

THE VOICE

MAGAZINE

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Dinuk Wijeratne

Irrelevance of struggle

Around AU

Dr. Frits Pannekoek

Romantic Comedy

The golden age



*Plus: From Where I Sit, Maghreb Voices,
Around E-Campus, and much more...*

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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

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SATURDAY NIGHT AT THE (OLD) MOVIES

Christina M. Frey



Romance in the Air Part III: Romantic Comedies

Although Valentine's Day was earlier this week, there's no need to push aside the romantic feeling! Last week we warmed the winter's chill with some classic romantic comedies from the 1930s and 1940s. In this week's Old Movies instalment, we'll continue looking at romantic comedies, this time focusing on films released in the 1940s, '50s, and '60s.

As time went on, romance films began looking at heavier subjects, but still kept a lighthearted atmosphere. In *The Miracle of Morgan's Creek* (1944), Trudy, a pretty small-town girl, sneaks off to a party to bid farewell to the soldiers leaving for Europe. The next morning, she finds herself married to a man whose identity she doesn't even know. She then discovers that she's expecting. A long-time would-be suitor steps in to help out, but when Trudy's father (the local chief of police) gets involved, things become increasingly complicated, with Trudy's beau thrown into jail and her dad fired from the police force. However, when the miracle occurs, all's well in the end.

Trivia: The newspaper headline referring to Canada's skepticism over the "miracle" is in reference to Ontario's record-breaking Dionne quintuplets, whose 1934 birth brought in \$51 million in tourism to the province. Apparently, it wasn't an honour Ontario was prepared to yield!

One of the few classic romantic comedies to deal with a consistently married couple, 1949's *Adam's Rib* is a must-see. Adam and Amanda Bonner (Spencer Tracy and Katharine Hepburn) have a good life. They're both lawyers, have money, and their marriage is solid. Then Adam, a prosecutor, is assigned the case of a woman accused of attempting to murder her cheating husband. Amanda, who disagrees with his stance on the case, decides to defend the woman. The arguments play out not just in court, but also in the couple's personal lives. The chemistry between Tracy and Hepburn and the film's clever dialogue make this comedy sparkle.

Trivia: Early in the film, Judy Holliday (who plays the accused) is trembling as she speaks with Amanda. This was not acting; Holliday was extremely nervous about working alongside a screen legend like Katharine Hepburn. Hepburn, however, was apparently impressed with Holliday's work. Allegedly, she built up Holliday's reputation both with the director and with the press in order to jump-start Holliday's career (her move was successful). Talk about non-diva behaviour!

The married man in *The Seven Year Itch* (1955) is also under duress, but of quite a different kind. With his wife and children out by the seaside to escape the city heat, Richard is alone in his apartment. He decides to improve himself in both health and knowledge while they're away. However, he gets nervous when he reads a psychology book about the "seven year itch," a tendency of men married for seven years to begin

seeking dalliances. Richard has been married seven years, but he's determined it won't happen to him. Then he meets his gorgeous new neighbour (Marilyn Monroe), and his lengths to avoid succumbing to the seven year itch and his neighbour's charms make for a hilarious comedy.

Trivia: This is the film with Monroe's iconic subway scene, but the scene wasn't accomplished easily. It was originally filmed on location, but whistling and noise from onlookers ruined the footage, and the scene was later recreated and shot on a studio soundstage. Monroe herself was difficult during filming; her lateness and her frequent inability to remember and deliver her lines properly caused the film's budget to significantly increase.

Another Monroe film is the witty and comical *Some Like It Hot* (1959). Set in 1929, this comedy follows the fortunes of two male band players, Joe and Jerry. On the run from the police after a raid on a honky-tonk, and from the mob after witnessing a murder, the two are desperate to escape Chicago. Their solution: dress up as women and join a travelling all-girl band. "Josephine" and "Daphne" make it onto the train, but their troubles aren't over. "Josephine" begins to fall for wide-eyed singer Sugar (Monroe); and "Daphne" is sought after by a persistent, aging playboy. When the mob boss arrives at their hotel, things really get complicated!

Trivia: The "Florida" hotel where the band performed is actually located in Coronado, California. The Hotel del Coronado has been used in a number of movies besides this one. It was also frequented by *Wizard of Oz* writer L. Frank Baum, and it is said that the building's imposing structure and lush surroundings inspired his description of the Emerald City.

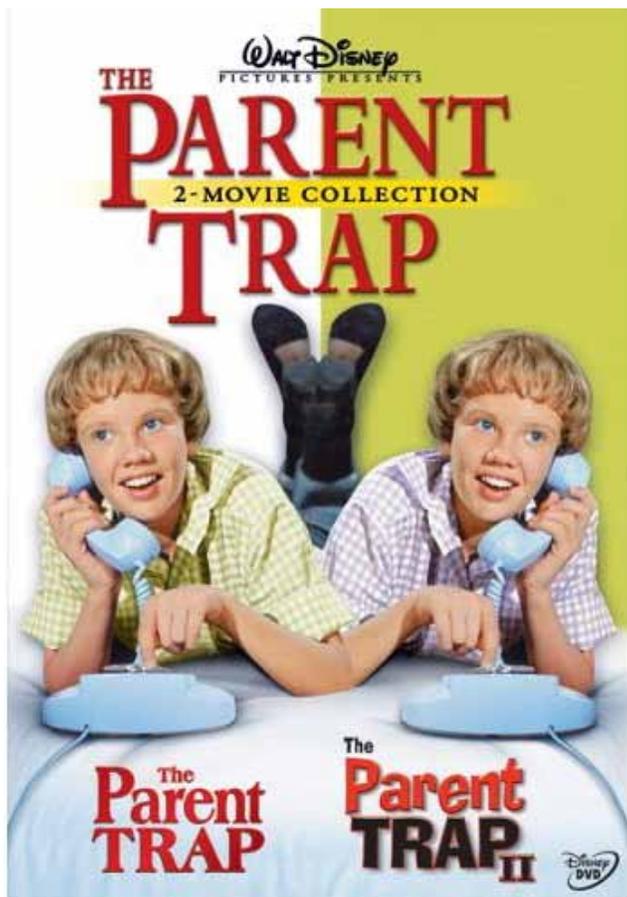
A good family comedy for the month of Valentines is 1961's *The Parent Trap* (the original, not the 1990s remake with Lindsay Lohan). Two girls (both played by Hayley Mills) meet at summer camp, and discover that they're long-lost identical twins. Their parents divorced when they were babies, and each took custody of one of the girls. Neither girl has met her other parent, so the twins concoct a plan: they will switch places for a few weeks, then reveal their deception and attempt to reunite their mom and dad. But there's a problem: the girls' dad has a new, gold-digging girlfriend who's not about to let her wealthy man go. However, she's no match for the twins.

