

# THE VOICE MAGAZINE

Volume 18 Issue 22  
June 4, 2010

## Home Truths

Songs and streets

## Father Bears

From the heart

## Pain-Proof Men

Precious details

*Plus: Sister Aurora,  
From Where I Sit, AUSU Update  
and much more ...*



---

# CONTENTS

---

## WELCOME TO THE VOICE PDF

*The Voice* interactive Table of Contents allows you to click a story title to jump to an article. Clicking the bottom-right corner of any page returns you here. Some ads and graphics are also links.

## Features

Who Are the People in Your Neighbourhood? ..... 3

## Articles

Editorial: Father Bears ..... 6

## Columnsn

The Mindful Bard ..... 7

From Where I Sit ..... 9

Sister Aurora ..... 10

AUSU Update ..... 11

## News and Events

Did You Know?: Open Culture ..... 5

Click of the Wrist ..... 8

International News Desk ..... 13

## From the Readers

Letters to the Editor ..... 2

The Voice  
Magazine

[www.voicemagazine.org](http://www.voicemagazine.org)

1213, 10011 109th  
Street NW  
Edmonton AB  
T5J 3S8

800.788.9041 ext. 2905

Email  
[voice@voicemagazine.org](mailto:voice@voicemagazine.org)

**Publisher**  
AU Students' Union

**Editor-In-Chief**  
Tamra Ross

**Managing Editor**  
Sandra Livingston

**Regular Contributors**  
Hazel Anaka  
John Buhler  
Christina M. Frey  
Jason Sullivan  
Bethany Tynes  
Wanda Waterman St.  
Louis

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

To subscribe for weekly  
email reminders as  
each issue is posted,  
see the 'subscribe' link  
on *The Voice* front  
page

*The Voice* does not  
share its subscriber list  
with anyone

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

© 2010 by *The Voice*

# LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

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



## WHO ARE THE PEOPLE IN YOUR NEIGHBOURHOOD?

Kimberley Sanders



*"Oh, who are the people in your neighbourhood?  
In your neighbourhood?  
In your neighbourhood?  
Say, who are the people in your neighbourhood?  
The people that you meet each day."*

Sesame Street

Tell me, who are the people in your neighbourhood?

I remember singing that song with my son in the mid-1990s. We sang about all sorts of

people we met on the street: letter carriers, police officers, teachers, and bus drivers. If we sang that song today, we could add the lady panhandling at the corner and the kid sleeping next to the curb.

Out of curiosity, I searched the word "homeless" at Sesame Workshop and although it came up blank, to their credit, Sesame Street has an "Initiatives" page with a section devoted to well-being that includes the piece "[Coping with Economic Difficulties](#)."

In Canada, our current economic difficulties have led to a rise in homelessness. According to [Statistics Canada](#), "in 2006, an estimated 24.9% of all households spent 30% or more of their income on shelter, up marginally from 2001. Those who spend 30% or more on shelter may do so by choice, or they may be at risk of experiencing problems related to housing affordability."

Gordon Laird, Media Fellow Emeritus for the Sheldon Chumir Foundation for Ethics in Leadership, and author of "[Homelessness in a growth economy: Canada's 21st century paradox](#)," writes that "Canada's 'new homeless' can be found everywhere—towns, cities, suburbs." In fact, according to Laird, "one in five renter households in Canada spends more than 50 per cent of their income on shelter."

Think about that for a moment. Imagine spending half your income on shelter and the other half on the rest of life's needs—things like childcare expenses, clothing, debt repayment, food, insurances, medical and dental costs, school expenses, transportation and, of course, taxes.

I find it notable that Sesame Street has supportive initiatives to help families during tough economic times, whilst our current Conservative government has allowed child poverty to worsen under its watch. According to the Canadian Council on Social Development (CCSC), [Stats and Facts on poverty](#), "approximately 3.5 million Canadians were living in poverty in 2004—more than 11% of the population." As well, 865,000 Canadian children under the age of 18 lived in poverty in the same year—one of every eight children.

