

THE

# VOICE

MAGAZINE

Volume 17 Issue 03

January 23, 2009

## Jelawung Jungle

Discovering new heights

## Porkpie Hat

Random dispatches

## Go Lightly

Heading for the sun



*Plus:*

*The Mindful Bard, Music to Eat Lunch To,  
In Conversation With, and much more...*

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**The Voice  
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# LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

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



## ON THE HILL

Sandra Livingston



### Mirror, Mirror

Long before the jubilant frenzy surrounding President Barack Obama peaked at his inauguration, the world was watching US events unfold with growing fascination.

Canadians watched with especially sharp interest. The US is our largest trading partner, and a new administration that's such a clear break from the old will undoubtedly affect everything from trade agreements to how long our transport drivers have to sit idling at border crossings.

Good reasons to pay attention, but there's another interesting Obama effect that's started to play out, and it may cause an even greater shift for Canadians—one that could change the face of leadership in Ottawa.

With such a unifying leader as president (a rarity in any age, and especially so following the Bush years), the bar has suddenly been set much higher. Whether Obama can live up to the expectations remains to be seen, but comparisons will be inevitable and other world leaders are already trying on their mantles of transparency and tolerance.

Michael Ignatieff, the interim Liberal leader, has been quick off the mark. In a move that echoes President Obama's willingness to work alongside former rivals Hilary Clinton and John McCain, Ignatieff is reported to be giving senior portfolios to Bob Rae and Dominic LeBlanc, his recent rivals for the party leadership. He's also been talking about the virtues of "hard work," the kind of grassroots attitude people love about Obama.

It may be nothing but political hot air, but it clearly reflects the current overwhelming tide of public sentiment. People have glimpsed the possibility of honest, effective leadership, and they're hungry for more.

In stark contrast to the atmosphere of building bridges is Harper's recent move to load 18 empty Senate seats with Conservatives. In the middle of a prorogation, some see it as a desperate rush to increase Conservative power in case the minority government falls later this month. And although the Senate is heavy with Liberals, it's yet another example of backpedalling after Harper campaigned on a pledge to replace the unelected body with elected Senators.

In the new political air, the effects of these vastly different leadership styles are already being seen. As the *Globe and Mail* reports, a recent Ekos poll shows the Liberals gaining momentum, "with a majority of Canadians now holding a negative view of Conservative Leader and Prime Minister Stephen Harper." Even Stéphane Dion's battered coalition is attracting new attention, with half of those polled "favouring a coalition government." The Conservatives are still preferred by 43 per cent of respondents, but that's a distinct shift from the overwhelming disapproval the coalition faced just a month ago.

There's no doubt that political winds change regularly, and the Dion-Ignatieff changeover clearly played a part. But the promise that Obama represents can't help but make us hold that mirror up to our own leaders. And in a time when partisanship and pettiness are so deeply entrenched in all the major parties, we can only hope it will make them take a good hard look at their own reflections.

## 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](http://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?

## THIS WORLD

Brian McIntyre



## Jelawung Jungle

*Based on journal entries, this article recounts some of the author's adventures during the three months he spent living in the jungle and acting as a guide for foreign tourists, struggling to clear paths through dense bamboo groves while learning more about himself and his surroundings.*

**Jelawung Jungle - Peninsular Malaysia**

**February 23, 2001**

I woke up at 4:00 a.m. and strapped on the new sandals that I'd bought at Bata Shoe for 80 Ringgit Malaysia (\$35 CDN at an exchange of \$1 to 2.30rm) then organized a small pack for the trip to base camp, leaving my other things in the village.

Boarding the "Jungle Railway," I was expecting a train out of *Schindler's List* or something, but got a rather comfortable train with air conditioning. So much for mystique!

The train ride cost 4.30rm and we expected to arrive in Dabong at 8:55 that morning, three and a half hours after our departure from Wakaf Bharu. The sky was still dark and I hoped that I could get some good photos before it was time to get off.

I sat across from a Muslim man who had been praying for the last half hour, turning in his seat in prayer position gazing out toward God, then crossing the aisle to repeat his prayer on the other side. With the most compassionate and eerily entrancing singing voice of prayer that gave chills as I listened, the man sat before me entirely full of faith.

In Penang, I visited a remote Buddhist temple where only locals were present (and few at that). Standing amongst a vast array of plaques, statues, and tributes, I was witness to one of the few temples attached to a monastery where, clothed in Buddhist cloth, the locals prepare the afternoon meal.

One man sitting in the full lotus on a nearby bench could be heard clacking away with some sort of instrument held in his right hand. Sitting down to examine the instrument, I saw that it resembled wooden spoons. Sitting there for the next 20 minutes or so, he began drumming a beat—his right hand holding the spoons, his left keeping time on his lap as he sang hymns with an air of discipline and focus.

Within five minutes, feeling as though I was part of the music, I began to go into a trance and my eyes began to water. I felt both suffering and joy in the voice of his prayers. It is truly amazing how, even with language barriers, an emotional heartfelt voice can be understood.

At last, I made it! Jelawung Jungle. I caught the jungle train at 5:15 a.m. and arrived in Dabong four hours later. As I walked around town, the local children hoarded into large packs for protection from the unusual human presence while a crescendo of "Hello!" boomed from the pack. With my response, their faces beamed with delight.

The children continued their language assault of basic English phrases, such as “Where are you from?” “What’s your name?” “How are you?” Answering seemed futile over the chorus of giggles and the astonishment of the group when I responded. The older people looked on as though I was an alien that had just landed to abduct their children for experiment.

