

THE

VOICE

MAGAZINE

Volume 17 Issue 25

June 26, 2009

Convocation 2009

Congratulations!

Photos, grad interviews,
and more

Reasoning Otherwise

A little to the left

Dear Barb

Trust sibling's judgement

Plus:

*The Interviewer, From Where I Sit,
AUSU This Month, and much more...*



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WELCOME TO THE VOICE PDF

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Magazine

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The Voice is published
every Friday in HTML
and PDF format

To subscribe for weekly
email reminders as
each issue is posted,
see the 'subscribe' link
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page

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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@voicemagazine.org, and please indicate if we may publish your letter.



CONVOCATION 2009

Sandra Livingston



This is the second of a special three-part Voice report on Athabasca University's 2009 Convocation, which took place June 11, 12, and 13. The Voice offers its warmest congratulations to all this year's graduates!

Accompanied by bright blue skies and balmy temperatures, graduands and guests filled the halls of the Athabasca Regional Multiplex once more as the final two days of convocation got underway.

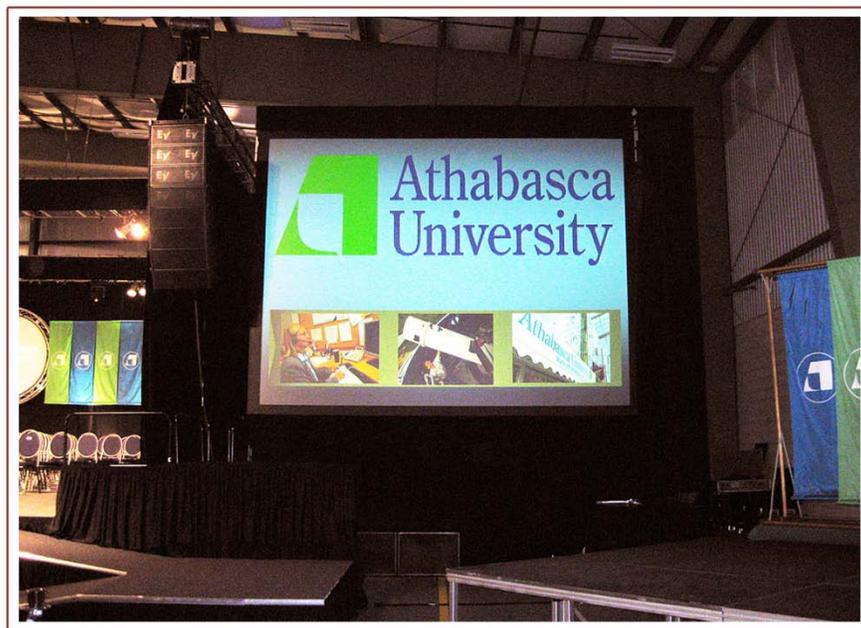
On Friday, June 12, the procession began with a performance that was uniquely suited to the day's program: the sounds of the Northern Cree Singers filled the complex, their honour song a fitting tribute to Chief Ovide William Mercredi, that day's recipient of AU's Honorary Doctor of Letters.

Before the conferring of degrees, though, the graduands, guests, and academics were welcomed by local officials, including Jeff Johnson, MLA for Athabasca-Redwater; Lionel Cherniwchan, Councillor of the Town of Athabasca; and David Yurdiga, Reeve for the County of Athabasca.

As Lionel Cherniwchan noted in his greeting, the community of Athabasca shares in the success of AU graduates, and he invited everyone to walk the town's trails and enjoy the local scenery during their visit.

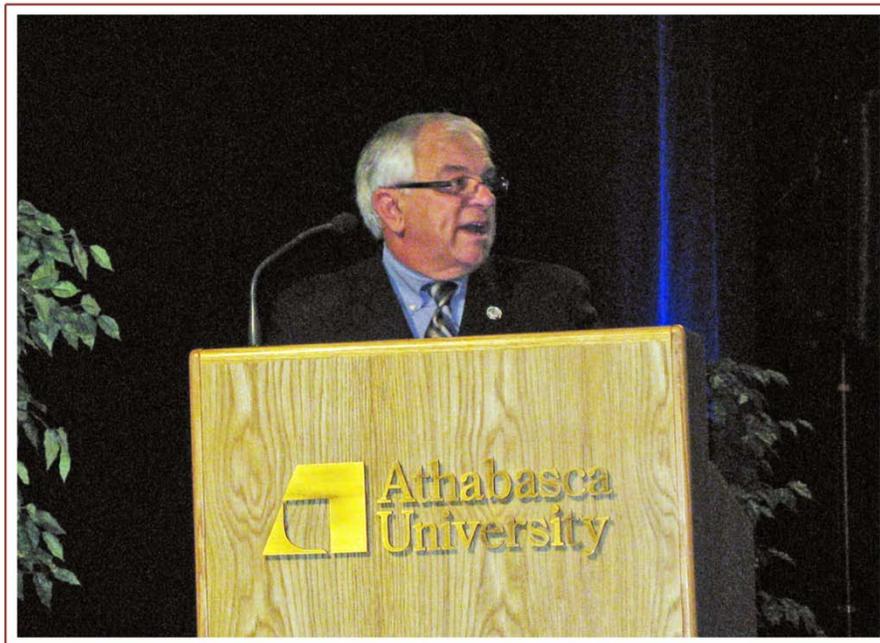
Each day of convocation also began with an official welcome from Joy Romero, Chair of AU's governing council, and AU President Dr. Frits Pannekoek. As greetings were offered, many in the audience found their attention on a feature that was new to convocation this year: the large screens set to each side of the stage. The screens gave everyone a great view of the ceremony, as well as a preview of what the online video will look like.

The real focus, however, was the moment that so many had spent years preparing for—the conferring of degrees on AU's graduands.



The large screens offered everyone a great view

Before each day's degrees were awarded, the petition was read, the Chair replied, and President Pannekoek addressed the graduands with this pledge: "Do you promise, when you are admitted as graduates of Athabasca University, to observe faithfully and to maintain loyally the statutes, customs and privileges of this, your university? Do you promise to accept and exercise, with good judgement, the authority and responsibilities of the graduate and to conduct yourselves in all things loyally and faithfully to the honour of your university? Do you promise to use the knowledge, skills and wisdom you have acquired to the enhancement of the reputation of the university, for the advancement of learning and for the betterment of all?"



Lionel Cherniwchan, Councillor of the Town of Athabasca

In answer, the graduands replied in unison: "I do so promise."

On June 12, the degrees awarded were in the Master of Health Studies, Master of Nursing, and Master of Science - Information Systems. Undergraduate programs were the Bachelor of Nursing, Bachelor of Science, and Bachelor of Science in Computing and Information Systems.

On Saturday, June 13, the Master of Business Administration degrees were conferred, as well as the Bachelor of Administration, Bachelor of Commerce, Bachelor of Management, Bachelor of Health Administration, and the Bachelor of Human Resources and Labour Relations.

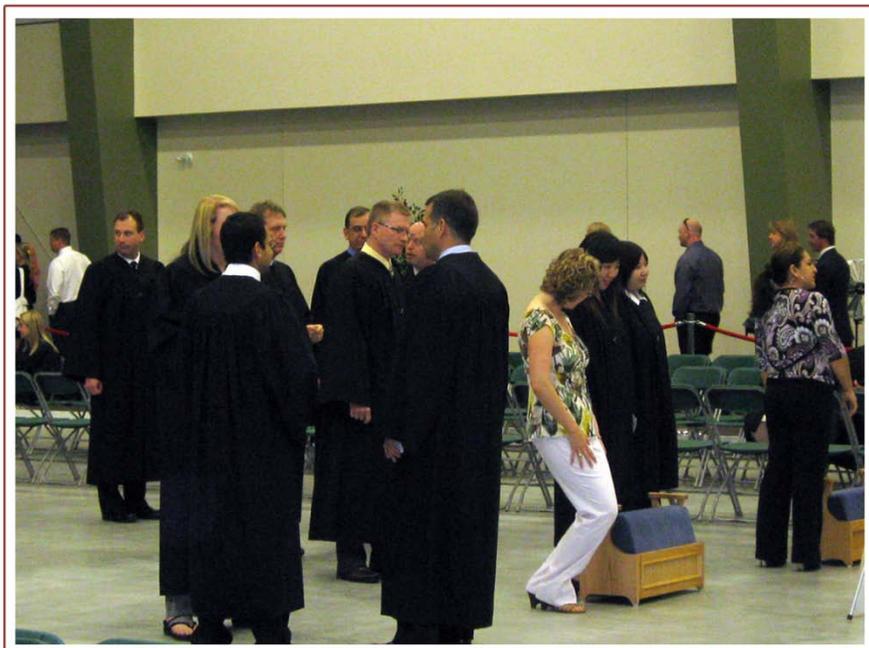
Once again, it was plain to see that AU students bring to their studies a wealth of diversity, talent, and curiosity.