*"People who are homeless are not social inadequates. They are people without homes."*

Sheila McKechnie, Housing  
Activist, 1948-2004

To break that down into relatable terms, according to the Ontario Ministry of Education's class-size tracker, primary classrooms in Ontario currently have 23 students. This means, rounding up, that three students in every primary classroom in Canada now live in poverty (the actual figure is 2.875).

In an effort to learn more about ways to advocate on behalf of the homeless, I recently spoke with Laird Eddy, Director of Mission Services at The Ottawa Mission. For 17 years Mr. Eddy has dedicated himself to ameliorating the lives of homeless men in Ottawa.

**What do you believe is the single biggest misconception Canadians make about the homeless?**

There are many misconceptions about homeless people. I think one of the biggest is that the homeless have caused their own situation. Economic factors, mental or physical illness and many other problems in life, issues that are often beyond our control, can lead to homelessness.

**What advice do you have for emerging advocates who want to confront homelessness in their own communities?**

Volunteer or get involved in some way in your own community. Take time to learn about the issues that cause people to become homeless. As you educate yourself, you will be able to determine where the need is greatest for the homeless in your own community.

*"I have always had a deep conviction that the best within us is drawn out when we show compassion to those around us who are most in need."*

Laird Eddy, Director of Mission Services, The Ottawa Mission



**What are some simple ways to help the homeless in our midst?**

Coordinate a fundraising event or a donation drive for your local homeless shelter. A simple thing like collecting socks, underwear and other everyday items for a shelter can inspire hope and dignity, particularly at a time when some have very little.

**Can you recommend some strategies that students can undertake to raise awareness concerning the issue of homelessness in Canada?**

Nothing is as effective as seeing the problem with your own eyes. There are many simple ways student can help. Get a group of people together to volunteer at a local homeless shelter, or collect donations and personally deliver them to a shelter. Through these types of experiences and talking with people staying at shelters, people become aware of various needs and get involved.

**What is the most enjoyable aspect of your job and, conversely, what is the most difficult?**

The most enjoyable aspect of my job is watching the hope return into the eyes of someone who has lost everything. I often see this when people realize that someone truly cares about what happens to them. The most difficult aspect of my job is when someone new walks through our doors. It means that circumstances in life have overwhelmed them with grief of some kind to the point that they are now homeless.

**If you had the ability to instantly fix one piece of the homelessness puzzle what would it be and why?**

I would try to provide more affordable supportive housing. In cities it is especially difficult for low-income families to afford even an apartment. The lack of affordable supportive housing is a barrier to solving the problem of homelessness.

**What are you most proud of in terms of The Ottawa Mission's advocacy around the issue of homelessness in Canada?**

I am most proud of the fact that we have been able to provide the kinds of programs that are life changing for people. Our programs, which include our hospice, medical clinic, school, job training, addiction rehab and housing assistance all work together to provide opportunities for people to change their lives for the better.

As Mr. Eddy has revealed, advocating on behalf of the homeless can be as basic as collecting and donating sundry items to a shelter, or it can be comprehensive as spearheading a fundraising initiative in your own neighbourhood.

And speaking of your neighbourhood: I ask you again, who are the people in your neighbourhood?

They are the housed *and* the homeless. And I know you see both.

## DID YOU KNOW?



### Open Culture

Philosophy blogs. Free classic films. Foreign-language lessons. Free online courses in everything from biology to psychology. What do all these have in common?

You can find them (and plenty more) at [Open Culture](#), the "best free cultural and educational media on the web."

The site is a treasure trove of original commentary and links to high-quality content. Open Culture founder and editor Dan Colman is also Director and Associate Dean at Stanford University. As the About section explains, he "finds the free courses and audio books you need, the language lessons and movies you want, and plenty of enlightenment in between." This is definitely one to bookmark!

## EDITORIAL

Sandra Livingston



## Father Bears

It may not seem that Father's Day and mother bears have anything in common, but they do. A lot, actually. Two completely unrelated events got this train of thought going.

The first was an article about fathers being present at their children's births. A bunch of New Age baloney, according to an [article](#) in *The Telegraph*. Fathers are pretty much useless for anything other than the conception, assembling the crib, and driving to the hospital. And whatever you do, keep them away from the prenatal classes. They'll just get underfoot and they don't want to be there anyway.

