

# THE VOICE

## MAGAZINE

Volume 18 Issue 12  
March 26, 2010

### **Money Assassins**

Financial freedom

### **On Kijiji**

Puppy love

### **AU Profiles**

DeAnne Csada



*Plus:*

*Maghreb Voices, From Where I Sit,  
Dear Barb, and much more ...*

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The Voice  
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*The Voice* is published  
every Friday in HTML  
and PDF format

To subscribe for weekly  
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each issue is posted,  
see the 'subscribe' link  
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page

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Special thanks to  
Athabasca University's  
*The Insider* for its  
frequent contributions

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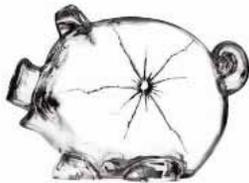
# LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

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# Money Assassins

*How they stole your financial freedom  
and how you can get it back*



**Chad Viminitz**

## Money Assassins

Spend less than you earn. Avoid debt. Stop buying toys just to keep up with your friends. Common sense, right? Stuff we already know, right? But if it really *is* common sense, why are so many people struggling with record amounts of personal debt—and increasing that debt by spending to fit in?

Those are some of the questions Chad Viminitz poses in *Money Assassins*, and you might be surprised at some of the answers.

Obviously, financial struggles existed long before credit cards; just ask all those Victorians who landed in debtors' prison. But Viminitz makes a strong case for the unique shift that happened around the 1970s, one that's contributing to record levels of personal debt in some of the most affluent countries in the world.

The shift was a combination of three main factors, as Viminitz explains: "the evolution of consumer society, advancements in technology, and increasing access to debt." Together, these three forces are the Money Assassins.

Rather than taking a purely prescriptive approach, telling readers what to do, the author begins with an enlightening look at just how thoroughly (and subconsciously) these forces work on us. For instance, in examining the cultural and emotional drive behind our spending habits, he reveals the strange disconnect we've come to accept in the meaning of "wealth," especially the widely used yardstick of GDP.

The 1989 Exxon Valdez oil spill, "one of the most devastating environmental disasters," illustrates his point all too well. Even as nearly 11 million gallons of crude oil spilled into Prudhoe Bay, polluting the coastline and killing thousands of sea mammals and birds, the disaster contributed to the country's economic "success." It gave an enormous boost to the GDP because of increased spending in all sorts of sectors, from media coverage to legal fees to travel.

The author demonstrates how that kind of skewed perception has become deeply embedded in personal spending patterns as well. As he explains, the accumulation of actual financial wealth, such as property and money, "was once a benchmark for financial success." But the typical North American now measures success by the *perception* of wealth. As long as you have the right car, take the right vacations, and have the latest electronic gadgets, you're a financial success. It doesn't matter that you're wallowing in debt and don't dare open your bills each month. It only matters that you *appear* to be keeping up.

(North Americans are hardly alone in the race to keep up with the Joneses. Just this week, a [UK study](#) showed that "owning a fast car, a large home and having a good job" was only likely to make people happy if those around them "are less well off.")

But rather than just taking consumers to task for a lack of self-control, Viminitz also delves into the fascinating world that encourages that behaviour: marketing. If you grew up in the 1970s and '80s, the chapter called "Groomed to Consume" will be of special interest. As the author points out, those years marked the first time that kids were selectively targeted as consumers and "we are only now seeing the first generation of adults whose financial habits have been shaped by these practices." It should come as no surprise, then, now that many of those children are parents themselves, that today's kids "influence 62% of family SUV and minivan purchases."

Viminitz has certainly done his homework and the arguments he makes are supported by solid references. You may not want to believe that advertisers try to manipulate you with things like neuromarketing (the "science of watching and measuring brain activity" to effectively embed brands into consumers' subconscious thoughts), but you owe it to yourself to be aware of the marketing tools you encounter as a consumer.

Awareness really is the key to understanding why we spend (and fail to save) the way we do, and as the author points out, there's a disturbing failure to educate young people about financial responsibility.

That's where the second half of the book comes in, with the author outlining "specific and practical ways to free up money so that more can be allocated and committed to eliminating debt and creating wealth." The advice is practical (accompanied by [financial calculators](#) on the book's website), and takes into account that change can be made in small, realistic steps, such as the guidelines for easing the cost of vehicle ownership.