They live in places as far-flung as Lively, Ontario; Chateaugay, Quebec; Doha, Qatar; Macedon, New York; Norman Wells, NWT; Houston, Texas; and KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa.



Chief Ovide William Mercredi (centre) receives AU's Honorary Doctor of Letters

Accompanied by friends and family, they attended convocation from locations as close as Athabasca and as far away as Aargau, Switzerland. As the grads came forward to receive their degrees, the brief biographies that were read out revealed that their educational journeys—and future career paths—were as diverse as the places they lived and studied in.



Graduands practice for the big moment

replicate databases. Another studied while in the middle of a Canadian boreal forest, while at least one grad called in her quiz answers from pay phones. One student was proud to have completed her undergraduate degree after 30 years of study.

It isn't all work for these AU grads, though, and future plans include an Alaskan cruise, spending more time with family, and learning how to sleep in past five a.m. There's also a \$10 dollar bet that one AU grad will collect on (a wager he won after completing his degree in less than 20 years!)

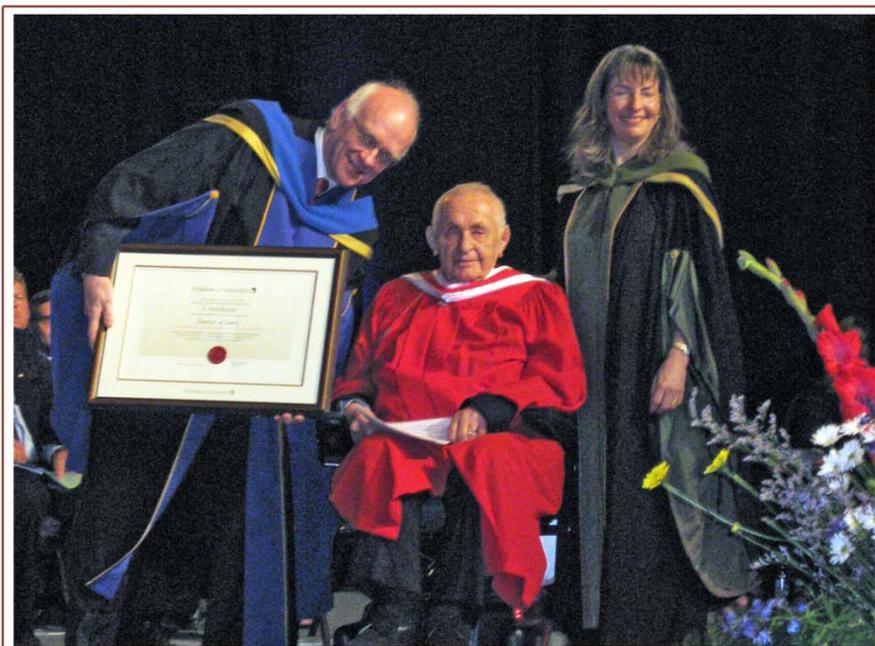
Along with the many proud AU students who received their degrees, several other special honours were presented.

On June 12, Chief Ovide William Mercredi received an Honorary Doctor of Letters degree. Chief

They work as medical lab technologists, nurse educators, and in acute psychiatry. Still other careers include working for Agriculture Canada, Maple Leaf Foods, Universal Studios, and IBM.

At least one grad plans to pursue a PhD in global public health, while others want to teach online or put their nursing skills to work in developing nations.

Even before they were ready to pursue new opportunities, their studies brought some interesting—and challenging—adventures. One grad's bio told of having to search out the unsecured Internet connections at random hotel parking lots in order to



Neil Reimer (centre) is awarded AU's Honorary Doctor of Laws

Mercredi has spent a lifetime committed to public service, most notably “the peaceful preservation and celebration of the rights of Indigenous Peoples.” His work has included the position of Regional Chief in the Assembly of First Nations, followed by two terms as National Chief of the AFN.

During the same day’s ceremony, the Governor General’s Silver Medal was awarded to Nadine Tobin of Calgary, Alberta, who was graduating from the Bachelor of Nursing program. The Academic Medals were created in 1873 “to encourage academic excellence across the nation,” and the silver medal is presented to students at the undergraduate level.

Nadine also delivered the graduate’s address, and you can read the text of her speech in this issue of *The Voice*.

On Saturday, June 13, the graduate address was given by Russell Permann, a Master of Business Administration graduate who also attended from Calgary, Alberta.

Saturday’s convocation ceremony also saw AU’s Honorary Doctor of Laws awarded to Neil Reimer “in recognition of his contributions to bettering the lives of working people.”

Mr. Reimer’s tireless efforts have benefited the working lives of not only Albertans, but Canadians and people around the world. His career has spanned the roles of politician, social activist, and trade union organizer, and he has also been a strong advocate of making post-secondary education more accessible to all.

As Convocation 2009 drew to a close, and new alumni posed for photographs with friends and family, the

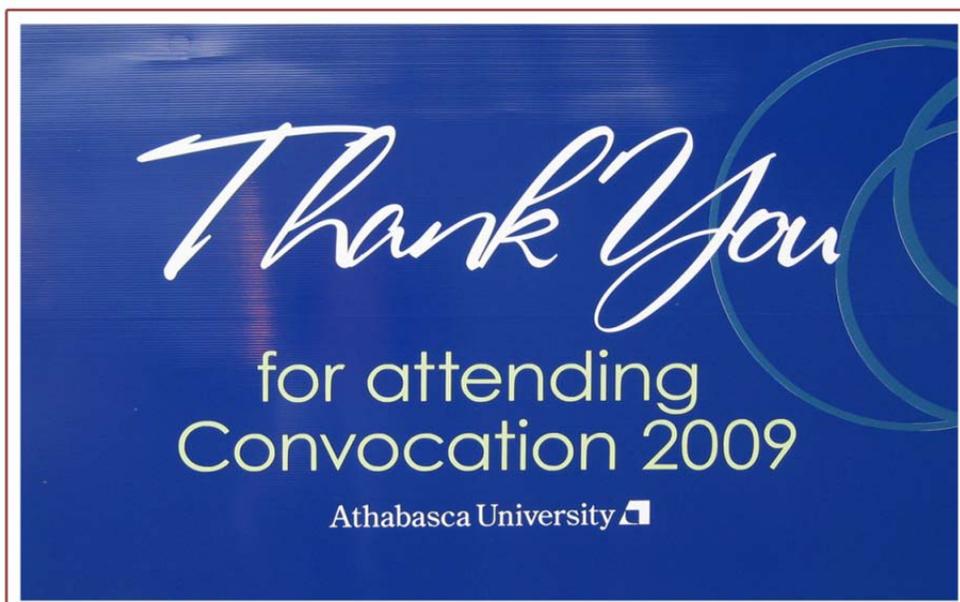


In full regalia to escort the graduates

sense of expectation that began the ceremony could still be felt. The occasion marked the end of one chapter, but it also represented a new beginning—whether a new career, more studies, or simply a newfound sense of pride in achieving a goal.

The Voice offers its warmest congratulations to the graduates of 2009!

Watch for a special behind-the-scenes look at convocation in next week’s issue!



CONVOCATION 2009 – ADDRESS BY GRADUATE

Nadine Tobin



During each of the three days of convocation, one graduate addressed her fellow students and convocation guests, sharing her thoughts about graduation and the journey that brought her there.

On Friday, June 12, the graduate address was given by Nadine Tobin, of Calgary, Alberta, who received her Bachelor of Nursing degree.

The Voice thanks Nadine for sharing the text of her address, which is printed below.

