggering deficits as Washington plans to spend its way out of trouble, and he's warned Americans that the country could well rack up a debt of over \$1 trillion. Yes, *trillion*.

In spite of the complexities involved in finding a lasting, stable solution, the Financial Post reports that the Liberals have accused Harper of moving too slowly. John McCallum, the Liberal party chief of economic strategy, called the Conservatives' reaction "timid and cautious."

But here's a thought: with so much a stake, isn't a thoughtful, cautious approach exactly what we need?

Clearly governments need to take action, but the danger (especially with so many sectors rushing to belly up to the trough) is that rapid, massive stimulus spending is dangerously akin to the cycle of using new credit to pay off old debt. It solves the problem in the short term, but perpetuates the whole buy-now-pay-later mindset that got us into this mess in the first place.

Some analysts are warning about that danger already, especially when it comes to the possibility of Ottawa putting money into the securitized credit markets to get money flowing through the economy again. There are a couple of options, as Finn Poschmann, vice-president of research at the C.D. Howe Institute, told reporters. Ottawa can either "guarantee short-term commercial paper" for investors or buy it directly. Either way, Poschmann said, the move would expose taxpayers "to new credit market risks."

If nothing else, the credit crisis has proved the old adage that there's no such thing as a free lunch. And while massive stimulus spending may look like as attractive as a shiny new credit card, sooner or later we're going to have to settle that tab.

OPERATION DIALOGUE

operation dialogue



Talk About Canada!™ Scholarship Quiz is back and you could win some great prizes.

Students who are Canadians or Permanent Residents of Canada can earn scholarship money for tuition by taking the online quiz (full contest rules can be found [here](#)). The quiz has 51 multiple-choice questions on Canadian subjects and there are 61 prizes—including one \$5,000 prize!

It's sponsored by Operation Dialogue, a non-profit organization which was founded in 1998 by a group of committed Canadians interested in promoting dialogue among Canadians on what it means to be Canadian.

The next Talk About Canada!™ Scholarship Quiz will be online from 10:00 a.m. EST January 19, 2009 to 10:00 a.m. EST March 23, 2009, but you can start testing your knowledge right now.

These questions are from the archives of Operation Dialogue's annual Talk About Canada!™ Scholarship Quiz. Students interested in a scholarship can go to www.talkaboutcanada.ca to enter this year's quiz.

The answers to this mini-quiz are included below. Good luck!

1. Which artist created the painting *At the Crease*, a portrait of an anonymous goalie, which has been described as a national icon? a) Ken Danby, b) Emily Carr, c) Bill Reid, d) Cornelius Krieghoff
2. Which top-selling acoustic jazz vocalist won a 1999 Grammy for *When I Look In Your Eyes*? The album was also nominated for Album of the Year, the first time a jazz album had been nominated in twenty-five years. a) Glenn Gould, b) Buffy Sainte-Marie, c) Robert Charlebois, d) Diana Krall
3. Which doctor, already world famous for another discovery, developed a method to make a plentiful and inexpensive supply of Heparin, which would permit doctors to do vein transplants and heart surgery? a) Dr. Charles Herbert Best, b) Dr. Wilbur Franks, c) Dr. Wilfred Thomason Grenfell, d) Dr. Norman Bethune
4. Who first developed the technique for mass bottling soft drinks, a breakthrough that revolutionized the soft drink industry? He was also the inventor of "The Champagne of Ginger Ales" a) John McLaughlin, b) Peter Pitseolak, c) Lawren Harris, d) Paul Kane
5. What rower was so badly injured before the Barcelona Olympics in 1992 that doctors predicted that he/she would never row again? This outstanding athlete, after numerous operations, went on to win the Bronze medal five weeks later. a) Silken Laumann, b) Chantal Petitclerc, c) Karen Kain, d) Percy Williams

Take the Challenge!

Do you know all the words to Canada's national anthem? Can you rattle off the names of every prime minister—and the years they were elected?

