

THE

VOICE

MAGAZINE

Volume 18 Issue 24

June 18, 2010

Convocation 2010

Congratulations!

Class of 2010

AU Profiles

Donna Alden-Bugden

Stuffed and Starved

You are what you eat

Plus:

*From Where I Sit, Sister Aurora,
Gregor's Bed, 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

Convocation 2010!	3
-------------------------	---

Articles

Stuffed, Starved, and Ignorant	7
In Conversation With: John Wall Barger	10
AU Profiles: Donna Alden-Bugden	12

Columns

Gregor's Bed	14
From Where I Sit	16
Sister Aurora	17
AUSU Update	18

News and Events

Athabasca University Closed June 28 - July 4	9
AU Library Catalogue—Now for iPhones!	13
Click of the Wrist	15
International News Desk	20

From the Readers

Letters to the Editor	2
-----------------------------	---

The Voice
Magazine

www.voicemagazine.org

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

800.788.9041 ext. 2905

Email
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
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*

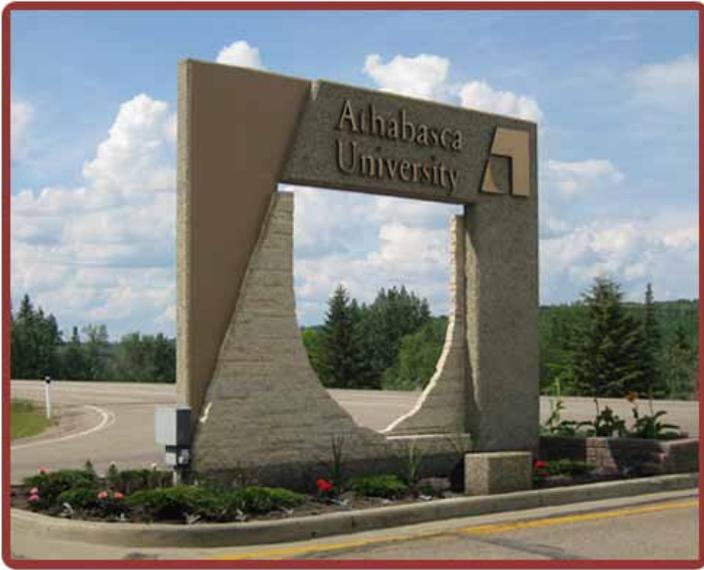
LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

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



CONVOCATION 2010

Sandra Livingston



This is a special Voice report on Athabasca University's 2010 Convocation, which took place June 10, 11, and 12. The Voice offers its warmest congratulations to all this year's graduates!

Convocation. For many, it's the end of a long journey; a celebration that signifies completion. But as graduands, family members, and special guests came together to celebrate AU's Convocation 2010, there were abundant reminders that every ending brings exciting new beginnings.

The weather seemed made to order as the AU campus sprang to life: a steady stream of cars filled the grounds, the tempting aromas of a

Continental breakfast filled the air, and graduands connected with fellow students—many for the first time outside emails and discussion boards!

And amid the many congratulations and reflections on the long journey to graduation, there was another popular topic: plans for the future. As AU President Dr. Frits Pannekoek noted in his opening remarks, AU students possess a unique blend of "vision, planning, and dedication," and those qualities will serve them well long after convocation. Some grads were busy discussing further studies (or are already enrolled!) while others looked forward to vacations with family or simply reading books for pleasure, not for research.

A fitting backdrop was on display as grads and guests arrived for the ceremony: AU's new Academic and Research Centre (ARC). Construction is well underway on the Centre, and visitors stopped to admire it and imagine the possibilities the new facility holds.

The main event, though, was inside the spacious auditorium, which quickly filled with guests and a sense of anticipation!

From as near as Athabasca to as far away as Hong Kong, the



Welcome to Convocation 2010!



AU's new Academic and Research Centre is well underway

graduands had all travelled their own paths for this special day. But preparations weren't finished yet!

Following breakfast in the airy tent, graduands needed to register, receive their gowns, be briefed on the procedure for the ceremony—and, of course, pose for countless photos!

All eyes were on the graduands as the procession began and, in keeping with AU's role as a distance university, the audience extended to viewers around the world through the live webcast.

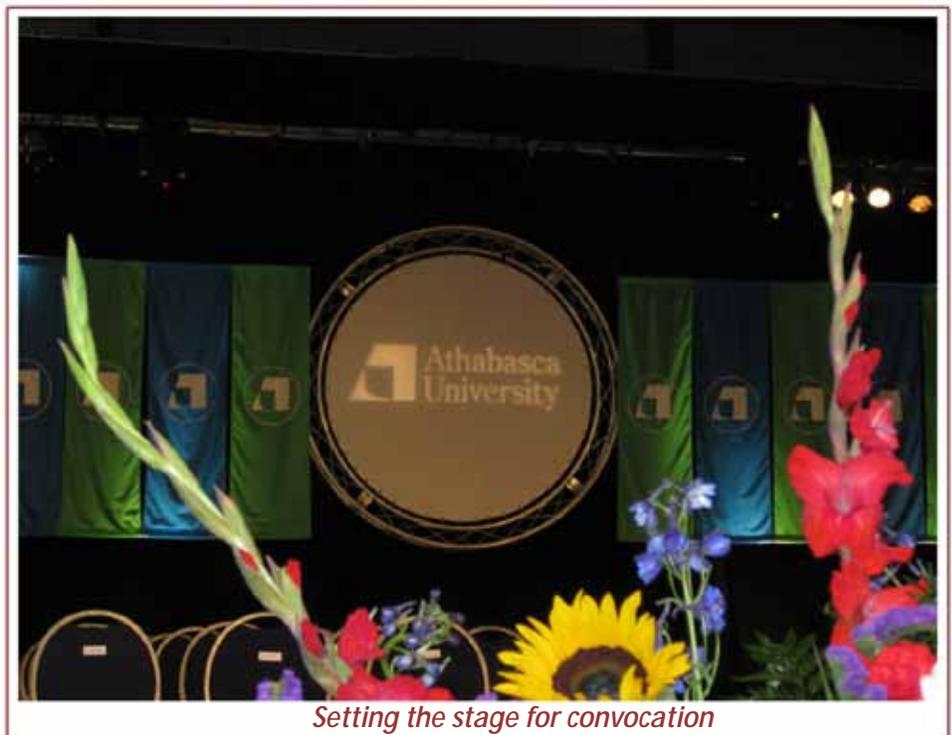
The webcast is a recent addition to convocation and the quality improves each year, making it a