Overall, the author has put together an engaging read that not only documents the financial reality that many face, but also *why* they face it and what they can do about it. *Money Assassins* offers intelligent advice no matter what stage of financial life you're at, and opening the book may make it a whole lot easier to open those bills every month.

## 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.

## ON KIJJI

Bethany Tynes



## Puppy Love

Alright, I admit it: I love Kijji. I might even be a bit addicted. Because when I'm in the market for something, it doesn't matter what it is, I usually start my hunting by searching it on Kijji. And from cloth diapers to summer sublets, I've found it (yes, you guessed it!) on Kijji.

And Kijji has been good to me. I've even managed to sell off the AU texts from that class I finished but never really got into. Made myself a few quick bucks and cleared off some shelf space, all in one fell swoop. My favourite thing on Kijji, though, is the free stuff, and I don't just mean those science books that I picked up that time. I *love* the free pets section.

The free pets section has been particularly good to me. Two llamas, one horse, two toads, another two llamas, and one pig good to me, to be precise. It's not everyone's cup of tea, I admit, but I love animals—pretty much all of them, it turns out. Kijji is my friend and ally.

But you know what gets my goat? (Hmm, wait, I don't have a goat yet. I bet I could find a goat on Kijji . . .)

Whoops, sorry, got myself off track for a minute there. You know what gets my goat? The fact that all these poor animals are on there in the first place. You want a kitten? Pick a colour; clawed or declawed, spayed or intact. Everyone and their dog have a kitten (or eight) to give away, because nobody actually *wants* their kittens. And if you're looking for a dog, pick a breed and you can find one that someone just doesn't have time for any more. You can probably find Precious the guinea pig and Thumper the rabbit there, too.

Now I recognize that allergies, and sometimes even severe ones, can develop that necessitate Rover's departure from the home. And maybe, sometimes, there are circumstances that make moving to a new neighbourhood or pet-free apartment (without Patches the kitty) the best of a bunch of bad choices.

It's terrible, though, that there are those in our society who view it as acceptable to get rid of an animal just because the novelty of pet ownership has worn off—as long as you sound sad for poor Snuggles, that is. Quite honestly, the number of pets posted every day that “deserve better but we just don't have time any more” is absolutely appalling, and so is the number of animals whose owners' “kids lost interest months ago.”

So before you get your kids that rabbit or puppy for Easter, please—think about whether or not you really can commit to providing a loving, caring home for this creature, regardless of whether or not Bobby and Susie get tired of walking Spot after the first week (because no matter how great your kids are, they will).

Otherwise, I'm afraid Spot will probably just become one more unwanted-pet ad that I scroll past next month on Kijji.

# AU Profiles:

## AU Profiles: DeAnne Csada

Christina M. Frey



Although distance learning is flexible enough to suit any lifestyle, that's not sufficient for success. As recent Bachelor of Administration (Health Studies) graduate DeAnne Csada discovered, flexibility on the student's part is also required. Here, the mother of four discusses how studying led her to change her parenting style. She also gives strategies for balancing school and family life, and explains why studying while raising a family can be beneficial for everyone.

The wife of a police officer, DeAnne was a stay-at-home mom, but wanted more. Although she'd attended nursing college after graduating high school, health issues required her to drop out mid-program. "Traditional school . . . wasn't for me," DeAnne says. "I learn better at my own pace."

However, part of her still longed to further her education. "Every time . . . people asked what I did, [and] I told them . . . they gave me that 'Oh, I see' nod of the head," she says. She decided to build her skills and self-esteem by going back to school, intent on earning a university degree.

Circumstances soon gave her the opportunity. DeAnne began studying with AU in 2001, when her son was a newborn. "[He] was born a preemie and I wanted to stay at home with him," she says. AU's flexibility allowed her to care for him and her preschool-aged daughter, while pursuing her personal goals. During her eight years as a student, that flexibility was a lifesaver. Because of her husband's job on the police force, she couldn't rely on his working regular hours. In addition, after she gave birth to twins in 2007, the ability to adjust her school schedule to her changing responsibilities was crucial.

