

THE VOICE

MAGAZINE

Volume 18 Issue 09
March 5, 2010

Academy Awards

Best picture classics

Sorority Row

Stewart Hendler

Cubamenco

Robert Michaels



*Plus: Maghreb Voices, From Where I Sit,
Sister Aurora, and much more ...*

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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.



SATURDAY NIGHT AT THE (OLD) MOVIES

Christina M. Frey



A Night at the Academy Awards

As Oscar season draws to its finale with this Sunday's Academy Awards, film buffs all over the world are discussing the merits of this year's top contenders. There's also been a noticeable interest in recalling past Oscar-winning films. Although not all Academy-recognized old films are familiar, many have become long-enduring classics. In this week's special Oscar instalment of Saturday Night at the (Old) Movies, we'll look at Best Picture winners celebrating the 80th, 70th, 60th, 50th, and 40th anniversaries of their wins.

1930 (3rd Academy Awards) Outstanding Production¹
Winner: *All Quiet on the Western Front*

Type: War drama

The Script: The film was based on the 1929 novel of the same name. The book's author, Erich Maria Remarque, was a German World War I veteran who wrote the novel based on his own experiences with the reality and horror of war.

The Story: Fired up by the stories of his schoolmaster and fellow students, a young German man (Lew Ayres) and his friends join the army. They're excited about the opportunity to experience the "nobility" of war. However, a short time at the front—and its reality of death, danger, deprivation, callousness, and remorse—changes their outlook on war. But it's not just their opinions that have been altered; it's the once-naïve young men themselves: emotionally, they've become old. In fact, their former homes have become a strangely unreal fantasy world, where they no longer can belong. War has claimed them, body and soul, for its own.

Why It Won: It's a powerful film. The movie's stark realism and its ability to move the reader are legendary, and its use of revolutionary filmmaking techniques (like not using a soundtrack in order to convey the harshness of the surroundings and lifestyle) are effective even today.

The Bottom Line: *All Quiet on the Western Front* is not light fare. However, its realistic and skilful portrayal of the reality of war is striking, and, 80 years later, is still relevant. Thought provoking, this tragic film is a must-see.

1940 (13th Academy Awards) Outstanding Production Winner: *Rebecca*

Type: Psychological thriller/Gothic drama

The Script: *Rebecca* was based on the 1938 novel of the same name, by British author Daphne du Maurier.

¹ Between the 1929/1930 and the 1940 Academy Awards, the current Best Picture award was called Outstanding Production.

The Story: Widowed nobleman Maxim (Laurence Olivier) brings his new bride (Joan Fontaine) home to Manderley, his country estate. However, the Manderley servants are ill-disposed toward the young woman; they still recall Rebecca, Maxim's first wife, and the strange circumstances surrounding her disappearance and death. Although the new wife attempts to settle into Manderley and her marriage, she is relentlessly pursued by the haunting memory of Rebecca.

Why It Won: Hitchcock brought his characteristic expertise to *Rebecca*, and the film's mood switches, suspense, and increasing sense of menace are skilfully juxtaposed with the young wife's innocence and naivety. I loved the use of shadows and flickering lights to create moods! It's not surprising that the film also received an Oscar for Best Cinematography.

The Bottom Line: Typical Hitchcock, *Rebecca* moves from light to dark, but ends with a glimmer of hope. It was Hitchcock's first American film; he really brings home to Hollywood the concept of suspense as an art form. Not a light film, but a good one.

