

# THE VOICE

## MAGAZINE

Vol 18 Iss 39 2010-10-01

### **Artistic Freedom**

The online music revolution

### **Back Seat Squabbles**

Driver at fault

### **One from Many**

Welcome to Valkania

*Plus: From Where I Sit,  
Chronicles of Cruiscin Lan,  
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](mailto:voice@voicemagazine.org), and please  
indicate if we may publish your letter.



## EDITORIAL

Christina M. Frey



## Driving Me Distracted

Recently, local lawmakers in my area put the kibosh on texting while driving—or tried to. Although the law's been in effect over a month now, I haven't seen much difference. I'll glance out the window and still see the college-aged woman steering with her knees while madly texting on her phone, or the businessman who can't let an office email go by without checking it two seconds after it arrives in his smart phone's inbox. Watching them is almost as distracting as texting on my own phone.

Clearly, something's not working.

The latest in a new series of safe-driving targets is the GPS device. Recently, after news broke that a deadly bus crash had been caused by the driver's programming his GPS device while operating the vehicle, a buzz of GPS-related commentary hit the Internet. For example, CBC's *Marketplace* published a [blog post](#) on in-car GPS devices, suggesting that their use while driving be banned in Canada. An earlier *Marketplace* [investigation](#) had strongly called out manufacturers for failing to install in-motion locks on GPS units in order to make them impossible to operate while the vehicle's driving: "Yet despite the problems of distraction, manufacturers of portable GPS devices still allow drivers the option of programming while the car is in motion, instead of completely locking them out."

And other materials proliferating across the web gave similar solutions, some even taking a personal stance. *What's wrong with the government? Why haven't they outlawed this? What's wrong with the manufacturers? Why aren't they installing safety locks?*

Excuse me? Yes, programming the GPS while cruising down the highway, or texting while driving, are made theoretically possible by the manufacturers. But they're made actually possible by stupid and/or irresponsible drivers.

The fault isn't in the technology, any more than a murder is the fault of the gun rather than of its user.

With this blame-game attitude so prevalent, is it any wonder that texting-while-driving regulations and similar laws are, and will be, ignored? The problem is that we've lost our sense of responsibility. If we cause a problem, it's the government's fault. If we misuse technology, it's because the manufacturers didn't prevent us: *The GPS made me do it!*

Give me a break! We shouldn't need Big Brother—in the form of manufacturers or lawmakers—to step in and make us behave ourselves.

No, we shouldn't be programming our GPS devices or checking email on our smart phones while we're driving. And that's precisely why we should be the ones who stop it.

We can petition manufacturers or the government. We can raise a public outcry. But all we're really doing is passing the buck. We're saying, *Please, help us help ourselves. We can't stop on our own.* And then, of



course, when the big guns can't keep us from our bad habits, we find a new scapegoat instead of addressing the real problem.

Who are we kidding? Let's put the blame back where it belongs. If we allow GPS, texting, or that email alert to distract us from driving, it's not the fault of our device's manufacturer for making it technologically possible. It's not the fault of the government for not passing laws to discourage us from unsafe practices.

We're adults. If we make stupid mistakes, we're the ones responsible. Enough playing with our techno-toys on the road. Enough passing around the blame. It's time to "Shut up and drive."



## CLICK OF THE WRIST: Caught in the Web

It's October 1, and for many, that means it's time to break out the Halloween decorations: pumpkins, scarecrows, and, of course, the fake spiderwebs made from cotton batting. But squeamishness about spiders aside, real spiderwebs are nothing short of amazing. This week's links look at webs that put Charlotte's to shame (almost!).

### Bigger and Better

The old adage "If you build a better mousetrap . . ." takes on a new meaning in the jungles of Madagascar. There, the Darwin's bark spider, a Madagascar species only recently studied by scientists, builds webs that may reach a mind-boggling 25 meters wide—and uses the giant structures to catch dragonflies and other small insects. This *National Geographic* pictorial shows the incredible photos.