The second incident was a passing comment about the unique bond that mothers have with their children. A relative noted with supreme confidence how it was so very true that, because women carry the unborn child, they automatically have some kind of inscrutable lifelong bond

that a father can't even imagine. "Just like animals in the wild," the wisdom went. "The way a mother bear defends her offspring so ferociously."

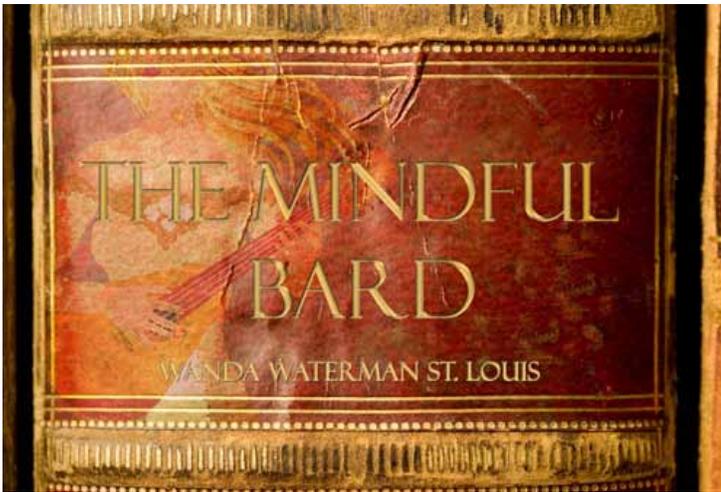
To put it politely, hogwash. To start with, the argument falls apart the minute you start talking about mother bears. The image of a female bruin fighting tooth and claw to protect her young is a romanticized one. I wouldn't want to test the odds, but it's not uncommon for a mother bear to "try and warn you off or escape and collect her cubs later," rather than stay to fight.

And even with this mythically maternal creature, the bond between mother and offspring has a fairly short shelf life. The cubs are cared for until they're around two, but when the female is ready to breed again all bets are off. The cubs are driven away—and you can bet the mother will compete just as ferociously with them when it comes to food or territory for her new litter. It's normal animal behaviour seen in most other species, including humans sometimes. So much for the magical, mystical bond of motherhood.

Yes, pregnancy and labour are experiences that men can't have. But the kind of outdated thinking I encountered recently made me realize that modern men are stuck firmly between that proverbial rock and a hard place.

On the one hand, they're supposed to be caring and empathetic partners, plus deeply involved with their children on an emotional level (unlike the stereotype of yesterday's stoic breadwinner). On the other hand, we perpetuate the myth of the supreme, unassailable bond that only mothers can have. Dads can go through the motions, but they aren't actually allowed in the club.

The truth is that there are lousy parents of both sexes, and great ones as well. For every mother who would throw down her life for her children, you probably don't have to look far to find a father who would do the same. Maybe, instead of Father's Day or Mother's Day, there should simply be a Parents' Day. Because arbitrary body parts have nothing to do with healthy relationships or good parenting skills. Those come from the heart.



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

Book: John Wall Barger, *Pain-Proof Men*

Publisher: Palimpsest Press

Publication date: 2009

The premise of this book of poems is a complex metaphor so grand and evocative that at first it can make you feel a little at sea. The title is a literal English translation of the word *fakir*, the Sufi holy man who flaunts an ability (granted him

through devotion to God) to endure pain.

The fakir sings the names of God, and God is in the details. In *Pain-Proof Men* the details are precious little Whovilles filled with tragic history and vague longings.