1950 (23rd Academy Awards) Best Motion Picture² Winner: *All About Eve*

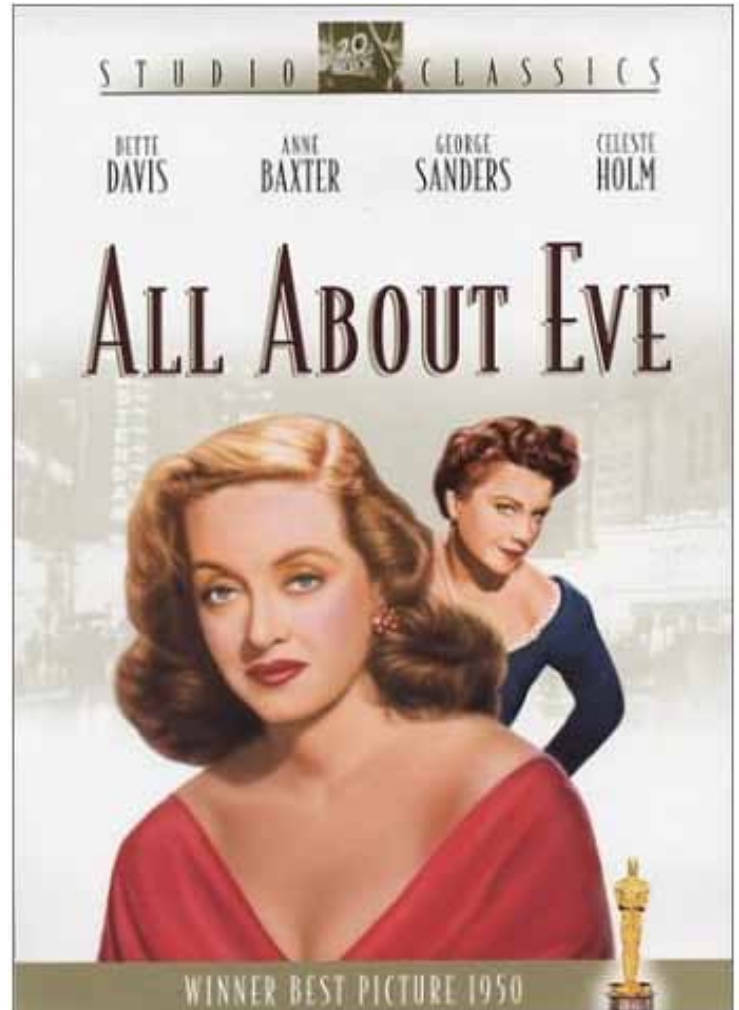
Type: Drama

The Script: The film was based on a short story, "The Wisdom of Eve" by Mary Orr, but the story itself was rooted in a real-life incident. Actress Elisabeth Bergner wrote in her autobiography about a similarly scheming assistant who attempted (unsuccessfully) to supplant her.

The Story: Aging but successful Broadway star Margo Channing (Bette Davis) is at the height of her career when she encounters Eve (Anne Baxter), a passionate young fan of her work. Eve's open, honest demeanour and apparent naivety charm Channing, who takes the girl on as her assistant. However, Eve cunningly schemes to build her own career and fortune at the expense of Channing's; through blackmail and sabotage, she uses friends and colleagues, and succeeds—apparently.

Why It Won: *All About Eve* is all about the characters. It boasts some superb acting from the ensemble cast. Although many cast members were nominated, only the actor playing the newspaper critic won a (well-deserved) Academy Award for acting; but the other performances were truly outstanding. The screenplay (also an Oscar winner) is well-written, with highly complex and developed characters.

The Bottom Line: Another deeper film, but a must-see.



² Between 1944 and 1961, the current Best Picture award was called Best Motion Picture.

1960 (33rd Academy Awards) Best Picture Winner: *The Apartment*

Type: Comedy-drama

The Script: Although the script was written as an original screenplay, elements of the film were inspired by various sources—for example, the Jennings Lang-Walter Wanger scandal in the early 1950s. Lang, an attorney, carried on an affair with producer Wanger's wife; they used the apartment of an office worker as their rendezvous. (Scandal broke out when Wanger discovered the pair and shot Lang; Wanger was sentenced to four months in prison after pleading insanity.)



The Story: Low-level insurance company employee C.C. Baxter (Jack Lemmon) is on the promotion track—but not for his achievements. In fact, he spends most of his work time juggling the social schedule for his apartment, which has become the preferred place for Baxter's managers to carry on their extramarital affairs. News of his promotion—and the availability of his apartment—reaches the ears of big boss Mr. Sheldrake (Fred MacMurray), who wants use of the apartment, too (and his own key!). However, things become complicated when Baxter falls in love—with Mr. Sheldrake's mistress (Shirley MacLaine).

Why It Won: The script is funny without trying too hard. The acting ensemble as a whole—both major characters and minor players—is solid and believable, almost like watching reality play out (surprisingly, although several of the actors were nominated, none received an Oscar win). Impressive also was the way that director Wilder (who took home the Best Director Oscar that year) skilfully moved the film from comedic to darkly dramatic to romantic without any jarring discontinuities.

