

THE

VOICE

MAGAZINE

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On Human Liberty

Maghreb Voices

SyncMyPix

Android app

AU Profiles

Emily Hines



Plus:

*From Where I Sit, Sister Aurora,
Dear Barb, 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.





AU Student Develops Android App

As a student in AU's Bachelor of Science in Computing and Information Systems (BScCIS), Neil Loknath knows a thing or two about studying computer science. Now, he's sharing some of that knowledge with a fun open-source application he created: [SyncMyPix](#).

SyncMyPix downloads your friends' pictures from your favourite social networking site and synchronizes them to corresponding contacts on your Android-based phone.

His work has won him a free Nexus One, Google's new phone, "thanks to a [new program](#) from Google that rewards developers with a new phone for developing popular apps," Neil explains. Part of the program's criteria is for developers to have "an application with 3.5 stars or higher and more than 5,000 downloads."

So far Facebook is the only option to use the app with, but Neil is busy expanding and refining his app. Recently, he shared the scoop on its development with *The Voice*.

For readers who may not know, can you give us a brief description of what Android is and how you got involved?

Android is an open-source software platform for mobile devices. It includes a Linux based operating system, middleware and key applications, such as an Internet browser, email client, etc. Since the platform is open-source, third parties can build software based on Android to operate their products. For example, HTC sells a number of phones that run their own customized versions of Android. Since Android is licensed under the Apache Software License, third parties are free to make proprietary enhancements to Android without being required to release their code to the open-source community.

This combined with the high level of quality of the Android platform has made it very popular with a number of handset makers. Android initially started as its own entity, Android, Inc. But, now, it is owned and maintained by Google. Some examples of the most popular Android phones are the HTC Dream, HTC Magic, HTC Hero, HTC Nexus One, and the Motorola Droid.

I got involved in Android around the time I finished up with the Google Summer of Code program last year. I had about a month before beginning courses in September, so I decided to buy an Android phone with the intention of using it to develop applications. Android was attractive to me because of the low cost of entry to application development. The SDK (software development kit) is free and the cost to distribute applications in the Android Market is a one-time fee of \$25. In contrast, Apple charges \$99/year to distribute applications in the Apple App Store, and your applications are subjected to a review before they are published. So, it is possible that, after a lot of hard work, an application could be rejected for

distribution. So the low cost of entry to development and the ability to publish my applications directly were huge selling points for Android.

What are some of the main features of SyncMyPix, and how can readers find out more about it?

SyncMyPix is a simple and easy-to-use application that makes it easy to attach pictures to the contacts on your phone. So when a friend calls, or you call a friend, you can see their picture displayed on your phone. It is a tedious operation to manually set pictures for individual contacts, so SyncMyPix makes the process automatic.

It can automatically set pictures for your phone contacts by matching friends from your favourite social networking website (currently SyncMyPix only supports Facebook) with the contacts you have on your phone. There are several options, but the default method uses diminutives for potential matches. For example, Robert matches Bob, Michael matches Mike, etc. This is helpful because people normally don't name the contacts on their phones the exact same way they appear on social networking websites. In addition, since matching is not always 100 per cent accurate, SyncMyPix allows manual corrections.

The application has a screen that allows you to view sync results, view pictures, crop pictures using face detection, match unmatched contacts, and make changes to existing matches. Going along with the theme of doing things easily and automatically, SyncMyPix can update pictures in the background at scheduled intervals.

SyncMyPix is available for download in the Android Market. In addition, I have set up a [Google Code website](#) providing additional information and bug tracking.

"In my opinion, open-source software is important because it fosters education and innovation. Since code is available for the entire world to view, everyone can learn from it and everyone can contribute to it."

Do you have plans to expand the social networking sites it will sync with?

A great thing about open-source is that popular projects tend to attract people that want to contribute. Recently, I had an individual interested in adding a German social networking website. They seemed very motivated, so it is possible that more social networking websites are just around the corner. It's exciting seeing people take an interest in improving something that I've built from scratch. I welcome new contributors and hope to see more in the future.

Is this the first application you've developed and/or made available?

I've developed other applications, but this is the first application that I've made publicly available. It started out

as an experimental way to try Android development. The more I worked on it, the more fun I had developing it. So, I was motivated to turn it into something useful.



Why is open-source software (and supporting its developers) so important?

In my opinion, open-source software is important because it fosters education and innovation. Since code is available for the entire world to view, everyone can learn from it and everyone can contribute to it. This encourages a free flow of ideas among an audience with varying degrees of expertise, thus creating an excellent environment for creative problem solving.