Madam Chair, Mr. President, Elder, distinguished guests, members of the platform party, graduates, families and friends, ladies and gentlemen.

First of all, I congratulate the Graduates for a tremendous achievement, and to the parents, friends, and faculty for sharing in the success of this graduating class of 2009. When Registrar James D'Arcy invited me to address convocation, I was both honoured and awed. After much reflection, I came to realize that perhaps I would be best to address you from the perspective I know, my own, and in so doing might touch upon experiences we have in common, and be

able to begin to sketch the great possibilities that lie ahead for each and every one of us. Our achievement today, obtaining our various academic degrees, is the first step towards a larger and as yet unknown future.

I began this journey many years ago. When I was a young woman, I became ill and spent some time in hospital. During my recovery, I became more and more interested in the work performed by the nurses taking care of me—many of whom were licensed practical nurses. This pivotal event led me to apply for a position in a school for Licensed Practical Nurses in Winnipeg, and I graduated proudly in 1981. Not long after beginning my career as an LPN, I determined I wanted to further my education and obtain my degree in nursing. My first application was in 1983, and I was denied entry into a BN program because I was “only an LPN.” I was accepted into the general studies faculty where I hoped to achieve the required minimum GPA to transfer into the nursing program.

Well, life intervened, and a few years later I moved to Calgary where I again applied to a university program and was denied entry because I had not completed grade 13 in Ontario—the equivalent of a grade 12 diploma, even though I had by this time accumulated a number of university courses with an excellent GPA. In frustration, I abandoned my hopes of obtaining a nursing degree. Life again intervened, and 11 years ago I became a mother. Motherhood became my primary focus in life and I worked steadily as an LPN while providing the best home I could for my daughter and me.

A few years ago, a good friend of mine was facing a very long recovery from a serious illness and she challenged me with the question “How many more years was I going to stand still before I went back and

obtained that nursing degree?" My mother provided the final incentive when she agreed to come and live with us for weeks at a time so I could concentrate on studying. I realized then that this was something I needed to do.

Where to go became the next serious challenge. The conventional schools had discouraged me, I was in no position to give up my day job, and so I therefore began my search for a program which would not only accommodate my schedule, but one which might recognize my past efforts. I found one. Athabasca University not only accepted me into the LPN BN bridging program but actually gave me credit for my LPN education and some of those courses I had taken so long ago when my dream was new.

"... let us advocate for our colleagues, and be the guardians of standards of practice to which we have committed ourselves professionally."

I began this portion of my education two and one half years ago. I rapidly discovered I not only had to retrain myself to write papers, but, also how to access a virtual library, communicate with professors online, and become motivated to do assignments, complete readings, and navigate a computer system completely alien to me—all without direct support! I was terrified! I became paralyzed with uncertainty and my insecurities multiplied. I am certain many of you may recall the agonizing dread you felt when first accessing a new course online, when opening the marked

section of submitted assignments, or sat down to write an exam.

After completing that initial course and gaining some much-needed confidence, I began to enjoy the thrill of attending class in my pyjamas, in the middle of the night, and on weekends. My daughter loved to read over my papers, and even tried to type a few for me. Thanks, Natasha, I could not have done it without you.

Athabasca University has become synonymous to me with some of the principles we as Canadians treasure—justice, equality, opportunity, and freedom. This university, in both its virtual and real senses, through the variety of programs it offers and the talents, wit, wisdom, and compassion of the faculty who deliver them, has prepared us to become life-long learners. We have graduated—informed with the skills and inspiration that will give us the courage and framework to try new things and explore our potential in ways perhaps not envisioned if we had completed our journey in a conventional university environment. Along the way, coached, supported, challenged, and mentored, we developed extraordinary teaching, planning, organizing, team-building, problem-solving, crisis management, and relationship management skills relevant to the 21st century. These skills, coupled with the promise of our chosen professions, and our motivation and passion, will allow us to become leaders, and inspire the men and women who will come after us.

In conclusion, let me share some strategies that I hope will be both stimulating and reassuring as we embark on our chosen careers:

Let us make sure to have a trusted mentor along the way. The advice and support of a mentor will see us through the many ups and downs that are sure to come. And many of my mentors are here today.

Let us commit to a life-long learning process: it will refine and strengthen the practice of our various professions.

And, finally, let us advocate for our colleagues, and be the guardians of standards of practice to which we have committed ourselves professionally.

Once again, my congratulations to everyone—this day belongs to you!

CONVOCATION 2009 – GRADUATE INTERVIEWS

Sandra Livingston



This is the second of a three-part *Voice* series featuring interviews with some of AU's 2009 graduates.

For many graduates, convocation weekend was the first time they had seen the beautiful grounds and buildings of the AU campus, and they attended the ceremonies from places near and far, including Mission, BC, and Missoula, Montana.

The Voice would like to offer its sincere congratulations to all this year's graduates, and knows that their accomplishments will encourage all those students who are still completing their studies at AU.

Beverly Balaski

Master of Nursing

Beverly travelled from Regina, Saskatchewan, to convocate with her Master of Nursing degree, a program she was able to complete in just over three years thanks to a leave from work.

The real-world applicability of courses was one of the things Beverly enjoyed most about her program.

"With Athabasca, I found that . . . I was able to integrate it into my work quite quickly, and even as I was doing the classes it didn't take until I graduated to see the benefits."

For those who may be considering the program, Beverly's advice is to "just do it."

"Enjoy it and don't focus on the marks," she adds, noting that this can be difficult when many adult learners tend to strive for perfection. "As long as you do your best, you don't have to have that 95 [per cent] to the detriment of really enjoying it."

Beverly hasn't ruled out further studies, but for now she just plans to relax—and enjoy travelling without having to search for an Internet cafe so she can do her homework!

Congratulations, Beverly!



Cathy Barter

Master of Nursing

Getting to know fellow students from around the world was one of the things Cathy especially enjoyed while completing her Master of Nursing.

“Just getting to know the classmates, and learn from [them], it just made the whole process enjoyable.”

A PhD may be in the future as well, but Cathy plans to take some time to relax first.

For those still in the program, Cathy’s advice is to just keep plugging away. “The instructors are amazing, they’re very willing to help, and just keep on track and you’ll get through.”

Cathy travelled from Riverview, New Brunswick, to attend convocation and enjoyed a vacation at the same time, taking in the sights of Edmonton, Jasper, and Calgary, including a trip through the mountains.

Congratulations, Cathy!



Shannon MacKenzie

Bachelor of Nursing

Shannon travelled from Calgary, Alberta, to attend convocation, and completed her Bachelor of Nursing degree in four years.

She plans to continue working after graduation, and although the health field is undergoing restructuring in her home province, says that her degree will open more doors within a nursing career.

“I might do my Nurse Practitioner [program] or do my master’s later on,” she says.

Meeting new people and making friends was one of the most enjoyable parts of the AU experience for Shannon—with one of the biggest surprises being how easy it was to procrastinate when it came time to study!

Congratulations, Shannon!



Vikas Kukreja

Master of Science, Information Systems

While completing his Master of Science degree, Vikas enjoyed the flexibility of working online—a learning mode that encourages students and instructors to stay in touch after the program is complete.

“I don’t lose any contact with teachers or my classmates, and that was the most enjoyable part,” he says.

There was a learning curve when adjusting to distance education, but “then the second course became so easy,” and subsequent courses easier still.

The degree will allow Vikas to specialize in his field and he has several research ideas in mind for a PhD. For students just starting out in the program, Vikas says that AU’s credibility makes it a good choice. While travelling during his studies, he found that it was one of the few universities mentioned at the Canadian embassy in Dubai.

“The greatest return you get is when you invest in yourself,” he adds, and encourages students to pursue their goals.

Congratulations, Vikas!



DID YOU KNOW?