Eventually, a local boy of maybe 17 gave me a ride on his motorbike to the boat that would connect me to Jelawung. Arriving at the “boat” (constructed of a hollowed-out log and a small outboard motor), we watched the boat driver as he went full throttle against the current upstream then coasted back down, completing a massive arch the length of a football field in order to go from one side to the other (1rm for the boat crossing)

When I got to the other side I immediately saw a monkey, the first wild one I had ever seen!

I was offered a taxi ride to the village some 10 kilometres away but said that I would walk. Within a few kilometres, another boy stopped with *his* motorbike and drove me directly to my starting point for the ascent to 1,500 feet and “Baha’s Base Camp.”

The walk (climb) was at times exhausting, especially while I was unsure of exactly where I was going. Prior to my departure a tour guide friend had drawn me a pencil map that resembled the old treasure maps I saw in *Indian Jones*—and just as you’d expect, X marked the base camp.

As an aside, the butterflies in this particular jungle were absolutely mesmerizing and I could often be seen lying within my hammock watching them fluttering through the mist of the waterfall that was the backdrop of my cabin. Some of the butterflies were largely black, dotted with brown on top and light green and blue on either side of the bottom. Wow!

With a good idea of where the path was, an hour of trekking passed by, leaving me to wonder if I had lost the path and would be left out in the jungle to be found days later by a search party (funny what the mind does). Within minutes the fear of being left out in the jungle alone was eclipsed by the sound of a waterfall. Thinking that I had walked a circle back to the start of the falls, I halted and contemplated turning around, but continuing the ascent gave rise to a blue tarp seen through thickets of bamboo and when I got closer the sign said “Baha’s Camp.” I had made it!

As I entered the camp I heard “Hello, Brian. Welcome!” and seated in their makeshift kitchen I spotted some local friends from the city that had gone up to visit Baha.

The place was stunning. My friends fixed me a cup of coffee and after a brief introduction to Baha I was given the most amazing tiny bamboo hut that was built on the edge of the pool that gathered an immense amount of water falling from above; the mist from it would drape my cabin in dew for the next three months.

From my 10rm bungalow and my hammock I would lay listening to the sounds of the jungle, with the highest waterfall in South East Asia literally at my feet. Up there on the first of three large tiers that make up this waterfall, I wondered how to put into words what life had become before my very eyes. It would take some time to put into words the next three months, but upon my initial arrival all that came to mind was stunning, simple, sound, silence, and solitude!

***Prior to my departure a tour guide friend had drawn me a pencil map that resembled the old treasure maps I saw in Indiana Jones—and just as you’d expect, X marked the base camp.***

## IN CONVERSATION WITH . . .

Wanda Waterman St. Louis

**Patrice Boulianne of Blou****This Beautiful Mess**

*Patrice Boulianne, a.k.a. Blou, fronts a band of the same name in Meteghan, Nova Scotia. Blou has forged a new style of Acadian music dubbed Acadico, a blend of Cajun, Acadian, and zydeco, and has won numerous awards at home and internationally. Originally from St. Boniface, Manitoba, Boulianne moved to Moncton, New Brunswick in 1982 and married an Acadienne—the rest is east coast music history.*

**A Nova Scotian Musical Career**

The biggest difficulty, for me, in pursuing a musical career while based in Nova Scotia, is the cost of transportation. I live between Digby and Yarmouth, in the Municipality of Clare, and it's a three-hour drive to the Halifax International Airport. But that's the only problem that bothers me; with all the different technology now it's relatively simple to communicate with anybody around the world.

**2008**

I was very busy last year with two recording projects and a couple of tours in Québec. I was the musical producer for an album tribute to the Acadian singer-songwriter Ronald Bourgeois. Nineteen artists from across Canada lent their voices to renditions of Ron's songs. Mary Jane Lamond, Lennie Gallant, and Mathieu D'Astous gave us especially beautiful interpretations. The album has been nominated for the 2009 East Coast Music Awards for Francophone Recording of the Year.

I also recorded my first Christmas album last year. I was in Christmas mode for nearly two years, preparing the arrangements and getting it all in place with my manager. I toured mostly in Québec this year, working on opening the market.

I played during the summer and did a lot of promoting and performing during the holiday season for the Christmas album. Three of the songs got a lot of airplay on Québec radio, which was amazing. While driving to an interview for the local newspaper in Trois-Rivières I was listening to a very popular Québec radio station and I heard one of my Christmas songs. I was beside myself! I'd heard my songs on the radio before but for some reason to hear my Christmas song was special.

I can't say that 2008 was a typical year. I did more recording than usual but fewer shows. This was mostly due to government cutbacks, which have really slowed the promotion and export of Canadian music and culture. I was supposed to go to Europe and China, but transportation funding wasn't awarded.

**Francophone Music in Nova Scotia**

We lack venues to promote our French music and to give a chance to our future Acadian singer-songwriters. It's sad that the Acadian School Board does not have a music program in their schools to give our young talents an opportunity to explore and discover. It's sad to see certain local bars in the Acadian

regions just giving in to what is easy and not developing an Acadian night once a month to encourage pride in our musical heritage, but it comes down to dollars for most of these establishments.

### Music Circles

What I would really like to see in every community in Nova Scotia, be it in the restaurants or the local pubs, is monthly, bi-weekly, or weekly music circles, just like they have in Chéticamp, where local talent comes in and jams, where if you sing rock and roll you sing your rock song, if you play the Scottish fiddle you play your strathspey, etc. Let the community enjoy homegrown music.

