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# LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

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



## 2010 AUSU Handbook/Planner Update

They're here! There have been some delays but the 2010 AUSU Handbook/Planners have arrived and will be shipping to students this week. They should start arriving in mailboxes by early next week.

The planners are free for AU undergrad students. They also happen to be one of the most popular items going, so if you haven't ordered yours yet, be sure to visit the [online order form](#) and reserve a copy!

## SATURDAY NIGHT AT THE (OLD) MOVIES

Christina M. Frey



## Romance in the Air, Part II: Romantic Dramas

With Valentine's Day coming up this weekend, theatres are brimming with light romantic comedies. But it's not necessary to head to the cinema to create the appropriate atmosphere. A classic romantic comedy—with a bowl of popcorn and a comfortable couch, of course—makes for a fantastic date night. In the next two instalments of "Old Movies," we'll review, in chronological order, a few old romantic comedies that are as enjoyable today as they were decades ago (and perhaps more!)

1934's *It Happened One Night* is equal parts romance and comedy. Spoiled rich girl Ellie runs off with a gold-digging playboy of whom her father disapproves. Although her father catches the couple before they've consummated the marriage, Ellie refuses to be ordered around and escapes, determined to reach her husband.

Partway through her travels, however, she's recognized by Peter, a recently fired reporter (another delightful rogue played by Clark Gable). He realizes his opportunity to turn his luck around, and makes Ellie a deal: either she gives him the exclusive story on her incognito travel, or he'll turn her in. As their adventures unfold, Ellie

begins to fall in love with the reporter—but is it mutual?

*Trivia:* *It Happened One Night* lifted Columbia Pictures from its second-rate, more obscure status to become one of the major contenders among Hollywood studios. Before production, Clark Gable was loaned to Columbia by MGM for the film as "punishment" for his off-screen antics. It was an ironic move, as Gable's role in this film garnered him his only Oscar win.

Divisions of social class were also a theme in *My Man Godfrey* (1936). Socialite Irene meets out-of-work, homeless fellow Godfrey and insists on bringing him home as her "protégé." He becomes the family's new butler, and although he's content to remain in that position, Irene is dissatisfied. She's begun to fall in love with Godfrey—much to his chagrin. It's a light, fluffy comedy with solid acting; Alice Brady's Oscar-nominated performance as Irene's ditzzy mother is particularly delightful.

*Trivia:* William Powell, who played Godfrey, was actually Carole Lombard's (Irene) ex-husband. The two actors—who had a 16-year age difference—had been married in 1931. They divorced two years later, only a few years before *My Man Godfrey*, but remained good friends and were able to work together on the film without bitterness.

For a hilarious screwball comedy with a sprinkling of romance, *Bringing Up Baby* (1938) is an enjoyable watch. David (Cary Grant) is a nerdy paleontologist who just wants to finish his dinosaur skeleton, get a

grant for his museum, and make it to his wedding on time. Susan (Katharine Hepburn) is a free-spirited, eccentric young socialite who needs help managing a baby leopard her brother has sent from South America. Assuming wrongly that David is a zoologist, she enlists his aid—and as their comical misadventures spiral out of control, love begins to bloom.

*Trivia:* Although it now tops many lists of classic comedies, *Bringing Up Baby* was a notorious box-office flop when it was first released. In fact, after its dismal opening, the studio fired both the director and Katharine Hepburn from future projects.

Another Katharine Hepburn movie, *The Philadelphia Story* (1940), reunites her with Cary Grant (and adds in Jimmy Stewart!) Snobbish Tracy Lord (Hepburn) is a wealthy socialite about to be remarried after divorcing her first husband. The wedding is to be the event of the year, and everything is perfect—too perfect.

Then Tracy's ex-husband (Grant) and a handsome journalist (Stewart) both arrive on the eve of the festivities, and because they possess damaging information, she can't send them away. Confusion, love triangles (times two) and some important choices propel this Philadelphia story to a happily-ever-after.

*Trivia:* Katharine Hepburn intended *The Philadelphia Story* as her "comeback" film after a string of "failures" (including *Bringing Up Baby*) and, with the director, purchased the film rights to the story in order to better control it. The film was a success both at the box office and the Academy, receiving six Oscar nominations and two wins.

