

THE VOICE

MAGAZINE

Vol 18 Iss 31 2010-08-06

Symbiotic harmony

A musician inspired

Treasure or trash?

Information overload

Paperless

E-books on trial

Plus:

*In Conversation With, Sister Aurora,
From Where I Sit, and much more . . .*



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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

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



EDITORIAL

Christina M. Frey



Information Off-ramp

Recently, a media frenzy erupted around the inappropriate firing of a US Department of Agriculture employee. Shirley Sherrod was forced to resign after an edited video clip posted online appeared to show her use of racial discrimination. Later, however, it was discovered that the online clip was missing a critical segment—information which gave context to her words, and which would have conveyed a much different impression.

Sherrod received multiple public apologies, including a personal one from President Obama. And over the past few weeks, the media has thrashed out the incident countless times and from countless different angles. Yet while much of the back-and-forth dialogue (including words from the President himself) has focused on public perception of racism, blogger etiquette, and the like, there's something far deeper at stake.

All those issues are important, certainly. But the root of this whole situation is our relationship with the online world. We media consumers often blindly accept everything we see, hear, or read on the web, regardless of its source or accuracy. And it's affecting our judgment.

While Internet technology has made incredible advances in the past decade, the quality of the information found there has taken the opposite path. The so-called “information highway” is now littered with potholes, gravel, and turnoffs to roads that go nowhere.

For years, the web has been viewed as a convenient source of facts: no *Encyclopedia Britannica*, of course, but still useful. If you need information, all you have to do is look it up online—right? Not anymore.

Call it collateral, if you will. But the truth is that reliable online sources are becoming more and more difficult to find. Run a Google search, and you'll notice that the first page of results is usually packed with links focusing more on keywords than content.

Forget the virus threats. The real danger of web-based information gathering is the risk that the content's quality and accuracy have been compromised; and even worse, the fact that fewer and fewer web users are thinking to question what they find.

It's time-consuming to sift through the good and the bad, but savvy web users will find that second-guessing what's been posted online will allow them to steer around the potholes and road bumps created by the pages and pages of poorly researched “facts”. Could this keyword-heavy content be the accurate information I'm seeking? Perhaps, but the sources' poor writing and grammar frequently lead me to question the facts' authenticity—and a cross-check with reputable sources usually confirms my hunch.

On today's information highway, it's a fact: the poor driving conditions can't be avoided. Anyone can post anything online, and often its accuracy is questionable. It's up to us information consumers to be choosy about what we believe.

IN CONVERSATION WITH . . .

Wanda Waterman St. Louis

Cochemea Gastelum, Part I

*Cochemea Gastelum is a jazz saxophonist and recording artist. As a member of Sharon Jones and the Dap Kings, he backed up Amy Winehouse in performance of and in the recording studio for her album *Back to Black*. The *Electric Sound of Johnny Arrow* (recently reviewed in The Voice) is Gastelum's first solo album, and Wanda Waterman St. Louis had the honour of giving him his first interview following its release.*

Childhood: Pick a Record!

I grew up in Spring Valley, California, which is basically San Diego. I grew up around a lot of music because both my parents were aspiring musicians; my mom liked to sing torch songs and stuff and my dad was a jazz guitar player, self-taught. I didn't grow up with my dad, but his influence was felt around the house.

My mom was always into jazz. She'd never really been into the hippie thing and was more into jazz singers, so I grew up around Billie Holiday, Wes Montgomery, Charlie Parker, Les McCann, Aretha Franklin, the Beatles . . . On weekends she'd always say, "Pick a record!" Wes Montgomery was one of my favourites. She had pretty wide musical tastes, but I grew up mostly with soul music and jazz.

When I was in second grade, I was really into Kiss. I liked rock music too, and wanted to be a drummer, but in my neighbourhood I couldn't really bang on the drums, so I ended up quitting that and looking for a horn. I saw a saxophone that looked so beautiful I decided I had to play it. It kind of went hand in hand with the jazz music. I also started getting into ska; for a horn player, it was really great to be able to jump around to those rhythms.

