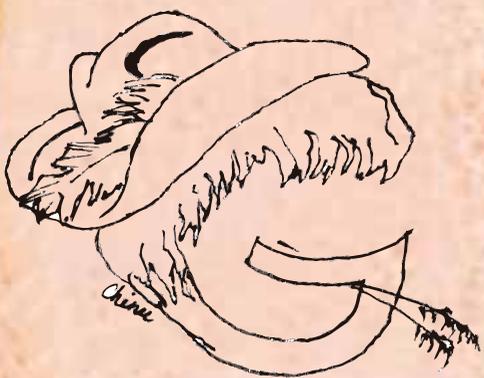


# Beer Fest

UNIVERSITY OF CALGARY  
**gauntlet**  
VOLUME 50 | ISSUE NO. 03 | MAY 28 | 2009

HOME BREWED



FOR FIFTY VOLUMES

Story by Ryan Pike, photo illustration by Kate Marlow, Chris Pedersen

Summer in Calgary is usually marked by a few key events. Snow becomes less frequent. The Flames get knocked out of the playoffs. Evenings grow warmer and people flock to patios for a cold beer. Now, every summer, the Calgary BeerFest provides an opportunity for local swill-drinkers to extend their appreciation of beer to a new level.

Erika Baltrus, project manager for BeerFest, explains that the event aims not only to help wannabe beer connoisseurs gain knowledge, but also to aid beer veterans to delve out of their comfort zone and try exciting new varieties. She notes that the popularity of beer helps the event reach a wide audience.

“We want people to take their beer knowledge to the next level,” says Baltrus. “Beer is the second most popular beverage in the world — after water — and has as many levels and differences to it as wine does. At [the] Calgary BeerFest, patrons can talk to the brewmasters and try out unique ales and lagers that they normally wouldn’t try.”

BeerFest originally began five years ago as a smaller event, but has grown exponentially in size since then. Last year’s festivities saw 10,000 thirsty patrons pack the Big Four Building over two days and Baltrus expects a similar turn-out this year. She notes that there is more to do at BeerFest than just drink, although the many and diverse beers are the biggest draw.

“There are over 200 different types of beers this year from 25 different countries,” says Baltrus. “My favourite right now is Mill Street’s Coffee Porter. We’ll also have food samples from several great local restaurants such as Soho Bar and Grill, Ric’s Grill and China Rose Restaurant.”

Drinking events sometimes degenerate into drunken tomfoolery, requiring the involvement of security staff. This hasn’t been a problem for BeerFest, though, as the event has been framed around enjoying the taste of beer, not imbibing massive quantities.

“We have security, staff and police on site to make sure no incidents happen,” says Baltrus. “Our event is about the appreciation of beer — it is not a pre-drinking frat party. Anyone who gets out of hand is dealt with as quickly and quietly as possible.”

If 200 different kinds of beer, a wide variety of food and local music groups sound like your idea of a good summer weekend, Calgary BeerFest may quench your palate. Bear in mind that space is limited, so be sure to head down early.

Some tickets will be available at the door, but they can be purchased online beforehand at [calgarybeerfest.com](http://calgarybeerfest.com)

BeerFest takes over the Big Four Building Friday, May 29 from 4 p.m. to 10 p.m. and Saturday May 30 from 3 p.m. to 10 p.m.

# Obama unveils a bonafide legal nightmare

Some claim the American Dream died long ago; last week president Barack Obama delivered a speech that outlined the violent end of the American Soul.

Standing at a podium in the National Archives — which houses the Declaration of Independence, the Constitution and the Bill of Rights — Obama's voice echoed out his administration's plans to enable, through legal means, a mechanism for preemptively imprisoning suspected future terrorists. This is surely one of the most serious challenges to the core values of the United States ever seriously considered. It rivals even the Draconian and inexcusable punitive measures employed by the Bush administration. Seeking to enshrine in law the ability to detain individuals who could not be held by current legal standards, Obama's proposal is not operating beyond the law as Bush's clearly had done, it aims at becoming law, thereby completing the erosion of American justice that began under the much-reviled Texan.

That this would be government-sanctioned is deeply troubling. The criteria for imprisonment are so stringent because of the grievous cost of mistaken detention or inappropriately harsh punishment. As individuals have no real power measured against governments, it is imperative that the government be constrained when acting against any particular person. Thus, innocence is assumed until guilt is proven beyond a reasonable doubt and certain standards of evidence must be attained. It should be obvious that preemptive detention is



wrong, for it is imprisonment without evidence, based merely on suspicion. It is hard to conceive of a society as free when not protected from such speculative confinement.