The Bottom Line: It's one of those rare Oscar winners that isn't dark, deep, or thought-provoking. It's a great choice when you just want to relax and have a good laugh.

1970 (43rd Academy Awards) Best Picture Winner: *Patton*

Type: Biographical drama

The Script: Because producers were unable to obtain General Patton's personal writings and letters from his family, they based the film on two biographies of the general's life.

The Story: *Patton* follows the titular hero through his involvement in World War II, particularly the campaigns in North Africa and Sicily. It's not all battles, though: the film also focuses on Patton's often controversial ideas, words, and actions.

Why It Won: Although *Patton* involves plenty of battles, it focuses equally—and seamlessly—on developing Patton’s character. George C. Scott plays the role of the legendary, outspoken general to perfection, bringing the man—and his personality—alive amidst the special effects. Scott also won an acting Oscar for his performance (although he declined to accept it due to his disagreement with the concept of competition among actors).

The Bottom Line: If you enjoy war films, modern history, or even biographical sketches of dynamic leaders, you’ll like *Patton*.

Next week, we’ll leave the halls of the Academy for the green fields of Ireland. In celebration of St. Patrick’s Day, we’ll look at some classic films that drew inspiration from Ireland and its people. Until then, enjoy the Academy Awards, and consider viewing some past award-winning classics. Happy watching!

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

IN CONVERSATION WITH . . .

Wanda Waterman St. Louis



Robert Michaels

Robert Michaels is a Juno-winning Canadian musician who plays jazz, flamenco, and Latin acoustic guitar to enthusiastic audiences and who has won kudos from across North and South America and Europe.

*His recently released album *Cubamenco* is a tantalizing mix of romantic melodies and danceable rhythms and his playing has all the ancient, thrilling, brooding sensuality of flamenco coupled with the celebratory élan of Cuban sounds.*

Robert recently took the time to talk with Wanda Waterman St. Louis about music, creativity, and making your own guitar.

“Cubamenco”

“Cubamenco” is a word I came up with, a combination of “Cuban” with “flamenco.” There are a lot of technical differences between Cuban and flamenco music but to put it simply I would say Cuban music is much more melodic, with sweeter sounding harmonic progressions, and flamenco is more dissonant and much more complicated rhythmically.

Musical Workings

I grew up in Italy and Canada. As a child I was always fascinated by how things worked, and I loved to listen to music. At the age of 14 I asked my parents to buy me a guitar. They were not too excited about this, thinking it might interfere with my schoolwork, so they refused.

I decided to build my own guitar by nailing strings to a piece of wood and drawing on frets so I could at least learn the fingering of the instrument as it would not produce sound. My parents finally gave in and purchased me a guitar several months later.

Training the Vine

I studied privately for five or six years, then I studied music at Humber College, but most of my musical



training came as a result of travelling and performing with other musicians in other places such as Cuba, South America, and Europe. My style was derived from life experiences and studying various techniques such as flamenco, jazz, Latin American, and Mediterranean styles.

Mesmerizing Experience

It's a mesmerizing experience every time I play in front of an audience; something magical happens that seems so personal, almost like an experience we share together that can't be repeated the same way. It's very powerful.