In addition, information sharing eliminates redundancy because problems that have already been solved do not need to be solved again. Free open-source software also provides an opportunity for organizations to reduce costs while maintaining a high level of quality. Schools, for example, can give their students access to different types of software that would otherwise be very difficult to provide due to costs, licensing, etc. And, since open-source software is typically free, students can easily use the same software on their computers at home.

Are there any other open-source projects (either independent or through mentoring) you'll be working on soon?

I contribute to a media player called Banshee from time to time. My most recent contribution was the addition of a search feature called "[typeahead find](#)". In addition, I continue to keep my Summer of Code work up-to-date. It's an extension to Banshee that allows users to share their music libraries with their instant-messaging friends. I've just recently joined a new project called Banshee Community Extensions. Basically, it's a one-stop spot for things that extend the functionality of Banshee. I've contributed to the project by adding [my extension](#).

Of course, I also hope to bring new Android applications to the market in the future.

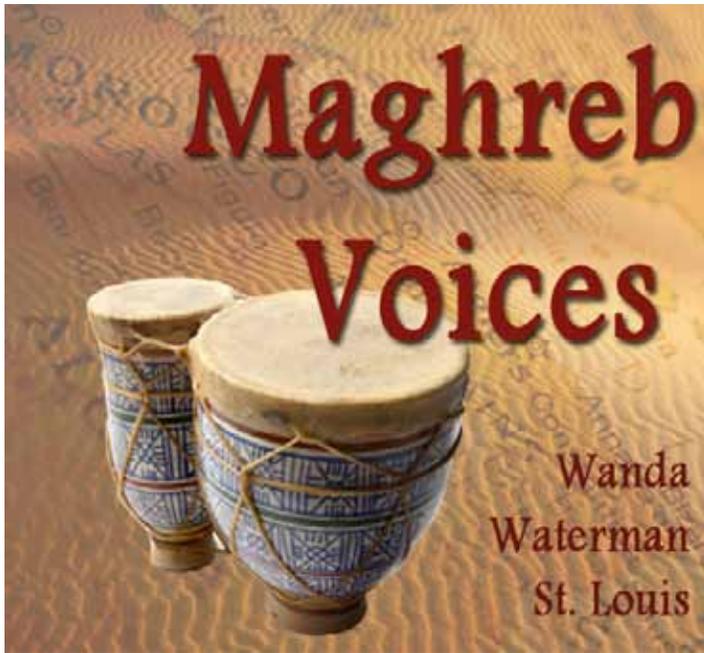
AUSU ELECTION RESULTS, UPCOMING AGM – APRIL 6



Following the excitement of the recent AUSU election, council is now busy planning their Annual General Meeting, scheduled for April 6. The meeting takes place at 5:00 pm MST and, as always, all members are "invited to attend and be heard." You can call the office to book a line, and the AGM includes an open discussion period—a great chance to chat with councillors, ask questions, and hear what's on the minds of other AU students! All the details and contact info can be found on the [AUSU home page](#).

And in election news, the results are in. Nine candidates stood for election and "eight were duly elected by receiving more yes votes than no votes." For the 2010-2012 council term, the eight councillors are: Ashley Seely, Barbara Rielly, Bethany Tynes, Joel Benitez, John Palmer, Kim Newsome, Sarah Kertcher, and Toni Fox. Congratulations to all new (and returning) councillors!

To find out more about council activities, find specific policies, take the latest online survey, and more, bookmark the AUSU site and check in often.



A.T.B.: A Blogger on Blogging on Morocco, Part II

A.T.B. is an award-winning Moroccan-born blogger who writes one of the net's most insightful blogs on Morocco: A Moroccan About the World Around Him. A.T.B. diligently disseminates relevant information to the English-speaking world regarding the struggles of a region where human rights are upheld in theory but where exercises of these rights are sometimes violently suppressed. A.T.B. often praises the bloggers of Morocco for their perseverance in spite of official silencing. He is also a poet of extraordinary insight and sensitivity.

Recently A.T.B. spoke with Wanda Waterman St.

Louis about freedom, oppression, and the temerity of the Moroccan blogging community.

On Human Liberty

I am not a dyspeptic critic of the Moroccan government; I stand by its efforts to defend the country's integrity from foreign threats. But I abhor its use of national security as a means of subjugating those who criticize the inefficiencies and transgressions of its officials.