Whether you're a whiz on Canadiana or need to brush up on the names of the capitals, the

6. Which aboriginal leader was highly regarded by both sides during the war of 1812? The British considered him to be a heroic ally who played an essential role in saving Upper Canada; the Americans viewed him as an honourable enemy who fought bravely to defend his people. a) Matthew Coon Come, b) Poundmaker, c) Tecumseh, d) Joseph Brant
7. Who was the skipper who sailed the famous Bluenose (the ship that appears on our Canadian dime) to victory in every race against American challengers between 1921 and 1938? a) Elkanah Billings, b) Sir William Logan, Dr. Gordon Murray, d) Angus Walters
8. Who was the Canadian who discovered kerosene, which replaced whale oil as a lamp fuel and brought an end to the American whaling industry? a) Robert Borden, b) Armand Bombardier, c) John Hopps, d) Dr. Abraham Gesner
9. What was Canada's biggest tourist attraction between 1934 and 1945? a) The Famous Five, b) The King's Daughters, c) The Grey Nuns, d) The Dionne Quintuplets
10. Which Father of Confederation brought Newfoundland and Labrador into Confederation and then remained as premier for almost a quarter of a century? He has been described as a colossus even though he only stood five and a half feet tall. a) Lester Pearson, b) Joseph Elzéar Bernier, c) Mackenzie Bowell, d) Joey Smallwood



Answers: 1) Ken Danby, 2) Diana Krall, 3) Dr. Charles Herbert Best, 4) John McLaughlin, 5) Silken Laumann, 6) Tecumseh, 7) Angus Walters, 8) Dr. Abraham Gesner, 9) The Dionne Quintuplets, 10) Joey Smallwood

DID YOU KNOW?



Read All About It

If you want to get the latest scoop on what's happening at AU, look no further than their [Magazines and Publications](#) page—the place to be for student news, links to scholastic journals, and newsletters.

You'll find *Open Magazine*, full of great articles and interviews (be sure to check out the fascinating history of AU in the latest issue).

There's *Viewbook 2009*, a "convenient guide to the more than 90 undergraduate and graduate degree, diploma and certificate programs AU offers," along with links to several scholastic journals, including *Aurora*, which features "interviews with leading thinkers and writers."

Newsletters, *AU World*, profiles in research—all this and more is just a click away, so why not check out AU's Magazines and Publications page today?

POETRY

Brian McIntyre

Visions and Contemplations

Sitting here in a meditative stance
 Contemplating the past
 Seeing the future
 Times are changing and we are the change.

9/11 attack
 Planes crash
 Buildings collapse
 Planned demolition blasts
 It's time for a change.

GM
 Builds SUVs
 Crushes electric cars
 Asking for bailout
 Time is fleeting.

Monsanto's
 Hybrid seeds
 Farmers
 Saving seeds.
 Nature provides.

Where to go from here?

Graduation from Athabasca
 Brings time for change and purpose,
 We have made it this far now
 Let's make this a better world for the future.

A big responsibility
 Our future's sustainability
 The time is now to make a difference
 Within the system and in your kitchen.

Making wise choices for the future means being informed.

If you're looking for a place to start, these films examine some of today's important social, political, and environmental issues:

The Corporation, Who Killed the Electric Car, Zeitgeist, Seeds of Change, and Loose Change.

These films and others are available online at [Google video](#).

We can work together to build a better world
 Growing gardens, saving seed
 Working in cubicles
 To make the difference seen

Starting our own business
 Taking the lead
 Wise choices for a future
 That our kids may breathe.

The time is yours
 Grads of AU
 What will you do
 With your grad degree soon?

IN CONVERSATION WITH . . .

Wanda Waterman St. Louis



Jeanne (Doucet) Currie

Jeanne (Doucet) Currie is an Acadian recording artist living in Annapolis Royal, Nova Scotia. From July to September 2008 her third CD, Serrons-nous la Main, was one of the top 10 songs on Franco Country, Radio-Canada, Galaxie.

She was one of the artists featured in “Members News” in the SOCAN French magazine Paroles et Musique and on the French television program VIA TVA.

She received two Music Nova Scotia nominations in 2008 for Serrons-nous la Main: Francophone Artist of the Year and Country/Bluegrass Artist of the Year. Her husband, Wayne, is her manager and also accompanies her on box drum, guitar, bodhrán, and spoons.

An Acadian Career Trajectory

In 1999 my husband Wayne and I attended the second World Congress of Acadians in Lafayette, Louisiana. It was really heartwarming, and kind of an eye-opener; there were five or six hundred people and we all felt like relatives because we all shared a past. There were people from Africa, from all over the US, and from Nova Scotia.

When we came back home to Nova Scotia I wrote 50 little poems, mostly about being Acadian. I wrote about my father, my grandfather, and many other things I wanted to share.

In 2003 I published these poems in a little book called *Grandir à la Baie*. But before releasing this book I decided to turn one poem into a song.

After a friend heard it she said, “Put away that book and go record that song!”

Then I heard out about a *Gala de Chanson*. You needed two songs, so I wrote one more and ended up being one of four or five finalists. I said to myself, “Hey, I can do this!”