Trivia: Although in this digital age we're used to higher tech film editing and CGI, the "split-screen" technology that allowed filmmakers to put side-by-side footage of the "twins"—played by one person—was a big deal for the time. The frames in which the twins appear together were filmed in two separate halves, and then copied together onto a new negative. To hide the line that would appear where the pictures changed, filmmakers used lines in the background props (windows, doors, etc.).

A lesser known, but still enjoyable, romantic comedy is *That Touch of Mink* (1962). Naive young girl Cathy (Doris Day) meets Philip (Cary Grant), a rich businessman, when his Rolls Royce splashes her, damaging her



dress. His suave ways sweep Cathy off her feet, and she begins to fall for him (and vice versa). However, while Cathy is seeking marriage, Philip isn't looking for long-term commitment. Add in Cathy's suspicious roommate; an odious clerk determined to date Cathy; Philip's frustrated assistant; and a nerves-related rash, and you have a light but enjoyable romantic comedy.



Trivia: In the Yankees game scene, real-life players Mickey Mantle, Roger Maris, and Yogi Berra make cameo appearances. The umpire who throws Philip, Cathy, and the three baseball greats out of the game is Art Passarella, an American League umpire from the 1940s and 1950s.

Romantic comedies have always been a popular genre, and, particularly in the 1930s, 1940s, and 1950s, some real gems were produced. The films reviewed in the romantic drama/romantic comedy series over the past few weeks are just a sampling of what is available. Check your local library or television listings for other must-see love stories, like *Holiday* (1938), *Sullivan's Travels* (1941), *The Major and the Minor* (1942), *The Big Sleep* (1946), *Marty* (1955), *Pillow Talk* (1959), *It Started in Naples* (1960), *The Apartment* (1960), *Love Story* (1970), and countless more.

In a few weeks, in time for the Oscars, we'll look at some of the history of the Academy Awards and review several Oscar-winning films. Until then, enjoy dipping into the

delightful world of classic romantic dramas and comedies. Happy watching!

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



CAN FUND

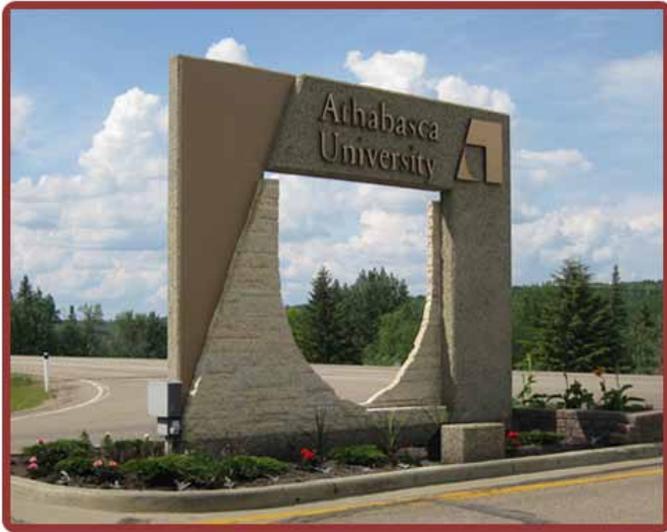
While all eyes are on the spectacle and excitement of the winter games in Vancouver, it's easy to forget the struggles many Canadian athletes go through just to scrape together the money to compete. Sometimes, after years of training, dreams of representing Canada are shattered over something as simple as the cost of plane fare.

[Canadian Athletes Now Fund](#) (CAN Fund) helps keep those dreams alive by raising funds that go "directly into the hands of Canadian elite athletes to support their training, coaching, nutrition and living expenses in preparation for international competition." CAN Fund, a not-for-profit organization, provides funding to "both able-bodied and paralympic athletes."

From national school campaigns to video messages from athletes, the CAN Fund website is definitely worth a look.

AROUND AU

Bethany Tynes



“Students are at the Heart of the University”: Dr. Frits Pannekoek Speaks to AU Students

Dr. Frits Pannekoek has served as the president of Athabasca University for the last five years. He was recently kind enough to discuss his role with *The Voice*.

As AU President, Dr. Pannekoek not only serves as the Chairperson of Academic Council, but is also “expected to lead a complex environment which values freedom—freedom to learn, freedom of expression more than anything . . . The president is also expected to position the reputation of the university nationally and internationally.”

“The position offers an incredible opportunity to do good,” Dr. Pannekoek says. “I consider it a privilege.”

Dr. Pannekoek has “been a tutor for AU for decades, and one of its staunchest supporters and admirers,” he says. “When I was approached to be president after several rigorous interviews I could hardly refuse. My career to that time involved being Chief of Historical Research for Parks Canada, Prairie Region, then the Director of Historic Sites and Archives for the Province of Alberta, and finally the Director of Information Resources,” responsible for the libraries, archives, press, and museum at the University of Calgary. “I was also a professor and taught a number of history and museum courses,” Dr. Pannekoek notes.

What is “exciting” about his position at AU, however, is that every day is different from the one that came before. “Most days involve meetings either with students, administrators, officials from the Ministry, colleagues from other universities or members of the university community. Generally most meetings focus on policy decisions, on solving ‘people issues’ and in securing resources for the institution from government and or donors.

“In my role as President of the International Council for Distance Education I also spend at least an hour a week on the phone resolving some interesting international distance education arguments. In the evenings I continue to enjoy tutoring two courses. The students are at the heart of the university and I never want to lose contact,” he says. “I also still have a few doctoral students at the University of Calgary and look forward as well to working with master’s students at AU. I also manage from time to time to do some research, and publish the occasional article—but that is not as frequent as I would like it to be.”