The Latin Factor

Midway through high school, I kind of knew that I wanted to be a musician, which was really interesting because I didn't grow up with my dad's side of the family. I got to know my dad's side of the family later on in life, and it turns out that it was a totally musical family: all my aunts and uncles played instruments. My grandfather was a music teacher.

They were Native American—Yaqui Indian. So basically, I was on the path.

I think that for me, the Latin influence started with jazz music because I really had an affinity for that Afro-centric kind of jazz sound. Back in the '60s a lot of jazz musicians started getting into their roots. Maybe it was in the blood, but it really felt like it came naturally to me.

I really liked Brazilian music. My father always used to play bossa novas for my mom on the guitar, and whenever the family got together, my uncles



and my dad would always be serenading everybody with “Girl from Ipanema” and all those Brazilian songs. And now whenever I’m with my family and I have my horn with me, they always want me to play those songs. It’s one of those things that just got passed down.

There’s definitely a Brazilian influence on this album, especially on “Impala ’73,” because I was listening to a lot of Brazilian music when I wrote that song.

Spheres of Influence

The record spans different eras because I’ve been a traveling musician for a long time now. So when I’m not on the road, I work on the record, then I go out on the road, come back, and work on the record . . . *The Electric Sound of Johnny Arrow* represents the kinds of music I was listening to at the time, and I think that’s why there are so many different styles.

So I went to the Berklee College of Music in Boston. The vibe there was heavy on the jazz music. Berklee is pretty much a jazz school, but I was into a lot of funk. When I got there I just wanted to groove, for lack of a better word. I wanted to play music and make people dance, and that wasn’t what the school was about at that time. So I wasn’t at Berklee for very long.

Back Home

I ended up going back to San Diego and playing with the Greyboy Allstars [that] was just getting going. Those are the guys I came up with in San Diego and I learned a lot from them. Soul jazz was just coming up in the dance clubs again.

I Work Best When . . .

I need to be left alone, [but] also collaborat[e] with my friends, and people I like playing with. This record was made with me tinkering in my studio or wherever I could find time to be alone. I need that quiet space. And then since I recorded it at home, I could bring friends in to play the guitar and we would vibe off each other. And then when they went home and I was alone again, I could shape the music.

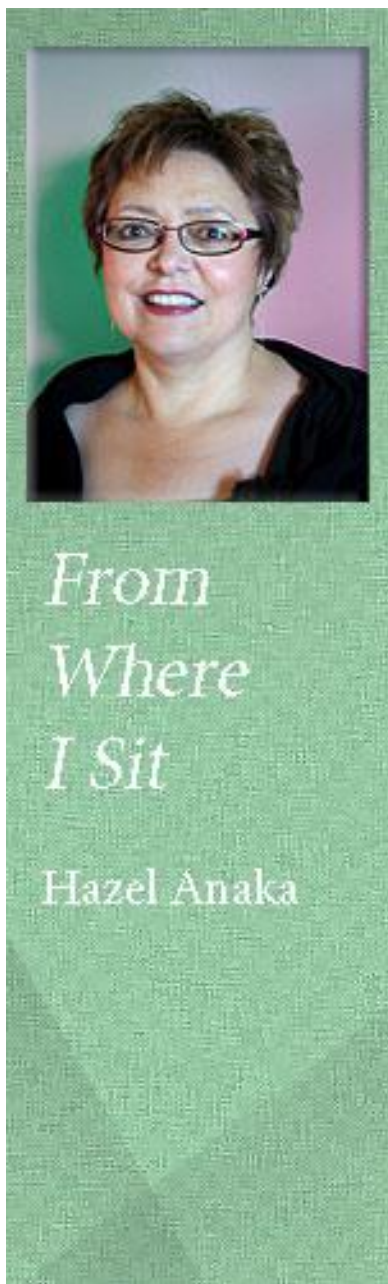


Above: Cochemea Gastelum. Photo: Greg Aiello.