One of my favourite romantic comedies is *His Girl Friday* (1940). Cary Grant plays Walter, a tough newspaper editor who's let his personal life slide in favour of his profession. Then he receives a visit from his ex-wife, and former reporter, Hildy: she's about to get remarried and leave journalism, Walter, and the area behind for good. She's determined to make it happen; he's determined to keep her there. Witty, with snappy, rapid-fire dialogue, this film seems surprisingly modern and is an excellent date movie!

*Trivia:* The director encouraged the actors to ad lib, and a number of unscripted in-jokes made it into the final cut of the film. For example, Grant refers to the sorry fate of "Archie Leach," who tried to put one over on the newspaperman; Grant's real name was actually Archibald Leach!

Fraud and deception abound in 1941's *The Lady Eve*. Jean and her fellow cardsharp con artists prowl aboard a steamer in search of victims to fleece. They settle on Charles Pike. He's a trusting young scientist who's returning to America after spending a year in the Amazon researching snakes; he's also a beer fortune heir.



The scientist falls for Jean, lets down his guard, and the cardsharps make a move on his fortune. But there's a snag: Jean begins to fall in love with Pike. When Pike discovers her true identity, he's furious, and dumps her. Broken-hearted, Jean sets out to exact revenge, and the resulting comedy of revenge, misunderstanding, and love moves to a satisfying conclusion.

*Trivia:* Pike's pet snake was a real king snake, and it caused a great deal of trouble during the movie's filming. Because filming occurred during the snake's normal hibernation season, it spent most of its time trying to sleep. It also shed its skin numerous times.

In next week's instalment, we'll keep the love and laughter coming as we examine some later classic romantic comedies. Until then, happy watching, and happy Valentine's Day!

*When she's not watching old movies, Christina M. Frey can be found blogging about kids and media at [Woozles and Heffalumps](#).*

## **CLICK OF THE WRIST – On Parade**

Whether it's the pomp and spectacle, or the chance of waving at Santa Claus, there's something about a parade that never fails to have us lined up, eagerly waiting for the next float to come along. From the Rose Bowl parade to Carnival—and some odd events in between—here's a look at a tradition that belongs to small towns and big cities alike: parades.

### Yankees Ticker Tape Parade

Don't worry—the first 45 seconds of this video don't prepare you for the incredible images to come. This daring spectator perched on the fire escape of a Manhattan skyscraper to watch the 2009 ticker tape parade for the Yankees. So if you've ever wondered what it would be like to have an aerial view of millions of New Yorkers thronging the streets—well, now you know.

### Satirical Floats

It seems that Europe is awash in carnival parades—the perfect opportunity to build a float “poking fun at world leaders.” This slideshow features some of the flattering (and not-so-flattering) caricatures of US President Barack Obama and Italy's flamboyant prime minister, Silvio Berlusconi.

### Rose Parade

Pasadena's Tournament of Roses is as much about the gorgeous parade floats as it is about football. Floats take a full year to build, and construction begins just days after the last parade is over. What makes this spectacle such a unique tradition is that “every inch of every float must be covered with flowers or other natural materials, such as leaves, seeds or bark.”

### Macy's Thanksgiving Day Parade

If you've never stood watching the Macy's Thanksgiving Day Parade go by (or seen it on television), you may be amazed at the spectacle of Santa's entrance. The jolly old elf is now announced by a Broadway-style song and dance number!

## IN CONVERSATION WITH . . .

Wanda Waterman St. Louis

**Juzzie Smith**

*Juzzie Smith is an Australian musical one-man-band capable of playing slide guitar, didgeridoo, harmonica, and rhythm instruments, and singing—all phenomenally well—more or less at the same time. Juzzi's music is characterized by a driving energy and brilliant melodic ideas within a traditional (somewhat) roots context. An avid street performer for whom busking has been a creatively liberating experience, Juzzie recently took time off from a busy tour to answer some questions from Wanda Waterman St. Louis.*

**Never Too Late For a Happy Childhood**

I grew up in Canberra, Australia. I loved sports but then that got taken over when I found music. I started playing guitar and harmonica at the age of 13. By 16 I'd started teaching music as a hobby, which lasted 10 years.