welcome opportunity for those who can't attend in person. One thing that would improve the webcast experience is the option of downloading a PDF copy of each day's program, both as a keepsake and to make it easier to watch for the appearance of that special grad.

On Thursday, June 10, the Kokopelli Choir led the procession with a vibrant performance, followed by greetings from Dr. Pannekoek; Jeff Johnson, MLA for Athabasca-Redwater; and Barry Walker, member of AUGC since 2004 and chair since 2009.

The degrees awarded on the first day were: Master of Distance Education, Master of Arts - Integrated Studies, Master of Counselling, Bachelor of Arts, Bachelor of General Studies (Applied Studies), Bachelor of General Studies (Arts and Science), Bachelor of Health Administration, Bachelor of Human Resources and Labour Relations, and Bachelor of Professional Arts.

As always, one of the most popular features of convocation was each grad's brief bio, read as they crossed the stage.



Setting the stage for convocation



Ready and waiting for the graduands

and AU staff and faculty—another reminder that distance education can bring unexpected challenges that sometimes require unique solutions from many sources.

With nearly 1,500 grads in AU's class of 2010, that's a lot of hard work and dedication!

On June 11, the degrees awarded were: Master of Health Studies, Master of Nursing, Bachelor of Nursing, Master of Science - Information Systems, Bachelor of Science, and Bachelor of Science in Computing and Information Systems. And on the final day of convocation, June 12, degrees were awarded in the Master of Business Administration, Bachelor of Administration, Bachelor of Commerce, and Bachelor of Management programs.

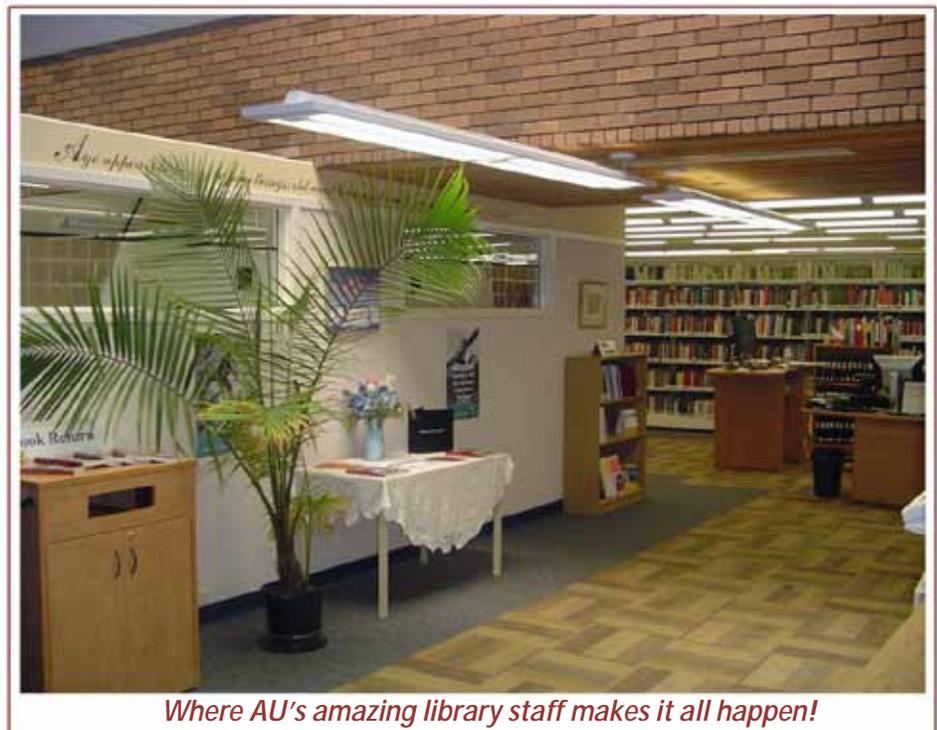
Several special degree recipients were on hand as well. On June

10, an honorary Doctor of Laws was conferred on Hon. Raymond Charles Lee "in recognition of his dedication to the preservation of Chinese Canadian history in Alberta and the integration of Asian Canadians into the mainstream of Canadian society."

And although AU prides itself on breaking down barriers to education, each grad's words revealed another important aspect of the experience: earning a distance degree is just as tough, and often tougher, than attending a bricks-and-mortar school.

Along with full-time studies, many grads worked full- or part-time, raised families, volunteered, and travelled. They studied in airports, on buses, and on business trips and holidays. Throughout, they set their own study schedules, arranged exams, and kept themselves motivated to reach this milestone.

Overwhelmingly, they thanked friends, family, fellow students,



Where AU's amazing library staff makes it all happen!

On June 11, an honorary Doctor of Science was conferred on Bill St. Arnaud “in recognition of his technical leadership in the design of Canada’s national research network and his tireless efforts to promote the effective use of this network.”

And on June 12, an honorary Doctor of Laws was conferred on Dr. Lawrence Lessig “in recognition of his outstanding work in advocacy and support of fair copyright legislation.” Dr. Lessig is “a strong advocate of fair use, open access and open source.”

Other special presentations included the induction of Joy Romero and Dr. Dominique Abrioux into the Order of Athabasca University.