The Daps

I started touring with the Dap Kings around 2005. For a while I toured with them off and on, but now I’m full-time in the band. They’d been on the go since the mid-90s, and I’d always been a fan of theirs. I was between bands and they needed a sub, so I started subbing with the Dap Kings. I was playing baritone sax, which I’d never played before, or even thought about playing. I felt like I’d finally met the group of people who were likeminded, who liked the same kind of music and who had a similar aesthetic.

To be continued . . .



Difficult Days Ahead

As much as I understand the reality, the inevitability of death, it still comes like a thief in the night, shocking and saddening all those affected. It's dreaded, feared, and misunderstood by most, yet often it is welcomed and embraced by those who are dying. I remember my dad wishing for it as he faced failing health and diminished capacity to live the life he once knew. When your body has let you down, when friends and family have died, when you have become weary of the fight, death provides welcome relief. That feeling is not uncommon, especially in the elderly. But wishing does not make it so. Death has her own timetable.

As human beings, we have an incredible faculty for forgetting the precious and fleeting nature of life. Any reminders of death, whether from down the road or on TV, are short-lived. Back we fall into our habits of roaring through life with only passing notice of those values most dear to us. Maybe we leave unkind words hanging in the air. Or neglect to make time for those we claim to care about. Maybe we mock the advice that just might keep us alive and well longer. Maybe we think we'll be the ones to beat the odds. I'm sorry to be the bearer of bad news, but it just won't go down like that.

We've just returned from our neighbour's funeral, so I've gotten another up-close reminder about death and ritual and grief. Alex was diagnosed with stomach cancer in January, had surgery in early February, and died July 28. He was a victim of one of those "Sorry, we can't do anything more for you because we don't have enough oncologists" scenarios. It is very hard not to be enraged by a system that lets some fall by the wayside. We fear it could be us or someone we love.

So, Alex's time came—at 67, most would say far too soon. Because he was a farmer unable to do what needed to be done, Roy stepped into the breach. He left his own work to lend a tractor and grain loader, to arrange for a trucker, to talk to grain buyers, and to help load nine semi-trailers of grain. He sprayed Alex's crop for weeds because timing is everything. No doubt he will help with the eventual harvest.

Today, he was a pallbearer.

For the survivors, too soon do the hugs and the caring concern slow down and then vanish. The hustle and distraction of making funeral arrangements and receiving family give way to days and long nights of silence. In a society that euphemizes death and grows impatient with grief lasting longer than a few weeks or months, in a society that offers cliché and trivialization and can't bear silence or tears, the road of grief is especially rocky. Insomnia, lack of appetite, fear, anger, guilt, and incredible sadness are waiting around the corner. Dealing with the day-to-day business of farming is tough enough for couples. For a widow, it is impossible. Unfortunately, for her I see many more difficult days ahead, from where I sit.



Intriguing New Developments in Alternative Music

Cybiont is a New Zealand recording artist with astonishingly innovative lyrics and sounds. He recently took the time to talk with Wanda Waterman St. Louis about Gaia theory, collectivism, and mindful listening. Be sure to check out The Voice's review of Cybiont's second album, Angels & Demons.

"The great challenge of the future will not be technical, it will be human."

Joel de Rosnay

On Joel de Rosnay

[De] Rosnay's book *The Symbiotic Man* caught my attention about 10 years ago. It had a very inspiring title acknowledging us as interdependent beings and showing how everything is connected. By no means can we call ourselves independent; we depend on everything around us, and above all else we are social beings, highly dependent on others in our quest for a good life.

In these times of individualism, I've many times used this book to inspire to promote collectivism. Apart from change, collectivism might be the most significant human tradition ever. [De] Rosnay's book gives some inspiring viewpoints on attributes, values, etc. that may be pivotal for a civilization of symbiotic human beings.

Lovelock's Gaia theory taught us that all are connected in this "web of life." Rocks, plants, animals, and humans all constitute . . . nature. Gaia is a living planet. Joel de Rosnay brought the concept further by including technology and human-made networks into the equation. Non-linear science tells us that "the total is bigger than the sum of all its parts." The "cybiont" is [De] Rosnay's bid on the next evolutionary step for the planet earth.