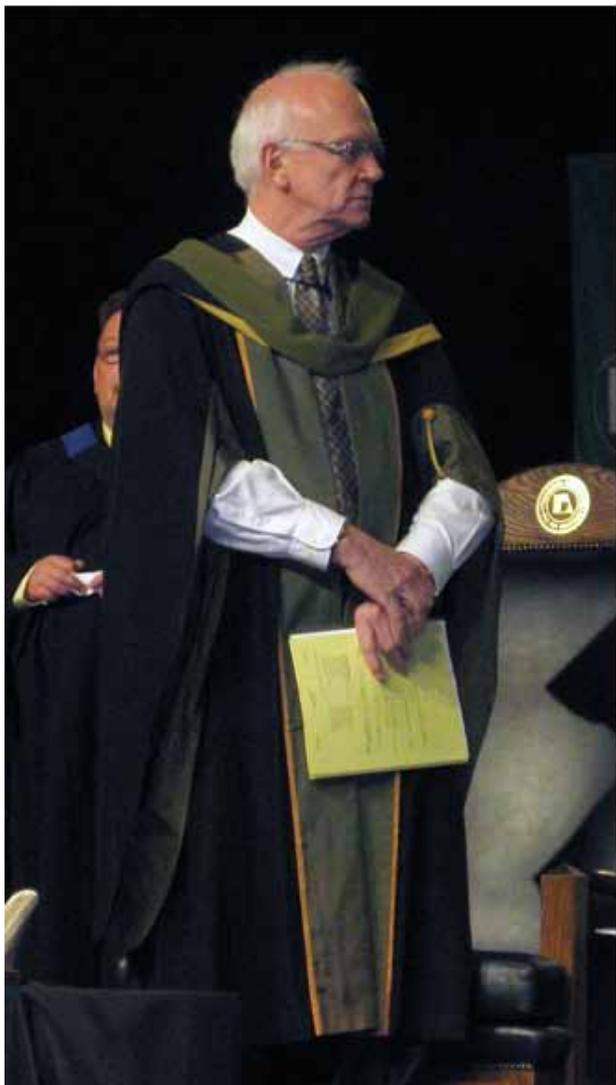
“My favourite part of the job is convocation. That is where everything comes together. It is often the first time that students and faculty meet in person. It is and remains one of the most emotional days of the year,” Dr. Pannekoek says. “I don’t think there is a ‘least’ favourite part of the position. The job can take a high toll on family life. I am very lucky to have had a very supportive family these last years.”

Dr. Pannekoek says that his role is unique in that “the President of Athabasca doesn’t really have to worry about ‘bricks and mortar.’” Instead, he worries about the “technology and intellectual infrastructure that

can help students be effective as learners," and also spends "a lot of time fighting for student access to government support programmes," which he says are generally "designed for 'bricks and mortar' students."

And while the current economic climate may create challenges "in the short term by changes in grants and by our inability to generate the revenues, we need to move forward. Tough choices will have to be made since the current economic environment has also impacted our fundraising.

However, as Alberta emerges from the recession there will be an even greater demand for the thinking skills that AU provides its graduates. We have also been fortunate to receive some key grants that will help us weather the economic storm and emerge with some strengths, particularly in our IT infrastructure."



Dr. Pannekoek at AU Convocation 2009

Whether seeking public or private support of the university, though, Dr. Pannekoek believes that "the university's strength depends on an active student body . . . With student support and when we speak with collective voice we will be heard."

When asked if there are any achievements of which he is particularly proud, Dr. Pannekoek says that "there is so much that we have all achieved together—increase in student awards, the beginning of the architecture programme, the foundations of the decanal structure, the raising of over \$50 million in funding for buildings and IT. We have also raised the research profile of the university and introduced the first doctoral programmes."

"The university has endless possibilities. I really see a future in Web 2.0. We can reinvent learning all over again. I believe that AU is the model that will allow the massification of learning throughout the world.

There are currently 150 million post-secondary places in the world. We need about 300 million. Open universities are the solution, and we are truly one of the best of the open universities. Being part of AU is being part of a learning revolution that will reshape the world."

"I think that as the next generation moves to go to university, that more and more of our children and grandchildren will choose an open, e-learning environment because it offers so much more, is more effective, and can

be customized for individual learning styles. It is an exciting time to be at AU," Dr. Pannekoek says.

To current AU students, Dr. Pannekoek says, "you are a student at one of the world's leading open universities. Take advantage of every learning opportunity! Connect with your tutors, with your faculty advisors and with your fellow students. Become involved in your learning! You are the university now as a student and forever as an alumni!"

IN CONVERSATION WITH . . .

Wanda Waterman St. Louis



Dinuk Wijeratne, Part I

Dinuk Wijeratne is a prolific composer, a brilliant pianist, and a musical visionary with an aesthetic informed by the Buddhist principle of balance. With a sensibility honed by one of the best musical educations—both academic and autodidactic—imaginable, Wijeratne is now welcoming the quiet of his newfound home in Nova Scotia as an opportunity to focus on composition and his duties as director of the Nova Scotia Youth Orchestra. Complex Stories, Simple Sounds, his CD collaboration with Kinan Azmeh, is soon to be

reviewed here in The Voice. He recently took the time to talk with Wanda Waterman St. Louis about jazz, Robert Altman, and the Zen of Mozart.

Until Something Clicked

My parents sent me for piano lessons and I hated it for about three years, until something clicked. I started playing the piano at nine and when I was about 12 I heard Mozart's music for the first time on an audiocassette I had bought. It had an incredible impact on my life. I remember thinking, *This is the greatest thing!*

I was listening to this one piece, *Piano Concerto No. 21*. It has a famous second movement but I had started from the beginning and I remember thinking that this was the most perfect balance of elements I'd ever heard. Whatever it was, somehow I needed to get close to it.

Interestingly, Mozart's music has probably been my greatest influence. I'm not saying that because of the musical language, because of course the language is something from the past and no one writes like that anymore. But he wrote in a language condensed to only the best elements, so that nothing in his music is superfluous and everything is in perfect balance. His music is as exquisite as it gets in terms of paring everything down.

When people describe Mozart's music they often say that it's divine, as if he had been copying something that came from heaven, but I believe that he was just one of the greatest geniuses. People like him go through all the processes of development that everyone else goes through; he was just remarkably accelerated.

Irrelevance of Struggle

I know this is an odd thing to say, but I connect with Buddhism in a musical way through Mozart. Buddhism is basically about finding balance in life, and I see this reflected in his music much more than anyone else's.