The concept of preemptive detention is dangerously close, perhaps inseparable in certain cases, from incarcerating political prisoners. Though it's unlikely the new powers would be broadly applied, they nevertheless will immerse some in a vortex of imaginary crimes and damning — in a near-literal sense — suspicions. Given that, by definition, there is no solid basis for an individual's preemptive detention, there would clearly be no meaningful way for the detainee to demonstrate their innocence. Unfortunately, ghosts are hard to shake off.

Obama stated that such a system would be legally

established, but this is simply a rhetorical swindle. Assuming that he intends for the American legal system to remain just, it cannot intern individuals who have done nothing to warrant it.

Because suspicion is so prone to error and so imprecise, it is not, nor should it be, sufficient to jail someone. There are strong reasons for ensuring that a government, especially in a democratic nation, never gains the power to arbitrarily detain individuals for no solid reason. The decision to unshackle itself from these constraints would end the notion of proper justice in the U.S. The country would, from that point, be violating some of its most long-standing and deepest held values — particularly the notions of individual liberty and justice.

It seems unlikely that this heinous proposition was the kind of change American voters sought in their new president. Or so I hope.

**Cam Cotton-O'Brien**  
Editor-in-Chief

## CORRECTIONS:

In a story last week ["Challenging commuters to be responsible," Daniel Pagan], several errors appeared: *The Bike Root is a member of the Commuter Challenge team, the event runs from June 1-5, a "Trail Mix Buffet," not a BBQ, will be held at the celebration June 1 and the Bike Root member quoted in the story was Jordan Brown. The Gauntlet apologizes for any inconvenience.*

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## STUDENTS' UNION EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITY

# Chief Returning Officer (CRO)

**Term:** Part-time, from August 2009 to March 2010

**Pay:** Honoraria of up to \$2,000 for the by-election and up to \$3,000 for the general election.

The CRO is responsible for ensuring the smooth running of the SU fall by-election and winter general election. Duties include hiring all election officials; supervising nominations and voting process; setting up voting stations; and ensuring SU by-laws, policies, and procedures are followed. Your work will be concentrated in September, October, January, February, and early March.

You must have completed one session of studies at U of C. Preference will be given to those with experience in student, civic, provincial, or federal election.

Please submit a cover letter and resume to the attention of  
Susan Judd, Coordinator Executive Cabinet, Committees & Elections  
Email: scjudd@ucalgary.ca or in person to SU Main Office,  
251 MacEwan Student Centre.

**Deadline: 4:30 pm, Friday, June 5.**



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# Black holes are nothing to be afraid of

Jon Roe  
Sports Editor

The recent completion of the Large Hadron Collider on the French-Swiss border near Geneva, Switzerland has seeped the fear of black holes from the minds of fictional space explorers into the public consciousness. This is because the high speed particle collisions in the LHC may produce tiny black holes.

These and other black holes were the subject of Tuesday's Science Cafe, a monthly event held jointly by the University of Calgary and the Telus World of Science.

Science Cafe features presentations and discussion by experts on hot scientific topics. Dr. Warren Anderson, a visiting assistant professor from the department of physics at the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee, and Dr. David Hobill, a U of C department of physics associate professor, held court this month.

"Are they cosmic menaces?" asked Telus World of Science astronomy producer Alan Dyer, who emceed the event. "Will they devour the galaxy? Will they devour the Earth? We'll find out."

The existence of black holes has been theorized since the late 1700s,



Jon Roe/the Gauntlet

Dr. Warren Anderson, Dr. David Hobill and Alan Dyer with a replica of Galileo's telescope.

when English geologist John Mitchell realized that if enough matter was concentrated in an object, light wouldn't be able to escape the object's orbit.

Mitchell called these objects "Dark Stars." Later theories of gravity by Isaac Newton and Albert Einstein predicted the existence of black holes — a term popularized by a student of Einstein's, John Wheeler.

Gravity, to Einstein, is the geome-

try of spacetime and black holes are like dimples in spacetime, producing extreme curvature.

"It's sort of like the soft mattress effect," Hobill explained.

Black holes have not been directly measured or observed, but their existence has been predicted by many different theories of gravity.

"All we can use is indirect evidence," said Hobill.

The speed stars move around a very small object observed at the

centre of our galaxy, the Milky Way, for example. The object must be heavy, up to a million times the mass of our sun, Anderson said, because of how fast the stars move, and it must be small because the stars get fairly close.

"What it is, we really don't know yet," said Anderson.

Einstein believed that black holes emit gravity waves and the Laser Interferometer Space Antenna satellite will detect and observe those waves, helping shed light on black holes and testing Einstein's theory of gravity. The satellite will be launched, at the earliest, between 2018 and 2020.