I am grateful to have had [De] Rosnay's ideas to use in my bag of tools during my years working towards a better world. It has also contributed to the understanding that for our (*Homo sapiens*) existence it might be important to sustain life in the future.

For me, James Lovelock's Gaia theory firmly placed humanity within nature. It resonates kindly in my ears to be part of it all and not one of nature's mistakes, a "cancer growth" that the planet would be better off without.

I actually find it a nice opportunity to be alive and I find our human intelligence interesting. What if we are not being here to destroy life on earth? Biological life seems to be a rare occurrence in the universe; maybe we'll have chance to make sure that this wonderful occurrence will continue to live on beyond the life of the planet.

Listening

I usually listen to the ones speaking from their hearts, be it a person, a talkative bird, a piece of music, or



some artistic lichen formations. “*Everything got its own sound—open your heart and it will be all around*” [from Cybiont’s single, “Sounds”].

Some pieces and artists that have made a long-lasting impression are Carl Orff’s *Carmina Burana*, *Zorba the Greek*, Nick Cave and co., Joy Division, freedom songs (especially from South America and Africa), Einstürzende Neubauten, and more. I think my latest CD purchase was Rowland S. Howard’s final album.

I Don’t Read Much

Stopped paying attention to newspapers years ago, and few books have been able to keep my attention from cover to cover. At times I get into reading and mostly tend to read science-based books. Last one read was Michio Kaku’s *Parallel Worlds*, taking you through string theories, quantum physics, and more. This was another book that influenced some of my new songs, such as “Sounds” and “Dreams Running Out.”

Occasionally I get drawn into the books of Alexander McCall Smith’s *No. 1 Ladies’ Detective Agency* series, fantastic stories reminding you of the goodness in people, giving a warm feeling around the heart.

Meaningful Conversations

In contradiction to what we tend to learn as kids, I love speaking to strangers. I’ve never been properly socially trained to avoid talking about topics I believe are important in the world of today. I’m incompetent at chit-chat, but I love passionate discussions about the earth, universe, politics, collectivism, time bending, what we can learn from bacteria, and so on. I love to talk to birds as well, and yeah, last week I found myself in a conversation with a bean plant.

To be continued . . .



DID YOU KNOW? MIT OpenCourseWare

If you’re seeking supplementary material for your courses, familiarizing yourself with background subjects, or considering studying a new topic for personal enjoyment, you’ll be excited to learn about Massachusetts Institute of Technology’s (“MIT”) [OpenCourseWare](#) initiative.

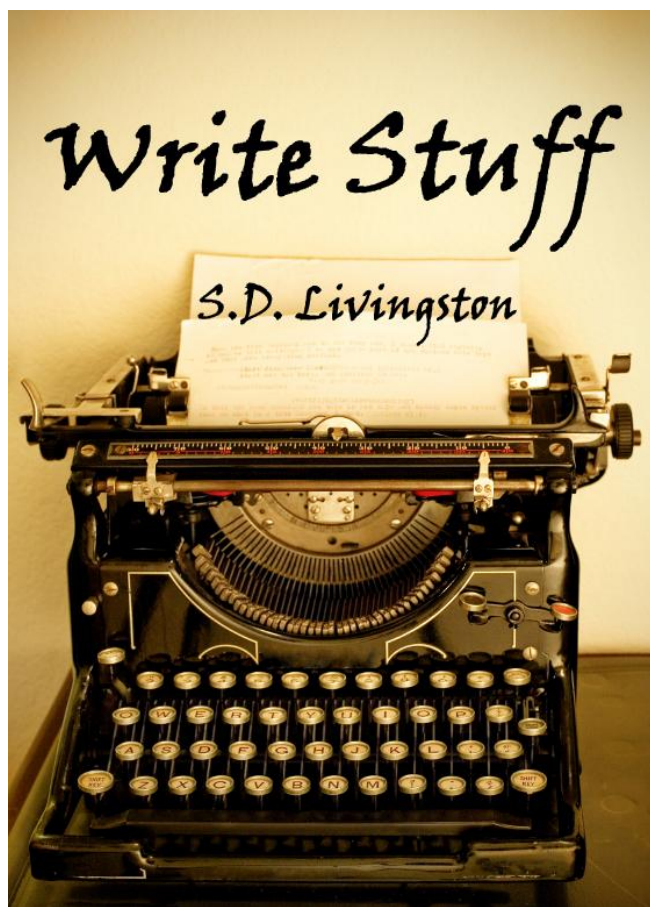
The donations-funded online resource, which is free and requires no registration, includes materials from two thousand courses previously taught at MIT. Course topics range from aeronautical engineering to music and theatre to women’s studies—and everything in between. New