### By Design

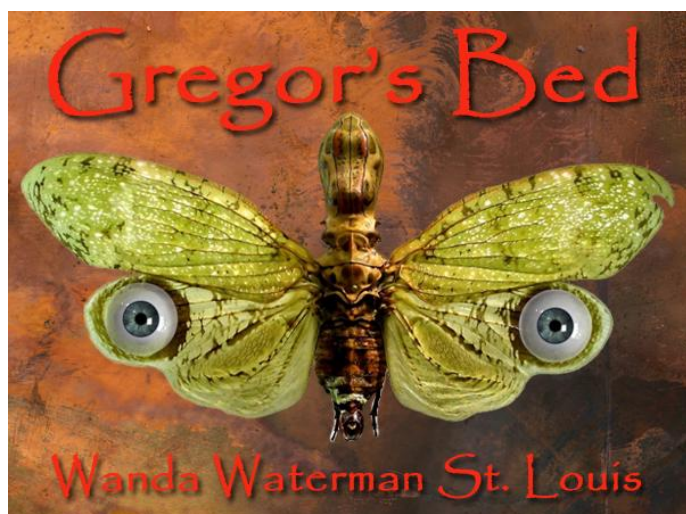
Scientists have long noticed that some spiders weave unusual, even decorative patterns in among the traditional web strands. But a few years ago, a University of Sydney study suggested that the designs may have a purpose: to reflect ultraviolet rays in order to mimic typical food sources for flies and other prey.

This article has the fascinating details.



### Silk from Milk

Spider silk, the material from which spiderwebs are made, is a much-studied substance—its strength and elasticity make it of interest for surgery, bulletproof vests, and more. But farming spiders to create the silk isn't successful, due to spiders' aggressive tendencies. Instead, scientists have been experimenting with the silk protein gene, injecting it into goats, which will then produce milk containing the protein. The National Science Foundation has the video story.



## Intriguing New Trends In Music

Giving It All Away: How *Art Libre* and Creative Commons Can Change the Way You Consume and Distribute Music

*"And art made tongue-tied by authority."*

William Shakespeare, "Sonnet LXVI"

*"Farewell! thou art too dear for my possessing."*

William Shakespeare, "Sonnet XXXVII"

*"Find a way of getting music from the musician to their audience that's inexpensive and supports musicians. Otherwise, musical diversity will continue to greatly suffer under the current system where only mega-hits make money . . . The systematic destruction of musician's lives is unacceptable: musicians are very close to staging a revolution (and some already have)."*

Magnatune [website](#)

I've always felt as though life wasn't really moving ahead if I wasn't finding new music to listen to. And so when I had played through my own meagre collection until I was fair sick of it, I would go through my brother's collection, then my friends', and then, yes, my parents' (hence my lifelong obsession with folk trios of the early '60s). I was, and still am, that annoying person who enters a store, home, or office and immediately asks, "Who is that?" in response to whatever music happens to be playing.

Eventually I got paid for my obsession, which meant that I had access to a *lot* more new stuff. But it still wasn't enough, and I continued to find myself tossing around for something to listen to.

I was happy as a clam in high water when I discovered that there were online sources of free new recordings in every genre under the sun. No more endless trawling for new acts or searching for contact information or writing to publicists (hoping they're not one of those companies that trains a new intern every month) or finally getting a CD in the mail, only to realize that it isn't exactly laudable.

With these sites, you can check the music right out online. If you like it, download it. If you've got some change jingling in your pocket and you want to help support the musician who made the music (and not a record company), you can donate on the spot. And I have never ceased to be amazed at the quality of some of the stuff that's available there, especially in genres like jazz, which, although they have devoted followings, carve out only a tiny slice of music consumers' spending.

If open-source music is great for listeners and critics, what about the musicians? I know, no price can be put on music, but the reality is that those who make it must eat, sleep, and make



it through the winter, and how can they possibly make money when they're giving their music away?

The answer: by coming up with ingenious new ways to draw income from what they love doing. For some possibilities, see the [Voice interview](#) with Tina Piper of Creative Commons Canada and then check out the brilliant new alternative touring model called [Home Routes](#). The internet is chock full of ideas about how to survive as a singer, honker, plucker, or 88er.

Few tears will be shed at the realization that Big Music is, for various reasons, going the way of the diplodocus. The standard recording contract did not benefit all musicians, just the few celebrities who managed to float to the top, usually because some record executive determined that this year Tiffany or Brad would be next big cash cow.