I grew up in Hassan II's Morocco, where politics were discussed in hushed tones if at all. Arbitrary jailings and the disappearances of dissidents were frequent; the silencing of opposition voices was ruthless. People feared for their lives and for the lives of their loved ones.

Things have changed noticeably, of course, but the traits of oppression are still there even though they're masked. Those who express their opinions are still aggrieved. The independent media is still persecuted, the political parties are puppets of the Royal institution, and there is no genuine representation of the people. There are multiple standards of the law. Everyone in Morocco, from the parking lot attendant to the Prime Minister, is a servant of the King.

Why Human Rights?

My devotion to human rights started as a by-product of my attempts to reconcile my Moroccan heritage with my American spirit. My allegiance to the democratic principles of the US Constitution proscribes my support for political practices prohibitive to human rights, such as those employed by the Moroccan government.

Speed Bumps

The two largest inhibitors of the progress of human rights in Morocco is the Moroccan government's total lack of accountability to the Moroccan people and its inability to accept and value dissent.

The two main things slowing down Morocco's evolution as a just society are illiteracy and Moroccan's unassertive and uncritical political mentality.

The monarchy strives to present Morocco as a just society because a veneer of democracy is critical to the government's foreign relations with Europe and the US and the flow of foreign capital into the country.

On Blogging

I started blogging in Iraq. It was my third visit to that war-torn country and I was then working for an NGO.

I'm motivated by the temerity and ingenuity of the Moroccan blogging community. It has been instrumental in affecting positive change in the way Moroccans think and the way the international community thinks about Morocco. It plays a pivotal role in drawing attention to human rights violations. It is indeed a force to be reckoned with and I am proud to be part of it.

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

Notes From the Front:

"Je suis prête à donner deux ans de ma vie en prison pour que les choses changent au Maroc. Je peux même donner quatre ans, dix ans ou toute ma vie pour que les conditions du peuple marocain s'améliorent."

Zahra Boudkour, speaking from prison August 3, 2009

Arrested during a student protest on May 28, 2008, Zahra Boudkour and nine other students were accused of having attempted murder and of setting a fire during the demonstration, both of which charges they deny. As in the later demonstration in Taghjijt on December 1, 2009, the students were simply demanding better conditions for university students when the police violently dispersed them. Zahra and a number of other students were beaten and tortured while questioned for several days.

The prison cells are overcrowded and unsanitary and the medical care is deficient. Zahra and a number of other women in the cell suffer from numerous ailments that are going untreated.

An [appeal trial](#) is scheduled for March 19. To sign a petition for Zahra's release [go here](#).

DID YOU KNOW?



Convocation Checklist

Planning to graduate this June? There are some important dates to keep in mind, and AU has an online [convocation checklist](#) to help you get ready for the big event!

Convocation will take place from June 10 - 12 this year, and "for Convocation in June, Applications for Graduation must be submitted by April 1st, and all requirements must be met by May 7, 2010."

The checklist includes links to check the date for your convocation ceremony, see daily schedules of events, find travel info, and more. Watch *The Voice* for more updates and full convocation coverage in June!

AU Profiles:

AU Profiles: Emily Hines

Christina M. Frey



"I'm intrigued by the people drawn to Athabasca," says AU student Emily Hines. She adds, "It's usually people who are willing to think outside the box." Emily, now in her fourth year of the Bachelor of Arts in French program, is herself a good example of a creative learner. She took advantage of AU's flexibility and brought her courses on the road, moving to Quebec for several years to increase her fluency in French language and culture. Here, she explains how involvement in the francophone community has enhanced her education. She also gives suggestions for overcoming both isolation and the temptation to procrastinate.

Several years ago, Emily was seeking a change in careers. "I was dissatisfied with my current job, accounting, and was looking for a new direction," she says. "My theory was . . . [that] if I could find something I enjoyed learning about, then chances [were] good it [could] lead me to work that I enjoy, too." Realizing that she enjoyed languages, she considered studying French, but it wasn't an easy decision: "It took a lot of convincing before I took the plunge," Emily says.

Emily was drawn to AU for its flexibility; she could just take a small number of classes in the evening while continuing to work. "There was relatively little risk," she points out. "With Athabasca, I could give it a try without having to drastically change my schedule."

It didn't take long, however, before she was ready to commit to a degree. "French has had an incredible role in the history of North America, and I find the language fascinating," Emily says. "After I'd completed the first French course, I was pretty much hooked!"

Over the past few years, Emily has sought creative ways to enrich her study of French language and culture. For example, while still in her first year of the program, the Alberta native moved to Quebec in order to immerse herself in the language. "Athabasca gave me such flexibility," she says. "The courses can be completed anywhere, so moving . . . and continuing to study was quite feasible."