That's what brought me into this beautiful mess—I wanted to share my homegrown ideas. I knew that there would be people who wouldn't like what I did, but I did it for those who *would* like it.

There will always be ups and downs, thank God; otherwise life would be terribly boring.

### FROM THE GALLERY

**Sandra Livingston**



With visions of turkey and sugarplums fading into memory, it's back to business after the holidays! January 19 was the first meeting of 2009 for AUSU council, and here are some of the highlights.

Several motions were approved, and among them was one affecting *The Voice*. In keeping with making the magazine autonomous, council has created a new restricted reserve fund to collect unused *Voice* budget funds at year end. This means greater stability in planning for future years, for everything from special projects to budget shortfalls.

Council also reviewed two current policies (4.04 Professional Development and 4.05 Technology Funding),

and agreed that they meet the needs of AUSU. To find out more about these or any other policies, you can find the AUSU Policy Manual [here](#).

In other news, President Karl Low noted that the latest audit is complete, and that auditors found AUSU's protocols to be quite strong in all areas. The VP External's report revealed a possible change to the way GPAs are calculated. Currently, decimal places are rounded down (e.g., a GPA of 4.569 is recorded as 4.56), and discussion is underway to look at rounding them up to more accurately reflect student achievement.

The report from Sarah Kertcher, VP Finance, gave an update on another ongoing discussion: the possibility of AU student emails. As discussion at the council meeting showed, there are compelling pros and cons on both sides of this issue, and Sarah will keep everyone up to date on developments.

And finally, if you've visited the AUSU home page lately, you'll know that the 2009 Planners are ready to order! Always a hot item, this year's planners have already started arriving in undergrad mailboxes. The rulers have been improved and several new pages have been added, and feedback on the latest version is positive.

Council's next general meeting is scheduled for March 9 at 5:30 MST, and members are always welcome. See you there, From the Gallery.

## MUSIC TO EAT LUNCH TO

Mandy Gardner

Fallout Boy – *Folie à Deux***Release date:** December 16, 2008**Label:** Island**Tracks:** 13**Rating:** 3

Fallout Boy, initially grouped into the same genre as virtually every one-hit wonder, so-called pop-punk band, has done a great job of staying afloat these past few years and making a name for themselves that extends past the original label.

With poppy, tentatively thrashy songs making waves in North America and overseas, Fallout Boy nurtured a growing population of fans that grew to absolutely love their cutting-edge, energetic pop sound. Critics, given the short duration of many similar sounding bands over the years, understandably took an

unfavourable approach when it came to Fallout Boy and their first few records.

Fortunately for the band and anyone who took a shine to songs like "Dance, Dance" and "A Little Less Sixteen Candles, a Little More Touch Me," early albums were very well received and Fallout Boy seemed destined have a tangible impact on modern music. Unfortunately, when it comes to *Folie à Deux*, not only has the sound of the music changed, but the impact of the band most probably has as well.

If you are inclined anywhere near the edgier pop genre of music, you will most certainly have heard the popular singles from Fallout Boy over the past several years. Whether or not you approved of the band, a few spins by the DJ should have given you a solid impression of what they were all about, or at least what they seemed to be about: energy, edgy emotional lyrics, and creating music that was actually somewhat unique given the state of current pop music.

Now, when you take this image of Fallout Boy and try to superimpose it on the band that created *Folie à Deux*, you are probably going to be a bit confused at the very least. If you listen well, you can hear the same elements of the band's music coming out of the speakers, but the production and emphasis is, well, just not the same.

I am actually pretty upset to report that I have found no tracks on this album to put on my MP3 player and pass around to friends. The introductions, instrumentals, and dramatic musical speed changes all seem too experimental and with little success. I come away from the new record feeling like I've just been listening to a mediocre '80s memories radio station—one that focuses on the little-known, pre-techno bands that have long since faded into the background of current popular music.

It makes me sad, but perhaps the change was inevitable for a band that has spent nearly its entire public career trying to prove its worth and distinction. Alas, the Fallout Boy I once knew and thoroughly enjoyed seems to have disappeared.

# The Interviewer

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

*written and illustrated by Wanda Waterman St. Louis*

## Rockhead #7: Tartan Hat



Inside Gord's group home are plastic air fresheners that make the place smell like a cat house.



They try to make you think it's like a "real" home but the staff act like a mother afraid a social worker's going to take her kids if her house isn't spotless.

There's this supervisor Francis that to Reuben seems just plain sick and always seems to make Gord shrink and wilt.



Reuben thinks, yeah, she'd make me shrink too, reeking of breath mints and narcissus, holding me on her rayon lap and stroking me and calling me "honey pie" and tucking my hair behind my ears.



*And you can't even taste the Spanish Fly!*



The staff all look like they've just been drawn screaming through an iron nut.



Rob doesn't have time to sit with Reuben and Gord in Gord's room and bliss out to the empyrean voices of the saintly Blind Boys because the laundry has to be done before shift's end.