With Beethoven's music the idea is one of struggle—for example the struggle of humanity to overcome the odds—and that's why it appeals so much. I admire that, but I don't connect with it in the same way because I find that the Mozartian idea is a much more Buddhist thing, that struggle is ultimately unnecessary because

there is a constant balance of cause and effect which means that *everything* will balance out over time. So philosophically Mozart's music is huge for me.

Significant Experience

There were no significant musical experiences again until I became an undergrad and was being exposed to



music very regularly. I remember going to summer camp in the UK just before college and that was huge because every day I was hearing top artists.

I think from that point in my life I can count the big concerts that changed my life, like hearing Mahler for the first time live.

The first week I landed in England for my undergrad studies the opening concert for the season was Mahler's 8th symphony. If you haven't been exposed to that of course it's just going to blow you sideways.

I ended up in Nova Scotia because my mother decided to immigrate to Canada. I was in New York at the time so I thought Canada was the next logical step.

It so happened that after I moved the job with Symphony Nova Scotia came up. I had been thinking that I might have to go to a bigger city to get work, and I had relatives in Toronto. But I auditioned and got the job.

A Space for Doing

You can't be that busy in Halifax in the art scene because it's a small art scene, but I do work with people here a lot. And of course I have the youth orchestra here, which is a very important part of my life. But most of my life is now freelance composition and performance.

I've really cut back on the conducting. I was a New Yorker for four years and while I do miss the stimulus of New York it was really stimulus overkill. Halifax is not as stimulating but I value this time in my life just as much because now is the time to reflect on everything and create.

ERAS IN EDUCATION

Jason Sullivan



India: Ancient Educational Practices, Part 1

It seems doubtful that any teacher in Canada would deny that an important aspect of education is to mould young people into well-rounded adults. A holistic approach combining practical with interpersonal knowledge is generally espoused by well-meaning educators as well as parents.

Yet there are many contradictions because we tend to value production, consumption, and truths external to the self more than reflection,

perception, and truths found within ourselves. Happiness in Western civilization is often associated with the acquisition of material possessions. We learn that truths are arrived at by particular methods, methods that demand of us as much impartiality as we can muster. Far away and long ago, in ancient India, schools held similar priorities based around education as “a source of illumination giving us a correct lead in the various spheres of life.”

Schools in ancient India were spiritual and isolated, and allowed women access to more positions of power than was common in other cultures. In the realm of science, ancient India was particularly advanced. Indian mathematicians “introduced the zero, the decimal system and the method of multiplication.” The first documented university in the world was in India; it was known as Tashkila. Perhaps most important of all, each student in ancient India was fulfilling a “supreme duty . . . to achieve his expansion into the Absolute, his self-fulfillment, for he is a potential God, a spark of the Divine.”

Indian education was moulded “more by religious than by political, or economic, influences.” The conception of India as a nation, then, has come to comprise “an extra-territorial nationality” based around “the manifestation of the divinity in men.” The fact that in India divinity is inseparable from education meant that in ancient India the teacher-pupil relationship was sacred. In ancient times, a religious ritual known as “Upanayana” involved the teacher “holding the pupil within him as in a womb, impregnates him with his spirit, and delivers him in a new birth.”

This procreation metaphor of education must have provided a great sense of belonging to Indian students. They were not merely empty vessels receiving truths or wisdom, they were living personifications of that wisdom and thus played an active role in its creation and procreation. To embody values and truths is so different than to simply read and memorize them; instead of looking to the back of the textbook for answers, one need only look deeper within oneself!

In India, “the forest, not the town, is the fountainhead of all civilization.” Unlike in the Western world, where cities have always been the seats of learning, education in ancient India was thought to require “open space . . . aloofness” and a sense of “wandering through eternity” rather than merely wandering through human civilization.

This apartness from the urban world played a central role in “the two great ancient ages of India, the Vaidic and the Buddhist.” Being separated from the vicissitudes of daily social life allowed truths to more easily be revealed. Ancient treatises such as the “aranyaka” contain in their translation evidence that they either “originated in, or were intended to be studied in, forests.” In ancient India it is said that “the current of civilization that flowed from its forests inundated the whole of India” and in this same way the minds of students felt themselves becoming naturally endowed with knowledge and wisdom. Learning was more of a flow or unfolding of one’s self than by a forced immersion in a pool of “knowledge.”

Whereas women only recently were even allowed access to an education in our society, in India “the further back we go, the more satisfactory is found to be the position of women in more spheres than one; and the field of education is most noteworthy among them.” Women were allowed to study even the most sacred Vedic literature and to perform the most sacred religious rights. Many religious hymns of the “Rig Veda” were composed by “sage-poetesses.” Even the notion of marriage taught in ancient India was referred to metaphorical not as a master-servant relationship (“to love and to obey”) but instead in the most natural of terms, consisting of bride and husband “merged like rivers in oceans.” Besides love and marriage, women in ancient India also possessed equality on the battlefield. Many women joined the army and participated in games with dice and balls. They even participated in chariot races. It was even possible for women to be crowned with the highest spiritual authority: guru status.

Ancient Indian educational institutions were so respected that “Chinese scholars like Fa-Hien or Hiuen Tsang to India” undertook the long voyage to visit India. “The enthusiasm for Indian wisdom was so intense, the passion for a direct contact with its seats was so strong, that it defied the physical dangers and difficulties which lay so amply in the way of its realization.”

Looking briefly at the accomplishments of Indian medical science, it is no surprise that visitors went to such great lengths to see India. During the 4th century BCE, Alexander the Great’s army of invading Greeks were amazed at how effectively Indian doctors could cure snake bites. Indian medical apprentices were taught circulatory science “on the veins of dead animals” as well as “application of bandages on stuffed human figures and the use of caustics on soft pieces of flesh.” Medical students even performed autopsies to understand the function and processes of the human body. (Meanwhile, in Western Europe autopsies were considered sacrilege until the last few centuries.) Corpses were “decomposed in water and students were then required to dissect them and visualize the nature of skin, muscles, arteries, bones, internal organs.”