At university I studied contemporary music, which was a bit too much mental energy as opposed to heartfelt energy. I went to India and learned the sitar. I feel my real music grew when I became a father, as I decided to put all my talents together and just go out busking. I've been growing ever since. I chose busking as a career option because it suits my rhythm for now and also gets my CDs out to the world.

I was first attracted to the blues because I just loved that sound. It comes naturally to me because I make it playful. I liked the album *Play* by Moby as it showed me how blues music could be mixed with dance music. Lately I've been listening to a bit of Fat Freddy's Drop and a lot of my own as I'm recording a new album and loving it.

Busking with my family was great and also hard, and we only had one child at that time. We got to see some amazing sights and I also learned a lot about performing. I now realize how important it is to have a place to hold your foundations. My partner is very happy to be in a house now. My kids love to sing and are featured on a song on my next album called "La La."

For my new album I created my own studio so I could capture music in the times it wanted to be captured. This album to me is a big leap forward musically and energetically. I've honestly surprised myself with this album and how amazing it's going to be.

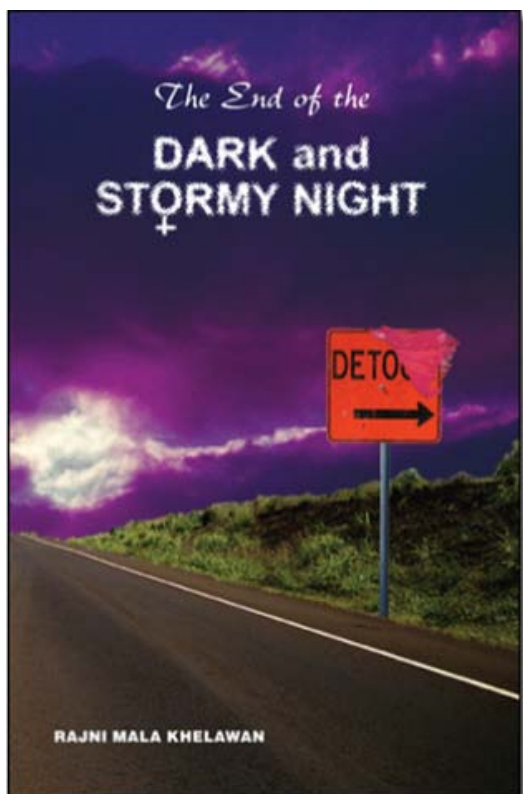
I've had lots of great musical experiences but I'd have to say the Byron Bay Blues Festival 2009 was special as the place was vibrating with joy and all I felt while playing was my body tingling.

In order to go on creating new material I need to be honest with myself and make sure I live my rhythm. To relax after work I lie or sit and just connect to my own breath. Breathe your own breath is my only ideology. My social conscience is all part of the rhythm that I create.

When I want to write I wake up early, about 4:00 a.m., and just connect to myself and go for it. I might start with a groove and then I might sing a melody and then put words to it. The clearer I feel the easier music comes to me.

## PAGES

Diane Gadoua



### The End of the Dark and Stormy Night

If there's one word to describe this debut novel by Rajni Mala Khelawan, it's contrast.

In Elkford, BC, Ravi Anand is a young man struggling to become a writer, and he's wrestling mightily with the first lines of his novel: "It was a dark and stormy night . . ."

His wife, Jesse, isn't much help. She's tired of supporting Ravi—and tired of being the "red-haired cow-eater" in the eyes of his disapproving mother.

Mrs. Anand remains stubbornly blinded by her own narrow beliefs, (still clinging to the hope of "a virgin bride from India for her son"), but she's not the only Elkfordian living in darkness.

Elisha Hicks longs to be with her lesbian lover but pretends to be straight, too ashamed to "take off the blinding glasses she put on the eyes of the world."

And Elisha's mother, the staunchly religious Mrs. Hicks, refuses to see her husband's infidelity or the truth about her children (including Elisha's brother, a porn addict).