courses are constantly being added, and older courses are frequently updated to reflect new studies and information available.

Materials available depend on the course: there are lecture notes, online textbooks, image galleries, and audio and video lectures. Many of the courses also include assignments, quizzes, and exams along with solutions and sample answers for students who want to check their learning progress.

Students can access the courses online, or download the relevant files for offline use (video components must be downloaded separately).

You can’t earn credit for courses completed here; MIT OpenCourseware “is not a credit-bearing or degree-granting initiative.” However, it is a fantastic resource for teachers, students, graduates, and all those with a love of learning.



New Friends

I'm confused about e-books. Not the general idea of them, or even their various formats or platforms; no, the confusing thing about e-books is why so many people scorn them and grieve the decline of paper books.

For every update about the Nook or the Kindle, and for every tech article on the latest e-book features, there seems to be someone lamenting the looming death of the paperback and hardcover. The general argument goes that there's nothing quite like the *feel* of a paper book—the tangible pleasure of turning the pages, of weighing that pure, solid comfort in your hand. Paper books, they say, are old friends. Their battered covers and curled pages remind you of camping trips and accidental dunks in the lake. The scribbled margin notes are physical connections to your youthful self.

Well, of course paper books are lovely. I've always been a fan. In fact, I treasure my wonderfully musty copy of *David Copperfield*, complete with an inscription by the original owner. It's dated December 1899, and I like to

imagine the Christmas morning when that book was first unwrapped. Mr. Copperfield is in good company nestled among the classics on my bookshelf, including a tattered old hardcover of Chaucer.

But if much of the magic of reading lies in the paper, the physical entity of a book, why does no one seem to mind the gradual decline of other printed forms? Where are all the elegies for the newsletter and the pamphlet, the newspaper and the magazine? Not that hard-copy newspapers and magazines have gone the way of the dodo yet. There are still plenty of both. The shift has been underway for years, though, with online versions of everything from *The New York Times* to the *Era-Banner*.

Plenty of organizations deliver their newsletters electronically now, too, straight to your inbox. And catalogues are close behind (one example is BBC Canada's gorgeous [digital catalogue](#), complete with page-turning sound effects).

Yet there doesn't seem to be the same nostalgia for these disappearing paper forms. Not even for that old standard, the paper calendar, now eagerly replaced by digital reminders on laptops and smart phones.

Do we, perhaps, cling to paper books because they've been an almost constant presence in recorded history, "the oldest of all types of publication" and one that dates back "to the earliest civilizations," as Britannica



Online tells us? Well, maybe. But journals and pamphlets are almost as old; the *Acta Diurna*, a daily gazette, spread news, horoscopes, and society gossip to Romans as far back as 59 BC.

If the value of paper books lies in the beauty of their historical physical form, perhaps we should start petitioning for copies of *The Girl with the Dragon Tattoo* transcribed onto clay tablets, papyrus, or wood. The idea might seem frivolous, but 22nd century readers, digital libraries in hand, will probably look back at your hardcover of *The DaVinci Code* as the charming, outdated equivalent of hefting clay tablets around.

Like any new friendship, e-books will take some getting used to. We need time to discover their quirks and their good qualities as well as their annoying habits. But when it comes to the metaphor of books as old friends, I like to think that covers and endpapers are merely their clothing.

It's their content—their words—that form their personalities. Their souls, if you will. And new friends or old, isn't that what really matters?