Feeding the Creative Self

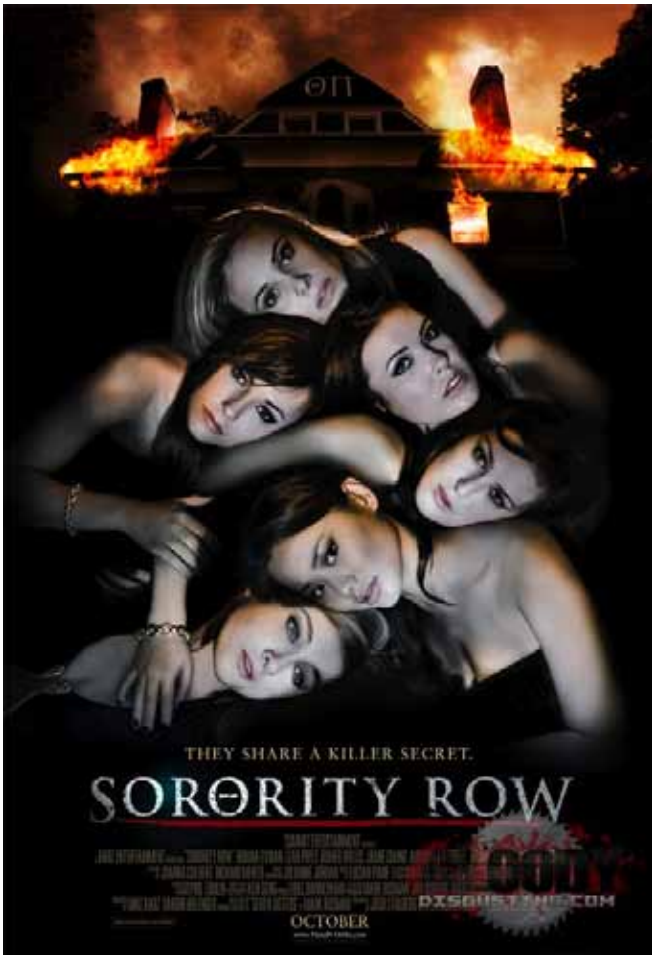
Love is the only condition I need in my life in order to go on being creative. The one thing that has inspired me the most is my family, especially my children. In my downtime I try to build things, like doing some woodworking. It seems to help me expand my mind and be more creative musically.

A Secular Holiness

I try to stay away from politics and religion as I don't have too much faith in them these days. But I think being aware of the world and the struggles of others will always affect the output of art. I do believe that there are greater forces out there guiding my music and me.

ON FILM

Diane Gadoua



Sorority Row

Take one horror movie, stir in a group of sorority sisters, a deadly secret, and a crazed killer, and what do you get? In the hands of director Stewart Hendler, probably not quite what you were expecting.

The fun starts not-so-innocently enough at a Theta Pi sorority party. Megan (Audrina Patridge) and her sorority sisters have cooked up a scheme to get revenge on her cheating boyfriend. When the prank goes horribly wrong, the girls swear to take the secret to their graves (and since it's a horror movie, you just *know* that's going to happen sooner than later).

But *Sorority Row* has a sly little twist in store: its humour. As Stewart explains, that element was a major draw when he first saw the script.

"I read this and I kind of saw this blend of *Mean Girls* kind of humour and *Scream* sort of self-awareness in it and I loved that," he says. He saw the potential to "really own it and enhance this kind of sarcasm and wit," making it "a celebration and a send-up of this crazy culture we have in America of sororities."

Navigating that fine line between tongue-in-cheek humour and straight-up horror proved almost as elusive as the film's hooded killer though. "It was so much harder than I thought it would be," Stewart says. "It ended up being one of the big things that we really had to fine-tune over and over again in the editing process because we had several different versions of the movie, and some were too funny and you sort of lost the scariness . . . I think the humour, when it's done right, kind of resettles you in your seat and then makes the next scare even more effective. We threaded that needle finally and got the balance correct."

That doesn't mean horror fans won't get what they came for. *Sorority Row* has enough murder, mayhem, and scantily clad college students to earn its R rating. But in another twist on the genre, it's the female characters that overwhelmingly drive the action.

"There's definitely intentional ideas about sisterhood and working together," Stewart says. "Some people have called the film misogynistic, which I think is really funny because if you look at every male character in the movie, they're all assholes, and ultimately it's the girls who . . . have to find the good within the sorority system and work together to escape it."

The ensemble cast handles the challenge well. Although fans of Audrina Patridge may be disappointed that she only appears for the first 15 minutes of the film, there are plenty of other interesting performances, particularly from Leah Pipes (Jessica) and Margo Harshman (in the role of Chugs). Chugs is the cynical, hard-

drinking member of the group and it would have been easy to overplay those qualities. But Margo Harshman nicely balances the polished sorority-girl exterior with her character's underlying anger.

And while Leah Pipes seems tailor-made for roles like the cool, sophisticated Jessica, you can't help thinking that she'd handle a straight-up comedy role just as well. Briana Evigan (Cassidy), Rumer Willis (Ellie), and Jamie Chung (Claire) bring their own unique talents to the screen, and Stewart notes that it will be interesting to watch where they take their careers.