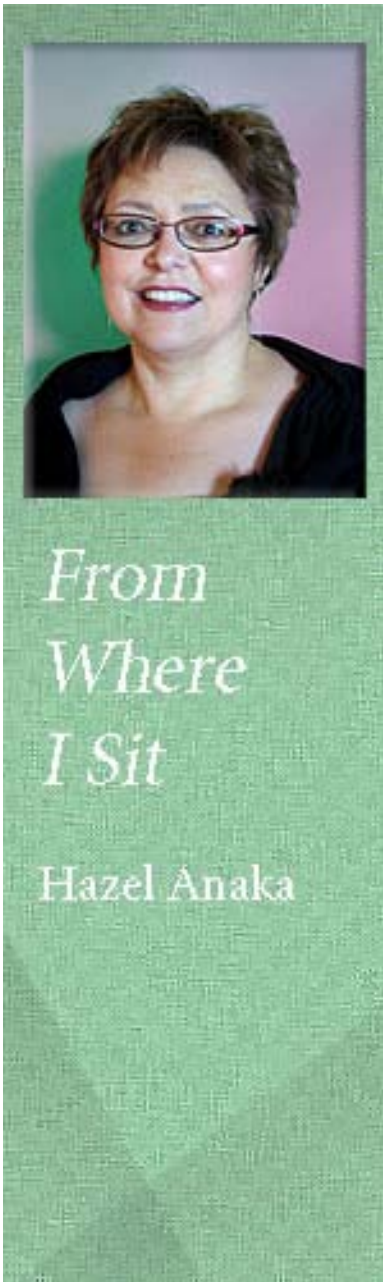
To Khelawan's credit, she imbues these characters with refreshing honesty. They're colourful, multifaceted, and at times outrageously funny. Mrs. Anand may be a racist, controlling mother, but when she gets her hands on Mr. Anand (fed Viagra in the guise of a diabetes cure), the earthy sex scene reveals her as an emotionally complex woman with much more depth than simply a stock character.

The ideas here are complex too, and well worth exploring, but that's where another contrast comes in—the writing just isn't as well developed as the concepts. The biggest trap Khelawan falls into is one that plagues many writers: telling, not showing. Despite the rich layers waiting to be explored, the prose often moves stiffly. For example, when Ravi meets a stranger in a nearby town, there's a certain energy missing: "He wished Ravi and his friends a nice vacation in Cowley as he adjusted the cap on his head. He invited them to come down and visit him at the Sawmill. He suggested that they might learn something."

The dialogue seems oddly uneven as well. The main characters are young, middle-class Canadians and in many places their speech feels real. When Ravi says "Jeez Mom, it's not like the only time I phone you is when I need money," it rings true. But too often, the dialogue reads like the passage above—awkward enough to feel as though you're peering behind the curtain and watching the actors practice their lines.

There's potential here, and lots of it, and it will be interesting to see how Khelawan's talent develops in her second novel (according to the author's bio, she's working on it now).

Like several of the characters in this debut novel, the reader often gets a glimpse of something wonderful just out of sight around the bend. With a little more time spent perfecting her craft, Khelawan may just show readers what's on the other side of that curve.



## A Helluva Week (and it Ain't Over Yet)

Last week in this space, I wrote about Roy starting a trucking job deep in the bush north of Lac La Biche. It was a challenging route with a section of ice road; narrow, winding stretches; steep climbs, and the need to announce, via radio, your whereabouts on the road.

But as with most things it was getting better with each trip. That is until the unthinkable happened. Roy pulls a 36-foot-long end-dump gravel trailer. When the box is hoisted fully it extends 34 feet into the air. Etched forever into his mind is the sight, in his passenger side mirror, of the loaded trailer tipping over in s-l-o-w m-o-t-i-o-n.

And so began an experience that we could have surely done without. First the silver-lining stuff. The tractor did not tip over, which usually happens in these situations. Roy was not hurt. Thank God. He had paused to let two body-job trucks with pup trailers unload first. Had he been impatient and anxious to squeeze in an extra load that day, he would surely have killed the driver in the adjacent truck cab. (Sadly, because of greed or stupidity, on many jobs there are drivers who flout the rules of safety and common sense so they can outmanoeuvre the more prudent drivers.)