You can make a CD nowadays the way you used to do yard work—on weekends and after work. But distribution is still an Everest, involving hiring—and trusting—alleged professionals with your precious plastic cargo, at great cost to your bank account.

Some artists just publish their own open-source, licensed material on their own websites, but they can be hard to find. However, organizations that provide cheap distribution, publicity, and sales opportunities to artists are ensuring that creativity flows freely, unhampered by pesky responsibilities like having to make a living right off the bat.

Says Matteo Sgarzi, bass player for the superlative Italian jazz band SLAM!, “I think it’s a brilliant way to disseminate our works among the online global community. You can always find a public. It’s also useful for finding gigs and getting contacts. Thanks to it we’ll be in Rome soon presenting our music.”

But what does this kind of music sharing do for the economy? I have a hunch that in the new, open-source world, less money is being spent on average, per consumer, than in the record companies’ heyday. A system that directs more money to the performer will probably generate less total revenue, but the same argument has been raised against labour unions, which slightly depressed the gross domestic product while creating income equity. When equality enters the picture, less can be more.

Musicians make their music available free online by means of “some rights reserved” licensing, sometimes called “copyleft” licensing, a new form of licensing which allows users to download the tracks for free and even use them for non-commercial purposes or alter them in some way, as long as they credit the creators. The promotion that they get by giving it away gets their sound out there and provides opportunities for gigs, tours, film scores, and perhaps even a recording

*But what does this kind of music sharing do for the economy? . . . When equality enters the picture, less can be more.*



contract (totally on their terms).

A bit of what's available:

Jamendo: Best for ease of use, music quality, and graphics. Music is Creative Commons licensed. My favourite so far.

Dogmazic: French site; like Jamendo, but the artists use an Art Libre license.

Magnatune: Has a \$15 per month user license, and artists share revenues.

Oronjo: Enables artists to sell their music on their own web site. Using a wizard, they can upload content to the Oronjo server.

*"Giving the music away? We musicians love to play live or record in a studio. That's our essence, we simply have to do it. If we get paid for that, great! If we don't, we'll play and record anyway. We might be remembered by an odd song or two, not by how much we earned. Do you really think of how much Louis Armstrong actually earned, while listening to his music?"*

Viktor Mastoridis of Valkania



### DID YOU KNOW? iTunes U

Think iTunes is just a music store? Think again. The online content giant now also offers iTunes U, a fantastic resource that contains a wealth of free learning materials.

Over 300 universities, including big-name schools like Oxford, Cambridge, and Yale, have created publicly accessible course materials in a wide variety of media. Video lectures, audiobooks, films, slideshows, and even video tours are among the multimedia available. And topics range from

creating business plans to programming iPhone apps to investigating the ancient world to learning a new language—and much more.

It goes beyond the classroom, too: there are museums, libraries, and a host of art, music, and programming to explore. Under the “Beyond U” tab, users “can access a wealth of content from distinguished entities such as MoMA, the New York Public Library, Public Radio International, and PBS stations.”

The iTunes software can be downloaded for free onto your computer. Alternatively, you can integrate iTunes U with your iPod or smart phone, making learning on the go easier than ever.





## From Where I Sit

Hazel Anaka

### Have Brush, Will Travel

Like all good mothers (and fathers), I am available to my children when they need advice or blood, sweat, and tears. For Greg and Carrie, that may involve babysitting our precious grandson Grady. It doesn't happen often enough because we live an hour away and have full lives of our own.

Hilary is another story. I spent holiday Monday at her condo helping her and Carrie repaint her master bedroom. A couple of years ago, two shades of mauve was the cat's meow, despite all our moaning about the extra cutting-in required around the bulkhead and with the colour change. "No, I really love this colour; it looks great with my dark headboard and white duvet," she protested. Hah!

This time, we ended up painting it all Naples Blue and it looks good—bold, flamboyant, and very young. A few years ago I had a fire engine-red office that I loved, so I guess the paint doesn't splatter too far from the can. I've tried to tell her, though, that many people happily live with a paint colour or job for eight or ten years.