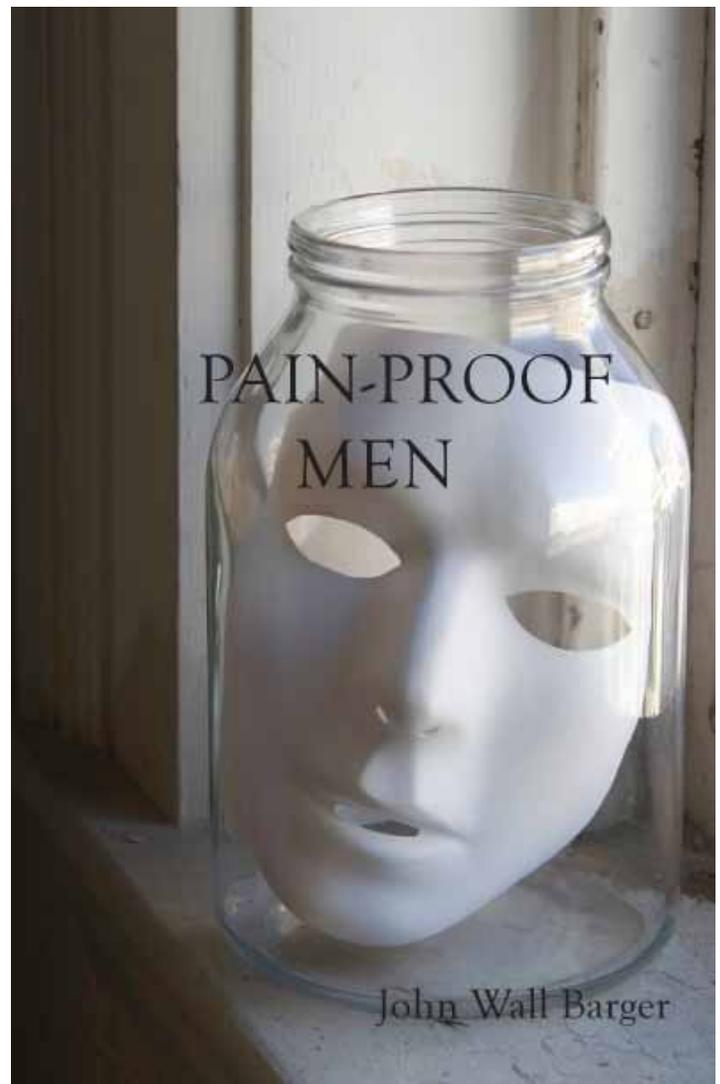
Although I love poetry I don't like most modern poetry, not because I'm anti-modern but because I don't like most of any era's poetry. I can appreciate a lot of what's been handed down but what's been handed down—unlike much of the doggerel lauded in its day—has stood the test of time.

We poetry lovers of the modern (and/or postmodern) era come across many poems that will not stand the test of time, poems recommended to us by those with some kind of stake in them (yes, poetry has stakeholders), poems whose charms are based on currently fashionable innovations and nothing else.

Along comes John Wall Barger with this series of stream-of-consciousness vignettes, within the imagist tradition but not squarely (too much action and not enough sang-froid).

Much as I tried, I couldn't find one speck of guile in these poems, not one instance of posing or pedantry; just crystal pools of rare insight with an imagic exactness as vivid as can be rendered in words, as close to the Thing Itself as art can approximate.

In this context self-immolation, crucifixion, masochistic performance art (both sublime and ridiculous), and the wounds that we pass down



wholesale from one generation to the next, bring the individual to the place where it can step outside itself and observe:

*This man is crying.*

*Scissors tremble in his hand.*

*I watch him.*

A correct and aesthetically perfect map of personal despair, with hope lurking in the margins.

*Pain-Proof Men* manifests six of The Mindful Bard's criteria for books well worth reading: 1) it is authentic, original, and delightful; 2) it gives me tools enabling me to respond with compassion and efficacy to the suffering around me; 3) it makes me want to be a better artist; 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.

*Auguste swayed like a marionette  
At the toe of the antique wall, enthralled  
by the hum of harps & drum within.  
Through a burnished gate, he saw gods  
& dwarfs walk arm in arm, cried,  
Here's no place for a freak to be glum.  
& entered Pandemonium.*

John Wall Barger, "Onset" in *Pain-Proof Men*

*Pain-Proof Men* was recommended to The Mindful Bard by Henri Bailley of Lansdowne, Nova Scotia.

## CLICK OF THE WRIST – Cave Divers

Whether you're hunting for pirate treasure or bats or just plain adventure, caves are enduring places of mystery. But if regular caves are exciting, how about underwater caves? This week's links take you deep into the watery shadows and the amazing world of cave divers.