Hobill and Anderson answered questions from the packed house at the Ironwood Stage and Grill in Inglewood and discussed topics

ranging from science fiction to the big bang, to the LHC.

The LHC has drawn public concern since its completion last year because it may create tiny black holes. These black holes likely wouldn't be produced under Einstein's theory of gravity, but if the LHC did produce a black hole, it would only last for nanoseconds and would evaporate quickly.

"That would be very exciting" said Hobill, adding that the scientists at the LHC would then look for particles the black hole would throw off as it evaporated.

These black holes are nothing to be feared, though, assured Anderson.

He then did some crude calculations, exploring what would happen if the black hole didn't immediately evaporate. If the smallest black hole produced by Einstein's theory was created by the LHC, it would sink to the centre of the Earth and bounce back and forth, absorbing any matter it came into contact with. But because this black hole is so small, and atoms are mostly just empty space, he calculated it would take 10 million times the age of the universe to grow to one kilogram in mass.

"We've covered all our bases, we don't have to be worried about being swallowed up by a black hole," Anderson said.

Tuesday's event was the last Science Cafe of the 2008-09 season and was part of Calgary's participation in celebrating 2009 as the international year of astronomy. Science Cafe will start again in September.

## Arts amalgamation passes

Katy Anderson  
News Editor

It's official, baret-wearing English majors will be grouped in with calculator-carrying economists starting April 1.

Well, almost. The highest governing academic body at the University of Calgary, the General Faculties Council, voted to approve the amalgamation of the social sciences, communication and culture, humanities and fine arts faculties into one arts faculty — a model similar to the University of British Columbia and the University of Alberta — Thursday, May 21.

The final hurdle for the ultra-faculty is the Board of Governors meeting June 25. The BoG is made up of community members and university stakeholders and has been described by U of C provost Alan Harrison as a "rubber stamp."

The motion passed almost unanimously at GFC, with only one person, Students' Union social sci-

ences faculty representative Chris Kalantzis, voting against it. Before the vote the amalgamation timeline was discussed, as was who would head the new faculty and what the transition team would look like and how it would be incorporated into the faculty.

Kevin McQuillan, current Social Sciences dean and future interim arts faculty dean, said he expects the amalgamation to simplify the admissions process and make it easier for students to move through their programs.

"Beyond that, there's hope that this will help to raise the profile of the arts and social sciences and will strengthen their position on the campus," said McQuillan.

SU vice-president academic Meg Martin said that after a long line of students pushing for change at this institution, the amalgamation is a positive step.

"I think the system now doesn't make sense and it does need to change," said Martin. "We need to

move in a direction that is more streamlined, that students can understand better, that students can navigate better, that encourages more collegiality within the arts at this university."

Martin echoed her thoughts from before the GFC vote, noting that the SU must diligently ensure students currently paying are not left behind.

Moving forward, it's the details that need to be hashed out, she said.

"It's going to get into things like promotions, tenure, it'll go into admission — what kind of course offerings are made, the way that programs are organized," said Martin. "The way that advising is done is a real priority for us, how you organize the academic staff, do you have several associate deans of students?"

The arts faculty will come into effect April 1, 2010, with the promise that any wrinkles will be ironed out by April 1, 2011. Anyone enrolled before the April 1 start day will not be affected by the change.

### STUDENTS' UNION EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITY

## FACULTY REPRESENTATIVE

Students' Academic Assembly Appointed Position

Term: Starts May 2009

Pay: Honoraria of up to \$400/month

Faculty Reps are the main communication link between the SU and the faculty in which they are registered. They are responsible for representing and promoting the academic interests of the students in their faculty. Their role involves staying up-to-date and briefing SAA on issues and concerns related to students in their faculty and the SU; and informing their faculty about SU policies, programs and services.

Duties include preparing for, attending and participating in SAA and General Faculties Council (GFC) meetings; working with student clubs in their faculty; attending Faculty Promotions Committee (FPC) meetings; acting as the student member on the faculty Student Appeal Committee; attending Faculty Council (FC) and any sub-committee meetings; and assisting in administering Teaching Excellence Awards in their faculty.

The following Faculty Rep positions are available: Kinesiology and Social Work.

Please submit a cover letter and resume to the attention of  
Susan Judd, Coordinator Executive Cabinet, Committees & Elections  
Email: [sejudd@ucalgary.ca](mailto:sejudd@ucalgary.ca)  
or in person to SU Main Office, 251 MacEwan Student Centre.



# University seeks to replace biggest wig

Katy Anderson  
News Editor

The search is on for the eighth president of the University of Calgary's 42-year history.