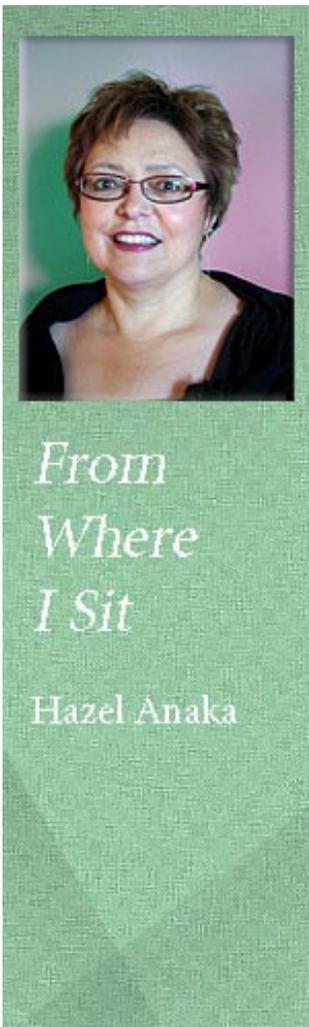
Francis, the mean kids on the bus keep taking my hat!



It's your own fault! And if you don't stop wearing that ratty old hat I'll burn it myself.



*next: Chub the Bus Driver*



## Go Lightly

At this moment in our house there are four pieces of luggage littering the hallway. They will become our ticket out of town, out of this wretched winter.

In November we were all quite smug in Alberta as one unseasonably warm day stretched into another until before we knew it the whole month had become a blessing. "Hey, this is really gonna shorten the winter, eh?" became a common refrain. Hah. As anyone who has frozen their butt off with the prolonged cold spell and dangerous wind chills knows, that's not how this played out. December was brutal and January has only been tolerable in the last week or so.

So very soon, we're outta here. Off to Los Cabos, Mexico for sun and surf, to lie about doing absolutely nothing if we so desire. Or go on tours. Or do nothing. Or shop. Or do nothing. Or perhaps do nothing but eat and drink. Oh, and of course read.

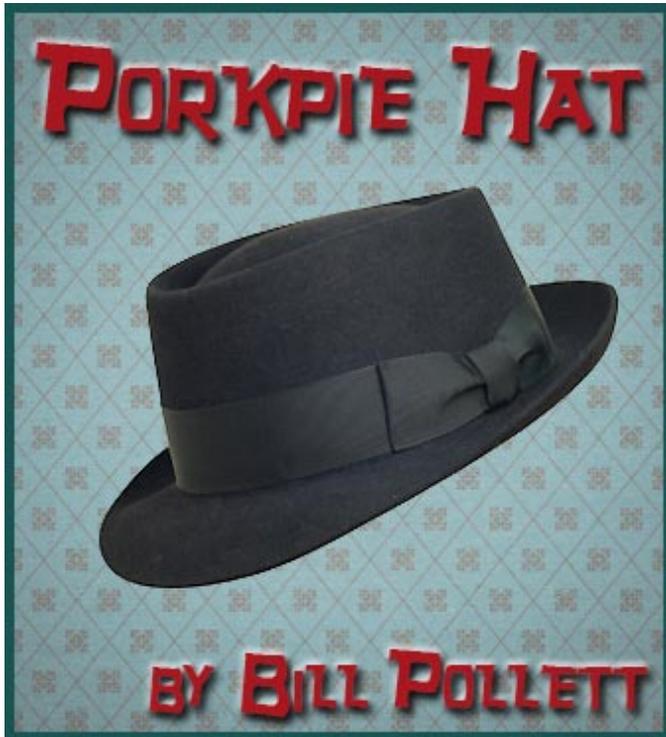
But between all that and us is a helluva lot of work. Studies have shown that as employees prepare to leave on vacation their productivity soars in those last few days as they bear down and really get 'er done. That seems to be true for us as well. Work like mad at work getting everything done plus do the same at home.

Write some "From Where I Sit" in advance. Do the two GST returns for the last quarter of 2008. Pay the bills due now and before we get back. Make time for a nail fill and a pedicure. A home hair colour job is likely tomorrow night. A salon cut is also booked for next week. Ask my sister to water the plants and check the house. Figure out what we're going to do with our car for the week we're gone. Put some valuables in the safe. Talk to the kids about the wills.

And then there are those suitcases. Given what happened with luggage at most airports during Christmas we need to plan for the likelihood that our checked suitcases may not make it when we do.

The classic dilemma: what to put in carry-on and what to check? What size is allowed for toiletries? How big can the suitcase be? What's that about quart-sized zip-lock bags? We obviously don't fly often enough to have this come as second nature. That's also why I've been nagging Roy to get involved and help with some of the thinking and planning.

That's also why I'm throwing things into those bags as it occurs to me. Roy hasn't found his sandals yet. I still need to figure what clothes I need. The packrat in me will want to overpack. It will take discipline to cut it back to essentials and leave room in the suitcases for new purchases. I usually go overboard with books. Heavy books. More books than anyone could realistically read in a week at a resort or during two four-hour flights. This time, going lightly is the goal, from where I sit.



## Random Dispatches From an Early-Morning Starbucks

So I am sitting at a window table in one of the hinterland outlet pods of the evil Starbuckian Empire. I am waiting for the caffeine molecules to clear customs at the blood-brain barrier, and help bring my shabby, wandering thoughts into focus. In the meantime, random ideas dart and flicker about my sleepy head.

---

Outside the window, a car is driving by with its interior light on. It is moving like a bright, radioactive particle through the arteries of the city. I have my laptop open, and for no particular reason I am looking at streaming video footage of those strange, glowing fish that live in the deepest trenches of the ocean. I want to see those fish in real time. I want to be enclosed in a diving bell, and sink and sink and sink until I find myself in a strange

new world, surrounded by luminous wonders.

---

I wonder, for instance, what the world would be like today without the discovery of caffeine. Would the world be much the same as it is now? Would the sidewalks be filled with people walking blindly into each other, the roadways filled with crashed and abandoned vehicles? Would we all be wandering about like lost souls, carrying empty Styrofoam cups and travel mugs, permanently distracted by the vague feeling that there is something missing from our lives?

