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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.



LOVE: MADE FOR TV?

A.K. Flynn



Hollywood runs on love. Every TV show and movie involves some kind of romantic entanglement and every magazine cover is flooded with photos of happy and not-so-happy couples. Considering that all I know of romantic love comes from what I've seen in the movies and on television, it should come as no surprise that I have some very skewed ideals when it comes to prospective partners.

Recently a representative for a company that cleans floor mats and uniforms hit on me, and when I say hit on me I mean flirted with me so shamelessly that even I, the girl who could find Don Juan frustratingly vague, could deduce his intentions.

As he leaned across my desk and complimented my hair and told me how it was a travesty that I'm not yet married and downright unbelievable that I don't have a boyfriend, I startled myself with the realization that if he should ask me out on a date, I would probably say yes.

Why was this quick, flickering thought so stunning? He doesn't fit the idealized image of the perfect man that I had always carried with me, that's why.

He isn't the boyishly handsome, slightly dorky but smart and snappishly funny romantic comedy male lead that I am subconsciously waiting for, nor is he anywhere in the ballpark.

He is far from boyish with lines threatening the corners of his eyes, his cornball lines do not snap, any dorkiness is overshadowed by his over-exercised body (he is muscled enough to warrant the term "beefy") and—*shudder*—he has the distinct orange glow of one who tans. Truth be known, I have an unfounded mistrust of all men who tan. Sorry, George Hamilton.

Ross and Rachel, Harry and Sally, these are the modern age's archetypes of romantic love. A funny and charming man falls for a lovely, beguiling woman. So perfectly matched are they that the term soul mates is bandied about but alas, the hero and heroine must blunder through hilarious misunderstandings and heart-rending tiffs (enough to fill two and a half acts) before finally realizing what the audience knew all along: they are in love.

I wish real relationships could be that simple.

Imagine a world where that cute guy you've had your eye on likes you back and everything you say to him is witty and charming. Also, you're always lit in the most flattering way and a fan is hidden out of sight in order to tousle your hair just so.

In real life my experiences with men have been far less sweetly romantic and more awkwardly tragic.

For example, there was my third grade crush who I believed too childish to be ready for my affections, or anyone else's.

Like a Mack truck careening out of nowhere, one day in the hallway of our elementary school, he offered a little gold-painted ring to a painfully pretty classmate of ours, committing himself to her with such passion as to put grown men to shame. I was, and remain, gobsmacked.

That was the first time, and by no means last time, I considered that *I* was the problem. That I had indeed chosen the right boy but that *I* was not the right girl—that *I* was not wanted.

Cut to middle school, where I alternately pretended the Backstreet Boys were my boyfriends and gleefully waited for high school. Even Screech had a girlfriend on *Saved by the Bell* and if one show gave an unerringly accurate depiction of high school, it was *Saved by the Bell*.

High school was not what I hoped it to be, although it was an improvement over all the years before it: boys were actually talking to me now. One boy in particular stood out; let's call him Joe.

Joe went out of his way to talk to me. He asked to borrow my notes, he asked for help with homework assignments, he got me in trouble for talking in class. He was funny and weird and perfect. And he had a girlfriend.

My friends, as friends do, assured me that Joe really did like me and the moment that he and his girlfriend broke up, he would be mine . . . Who could've figured that they would date all through high school with me pining all the while?

What was different about Joe as opposed to the crushes that came before him, including the Backstreet Boys, was that I could talk to him. I wasn't a shy, mute mess with him. Yes, he gave me butterflies in my stomach and I would blush just from seeing him but I was myself around him and he seemed to like me even still.

I should've taken that as a boon to my self-confidence but, like any other teenage girl, I managed to interpret it as a slight. If he liked me as much as he seemed to, why wasn't he leaving his girlfriend? Why wasn't he asking me out? Why was our time spent together confined to the four walls of the classroom? Why wasn't I *enough*?

Much hasn't changed over the years. I find someone to spend weeks or even months yearning for only to have things fizzle out or, more depressingly, stop just as quickly as it started—often by finding out the guy had something or someone else entirely in mind. Again, I am just not enough.

Have I given up on my ideals in favour of harsh cold reality by envisioning myself with the hackneyed cleaning rep? Am I ready to stop chasing the men who fit the basic structure of my dream man in favour of one who looks like a muscled orange?

You may think I'm being a bit extreme here, equating a single date with a man I find unattractive as a fundamental shift in ideals and ambitions, but take it from a girl whose total list of crushes in her entire life (not including the Backstreet Boys) numbers under 10, that even picturing myself with this beefy fellow is highly disconcerting.

Maybe, I thought as I gawped at Mr. Orange, *I'm enough for him*.

After he left, and the hazy glow of finding out someone thinks I'm hot dissipated, I began to wonder, is he enough for me?



What made Ross and Rachel and Harry and Sally so perfect was that they were perfect for each other. They had that magical spark, that mystical balance of chemistry and biology; they could not be any more or any less perfect for each other.

Sure, I could go out with this man and all the while have my fingers crossed hoping someone better came along. Or I could do as I've been doing and wait for the perfect match.

It may be a naive, romanticized, and lonely choice but if it took Harry and Sally 12 years to get it right and if Ross and Rachel managed to find each other after decades filled with miscommunication and famous hairstyles, at least I know I'm in good company if I don't settle for second best.

Perfect romance may only be in Hollywood scripts, but how will I know for sure unless I wait to see how my third act turns out?

ON THE HILL

Sandra Livingston



In the Closets of the Nation

Is it possible to defend someone's personal freedom by taking away their right to choose? That's the decision Ottawa may soon face on the issue of banning the burka and the niqab.

The Muslim Canadian Congress is asking the federal government to ban the two garments in public. As the *Globe and Mail* reports, the group says the practice of covering women's faces in public "has no place in a society that supports gender equality."

The point has been made that concealing identity is a public safety issue, but the central issue seems to be women's equality. As Farzana Hassan, a spokesperson for the Congress, told reporters, "If a government claims to uphold equality between men and women, there is no reason for them to support a practice that marginalizes women."

Do these garments marginalize and suppress women? Yes—if women are forced to wear them. In many instances that's the case. Whether it's a cultural practice more than a religious one (as Ms. Hassan says), there's no denying that the threat of violence, or even death, is often very real for women who protest.