After eight years at the reigns of one of Canada's G-13 universities, Dr. Harvey Weingarten is moving on this January.

To find a replacement, the university set up the Presidential Advisory Search Committee and is now looking for input from campus stakeholders, said Board of Governors chair Jack Perraton.

"What we want to do is have as broad and encompassing a review as possible to see what we need for the institution going forward," said Perraton. "Of course, one of Harvey

Weingarten's major concerns and endeavors was always the student experience and we want to see that continue to be enhanced and that we continue to provide absolutely the best education possible."

The PASC has chosen the following criteria for assessing candidates: institutional leadership (vision and planning), academic leadership, internal relations, external relations, administration and management and personal qualities. Perraton explained that the committee is looking for feedback on the criteria, which are further explained on its website, [ucalgary.ca/presidential\\_search](http://ucalgary.ca/presidential_search), and is encouraging community stakeholders to suggest potential candidates.

Of approximately 10 committee members, two will be students: Students' Union president Charlotte Kingston and Graduate Students' Association president Veronique Dorais — a strong student presence as far as university committees go, according to Kingston. Other members will include Perraton, a member of the University of Cal-



Dan Pagan/the Gauntlet

Still looking for a job? The university is hiring for its top spot — el presidente.

gary Teacher's Association and one alumni, among others.

Kingston said the incoming president will face significant challenges, like supervising the reorganization of the arts faculty, addressing student retention and student success.

"There's been a lot of talk about

expanding research opportunities, which is more in line with provincial priorities," she said. "I think that's certainly going to be a factor for them, but at the same time the Students' Union needs to continue emphasizing that both deferred maintenance and undergraduate

teaching and research opportunities have been neglected at this institution and that's going to be a vision that the incoming president is going to have to bring together."

The next meeting of the PASC will be June 23 and final criteria will be posted by July 6th.

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## SU approves new accountability agreement

Noah Miller  
Gauntlet News

The 67th Students' Union has approved a new and "exciting" — a word consistently, and perhaps ironically, used at all SU meetings — Executive Accountability Agreement.

In compliance with various SU bylaws, the document contains

rules governing official office hours. It states the executive must "post and maintain regular office hours and ensure that they are available, or accounted for, during the posted office hours."

Building on past drafts, the SU executive produced a 17-point document that outlines mutual respect, flexibility and fairness.

In some ways this is business as usual for the SU.

"It's not very different from accountability agreements of the past," said SU vice-president academic Meg Martin. "We are required to publish our hours on the front doors [of the SU office] and it's something we do every year that's meant to be guidance."

However, this Accountability Agreement has grown into more than mere promises of accountability.

"In the last couple of years it has evolved into a code of conduct," said Martin. "It outlines how we are treated and how we treat other people."

The new agreement includes more time to deal with an overwhelming influx of phone calls and emails.

Previously a response was required only one day after a message was received, a promise impos-



Chris Pedersen/the Gauntlet

Students' Union executives Charlotte Kingston and Kay She are policy peddlers. That's right, policy can be "exciting."

sible to keep with a sea of students sending letters late on Sundays, she said.

"Three days is more reasonable and more pragmatic," said Martin in Monday's meeting.

The SU also has something new in the works. All elected officials — both commissioners and faculty representatives — will agree on a code of conduct in the form of a charter.

"It will give us more of a framework for bringing up problems with

people and this sets expectations so everyone knows how everyone else is to behave," said Martin. "There have been bare bones [frameworks] in the past."

The "full body" of this charter can be expected in the fall.

The motion, initiated by SU president Charlotte Kingston, was passed last week by the two main bodies of the SU, the Student's Academic Assembly and the Students' Legislative Council.

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# The fantastic folly of Bill 44

## Proposed human rights amendment gets it wrong

**Doug Horner**  
Gauntlet Opinions



We revered our grade four teacher. He was an ex-prison guard with a serene and sturdy character. He easily commanded the respect of a room full of 10-year olds. There were, however, a few days when his no nonsense demeanor evaporated and strange overheads provoked our classroom into uncomfortable silences. This awkwardness was always preceded by permission slips, sent home and brought back with our parents' signatures. With forms in hand, our teacher could begin his bumbling exposition on certain aspects of human physiology, the kind not uniformly shared by every wide-eyed and somewhat beguiled kid in the classroom. The permission slips were one of many interactions be-

tween our parents and those entrusted with our education. Their existence makes Bill 44 all the more confounding.