### A Cave Diver Story

This astonishing footage is from the documentary *A Cave Diver Story*—and what a story it is. The pit, as it's known, is 400 feet deep and contains many tunnels and caverns. In this segment, viewers follow Steve Bogaerts on a 10-hour dive through some of the most incredible sights on the planet.

### Power of the Planet

This BBC clip doesn't just offer a glimpse of the fascinating world of underwater caves. It also reveals "a spectacular hidden world" that "tells the story of the colossal meteor strike 65 million years ago that created them and thereby triggered the extinction of the dinosaurs."

### Cave Diving in Mexico

It isn't clear what film this clip is from, but it really doesn't matter. As exciting as cave diving seems, it's not a sport for the reckless. This footage demonstrates both the beauty and danger involved.

### Ice Formations

These remarkable photos of undersea ice in Lake Sassolo, Switzerland, give a whole new perspective of cave diving. And although these massive ice formations aren't caves in the truest sense, it probably wouldn't take much to get lost below them.



From  
Where  
I Sit  
Hazel Anaka

## Love it, Use It

Last Friday, I spent an exhausting day helping my elderly aunt find, display, and price her household as she prepares to move. She was lucky to be able to sell her collection of Bossons heads and Royal Doulton figurines as a lot. Like many of us, she had china dinner sets, an assortment of crystal stemware, petit point pictures, hand-stitchery pieces, and more. She marvelled at how much she had and wondered why.

I have theories. Some things we collected because every young woman/bride of a certain era did. Getting a place setting or complete set of your china pattern as a gift was a welcome thing and served as a passage into womanhood. Same goes for silver flatware. Why we all needed a crystal ashtray, candlesticks, toothpick holder, decanter, candy dishes, dinner bell and more is a mystery to me. Let's chalk it up to naiveté and not yet understanding what we like, need, and value. A decanter, for heaven's sake! You only see liquor decanters on soap operas for those middle-of-the-day pick-me-ups.

My sister has a collection of music boxes. When our friends had a dairy, they had Holstein cow everything. Sometimes a person will buy (or receive) one cute whatever. Oohing and ahing ensues and then everyone (wrongly) assumes that if one is good, 38 whatevers must be better. Pesky decision making when shopping becomes a thing of the past. We'll all just get them a cow apron, napkin holder, wall hanging, or a musical something or other.

Sometimes, we collect because we think something is a good investment. Heaven help anyone who believes that. Roy has several boxed, never been fired commemorative rifles. When he tried to find a market for them, we learned there were far too many made for them to appreciate in value. How do you sell a firearm when everyone needs an FAC (Firearms Acquisition Certificate) these days? We also have millions of carded and boxed John Deere farm toys in all sizes and scales. Yes, I know I could be opening an account; inventorying, photographing, and pricing the stock to sell on eBay. Or maybe we'll spend every weekend of our golden years flogging them at flea markets.

Sometimes, as parents we become enablers. Hilary was a preschooler when we all fell in love with My Child dolls. They had skin as soft as peaches, movable joints, nice hair, and beautiful clothes. She ended up with 17, I think. When she left home, we needed to sell them. We lined them up on the deck of Roy's flatbed trailer and did a photo shoot of her with all the dolls. I kept a black doll that I loved; she kept two or three and the rest had to go. One day, if she has a daughter, we'll have stories to tell.

Maybe some of us have addictive, acquisitive personalities. Watching a few episodes of *Hoarders* or *Hoarding: Buried Alive* shows us mental illness plays a role in these extreme cases.

Maybe the recession and green movement will teach us that less is enough.

If we only buy and keep what we truly love or use, we'll have gotten our money's worth and years of pleasure. After that, does it really matter? At least I don't have collector plates or Beanie Babies to sell, from where I sit.

# Sister MURDER

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

#43



**BERT!** How could you fantasise about **KILLING** someone?



It was the only way I could stay sane. I always told myself it was harmless, daydreaming about killing Shane.

Maybe it was harmless.

Or maybe...

...I was preparing myself.



Can you even imagine what it would be like to have a member of your family **MURDERED?!!**



You can't get hung up on things like that when you aim to win.