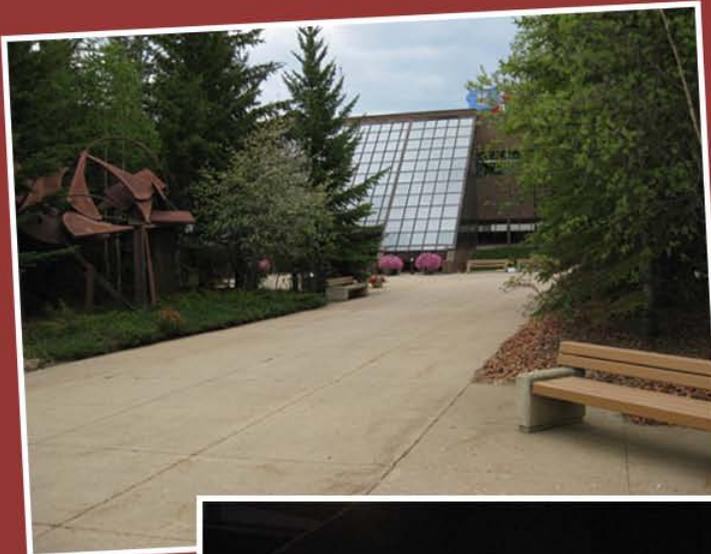
Open AU

Physical fitness, research projects, hockey, environmentally friendly cars: where can you find stories on all these topics and more? At [Open AU](#), Athabasca University’s online publication that “features stories about our students, faculty, research, awards and events.”

Along with fascinating feature stories, you can also find Alumni Profiles, Twitter feeds, and links to AU news. And if you’re an AU student or graduate, you can also submit your own story for publication.

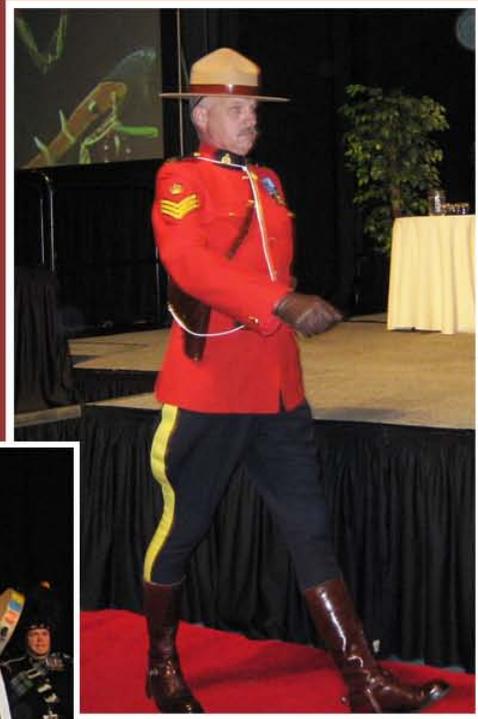
Whether you want to open an account and post comments, keep up on the latest news, or read about the latest titles from AU Press, Open AU is the place to be, so don’t forget to add it to your favourites!

CONVOCATION 2009 – PHOTO ALBUM



The scenic grounds of AU

Escorting the new alumni



Asani raise their voices in song



The latest AU gear!

IN CONVERSATION WITH . . .

Wanda Waterman St. Louis

**James Wallace**

James Wallace is a musician and composer of beautiful, melodic, musical meditations infused with hope and healing. His latest album, Return to Good, was written in response to the events of 9/11. James is also active in promoting music education and environmental awareness. He will soon be touring to promote his new CD.

The following are notes from a conversation James recently had with Wanda Waterman St. Louis.

About *Return to Good*

“Return to Good” is not so much a return to the past as a journey toward what’s real.

On a practical level, at home in New York on 9/11 there was such fear and anxiety and horror and shock. This overtook not just America but the world, and so much of what happened since feels like a wrong turn we made.

I was an active campaigner for John Kerry, and our new president, Barack Obama. My wife and I (both Canadians) naturalized just in time to proudly vote for Barack.

Joseph Campbell said, “The best we can do is lean towards the light,” and I really believe that in terms of the choices we make. On a spiritual level I feel we are living in a time of need for reconnection—we press buttons and “tweet” but we need to remember to smell the flowers.

Musical Training

One of my biggest influences was Dr. Dawson, at the Royal Conservatory in Toronto, who showed me how to distill pure simplicity from the most complex frameworks. Also producers like Brian Eno—I loved his description of the pop song as this three-minute invitation into a garden of sonic delight—and Henry Tate, the historian who opened up my eyes to art at the Museum of Fine Arts.

I grew up singing in choirs and performing in competitions. I graduated from the Royal Conservatory in Toronto with a Gold Medal in Woodwinds, and then, on scholarship, I studied studio production and voice at Berklee. I also took classes at the New England Conservatory and Juilliard.

Instruments

I play different types of flutes and whistles. I found a pear-wood flute in a barn in Vermont and it turned out to be from 1832! I had it restored by Van Houtte in Boston and it has this soft, mellow tone. Out on tour at Newport, I found this 50-cent tin whistle with a wooden fipple and I ended up using it on a recording at Philip Glass Studios.

I do a lot of voice work as both a singer and a narrator. I have a version of “Danny Boy” that’s a bestseller at iTunes. I also perform and write on piano and keyboards, and over the years I’ve added guitar, bass, and percussion. You could say I do a broad range of things, but I mostly sing and play different types of flutes and wind instruments.

Writing Process

Since childhood I’ve heard melodies in my head. I have this muse that draws me to write and it happens anywhere. I could be at the piano, playing solo flute, or riding a train with manuscript paper. I do my best work by recognizing this energy when it arrives—then stepping out of the way so it can unfold. Because I’m trained and have a good ear for pitch, I’m fortunate in that I can work pretty much anywhere and at anytime and be confident of catching the threads to pick up with later.

The National Association for Music Education

I was a music teacher in New York City for years, and some of my students went on to music in college and did the All-State festivals. For many of them music was a lifeline to something positive and tangible. They learned that they could do things they thought weren’t possible and even achieve beyond that. This carried over to other areas of school and in their personal lives.

I had similar experiences growing up where music kept me sane and gave me hope. When I got more involved with production and recording I wanted to continue helping make music education possible for kids because I believe that it’s critical across generations to develop the ability to express emotions, have an aesthetic vocabulary, and draw from both left and right brain hemispheres. Kids with music training tend to do better in school. So I support the MENC and write essays to the papers and public offices. You can find out more at [Uplifting Spirits](#). Another excellent group making a difference is George Lucas’s [Edutopia](#).

Right Conditions

Simplicity is a key to creativity and often the hardest one to achieve. When my wife and I moved to New York we lived in a tiny studio for years and this taught us to focus on what really matters. I find this has carried over into creative pursuits; where is the goal, what is the essence? By uncluttering you let the sun come out; the purpose grows clearer.



photo: janine marshall bolton

AU Profiles:

AU Profiles: Shelley Lawson

Christina M. Frey



“One of the things that appealed to me about Athabasca . . . is that it supports my long-term education plans while allowing me to maintain a rich, full life,” says first-year AU student Shelley Lawson.

And a full life it is. The Anthropology/Women’s Studies major is a single mom to an eight-year-old girl, runs her own alternative healing studio, works part-time at an organic farm, partially home-schools her daughter, and volunteers at her daughter’s school. Moreover, her work with alternative healing methods—dealing with body-mind-spirit connections—is an entirely different world from her cultural studies with AU.

In this interview, she explains how she keeps from getting overwhelmed, and why immersing herself in such different fields is actually helpful.

She also describes her daughter’s non-traditional public school, comparing developments in alternative children’s education to the alternative adult education pioneered by AU.

Shelley, who lives in Salt Spring Island, British Columbia, has been running her own healing studio for several years. She uses alternative healing methods like vibrational healing, reiki, reflexology, acupressure, massage, readings, and Shamanic healing. “I see everyone from chronic back complaints who mostly like massage to childhood abuse sufferers who are looking for a complete approach to healing,” she says. “Sometimes . . . I just listen while people talk.”

Although some might quickly dismiss the concept of body-mind-spirit connections, Shelley disagrees. She points out how much science has increased our knowledge in the past few hundred years, turning age-old theories of flat earth and a geocentric universe on their heads. “With quantum physics we are learning about the probability of not just other senses . . . but other dimensions of thought and reality,” she says. “There is so much we don’t know.”

Her interest in learning even more about the world led her to Athabasca University in 2007. “With the healing studio well underway and Hannah embarking on public school, it seemed . . . time to start using my brain,” she says. “I hadn’t done much [learning]—formal learning, anyway!—since high school.”