How did she juggle four kids and a degree? DeAnne was up to the challenge. "I am very task-oriented," she says. "Organization is my middle name!" For example, she often combined studying with a trip to the playground. "They . . . could interact with other kids while I sat and read a chapter or two," she says.

Organization was vital, but equally important was the need to discover a sense of balance. "Honestly, there were times I did burn out!" DeAnne admits. For example, when her son began attending school, she returned to work while taking five courses. Although she loved her job, she soon found that its demands

threw her off track. "It made balancing kids, life and work very difficult," she says. "I thought I was going to die!"

The experience taught her to make more realistic goals. "I think learning to let go of some things and remembering I couldn't do it all was key," DeAnne says. For instance, when her children were busy or napping, she'd resist the temptation to do housework and instead use the quiet time to her studying advantage. "Your kids aren't going to grow up and remember your clean house!" she points out.

Despite the hectic lifestyle, DeAnne feels that studying while raising kids is valuable for the whole family. "People think they can't work on school while the kids are around," she says. She, however, believes it's a "win-win" situation: "I think kids nowadays are too [used to] instant gratification," she says. "It was . . . good for the kids to see me studying . . . they learn[ed] that it takes time and commitment to reach a goal."

Although she would occasionally struggle with a sense of isolation, DeAnne feels that the end result was worth the trouble. "There were many times that I felt alone," she admits. "Most people I knew were past the education stage." However, putting her priorities in place helped her cope with this aspect of distance learning. "Keep your end goal in perspective, and everything else will fall into place," she advises.

"Athabasca was a wonderful experience for me," DeAnne adds. "[It] helped me to achieve a goal I otherwise wouldn't have been able to." Although she's not currently working in the health administration field, she has no regrets. "I have explored many different avenues throughout my years and I don't consider any of them to be a waste," she says. "I believe that you should never stop learning!"



### Amir Ali

*"Amir Ali est l'un des plus talentueux violonistes du monde Arabe."*

Haj Youness, virtuoso oud player and Moroccan cultural ambassador to the United States

### World-Spanning Career

For many years Moroccan-born Amir Ali represented Morocco with his band Mo' Rockin' in the Morocco Pavilion at The Epcot Centre in Walt Disney World in Florida and has also played at many large venues in the United States. He has performed with Al Di Meola, Cheb Khaled, and many other notable musicians.

Ali sings and plays the oud, the violin, and numerous Arab percussion instruments, blending

Moroccan and Middle Eastern melodies and rhythms with jazz, hip hop, fusion, and rock, creating an energizing cocktail of passionate rhythms and sinuous melodic lines.

"I call my music 'Moroccan contemporary music'," he says. "It's a modern blend of the traditional melodies and lyrics from Morocco. My music has no political or religious conflicts whatsoever. My music is for everyone—Muslims, Jews, Christians, and nonbelievers."

## Going Home

Ali returned to Morocco six months ago and now makes his home in Casablanca.

“After 25 years abroad I returned to Morocco because I had become a big household name there, with hit singles on the radio and television and lots of opportunities to perform at concerts and festivals. The most important reason was to be close to my mother and the rest of my family. Besides, Morocco today holds the biggest number of known world-renowned festivals.”



Ali says that his social conscience does not influence his music, but his charitable activities reveal a compassionate heart. Because his motherland has been so good to him, giving him plenty of opportunities to play at festivals, concerts, and private parties, he's more than ready to be generous in return.

“I'm a member of an association called Don't Touch My Son, created by a woman whose son was abused by his teacher. The association gave me an award last month; I had performed for them at a big event and they gave me an award of appreciation. That touched me and I wanted to do more.”

“Recently,” he says, “I've been working with Rachid El Ouali, a famous Moroccan actor, on a song for children with cancer. We're doing a music video and we're going to be performing the single in hospitals all over Morocco.”

## Beginnings

Amir grew up in the city of Meknes in Morocco. He remembers becoming enamoured with music at the age of seven and beginning to learn to play the violin the same year.

"I was passionate for music," he says. "I studied music theory, classical violin, oud, and all kinds of traditional and modern Moroccan and Middle Eastern music for eight years in Morocco before migrating to the States. I play violin, oud, and all of the Arabic percussion instruments.