Serrons-nous la main

Jeanne (Doucet) Currie



Photo: Judy Amiraul

I recorded this first song at a local studio and it started getting airplay and did really well. Twenty-two of the poems in my little book were then revamped as songs.

I could not have followed my dream without my Wayne's support! He had already started to learn to play guitar, so he accompanied me. We started getting asked to play at all these different places. In 2007 we were asked to perform in the Yukon with storytelling and singing because by that time I had enough stories and songs that I could weave them together. I also have songs that go with the stories. Last year we were invited to sing in France!

Adversity makes you strong.

***We not only knew we had a
place in history, we had great
pride in what had been
accomplished.***

Strong Roots and Branches

I am the second of six children from a French-Acadian family, the daughter of Georges and Alexandrine Doucet. My mother was a Thèriault from northern New Brunswick and my father a Doucet from New Edinburgh.

One of my earliest ancestors on my father's side was Germain Doucet, who was at Port Royal around 1636. Jehan Thèriault, on my mother's side, was in Port Royal in 1637. Jehan was a labourer;

he worked in the fields making the dykes. Germain Doucet was second-in-command at Port Royal.

When the deportation started in 1755 it mostly took place in Nova Scotia. Some of them escaped. There were at least one or two boats that the Acadians took charge of; they were able to go to St. John and from there escape to Prince Edward Island. But they were deported from Prince Edward Island a year or two later. My family eventually came back to Clare.

In school we didn't talk about our Acadian heritage too much but we knew we lived on the Acadian shore so I suppose we knew even then that we were Acadians. *The Festival Acadien de Clare* started around 1955 and that was when Princess Margaret came to visit.

The ladies made all kinds of Acadian costumes. The costume you see me wear during my performances goes back to the original costume we would have worn—only the cloth would have been different. During the Festival my sisters and I all wore this costume.

Adversity makes you strong. We not only knew we had a place in history, we had great pride in what had been accomplished. It's the same with the native people—our footsteps have not always been easy. Our ancestors went through a lot of hardships, and for us to keep our language and culture vibrant after everything that happened is really something.

A doctor around here once told me that he thought the French in this area were living a bit longer than the English. I think it's because there's that neighbourhood net with the relatives and the friends and all the interactions. The Acadian communities are very close-knit communities, too, like a huge family. Family is very, very important, extended family as well. It all adds up to a feeling of pride.

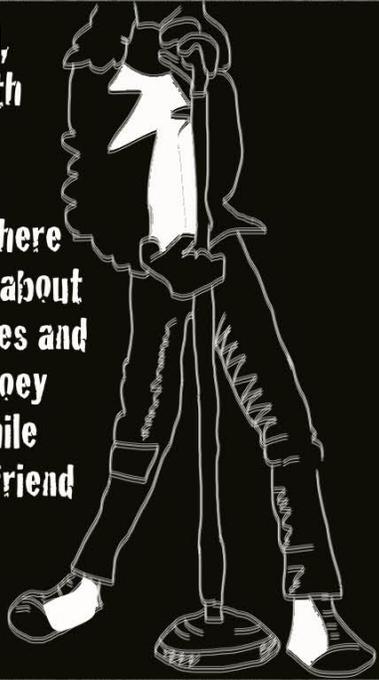
The Interviewer

It is the ninth decade of the twentieth century...

written and illustrated by Wanda Waterman St. Louis

Rockhead #6: *Ramoners*

Rob is cool, patient with Gord, and knows just about all there is to know about the Ramones and even met Joey Ramone while visiting a friend in Queens.



So Reuben has to introduce Rob to Kush,

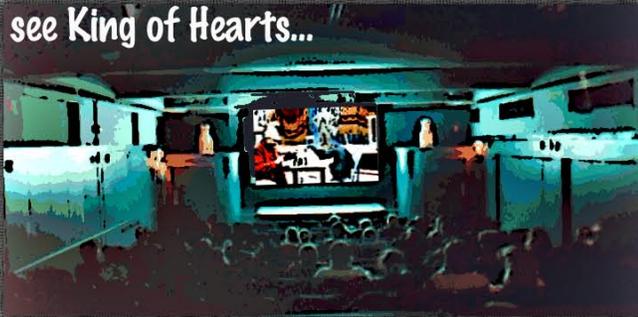
who would idolise the Ramones if she believed in idols.



Gord and Rob and Kush and Reuben start going to movies together.