Bill 44 is currently being debated in Alberta's legislature. It proposes amendments to the Alberta Human Rights, Citizenship and Multiculturalism Act (AHRCM). This act exists to protect Albertans from discrimination and is upheld by the Human Rights Commission. The Act has not been revised since its inception 13 years ago and has been criticized for not reflecting the values of Albertans. In September 2008, the Sheldon Chumir Foundation submitted a report to the province with 21 recommendations for re-establishing the viability of the Act and repairing the reputation of the Commission. Last year, Minister of Culture and Community Spirit Lindsay Blackett announced he was going to examine and update the Act. Unfortunately, Bill 44 was the result.

There are basically two changes being proposed. One is laudable but completely

cosmetic and the other is downright Draconian. Discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation has been illegal since 1995, when the Supreme Court of Canada ruled it fit under the Charter of Rights and Freedoms. In 1998, the Supreme Court further held that the Alberta Individual Rights Protection Act's omission of sexual orientation was unconstitutional under the Charter. Bill 44 proposes to officially write sexual orientation into the Act and, if it succeeds, Alberta will be the last jurisdiction in Canada to do so.

The other proposed amendment gives parents the right to withdraw their kids from classes dealing with religion, sexuality or sexual orientation. The school board would be responsible for informing parents when this type of material would be taught. If parents felt they were not properly notified, they could make an official complaint about the teacher or principal to the Human Rights Commission. The bizarre aspect of Bill 44 is that parents in effect already have this right.

We can all remember being stubby-legged messengers couriers permission slips from teachers to parents and then back again. The Alberta School Act explicitly states, "parents have a right and a responsibility to make decisions respecting the education of their children." All Bill 44 does is introduce an ominous undercurrent to a relationship built on mutual respect. It is important to trust teachers to do their job and empower them to do it well. Introducing an element of fear into the classroom and forcing teachers to second-guess themselves will pollute the learning environment.

On the back of our classroom wall our venerable teacher had pasted various aphorisms. One read, "Your future lies before you like freshly fallen snow. Be careful how you tread on it, for every step will show." The AHRCM Act is clearly out of step with Albertans. If Bill 44 becomes law it will create a mess of the province's classrooms and further tarnish the Human Rights Commission's already murky reputation.

# Young workers feeling the recession's wrath

## Students, graduates unfairly facing brunt of job cuts

**Eric Mathison**  
Fighting Words



Since the economy started its downward spiral late last summer, we of the insulated student population haven't had need for the same apprehension as the rest of society. We have no life savings to lose, no homes to be repossessed by the bank and job security is more likely to be a security job. Sure, Harvard lost \$8 billion of its endowment and faculties, as well as banks, are constantly preparing to merge, but through all that the ivory tower — brown and overrun with geese in our case — is still standing.

Now that the winter semester is over 20,000 full-time students have bombarded a job market at a seven year low. Things are tight. Maybe it didn't take this long to catch up to us at the bottom — I just might not have been looking — but four months is not a long

time to save up for next year and every week that goes by makes me more inclined to push for prohibition so I can become a bootlegger, though I haven't worked out all the details quite yet.

The *Wall Street Journal* recently wrote that with layoffs becoming necessary as companies struggle to trim costs, anti-discrimination laws and legal threats have forced managers to show younger people the door. In contrast, during previous downturns, companies released the aged or those nearing retirement. Similarly, consideration is given to those with families over unmarried and dependent-free individuals.

Whether these choices make business sense or not is debatable. Arguments abound regarding whether younger people are more productive; quantifying individual indispensability is similarly fraught with problems. Regarding productivity, labour jobs will likely be better handled by younger workers, while fields relying on fresh ideas could go either way.

As one zooms out, the picture

may remain fuzzy. The simple math of more employees being let go means that there are less peripheral costs associated with each one — office space, health insurance and so on — and may therefore be an enticing choice. What it also means is that if more people are let go to cut costs, unemployment will be higher and will likely remain higher as those with less experience fight to get back into steady work — a break from previous downturns when cuts to senior staff often led to them leaving the workforce altogether. Anecdotal evidence suggests that many people in entry-level positions have been laid off and have returned to the jobs they were doing during school, such as serving, bartending and retail. This means those still in school — who can't commit to full time hours — are having a much harder time of it.

Business sense aside, is having a child a job security mechanism? As a manager, is it right to be swayed into choosing whom to lay off because someone has a family

and not show a person with different life goals similar empathy? It seems hard to say yes. Of course, having a child shouldn't hinder someone's employment opportunities. When the tough choice of

who stays and who goes has to be made, though, it would be preferable that the decision come down to how well the person serves the company, not factors outside the control of the younger generation.