But what if a woman *chooses* to wear one? Clearly, when it comes to proving identity, laws must be followed. In court, when voting, at a traffic stop, or passing airport security, to name a few. And in situations where a person may pose a threat, such as a stranger entering a primary school, we must have the right to clearly identify them.

Yet what of the woman who, for her own reasons, cultural or religious, is more comfortable in such clothing, who chooses to wear it at the grocery store or while taking her children to the local playground? Does the state have the right to ban a private individual's cultural dress that does not pose "a clear and present danger," as this *New York Times* article asked?

It's true that forcing a woman to cover her face undermines her identity and erodes her rights. What, then, could be said of a law that denies her the right to choose?

IN CONVERSATION WITH . . .

Wanda Waterman St. Louis



Chris Smith, Part II

Chris Smith is a Scottish neoclassical composer, a career he embraced after having served as a drummer for a number of major rock bands. His exquisite performances and the beautifully crafted music videos that accompany his music have appeared on a number of television networks.

He recently put out his second album, Piano Passion and Middle Age Angst, reviewed in The Voice last week.

Recently he took the time to talk with Wanda Waterman St. Louis; this is the second half of the interview.

Mesmerizing Musical Experiences

I remember the first really big gig I played with Dougie MacLean. The venue was Edinburgh Castle, to an audience of ten thousand. The castle was superbly lit as the backdrop to the stage, and the atmosphere was electric. The PA was over 100,000 watts with 50 huge cabinets per side. Motorized television cameras darted on high-speed wires suspended above the crowd. When we were announced the crowd went wild—the noise was deafening. I remember feeling like a thousand volts of electricity were rushing through my veins.

There have been so many great gigs. I really enjoy travelling. In 1996 I did some gigs in Russia with guitar looper David Allison. As guests of the government we were looked after by the mayor's office, and each day David and I were obliged to attend social functions organized by that office. There was a serious drinking culture there—champagne breakfasts, carafes of vodka with lunch, bottles of cognac with dinner, and more champagne in the sauna with supper.

One day we were taken to the local pedagogical institute where we were initiated as Cossacks. This involved drinking a half pint of neat vodka in one go, kissing all of the girls in the room (around 30 of them), and then hurdling an obstacle. After performing well I was given my Cossack boots, which unfortunately were two sizes too big.

Heavy drinking ensued and eventually David and I made our way across the city by foot to the local television studio where we were to be interviewed that evening with the aid of an interpreter. They asked who I had played with in my career. I explained that I had played and recorded with Nazareth. Nazareth, unknown to me, was more famous than the Beatles in Russia. To this day I have no idea what was lost in translation, but the following night at the jazz club 300 rockers in biker jackets turned up at our gig to see Nazareth.

I toured in the States regularly over a period of five years playing drums for Dougie MacLean. One of the most mesmerizing gigs was the Telluride Bluegrass Festival in Colorado. We played to around 20 thousand people in a box canyon that rose up to 14,500 feet. We had to have oxygen on stage to keep lucid. Other artists on the bill included Emmylou Harris and Nancy Griffiths.

The Videos

The first video was *Fantasy*. After composing my first piano concerto I set about trying to hire an orchestra to record it for me. I couldn't find one orchestra in Britain that was prepared to even listen to it. The head of a prevalent Scottish orchestra I took out to dinner told me he thought I was "a destructive aberration" and that he would certainly not entertain the prospect of recording anything of mine.

I told him that I understood it might be a little peculiar for a person with no musical training to write a piano concerto, but why "destructive"? He told me I was a terrible example to those who sought classical music education and that I shouldn't be able to compose the way I do.



I sent the composition to Rusty Holloway, leader of The Studio Orchestra at the University of Tennessee, who took on the recording of the project without hesitation. I filmed half of the video in the magnificent ballroom of Kinross House on the banks of Loch Leven and the other half in Knoxville. In this video I wanted to portray the idea of a pianist being helped by the ghost of a long-dead composer.

Consolation is my latest video. It was shot by Ewan and Alasdair Meldrum, professional filmmakers from Edinburgh (Scotland's capital). They spent a year in the Scottish mountains time-lapsing the astounding beauty of the Highlands.

The Proper Conditions for Creative Output

I live in a lovely rural Perthshire village. I have a downstairs living room that I use as my studio. I crave solitude and silence but rarely get it, being the father of a nine-year-old daughter. I love red wine (too much), especially old French like Château Margaux and Spanish Rioja. Wine certainly does *not* help the compositional process.

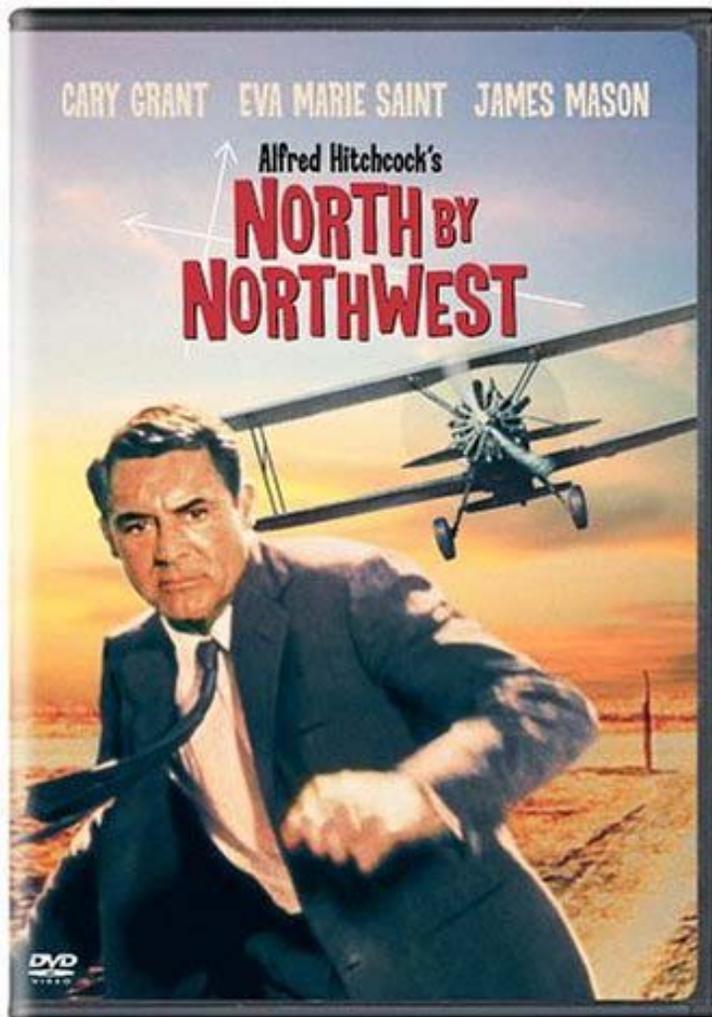
On Composing

Composing is usually a series of tragedies punctuated by the occasional success. I delete most of my ideas. I write using a piano and recording software called Cubase. With Cubase you can draw notes on the screen with a pen and give them a sound (piano, strings etc.) When composing is going well it's very fast and I can complete a piece in an evening.