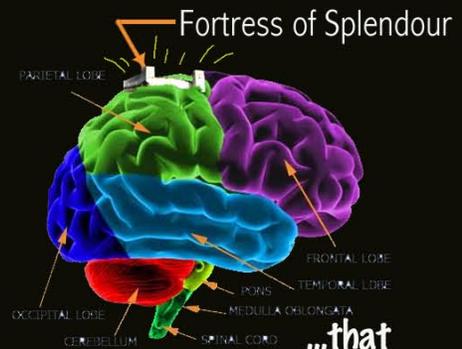
On their first movie night they go to Wormwood's Dog and Monkey Cinema to see King of Hearts...



Gord loves the movie and wants to see it again and again.



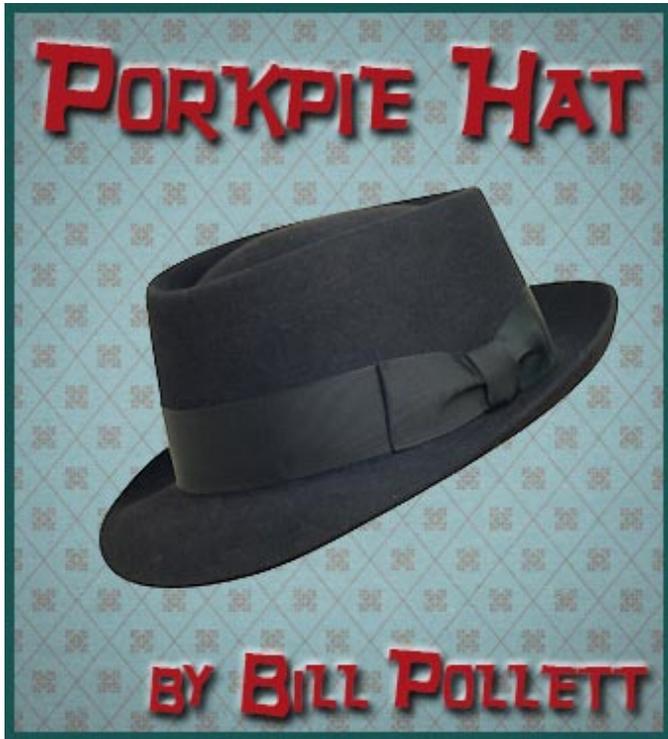
Reuben starts to wonder if there's a special part of the brain that damage can't touch...



...that comprehends music and art and tenderness, that no trauma can ever take away and no DNA or environment can ever guarantee. The thought intoxicates him.

next: Tartan Hat

By dressing stylishly, I help my man get ahead!



You Should Know

Excuse me, Sir. I don't mean to be disrespectful, and I don't mean to be rude. But there are some things you ought to be aware of.

You should know, for example, that the brain of that moth that you never would have noticed, the one squashed on the grill of your Mercedes SUV, is an intricate and beautiful thing.

It is more wondrous by far than the circuit board of your Blackberry, than the first-quarter marketing plan sitting in your buckskin portfolio.

You should know that the old woman you cursed at—the one with the red vinyl coat who crossed too slowly in front of you when you were late for a meeting at the office—that woman was once a ballet dancer whose *jetes* and *batterments-glise* once caused audiences in Paris and Milan to hold their

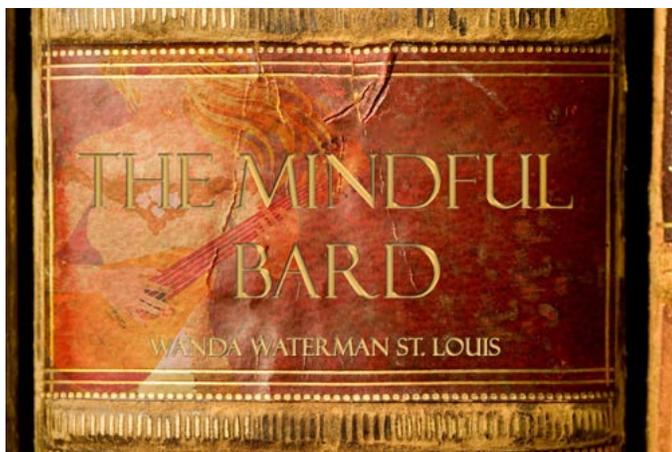
collective breath in darkened halls.

You should know that the Vietnamese street kid who asked if she could squeegee your windows, the one you told to “fuck off and get a job,” is up at six o'clock every morning getting her kid sister ready for school. When she has enough money to buy a coffee, she sits at a table in the window of the Starbucks across the street from your office building (if you were ever to take the trouble to look down from that great height, you might just see the top of her pink-dyed head).