But for sheer physical presence, there's only one thing to say: Carrie Fisher. From her first moments in the film, Ms. Fisher draws the viewer's eye—and that's in spite of being surrounded by a houseful of partying college students. She plays Mrs. Crenshaw, the Theta Pi house mother, and her brooding intensity seems effortless, conveyed without a word in the simple act of making a cup of tea. And she handles a shotgun hilariously well—especially when she *isn't* firing it.

It may seem odd to recommend an R-rated horror film as good clean fun, but there's something refreshingly self-aware about *Sorority Row* that makes the description fit. It's a "classic throwback slasher film," Stewart explains. "I think if audiences go in expecting a kind of tongue-in-cheek movie they'll have a good time," he adds, "and if they're expecting a gruesome, *Hostel*-style movie, it's not going to be for them."

He notes that the film sets out to be "a good ride and a good laugh and a good scare." If you like your thrills (and your white wine) with a twist of irony, it's a ride you'll definitely enjoy.

CLICK OF THE WRIST – Caravan

Whether they're called caravans or campers, there's a universal appeal to hitching up and hitting the road that never seems to fade. This week, we take a look at the fascinating world of the caravan, from vintage cubbyholes to modern behemoths.

Retro Caravans - Writer Chris Haddon doesn't use his 1963 Airstream Globetrotter for camping. Instead, he converted it into the perfect office—one that happens to be parked in the middle of his garden.

Caravan Collection - Richard Potter hasn't just collected five classic caravans. He's also restored them with original items from the '50s and '60s, including "deck chairs, radios, plates, cutlery, kettles, anodized drinking cups, Eskys, folding tables, caravan magazines, and appropriate paint colour schemes."

Vintage Trailers - Serious vintage-trailer enthusiasts will enjoy this clip. Ken Faber has collected some unique trailers, including a one-of-a-kind Airstream prototype and an early 1930s covered wagon trailer. Step inside—just watch your head.

Featherlite - Let's see: a 53-foot trailer, solid wood floors, copper country sink, a convection oven, electric fireplace, solid maple cabinets, a 32-inch flat-screen TV, satellite dish, sound system, and a queen-size bed. Oh, yes—and it's a horse trailer with a place to park your ATV.

Most Expensive Motorhome - It's not technically a trailer, but if you want to go "camping" in style, there's nothing quite like this motorhome featured on *Top Gear*. If you're not impressed by the granite floors and table, in-floor lighting, and recessed plasma TV, you may still enjoy the remote-controlled car carrier.



Maghreb Jazz

"Jazz legends like Miles Davis, John Coltrane, Duke Ellington, and Dizzy Gillespie introduced Arabic flavours in compositions such as "Night in Tunisia," "Caravan," and "Nardis" . . . These are songs that are still played everywhere and are famous all over the world."

Jan Wouter Oostenrijk

Malika Zarra was born in southern Morocco but was only a child when she emigrated to Paris with her family. Obligated to adopt French culture at school while remaining tapped into her Berber and Saharan roots at home was a strain, she says, but it's clear that her difficulties bore fruit in her amazing musical achievements; a jazz composer

and chanteuse who draws on her North African background for language, lyrics, rhythms, and melodic lines, Malika has garnered a large and avid worldwide following.

This particular kind of immigrant experience—gifted musicians of the Maghreb region migrating to Europe and North America—is one catalyst that created the burgeoning global phenomenon of Maghreb Jazz. Karim Ziad, Wajdi Cherif, and the group Monkomarok are just a few of the prominent musical acts whose careers have followed this pattern.

The Maghreb diaspora was influential enough to draw in musicians from other cultures, compelling them to devote themselves wholeheartedly to writing music in Maghreb styles. Vietnamese-born Nguyễn Lê says of his album Maghreb and Friends: "I'm deep into African music, and I've always found the relationship between black African styles and the North African—Algerian and Moroccan—musics, very interesting."

The present crossover of jazz with the diverse musical genres of the Maghreb region is not a new event in jazz (or music) history. A number of American jazz masters were all clearly influenced by the sounds they heard in North Africa, modes and rhythms that inspired innovations in their compositions and improvisations, and seasoned players have been turning to this region for years for musical stimuli.