Daily interaction in the francophone community gave her a linguistic advantage that would have been impossible to otherwise attain. "I didn't have much experience speaking or listening," she says. "The opportunity to use the language daily was priceless!"

Emily also found that immersion in the greater community changed her perception of French language and culture. "I loved being able to live in Quebec and learn about a different perspective," she says. "The experience I gained . . . was invaluable."

Another benefit: it reduced that sense of loneliness commonly felt among distance students. "Distance education can be quite isolating," Emily admits. "I had some great tutors for my AU French courses, but it



Chateau Frontenac, an icon of Quebec City

was a challenge not seeing them in person, especially for a language degree." While in Quebec, Emily studied at Laval University concurrent with her Athabasca courses, allowing her to expand her course repertoire and immerse herself more fully in the francophone community. "[It] was great for being able to meet people," she says.

Although she has returned to Alberta, Emily hasn't let her French fluency slide during the latter part of her degree. She's discovered the University of Alberta's francophone community, Campus Saint-Jean, and is enjoying

taking concurrent classes there. It's allowed her to go beyond the selection offered at AU, while retaining the ability to concurrently study her AU degree requirements.

In the future, she's hoping to do more travelling: "Part of my motivation for learning French is that [it] offers me a window to see into other cultures," Emily says. She's considering teaching English in a French-speaking country, or doing some other overseas work. "It may be a few years down the road!" she admits.

Procrastination hasn't been a difficulty for Emily; studying something she loves has kept her motivated. Integrating a social aspect into her studies has also helped her to keep the flame alive. There are many opportunities in the greater community for volunteer work, something she recommends for its social and educational benefits. "I really enjoyed . . . volunteering in [my] area of interest," Emily says. "Schools and community organizations are happy for the assistance, and I'm happy for the experience . . . it's a win-win situation!"

"[Find] out . . . what [you] love and feel passionate about," Emily says. Then, follow your dreams! "The more I discover," she says, "the more interesting it becomes."

Christina M. Frey's got her schedule all worked out: everything comes before housework. When she's trying to avoid doing the dishes, she blogs about life at [The Twisting Kaleidoscope](#).

Sister Aurora

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

#32

Why do you think she's always picking at you, Bert? She's jealous!

NO I AM NOT!

Hey, don't worry about it! Take my boyfriend! Please!

If yer so anxious to be free why don't you just break up with him, Bert?

I tried once. He cried so I took him back.



Dear
Barb

Barbara Godin

Find a Compromise Before Heading to the Altar

Dear Barb:

I'm engaged to be married this year. I have been dating my fiancé for five years. We have always got along well, until recently. As we began planning our married life together I noticed that John was very definite in the way he wants our life to be. For example, we both work but he feels the man should manage the money. I don't agree. I feel we should have our own bank accounts and work out who will pay which bill, etc. I have told John how I feel but he's not willing to compromise. I'm a very independent person and I really don't want to do this, but I don't want to jeopardize our life together. How can I get him to understand how important this is to me?

Ellen

Dear Ellen, thanks for bringing up this very important topic.

Managing the finances in marriage is vital to making the partnership work. You need to discuss and resolve this issue before you marry. Is there any reason why your fiancé feels he would be a better money manager than you? It seems that he simply believes that the man should manage money. Perhaps his father always managed the money at home and he feels that's the way it should be. How have you managed your money up to this point? Have you

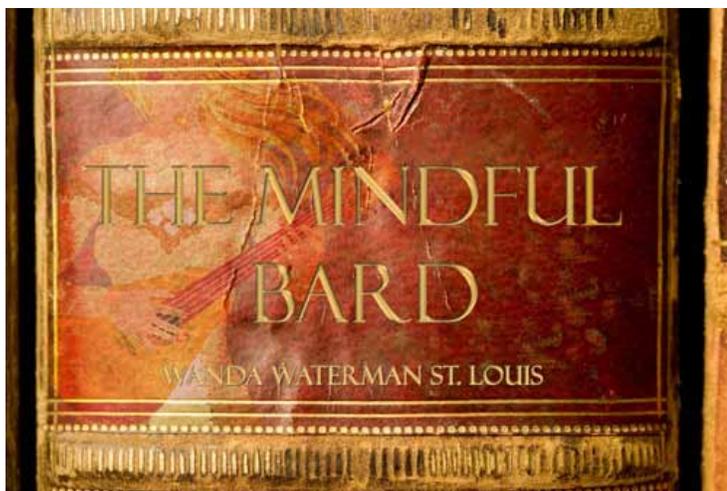
been irresponsible, thus causing him to be concerned?