She sits in the window and sketches pictures of flowers, of gargoyles, of faces (lonely, laughing, haunted and talking) passing by. She uses a sketch pad and stub of graphite given to her by her grade nine art teacher the week after she slashed her wrists for the second time, the week before she was kicked out of school for showing up stoned. Not that it matters, but she pays more attention to the terrible beauty all around her than you ever will, or ever could.

You should know that the 12-year-old boy in his bedroom in your four-thousand square foot North Van rancher, the boy you never had much time for, is going to surprise you in ways you never could have imagined. You should know that the woman sitting alone in the darkened living room is making plans of her own.

You should know that the world is strange, and it is vibrant, and it is awful. And there are more things in heaven and earth than are dreamt of in your regional managers' quarterly reports.



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

CD: Rory Block, *Blues Walkin' Like a Man*

Release date: 2008

Label: Stony Plain Records

A Place in the Blues Pantheon for Little White Girls from New Jersey

“Blues Walkin' Like a Man transcends gender. The blues got so bad that they manifested into human

form and began walking down the road beside you . . . so real and so bad you began to converse, and even to take blues by the hand. Now that's intense—but that's what Son House is all about.”

Rory Block, liner notes, *Blues Walkin' Like a Man*

Back in our teens my brother and I had a standing argument about the blues, me insisting that it emerged as much from the European folk music tradition as from the African, he maintaining that it was purely an African musical form.

One day I had to ask: “Then why didn't they have the blues in Africa before the slave era?”

“They did,” he dryly replied. “It was just underground.”

I'm sticking to my guns. Sure, it's doubtful that whites could have invented blues or jazz, but then it's doubtful that blacks could have invented the blues or jazz outside of the unrepeatable complex of social, cultural, and historical factors from which the genres actually emerged.

So why do blues fans generally refuse to grant to white blues players the equality-with-blacks status allowed white jazz musicians?

For one thing, it's widely known that white players were part of the jazz tradition early enough and had enough contact with the genre's black founders to make a meaningful contribution to the music.



But Delta blues wasn't played on any grand scale by white musicians until the '60s, and the white players tended to vacillate between weak, watered-down blues and a ridiculously loud, in-your-face kind of blues that was more a celebration of hard living than an homage to human suffering. It's little wonder their work was dismissed as inauthentic.

There are some notable exceptions. Just because she's a female of the paler persuasion, do not make the mistake of assuming that Rory Block's interpretations are glossy manufactured simulations of Son House's gritty masterpieces.

We've passed, I hope, the time when the recording industry felt the need to create palatable white versions of black geniuses to appease the mass market, and so we can, I hope, let go of the prejudice which dictates that only blacks can play and sing the blues.

Fortunately Rory Block, as a gifted young girl already playing the blues, was in 1965 able to connect with the aging Son House and even to learn under him, putting the lie to any claims that historically or stylistically she was detached from tradition.

Blues Walkin' Like a Man is like a sweet breeze from nirvana for several reasons. For one, the unplugged Delta blues tradition is often underrepresented among new blues recordings, maybe because this branch of the blues is less formulaic, more difficult, more emotionally and technically taxing than the more danceable urban blues inspired by the Chicago players in the '40s and '50s.

For guitarists this album is a master class in blues riffs and techniques. Rory and her producers were faithful to the original arrangements but were so in touch with the spirit of this music that they added only what would enhance it and zealously avoided burying the purity of the sound under superfluous instrument tracks.

Another reason why recordings like this are such a treat is that it's utterly refreshing to hear this music in a clean modern recording, devoid of the buzzes and muffling, cherished as they may become through frequent listening, of House's original records.

I've heard Rory sing off and on over the years and have always felt a pleasant shock at her powerful delivery. Her voice lacks tenderness and nuance but this is common to the blues, which is better at channelling anger, hopelessness, and desolation than wistful heartache or homesickness. She sounds like Bessie Smith at times, but really there is no one she sounds quite like and no one who sounds quite like her.

Blues Walkin' Like a Man manifests seven of The Mindful Bard's criteria for music well worth a listen: 1) it is authentic, original, and delightful; 2) it confronts, rebukes, and mocks existing injustices; 3) it makes me want to be a better artist; 4) it gives me tools which help me be a better artist; 5) it displays an engagement with and compassionate response to suffering; 6) it inspires an awareness of the sanctity of creation; 7) 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.

For guitarists this album is a master class in blues riffs and techniques.