Jan Wouter Oostenrijk, the jazz guitarist who originally coined the term "Maghreb Jazz" (even bestowing the name on his recent album), was originally introduced to Maghreb music genres by Moroccan immigrant musicians in his native Holland. For years Jan has worked with these musicians to create beautiful musical crossovers. Of his longstanding fondness for fusing seemingly disparate traditions, Jan says:

"My music is all about how to absorb another culture without losing yourself. I like the idea that when you listen to my music you forget this whole idea of the clash of civilisations between the Arab world and the West. Like jazz it also overcomes racial issues."

A beautiful symmetry is observed when we remember that the musical rhythms and modes brought to America by black slaves were also carried to North Africa, with distinct but musically connected traditions emerging from the two continents. The most salient example is Gnawan music, a product of the mix of black African influences with the Arabic cultures of the Maghreb region. When you listen to traditional Gnawan

music and then to American jazz you can sense a deep and ancient understanding between the genres, and the modern blend of the two is gumbo-delicious.

Any familiarity with the peoples of the Maghreb region might lead one to suspect that there isn't a huge jazz following in Algeria, Tunisia, or Morocco, but jazz festivals abound, and the ratio of jazz fans to fans of other genres is probably equivalent to that of North America or Europe. Jazz can be difficult, an acquired taste, but those who love it love it a lot; jazz aficionados tend to become utterly devoted to the music, and this is just as true in Casablanca as it is in New York. And Maghrebians who aren't diehard jazz buffs still appear to get a great deal of enjoyment from crossover styles.

The Zazz Band is made up of a bunch of energetic whiz kids that can jam any session player under the table while weaving in a Gnawan rhythm and belting out a Chaabi-style lyric. The Zazz Band's music can't be described as jazz exactly but jazz is certainly in the stew, and the freedom and enthusiasm with which these young guys recruit other genres into their musical posse is one of the hallmarks of great jazz.

France has been one of the more prominent hosts to this worldwide phenomenon. One of the few positive repercussions of colonialism was that France, which has had a history of cultivating great jazz, was the European country to which Maghreb peoples most often migrated.

The world stage is currently witnessing a fascinating renewal of musical growth very much like what occurred in America in the early half of the 20th century when many new musical genres were born, an awakening similarly linked to the struggles of oppressed peoples. The political plights of many Maghrebians and the sorrow of exiles forced to flee beloved homelands have found an outlet in a flood of creativity that is complex, marvellous and very much worthy of our contemplation.

Check past and upcoming issues of *Maghreb Voices* for articles on the musicians mentioned here, and many others.

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

DID YOU KNOW?



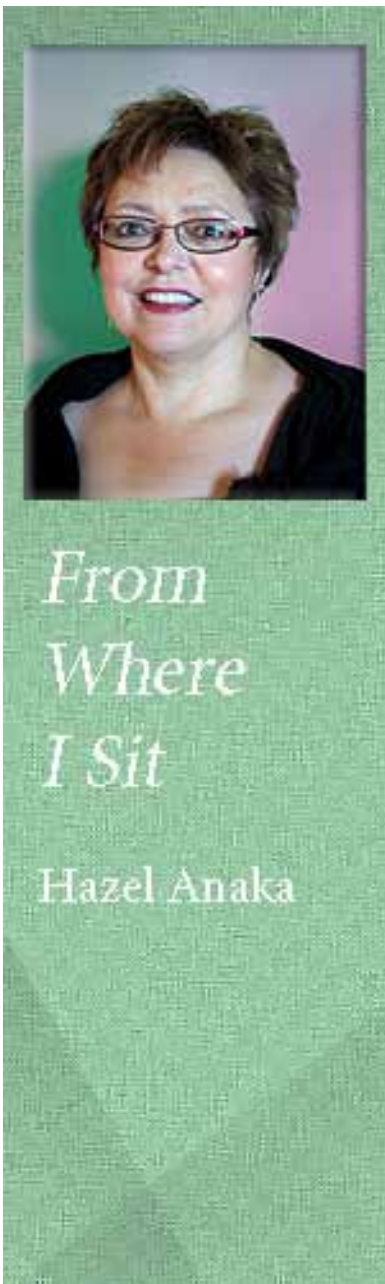
The Postsecondary Page from Statistics Canada

If you need statistics on just about any aspect of postsecondary education, this [Statistics Canada](#) page is the place to find them.