I firmly believe if two people are working and contributing to the household, then they should have an equal say in how the finances are to be managed. Neither person should have to ask the other for money. As well, each should have a bank account with money he or she can spend without having to explain those choices to the other person.

You said you have discussed how you feel but your fiancé isn't willing to compromise. Therefore I would suggest that you talk to a marriage counsellor or a credit counsellor. Perhaps John needs some reassurance that you can manage the finances effectively as a couple. For example, you should decide together how much each of you will contribute toward household expenses, savings, future purchases, and retirement. A credit counsellor can help you set up a budget. As well, a 50/50 split may not be adequate if one party makes considerably more than the other.

If this information is presented properly, by knowledgeable individuals, your fiancé should be open to compromise. After all, I'm sure he doesn't want to start off his married life with problems present. I hope this information was helpful, and good luck with your wedding plans.

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



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

Book: *Getting Real: Challenging the Sexualisation of Girls*, Melinda Tankard Reist, ed.

Publisher: Spinifex Press

Publication date: 2009

The Care and Grooming of an Object

From a neighbouring shrubbery emerged a nurse, leading by the hand a small boy, who howled as he went. An anxious-looking little girl trotted at

her heels.

"What's the matter?" asked the Director.

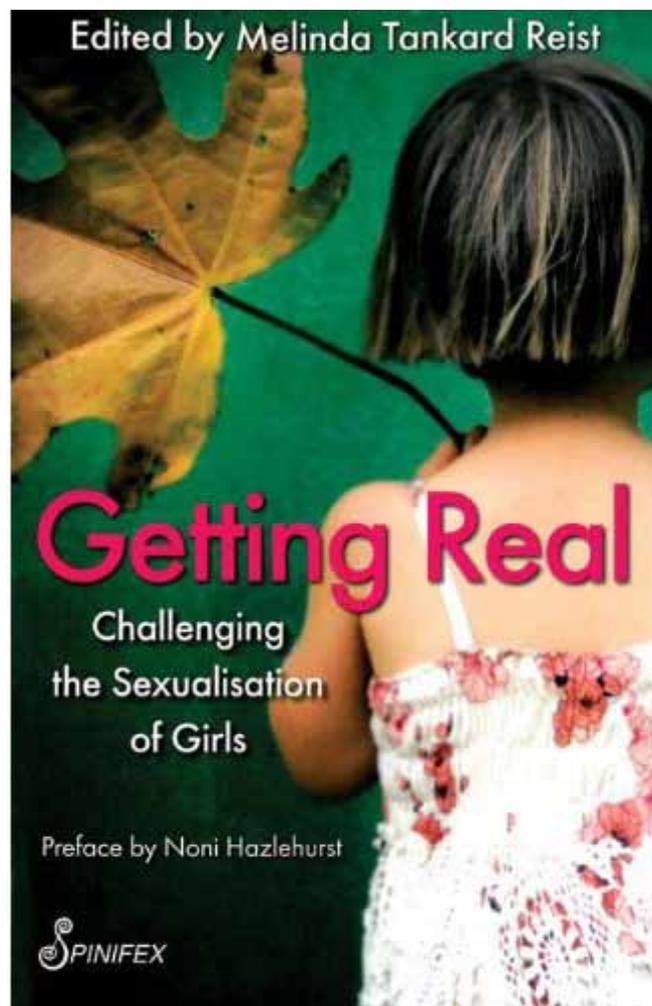
The nurse shrugged her shoulders. "Nothing much," she answered. "It's just that this little boy seems rather reluctant to join in the ordinary erotic play. I'd noticed it once or twice before. And now again today. He started yelling just now . . ."

Aldous Huxley, *Brave New World*

In Huxley's speculated future children are conceived in test tubes and raised en masse like hothouse flowers, conditioned and trained from birth to respond in peculiar ways to specific stimuli. Love relationships once thought normal and healthy—parenthood, friendship, and monogamous sexual unions—are now considered obscene and disgusting in a world where the only purpose of sex is to illicit pleasure.

Western society is now dangerously close to fulfilling this scenario, and the way is being paved by media depictions of children and young teens that blur the distinction between adult sexuality and the far more vulnerable sexuality of a developing human being.