MUSIC TO EAT LUNCH TO

Mandy Gardner

Senses Fail – *Life is Not a Waiting Room***Release date:** October 7, 2008**Label:** Vagrant Records**Tracks:** 12**Rating:** 6

Life is Not a Waiting Room is the fourth album released by New Jersey's Senses Fail; their third with Vagrant Records and also their third to have charted on international music charts. This record has charted at number one on the US indie charts and is something that the band members had been very much looking forward to recording after working to create and produce tighter, harder songs for their growing audience.

The outcome is a well-formed record with some excellent guitar work, solid vocals, and an altogether

enjoyable sound that should fare extremely well in the pop charts.

Although an album or a band that has mass appeal to the pop charts and radio audiences can often burn out, the good thing for Senses Fail is that they have survived three previous album releases and only expanded their number of listeners.

There are certainly no technical issues with Senses Fail that show through on *Life is Not a Waiting Room*; in fact, exactly the opposite is apparent. The guitar harmonies on "Family Tradition" deserve high commendation from all the band's peers, and this single track could be one of the greatest the band has ever written.

The intensity, passion, and creativity embodied in "Family Tradition" are not fully echoed in the remainder of the record, however, and it is for this reason that I must award a sub-par score of six out of 10.

While every other song on the album is composed with intelligence and musical flare, the problem is that the music does not stand out in any real way amongst similar bands like New Found Glory and Amber Pacific. Because of this failure to make a strong impression, I fear that the album will be well received but that the band will suffer in the long term.

There are certainly audiences for this type of pop-punk, post-modern rock in the world—millions of them—but without filling a certain niche, Senses Fail will have exactly the impression on audiences as their name suggests.

As the music industry stands at the moment, Senses Fail are part of a fading family of music that was born with Blink-182 and Good Charlotte. The major flaw in these types of bands these days is that they have managed to capture the basic pleasing sound of the genre, but failed to ignite a real, lasting spark in audiences.

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.

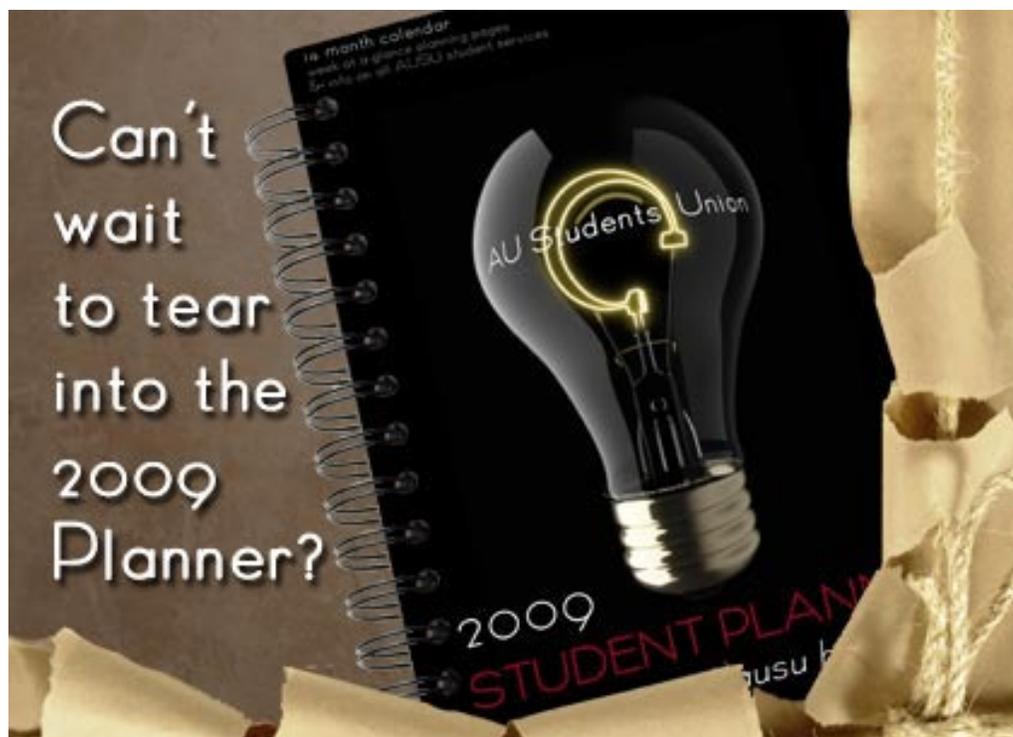
Merchandise Still for Sale

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.