"Actually, the instruments chose me. In life you try different things and the thing that responds to you best is what you're made for and that's how I became a violinist, an oud player, and a singer.

"My musical style emerged from my vast musical experience in Morocco and then later from the musical integration I experienced during my career in the States, touring with the great Al Di Meola as well as touring and collaborating with five-time Grammy winner Victor Wooten and many others. The list is huge."

## Creative Inspiration

"Most of my favourite books are in French, except for the book *The Music Lesson* by long-time friend Victor Wooten. Recently I enjoyed the movie *The Secret*. I love Egyptian music, Moroccan, jazz, funk, fusion, salsa, and many more musical genres."

## Maghreb Jazz

"I blend jazz and Arabic music in my chord progressions and in my way of writing as well, applying the bass lines the right way; we didn't have that before in Arabic music, but many have done it and I happen to be one of those artists.

"It's clear that in the Arab world it's the Moroccan musical genres that are closest to jazz."

In May Amir will be on stage at the [Mawazine Festival](#) in Rabat, Morocco, a major music festival at which many world-class musical acts including Sting, Hamid El Kasri, Kathy Mattea, Santana, Alpha Blondy, Mika, and Al Jarreau will also be performing.

## DID YOU KNOW?



### Convocation Checklist

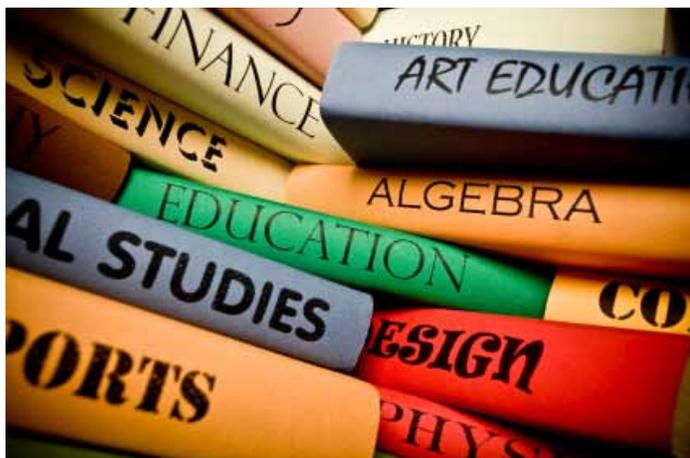
Planning to graduate this June? There are some important dates to keep in mind, and AU has an online [convocation checklist](#) to help you get ready for the big event!

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 OPTIONS

Bethany Tynes



### Bachelor of General Studies

AU's Bachelor of General Studies degree is "one of the most popular programs at Athabasca University," according to the AU calendar. This three-year, 90-credit degree "provides a framework of individualized study within an Arts and Science or Applied Studies designation that offers students the freedom to choose courses to meet career or educational goals."

It also allows students to either "specialize or diversify their course selection," allowing them "the

freedom to develop their own intellectual and academic interests."

Unlike most degrees offered at AU or other universities, however, the Bachelor of General Studies does not have a residency requirement, which means that degree requirements may be completed not only at Athabasca, but at virtually any other institution from whom AU will accept university-level transfer credit.

Lonita Fraser is an AU student currently nearing the completion of her B.G.S. degree. "[The B.G.S. program] appealed to me because I could pick and choose the courses I wanted to take," she says. "I liked the idea of designing my own curriculum. It appealed to my varied interests. I could obtain a degree without being forced to take courses I had zero interest in."

While Fraser appreciates the opportunity to be "able to obtain a degree with material that caught [her] interest," she has found that one "weakness of the degree comes in its unfamiliarity to others. People understand B.A. or B.Sc.," she explains, "but the B.G.S. is not as saleable, not as visible a degree as the others. I usually end up telling people it's a Liberal Arts degree with a bit of science thrown in. I think its lack of familiarity might have a little influence upon those to whom you are trying to market yourself for work or further education, but probably not a lot. It just requires a little more explanation on the part of the degree holder."

According to the AU website though, graduates of the B.G.S. degree program have been successfully "employed in practically all fields, including business, education, public administration, public relations, sales, and social service. A significant number of graduates," meanwhile, "continue in graduate programs in such diverse fields as business, education, law, ministry, and social work."