Unfortunately, the dark-cloud list is longer. This incident brought to an abrupt end the first trucking job Roy had in nearly a year. Despite murmurings and wishful thinking and tea leaf reading, the trucking sector is still very much suffering. The trailer itself is only two years old, has fewer than 30,000 kilometres on it and is, in our opinion, a writeoff. Unfortunately it didn't last as long as the loan payments; there is a significant amount still owing.

We are now in the throes of the insurance process. Roy was able to haul the trailer home the night of the incident and has since taken it to Edmonton to be examined by an insurance adjuster and shop foreman. We await the recommendation of the adjuster but believe it will be written off.

Estimates for the parts and labour to repair it are at about \$55,000 so far. A rental trailer is not our first choice for getting Roy back to work. The recession has caused dealers to unload their inventory of for-sale trailers at large auction sales, leaving next to nothing to choose from on the lot. The tractor unit sustained damage to the fifth wheel and springs. The out-of-pocket costs so far are about \$2,300 but considerably less than the insurance deductible of \$5,500.

Then of course is the impact on mind and body. And sleep patterns. Yes, this could have been much, much worse with deadly consequences. Thank God, it wasn't. But dealing with the uncertainty, the loss of income, and the direct financial impact is huge. And frankly, it's a test we would have rather not had. It's been a helluva week, from where I sit.





## Blogger El Bashir Hazzam and the Strange Destiny of Free Speech in Morocco, Part II

*"I disapprove of what you say, but I will defend to the death your right to say it."*

Evelyn Beatrice Hall

### Free At Last

El Bashir Hazzam was arrested in Taghjiit, Morocco on December 7, 2009, and sentenced to four months in jail for blogging about a student demonstration. The Facebook group set up by the Association of Moroccan Bloggers to build global solidarity for Hazzam quickly grew to more than 2,500 members, and human rights groups and free speech advocates have been delivering support in droves.

The Association of Moroccan Bloggers is happy to report that on Monday, February 8, El Bashir's sentence was commuted from four to two months, counting the two months already served, and that he was released that evening. The three student detainees have also been released and Boukhou's sentence has been reduced from 12 to eight months. (To read the background of this story see Part I of this article.)

### On Vigilance . . .

When discussing the case of Hazzam with friends here in Canada the response tends to run along these lines: *That's terrible! But isn't that kind of thing happening all over the world? We Canadians should really be grateful.*

Yes, we should be grateful, but with caution. To assume that our freedoms sprouted up like wildflowers and that we need simply enjoy them is an insult to the memories of people like Louis Riel, Nellie McClung, and Tommy Douglas, who braved danger, want, and humiliation to create lasting positive change in a society whose leaders didn't necessarily want it.

So yes, when we hear that for blogging about a student demonstration El Bashir Hazzam was given a four-month sentence (during which he had to join a long queue to share one toilet with 79 other prisoners, subsisted on food that was both poor and inadequate, and sometimes had to sleep on a bare floor), yes, I feel gratitude. And also a sense of urgency.

The compulsion to silence fellow human beings is a natural tendency of those in power, a tendency that will keep emerging unless we're wary in guarding against it.

### . . . and Solidarity . . .

Part of our vigilance must include manifesting solidarity with those who are being robbed of their freedoms, because it won't be long before the thieves will be coming after our freedoms.

In recent years Morocco has appeared to be making strides toward democracy and social justice, and activists there have wisely seized on the potentials of digital media to help bring about change. But the potency of the Internet as a tool for disseminating knowledge has been seen as a threat by a government with a low tolerance for the kind of dissent essential to societies negotiating their own political terms.

In a letter to Morocco's King Mohammed VI, The Committee to Protect Journalists, an organization promoting freedom of the press internationally, made this statement: "International human rights groups praised Morocco before your ascension to the throne for having made significant steps toward the rule of law. Unfortunately, just a few years later it was among the 10 nations worldwide where press freedom had deteriorated the most."

Hazzam's arrest came on the crest of a wave of crackdowns on independent journalists, publications, and bloggers in Morocco. A quick search uncovers a host of extreme reactions to the media's distribution of information, much of this rancour in response to incidents of which the world might not have taken notice had reports of them not drawn such swift and furious reactions from authorities.

Right now it isn't the principle of free speech that seems to matter to this government so much as the illusion that freedom of speech is being upheld. Citizens can speak freely as long as they reflect the official stance of the government on all issues and remain silent regarding corruption and threats to civil liberties.