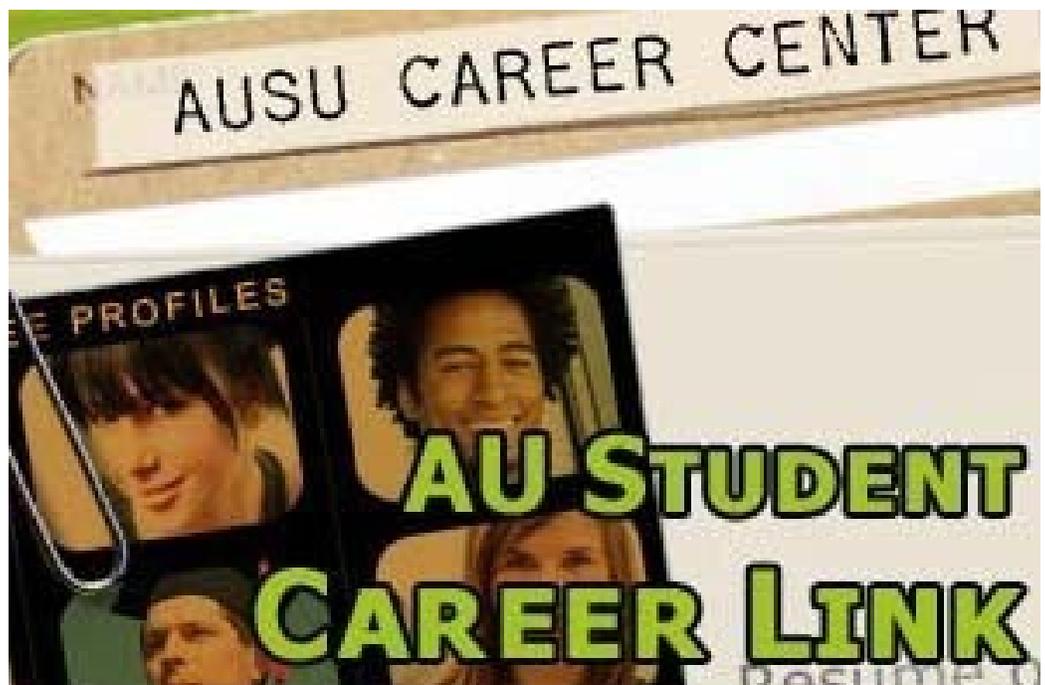
For any course that requires charts that cannot be easily created in Word or Excel, this should be a real time saver and make it easier to submit all portions of an assignment by email.

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!

INTERNATIONAL NEWS DESK

Mandy Gardner



At Home: Harper and Obama to meet, possibly disagree over NAFTA

Although spokespeople for the Obama administration cannot give details on the agenda or specify a date, they have announced that once Barack Obama becomes president of the United States on January 20, his first international trip will be to Canada. The current president-elect has either not cemented his own reasons for the Canadian visit, or has decided that it is in the best interests of his administration to withhold the information until after his inauguration.

According to [Yahoo News](#), one of the major issues that will likely be on Obama's Canadian agenda is NAFTA. Prime Minister Stephen Harper has confirmed this likelihood, but also states that "I don't think his administration will question NAFTA in any fundamental way." Harper himself has few reservations concerning the 14-year-old trade agreement that encompasses Canada, the United States, and Mexico, and admits that in his own mind, it would be best to leave most NAFTA rules in place.

In fact, Harper went so far as to cite the Depression in his steadfast support of NAFTA: "One of the great dangers in a global recession is that people start erecting trade walls or tariff walls. That is one of the things that turned the stock market crash of 1929 into a depression."

Obama's Democratic administration can easily be said to have more liberal views on trade and foreign affairs than Harper's Conservatives. However, citizens of North America will have to wait a little longer before learning the true nature of Obama's intentions concerning the agreement. On our own piece of the continent, Canadians will just have to guess how the Prime Minister will react to what could well be a radical new US establishment.

In Foreign News: Fed up with religious propaganda, European atheists start to advertise

Comedienne Ariane Sherine has started a campaign via London's ubiquitous red buses to combat what she feels is a depressive battering of tourists and Britons from religious propaganda. The campaign began after Sherine spotted several buses sporting an Internet address for people to go to who were worried about spending eternity in "torment in hell." The Christian advertisements were directed at believers whose indifference toward God was, in religious terms, destined to send them to hell to pay for their sins.

Sherine was supported by the British Humanist Association (BHA) as she gathered donations from people throughout London to place her own ads on the buses, ads that were meant to reassure and inspire viewers to think more positively about their time on earth.

Several heavyweight atheist organizations and individuals have been attracted to the campaign, which saw the phrase "There's probably no God. Now stop worrying and enjoy your life" gracing buses throughout

London. The appearance delighted many Britons and tourists, and Sherine hopes that, believer or non-believer, people will take this message as intended: lighthearted and comforting.