## AUSU UPDATE



### AUSU Executive Election

AUSU has recently held its internal election for the Executive. We wish to congratulate Barbara Rielly (President), Bethany Tynes (Vice President External and Student Affairs) and Sarah Kertcher (Vice President Finance and Administration) on their election and thank those that ran for their willingness to serve.

Internal elections are being held to determine committee membership and we expect that all will be in place shortly. Our new Council is taking its bearings and has already begun to set the direction for this term.

### Student Issues

AUSU recently completed a compilation of reported student issues covering a two year period; all issues were recorded in such a way as to ensure that student information remains protected and private. This effort confirmed what we long suspected; that tutor problems were the single biggest issue faced by our students (56 of 120 complaints).

Outdated course materials and errors in texts continue to be reported as well as were exam issues, slowness of the transfer process, and the scantiness of information in School of Business FAQs. Over that two year period there was a decrease in the number of complaints about student financing, exam request problems, difficulty registering in more than six courses, and materials shortages for courses. Kudos to AU for improving in those areas. Now if we could only get the Tutors' Union to the table . . .

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

Finally! People have already started receiving the new planners in the mail, and we're currently shipping them out as fast as the orders come in. Full of useful information about AUSU, writing styles, course grading, great finds online for your studies that you may not have known about, as well as having places to write down your phone numbers, keep track of your assignments, and, oh yeah, a year's worth of calendar to plan out your schedule too. We'll give one free to each AUSU member just for the asking.

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

### 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.

And if you have new little ones in your family, or know somebody who does, check out our baby onesies. Made by American Apparel, these onesies are high quality and let folks know your kids are growing up to great things as a "Future Graduate of Athabasca U"

## AUSU Scheduling Meeting with Tutors' Union – Not really an Update

Some things resist change. 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.

Our statistics we've been collecting from the forums and your calls show that issues with tutors - specifically the amount of time taken for marking assignments and exams are your number one concern. Help us help you.

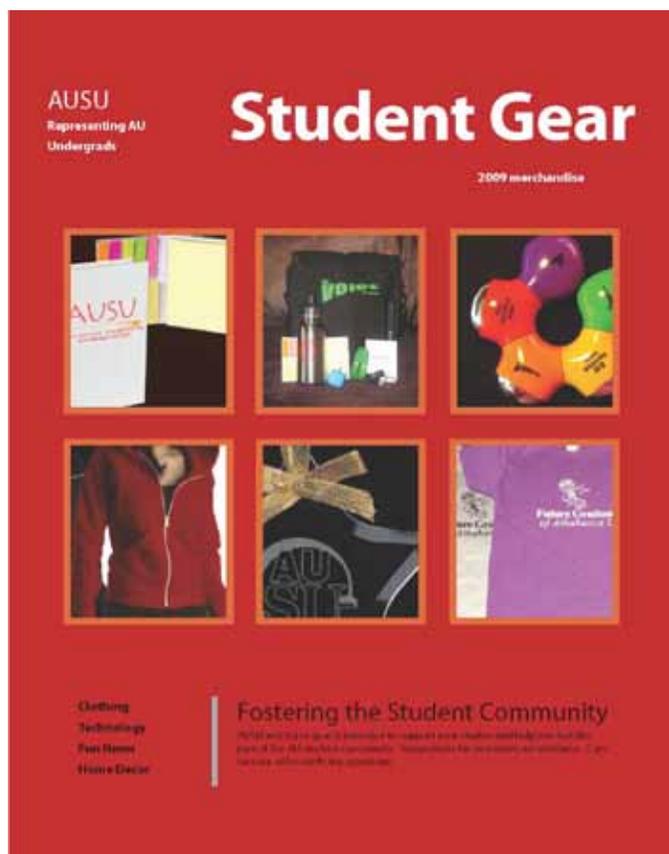
## SmartDraw Program Renewal

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.