The depiction of children as sex objects arguably prepares society to accept the sexual involvement of adults with children. But the dangers are more complex and far-reaching even than this. Sending children the message that they are potential partners for adults is in itself a form of molestation, with all of the psychological and developmental hazards that molestation brings to its victims. Hence the now common practice of representing children as sex objects has earned itself the moniker "corporate pedophilia."



Consequences of this conditioning include eating disorders, academic underachievement, depression, low self-esteem, compelling young people to turn to potentially dangerous medical fads for cosmetic surgery and help with promiscuous lifestyles, hampering of normal development, a blurring of the lines between adult sexuality and the (quite distinct) sexuality of children, the desensitizing of the public to the horrors of pedophilia, and patronizing attitudes toward female self-determination. These consequences are clearly correlated with pressures to conform in the new “free” world in which one’s worth is tallied by physical attractiveness, according to a standard of beauty defined according to extremely narrow terms.

It sounds a lot like Victorian times, only the rules have changed; where once women were ordered into strangling corsets and motionless sex, females of fewer and fewer years are now directed to embrace lives of loveless surrender to the whims of men and a corporate agenda.

Renate Klein presents an excellent attitude check to the flood of images that haunt young women and girls. She recommends rejecting the rejecting messages and learning to love our bodies as they are. She quotes Elizabeth Reid Boyd and Abigail Bray from the book *Body Talk* (2005): “It’s time we celebrated being strong and healthy and intelligent and creative.”

Clive Hamilton draws us away from the limited thinking that prescribes sex purely for either reproduction or pleasure, and points to a third, and much more meaningful, purpose for sex—union. The mind-body-spirit melding between two people in a loving, committed relationship is, he claims, the motivating force behind our culture’s obsession with sex even though the forms in which that obsession is expressed fall far short of the mark.

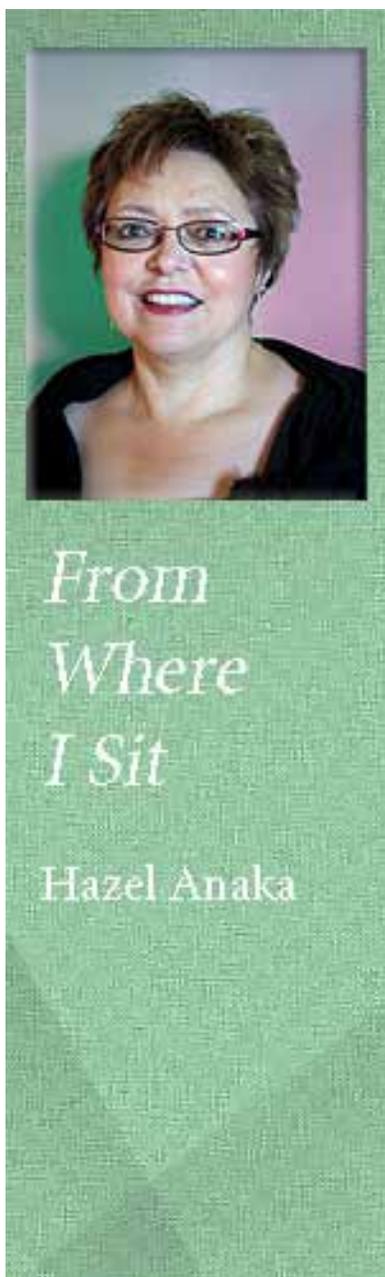
The absence of loving monogamy as a goal of sex is perhaps the most poignant reason why a culture of casual sex leaves people, especially the young, feeling confused, depressed, empty, and lonelier than ever: “the evocation through sexual union of some mysterious power that holds the promise of ecstatic merger gives sex a significance that transcends every day experiences.” He argues that even consensual sex is a denial of our basic humanity, and that a culture that celebrates casual sex and rates all human beings, even children, according to their sexual attractiveness is a culture of meaninglessness.

Amen to that. So let’s turn this rig around. Several of the writers here recommend parental action, lobbying, and specific changes to public policy. But they acknowledge that even responsible parents, as Barack Obama recently pointed out, are sometimes all but helpless when they send their children into a society that is giving them all the wrong messages.

Kudos to Melinda Tankard Reist for bringing all these arguments under one umbrella and doing much to dissipate the confusion and ambivalence surrounding discussions of this topic.

Getting Real manifests seven of The Mindful Bard’s criteria for books well worth reading: 1) it confronts existing injustices; 2) it renews my enthusiasm for positive social action; 3) it gives me tools enabling me to respond with compassion and efficacy to the suffering around me; 4) it displays an engagement with and compassionate response to suffering; 5) it inspires an awareness of the sanctity of creation; 6) it is about attainment of the true self; 7) it poses and admirably responds to questions which have a direct bearing on my view of existence.