Now it seems that I will be pressed into service once again to help neutralize and freshen the paint in her rental condo. Oy. When Hilary first lived there herself, we went bold. She had a black wall, which dramatically set off her red leather couch. The entrance wall was also black. Most of the rest of the common area was a rich, light taupe. Her master bedroom was olive green, one of her favourite colours. Her bathroom was a beige-y taupe. The second bedroom and bathroom were a neutral off-white. This was all very dramatic and personal. But when she moved out and the condo became a rental, we had to get rid of the black.

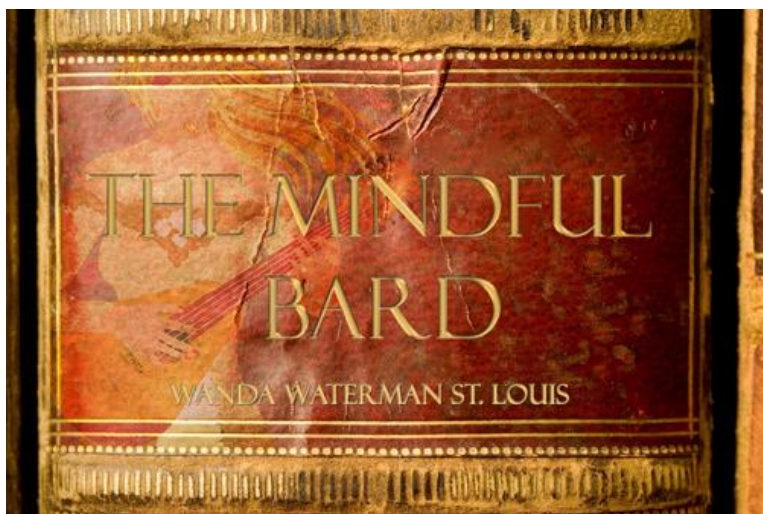
Now, with the last tenants gone and some wall damage to repair, we're set to repaint yet again. Estimates to repaint the entire condo range from \$1,100 to \$1,700. Needless to say, mom's rate of "free, gratis, no charge,

complimentary" is more appealing. To save ourselves a second coat, we'll paint the entire place with some high-quality, good-coverage paint.

So instead of curling up with a good book and riding out these cool, rainy days of autumn, I'm hauling around my step ladder, TSP, drop cloths, paint tray, roller, and assorted other paraphernalia. Let's hope fresh paint makes a difference in a funny housing market. Oh, and a pox on the last tenant, who didn't have the stones to tell Hilary he wasn't renewing the lease. Finding a tenant after most students have settled into a new school year isn't proving to be easy and is a source of concern for this mother.

In the meantime, Have Brush, Will Travel, from where I sit.





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

Valkania

EP: April 2010

Release Date: September 2010

**Musicians:** Mariana (vocals, percussion, guitar), Rob (piano, keyboard, accordion), Viktor (guitar, bouzouki).

*“Music is your own experience, your own thoughts, your wisdom. If you don’t live it, it*

*won’t come out of your horn. They teach you there’s a boundary line to music. But, man, there’s no boundary line to art.”*

Charlie Parker

The Mi’kmaq here in Bear River often sing “The Gathering Song”; taboo to sing except with the permission of an elder, it’s a powerful prayer summoning the ancestors of everyone present in the room. Once when I heard this song, I looked around the room at the spectrum of races and hues and asked myself, *If all our ancestors were gathered here now, would they get along?* I then realized that of course they would—if they didn’t, we wouldn’t have all been there.

Similarly, if you were to enter the unconscious of the modern European, you might find that twilight place where Celts, Romans, Teutons, Arabs, Huns, and Visigoths all danced and leaped around the same fire, or a place where eastern, western, northern, and southern Europeans sipped absinthe together in a smoky bar while a transvestite played an accordion and warbled on about a sailor who died at sea.

Or something like Valkania, an East London-based trio that seamlessly and engagingly mixes jazz and progressive rock with its East European roots to create a sound that oozes atmosphere and emotional significance.

And if I still haven’t managed to convince you purists of the necessity of musical syncretism, listen to guitarist and bouzouki player Viktor Mastoridis: “I come from a mixed nationality marriage. I have never felt untrue to one country or the other regardless of where I live. I am happy about who I am; I feel normal, harmonious, and even beautiful. Why should my music be any different?”