But when all was said and done, when the amazing sounds of Epsilon’s voices had faded and the piper had led the final procession from the stage, Convocation 2010 remained a celebration of each new grad’s personal achievement. A reminder that no matter how far away the goal may have seemed when they started, or how many obstacles arose along the way, hard work, persistence, and motivation brought them to this milestone—and will play a big part in tomorrow’s plans.

The Voice offers its warmest congratulations to the graduates of 2010!



It's never too soon to start planning your AU degree!

STUFFED, STARVED, AND IGNORANT

Kimberley Sanders



I have a German mother who took every opportunity to tell my brother and me, “You are what you eat.”

Naturally, as a kid it meant nothing, and I continued to eat as much Gummibären (Gummi bears), marzipan (almond icing), and lebkuchen (gingerbread) as I could scarf down. And every December, just in time for Heiligabend on December 24, a gigantic box of goodies arrived from my Omi in Germany; inside was every manner of holiday sweet including my favourite, dominosteine (chocolate-dipped lebkuchen cubes with jelly and marzipan filling).

Back then, I drifted off to sleep with visions of sugar plums. If I ate that way today, I’d be drifting straight into a diabetic coma.

As a mid-forties adult, “Der Mensch ist, was er ißt” suddenly means everything and I find myself obsessing over food labels. It all started last fall at the Kardish health food store in Ottawa. While I was waiting in the checkout line, I picked up a gratis copy of *Vista* magazine. I had never seen the magazine before and when I flipped to the contents page I was pleasantly surprised by the array of insightful articles. Although titles like “Grow a

Younger Body” and “Nobel Prize Winner Discusses Our Climate” sounded interesting, I was immediately drawn to the title “Overfed Yet Undernourished,” written by Ironman triathlete Brendan Brazier. I quickly flipped to Brazier’s article and read about the obesity epidemic pervading contemporary North American society.

Stuffed and starved we are.

However, I’ll go one step further than Brazier and say that we are also ignorant when it comes to matters related to foodstuff; in particular, what we *think* we are eating. Inasmuch as *caveat emptor* applies to real property, it also applies to real persons.

Having recently watched the film *Killer at Large*, I knew Brazier was on point. To further buttress his assertion that we are overfed and undernourished, my partner and I had just returned from a Caribbean cruise with eight of our friends where we witnessed excessive, unremitting consumption. While the volume of consumables was substantial, and visually appealing, it was largely nutrient-deficient fare. Even the fruit juice, no doubt injected with excessive flavour molecules, was too sweet.

Although I don’t consider myself a people-watcher, I couldn’t help but stare (frankly, in utter astonishment) as passengers gorged themselves on as many as 17 (yes, one more than 16) plates of assorted desserts. Frenzied dining is not something I care to see again; nor, for that matter, do I ever want to vacation amidst such a backdrop of overindulgence. While I realize it must be challenging to prepare healthy food options for three thousand people, as I walked down the gangway I was relieved to leave the floating amusement

park, with all its greed and gluttony, behind me. Back on beloved terra firma, I pledged to make wiser, healthier food choices.

In an effort to help me more fully understand the effects of sugar in my diet, a doctor friend of mine challenged me to give up all forms of sugar (i.e., agave, stevia, honey, brown sugar, maple syrup) for 10 weeks—an experiment that changed my life.

After my little science project concluded, I picked up a second-hand copy of Connie Bennett's book *Sugar Shock*. Having just experienced cold-turkey sugar withdrawal I was well aware of the negative impact sugar had on my body. More importantly, I finally understood that sugar, with its short-term boost, had actually been depriving me of intrinsic vitality. In any case, as I continued to educate myself, I began to see that prepackaged, ready-to-eat foods are by no means convenient for the body and, more often than not, food identified as "wholesome" is anything but.

So why such a disconnect between fact and fiction? Commerce.

Although *Killer at Large* offers some insight concerning food origins, it only skims the surface. If you really want to understand where our consumables come from, go rent the movie *Earthlings*. Written and directed by Shaun Monson, the English film is narrated by Joaquin Phoenix and Persia White while the French version, *Terriens*, is narrated by Montréal Canadiens vegan hockey player Georges Laraque. If you are at all mindful of the interconnectedness of life, you will walk away from this movie irrevocably changed. In addition to examining what you eat, you might even find yourself motivated to lessen your environmental footprint (to learn more about that, visit [Planet Green](#)).

As for me, the way in which I treat other living beings—beings that exist "lower on the food chain"—is becoming more important to me; the more I ponder human-instigated death and destruction, the more I find myself wondering what our future will hold. What will our patent disregard and disrespect for other life forms say about us as a species after we have annihilated ourselves? And I wonder, too, about the knock-on effect of the religious decrees that say on one hand "Thou shalt not kill," (Deuteronomy 5:17) but conveniently claim that not all killing is murder. Is it just me or is that not somewhat of a contradiction, like the term "civil war"?

American educator Derek Bok once said, "If you think education is expensive, try ignorance." If you have the guts to explore your own ignorance, I invite you to conduct your own science experiment and eliminate sugar, processed foods, or meat from your diet and record what you observe. After my experiment with sugar deprivation I decided to purchase a book for some levity, so I snatched up a copy of *Does This Clutter Make My Butt Look Fat?* by Peter Walsh. After reading Walsh I was not only inspired to purge my kitchen cupboards but the rest of the house, too. As I surveyed the house I began to realize I have a lot of stuff. Let me clarify: I have a lot of unnecessary stuff. The very act of donating boxes and bags of excess "stuff" to Goodwill enabled me to wake up to my own excess.

If you are at all like me you, too, have a subconscious penchant for excess. If we don't address this epidemic, like obesity itself, I wonder what will happen to us as a species. Once we have destroyed and consumed every other living thing, what will be left to eat? I wonder if we will go the way of the 1973 science fiction thriller *Soylent Green*? For those who are unfamiliar with the movie, it is based on Harry

"Der Mensch ist, was er ißt."