The info is divided into several sections: Postsecondary; Data, Research and Analysis; Support for Faculty; Support for Students; and Additional Publications. There's a wealth of information here—everything from links to student awards to things like an educator listserv and historical stats.

The link to depository libraries offers “free access across Canada to many Statistics Canada publications and standard electronic products.” There's also access to over 700 free StatsCan publications, along with information on how to cite Statistics Canada resources.

You'll also find something called E-Stat, an “online learning tool specially designed for use by the educational community” that lets you “generate dynamic tables, customize graphs and maps using Statistics Canada's Census of Population and socioeconomic data.”



All Will Be Well

In a year of losses, challenges, setbacks, and bloody bad luck, there's something restorative in the good that still exists "out there." So, indulge me, dear reader, while I document some blessings that are easy to take for granted. I do this for me but I hope there's a payoff for you as well.

Based on my feelings and those chronicled on TV and in the newspapers, I think there are only 17 people in all of Canada who did not experience some soul-stirring, heart-thumping, tear-forming rush of unbridled patriotism. Of course I'm referring to the just completed Olympic Winter Games. Millions of us were riveted to CTV for days watching this miracle unfold.

As a prairie kid I'm more familiar with the flatness of curling, skating, and hockey than sports requiring vertical landscape protrusions. But there was no mistaking the skill, training, and joy of all athletes in all sports. I remember where I was when Paul Henderson scored *the* goal in 1972. For a new generation, Sid the Kid has added new images to replay and relive.

So whether we had event tickets and partied on Robson Street or simply bought 10-dollar mittens and clapped in our own living room, Canadians were present, engaged, and proud. Maybe we've finally shed our collective inferiority complex and are now basking in the blessing of being Canadian whether by birth or by choice. Go Canada!

Our grandson Grady is now about six and half months old. For some time, we despaired at ever becoming grandparents and were thrilled with his arrival. He's healthy, strong, beautiful, precious. The changes in him are practically moment to moment. If we don't see him for a week, we're lost. This little presence has the power to bring smiles, soften hearts, and restore faith every day.

We marvel at his development and remember our own parenting moments a lifetime ago in a world much different. We all wait to see his personality develop. Will he be a reader like his grandmother or a golfer like his dad?

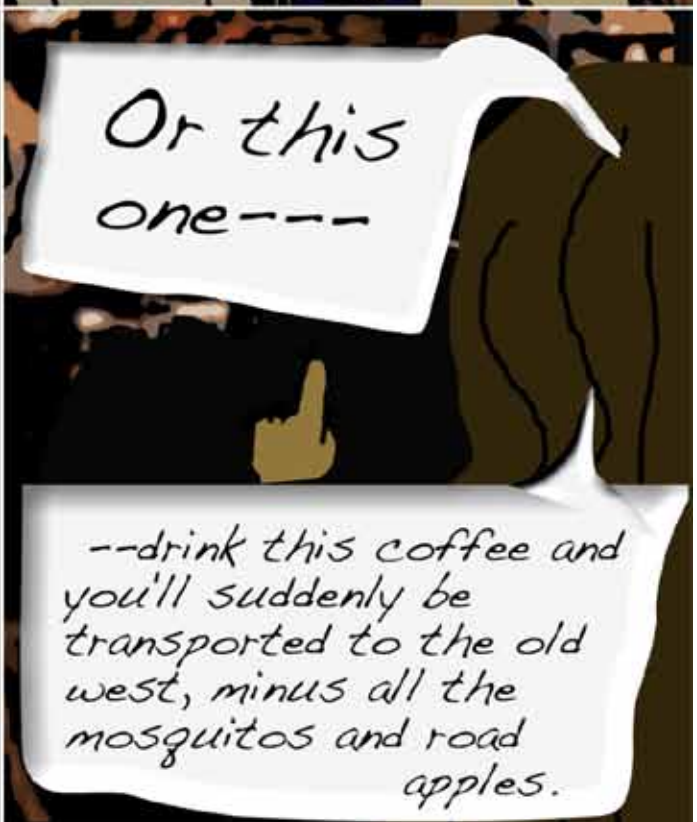
Will he love tractors, trucks, and machinery like his grandfather or will he be a city slicker? Will he be good in school or good with his hands? We are blessed to be able to watch this young life unfold.