While Fraser has no concrete plans for what she'll do with her degree, she "would like to work in the non-profit sector in some fashion." She says that she was "very glad to find" AU's B.G.S. program, and thinks that "it's a wonderful way for people to obtain an education without pigeon-holing themselves into something that doesn't intrigue them."

Need advice on school,  
work, or life in general?

*Ask  
Dear Barb!*

Send your questions to  
[voice@voicemagazine.org](mailto:voice@voicemagazine.org)



*From  
Where  
I Sit*  
Hazel Anaka

## Getting Some Sleep

My friend deserves a Purple Heart, medal of commendation, park statue, and official holiday in her name. Without (too much) complaint or concern for her own well-being she has stayed married to a husband who snores.

Snoring of epic proportions; legendary snoring. Snoring our boys still talk about from a long-ago hockey tournament road trip where in desperation his cot was rolled out into the hotel hallway. His snoring made for great, funny stories—told and retold. Funny—as long as you weren't anywhere near the scene of the action. I'd guess he's been snoring for at least 20 years.

Finally, as medical advances were made and awareness rose, he was tested and diagnosed with obstructive sleep apnea. Since being outfitted with a CPAP (continuous positive airway pressure) machine that forces oxygen into his airway, life has changed for both of them. He longer falls asleep during the day. He can drive without tiring. She can at long last fall contentedly to sleep. In the early days of adjustment she feared he had died because he was so quiet.

We now know that sleep apnea is a serious condition affecting thousands of people and largely going untreated. We also know the frequent stoppage in breathing is hurting people and creating dire consequences including high blood pressure, stroke, and heart attacks. Falling asleep behind the wheel can have deadly results. Being older, overweight, and male; having a neck circumference over 17 and a half inches; smoking; and using alcohol or sedatives are risk factors.

Another, not often discussed, danger to the snorer is the very real risk of being smothered by your spouse. Trust me, I've considered it. For some reason I can no longer fall asleep quickly. Lying there for up to three hours, night after night, listening to Roy snore is taking its toll on me. And us. He claims I snore too. Perhaps. "But has it caused you to lose even one minute of sleep?" I ask. He falls asleep within nanoseconds of going to bed. I lie there. Sometimes I watch TV; sometimes I turn on a light and read. I replay the just-ended day and plan the one to come. I clutch the hunk of amethyst that I keep under my pillow. According to *The Crystal Bible* it "treats insomnia and brings restful sleep." Roy likely owes his life to that crystal. Every so often I have to remember to cleanse the stone when it appears not to work anymore.

I know sleep disturbance happens to "women of a certain age." Many of my menopausal friends are having difficulty. If they manage to fall asleep quickly, they spend two or more hours awake in the middle of the night, always waking at the exact same time. Not me. It's those first minutes/hours of listening to this guy snore. Since neither one of us is willing to move to a bed downstairs, he needs to get his butt to a doctor and get checked out. A sleep-deprived wife's solution is a violent, illegal option from where I sit.

# Sister Aurora

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

#33

He CRIED?! Why would a guy like SHANE cry over losing YOU?

For God's sake, Jodi, stop being such a bitch!

You got me. But I just know he'd be happier with you!

That's just it. God only knows why, but he's totally in love with you.

LOVE?!

According to him.

He TOLD you?

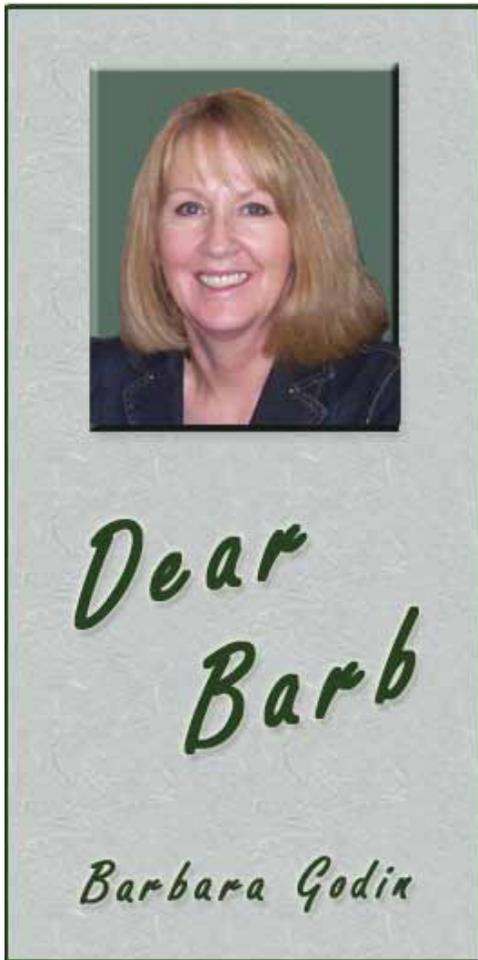
It doesn't matter. Last thing I want is your sloppy seconds.