I think it was Bill Wyman of the Rolling Stones who said he didn't write anything, he just pulled ideas from the ether. I have had many experiences like this, when I have virtually no recollection of writing a completed piece. Generally, in order to succeed there has to be an emotional charge. My best pieces originated from great personal sadness.

SATURDAY NIGHT AT THE (OLD) MOVIES

Christina M. Frey



Part 1: Old What?

As the weather moves toward winter, the lure of the outdoors starts to diminish. In my mind, there's no better way to spend a chilly evening than curled up on the couch with a bowl of popcorn and a good movie. The problem is, I'm having difficulty finding a movie I actually enjoy. The fault is entirely the responsibility of Operation: Films We Need to See.

It's a project that's been ongoing in our family for over a year. Last year while I was browsing the movie section of the local library, I noticed an old film, *North by Northwest*. It's a Hitchcock thriller in which Cary Grant, in a double case of mistaken identity, is on the run from the bad guys and the law. It had suspense, romance, and Cary Grant. I couldn't go wrong!

But when my husband and I plugged it in that night, something happened. As we watched Cary Grant flee his pursuers across Mount Rushmore, a light went on. "Hey, that's just like that *Family Guy* episode!" we shouted in unison.

Then suddenly, we paused. No, the *Family Guy* episode was like the Hitchcock film. And then we realized: we knew the parody of a classic film, but

not the original. We hadn't even recognized it as parody when we'd seen the TV episode the first time. (The title of the episode was even "North by North Quahog," but we hadn't understood the connection.) How many times had this happened? How many parodies, songs, quotes, and the like were familiar to us, yet we'd never known the source?

"Uneducated" is often bandied around as a description of the current generation, and Hollywood's usually one focus of blame. Ironically, though, it seems as though North Americans are equally unschooled where film is concerned. Hollywood isn't just a modern influence, but has played a big role in Western culture for decades.

This isn't just in the areas of manners and social mores; quotations, songs, expressions, and plot lines from classic films have become so embedded in everyday culture that we don't pay them special notice. We began to realize just how undereducated we were in classic film. How many classic movies had made a significant impact on popular culture, or had set the stage for the various film genres or elements we see today, yet we'd never even heard of them?

This experience culminated in Operation: Films We Need to See. The American Film Institute (AFI) created two [Top 100 American Movie Lists](#) (one in 1998, and an updated version in 2007), and we've been slowly working our way through the list. We're determined to see every film the AFI recommended, and to try to figure out what makes those films so historically, culturally, or cinematographically significant.

We're about halfway through, and it's been not only entertaining but also very instructive. Although we've loved some, hated others, and puzzled over a few, the overall experience has been enlightening—and it hasn't been limited to two hours on the couch.

Even better than the movie itself (and in some cases, much better!) has been the accompanying research we usually end up doing. We didn't enjoy *The French Connection* (except for the opportunity to see a much younger Gene Hackman!), but we later learned that its iconic car chase scene has probably influenced crime movies for years. In fact, many of the older movies have set precedents: often, the films and even genres we see today are variations on the formula.



Doing a little digging has yielded some surprising relationships, too. Since many of "today's" actors and actresses come from old acting families, we'll often recognize a surname or two in the credits. After a quick search of Wikipedia, we discover that Jamie Lee Curtis is the daughter of the murdered woman in Hitchcock's thriller *Psycho*.

Non-familial ties are also interesting. Did you know that Victor Fleming, who directed most of *The Wizard of Oz*, also was the director for *Gone with the Wind*? We'll often spot an actor or actress who "looks familiar," and our inner geek won't rest until we discover that, yes indeed, the maid in *Rear Window* was the "I don't get it" shopper who appeared for five minutes in *Miracle on 34th Street*.

We're not only familiarizing ourselves with films and people who have laid the foundation for modern Hollywood, we're also noticing more technical aspects of film production. Without the modern-day technology to fill in the gaps, filmmakers years ago had to rely on other tricks to keep the viewers watching. For instance, there are often fewer scene changes and fewer settings. In a few movies (*Twelve Angry Men* and *Rear Window* come to mind), the majority of the film occurs in one setting. The focus is on the characters' interpersonal relationships, and we really become invested in who these people are, since we're not being distracted by changing scenery.

One of the biggest benefits of the project has been the conversations it's spawned. Old movies—and the spinoff topics that tend to evolve as we talk about people, places, techniques, and culture—is one subject area that *doesn't* involve family, or my husband's work, or my work. If true relaxation involves escaping from the everyday, then Operation: Films We Need to See has given us the opportunity to place ourselves in a different world, still connected to our own, but in a different sphere.

As the winter progresses, what better way to connect with family—and society—than by immersing ourselves in classic film? This series will highlight some of the better old movies available, and give some background as to *why* they're culturally significant.

Where to find classic films? It's easier than you might think. Your video store may only offer a small collection of classics, but don't let that daunt you. First, check your local library: most allow patrons to borrow DVDs or VHS tapes, and many have a surprisingly good selection of older movies. There's also the [Athabasca University library](#), which offers certain films on both DVD and VHS. Finally, don't forget to keep an eye on your local television listings. Even if you don't have premium cable, the non-network channels will occasionally run classic films. If you have access to [Turner Classic Movies](#) channel (it's more widely available in the US than in Canada, but some Canadian providers offer it), you're in luck: it constantly plays old or classic films (some of which are better than others).

In honour of October, the next instalment will review some spooky classics. Until then, happy watching!