### . . . and Hope

As old and ingrained as this deterioration of press freedom may be, it may yet be among the growing pains of a new order. If all Moroccans believed that their country was doomed there would be no bloggers like Hazzam bravely exercising their inherent right to free speech, and neither would there be hoards of activists giving passionately of their time and strength to defend them.

The recent decision to reduce Hazzam's sentence is part of a growing body of evidence that Morocco is tending toward becoming a just society. Cynics may scoff, but there are enough citizens there who are fervent enough about the protection of human rights (and enough people outside their country siding with them) that they stand a very good chance of prevailing.

After El Bashir Hazzam was released the name of the Facebook group "Free Moroccan Blogger El Bachir Hazzam" was changed to Free Moroccan Bloggers. The group continues to welcome support for bloggers who remain in prison in Morocco and to raise awareness for violations of freedom of speech in the country.

*Maghreb Voices celebrates the art, culture, and struggles of the peoples of Algeria, Morocco, and Tunisia, in northern Africa.*

## Laurence Decore Award for Student Leadership

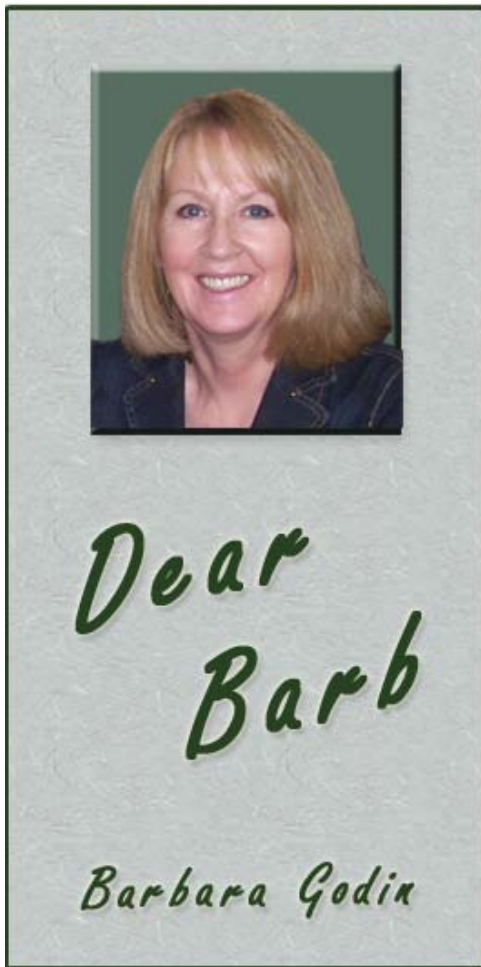


The Laurence Decore award is a \$500 bursary that recognizes students for their "outstanding dedication and leadership to fellow students and to their community." The AU winner must be an Alberta resident (the award is funded by the Alberta government) currently enrolled in three or more AU courses.

The winner will be selected based on involvement in either student government or student societies, clubs, or organizations. As well, candidates may be involved in student organizations at the provincial or national level or in non-profit community organizations.

You may self-nominate or nominate another student who you feel deserves recognition. Please fill out the PDF application form and return it to [ausu@ausu.org](mailto:ausu@ausu.org). You can scan the completed form or fax it to 1-780-497-3413.

Contact the AUSU office if neither of these options works for you or if you need a hard copy of the application mailed to you. The deadline for submission of forms is March 1.



## Grandmother Shouldn't Be Obligated to Babysit

*Dear Barb:*

*I lost my husband two years ago. It was a very difficult time in my life. I was quite lonely and as a result I began spending a lot of time with my grandchildren, babysitting etc. Recently I have met a widower and we are spending time together. My son is getting upset that I am not always available to babysit as frequently as I used to. He is making me feel guilty because I am spending time with this gentleman.*

*My grandkids are getting older, developing their own lives with friends as well as becoming involved in many sports activities. I still want to be involved with my grandchildren, but shouldn't I be entitled to have a life of my own life as well? I was hoping I could have my son read your response to help him understand how I feel.*

*Irene*

Dear Irene, what a great question. I'm sure many grandparents are in similar situations. Your son has probably gotten accustomed to the ease of just phoning up grandma when he needed a babysitter. Now he can't do that. He will not only have to make other arrangements, but most likely will have to pay someone, which he may or may not have done with you.