Doctors even invented and administered a vaccine against smallpox; the formula for which a medic named Dununtary was said to receive from God in a dream. The Indians also created the first hospitals. The aforementioned Chinese visitor named Fa-Hien described them as “comfortable” and effective. Hospitals also served as teaching laboratories, culminating in a final exam providing credentials for would-be doctors. Nowhere else in the ancient world was the anatomical knowledge of India surpassed. India even made advancements in veterinary science; there existed a special field known as Hastyaurveda: “The Science of Prolonging Elephant Life.” Perhaps the veterinary expertise endemic in ancient India should not be surprising considering that according to Hinduism “animals were regarded as a part of the same cosmos as humans” and thus accorded similar respect.

In sociological terms, the fact that education in ancient India allowed for greater participation by women and greater connection with nature suggests that the cosmology or world view of Indian society was very different from our own.

In sociological terms, the fact that education in ancient India allowed for greater participation by women and greater connection with nature suggests that the cosmology or world view of Indian society was very different from our own. The theorist Michel Foucault described how all ways of arriving at truth are essentially human and subjective in origin when he stated that “we can see, then, how vain and idle are all those wearisome discussions as to whether such and such forms of knowledge may be termed truly scientific, and to what conditions they ought to be subjected in order to become so. The ‘sciences of man’ are part of the modern episteme in the same way as chemistry or medicine or any other such science.”

In particular, Indian science and math and the example of the smallpox inoculation being “discovered” by way of a dream sent by God illustrates how the limits of the thinkable were tied to divinity and the sacred in a way that modern science and Western civilization would find incomprehensible. Even the term “discovered” implies truths waiting in the external realm for us to find them. In contrast, science in the West is like a treasure hunt and the map (scientific methodology) is the key to finding treasure. In ancient India it was possible for treasure to appear out of nothing other than the will of God.

AU OPTIONS

Bethany Tynes



Consulting a Counsellor

AU Counselling Services provides educational and career planning advice to both current and prospective AU students, as well as offering assistance and learning support to current students. According to the [Counselling Services website](#), “counsellors can help you clarify your educational and career goals and overcome barriers to your learning; they support you in your studies, help you learn to cope with change, recognize problems early, and identify solutions. Counsellors may

recommend print or electronic materials, provide individual assistance for specific concerns, and suggest appropriate referrals.”

Rhonda Guay is a Counselling Services Coordinator with Athabasca University, and is responsible for “coordinating the intake functions for the Counselling Services Unit.” This means that if “a registered or prospective student contacts Counselling Services (by phone or email), they would initially speak with either Monica [Wolanuk] or me,” Guay says. “We provide students with information about our university’s programs and processes, and book telephone appointments for students with our counsellors (when necessary).”

While Guay has been with AU “26 years this July,” she has held a variety of positions within the university. “My work history started in the Office of the Registrar, moved to the Office of the President, and finally Counselling Services,” Guay says, explaining that one thing she has “always appreciated about the university is that it allows staff to work in various units and get a better understanding of how other areas operate.” Guay also represents Counselling Services “on a variety of university committees.”

"It's a big step for an adult learner to either return to formal learning or approach it for the first time. Hopefully, if they reach a friendly voice (or email presence), they feel more confident, relaxed and informed about their decision/issue and less isolated," Guay says.

"While I'm a strong advocate for distance education, it can also be difficult and students sometimes do feel alone and isolated in their situation which can be quite stressful. Or, it may be an issue of juggling home, work, family and community commitments. Many of our adult learners also work outside the home, so keeping it all together for the length of time it takes to complete a university degree is a huge accomplishment! We're here to help . . . [and] have worked hard to develop a variety of educational and career resources on our website."

"Student satisfaction with Athabasca University is among the highest for all universities and I think AU's commitment to service for our students is what sets us apart from other distance education providers."

Julia McDonald, also a member of the Counselling Services team, has been a counsellor at AU for the last 10 years, prior to which she was "a College Counsellor and briefly a Guidance Counsellor in the K-12 system." In her position, McDonald "counsels prospective students and registered students regarding education, career and study skills matters, in person, on the telephone or by email, individually or in workshops." She also works to "design, plan, implement and

evaluate services to students which includes printed and web materials for counselling and guidance programs."

When asked about her schedule, McDonald explains that she tries to "book four one-hour appointments per day (sometimes more)," in addition to completing counselling notes, answering emails, preparing for sessions with students, and participating in committee work and various short-term projects. She also likes "to keep the schedule a little flexible in case of an emergency call."

One unique aspect of AU's Counselling Services is that "AU is one of the few universities that offers counselling services for prospective students. We help prospective students choose the right program for their career goals, answer any questions they have about AU . . . We see prospective students, so we serve a recruitment function and we help students with career issues, study skills, time management, etc., which will help the student to be more successful and stay a student so we have a retention function," McDonald explains. "If a student is in crisis (i.e., threatening suicide), other frontline staff will send them to us. We will assess the situation and help the person get help in their area. We generally do not do ongoing personal counselling but will help a student to [find] help in their community."

"I love talking to the students," McDonald says. "I am a people person and I enjoy helping them with the career choices, study skills, time management issues, etc. My least favourite part of the job is when I cannot help a person . . . Sometimes students contact me when it is too late. If they contacted me sooner for help with their study skills, etc., I may have been able to give that person the tools to help be a successful student."

"We all seek to provide the best services to meet the unique requests and needs of our students," Guay says. "Athabasca University has been in the business of providing post-secondary education since the 1970s and I still think we do it the best . . . Student satisfaction with Athabasca University is among the highest for all universities and I think AU's commitment to service for our students is what sets us apart from other distance education providers."

Sister Aurora

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

#28



Think we've "come a long way, baby"?



Look at my mother, who lost everything she had when she left my fist-happy drunk of a father. Look at Lynn, who can't go to theatre school because...

...her sisters "need" her to look after their kids while they work at the call center.



When SHE has kids SHE'll have to go work at the call center.

And if her man leaves her she'll have to go on welfare...

...because it PAYS more than the call center!



Oh yeah, we've come a long, long, way!



*From
Where
I Sit*
Hazel Anaka

Pareto's Principle

It was the mid 1990s when I first heard about Pareto's Principle. Motivational speaker and multi-millionaire Jim Rohn was in Alberta speaking to the masses. I glommed onto Rohn's style of speaking: simple, down-home, common sense. I appreciated his ability to distill complex concepts to their essence.