(Man is what he eats.)

Ludwig Andreas Feuerbach,
*Concerning Spiritualism and
Materialism, 1863*

Harrison's 1966 sci-fi book *Make Room! Make Room!* and takes place in New York City in the not too distant future of 2022.

In that world, some 40 million New Yorkers struggle to stay alive, most living in the streets. Surviving on ever-depleting rations, the government comes up with a sustainable solution: feed the people, people. Okay, so perhaps that concept is a bit of a stretch. But since we do live in a world that is obsessed with consumption—soda pop, candy, fast food, cars, clothes, electronics, whatever—I have to concede it's possible that we will, some day, run out of food.

Before you call me a blasphemer, remember I said "I wonder." Besides, I agree with Isaac Asimov when he said "Individual science fiction stories may seem as trivial as ever to the blinder critics and philosophers of today—but the core of science fiction, its essence has become crucial to our salvation if we are to be saved at all."

I wonder a lot, in fact, so in an effort to continue my "food and me" education, I am reading as many books as I can find that challenge me to think about my relationship with food. Books like *The Ethics of What We Eat* and *The Way We Eat: Why Our Food Choices Matter*, both by Jim Mason and Peter Singer.

I'm also building up my personal library to include as many of Michael Pollan's books as I can find, including *The Omnivore's Dilemma* and *In Defense of Food: An Eater's Manifesto*. The point, for me, is to keep learning. Like any situation in life there are always more than two sides to the story.

To close with an interesting quote by Tim Robbins (from the December 1993 edition of *Esquire*), "You are what you think you eat." I would like to tell my shipmates who gorged themselves on food like it was in infinite supply, though you thought you were eating well, you were mistaken. While you were storing up empty calories in your body, that same quality of energy was feeding your brain.

*"There is nothing
more frightful than
ignorance in action."*
Johann Wolfgang von
Goethe

ATHABASCA UNIVERSITY CLOSED JUNE 28 - JULY 4



AU has announced that the university will be closed during the week of June 28, although some key services will be available. According to the AU website, the closure is necessary to help balance the budget and is scheduled "during a reduced period of activity," which should allow for the least impact on students.

The Information Centre will operate on reduced staffing levels during the closure. If you have an urgent inquiry, you can leave a voicemail at 1.800.788.9041 (Canada and the US) or 780.675.6100 (Alberta).

If you've got an exam scheduled, don't worry. AU's announcement notes that "all scheduled examinations will be conducted during the closure." For more info, visit the Exam section of the online calendar.

The Faculty of Business Student Support centre will be operating as usual and can be reached toll-free at 1.800.469.6531 (Canada/US), 780.675.6338, or by emailing business-support@athabascau.ca Tutor services aren't affected by the closure and you should be able to reach your tutor during regular hours.

AU will resume normal operations on Monday, July 5 at 8:30 a.m. (MDT).

IN CONVERSATION WITH . . .

Wanda Waterman St. Louis



John Wall Barger

*John Wall Barger is a Halifax-based poet. (See [Voice review](#) of his recently published *Pain-Proof Men*.) Recently John took the time to talk to Wanda Waterman St. Louis (who, along with Bob Snider, shares the same home town with John) about poetry and the poet's life.*

Tell me what your life was like while you were living in Bear River.

It was 1975, I was five, and we'd just moved from southern California to a forest in Canada. First we lived in a tipi my mother stitched. I remember thinking it was odd that ferns were growing in the living room. My dad built a cabin out of an old house he helped tear down. I liked it in Bear River. I climbed and fell out of a lot of trees, and the deep eerie silence of those woods stuck with me. My poem "Doberman" describes what it was like to be attacked by a local dog. I think I was always a city kid. After a year, we moved to Manhattan, and I was ecstatic.

When did you first think you could write poetry?

I wrote my first poem when I was 17, and liked the feeling. It was a kind of power that nobody else had any say in. So I began writing a lot of poems. Quick, *sans* revisions. I definitely *thought* I could write poetry. Ginsberg and Kerouac and Bukowski were models, but I kept drifting toward the mythic and surreal. Later Blake blew my mind. The first time I wrote one that I can bear to reread was about 10 years after. Still now, when a poem bears weight, it's a lovely surprise.

How does it feel to write a poem? From start to finish?

If I'm not writing consistently, I feel kind of ill, psychically. On a jag, the mind goes mercury. Fluid, open, flexible. Although writing is obsessive, it somehow contains the antidote to fear and worry. Starting a poem is terrific. It's the stage I love the most: ransacking the toy-box of archetypes. I revise compulsively, but I'm less exuberant about the niggling latter stages. At a certain point, when a poem seems to be getting *close*, I would love to hand it over to someone at H&R Block, and have them bottom-line it for me. I don't ever feel quite finished with any poem.

How do you hone your art?

Reading. I ape everything I like. Lately it's been James Tate, D.A. Powell, Pasolini, and Kay Ryan. I unlock my jaw like a snake and swallow their work. For a while, when I fall in love with a new writer, I write poems that are so derivative and plagiarized that they must be thrown away. But now and then I can adopt some aspect, some *twitch*, of what they do as my own. Some writers, like Kay Ryan, are so singular, or at least distinct from me, that I can learn nothing but only admire from afar.

What conditions do you need in order to be as creative as you need to be?

I have fabricated a life that, more or less, allows me the time and energy to support my work. This has involved a lot of luck, and the generosity of the people around me, for which I am very thankful. I work as a part time prof—just enough to keep my hapless left brain firing, like fireworks in fog—but not so much that

it impedes writing time. The odd grant is invaluable. Travelling helps fill the reservoir. Friends swim in the reservoir.

What role do you think poets play in modern culture? What role should they play?