Sister Aurora

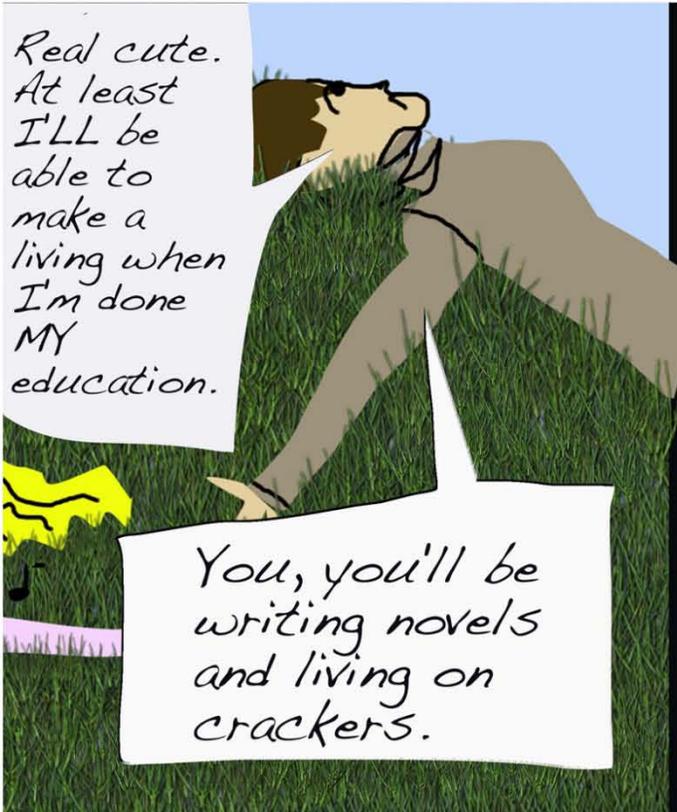
There's a rainbow dancing in the sky tonight, and I think I'm gonna go outside . . .



And put that cellphone away. Geez, you're like the Lady of Shalott with that thing!

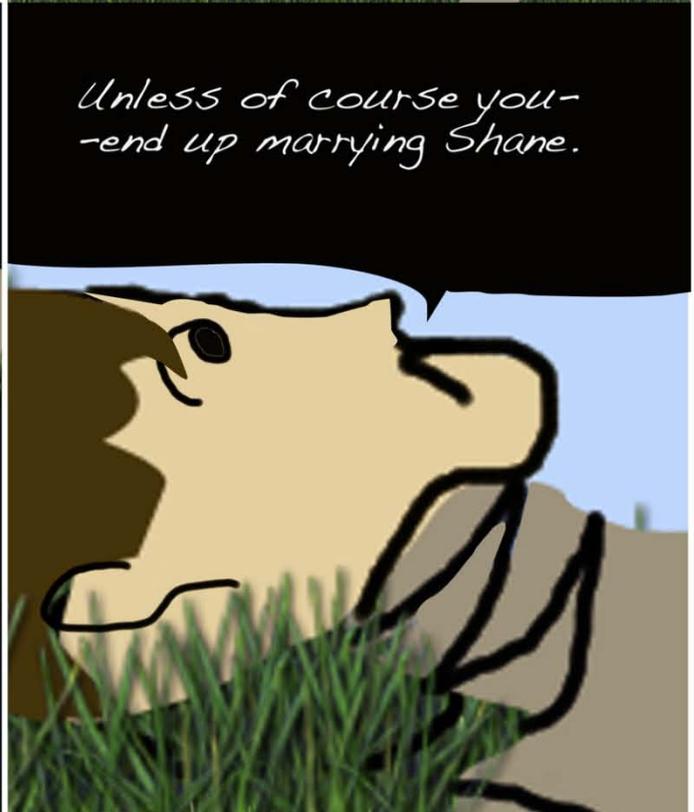


What are you trying to say, Jodi?

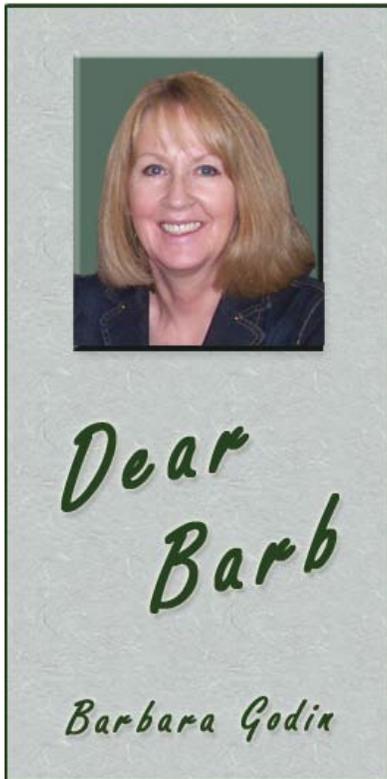


Real cute. At least I'll be able to make a living when I'm done MY education.

You, you'll be writing novels and living on crackers.



Unless of course you—end up marrying Shane.



Follow Instincts on New Relationship

Dear Barb:

I am divorced and in my mid thirties with two children. I have been single for about three years. It's been hard for me and my children being alone without a partner in my life. Six months ago I met a great guy and we seemed to click right away. We spend a lot of time together and have been talking about moving in together.

As we get closer I am beginning to wonder if I really love this man, or am I just infatuated. I feel a very strong physical attraction and miss him terribly when he is not here, but I don't want to bring him into my children's lives until I am sure that this is going to last. Are there any clues that I can watch for that would help me to understand whether this is love or just infatuation? Thanks.

Tina

Hi, Tina. Congrats on finding a new partner. I'll do what I can to help you unravel your true feelings for this man.

Most relationships begin with physical attraction and an element of infatuation. Eventually the infatuation diminishes and you are left with a deep sense of love and caring, or the relationship fizzles out and each goes his or her own way.

According to Wikipedia, following are the definitions of love versus infatuation.

Love "usually refers to a deep, ineffable feeling of tenderly caring for another person." It is also described as "any of a number of emotions and experiences related to a sense of strong affection and attachment."