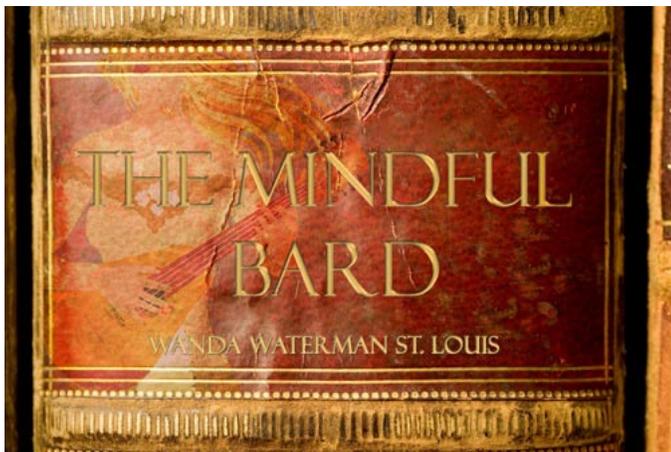
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I wonder how much money I have spent in my life on coffee and tea. Too much, obviously. Money that could have been put to other, better, and more interesting purposes. I could have saved that money and donated it to a family who really need it. I could have built and paid for the running of a community hall in a small fishing village somewhere. I could have travelled to Prague, or the Arctic Circle, sponsored a tango competition, or commissioned a papier-mâché sculpture of Susan Musgrave. I could have built a boat, or paid for a friend to take flying lessons.

---

I am thinking that the bearded, heavy-set man at the table next to mine is particularly intriguing. He is wearing what is obviously an expensively cut suit of what appears to be raw silk the colour of the Atlantic Ocean at twilight. He has a red power tie, and a gold watch that I am convinced cost as much money as my lifetime's coffee consumption.

He could be a senior executive with a multinational chemical manufacturer, in town for the morning to oversee the cover-up of a sinister airborne toxic event. He could be a lawyer, a diplomat, or a world-class assassin. Incongruously, bizarrely, he is holding an Asterix comic book, and peering at its pages with rapt attention. I have no frame of reference that can explain this anomaly, which is something that makes me unaccountably, momentarily happy.



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

**CD:** Fucked Up, *The Chemistry of Common Life*

**Release date:** 2008

**Label:** Matador Records

### Demon Spawn Acid Punk Call-to-Arms Rousing the Fainthearted to Radical Consciousness

In the story of the Pied Piper the town of Hamelin is teeming with rats. The townspeople have done all they can to oust the vermin, to no avail, so when a flutist comes to town and offers, for a sum, to charm the rats away the people immediately agree to his terms. But once the rats have been led away to drown in the river the townsfolk don't think it necessary to pay the piper. Later on, he returns for their children.

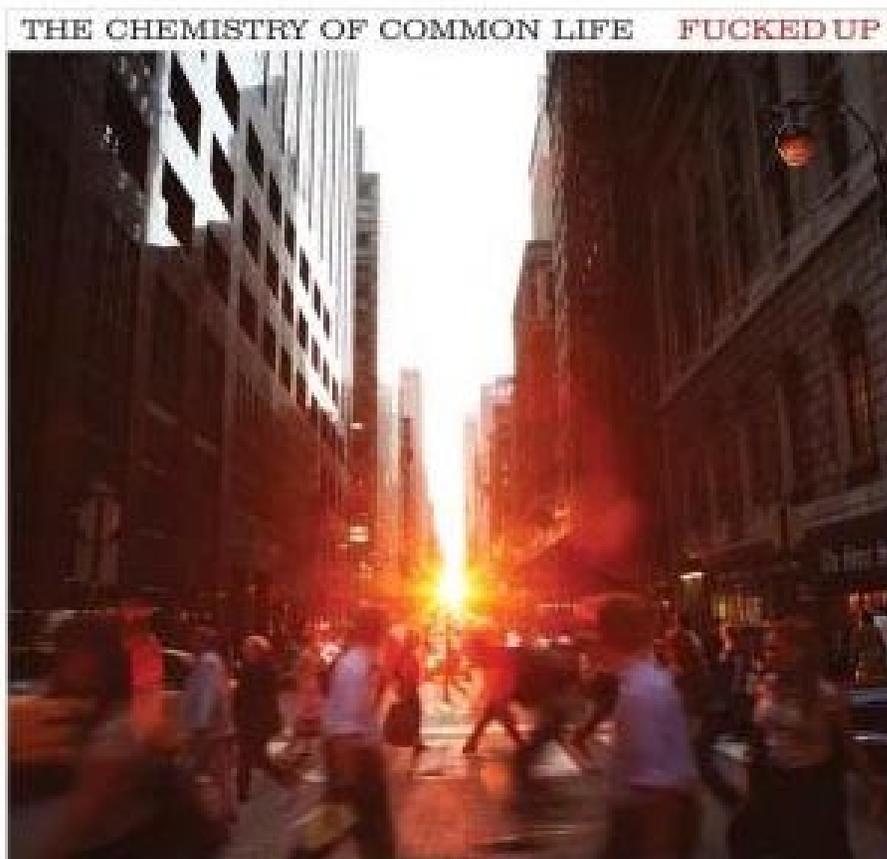
*The Chemistry of Common Life* places a value on beginnings and endings. The title song is at once a creation hymn and an ode to the apocalypse. The album opens and closes with a flute soliloquy; the tune at the start is like an offer of redemption, the warble at the end somewhat less beatific. You can almost hear somebody saying, "You failed to give me what you promised, so I'm taking your children."