It didn't go anywhere. We just kissed.

YOU JUST KISSED?!!

Wait a minute-- last month at Moira's wedding reception-- you and Shane came out of the coat room together...





## Don't Let Details Clutter the Big Picture

*Dear Barb:*

*This may seem like a trivial thing to write to an advice column about, but I am totally stressed out. Easter is just around the corner and I'm hosting the family dinner this year. My parents are getting older so my sisters and I have decided to take turns. I was planning on preparing a ham dinner, but one of my sisters says she won't eat ham. This is news to me since she always ate it in the past.*

*I want everyone to enjoy their dinner, so I then suggested a pork roast. Well, my brother-in-law doesn't like pork. I don't want to cook a turkey since we had turkey for Christmas dinner. So it seems like I'm left with lamb or roast beef. I know my dad doesn't care for lamb, but he would never complain. Aside from the dinner problems, two of my brothers-in-law are not getting along with each other. It seems one bought a new vehicle and the other one has his nose out of joint about it. I just feel like taking my parents out for dinner and forgetting about everyone else, but I know they want us to all be together. Please help before I go crazy!*

*Alyshia*

Hi, Alyshia. I don't think your situation is trivial. In fact, I think there are a lot of people feeling the same way you do right now. These are the exact reasons many people do not enjoy holidays. Experiencing stressful family gatherings while growing up will cause feelings that carry on into adulthood and ruin many special occasions. For many people, the anxiety begins weeks before the occasion as they anticipate things that may occur. It's likely that in many cases the anticipation causes more stress than the actual event.

If you are hosting the family dinner, then I think it is up to you to decide what you want to prepare. If your last meal was turkey, then I can see why you would not want to prepare it again. You are never going to be able to please everyone. Hopefully you can present enough of a variety of foods that each person will find something they like.

As for the relationship problems between your brothers-in-law, I would suggest you try to ignore it. Your job is to bring the family together for a nice meal. How they choose to interact with each other is beyond your control.

Happy Easter, Alyshia, and try to look at the bigger picture: that your family are together and that your parents are still able to share the day with all of you.

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



## Intriguing New Developments in Alternative Music

*"Great feelings take with them their own universe."*

Albert Camus, *The Myth of Sisyphus*

On what we called our "Aleatoric Soirées" my best friend Lorrie and I used to sit around of an evening on the floor of her damp basement apartment in the building where we both lived and ping bottles and play penny whistles and sing in harmony and otherwise emit a host of weird sounds to our hearts' content and record it all on a crappy little tape deck and make our

friends listen to it afterwards.

We were heavily into Glass and Cage and Reich at the time and would probably have gone on making music like this forever had we had the musical training and also been able to endure the sheer level of concentration required to make this kind of music. It's not enough just to get into the zone—you've got to stay in it until it makes you half crazy, and this is just as true of listening to the best, i.e., most authentic, experimental music.

I've recently discovered a couple of free downloads that I'm proud to say have driven me just a little more over the edge.

**Delicious Dissonance. And Whale Songs.**

Nunun

*Impromptu*, Acustronica, 2010

Italy

Cesare and Massimo Discepoli comprise the duo Nunun, whose aptly named *Impromptu* gets you to a space where you can passively (well, not really, it takes some effort to get the full good out of this album) escape from the crushing normalcy of the everyday world.