The phrase is soon to be put to use in Spain as well. According to Spanish transport authorities, atheist groups in Barcelona will be following Sherine's example and pasting their own denial of God on two buses driving major routes through the city.

Arguably a more devout nation than Britain in terms of Christianity, Spain has made a smaller start to the campaign but still managed to show its support and even its comedic qualities by jumping onboard. Still to come on the red London buses are BHA-supported quotations from leading historic individuals that lend themselves to the no-God theory.

EDUCATION NEWS

Amanda Shendruk



Graduating into an economic downturn not so bad

Despite turmoil, career climate warm for upcoming graduates: job experts

OTTAWA (CUP) - Job prospects for the class of 2009 may not be as dismal as a rising national unemployment rate and a recent increase in layoffs suggest.

With 71,000 Canadian jobs cut in November—66,000 of those in Ontario alone—upcoming graduates are left wondering whether or not the job market will take them in.

"There will be jobs," assured Anne Markey, executive director of the Canadian Association of Career Educators and Employers. "Will they be easy to find? Will they be exactly what graduating students want, or will it be in the location they want? Maybe not, but there will be jobs."

Recruitment agencies in Ontario have seen an increase of new applications following massive job cuts in both the manufacturing and the service sectors.

"Absolutely, there has been an increase in the number of candidates looking for something else," said Pierrette Brousseau, owner of the Ottawa franchise of Hunt Personnel, a national permanent and temporary employment agency.

She sees very few applications from recent post-secondary graduates, however.

"A lot of students end up getting jobs in their fields, so they don't require our services," she said.

Even before the global financial crisis, which surfaced in September 2008, companies have consistently hired recent graduates, says David Rodas-Wright, co-ordinator of employer relations at the Student Academic Success Service career centre at the University of Ottawa.

"There are companies out there, especially some of the big companies, [for whom] it's not as much money to hire new talent as it is to maintain senior talent," he said. "So they continue to look for new graduates."

Hiring young people also serves as a way to refresh and renew the face of a corporation, according to Rodas-Wright.

Companies across the country seem to be confirming that assertion—despite economic difficulties, many have maintained or even increased hiring rates.

“We’re not cutting back at all on hiring,” said Louisa Testa, executive assistant at Ottawa’s Investors Group, a financial planning company. “Actually, we’ve hired more in the last few years than in the past.”

The Public Service Commission, the federal government branch that supervises post-secondary recruitment, has also recently increased hiring of recent graduates.

“The economic situation seems to have affected recruitment in the federal public service in an interesting way; post-secondary recruitment has, in fact, increased since last year,” said Marilyne Guèvremont, manager of media relations at the Public Service Commission.

In November 2008, Millennium Research Group, Ernst & Young, TD Bank, and BP Canada Energy Co. all assured Globe and Mail readers in an article about job prospects that they would not be scaling back post-secondary recruitment efforts.

“Even without this economic situation, [the market] is competitive. It’s very hard to, right out of university, get that first job if you have no experience,” said SASS career and employment counsellor Marie Mitsou. “I always tell people it’s not just your degree, it’s what you do during your degree that is going to make the difference.”

Mitsou recommends getting experience before graduating by finding degree-related part-time work, volunteering on or off campus, or participating in intern or co-op programs.

Markey also recommends getting involved in areas outside of academics before graduation as a means of getting a step-up in the competitive job market.

“If you’re graduating this year, maybe it’s going to be tougher. But what you can do for students that are not graduating this year [is] take advantage of every work opportunity that you can as part of your program,” she said. “Should [students] be concerned? Should they be starting their job search early? Should they be taking advantage of every opportunity to meet an employer on campus? Absolutely.”

Students hoping to take advantage of internship and co-op opportunities during their academic careers may in fact benefit from the economic downturn.

“What often happens in tough economic times is that the number of positions for co-op and intern students increases,” said Markey, explaining that employers always have tasks that need to be accomplished, but during tough economic times are reluctant to commit to hiring permanent employees.

According to the Bank of Canada, the nation’s economy should recover by 2010. In the meantime, graduates shouldn’t panic.

“I think students need to pay close attention to what’s going on,” said Rodas-Wright. “But certainly we wouldn’t recommend that they jump into an employment opportunity just for the sake of having a job. There [are still] opportunities offered for a lot of disciplines.”

Students hoping to take advantage of internship and co-op opportunities during their academic careers may in fact benefit from the economic downturn.

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THE VOICE

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