Not only is Shelley enthusiastic about her studies, she's also glad for the flexibility that allows her to earn her degree one course at a time.

But although she finds alternative healing “fascinating,” she’s taken her AU studies to a completely different field: cultural studies. The big leap doesn’t faze her; in fact, she’s excited about linking the two. “I am loving the correlations between the two worlds,” she says. “On one hand there is this whole other realm which most of us won’t acknowledge, this whole arena of body-mind-spirit connections . . . and then there is this whole undiscovered past that we are only just learning about.”

She’s constantly amazed by how far we’ve come, and how far we have left to go. “There is so much we don’t know, and so much we refuse to see,” she says.

Not only is Shelley enthusiastic about her studies, she’s also glad for the flexibility that allows her to earn her degree one course at a time. “I’m on the 10-year plan!” she jokes. With her busy life, scheduling is key to keeping it all together. “Use your AUSU Planner,” she advises. “It’s the best!”

Studying happens in the evenings, when she’s often joined by her daughter. “We have a four-day school week here, and Hannah is partially home-schooled,” Shelley says. “We study together a lot.” Doing homework alongside her daughter has been a good experience. While she’s modelling lifelong learning to Hannah, Shelley’s also bringing a little competition into the mix. “She was having a hard time with reading . . . [but] when I brought home two A-pluses . . . that upped the ante for her!” she says.

AU’s alternative delivery goes hand-in-hand with her daughter’s education—it’s a public school, but based on an alternative model. “[It] is parent-directed,” Shelley says, and like AU, “incorporates many of those life-long learning principles.”

At the beginning of the year, parents and teachers work together on an Individualized Learning Plan for each student, supplementing throughout the year with student-led conferences. There are also no report cards. “It’s very innovative learning, much like AU,” Shelley says. “We can travel and still be working on her curriculum . . . having that plan laid out at the beginning of the year makes it easy to bring it with us.”

The flexibility of both her and Hannah’s studies means that extended travel is a possibility. In fact, Shelley is planning to move to Edmonton for six months next year to focus on her BA studies. She hopes to take up to four classes at once, giving her the opportunity for some “classroom time and peer support,” she says. “Even if we are gone for six months, [Hannah] can still be registered [at her school].”

“There is lots of talk right now about what we need to do to prepare young people for the reality of the world they live in,” Shelley adds. She thinks that, just as adult education has changed, the old childhood education model needs revision to keep up with the ever-changing modern world. “[Kids] take in more information in one day than our great-grandparents did in a lifetime,” she says. “That is going to require a different approach than the Industrial Revolution form of public school.”

In the meantime, she’s focusing on raising her daughter, studying the world, and enjoying her busy life. “I love everything I am doing,” she says. “I find it easy . . . okay, maybe not ‘easy’, [but] rewarding.” It’s that attitude which keeps her motivated. “These are all components of a life I love,” she says. “To allow that to be stressful feels counterintuitive!”



*Dear
Barb*

Barbara Godin

Brother Capable of Making Own Decisions

Dear Barb:

My brother is dating a woman who is 10 years older than him. He is 30 years old and hasn't had much dating experience. His girlfriend is 40 and is divorced with two children. I don't think she is the one for him and neither do my parents. There is nothing wrong with her, aside from her age and the fact that she has two children. We just feel she is not the one for him.

We don't want to alienate him, but we don't want him to make a mistake. I believe we have done a good job of keeping our feelings hidden from my brother. Should we just keep quiet and let him do something he will regret, or should we confront him with our concerns?

Thanks, Bonnie

Hey, Bonnie, good to hear from you. In your question you really don't say what your concerns are other than the fact that your brother's girlfriend is 10 years older than him and has two children. As we age it becomes more likely the person we meet will have children from previous marriages or relationships. If you have other concerns my response to your question may change, but since you seem to be mostly concerned with the age difference, let's discuss that.

The fact that your brother has not had a lot of dating experience and has chosen to become involved with this woman, should indicate there is something beyond age that is drawing them together. Do you trust your brother's decisions? How has he done when making decisions in other areas of his life? If your answer is positive, then why would you question this decision?

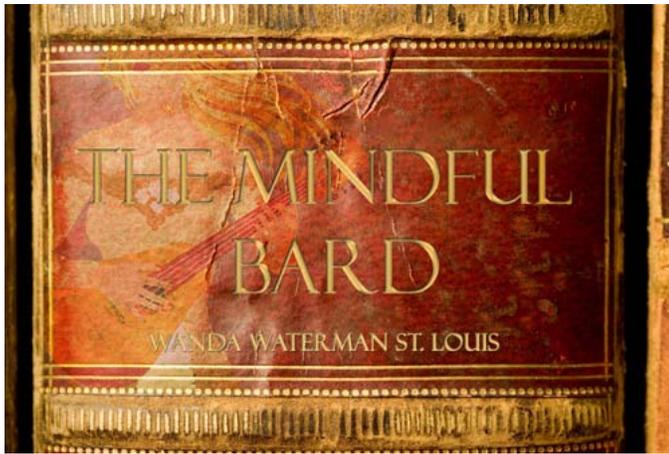
Age is really only a number. If this scenario were reversed, with your brother dating someone 10 years younger, would your response be the same? Possibly not. At 30 years of age your brother should be capable of making the decision of whom to date.

Therefore I would say you and your parents are right in keeping your opinions to yourself. If there are other issues with this woman, your brother most likely will discover them over time. If it turns out that the relationship doesn't work, hopefully he will have learned something from it. As you say, he hasn't had a lot of dating experience, so this could be an opportunity for him to learn more about himself and what he wants in a potential partner.

I hope I was able to help, but with the limited information you provided I'm not sure how helpful I have been.

Good luck, Bonnie

Email your questions to voice@voicemagazine.org. Some submissions may be edited for length or to protect confidentiality; your real name and location will never be printed. This column is for entertainment only. The author is not a professional counsellor and this column is not intended to take the place of professional advice.



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

Book: Ian McKay, *Reasoning Otherwise: Leftists and the People's Enlightenment in Canada, 1890-1920*

Publisher: Between the Lines, Toronto

Publication date: 2008

How to Think Differently in the Face of Confounding Chicanery

"In my eyes this book will find its place by generating new conversations and debates . . . as a means of reimagining the past of the left, and anticipating its future. This is indeed an urgent task as we debate not just the characteristics of this particular formation of the left but the future hopes and prospects of those that are yet to come."

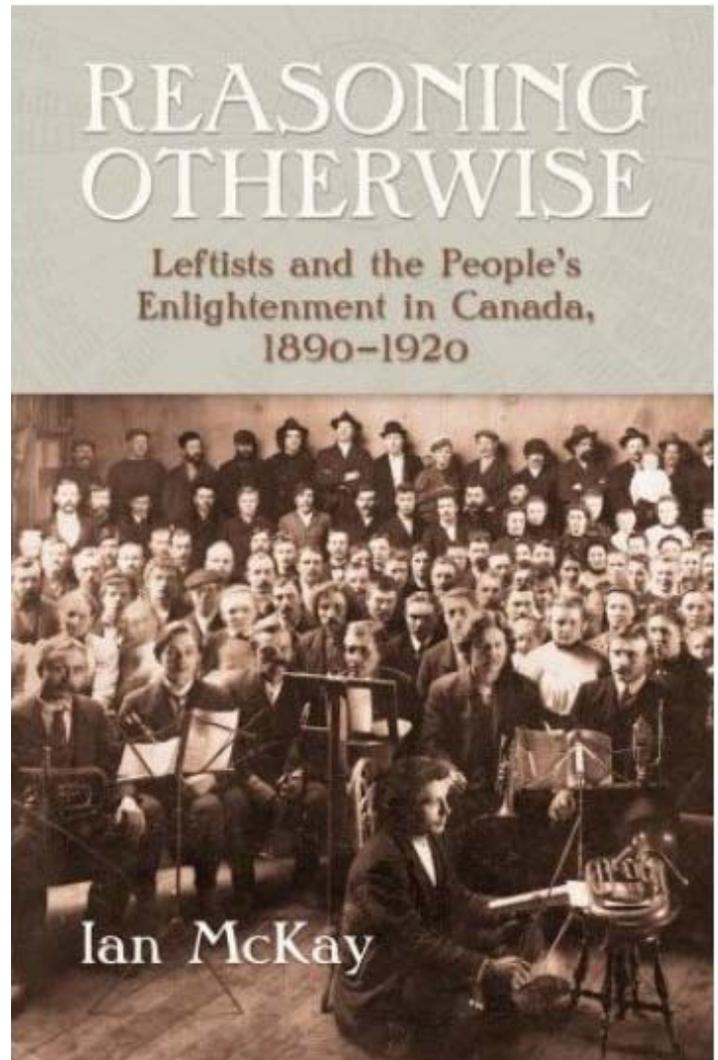
Ian McKay, from the introduction, *Reasoning Otherwise*

My home province just elected an NDP government. Until now Nova Scotia has never had a socialist government despite a feisty working populace, labour issues galore, and its role as the spawning grounds of some of the most brilliant and persuasive minds in Canadian socialism.