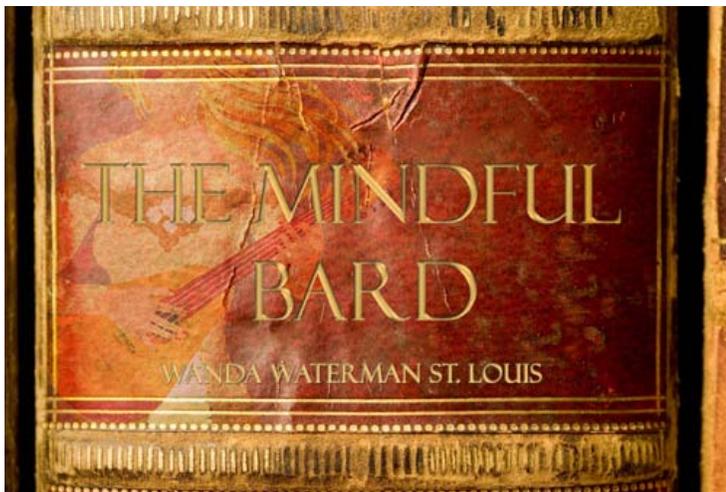
Infatuation, on the other hand, is "the state of being completely carried away by unreasoned passion or love: addictive love. Usually, one is inspired with an intense but short-lived passion or admiration for someone."

It is a "common emotion characterized by unrealistic expectations of blissful passion without positive relationship growth or development." Infatuation is also distinguished by a lack of commitment, trust, and loyalty, and is often not reciprocal.

According to the description of your relationship in reference to these definitions, it does appear that you have both gone beyond the initial infatuation and are moving to the next phase of your relationship. On the other hand, if you are questioning whether this is really love, then it is not a good idea to move in together. As I am sure you realize, this is a big step and would have a great impact on your children's lives, so you are right in being cautious.

My advice is to wait a while until it feels right; you will instinctively know when to make this move. Follow your gut feelings. If something doesn't feel right then it probably isn't. Thanks for writing, Tina.

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

CD: Allen Toussaint, *The Bright Mississippi*

Label: Nonesuch

Release date: 2009

A New Orleans Old Soul Makes Everything New Again

"As a youngster I was listening to whatever was on the radio, and there were things like boogie-woogie, and popular songs and even a lot of

hillbilly music—Red Foley, Jimmy Dickens, Ernest Tubb. On Sundays my mother would play classical radio all day long, so I heard a lot of that. And it all seeped in."

Allen Toussaint in *City Pages*

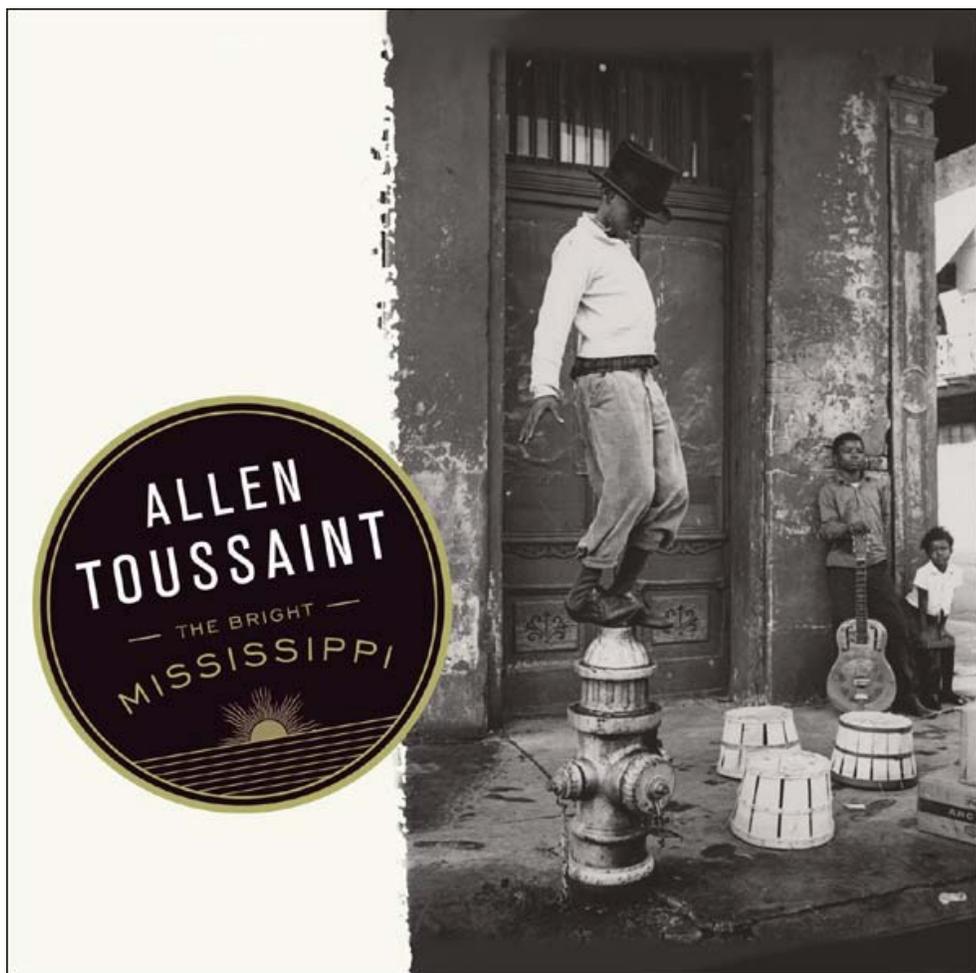
Toussaint is one of the deepest living taproots of the New Orleans music vineyard. He's been so active for so long in such seemingly disparate musical genres that he has absorbed elements from every one of them to deliver music that is both voluptuous, complex, and of a classical calibre.

He plays, in the words of Wynton Marsalis, *"all of jazz,"* but the focus is the music of his hometown.

Toussaint has long embraced New Orleans jazz, blues, R&B, zydeco, and more, but *The Bright Mississippi* is pure, distilled jazz. And for now the calendar is irrelevant.

Toussaint's piano playing is *thoughtful*. The most penetrating poetry spills effortlessly from the man's fingers.

On this album he's working with some amazing musicians, and the rapport is palpable. Some high points are:



The title track, which sounds like a Mardi Gras parade with Professor Longhair eighty-eightin' on the balcony and a horde of youngsters playing homemade rhythm instruments. (Note the contrapuntal rhythms set up by the piano and carried on by the reeds.)

The smoky, film noir atmosphere and Marc Ribot's brilliant guitar lines in "Blue Drag."

The way the musicians accent the similar chord structures between standards by adding in traces of sister songs; for example, insinuating the melody of "It Ain't Necessarily So" into "St. James Infirmary" and "Dear Old Southland."