You'll hear a layer of what sounds like nature or even industrial sounds and other less describable tones, often at no definable rhythm, layered over a standard rock or world beat layered over an ambient bass line or super-simple chord sweep. As far as I can tell it's mostly improvisational. There's a slow rising plane of emotional



intensity and a soothing tenderness to these five tracks, which are really 30 minutes of brilliant music cut up into five juicy hunks.

This is music to listen to when life crowds in on you. You need this. It's wide open. Enjoy.

### Dancing With the Dark Tempest

Th.e n.d

*Schizophrenic Birth*, EP, [free download on MySpace](#), 2010

Germany

There is some instrumental music that seems to be trying to talk. And it does talk, but not in so many words. This is the kind of music that forms pictures in your head, somehow assures you that all is right (or not right) with the world, or that brings some new truth to light in your stubborn little self-righteous brain.

The three tracks on this EP start out, in the title track, with what sounds like a metronome, a ticking clock, and a needle tracing the almost silent beginning (or ending) of a vinyl record. The emerging music of this title track is absolutely poetic. The piano and harp ground the avant-garde progressions in a nostalgic poignancy as sweet as dried roses.

"CanCan" is wondrously reassuring. And "Brahmans Son" is a beautiful garden of enchantment.

Listen to this music while you meditate. It says all that you need to hear.

## FROM THE GALLERY

Sandra Livingston

With AUSU's new council elected and the Annual General Meeting fast approaching, change was in the air at the latest public council meeting on March 24.



Although the new council hasn't officially taken the helm yet, some newly elected councillors were at the meeting, ready to learn the ropes.

Several items on the agenda dealt with financial matters, and one notable example is AUSU's decision to start an investment plan. The move will see a certain percentage of AUSU funds placed into risk-free investments, with a minimum of \$75,000 kept in reserve for operating expenses.

In other finance news, *The Voice* will have a separate bank account set up for its operations. The decision is in keeping with the goal of increased autonomy for *The Voice*.

And in the Executive Director's report there was an update on the possible new staff position, with discussion centring on making student liaison a focus for the role. That fits well with news from the Vice-President Finance and Administration, Sarah Kertcher, who noted that AU's projected enrolments for the next two years are over 9,000 graduate students and more than 64,00 undergrads.

Don't forget—the AUSU Annual General Meeting takes place April 6 at 5:00 pm MST. See you there, from the gallery!

## AUSU UPDATE



### AUSU Election!

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

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

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

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

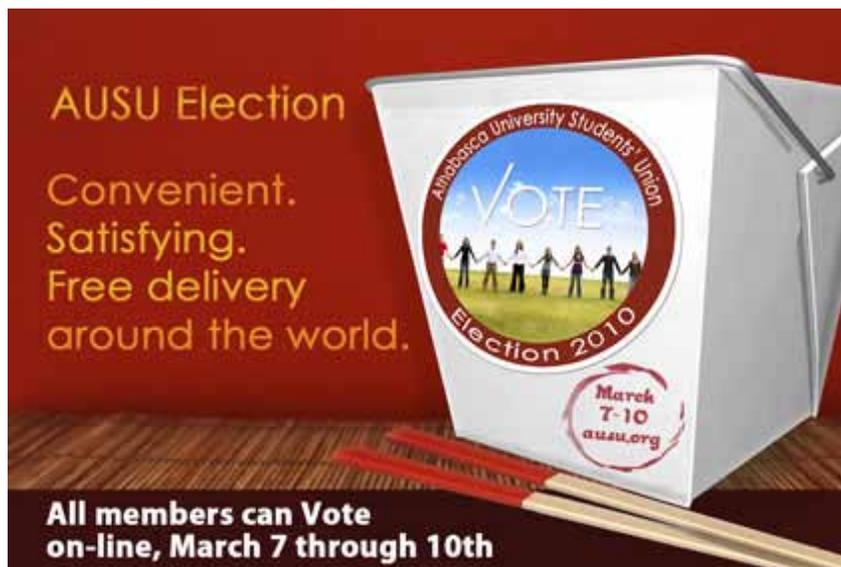
### SmartDraw Program Renewal

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

SmartDraw allows you to create a wide range of graphics for your assignments and submit them electronically in a Word file. You can also place your graphics in Excel or PowerPoint files, or export them as TIF, GIF, or JPEG files to make a web graphic or even a logo. Just a few of the graphics you can make include Venn diagrams, genetics charts, graphs, organizational and flow charts, and Gantt charts.