Subsequent research showed that in 1906 an Italian economist, Vilfredo Pareto, devised a mathematical formula to explain the lopsided distribution of wealth in Italy. Twenty per cent of the people held 80 per cent of the wealth.

Simply put, Pareto's Principle, also called the 80/20 rule, states that 80 per cent of effects come from 20 per cent of causes. Twenty per cent (more or less) of your sales force will produce 80 per cent (more or less) of your sales. Eighty per cent of problems will come from 20 per cent of defects. In a business environment 80 per cent of your income will come from 20 per cent of your customer base.

From a time-management perspective, at work or personally, it behooves us to analyze those activities or behaviours most beneficial to us. Are we likely to advance our goals by watching TV or attending a lecture? Going for a walk or becoming a regular at happy hour? First we must clearly understand our goals (perhaps a promotion, financial security, quality family life, more vacations); then we can hone our actions to help us achieve them. Or we can do all the peripheral time-wasting, energy-busting stuff that makes us feel busy (and even stressed) but is doing squat to move us ahead. In other words, use Pareto's thinking to manage our behaviour.

But why do I bring this up now? In my experience, this principle applies across the board. Not just in Italy. Not just in our own lives. The theory applies to families and groups. I can scream in exasperation when people don't keep their word, carry their weight, do their share. Logic should tell me that it's just the 80/20 rule at work and you can't mess with these immutable laws. In more rational moments I thank God I'm one of the 20

per cent. I can't fathom going through life making promises I don't intend to keep, telling bold-faced lies about my commitment, and dropping the ball over and over again.

In volunteer-run community groups there is a tacit agreement among members that we all need to step up. For the sake of the cause, for the sake of our fellow volunteers. Is this so hard to understand? If you take on a project or are scheduled to work your shift, do it; be there. Don't yap and posture at meetings. Don't come up with brilliant ideas—for *others* to implement. Don't brag about your involvement to the world when *we know how effective and reliable you really are*.

Choose instead to become part of the 20 per cent who deliver more than promised. Honestly evaluate your time and energy before committing. Or just stay the hell away, because you're ticking off the doers, from where I sit.



AU's People and Places

Lee Benson

Lee Benson is a Course Maintenance Clerk in the Office of the Registrar at AU, and has been with the university for almost eight years. "I started in Examination Services," Benson says, "and was there for over four years, and then I started my current position in Course Maintenance about three and a half years ago."

"My position involves setting up course information in our system, and making changes

to course information in the system also," Benson says. "I set up the general course information, and I set up the course sections which the students register in. I send out notifications to staff when courses are open, closed, or open in a new revision."

Benson works at AU Central, and says that "every day is different," with a variety of tasks and projects. "I get most of my work by email, such as requests to create course sections, forms for new courses, forms for changes to course information, and enquiries that I need to reply to."

Benson doesn't have the chance to interact with students very often, but has appreciated "the opportunity to interact with staff from a lot of different departments."

Working at AU, Benson says that "there are always new things to learn, as something comes up every once in awhile that I haven't encountered before, and things are always changing. It is always interesting."

Outside of work, Benson "enjoys watching home decorating shows."

Laurence Decore Award for Student Leadership

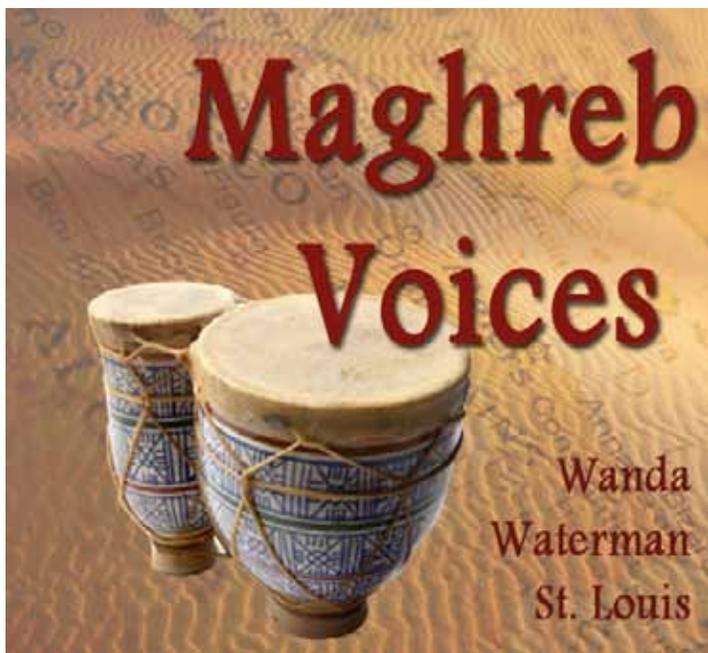


The Laurence Decore award is a \$500 bursary that recognizes students for their "outstanding dedication and leadership to fellow students and to their community." The AU winner must be an Alberta resident (the award is funded by the Alberta government) currently enrolled in three or more AU courses.

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. 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.



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

"If you have come to help me, you are wasting your time. But if you have come because your liberation is bound up with mine, then let us work together."

Aboriginal Activists Group, Queensland Australia, 1970s

"The love of liberty is the love of others; the love of power is the love of ourselves."