Toussaint's celestial piano playing and Joshua Redman's sweet, *sweet* tenor sax on "Day Dream."

The way Jelly Roll Morton's "Winin' Boy Blues" actually sounds like a happy drunk staggering down Story Street, dissonant, rolling chords just adding to the poignant joy of it all.

"Long, Long Journey," the only track Toussaint sings on.

The Dixieland ecstasy of the reeds and horns halfway through "Egyptian Fantasy."

The Bright Mississippi manifests seven of The Mindful Bard's criteria for music well worth a listen: 1) it is authentic, original, and delightful; 2) it makes me want to be a better artist; 3) it gives me tools which help me be a better artist; 4) it displays an engagement with and compassionate response to suffering; 5) it inspires an awareness of the sanctity of creation; 6) it provides respite from a sick and cruel world, a respite enabling me to renew myself for a return to mindful artistic endeavour; and 7) it stimulates my mind.

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.

DID YOU KNOW?



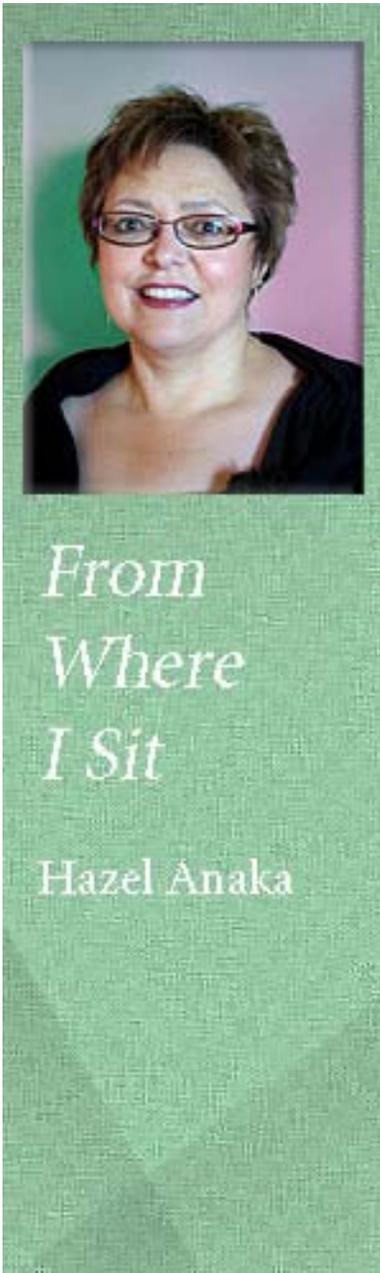
Convocation 2009 Photo Album Online!

Ever wonder what it's like to finally finish your degree and cross the stage to receive your parchment? Look no further than AU's Convocation 2009 [photo album](#).

The photo album captures the pride and excitement of this year's grads, along with their reflections on what made their education journeys special.

And on the main convocation page, you'll find links to this year's honorary degree recipients and other special guests who attended the ceremony.

There's also a link to [previous convocation photo albums](#) (all the way back to 2002), so you never know who you might catch a glimpse of!



One Thing at a Time

Recently I read an article in the *Edmonton Journal* with the following headline: “Shattering the myth of multitasking.” This is not a total surprise.

I always prided myself on being one of those people who could multi-task. It seemed like an efficient way to accomplish more in an increasingly crazy busy world. My favourite thing was reading while watching TV. Maybe that explains why I can be an hour into a movie before I realize I’ve seen it before! Or why I have to read and reread certain passages to get them to stick. In my heart I knew I wasn’t doing justice to either activity but like so many I was sucked into the belief that I could make it work. And if I didn’t I was obviously not trying hard enough.

Goodness knows I had read enough over the years (probably while watching TV) about mindfulness to realize that multi-tasking flies in the face of that concept. Author Barbara De Angelis said, “Only when your consciousness is totally focused on the moment you are in can you receive whatever gift, lesson, or delight that moment has to offer.” It is a principal belief in Buddhism. It is an integral part of meditation.

The closest I’ve come lately to total mindfulness is holding my grandson against my chest, watching him sleep and understanding what a precious gift all babies are. And while that works for me as a visitor to the household, the reality for the parents is that meals need to be made, laundry needs to be done, a paycheque needs to be earned. Today an ingeniously long, stretchy piece of fabric can be wrapped around the mother’s body and hold the baby in place against her chest, allowing her to do laundry and other chores. The challenge is not to get so hung up on productivity that the mindful, seemingly purposeless snuggling suffers. We’re all so captivated by this little soul that isn’t likely to happen.

A Stanford University study on multi-tasking found that participants “don’t focus as well,” and are poorer at “organizing information” and “shifting from one task to another.” Researchers had set out to find what extraordinary gifts multi-taskers possessed. Participants’ focus, memory, and distractibility were tested.

Researcher Clifford Nass admits to being totally shocked to find that “multitaskers were just lousy at everything.” Researchers thought multi-taskers “were very much in control of information. It turns out they were just getting it all confused.” Follow-up tests will be done to assess short- and long-term effects of multi-tasking. Nass says “the core of the problem is multitaskers think they’re great at what they do and they’ve convinced everybody else.”

Perhaps we need to start a new movement of uni-taskers. We could write articles, give speeches, have meetings. But not all at once, of course. In our house the TV is now off more than it’s on. I have an instrumental CD playing in my laptop while I write. Some days I have a baby boy to hold. That’s all I handle now, from where I sit.

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.