Mastoridis began his musical career as a blues guitarist in the Balkans. After playing in progressive rock and hip-hop bands, he moved to the Netherlands and then to the U.K., where he realized the extent to which everyone was simply aping Western music. His decision to channel the musical genres of the cultures from which he sprang, mixing in generous helpings of the foreign







genres he loved, seemed so right that he completely embraced it.

The whole EP sounds incredibly tight and smooth, and yet you get the sense that these folks had big fun putting it together. The vocals, both male and female, are pitch-perfect, resonant, and heartfelt. Musicians, you should be sure to count out the beats in the bars to see how many odd rhythmic structures you can find.

*April 2010* manifests seven of the Mindful Bard's criteria for music well worth a listen: 1) it stimulates my mind; 2) it harmoniously unites art with social action, saving me from both seclusion in an ivory tower and slavery to someone else's political agenda; 3) it provides respite from a sick and cruel world, a respite enabling me to renew myself for a return to mindful artistic endeavour; 4) it is about attainment of the true self; 5) it makes me want to be a better artist; 6) it is authentic, original, and delightful; and 7) it makes me appreciate that life is a complex and rare phenomenon, making living a unique opportunity.

## CHRONICLES OF CRUISCIN LAN

Wanda Waterman St. Louis

Ole McCullough, ee az import a mare from de desert.

Don't seem right. Why can't he give the job to one of our local girls?

None of 'em wants the job!!!

Hmph. Dey doan wan...

Chronicles of  
CRUISCIN Lan

I tell yiz, they's lettin' the foreigners take right over! Soon they'll be takin' me woodpile! I won't have nuthin' t' set on all day!

You say dat like it a bad ting . . .

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## INTERNATIONAL NEWS DESK



### At Home: Montessori for Dementia Patients

Dementia has become a hot health care topic lately, as increasing numbers of families are affected by the slow-moving and devastating illness. But there's hope: while scientists search for a cure, researchers are discovering methods to slow memory loss and provide a better quality of life for sufferers.

As *The Globe and Mail* [reports](#), research suggests that using the Montessori method may allow dementia patients to function more fully at their level, which means less frustration and, as a result, fewer challenging behaviours.

According to Montessori philosophy, “adapting the environment to suit the needs of children” allows kids to thrive, “achiev[ing] higher levels of engagement.” Importantly, environmental manipulation helps the children to avoid boredom.

Recent studies from McMaster University suggest that “boredom is a trigger” for dementia patients. Nursing homes that have adopted the Montessori philosophy are working to avoid this, creating “[a]ctivities, visual cues, and roles and routines” appropriate to each patient’s abilities. These will provide patients “with a sense of purpose and something to do, thereby reducing [their] agitation.” In addition, environmental cues can help them function despite their memory loss, avoiding “anxiety and agitation.”

Best of all, it’s a non-invasive, person-centred technique that gives dementia sufferers a little more control over their lives.

### Around the World: Flying Vegetables

Got an overabundance of zucchini, but tired of serving it for dinner? Don’t be so quick to throw away the squash; someday, it might save your life.

As the *Missoulian* [reports](#), a Montana woman recently used a giant zucchini to fight off an attacking black bear.

The woman was letting out her three dogs one night when she was startled by the bear, which suddenly began charging down the hill toward her. The bear attacked one of her dogs, “aggressively rolling the dog around on the ground.” When the woman attempted to defend her pet, the bear turned on her instead, clawing her leg right through her jeans.

When the bear attempted to follow her into the house, the woman “reached inside and grabbed the only object on the counter”—a 14-inch zucchini she’d harvested from her own garden. She then simply “threw the squash at it,” successfully scaring off the attacker.

Both the woman and her dog are “doing fine,” but the bear is still at large. Presumably, though, it’s learned its lesson and will stay away from flying produce.



## 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.



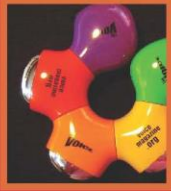



For any course that requires charts that cannot be easily created in Word or Excel, this should be a real time saver and make it easier to submit all portions of an assignment by email.

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.

# CLASSIFIEDS

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

## THE VOICE

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