For any course that requires charts that cannot be easily created in Word or Excel, this should be a real time saver and make it easier to submit all portions of an assignment by email.

Remember, though, that you should always check with your tutor to find out if there is a specific format he or she prefers. Your tutor does not have to have SmartDraw to view these graphics, however. Installations under this program are good for one year. The package includes both the Standard and Health Care editions of SmartDraw.



## Let 'em Know who Represents for You!

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

## AUSU Council Down to Seven

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

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

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

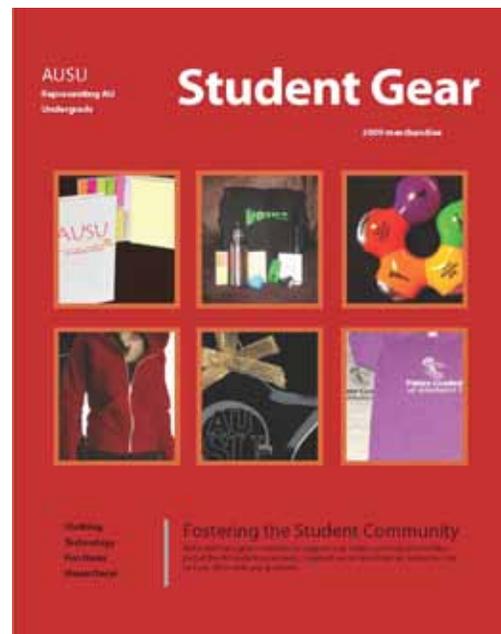
## Tuition Increase Upcoming

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

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

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

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



## INTERNATIONAL NEWS DESK



### At Home: Strahl holds firm on FNUC funding despite province's reversal

In spite of protests, and a reversal on provincial funding, Indian Affairs Minister Chuck Strahl is standing firm on the decision to pull federal grants to the First Nations University of Canada (FNUC).

In February, both Ottawa and the Saskatchewan government announced that long-running problems at FNUC had reached the point where funding had to be withdrawn. Issues included poor governance and misspending.

According to the [CBC](#), provincial government officials signed an agreement March 23 to allow for "a temporary administrative reorganization of FNUC under the auspices of the University of Regina."

The agreement will see the provincial government reinstate \$5.2 million in funding to FNUC. Strahl, however, told reporters that FNUC's promises to reform have shown little result in the past, and the school's federal funding of \$7 million will end as scheduled.

April 1. On FNUC's promises, Strahl said that "I've been told that now. And our government's been told that for five years. And it stretches back into the Liberal government era."

However, he also told reporters that his main concern is the academic year of the 820 students currently enrolled at the university, and noted that Ottawa may be willing to provide financial support other than grants to FNUC.

### In Foreign News: US push for foreign students worries Australian universities

Several US state universities are battling the financial downturn by encouraging foreign students to enrol—and that's got some Australian universities worried. As [The Australian](#) reports, US Studies Centre chief Geoff Garrett has warned that "the obvious implication is the market for foreign students will become more competitive because you will have a lot of large and high-prestige universities competing for the students."

And when it comes to attracting those foreign students, US schools have several advantages, including fast visa approval times and "plenty of student accommodation." They also have the powerful brand recognition of schools such as the University of California, Berkeley. A weak US dollar provides another reason for students to consider American universities.

Australian universities have courted foreign students for over a decade and the entrance of US universities into the game will mark a major change in the market. Before the recent financial crisis, most US state schools didn't need to boost enrolment by looking elsewhere. There are some three million students worldwide who study abroad, with many coming from China, South Korea, and India.

Currently, Australian universities "rely on foreign undergraduates to fund one-quarter of their teaching." Other English-speaking countries may feel the loss of foreign students to the US as well, including Canada, England, and New Zealand.

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# CLASSIFIEDS

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Classifieds are free for AU students! Contact [voice@voicemagazine.org](mailto:voice@voicemagazine.org) for more information.

## THE VOICE

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*The Voice* is published every Friday in html and pdf format

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