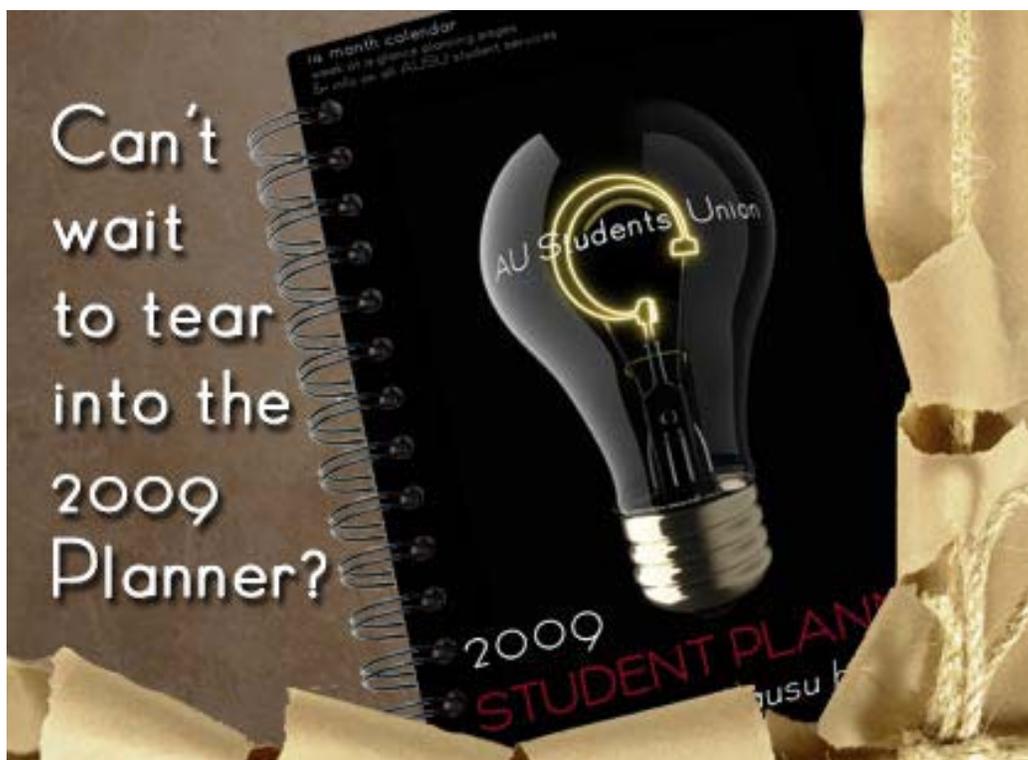
In that meeting a number of important revisions to the definitions of AUSU membership occurred, to make sure that the Councillors you elect are able to represent you during General Meetings and so that if you're a student in an AU collaborative undergrad program, you'll still be counted as an AUSU member 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.

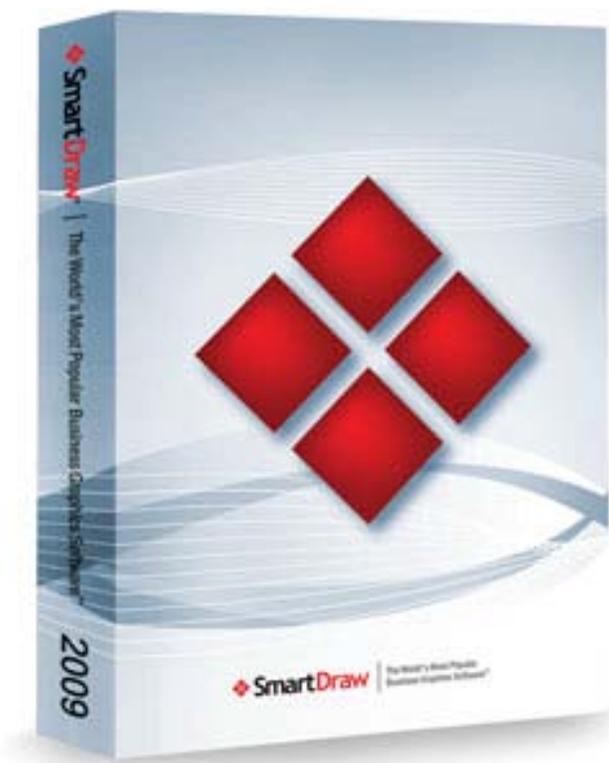
More concerning is the increase to the Learning Resources fee. AUSU will continue to press for details on how this fee relates to the prices the university has to pay for your textbooks and online materials.

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

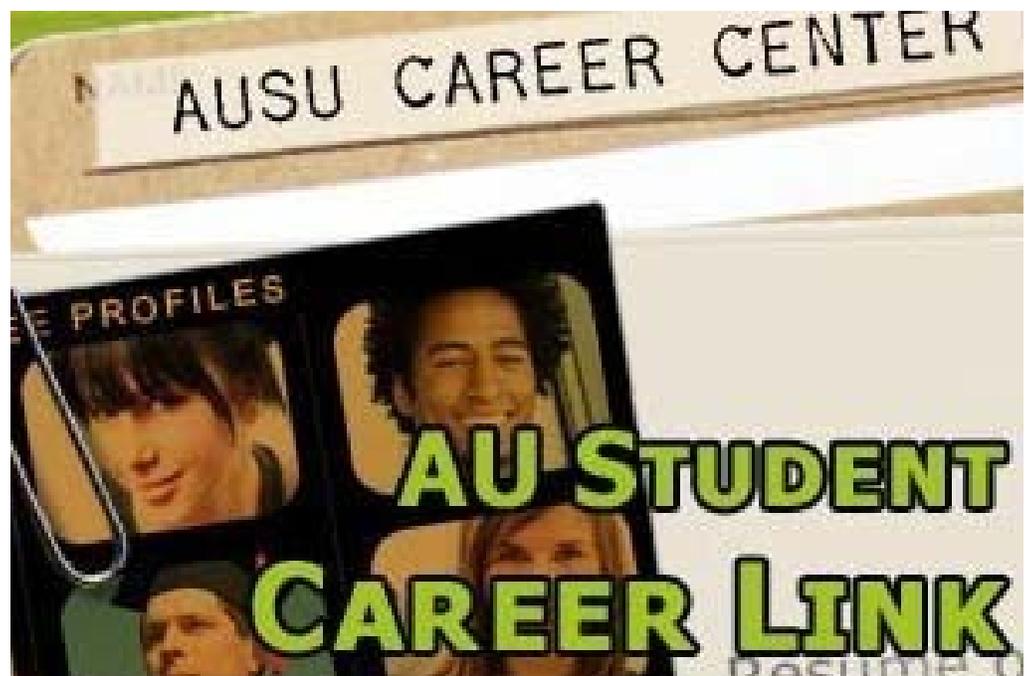
Still running, and still popular, the lock loan program can allow you to rest easy knowing your valuables are safe if you're taking an exam at the Calgary or Edmonton campus. The locks can be set to any combination, and are loaned to people without any deposit, but we ask that you please remember to 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: Toronto falls flat on bike lanes

With a population of 2.48 million people and growing, Toronto faces a rising gridlock problem. And although the city has an official Bike Plan in place, a recent report criticized the lack of bike lanes being provided.