What was the holdup? Whereas *Reasoning Otherwise* may not directly answer that question, reading about the journey from the social reform movements of the late nineteenth century to the Winnipeg General Strike and its aftermath goes a long way toward helping us figure it out.

McKay traces the development of socialist thought in Canada through a number of channels, asserting that without Marx, Darwin, and the Darwin-inspired Spencer, the first formation may have looked markedly different; the influence of these thinkers convinced many that socialism was not only inevitable but scientific, that its attainment would be as necessary a part of *Homo sapiens* evolution as the ability to walk erect.

This careful study of the first socialist formation in this country reveals the movement as being amazingly multi-faceted, crossing gender, class, and religious lines. Although there were tensions



between Christian socialists and those who believed that real socialism naturally prohibited belief in God,

there does not appear to have been much rancour between these two; the perceived necessity of the proposed solution supplanted differences in the rationale behind it.

This is no misty-eyed nostalgic romp; McKay writes openly of the sexism, classism, and racism that plagued the left during those years and to which many on the left were obviously blind.

The main thing that united the left was a resistance to the way of thinking perpetrated against them on every hand by a liberal capitalist order that was just as ingenious back then as it is today in cloaking greed and cruelty in the splendid robes of freedom, individualism, egalitarianism, and family values.

The galvanizing circumstances that drove many to socialism—child labour, perilous working conditions, extreme poverty, and employers' utter lack of remorse—were ugly enough in themselves to sweep aside any illusions about the liberal order. What Leacock referred to as "the elephantiasis of individualism" was presented to the masses as something great and marvellous at best and disarmingly benign at worst.

The people weren't buying it. The title of the book refers to the importance of the process by which large numbers of people were persuaded to question the propaganda of the reigning order. Today's socialist will delight in reading about factory workers who in their few leisure hours greedily devoured the latest books on socialist thought and enthusiastically participated in debates in the press. Publications like *Western Clarion* and *Cotton's Weekly* served as sounding boards for both intellectuals and ordinary folk to voice both their pain and their resistance.

"This cohort of socialists," writes McKay, "loved to dissect the hypocrisies, shallowness, and misrepresentations of the capitalists and their liberal apologists. Beneath the liberals' pious pronouncements about individualism, their pathetic self-help books, and their pompous self-serving speeches could be found the barely concealed facts of exploitation and repression."

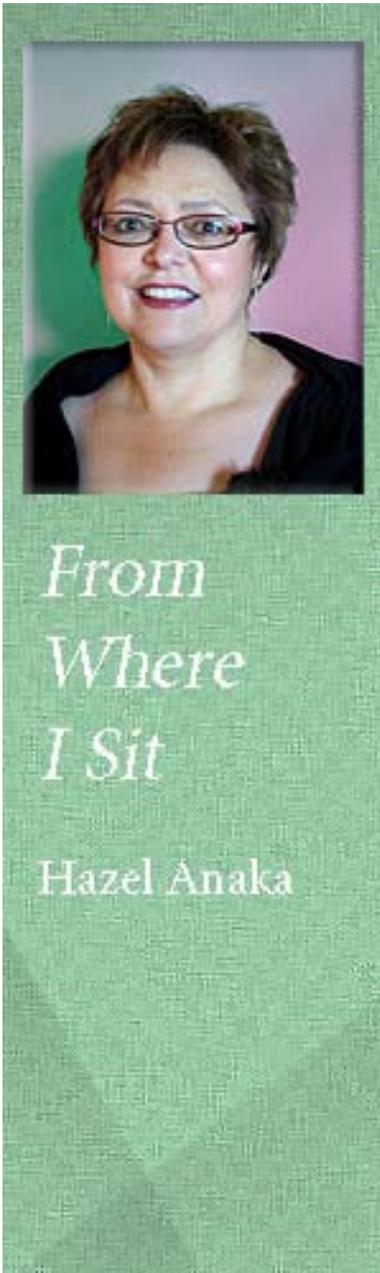
In the end the movement was doomed by poor public relations (railing against God and religion and in favour of free love alienated much of the working class), misguided utopianism, a dependence on a scientific socialism independent of historical patterns, and a tidal wave of negative propaganda from a government determined to maintain a capitalist democracy at all costs.

This is no misty-eyed nostalgic romp; McKay writes openly of the sexism, classism, and racism that plagued the left during those years and to which many on the left were obviously blind. In retrospect we can see how socialism has taken on more humanist values in response to the changing of the lens through which we view social problems.

This is all good to know. For the next time.

Reasoning Otherwise manifests six of *The Mindful Bard's* criteria for books well worth reading: 1) it confronts existing injustices; 2) it renews my enthusiasm for positive social action; 3) it gives me tools enabling me to respond with compassion and efficacy to the suffering around me; 4) it displays an engagement with and compassionate response to suffering; 5) it stimulates my mind; and 6) 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. If I agree with your recommendation, I'll thank you online.



Not Most People

When was the last time you were silent? Or sat in silence? Have you ever spent more than an hour or two without the companionship of the radio or television? Have you ever laid down your cell phone and your iPod?

What about non-verbal communication? How long can you go without emailing, Twittering, texting, and checking or updating Facebook status? Have you tried?

The other day I saw a 20-something texting while on her bike waiting for the traffic light to change. A day later I saw another young woman riding her bike through a busy crosswalk while talking on the phone squeezed between her ear and her shoulder. I've seen a pair of young girls walking down the street together while one is busy yakking on the phone.

So what's the common denominator here besides the fact that all three examples included females? I could just as easily have noticed male examples, I'm sure. The overriding point in my mind is the pull of the connection, the need to know everything about everyone at every minute.

It takes a heap of bad manners and rudeness, in my opinion, to be in your company and yap on the phone to someone else instead. It takes a lack of common sense and an abundance of youthful invincibility to believe that you can negotiate city traffic while distracted and still get home without a body cast or an ambulance ride.

Where does the multi-tasking end and the mindfulness begin? For me it's begun, yet again, in retreating. I'm spending a few days in Edmonton, condo-sitting while Hilary is in Tokyo. She doesn't own a TV or radio and must have taken her iPod with her for the long flight. I brought my laptop but have chosen silence over playing a DVD or listening to a radio station online.

This isn't a grab for either pity or admiration. It is simply me acknowledging a basic truth for me: I crave this silence, this time apart from my regular, "real" life to reflect and regroup. To hear and welcome my own thoughts rather than missing, overriding, ignoring, or censoring them. I've sent four emails out of necessity and made about that many phone calls home. Whole days have gone by without speaking a single word.

Instead I read deeply what I may have skimmed superficially at home with the TV providing background not-so-white noise. I'm using this time to journal as a way to capture and make sense of my life and work through some Stuff that has been simmering away beneath the surface. I'm mindful of what I'm eating and am sleeping when I'm tired rather than on some arbitrary schedule.

I am fully aware how lucky I am to have the time and opportunity to do this. I'm also aware that most people would not willingly choose this as a great way to spend a few days. Today, for that reason, I'm glad I'm not most people, from where I sit.