William Hazlitt

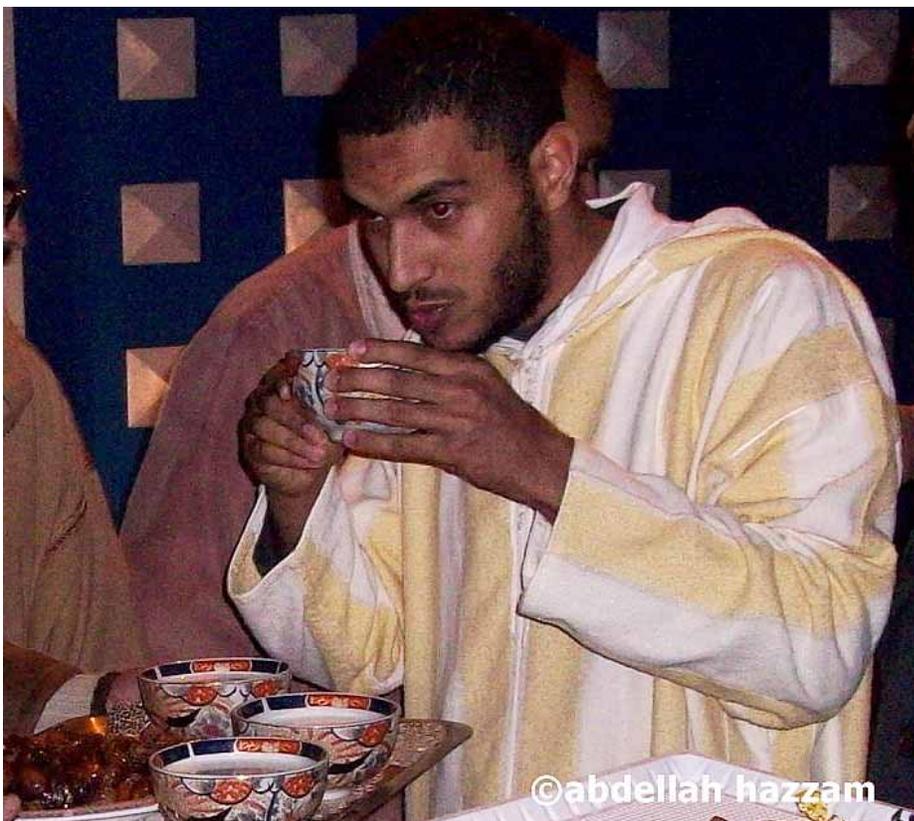
El Bashir Hazzam was arrested in Taghjijt, Morocco, on December 7, 2009 and sentenced to four months for blogging about a student

demonstration on December 1 and for a blog he had written in 2007. On February 8, in the Court of Appeal in Tiznit, El Bashir's sentence was commuted from four to two months, counting the two months already served, and he was released that evening. (To read the background of this story see [Part I of this article](#).)

The courtroom was packed with lawyers, journalists, activists, and friends and family of the prisoners. Supporters all over the world sat glued to Facebook, anxiously awaiting news of the outcome. Blogger El Bashir Hazzam, Internet café owner Abdullah Boukfou, and the three student protestors—Mohammed Chouis, Ahmed Habibi, and Abdul Aziz Al-Salami—were appealing charges stemming from a student demonstration in Taghjijt on December 1, 2009.

When the news of the prisoners' release was made known cyberspace resounded with a collective cheer from those who saw the freedom of Moroccan bloggers in particular.

Back in Hazzam's village of Taghjijt the blogger was fêted, embraced, and questioned at length by family, friends, and journalists. With the consummate civility typical of



El Bashir Hazzam, being offered milk and dates after his release

Moroccans, he repeatedly thanked all those who had defended and supported him and who had brought his plight to international attention.

A Fierce Resolve

Meanwhile defenders of free speech in Morocco barely paused to draw a breath. As soon as the news circulated that El Bashir and his friends were free, up went a chorus of *Yes, buts: Yes, but Boukfou is still in prison! Yes, but the doors of Le Journal Hebdomadaire are still closed! Yes, but there is still a menace hanging over the heads of our journalists!*



El Bashir Hazzam and the three student detainees on their release

correspondent for AljazeeraTalk.net, the Association is diligently working toward the release of imprisoned blogger Boubaker Lyadib and Internet café owner Abdullah Boukfou, raising global awareness of threats to media freedom of speech, and, perhaps most importantly, continuing to exercise the inherent right to blog.

As for El Bashir Hazzam, he admits to having been surprised at first by the worldwide show of solidarity that accompanied his imprisonment, but he recognizes that the issue at stake—freedom of expression—is one of international significance. He’s still critical of his country’s track record on human rights but not without hope, saying only that Morocco is still years away from being a country that respects the fundamental human right to freedom of expression.

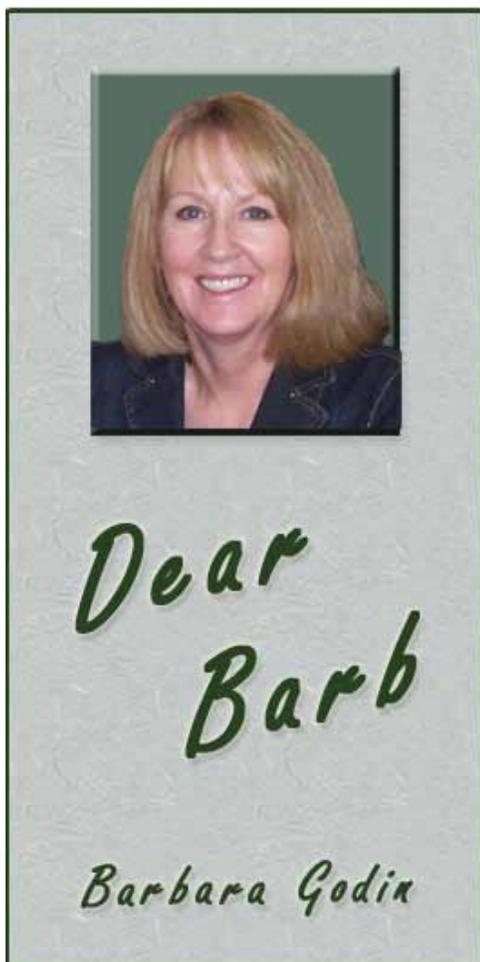
His recent experiences have given him an even more fervent resolve to exercise and to defend freedom of speech both in his own country and in developing nations.

More details can be found at El Bashir’s [blog](#) and the Facebook group [Free Moroccan Bloggers](#).

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

In what seemed like the blink of an eye the Facebook site “Free Moroccan Blogger El Bachir Hazzam” was changed to “[Free Moroccan Bloggers](#)” and its focus shifted, in the midst of the celebrations, to working for the release of the other detained bloggers. There is much to be done in the wake of the government’s recent tidal wave of paranoia, and the Association of Moroccan Bloggers, which now includes El Bashir Hazzam, is busier than ever.

According to Mohamed Akinou, member of the national office of the Association of Moroccan Bloggers as well as a



Lending Money to Family Can Come at a Price

Dear Barb:

My younger brother and I have always been really close until he got married three years ago. My husband and I have never gotten along with his wife. In fact, Melissa seems to have a problem getting along with everyone. Recently Melissa and Jay have gotten into financial difficulties and Jay has approached me and my husband about borrowing money. We haven't decided yet whether we will lend it to them.