The criticisms came in the annual report by Gord Miller, Ontario's environmental commissioner. Specifically, the report touched on the failings of Toronto's Bloor Street revitalization project. The report was tabled in the provincial legislature on October 6.

As the [CBC](#) reports, the way the project was classified resulted in the loss of bike lanes along a section of Bloor Street, "between Church Street and Avenue Road."

A classification of 'A' meant that the city did not have to provide much opportunity for public discussion or consultation. Opposition to some aspects of the revitalization project landed the matter in court. The city prevailed, and instead of bike-only lanes it provided "sharrows"—travel lanes that are shared by bikes and other

vehicles.

Miller noted that, when it comes to municipal transportation projects, the province should do more to ensure cycling is taken into consideration.

"There should be a mandatory requirement [that] in future in these kinds of projects that cycling and pedestrians—as legitimate forms of transportation—be included in the consideration and the alternatives in discussion and design," he told reporters.

In Foreign News: Sonar helps blind boy 'see'

Seven-year-old Lucas Murray may be blind, but that doesn't stop him from playing one of his favourite games: basketball. Lucas, who hails from Poole in Dorset, uses an echolocation technique to locate objects around him, and can even determine what some objects are made of.

Similar to the sonar used by dolphins and bats, Lucas uses a series of clicks to get feedback about the world around him. Lucas "clicks his tongue on the roof of his mouth and from the sound that returns he tries to work out the distance, shape, density and position of objects." By gauging how long the sounds take to return, as well as which ear they reach first, Lucas has achieved a remarkable amount of independence (he demonstrates the technique in this [BBC](#) video).

Lucas is also able to tell when objects are moving toward or away from him, based on pitch. Objects moving closer create a higher pitch than objects that are moving away.

Daniel Kish, founder of the charity World Access for the Blind, taught Lucas the skill. Kish lives in California and was contacted by the Murrays after they spotted him on television.

EDUCATION NEWS

Alexandria Eldridge



MADD says bar's cash promotion encourages binge drinking

Edmonton's Union Hall bar giving cash to students on student nights

EDMONTON (CUP) - A promotion put on by an Edmonton bar where students get cash if they show ID at the door has become a controversial subject in the community.

If a student shows ID at the door of the Union Hall before 10 p.m. on a "student night"—usually Thursdays—they receive \$10 cash and a token that they can redeem for another \$10 cash at 12:30 a.m., when a money table is brought out.

Jesse James is the director of operations for the nightclub side at Gateway Entertainment, which operates Union Hall. He described how the idea of the promotion came about.

"This year we wanted to really come out of September with a bang and just go for a really crazy incentive especially in light of the recent competition and in light of the economic situation," James said.

James also described the promotion as a response to new Alberta liquor laws on minimum drink prices.

"We're not allowed to give away free booze of any kind, so the only thing we're legally allowed to give is cash, so the cash is more geared towards getting people a couple drinks essentially for free . . . you don't have to buy drinks, but that's the idea of it," James said.

Mothers Against Drunk Driving (MADD) have expressed their disapproval of the promotion. Gladys Shelstad, vice president of the Edmonton and area Chapter, wants owners to be more responsible.

"More my concern is that they put minimum drink pricing in effect for a reason and bars should be abiding by that . . . they should be wanting all their patrons to be safe," Shelstad said.

James said that regardless of whether or not they give away cash at the door, they are always aware of patrons' safety. "Whether we give them 20 bucks or they're just spending their own money, we have to always be aware of someone's level of intoxication," James said.

James also said that the promotion is more geared toward back-to-school and was intended to get people down to the Union. The club was renovated over the summer and now has a new DJ.

"The nightclub business is all about change and all about keeping cutting-edge, so we have a couple other cool ideas in the works to follow up this promotion when we do decide to end it," James said.

At this point in time, the Union Hall is the only establishment employing the promotion. The Ranch, another Gateway Entertainment establishment, closed its doors on October 1, ending the promotion at that location. Shelstad feels that there is a reason that other establishments are not following suit.

"I think the respectable bars are going to still maintain the liquor bylaws and they are going to enforce it and be respectable," she said.

Shelstad also mentioned that this promotion is only available for students, which might upset other patrons.

"There's a lot of other customers, a lot of other patrons out there than just students . . . that bar is showing favouritism for students over other patrons," Shelstad said.

She said the reason that MADD has commented on this issue is because it could encourage binge drinking.

"These people that take the money from the bar, are they going to go and drink more and indulge quickly and in large amounts? I don't know. I'm hoping not, I hope that everyone drinks responsibly because at the end of the day we want you guys all to be safe," said Shelstad.

But James stressed that students do not need to spend money on drinking, and need to make their own choices.

"I think that these choices are at our fingertips in all walks of life and in all things, and I think that people have [to] be held accountable for their own actions."

CLICK OF THE WRIST – No Limits

When most of us have a bad day, we're dealing with the usual obstacles life can present—traffic, late assignments, and sick kids. These inspiring athletes have to deal with all that and more, but they haven't let any of it stop them from reaching their goals. For them, there truly are no limits.

World Arm Wrestling Champ - Joby Mathew, 33, has proximal femoral focal deficiency. But the disorder that left him with "deformed hips and stunted legs" hasn't stopped him from becoming the world arm wrestling champion. His next goal is to climb Mount Everest.

Blind Football Player - In this video, Dillon Collier is playing guard for the Greenwood Panthers, a school football team in West Texas. Dillon carries a special piece of equipment on the field: a radio inside his helmet. The reason? The young football player is blind.

Marathon Man - Two years ago, Rick Ball had never run a marathon. Since then the 43-year-old has broken a marathon and a 10k record, both in the same year. He's now got "a shot at representing Canada at the 2012 Paralympic Games in London." Clearly, having only one leg isn't about to slow this athlete down a bit.

Pete Gray - In 1945, there were no official Paralympic games. But that didn't stop Pete Gray from reaching baseball's major leagues. This archival footage shows the one-armed player in action at Yankee Stadium.

Kevin Laue - At 6 feet 10 inches, Kevin Laue often heard people say he had the potential to be an N.C.A.A. Division I basketball recruit—if only he had two hands. People were right about his potential, but wrong about needing both hands. Laue recently accepted a basketball scholarship at Manhattan College.

CLASSIFIEDS

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THE VOICE

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