I like that Charles Olson used to advise Roosevelt. Trudeau had “meetings” with Marshall McLuhan, who, with his Zen koan-like “probes,” was a kind of media poet. But what on earth did Roosevelt or Trudeau learn from these lovely lunatics? I’m not interested in poetry that teaches me lessons about culture. That kind of art (rare exceptions come to mind, like Neruda and Jenny Holzer) makes me feel deceived. Can the deep mysteries really be condensed into stereotypes and aphorisms?

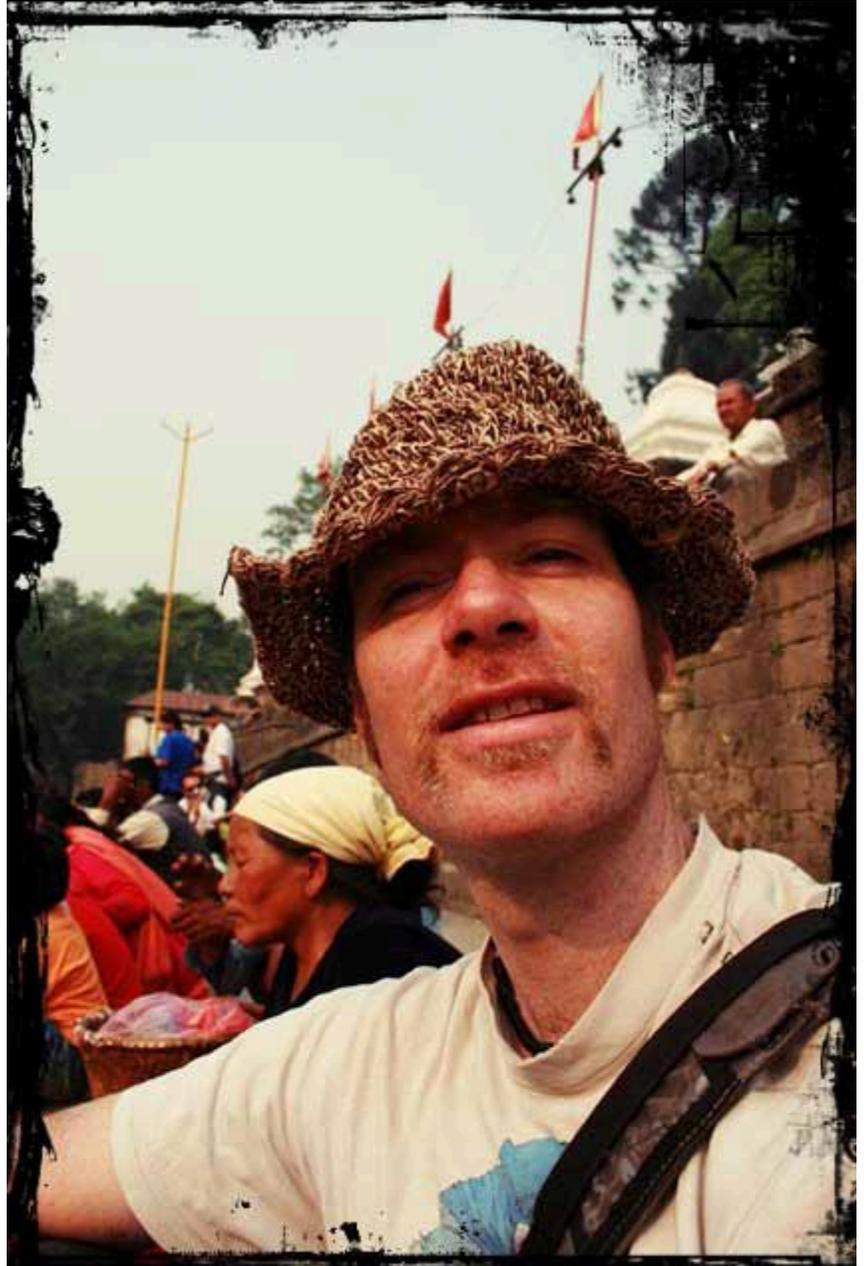
The poets I admire don’t judge. They watch, and report. They speak out of the dream. The environment is going to hell, of course, but I don’t think it’s the job of poets to *critique* this, at least in a literal way. Perhaps poets today are *useful* because they (usually) do not look at the world through the ubiquitous commercial lens. This job might be enough, for our fragile poets.

How did you first get the idea for the title *Pain-Proof Men*?

I’ve been obsessed for years with carnival culture, and at one point I wanted my first book to be all about circuses. A pain-proof man is, of course, a performer in a sideshow who stabs himself with pins and needles, as a little mob looks on. I liked this as a metaphor for the artist. Most of the circus poems fell away from the manuscript, and the idea expanded to pain in general. I don’t think suffering is just ours. We all know its texture, its smell. So it’s a potential point of connection with others. Heartbreak, in balance, leads to empathy.

Do you have any plans for the immediate future? The distant future?

My lifestyle now is the best one I’ve been able to think up. I live in Halifax, Nova Scotia, though it’s now June and I haven’t been there yet this year. I’ve been working on a translation of the Italian poet Pasolini, so next winter, like the last, I’ll live for a few months in Italy. I try to live well each day, and not worry about the distant future.



AU Profiles:

AU Profiles: Donna Alden-Bugden

Christina M. Frey



AU graduate Donna Alden-Bugden graduated from Athabasca's Master of Nursing (NP) program in June 2003, but the nurse practitioner—and fan of distance learning—is still furthering her educational dream. Here, she speaks about why she chose AU; how she stays motivated while juggling family, work, and school; and what makes it all worthwhile.

Initially, it wasn't AU's distance delivery that attracted Donna to the program in 1999. When Athabasca opened a nurse practitioner degree program—the first of its kind in Alberta—Donna's interest was piqued. "I jumped at the chance to advance myself professionally," she says. "I always wanted to get my PhD . . . and the master's was the [first] step."