You do not need to feel guilty. Everyone is entitled to live his or her life to the fullest. You have fulfilled your obligation to raise your children and now it's their turn to raise their own children. Not to say you shouldn't babysit, but it should be at your convenience. A lot of grandparents make the decision early on that they will not babysit grandchildren. They don't want to take on that role. Obviously you chose to babysit, as it probably helped you in your grief while helping out your son as well.

The bond between grandparents and their grandchildren is a special one and should be honoured. You can maintain that relationship without having to babysit. Perhaps you can include your new friend in some activities with your grandchildren. Depending on whether he has grandchildren or not, this could be an enjoyable, fun activity you can both share.

I think you should discuss your feelings with your son and, if you feel it's necessary, give him this column to read. It may take a while for him to come around, but ultimately if he wants you to be happy, he will understand.

*Email your questions to [voice@voicemagazine.org](mailto: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.*

# Sister Aurora

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



27  
Oh, poor, naive Jodi! Put your blinkers on, run your marathons, talk tough, but you don't change a thing! You're still just a girl!



Geez, Bert, it's not THAT bad!



Not when you keep your head stuck in the sand!



You act like we're still in the fifties! Look at where women are now!

Oh, I'm looking...

## AUSU UPDATE



### AUSU Election!

It's here! The Election for your 2010-2012 Council. AUSU is looking for interested individuals who believe they can speak for the students of AU. To be eligible, you need to have completed at least one course, and be currently enrolled in a course. Self-nominations will be accepted until February 15th. Voting starts on March 7th and runs until March 11th. For more information, see our election page.

### New 2010 AUSU Handbook/Planners – Delayed!

We know you want them, trust us, we want them too! Unfortunately, our printer has informed us that there was a problem with the paper order for our planner cover, and so there's going to be a little bit more of a delay. Don't worry though, we've been assured they're doing everything they can and we want to be getting these planners into your hands as soon as possible! If you haven't already pre-ordered your planner, now's as good a time as any to do so. You can reserve your copy here: <http://www.ausu.org/handbook/index.php>

Remember, we only print a limited number of these each year, so when they're gone, they're gone.

### SmartDraw Program Renewal

Some of you who took advantage of our program to provide SmartDraw software to members have been getting notifications that your software license will soon be expiring. Fortunately, AUSU will be continuing this program, so if you haven't already, go to the AUSU home page to download the newest version.

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.



## Let 'em Know who Represents for You!

AUSU logo mugs, hoodies, USB keys, and much more are all available for sale from our office. Also, used locks can be purchased at half price! Check out our merchandise catalog on our front page. You should check out our hoodies in particular—made in Canada and 100% bamboo, we're offering them for just barely over our cost, and they're both durable and comfortable.

## AUSU Council Down to Seven

Lonita Fraser recently tendered her resignation to Council. Lonita's gotten busier and realized she wasn't really keeping up with what it meant to be an AU Student any longer. As a result, she chose to step down from Council, saving AUSU some money. AUSU extends its thanks to Lonita for her service, and wishes her well in her ongoing endeavours. This brings us down to seven just before the election.

## AUSU Scheduling Meeting with Tutors' Union – Update!

We're still waiting for a response from the Tutor's Union as to when we might be able to meet with them to discuss ways that AUSU and the Tutor's Union can work together to ensure that students are getting the contact they need. Unfortunately, they haven't yet replied, so we're stepping up our campaign to get in touch with them. If you want to help, the next time you're talking to your tutor, ask them if they know when the Tutor's Union will meet with AUSU so that the groups can work together on common issues.