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If You Want to Write

With a few weeks of plus temperatures and disappearing snow some of us suspect spring is playing a shell game. Long-term Albertans know there is at least one more blizzard in our future. If it doesn't happen in March we'll probably get walloped in May.

But here's my *modus operandi* this time. Instead of waiting for the other shoe to drop, I'm enjoying this. The gravel road bordering our farm is bare and dry. The sun is shining, the wind is light—perfect conditions for walking. I've been out there working a two-pronged approach. I set out hoping to ease the kinks out of my winter body and the murky thinking out of my mind. Frankly, some days the strategy works better than others. If I come home winded, with rosy cheeks and a great first line for a piece of writing, I call it a success.

The spring-is-here effect is spilling over into other areas of life. It's motivated me to tackle some office clutter. A skeptic may say this is a thinly disguised attempt at avoiding any "real" office work within those walls. A skeptic may have a point. But experts insist that a disorganized, cluttered area stifles rather than stimulates output.

Here's my story and I'm sticking with it. By purging papers, magazines, and clippings I no longer need, I am maximizing my work space. For years I've had a love-hate relationship with keeping a journal. I pick out a beautiful and/or functional journal and begin with a dated first entry. The book may have a theme like the one I started on a silent retreat or it may just be another attempt at what Julia Cameron calls morning pages; three pages of longhand writing done first thing every morning.

Jim Rohn, success guru, talks about buying expensive blank books as a challenge to himself to find something important to write. Tony Robbins says a life worth living is a life worth recording. Many successful authors use notebooks to capture snippets of dialogue or character descriptions or ideas for the next great novel. My intentions are good but my approach has been

hit-and-miss.

In the last few days I've begun the revealing process of finding and typing years worth of disparate bits of writing in countless books, scribbles, and on scraps of paper. This journey back in time has been great for my iffy memory. Free-fall writing and writing to prompts coaxed feelings and thoughts out of me I forgot I had. Some of the writing is good. Some of it is seedling-like in that it needs nurturing. Some of it may grow up to find its place in more public writing.

Perhaps best of all is the motivation to keep on going. Use prompts more often because of the results they produce. Be meticulous about attaching dates. Take the time to explain what I'm saying. Do the slovenly, reckless daily journal writing that Brenda Ueland (*If You Want to Write*) recommends because it yields "vitality, brilliance, beauty." That's good advice, from where I sit.

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.

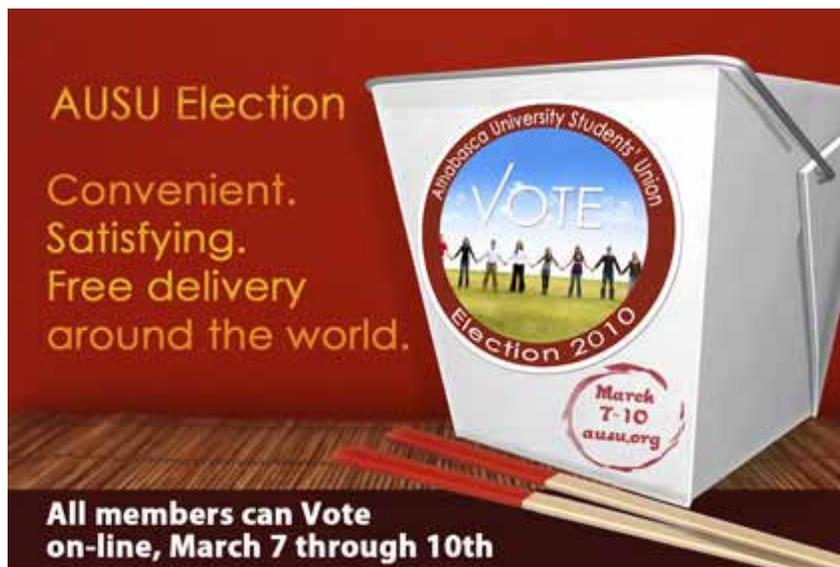
SmartDraw Program Renewal

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.