However, she soon realized the convenience of AU's flexibility. "My husband works in the military and we travel a lot," explains Donna, who has studied while living in Alberta, Manitoba, Labrador, and now Ontario. "It is really difficult to . . . attend traditional universities."

The flexibility of distance learning has allowed both Donna and her husband to continue furthering their education despite travel, work, and family. After graduating from AU, Donna began working on her doctorate through a primarily online program at Case Western Reserve University in Cleveland, Ohio. She has now finished the coursework component of the degree, and is beginning work on her dissertation. Her husband, too, obtained his BA by distance (from Royal Roads Military College) and is currently working on his master's degree via alternative delivery. Studying together has an additional benefit: "we proofread each other's papers!" Donna says.

Distance learning may be "challenging," Donna admits, but it suits her personality. "I like it . . . because I'm independent," she says. "I like to do things on my own time." Although she misses the feel of being on campus, it doesn't bother her as much as it might. "I was a bit of a bookworm even in a classroom setting," she says. "I am a social person, but when it comes to school I am somewhat serious!"

Still, she understands why isolation could be a stumbling block for many distance students. "People who like the connectedness with [others] may not adapt as well to online programs," she says. Fortunately, many

programs and courses—including the master’s program she took at AU—attempt to replicate a classroom setting online. “All the students are in a virtual classroom that is not in real time,” Donna explains. “You leave comments and reply to weekly assignments in a forum.” In fact, class participation forms part of the final grade.

Balancing school, work, and family is a little more difficult. “The biggest challenge [is] probably working and going to school at the same time,” Donna says. While making her way through the master’s program, Donna worked as an RN; now, she’s a full-time nurse practitioner while continuing to study for her doctorate.

“It . . . is tiring,” she admits. “I just keep going because . . . I want to be the best role model for my children!” She also finds her practice rewarding enough to make it worthwhile. “I love my patients and wouldn’t want to do anything else,” she says.

To stay motivated, Donna has focused on keeping her goals front and centre. Initially, “I . . . just . . . looked at my ultimate goal and . . . kept plugging away,” she says. “I figured that nothing could stand in my way.” She’s not kidding. Two pregnancies, as well as unrelated medical problems and several hospitalizations later, she was still going. “I . . . wasn’t going to let anything stop me!” Donna says. She’s kept that attitude through her doctoral studies as well.

And her goals encompass more than just obtaining the degree. Donna’s passionate about the example she sets for her daughters, aged six and eight. “I want . . . my children to know that education is lifelong,” she says.

In the future, Donna sees herself continuing in family practice as a nurse practitioner. “People always ask me what I will do with my doctorate when I graduate,” she says. “I say . . . I will do what I’m doing right now because I love it!”

AU LIBRARY CATALOGUE—NOW FOR IPHONES!

Anne LePage



The AU Library is proud to announce that the library catalogue is now compatible with iPhones and Smartphones.

The library catalogue has been compatible with mobile devices for

some time, but a new feature has been added to automatically detect and allow searching capability with iPhones and Smartphones.

To see the new version of the catalogue on your mobile device, go to <http://mcat.athabascau.ca> or visit the [main library site](#) and click “AU Library Catalogue.”

Less advanced devices will be presented with a mobile version of the main library site and will have the “basic” and “advanced” choices for viewing the catalogue.

If you have any questions, comments, or suggestions regarding this new feature, please [contact the library](#).



Intriguing New Developments in Alternative Music

Clothesline Revival, *They Came From Somewhere*

Paleo Music 2010

Musicians: Conrad Praetzel, Robert Powell, Charlie Musselwhite, Chris Rovetti

High Lonesome Mountain Angel Jubilation

"The mind is not a vessel to be filled but a fire to be kindled."

Plutarch

"You can lead a horse to water, but if you can get him to lay down on his back and float in it, then you have something."

Joe E. Brown

Gentle music lover, do you remember the first time you realized that music could be used as a healing balm for your weary soul, an elixir of comfort and joy in the Valley of the Shadow of Death? Do you remember what you were listening to at the time? Well, now you can relive that introspective epiphany with Clothesline Revival's newest album!

They Came from Somewhere is a bracing, life-giving thrill ride, marrying the most artful audio wizardry with the most intense and authentic American roots sounds.

The combination is practically combustible. There's just something about the melodies, the little bits of accompaniment that add just the right accent, the melodic riffs so evocative they almost talk. Or transcend talk.

There is an absurdist theme that permeates the package: the album cover is based on a photo throwback to an era when everyone was supposed to have been happy, featuring a couple of stilt walkers at the Birmingham Onion Fair, and the title is like a Zen koan, a secret door opening into the cloud of unknowing.



I've been a shirt-waving Clothesline Revival zealot ever since I first heard their version of "Little Maggie," and I've awaited the arrival of this CD like an eager pup. (Front man Conrad Praetzel has the dubious distinction of being one of the Mindful Bard's stalking victims, and last year I had the pleasure of interviewing him about his earlier recordings.)

This album manifests a more carefully refined art than that found in previous Clothesline Revival albums but not at the expense of sonic vitality. In spite of the breathtaking originality of this music, nostalgia breaks like waves on the heart as Praetzel dips into one style after another.

"Snake Walk," for example, sounds like '60s rockabilly funk while "Return to Iona" mixes what sound like car factory clankings with a lazy old country slide. "Beautiful Home" is a touching tribute to America's mountain heritage and the propensity to an intense weird spirituality in that country which even now shows no signs of dissipating. Hallelujah.

Song titles carry a heavier weight in instrumental works but sometimes the need to distill meaning into a brief moniker—like "Orange Clown Train" or "Voice of the Lobster"—is all that genius requires.