As I write this I'm listening to the Stollery Children's Hospital Radiothon on CISN. With my daughter working for the foundation I feel connected to the process. With a healthy Grady in our lives we are aware that heartache is sometimes only a genetic accident away. As much as it hurts to listen to the stories or know Hilary has attended too many funerals, it's even more important to celebrate the existence of a world-class facility and the miracles happening within its walls. Thank God for the existence of expertise and the generosity of donors.

Today the sun is shining, spring is within sight, and life is good. With God's help, inner resources, gratitude, and a rejigging of priorities all will be well, from where I sit.

Sister Aurora

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



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.

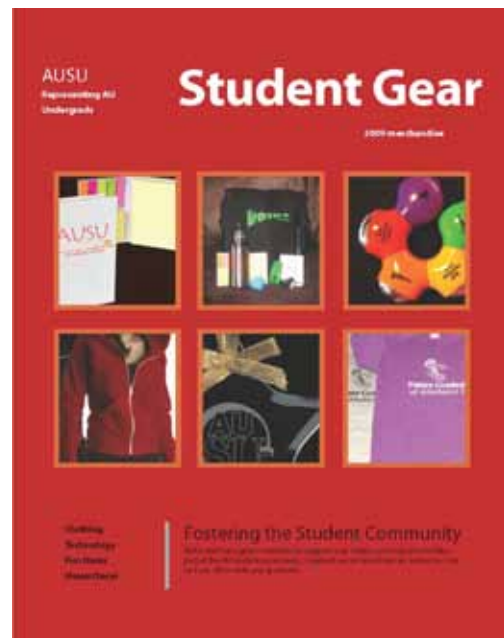
Tuition Increase Upcoming

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: Higher US passport fees could affect Canadian tourism

The success of the recent Winter Olympics in Vancouver brought Canada to the world's attention. But a hefty hike in US passport fees could put a damper on American visitors getting to know us better.

As the *Toronto Star* recently reported, the US State Department has plans "to raise passport fees by as much as 35 per cent." Such an increase would put the cost of an adult passport at \$135. Passports are now mandatory to cross the US-Canada border. For a family of four, that trip would cost \$480 in passport fees alone. The planned increase would take effect in mid-March.

Canadian tourism officials are shocked at the proposed increase, especially as it comes at a time when the strong Canadian dollar is already affecting the industry.

Wayne Thomson, the Niagara Falls Tourism chair, told reporters the increase was also bad news for "people in the U.S. who may not be able to afford a passport and it's certainly not good news for tourism destinations." The rate increase could affect business travel as well, but the State Department stands by the decision, noting that "high-tech features are making passports more expensive to produce."

In Foreign News: Home-schoolers granted asylum in US

Of all the reasons for seeking asylum in the United States, home-schooling may not be the first one that comes to mind. But fear of persecution for the decision to home-school is the reason a German family has been granted US asylum.

As *The New York Times* reports, Uwe and Hannelore Romeike wanted to home-school their five children in their native country, Germany. But home-schooling is illegal there, and Germany is one of the few European countries that both requires and enforces children's attendance "at an officially recognized school."

The Romeikes arrived in the US in 2008. They're devout Christians who wanted their children educated in an environment free of the "unruly behavior" they saw as widespread in their local schools. They only learned about home-schooling as an alternative when they began to explore their options—not unusual given the strict penalties imposed. When they decided to home-school their children after months of research on the subject, they "expected to be punished with moderate fines and otherwise left alone."

However, they soon faced the possibility of losing custody of their children, fines of more than \$11,000, and even a police visit during which the children were forced to go to school. Even before the Romeikes's case, lawyers at one advocacy group, the Virginia-based Home School Legal Defense Association, had attempted to litigate on behalf of home-schoolers in Germany, with little success. The US judge who granted the Romeikes asylum noted that the measures taken against them amounted to persecution, and that the German policy is "utterly repellent to everything we believe as Americans."

CLASSIFIEDS

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THE VOICE

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