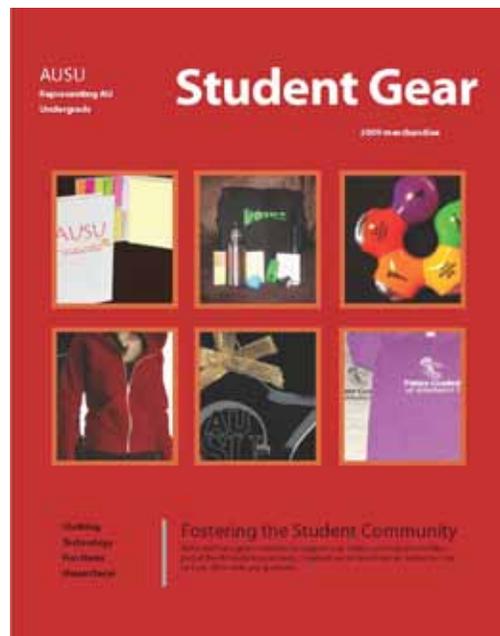
Tuition Increase Upcoming

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.

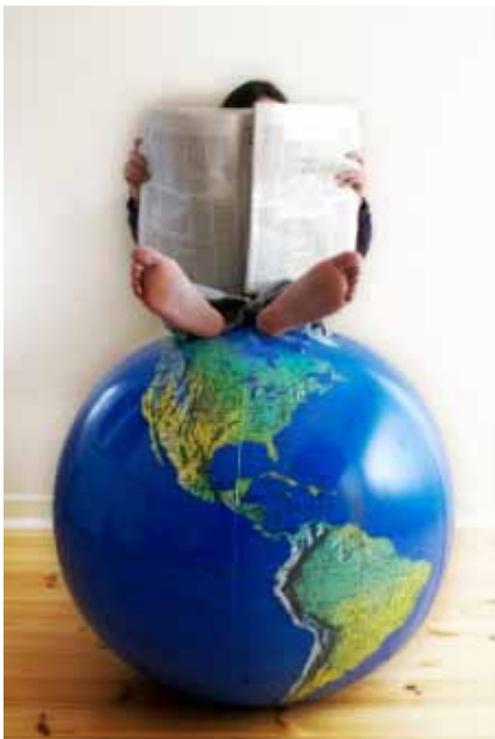
It's not all roses, however, as every university is feeling the crunch. For AU, they will be increasing many of the non-mandatory fees. For instance, the late exam and exam rebooking fees are both going up to \$100. While they had concerns that some students were abusing these opportunities to take exams 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: Conservatives reject proposed MP3 tax bill

Since 1997, Canadians have paid a small levy on blank media, such as DVDs and CDs, that can reproduce media. Now, Conservatives are opposing a bill that would extend the tax to MP3 players and computers.

According to the [CBC](#), NDP copyright critic Charlie Angus has introduced a bill to “add a small tax to all blank media . . . and to devices that can reproduce media, including MP3 players and computers.” The tax would extend rights of users to copy digital content, but Conservatives have spoken out against the bill.

The legislation would also see the use of Canada’s “fair dealing” principle expanded when it comes to non-commercial copying done by educators, researchers, and innovators. The existing levy is used to compensate creators, publishers, and record labels for revenue lost by copying.

Heritage Minister James Moore declared in the House that the government plans to “fight this new tax every single step of the way.” The rationale is that the Conservatives have already done enough to provide funding for artists, and an additional levy is “out of the question.”

Although the bill has the full backing of the Bloc Québécois, it doesn’t have enough support to pass. Discussion on the issue is expected to continue.

In Foreign News: More UK students graduating university under financial strain

As [The Telegraph](#) reports, as many as a quarter of UK students say they’ll be leaving university “under significant financial strain”—a significant jump from only two per cent in 2004. According to a recent study, a record number of students “are expected to graduate with debts of more than £20,000.”

The study, undertaken by Sodexo, found that the high cost of university has created a substantial shift in the typical students’ lifestyle. Rather than living on campus many students now choose to live at home while they study. And contrary to the stereotype of campus socializing, as many as 25 per cent of “students at former polytechnics never socialise on campus at all.”

Almost 2,000 students took part in the current poll, which was first carried out in 2004.

Higher tuition fees were introduced in 2006, and some 28 per cent of students surveyed expect to graduate with more than £20,000 in debt. That figure is a “14-fold increase in just six years.” Of those surveyed, nearly a third reported that they’d “considered dropping out of university at some point,” with nearly half pointing to financial strain as the reason.

The principal lecturer in English at De Montfort University, Dr. Gary Day, told researchers that the combination of financial pressure and a competitive economy has made students “put socialising on the back burner, balance a job alongside their study,” and become more focused on “pursuing a degree that will lead to employment.”

CLASSIFIEDS

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

THE VOICE

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