CLICK OF THE WRIST – Stop Calling, Stop Calling

This coming Tuesday marks the 134th anniversary of one history-making telephone call: on August 10, 1876, Alexander Graham Bell made the world's first long-distance call from Brantford, Ontario, to Paris, Ontario. Land line-based telephones have been a part of modern life for so long that it's easy to take them for granted. This week's links connect us with some of the background behind this everyday necessity.

How and Why

Have you ever wondered how your voice is transmitted through a traditional land line phone? This short video from the Science Channel explains the basics behind the process. You'll never think of a phone conversation in the same way!

Code Name

Think area codes were assigned randomly? Think again. Here's a brief history explaining the rationale behind the original assignments of those three numbers.

Fashion Show

This photo gallery, an online accompaniment to the PBS series *American Experience*'s feature on the telephone, shows the evolution of telephone design. From the clunky wooden boxes of the early days to sleek, modern cordless sets, it's come a long way!

Everything Old Is New Again

Telephone technology has come far, but it hasn't forgotten its roots. This YouTube clip shows an iPhone app which allows users to turn their smart phone into an old-fashioned rotary-dial telephone.



Sister Aurora

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

#52

Wow!

Amazing!

Ooh!

Whoa!

It's like sparkly gauze curtains, blowing around!

It's like a flowing sunset!

Hey, Bert, I'd say it's a good time to give you your new name.

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.

AUSU
Representing AU
Undergrads

Student Gear

2009 merchandise

Clothing
Technology
Fun Items
Home Decor

Fostering the Student Community

AUSU and Voice gear is intended to support your studies and help you feel like part of the AU student community. Suggestions for new items are welcome. Contact our office with any questions.

INTERNATIONAL NEWS DESK



At Home: Job Posturing

Your mother always told you to sit up straight, and it turns out she was right—if you want to land a job, that is. As the *Calgary Herald* [reports](#), a new study by CareerBuilder Canada suggests a strong link between body language and successful job interviews.

According to the study's results, 37 per cent of the Canadian hiring managers surveyed cited “bad posture” as an interview no-no. Also on the list of practices to avoid: failure to maintain eye contact (68 per cent of managers considered this to be a faux pas), “crossing your arms, fidgeting, a weak handshake, playing with an object on the table and touching your hair or face.”

Watching your body language during an interview can indeed make a difference in favourably impressing hiring managers, according to CareerBuilder's Allison Nawoj. As Nawoj told reporters, “When you're meeting someone for the first time, you want to make sure . . . that you're conveying the positive parts of your personality,” adding that

“paying attention to your body language is part of that.”

This news is nothing to frown at. After all, “a friendly smile” is also “key” to a successful interview.

In Foreign News: Stolen Words

In a university environment, the emphasis on academic integrity is high, but access to online information has led to some confusion over what constitutes plagiarism. In fact, many students plagiarize web-based content, like Wikipedia—and aren't even aware it's wrong.

As *The New York Times* [reports](#), studies show that fewer than ever students “believe . . . that copying from the Web constitutes ‘serious cheating’.”

Theorists are divided over the cause of the shift. Teresa Fishman, director of Clemson University's Center for Academic Integrity, believes that the fault lies with the prevalence of web-based content. “Now we have a whole generation of students who've grown up with information that just seems to be hanging out there in cyberspace,” Fishman told reporters.

However, anthropologist Susan D. Blum, of the University of Notre Dame, feels that it's part of a deeper shift in the younger generation's perception of individuality and uniqueness. While prevailing views on authorship are “rooted in Enlightenment ideas of the individual,” she argues that today's students are “less interested in cultivating a unique and authentic identity . . . than in trying on many different personas.” Not surprisingly, she points to the similarity between students who cobble together work from several originals and “TV shows that constantly reference other shows.”

But Donald J. Dudley, who manages the discipline office at University of California Davis, thinks the answer is much simpler: laziness. “Writing is difficult, and doing it well takes time and practice,” he told reporters, adding that frequently, discipline cases result from students being “unwilling to engage the writing process.”

CLASSIFIEDS

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

THE VOICE

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