Unlike earlier Clothesline Revival albums, which leaned heavily on archival vocal and instrumental samples, this album is all original material (and original rhapsodies on traditional material like "John Henry"), much of it written or co-written by mastermind Conrad Praetzel.

Really, *really* hope to hear this music in the movies soon. Even a bad movie. I could watch dandelions grow to this music.

CLICK OF THE WRIST – Finish Line

Sometimes, earning a university degree can seem like an impossible goal to reach. But there are plenty of other long, gruelling roads to success—and some of them make essays and exams look positively enjoyable. This week, we take a look at some of the world's hard-to-reach finish lines.

Great Indian Desert Run

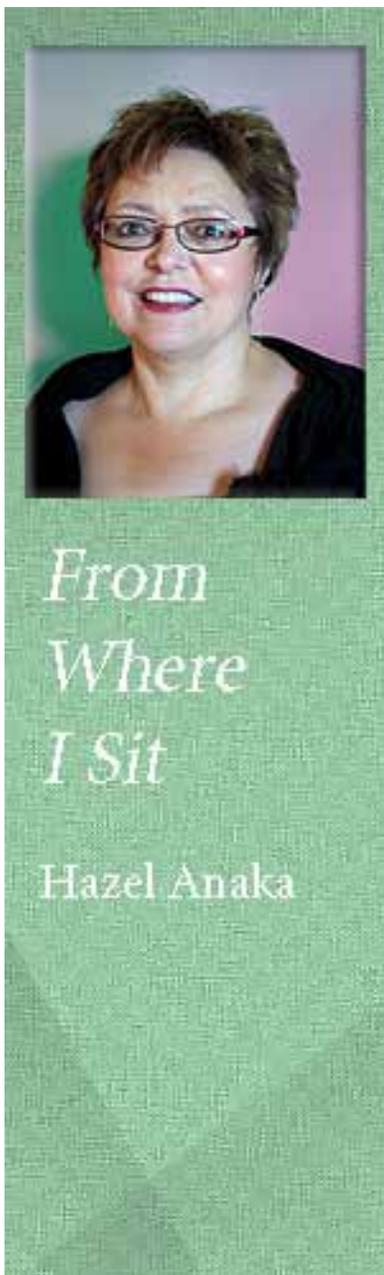
Held in the Thar desert in Rajasthan (the largest desert of the Indian subcontinent), this event is "a footrace of 250 km to be run in 6 stages spread over 6 days." Participants cover trails between "25-65 kms a day through desert terrain including dunes and flat arid dry lands." But don't worry—you'll find "camping tents to rest in" at the end of each day.

Longest Foot Race in the World

It's one thing to drive from New York to Los Angeles—but how about running the same distance? That's the challenge for competitors in the 3,100-mile Self-Transcendence Race, the world's longest certified road race. All you need is 10,000 calories a day, between 10 and 20 pairs of running shoes, and a whole lot of determination.

The View from Mount Everest

If you're looking for iconic achievements, it doesn't get much more challenging than Mount Everest. And although most people will never reach the summit, that doesn't mean they can't have a panoramic view. This interactive panorama was photographed by Australian photographer and mountaineer Roderick Mackenzie. What a view.



Sisterhood

Picture yourself in a university extension classroom in Edmonton with nine strangers; all female, all ages. Add a skilled, compassionate, funny instructor, also female, and you get a sense of what a Women's Words course can offer.

If you come open to the experience, bring your best to the writing prompts, and learn to give and accept feedback you will see the magic happen. Differences in age, education, and background fall away as the women laugh and cry together. Shirley lectured, told tales out of school, read excerpts of wonderful personal essays, and laughed. Her wonderful, mischievous sense of humour ran like a glittery thread through our five mornings together. Her thoughtful feedback to our writing and generous sharing of her own life and writing experience touched each of us.

We were in the Writing the Personal Essay course where "you're allowed to say 'I'; where you are the authority on your life; where no outlines or footnotes are required, just life experience and reflection." Through the use of a basket full of decorative eggs, prompt cards, and handwritten how-to topics, we were given multiple opportunities to write. We were invited, but not obligated, to share what we wrote. We were encouraged to do "homeplay" (as opposed to homework) if we wanted to.

The sharing of the writing by single women, young mothers, retired women, and a cancer patient brought nods of recognition, outbursts of laughter, and tears of empathy or breakthrough. I (only) jokingly asked Shirley if she had a therapist on standby. In her work with hospital ward patients, quite often that help is needed.

Most of us poked around under some stubborn, long-buried rocks and dragged issues and feelings into the light of understanding. My theory is that it's easier to share those hurts with strangers in a safe, confidential setting than it is with people we know. Most of us have a facade and public persona that we need to protect at all costs. Kind strangers accept our version of the truth without question, proof, or contradiction. Our take on our own history is accepted and validated by the murmurs of understanding, the knowing nods, the laughter in all the right places, and the words of recognition as our truth turns out to be a universal truth.

And while I was most interested in my own story and insight, I couldn't help but be touched by the stories I heard. I relived the blessings and bondage of early motherhood. I empathized with the older women who are trying to find their role in retirement and marriage. I listened to the eloquent words of the woman fighting cancer and wondered if I would take the same angry approach to the "work" of being a cancer patient.

I came home with story fragments, great prompts, some wonderful beginnings, and an email contact list. The true blessing of the week, though, was the gentle reminder of what it means at the cellular level to be a woman. Ours truly is a sisterhood, from where I sit.

Sister MURDER

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

#45

Okay, so here's my plan.

I pick a time when he's drunk.

Like he is now.

I call him up and break up with him. I tell him I'm going with another guy and we're down by the river.

He comes roaring down to the river, and if he doesn't die in a car crash on the way I lure him out to the boardwalk . . .

. . . and push him off with a pole.

He can't swim, and this time of year the water's cold enough to freeze the nads off a brass monkey.

HEEEELLLLLPPP!
I'll never be a butt smear again!!!