It seems the children are following, entranced, in droves. Fucked Up's career has so far straddled the two George W. Bush terms, and aptly so; their music is a radically fitting response to an era notorious for expensive and life-destroying exercises in futility, not to mention broken deals with rat catchers.

History regurgitates. The '70s-'80s punk phase was timed to coincide with recession, Reaganomics, and mounting conservatism. Punk rock issued a loud challenge to the dirty dealers of the time while deliberately avoiding the hypocrisies exhibited by '60s pop culture icons.

Having come of age in this grimly divine epoch there is still a warm place in my heart for incarnations of punk in its sincerest forms.

It's hard to get more sincere than Fucked Up, which manages to create poignancy with screaming



vocals and ripping power chords (is such a thing even *possible?*). Not only are the message and poetry of the lyrics delightfully (or offensively?) at odds with the hardcore sound, you can barely hear what the singer is saying.

If it weren't for the liner notes you wouldn't imagine that the rebel yells included lines like "The Greek gods watch down from the heights of Mount Zion joking that the worship of the literal doesn't fade with time . . ."

***Ignite the crust***

***Inseminate the dust***

***The cultured quartz that rises high***

***The stone refined that lives and shines***

***Be the vessel, be the knife stone and  
metal***

***Come to life in the crux***

***The cross divine***

***The shell, the purpose, the sublime . . .***

***Fucked Up, title track, The Chemistry  
of Common Life***

The theology is questionable but intriguing, and I'd be the last to question the poet's right to disseminate ideas; to paraphrase Reginald Shepherd, poets initiate the future.

This is neither the self-indulgent word-diarrhea of the art rockers nor the self-consciously simple-minded ditties of so many garage band wannabes. "Crooked Head," for example, is at once a stirring anthem to psychological anomaly and a kind of Zen renunciation of worldly ambitions.

The lead singer is rumoured to have schizophrenia, which if true, is one clear sign of the band's punk integrity; taking the outcasts of society and placing them centre-stage, like Joey Ramone with his obsessive-compulsive disorder, or Ian Dury with his polio-damaged limbs, is a reliable demonstration of the punk ethos.

We have some cause to worry about great bands like this when society at large changes tides. Punk rock seems culturally more significant during those times when bozos have the wheel and use it to force us into reverse, but recent developments in the US have given its citizens an unprecedented optimism which is rippling throughout the world. In times like these, can a band like Fucked Up continue to be relevant? I'm anxious to see.

*The Chemistry of Common Life* manifests eight 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 displays an engagement with and compassionate response to suffering; 4) it inspires an awareness of the sanctity of creation; 5) it is about attainment of the true self; 6) it provides respite from a sick and cruel world, a respite enabling me to renew myself for a return to mindful artistic endeavour; 7) it stimulates my mind; and 8) it poses and admirably responds to questions which have a direct bearing on my view of existence.

*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](mailto:bard@voicemagazine.org). For a list of criteria, go [here](#). If I agree with your recommendation, I'll thank you online.*

## AUSU THIS MONTH



### 2009 AUSU Handbook/Planners

The 2009 AUSU planner 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 ordered early 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.

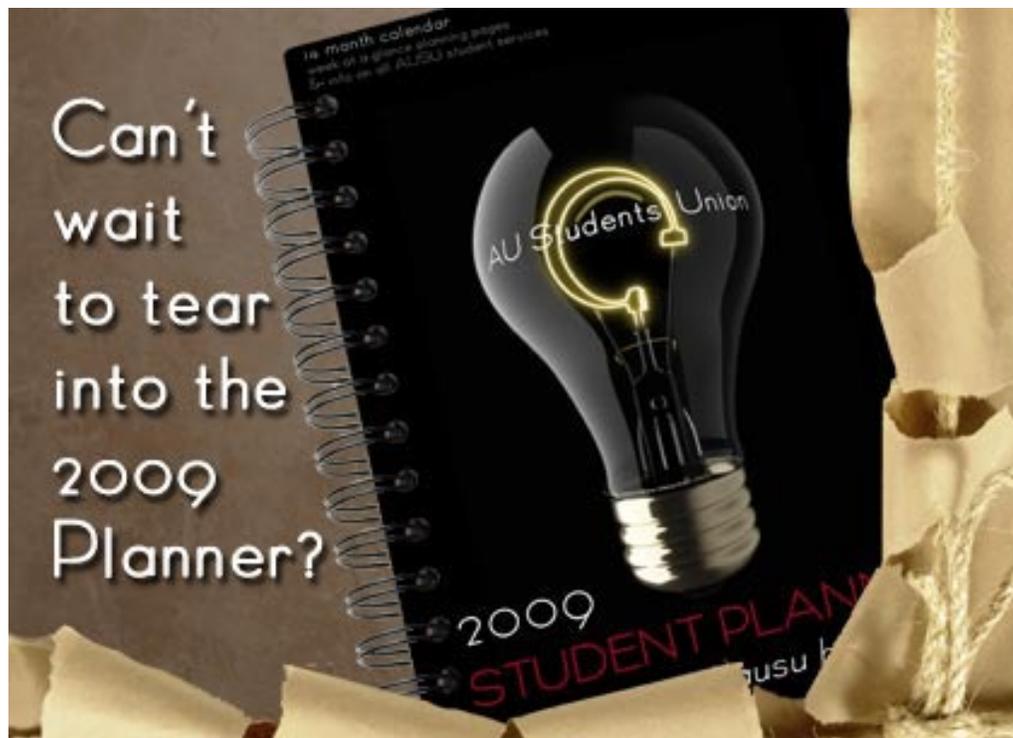
### Merchandise Still for Sale

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.