The Interviewer

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

written and illustrated by Wanda Waterman St. Louis

Rockhead #29: Yer in My Seat

Reuben grabs Gord's hat and gets right down into the jerk's face with his morning coffee breath (which Kush has always said could peel industrial grade paint from concrete) and snarls:

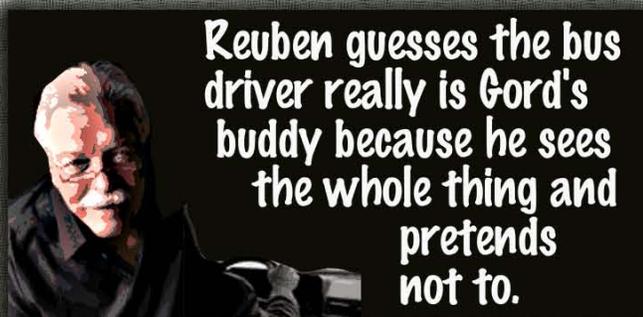


The guy acts like he's frozen. He really wants to fly outa there...

...but his friend would tease him, so he just sits there breathing in Reuben's caustic halitosis.



Reuben gently removes them both to a seat down the aisle.



Reuben guesses the bus driver really is Gord's buddy because he sees the whole thing and pretends not to.



Yup. Gut me some good buds.



It's how I gut to be where I am today.

next: *Reversible Damage*



It makes my hips look slimmer.



AUSU THIS MONTH



Annual AGM Held

As you probably already know from the AGM Report put out by the *Voice*, AUSU held its annual general meeting on March 23, 2009.

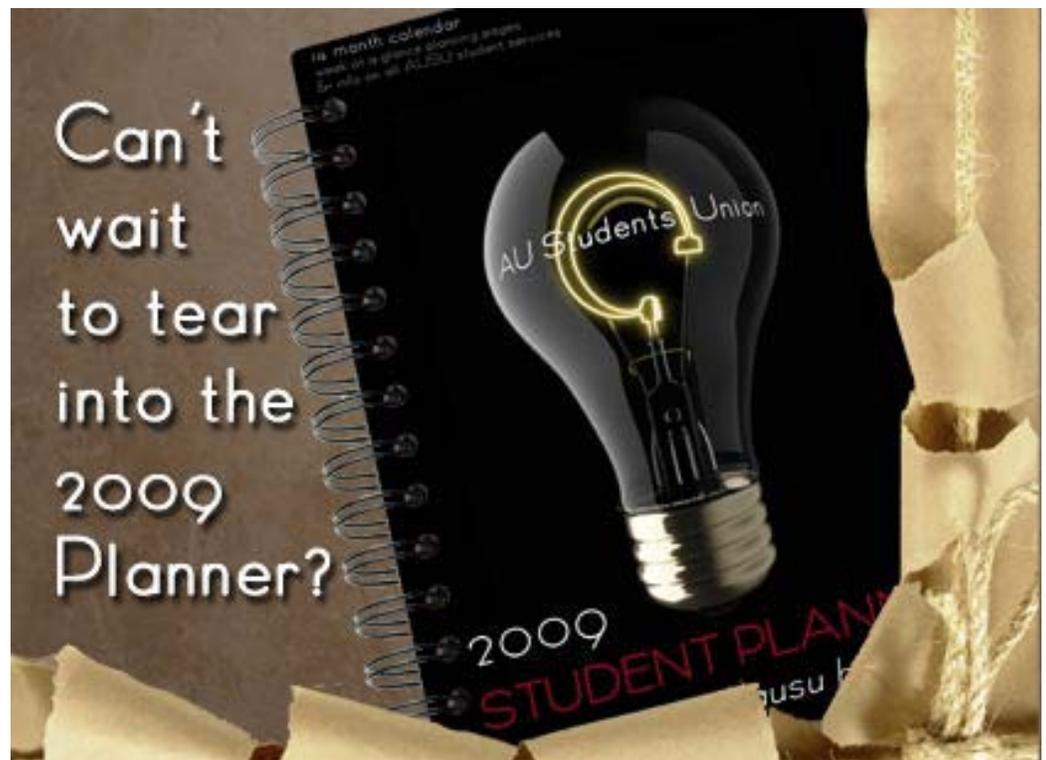
In that meeting a number of important revisions to the definitions of AUSU membership occurred, to make sure that the Councillors you elect are able to represent you during General Meetings and so that if you're a student in an AU collaborative undergrad program, you'll still be counted as an AUSU member even during a term that doesn't have any AUSU courses scheduled.

Also, our fees were changed from being \$8, \$16, or \$24 per course depending on the number of credits, to being a flat \$3 per credit, an increase of a dollar per course for most students. With this extra money, AUSU should be able to begin moving forward with a lot of desired programs that have been held up due to our staffing not being as big as our ambitions.

Also at the AGM, some good discussion was held with respect to email accounts, an issue we know a lot of you are concerned about, and we'll keep working with the university to see if a reasonable solution can be found among all of the priority issues AU needs to deal with.

Media Committee Started

Council has approved the terms of reference for the new media committee. This group, including your *Voice* editor, will be working hard to deliver new multimedia content to you on a regular basis. Our hope is to bring forward a more engaging, interactive AUSU, one that can help you get everything you want out of your education.



AU Fees Increasing

On March 27, the AUGC approved the new fees that will come into effect in September 2009. The bottom line is you'll be paying an additional \$29 per 3-credit course, including the increase to the AUSU fees. This includes an \$18 increase to base tuition and a \$10 increase to the Learning Resources fee. AUSU has noted

concerns with the university continuing to increase fees by the maximum allowable by Alberta legislation, but has agreed that lower quality service is not a viable alternative.

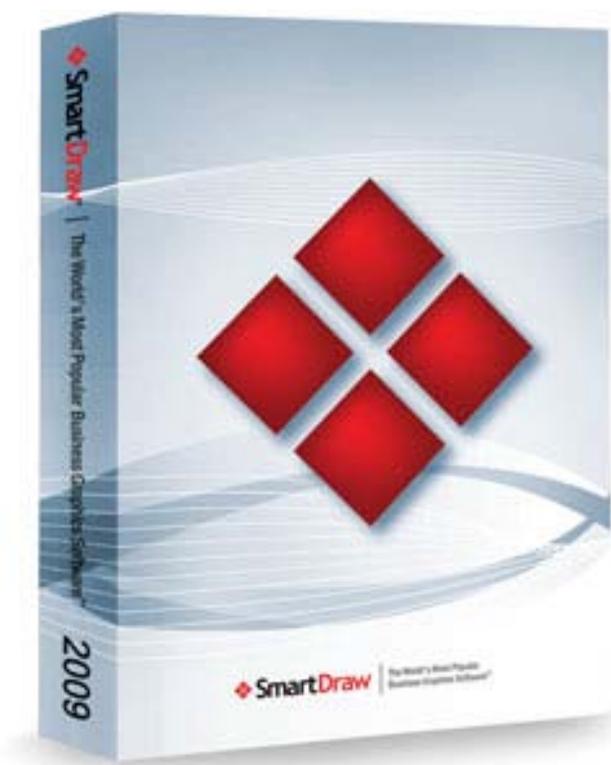
More concerning is the increase to the Learning Resources fee. AUSU will continue to press for details on how this fee relates to the prices the university has to pay for your textbooks and online materials.

au.world Closes

AUSU has noted the closing of the au.world publication with sadness, and has brought this to the governing council of AU. In its place, AU has begun a new magazine called *AU Open* which, rather than being strictly student focussed, contains a mix of stories for alumni, investors, and students. We have strong hopes that AU will increase the focus of this new magazine to be at least as relevant to current students as the old au.world was.

2009 AUSU Handbook/Planners

Members are snapping up our 2009 AUSU Handbook/Planner. Now in full colour, it has more course tracking pages, brief guides to the citation styles you'll need for your essays at AU, and of course, all the important AU dates and addresses that you need to know. You can order your own copy by going to <http://www.ausu.org/handbook/index.php>



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.

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.

In addition, we have recently purchased some steel water bottles. With all the concerns about BPA in clear plastic, the decision was made to go stainless steel. Cheaper and more environmentally friendly than purchasing plastic bottles of water, fill up your AUSU bottle to keep thirst away no matter where you're travelling.