# Sarah Slean is a total recession-ista

**Sarah Slean**  
music interview

**Kate Marlow**

Gauntlet Entertainment

Thrice Juno-nominated Sarah Slean has just been crowned superwoman. Well, not quite, but her list of accomplishments for the past 10 years is staggering: she's released and co-produced six albums and two EPs, published two books of original poetry, established herself as a painter and acted in David Morton's award-winning film noir, *Black Widow*. She's toured Europe, America and Canada, broke from her label to become an independent artist, became a recluse in Paris and then burst from self-imposed exile with her most incredible album to date, *The Baroness*.

Her latest accomplishment? Graduating with an undergraduate degree in music and philosophy from the University of Toronto, a feat that — given all her other projects — took 10 years and deserves the superwoman crown all on its own. She has some words of hope for those of us working at a degree.

“The joy and relief [upon graduating] will be beyond your imagining. And I know right now you're thinking, ‘Oh my god, that's going to be so great,’ but you have no idea how great.”

Philosophy may seem like a bizarre area of study for a pop musician, but listening to her music it's clearly a natural fit. Her arrangements are rooted in the classical realm and her lyrics reference literary greats. Her work paints a picture of a woman trying to find her place in the world, asking the big questions that may only be answered by the philosophers.

“It's not knowledge that you can grasp. You can't surround it and hold on to it,” says Slean. “If you let it, it can surge up within you and you can feel it . . . I would never try to claim that in lyrics. But I do feel that music, like any other art, is close to that same thing.”

Slean will be at the University of Calgary's Rozsa Centre May 30 as a part of her Recession-ista tour. This will be the final tour supporting *The Baroness* and she's going out with an environmentally-conscious bang.

Battling the typical environmental lessons that we are constantly barraged with — “don't



courtesy Andrew MacNaughtan

Sarah Slean plays at the Rozsa Centre Sun., May 30 at 9 p.m.

do this . . . and you shouldn't do this anymore,” she says — Slean is looking to spread the green love

in a more positive way.

“The only way that this message was really going to enliven us, in-

cluding me, was if it can engage our imagination; if it can engage our creativity,” says Slean. “If it can delight us in the way creativity does delight us.”

At each stop on her tour, Slean will be wearing a different gown created by eco-friendly Canadian designers, each fashioned entirely from repurposed material. Once the tour is finished the gowns will be auctioned on eBay, the proceeds going to the David Suzuki Foundation.

With the name of her tour reflecting the hard times, she ruminates on the current economic climate.

“This recession is a moment of pause and thinking, you know, the way we were living before is not going to work. It's not sustainable, we're wrecking the planet, it's not economically just and people are suffering. This consumption race is ridiculous . . . and it doesn't make any sense when we have a garbage problem.”

So, what's the next adventure for the Baroness?

“It's a secret,” she reveals in a hushed, anticipatory tone. “Perhaps origami?”

Sarah Slean plays at the Rozsa Centre May 30 at 9 p.m.  
Check out the full interview online at [thegauntlet.ca](http://thegauntlet.ca)

## Black Diamond Bay: a little bit Led Zeppelin, a little bit Radiohead

**Black Diamond Bay**  
music interview

**Savannah Hall**

Gauntlet Entertainment

**G:** How would you describe

what people can find on your CD?

Patrick Krief: It's very intimate, is one good way of saying it. It changes direction, yet [it's] uniform at the same time. People shouldn't expect to hear who we are live, [it's] something different.

I'm a huge Beatles fan. I don't think that shines through our music, but the influence can be seen somewhere. [The album] has been compared to Led Zeppelin and Radiohead. Every time I hear a comparison I'm always surprised.

**G:** Is the outcome what you

imagined and hoped for or [is] it something completely different?

PK: It's a little bit different than what I expected. It might be better than what I expected. It wasn't a record that I set out to sound a certain way. I just went into the studio and [got] the right musicians together and just [made] the album whatever it could have been. All my past records have never sounded quite like this one, which was a nice surprise.

**G:** How did you come to the decision to depart from the Dears? Can you give some insight into your decision?

PK: I recorded on the Dears album *Missiles* and [Dears lead vocalist] Murray [Lightburn] had his mastering tape and finished records literally days apart. We had a discussion of “can we do both?”

The Dears were looking at a pretty hard touring schedule and I didn't think it would be fair to this album to put it aside for another band. So I decided to put everything I had into this band, BDB. At least until it gets its own identity and its own strength and then I can consider other things.

**G:** Why is Black Diamond Bay a more desirable option?

PK: It's new and it's my baby. I just felt like I needed to give it its legs. Give it its strength, let it stand on its own before I can think of doing other stuff. And the only way I can do that is by devoting my whole life to it. It's what I do everyday. At least 8–9 hours a day [are] involved with BDB. There is just no way I could do both. I write a lot of music, more than one band

can keep up with, so I would like to do other stuff eventually.