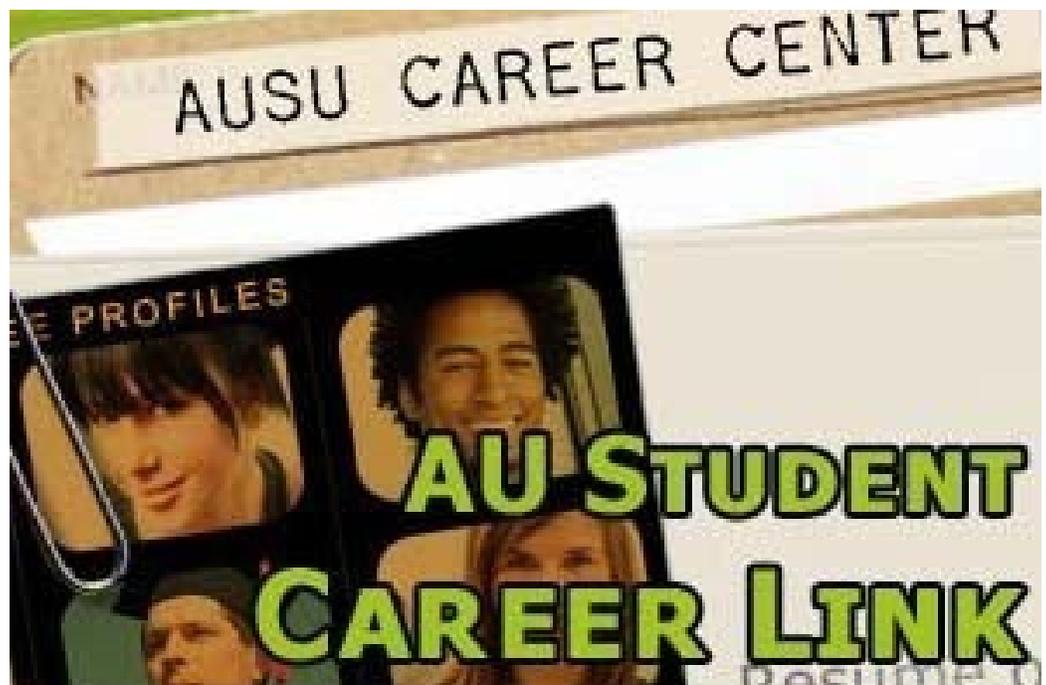
For any course that requires charts that cannot be easily created in Word or Excel, this should be a real time saver and make it easier to submit all portions of an assignment by email.

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



### In Foreign News: International bookies placed odds on Obama's inauguration phrases

New US President Barack Obama was sworn in Tuesday, January 20, in front of thousands of onlookers and billions of television viewers worldwide.

And much to the disappointment of long-shot bettors in the United Kingdom and other countries (including the US, where online betting has been a federal offence since 2006), Obama did *not* mention the word "banana," say the phrase "change has come," or shock the world by uttering a curse word.

Why would anyone make such a ludicrous bet on the president's inaugural speech? It turns out that bookies in the UK, such as Paddy Power, have been collecting bets on the details of the US presidential race since before Obama was even declared the leader of the Democratic Party, and alongside regular bets like "who will win the presidential election?" strange banana-related bets have also appeared.

So, let us for once skip the usual antics surrounding the entire Democratic campaign, and take a look at the kinds of things that people in Britain wanted to spend their money on during the US election process.

Aside from the "banana" bet, which was given odds of 1,000 to 1 according to Yahoo News, people were willing to place bets on whether Obama would again mention the puppy he'd promised his family during his acceptance speech, such as what breed it might be.

Bettors were even willing to dole out some of their cash for the 1,000 to 1 odds that the inaugural speech would actually include the name of the German Chancellor, Angela Merkel. Odds were reported to be measly on the gambling website Betsson for the most likely of phrases to be heard in Tuesday's speech, such as 1.01 to 1 for "the United States" and 1.03 for "change."

As it turned out, nobody cashed out for "banana," but the real surprise was the fact that so-called easy bets like "the United States" and even "change" didn't pay off.

So what did bettors actually benefit from during the history-making inaugural speech? After Paddy Power paid off early for Obama's win in the election, the best bet to have made was on the opening line of the speech: "As I stand here today." That opener paid off at 12 to 1.

If you feel like you've missed out on the fun, don't worry! You're still able to place bets on whether or not one of Obama's daughters will win the presidency further down the line, and what major event or legislation is bound to be the first to occur during the new administration.

## EDUCATION NEWS

Amy Minsky



### Sustainability money remains untouched

MONTREAL (CUP) - Nine months ago, the Quebec government pledged \$250,000 to fund student-run sustainability initiatives at universities across the province. To this day, not one campus has seen a single dollar of that money.

And they might never if an extension for the July 2009 deadline to appropriate the funds isn't approved.

Line Beauchamp—Quebec's minister of sustainable development, environment and parks—announced last April the government would match the sustainability funds raised by students, and put it toward campus sustainability projects.

The \$250,000 was taken from the Fonds d'action québécois pour le développement durable (FAQDD) budget.

The FAQDD, created in March 2000, is a non-profit organization that offers financial support to groups wanting to develop sustainable projects in Quebec.