AUSU Lock Loan Program

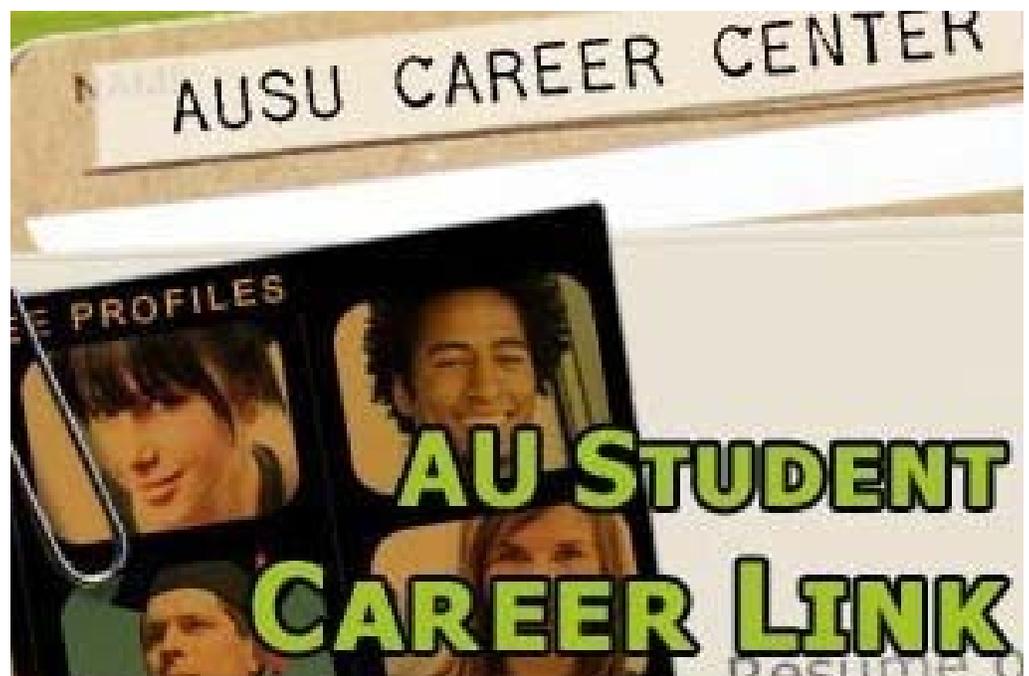
Still running, and still popular, the lock loan program can allow you to rest easy knowing your valuables are safe if you're taking an exam at the Calgary or Edmonton campus. The locks can be set to any combination, and are loaned to people without any deposit, but we ask that you please remember to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

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



At Home: BC Health Minister backs private care

When it comes to Canadians paying for private health services, BC's new health minister thinks it should be an option.

"I do not have any objection to people using their own money just as they do for dental care or sending their kids to private school," Kevin Falcon, BC's new Health Minister, told reporters.

For Falcon, allowing patients to pay for extended, private-sector health care is just one way of helping "improve the public delivery of services."

Falcon was appointed as health minister on June 10, and his statement comes as part of his first major interview in the role. As the Canadian health care system faces continuing service cuts and longer wait times, the issue of private care has come under increasing scrutiny.

In one current court case, the government is being sued by private clinics "for not allowing doctors to accept private payment from patients in private clinics."

The claim by private clinics is that "legislation preventing patients from paying for expedited care in private clinics is unconstitutional." The clinics are hoping to have a previous Supreme Court of Canada ruling apply in BC; that case saw the court overturn Quebec's ban on "private insurance for medically necessary services."

In Foreign News: Sears tower goes green

The Sears Tower, Chicago's iconic 110-storey landmark, is going green. The building won't change its familiar bronze and black colours, but will instead be adding wind turbines to its rooftop as part of an energy-reduction plan.

The retrofit of the '70s-era building is expected to cost \$350 million dollars and "reduce electricity use in the tower by 80 percent over five years," as *The New York Times* reports. Along with installing wind turbines, the green renovations will include upgrades to the internal lighting, glass exterior, and the cooling, heating, and elevator systems.

In a building that houses 4.5 million square feet of retail and office space, even small changes make a big difference, and the green renovations are expected to set an example of what can be done with other aging skyscrapers.

"If we can take care of one building that size, it has a huge impact on society," said Adrian Smith, an architect with the firm behind similar renovations at the Sears Tower. "It is a village in and of itself."

EDUCATION NEWS

Ryan Pike



CASA outlines priorities for upcoming year

CALGARY (Special to CUP) - Canada's second-largest student advocacy organization will prioritize access and child-care issues in the next year, following the decision reached at a week-long policy and strategy session at the University of Calgary.

Post-secondary institutions' students' unions and associations representatives from across the nation attended the Canadian Alliance of Student Associations policy and strategy conference last week. CASA national director Arati Sharma explained the

meeting allowed membership to identify several lobbying priorities for the coming year.

"Affordability and upfront grants are one of them, and that's where we're talking about access grants," said Sharma. "Upfront grants are for students from under-represented backgrounds, such as low-income, first-generation [students]. Another policy-slash-advocacy priority is Metis, Inuit, and First Nations groups and their access to post-secondary education, their barriers, their challenges, and how we can meet them."

Although primarily an undergraduate organization, CASA also tackles graduate student issues. Many graduate schools were represented in Calgary, and discussion centred around tri-council funding through the three main federal scholarships: the Social Science and Humanities Research Council of Canada (SSHRC), the Natural Science and Engineering Research Council of Canada (NSERC) and the Canadian Institute of Health Research (CIHR).

The delegation additionally focused on another pertinent issue for masters and PhD students.

"We're also looking at child care on campus, which was an issue that was brought up by graduate students that were observing and also members, and they actually affect all students," said Sharma.

Sharma stressed that student financial aid continues to be a priority for CASA. Much of the discussion focused on the federal government's phasing-out of the Canadian Millennium Scholarship Foundation and its resources, as well as access to aid for part-time students.

"We actually developed a working group on issues surrounding part-time students and the fact that sometimes they're actually not eligible for grants, bursaries or scholarships depending on which one it is. Most of the ones that are available for students are only for full-time students, as [are] loans and student financial aid. It's much harder, and sometimes impossible, for a part-time student to get a loan or access student financial aid compared to a full-time student," said Sharma.

Kay She, University of Calgary Students' Union vice-president external, attended not only as an elected official and conference host, but also as vice-chair of Council of Albertan University Students. She noted that the organizations share some common goals due to an overlap in membership.

As a VP external's job revolves around lobbying the provincial and federal governments on behalf of students, She said working through a national body is sometimes the best option.

"Last year one of the huge gains that I thought CASA had a huge part in was the \$2 billion in deferred maintenance funding that [the U of C] got from the government," said She, noting that the SU pays \$46,000 in membership fees annually. "That was our Level 1 priority for us to lobby on and it was so important and I just think that University of Calgary students get a bang for their buck when the Students' Union pays [CASA] membership fees because this is something that U of C students would not be able to achieve on their own."

Tina Robichaud, of l'Université de Moncton in New Brunswick, was elected as chairperson for the upcoming year.

CLICK OF THE WRIST – Hair

It's been 42 years since the musical *Hair* had its first public performance, and though the play centred on issues of war and questioning authority, the "most dramatic visible element" was the actors' long, flowing locks. Here's a look at our modern fascination with hair.

World Beard and Moustache Championships

The 2009 World Beard and Moustache Championships were recently held in Anchorage, Alaska. From beards shaped like snowshoes, to the Fu Manchu category, these guys clearly take their facial hair very, very seriously.

Longest Hair in the World

Tran Van Hay, a 71-year-old man from Vietnam, claims to have the world's longest hair. His locks measure approximately 6.3 metres, or 20 feet and six inches. Apparently, he hasn't washed his hair in over a decade—but as you can see from this video, at least he doesn't have to worry about brushing it.

Longest Beard

In 2008, a man from Surrey set the Guinness world record for the longest beard, surpassing the record set in 1997. This video is interesting because the man's family also explains some of the social and religious reasons behind the record-breaking beard.

Bad Hair Tribute

This slideshow is a tribute to all those terrible hair-salon books—the ones where you can pick the latest style from thousands of tiny photos. As if some of today's offerings aren't bad enough, this crop is from the '70s. Gotta love those sideburns.

CLASSIFIEDS

Classifieds are free for AU students! Contact voice@voicemagazine.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@voicemagazine.org

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