My concerns are that Melissa will get into an argument with us as an excuse not to pay us back. I'm trying to maintain a relationship with my brother in spite of his wife and I'm not sure if we should take a chance and lend them the money. Either way could end up causing problems between us. Not sure what to do.

Anne

Hi, Anne. Thanks for sharing your situation with us. I will try to help you sort it out.

You are in a very delicate situation that is further complicated by the fact that you and your sister-in-law don't get along that well.

You didn't say what has caused your brother and his wife to have

these financial difficulties. Was it careless spending, or did they lose their jobs? Are there alcohol and drug problems, or other irresponsible behaviours? If either or both have alcohol or drug problems, lending them money will be enabling them to continue with this destructive behaviour. Therefore there would be no debating the right thing to do in that situation.

If they have gotten into this position through no fault of their own, then you may have to think carefully about what you want to do. My belief is that if you are going to lend money to family, it's best to be prepared for the possibility that you may not get it back. You don't want money to come between you and family members.

For example, if you need the money and are expecting to be paid by a certain date and they don't pay, you can be sure your relationship will be affected. You also have to consider your husband's feelings about lending money to your brother and his wife. You don't want to cause strain in your marriage.

If you cannot afford to lose the money then my advice would be not to lend it. If you decide to lend the money and you get it back, then consider it a bonus. I hope this advice is helpful.

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.

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.

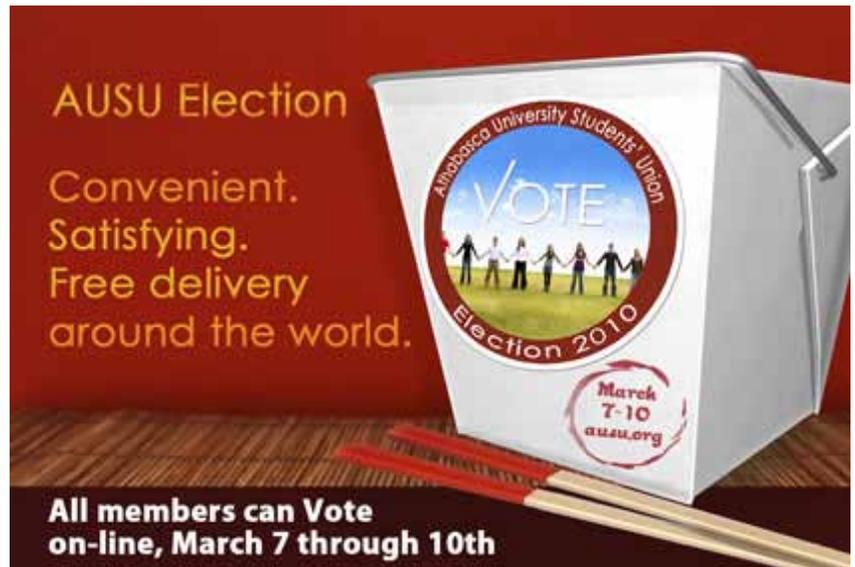
SmartDraw Program Renewal

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.

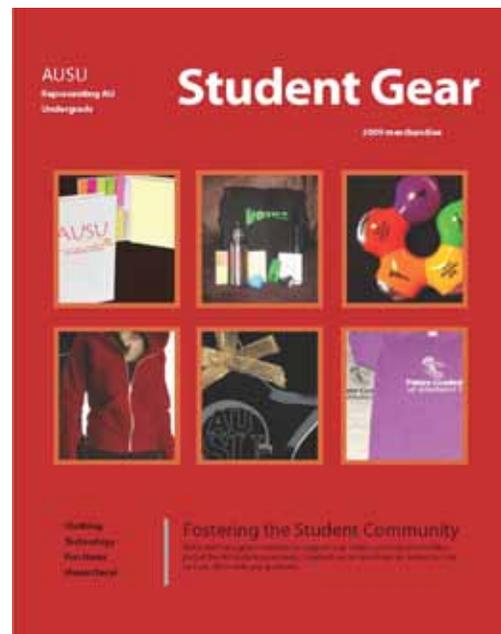
Tuition Increase Upcoming

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: Canada's aging population could strain GDP

Mention Canada's aging population and many people immediately think of the extra toll it will put on services like health care. But in a recent report, the federal budget watchdog warns of another sector that could be deeply affected: Canada's gross domestic product.

As the [CBC](#) reports, the federal budget watchdog has cautioned that "the government's current fiscal structure is not sustainable if the demographic issue of the country's increasingly aging population is not addressed."

The report, released by the Parliamentary Budget Office (PBO), estimates that, if the government's fiscal structure remains the same, growth in the GDP per capita "will fall by a little more than half over the next 50 years."

Since 1961, GDP has grown an average of 2.1 per cent. But as the country's population ages, GDP growth is projected to average only 0.9 per cent over the next 50 years. To combat the problem, the

PBO's report recommended "permanent fiscal actions": spending cuts to programs, increased taxes, or both.

However, a spokesperson at Finance Minister Jim Flaherty's office disagreed with some of the report's conclusions, telling reporters that "once the economic recovery has taken hold, extraordinary stimulus spending will end, the economy will grow and we will undertake the necessary restraint in spending growth to reduce deficits."

In Foreign News: Grade 10 students could head straight to college

A new program aimed at better preparing US students for college could see some students headed there after grade 10. As [The New York Times](#) reports, the program is modeled on "systems in high-performing nations including Denmark, England, Finland, France and Singapore."

Rather than tying high school graduation to "seat time," the program would set board exams that students could attempt after grade 10. The passing score for the tests "would be set at the level necessary to succeed in first-year college courses." In the current system, high school graduates are often shocked to find that they're not prepared for college-level courses. Many of them require remedial help to get through their first year, while others simply drop out.

A student who successfully passes the board tests could begin community college right away. Students who plan to attend a "selective college" have the option of taking college prep courses while finishing high school. If a student fails the grade-10 board exam, they can retake it at the end of either grade 11 or 12. Terry Holliday, Kentucky's commissioner of education, told reporters that the program "would allow an approach based on subject mastery—a system based around move-on-when-ready." Schools in eight states will introduce the program in 2011.

CLASSIFIEDS

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

THE VOICE

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