**G:** Some say the Dears and Black Diamond Bay sound alike, some don't. What is your view on the two sounds?

PK: I find them similar. I think it's funny when some people say it sounds just like the Dears, I find that absurd. And when they say it sounds nothing like them, I think they are wrong too. There's two guys in this band that were in the Dears for five years.

We have that sound that is in the Dears. It crosses over, but not that much because it is different writing. After five years of touring with the Dears and playing those songs, it is obviously a part of what I like and how I think of musicians. It is going to come through a little bit.

The bottom line is it is different enough, but people will want to say it's similar to the Dears because it's a quick, lazy assessment.

Black Diamond Bay play with the Dears at the Grand Theatre on Tue., Jun. 2 at 8 p.m.

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**Ben Harper and Relentless7**

*White Lies for Dark Times*  
(Virgin Records)

**B**en Harper and his backing band Relentless7's new album *White Lies for Dark Times* makes with the good times, with a variety of music built around Harper's versatile vocals. Reminiscent of classic rock, blues and soul, *Lies* manages to find cohesion amidst its many influences.

From opener "Number With No Name," Harper and Relentless7 shy away from modern, clean-sounding rock, choosing a more grungy sound evocative of The Jimi Hendrix Experience, chock full of wailing vocals and choppy guitar licks.

"Lay There and Hate Me," is perhaps the best example of the album's

funky, guitar-fueled instrumental breaks. Only a couple songs later, Harper whips out the acoustic guitar — a familiar sound from his past — for the love song "Skin Thin."

"Skin" leads into another mellow tune, "Fly One Time," which builds to a slow crescendo, setting up the more rock-flavoured "Keep it Together (So I Can Fall Apart)." Although "Together" suffers a bit in the lyrics department with its relentlessly monotonous refrain, the track explodes in every direction, opening with blaring vocals and instrumentals before sinking into a groovy instrumental break.

Overall, *Lies* is well thought out, with some excellent transitions and variety. Harper's voice shines at singing rock and really sets the album's mood. For those wanting to take a modern trip through rock's past, *White Lies for Dark Times* shouldn't disappoint.

..Joseph Tubb

**Pet Shop Boys**

*Yes*  
(Parlophone)

The Pet Shop Boys have been making clever pop albums that balance searing wit with fey, Euro-trash dance music sensibilities for nearly 25 years without a misstep. Thankfully, they continue that trend with their latest LP, *Yes*, which holds to the tried and true Pet Shop Boys tropes — fashion, style, wealth and love.

"Love Etc.," the extremely catchy lead single,

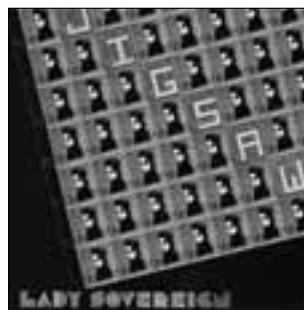
captures nearly all of those themes in a piece of heartily decked out pop confection. It simultaneously takes a stab at the excesses of the seemingly rich — all the more mordant in these times — while offering some sticky sweet house beats that those same Richie Riches can ironically bob their heads to, while waiting for their convertibles to be repossessed.

After "Love Etc.," the quality of the album slips, but still remains very strong. "All Over the World" takes a sample from Tchaikovsky

and bathes it in synthesized grandeur, while "Pandemonium" and "Did You See Me Coming?" are good reminders that, though the Boys are now in their 50s, they sure can tap into some fresh-sounding pop.

Closing track "Legacy" is the only real low point. It starts out well, but at over six minutes long, turns into a real slog. Other than that, the Pet Shop Boys offer up another excellent, well built album that you can find yourself vogueing not-so-brainlessly to.

..Hoang-Mai Hong

**Lady Sovereign**

*Jigsaw*  
(Midget Records)

British grime MC Lady Sovereign is back with her second album, *Jigsaw*. Much more melodic than 2006's *Public Warning*, *Jigsaw* lacks the clever-yet-abrasive vocals of Sovereign's prior effort, leaving what is in all respects a merely average hip-hop album.

That's not to say it's all bad. "Student Union"

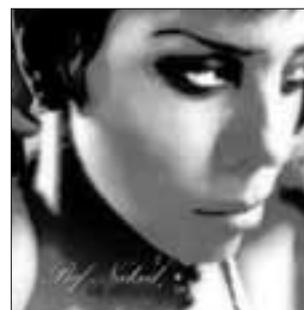
brings back some of what made her last album so good and the Cure-sampled "So Human" is pretty catchy. Opening track "Let's Be Mates" seems to be the album's most likely song to chart, while the hard electro backing of "Pennies" redeems what is otherwise a fairly boring song. "I Got You Dancing" just might do what its name implies.