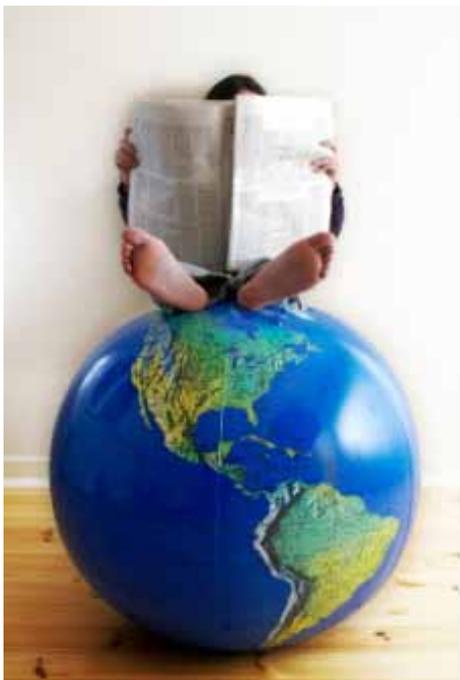
SmartDraw allows you to create a wide range of graphics for your assignments and submit them electronically in a Word file. You can also place your graphics in Excel or PowerPoint files, or export them as TIF, GIF, or JPEG files to make a web graphic or even a logo. Just a few of the graphics you can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



## INTERNATIONAL NEWS DESK



### At Home: Ottawa college may cut some trades programs

The federal government has been promoting apprenticeships and training in the trades, but one Ottawa college may cut two of its trade programs. As the [CBC](#) reports, Algonquin College “is considering cutting programs in trades such as horticulture and toolmaking.”

Although teachers and others familiar with those trades say the move would “leave local businesses in those fields high and dry,” some observers note that the cuts could be the result of higher demand for other programs like video game development.

Doug Wotherspoon is a member of Algonquin’s program review steering committee, and he told reporters that the college has 27 existing programs it wants to increase, as well as 51 new programs it would like to initiate.

“For that to take place,” Wotherspoon said, “we do have to take a look at the programs that . . . aren’t meeting either the demand or that have a lower relevance.” One factor in the possible cuts to the horticulture program is that it’s expensive to run but student applications are low compared to other programs.

However, with more than 1,000 horticulture businesses in the region, nursery owners and landscapers say Ottawa’s existing horticulture programs “can’t keep up with demand as it is.” Algonquin College is expected to make a decision on its trade programs before the September semester begins.

### In Foreign News: Unmade beds could be good for your health

Don’t want to make your bed in the morning? Don’t worry about it—an unmade bed could be good for your health. As the [BBC](#) reports, research shows that untidy beds could prove unappealing to dust mites that are “thought to cause asthma and other allergies.”

As many as 1.5 million house dust mites could live in the average bed. The tiny creatures are “less than a millimetre long, feed on scales of human skin and produce allergens which are easily inhaled during sleep.” The good news is that a Kingston University study found the bugs can’t survive in the “warm, dry conditions found in an unmade bed.”

The dust mites thrive in warm, moist conditions; the kind created when people climb between the blankets for a long cozy night. Using a computer model, the scientists tracked how “changes in the home can reduce numbers of dust mites in beds.”

One of the researchers, Dr. Stephen Pretlove, noted that “mites can only survive by taking in water from the atmosphere using small glands on the outside of their body.” Leaving your bed unmade during the day can help eliminate moisture in the sheets, making it a much less inviting place for dust mites. The drier atmosphere could also cause existing mites to “dehydrate and eventually die.”

Further studies are planned, and researchers will be looking at how changes in insulation, heating, and ventilation could affect dust mites in homes.

# CLASSIFIEDS

---

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

## THE VOICE

---

1213, 10011 109th Street NW, Edmonton, AB T5J 3S8 -- Ph: 800.788.9041 ext. 2905 - Fax: 780.497.7003 attn: Voice Editor

**Publisher** Athabasca University Students' Union  
**Editor-In-Chief** Tamra Ross  
**Managing Editor** Sandra Livingston

**Regular Columnists** Hazel Anaka, John Buhler, Christina M. Frey, Jason Sullivan,  
Bethany Tynes, Wanda Waterman St. Louis

---

[www.voicemagazine.org](http://www.voicemagazine.org)

---

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

Contact *The Voice* at [voice@voicemagazine.org](mailto:voice@voicemagazine.org)

To receive a weekly email announcing each issue, see the 'subscribe' link on *The Voice* front page. *The Voice* does not share its subscriber list.  
Special thanks to Athabasca University's *The Insider* for its contributions