AUSU UPDATE



Convocation 2010

AUSU wishes to congratulate this year's graduates, whether attending Convocation in person or by distance. We wish you the best of luck in your future pursuits. You are an inspiration to all AU students!

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.

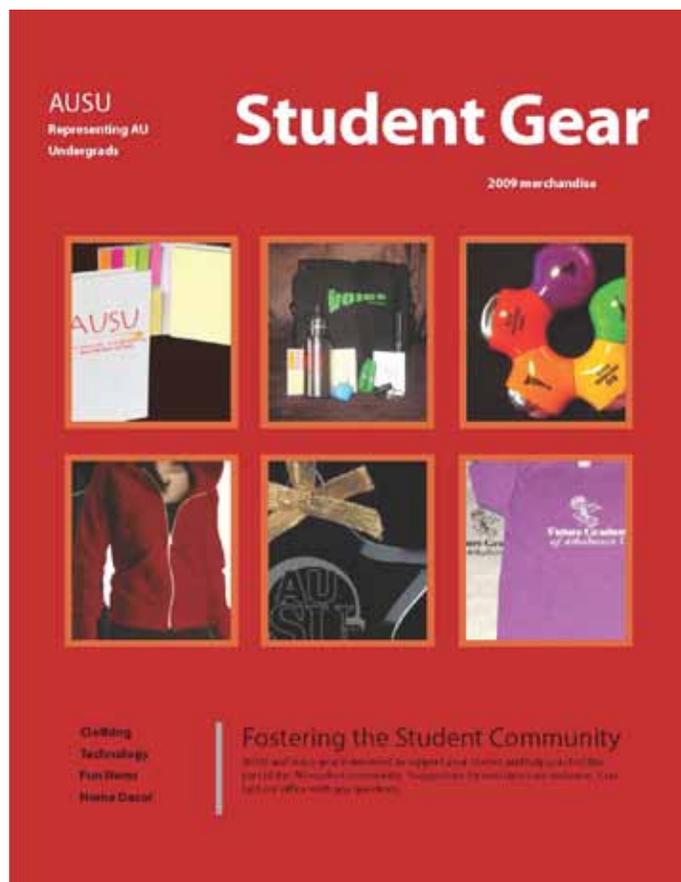
SmartDraw Program Renewal

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.

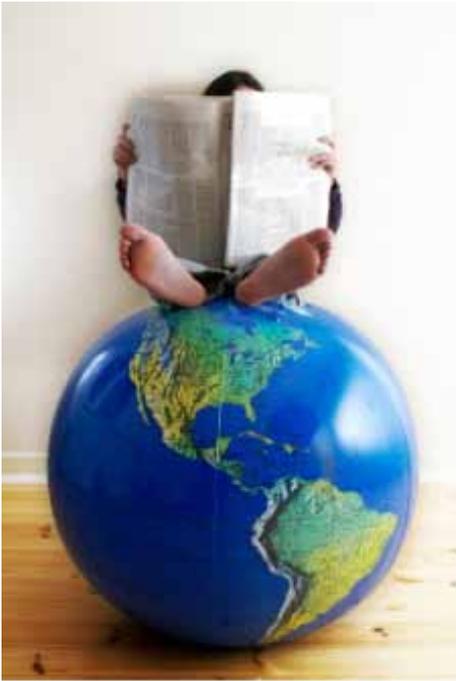
SmartDraw allows you to create a wide range of graphics for your assignments and submit them electronically in a Word file. You can also place your graphics in Excel or PowerPoint files, or export them as TIF, GIF, or JPEG files to make a web graphic or even a logo. Just a few of the graphics you can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

When a grade 10 student at Lake Trail Secondary School in Courtenay, B.C., wrote a comment for the school yearbook there were some who didn't give his write-up a passing grade. In fact, it was considered so controversial that staff used scissors to cut the passage out of the books before they were handed out to students.

As the [CBC](#) reports, Brandon Armstrong's comment criticized principal Lori Carpenter, claiming that the principal had "spent the school's money on a fence rather than on textbooks." School officials say that Armstrong's comment wasn't true, but somehow the offending passage made it into the yearbook.

Before the yearbooks were handed out to students, 150 copies had Armstrong's entry cut out. The decision created a strong reaction from parents, students, and the community, with many decrying what they saw as censorship.

Emotions have been running so high over the matter that the principal has received hate mail, with comments that are "very aggressive and very disrespectful," as the assistant superintendent of the Comox Valley School District told reporters.

School officials have now made the decision to reprint the yearbooks and Armstrong "will be allowed to write a new comment." A local printing company has offered a discount to help ease the additional cost.

In Foreign News: Striking students in Puerto Rico claim victory

Most of the time, school strikes involve teachers walking out over contract disputes. But when officials at the University of Puerto Rico announced severe budget cuts, students turned the tables and began "one of the largest and longest" strikes in Puerto Rican history.

As [The New York Times](#) reports, the student strike began two months ago. One of the issues they were protesting was "a special fee that would have effectively doubled the cost to attend the university's 11 public campuses." On June 17, the students declared victory and ended their strike after they reached a deal that was brokered by a court-appointed mediator.

Although the deal still needs to be approved by "a general assembly of university students," it's expected to pass since the students had all but one of their demands met. The only item not agreed to was a promise that the university would not implement a substantial tuition increase next year.

A key part of the deal was "a promise that there will be no sanctions against strike organizers." During the lengthy strike, organizers and police clashed on a few occasions at the university's main campus outside San Juan.

And while life at the university might be getting back to normal, more disruptions are possible later this year when planned cuts are announced to professors' benefits and salaries.

CLASSIFIEDS

Classifieds are free for AU students! Contact 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,
Wanda Waterman St. Louis

www.voicemagazine.org

The Voice is published every Friday in html and pdf format

Contact *The Voice* at 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