That said, the longer "Food Play" is simply unlistenable. It's comparable to sticking an electric drill in your ear canal, with similar

effect on one's sanity. "Guitar" is slow and uninteresting, as is the titular "Jigsaw."

Def Jam and Island unceremoniously dropped the s-o-v after her last album, resulting in this one's independent release on Sovereign's own label, Midget Records. Fans can only hope she'll find some better producers for her next effort, because despite some bright spots, this *Jigsaw* is certainly missing some crucial pieces.

..Andrew Rininsland

**Bif Naked**

*The Promise*  
(Her Royal Majesty's Records)

Bif Naked is usually thought of as a hardcore, man-eating whirlwind of black hair and tattoos. But for *The Promise*, she's cut off her hair, moves away from her old aggression and shows her softer side. Going into this album, listeners might expect the usual man-bashing, scream-along songs. But as Naked has matured, so has her sound. Instead of yelling at wrong-doers, she takes the high road, her powerful lyrics hit-

ting with metaphoric jabs, though elements of her angry-grl persona still remain.

The album is still distinctively Bif Naked, but less harsh-sounding. Her voice still won't win any school talent shows — it's raw and honest, like an upbeat Ani DiFranco. The lyrics are simple and concise, no BS, just what you would expect from her. With songs like "I Won't Cry (Fuck You 2)" boasting the lyrics, "So, now, I am nothing to you/So fuck you too," it's the perfect post-break-up CD to pop into the car and sing along with while speeding down an empty, moonlit highway.

*The Promise* should be used solely for the purpose of releasing pent-up aggression. The whole thing seems to have been written in the three days after the worst break up ever. It does not lend itself to use as background music, the instrumentation and melody are excellent but sporadic and the tracks do not flow together.

That's not to say *The Promise* is a disappointment, it's just different from Bif Naked's previous albums. Her anger has been replaced with passion and her trademark screaming has become a forcefully raised voice.

..Savannah Hall

VOX

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**TOP 20** for the week of  
**MAY 18 .09**

\* Denotes Canadian Artist  
\*\* Denotes Local Artist

- PINK MOUNTAINTOPS\*** *Outside Love* (Jagjaguwar)
- WOODS** *Songs Of Shame* (Shrimper)
- PREFUSE 73** *Everything She Touched Turned Ampexian* (Warp)
- YEARS\*** *Years* (Arts & Crafts)
- VARIOUS\*\*** *Pizza Records Party Pack* (Pizza)
- CROCODILES** *Summer Of Hate* (Fat Possum)
- TARA JANE ONEIL** *A Ways Away* (K)
- PJ HARVEY & JOHN PARISH** *A Woman A Man Walked By* (Island)
- JOEL PLASKETT\*** *Three* (Maple)
- LONG LOST** *Long Lost* (Ninja Tune)
- FRESH & ONLYS** *Fresh & Onlys* (Castle Face)
- AKRON/FAMILY** *Set 'Em Wild, Set 'Em Free* (Dead Ocean)
- PONTIAK** *Maker* (Thrill Jockey)
- GHOST IS DANCING\*** *Battles On* (Sonic Unyon)
- JAPANDROIDS\*** *Post-Nothing* (Unfamiliar)
- KING KHAN & THE SHRINES** *What Is?!* (Vice)
- BEN LEE** *Rebirth Of Venus* (New West)
- THURSDAY** *Common Existence* (Epitaph)
- KARA KEITH\*** *Vision's Fugitives* (Self-Released)
- DOVES** *Kingdon Of Rust* (EMI)

**WORLD**

- EASY STAR ALL-STARS** *Easy Stars Lonely Hearts Dub Band* (Easy Star)
- HENNIE BEKKER** *African Tapestries Collection* (Abbeywood)
- VARIOUS** *Salsa!* (Putumayo)
- AMADOU & MARIAM** *Welcome To Mali* (Nonesuch)
- MISHKA** *Above The Bones* (J.K. Livin')

**FOLK/ROOTS/BLUES**

- RATTLENAKE CHOIR** *Live Music* (Cousin Jeb)
- WESTERN STATES** *Bye & Bye* (Dollartone)
- JOHN DOE AND THE SADIES\*** *Country Club* (Outside)
- TAS CRU** *Grizzle n' Bone* (Crustee Tees)
- WEINLAND** *Breaks In The Sun* (BadMan)

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