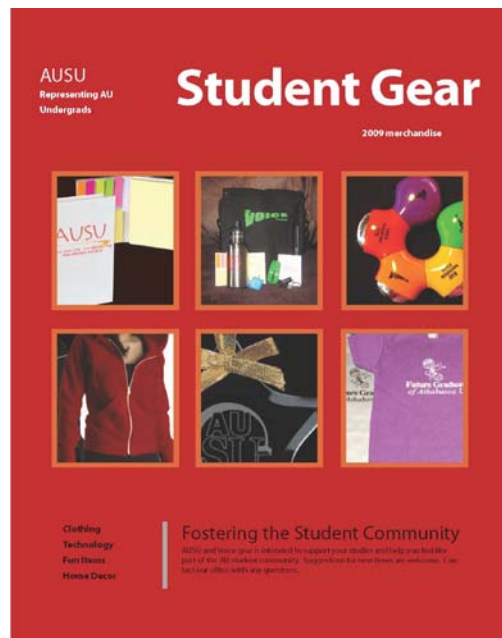
## Tuition Increase Upcoming

Recently, AUSU Executive met with the university executive to discuss the new year's tuition. AU, like all other Alberta universities, is raising tuition by the maximum of 1.5%. For AU that increase works out to only \$7 per three credit course. Even better, unlike U of A which is considering a mandatory annual fee of \$500, the other mandatory fees at AU—your Learning Resources and Lab Fees—will remain where they were last year, meaning that the \$7 per three credit course is the only increase you'll have to see this September.

It's not all roses, however, as every university is feeling the crunch. For AU, they will be increasing many of the non-mandatory fees. For instance, the late exam and exam rebooking fees are both going up to \$100. While they had concerns that some students were abusing these opportunities to take exams beyond the course contract date, we convinced them to investigate this issue further, and possibly move to a graduated fee that would increase the more times you used the option. Of course, with some planning, you shouldn't have to pay these fees at all, so that's an even better option.

In addition, PLAR costs will be going up by \$250 to a total of \$750 to better represent the amount of work they have to pay for to carefully evaluate your PLAR, and the Write Site has proposed a fee of \$50 for students who need to take an online assessment and \$100 for non-students who want to use AU's expertise. In their discussion with us, however, they agreed to remove the Write-Site planned fee for students, and to slightly reduce the fee for non-students.

So while perhaps not perfect, we think it was a successful meeting, and we hope you do too!



## INTERNATIONAL NEWS DESK



### At Home: Strahl stands behind cuts to First Nations University

In spite of the outcry over funding cuts, Chuck Strahl stands behind the decision to stop funding the First Nations University of Canada (FNUC). Strahl is the Indian Affairs and Northern Development Minister. As the [CBC](#) reports, Strahl announced on February 8 that his department “would stop giving money to the Saskatchewan-based university as of April 1.”

In 2009, the university received a \$7.2 million operating grant from Indian Affairs. As well, the Saskatchewan government provides about \$5.2 million per year to FNUC.

But Strahl told reporters that the Indian Affairs funds cut from FNUC will be redirected to assist other First Nations students, and stressed that the recent decision had more to do with poor governance than with money.

Even as the university is struggling financially, it faces allegations of misspending. It has been criticized for having a large board of governors, one that is “dominated by First Nations chiefs and other politicians.” Both the federal and provincial governments have urged FNUC to fix its governance and spending issues, at one point making funding conditional on governance reform.

However, as Strahl told reporters, “Every deadline came and went many times.” Following the announcement, the Federation of Saskatchewan Indian Nations will reportedly dissolve FNUC’s board of governors.

### In Foreign News: US suspends education aid to Kenya

In 2003, a new education program was started that would allow over a million Kenyan children to attend school for the first time. The Free Primary Education (FPE) program received funding from the US and Britain, among other countries, and was hailed as a major breakthrough in accessibility.

But as the [Afric News](#) network reports, as much as \$1.3 million US has been “stolen or diverted to other use by senior Education ministry officials,” and the fraud allegations mean that the US has suspended its planned five-year funding of the program. The missing money came to light during an audit last year by the Kenyan Finance Ministry.

In December, Britain announced that it was halting further funding of the program. At the time, Kenyan President Mwai Kibaki ordered a “thorough investigation into allegations of mismanagement and massive fraud” at the country’s education ministry. He also issued a statement calling for the involvement of Kenya’s Criminal Investigations Department (CID) and the Anti Corruption Commission (KACC).

Two months after the scandal first erupted, however, Kenyans’ anger is increasing as education officials deny responsibility and the government has yet to find the culprits.

# CLASSIFIEDS

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## THE VOICE

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