In order to fulfill its mission, the FAQDD was given a \$51-million budget from the government of Quebec.

One of the conditions to receive funding was that projects would have to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. Two more restrictions were that the project would have to be innovative and the funding could not be injected into projects that were already under way.

The minister's announcement came at the end of the Generations Pact tour, an initiative spearheaded by graduates of Montreal's Concordia University.

The tour, which visited 10 of Quebec's 18 universities over 10 days, aimed to get the provincial government to match student-raised sustainability funds dollar-for-dollar.

Concordia University, McGill University, Bishop's University, and several other universities each submitted proposals for projects to receive funding from the Generations Pact, but not a single one was approved.

"The process was rushed and unclear," said Concordia's sustainability action fund co-ordinator, Jasmine Stuart.

Although the funding was announced in April, students had to wait until they had a co-ordinator to work with, then submit their proposals in time for the October deadline. When Pascale Geoffroy was hired as the Generations Pact project co-ordinator in August, her role was to develop the project and support students throughout the application process.

The students involved with campus sustainability acknowledge she has worked hard, but even her guidance wasn't enough.

"There was a lack of communication," Geoffroy said. "It didn't appear anybody was clear on the information at any step of the process."

Nicolas Girard, FAQDD's program director, agrees with Stuart and Geoffroy.

"There are a lot of parties involved in this project," he said. "Passing the same information to everybody was very difficult, and it was all going too fast," said Girard.

Montreal's McGill University asked for funding to help develop a 100-tonne composting facility downtown.

"We applied with that because we thought it was a good project and we were able to pull the proposal together fast enough," said Maggie Knight, an environment ambassador with the Student Society of McGill University. "We put a lot of work into it, and it was just turned down. It was really frustrating and disappointing," she added.

Geoffroy says the proposals were not accepted because of discrepancies between the way students presented their projects and the conditions and requirements for funding.

At the request of some students, a representative from the provincial government and FAQDD held a video-conference with university representatives and Geoffroy. During the conference, the government representatives outlined the criteria they were looking for.

"At that point it was more clear there was a difference between the way the proposal of the government investment was presented to the ministry during the tour and what was actually announced by the ministry," Geoffroy said.

Knight's partner, Nathan DeBono, got the impression the government didn't really want to give the schools the money.

"The criteria were really difficult to understand. It was totally confusing," he said. "We asked for examples of what they would accept, and they wouldn't give us any. They said if they did, then the projects wouldn't be innovative."

Unappeased, DeBono, Knight, and Stuart decided to write a letter to the minister during the last provincial election campaign expressing their frustrations and disappointments.

They eventually got a letter back from Geoffroy, informing them actions were being taken to extend the government's deadline for appropriating the funds by a full year, to July 31, 2010.

Geoffroy says the new deadline hasn't been approved yet, but she expects it should be.

Girard, who said the FAQDD is "really just a financial partner in the project," would not comment on the deadline extension.

"We are in discussion right now," he said. "Our priority is to get this going. We want to give the students time to use the money, but we're also concerned the projects meet all the requirements." Girard expects to have an answer on the extension within the next two weeks.

Geoffroy says she is committed to doing her best to see that students' projects are accepted this time around.

"I really believe in the students and their empowerment and their ability to do this," she said.

But some students aren't motivated to re-apply for funding after seeing all their efforts go to waste last semester.

"Students will be slower to put in the big effort again," Knight said. "The students in charge of the composting project are already looking elsewhere for funding.

"They were really discouraged after being turned down. I mean, we're all students, we have full course loads. It's really hard to convince yourself to dedicate that much time to something that's so uncertain."

Stuart, who remains hopeful, has several projects she is considering to use on Concordia's application.

"I think everybody's on the same page now. Everybody wants the project to be successful," she said. "We just need to figure out how to work through the bureaucratic system."

## **CLICK OF THE WRIST - Moving Day**

While President Barack Obama may have a large staff to deal with all the messy details of moving, the average person dreads all that packing tape and the miscellaneous clutter that always seems to get dumped into a box at the last minute. In honour of the big move that took place in Washington this week, here's a lighthearted look at two words that strike a chill in even the stoutest of hearts: moving day.

### **National Geographic Monster Moves**

On the National Geographic program *Monster Moves*, teams tackle shifting the 700-ton Murillo Hall across a city, relocating the entire town of Malmberg in Sweden, and many other seemingly impossible feats. These photo galleries give a glimpse at just what it takes to move these man-made mountains.

### **Building Stonehenge**

Now *this* is the man you want around when it's time to move—whether it's a couch or an entire house. Wally Wallington isn't an engineer, but in this amazing video he demonstrates how basic principles could solve the mystery of how Stonehenge was built. And he proves it by standing a 19,200-pound block on its end.

### **Excuses for Getting Out of Helping Your Friends Move**

These folks didn't come up with any terribly original excuses—some could barely stumble through their answer—but the expressions on their faces are all too familiar to anyone who's ever tried to wrangle in a friend with a pickup truck.

### **5 Ways To Con Your Friends Into Helping You Move**

If you're on the other end of the moving spectrum, this site offers some handy tips on how to recruit people to help slug your belongings around. Just be prepared to see some of the expressions from the website above.

### **Raccoon Moving Day**

Not exactly action packed, but this video of a mother raccoon relocating her litter is a reminder of just how difficult things would be for humans without the marvels of cardboard boxes and moving trucks.

# CLASSIFIEDS

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Classifieds are free for AU students! Contact [voice@ausu.org](mailto:voice@ausu.org) for more information.

## THE VOICE

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